How does social class shape and influence the ethnic identity of immigrants? Take the Chinese group in Glasgow as an example

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on Chinese immigrants from different social classes in Scotland, aiming to explore how individuals' understanding of ethnicity is influenced by their social class, thereby contributing to the sociological literature on the intersection of ethnicity and class. In particular, it pays close attention to the life trajectories of working-class Chinese immigrants, especially those on the margins of society, enriching the British sociological scholarship on the experiences of Chinese immigrants by refusing to treat this group as simply homogenous.

The thesis adopts an everyday life approach, emphasizing the importance of capturing, identifying, and analysing dynamic, nuanced, and complex social relationships and practices related to ethnicity in daily life. It also employs an intersectional lens, arguing that individuals' understanding of ethnic identity is always shaped by the interwoven influences of different social categories and multiple social spaces. Furthermore, this study draws on Bourdieu's theoretical framework, utilizing concepts such as social space, field, capital, habitus, doxa, symbolic violence, and reproduction to analyse the different forms of class inequality experienced in ethnic identity construction and reproduction.

Based on two years of fieldwork – including life history interviews with 29 participants from different class backgrounds in Glasgow and two periods of participant observation – this study qualitatively examines the participants' life trajectories and the ways in which they understand ethnicity within a broader socio-cultural context. Grounded theory was adopted for data analysis, and the results are presented through key themes and case studies, incorporating participants' original interview excerpts. Accordingly, the thesis argues that within a given social space or field, class influences ethnicity through the unequal possession, inheritance, distribution, and access to different forms of resources, which is reflected in a series of social relations and practices in everyday life. The findings suggest that participants' understanding of ethnicity is always structurally shaped by their social position and the logic of the spaces they inhabit. For example, due to the unequal possession and acquisition of material and symbolic resources caused by class differences, individuals encounter different forms and degrees of obstacles in transnational mobility, as well as varying capacities and strategies to cope with these challenges, which shape their interpretation of ethnicity. This study also emphasizes that the way class influences ethnicity within a given social space depends on its specific hierarchical structure and the forms of capital that are at stake in such spaces. For example, in Chinese school space, class can influence students' ethnic identity and resistance through the degree of cultural capital inheritance and inequalities in the possession and distribution of educational resources, thereby affecting the reproduction of ethnicity.

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Author’s Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

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Introduction

1. From An Episode

Trust and belonging built up over the years can be easily broken by some trivial things. This was what I realized when I was attacked by teenagers with water guns for no reason in Glasgow for the first time after studying in the UK for 4 years.

At that time, I had lived in England for 2 and a half years and in Scotland for a year and a half. Perhaps because I had always been treated kindly and patiently by my British classmates and supervisors, I always felt a sense of trust and belonging to British society. And if I heard some international students complain or even slander the British social order after being discriminated against or treated unfairly in the UK, I would also defend British because that was not my experience. Until Friday, June 3, 2022, a sunny afternoon, when I set out from my student apartment to the nearest Tesco to buy dinner. It was about 4.30 pm. I walked to the traffic light at the intersection closest to the dormitory, pressed the button, and stood on the street waiting for the green light to pass. There were people and cars around me. Everything was so familiar and reassuring because similar scenes had been repeated countless times in the past year and a half.

Suddenly, two teenagers rode bicycles from one side of the road. I still remember their general appearance from a casual glance, with colourful clothes and bicycles, whistling in their mouths, and holding water guns in their hands. Because of their weird behaviour, I subconsciously took a step back to avoid close contact. When they passed in front of me, the leading teenager suddenly raised the water gun and sprayed water on my face, and then the two of them laughed and sped away. The moment I was sprayed, I instinctively took a step back and turned my head to the right. My consciousness was a little fuzzy, and I could not figure out what happened for a while. Then in the next one or two seconds, I clearly realized that I was attacked (I know some people may think this is a bit of an excessive word, but at least it was like this for me). When I looked at the two teenagers again, they were already 20 meters away. My first reaction was to scold them, or even rush up to stop them and question them about why they did this, but suddenly I remembered the precedent of international students being deported or even injured because of conflicts with locals, so I swallowed the words that were about to come out of my mouth to avoid escalating the conflict.

In an instant, many emotions surged into my heart: doubts, anger, grievances, etc. At the same time, I suddenly realized that I had even no time to care about these emotions, because I had to face the eyes of many passers-by first. This is tantamount to public execution, especially for someone like me who does not like to be in the spotlight. Looking around roughly, I easily found that I was being stared at by many pairs of eyes, including passers-by waiting for traffic on the opposite side of the road like me, people in vehicles waiting for traffic lights on the street, and pedestrians passing by me. I understood that there might be more sympathy in their eyes than other meanings, but as many disadvantaged groups tried to emphasize, we did not need sympathy. At that moment, I felt that I was standing alone in the spotlight, and the eyes around me were cast on me, whispering about the experience I had just suffered. Despite such helplessness and pain, I tried my best to control my emotions, waited as calmly as possible until the green light sign, and walked calmly for two blocks before I was able to review everything that had just happened. For me, these few minutes were like a long night full of nightmares.

I knew clearly what I had suffered, because many of my friends' previous experiences and countless cases I had learned from the Internet had made me familiar with the cases of British teenagers attacking international students. However, when I suffered all this myself, I felt the pain and grievance that I could not understand when I heard other people's cases. Later, a group of teenagers appeared on the opposite side, some of them holding skateboards, talking and laughing. I felt a great sense of threat that I had never felt before, so I chose to cross the side road, even though it would take me 5 minutes longer to reach the supermarket. However, when I turned into the side road, I felt like I was facing a new potential danger, because I noticed a tall and drunk man stumbling towards me with a bottle of wine. I thus was stuck at the intersection and did not know what to do. At that moment, I felt that I began to fear and even hate Glasgow and Britain. In the end, I had to go back, cross the road, and arrive at the supermarket from another block, ending this “thrilling” shopping trip.

I was filled with anger. I felt I had never been so helpless and cowardly. I was splashed with water for no reason but could not say or do anything. I was bullied but could only keep silent. Later I calmed down and thought carefully. If I had fought back and the incident had been escalated, I might have suffered and faced more, such as physical injury, interrogation, and even accusations. As expected, I would have no advantage in facing these. At the same time, once a conflict occurred in a foreign country, it would inevitably affect my studies and

progress, thus going against my original intention. I took a deep breath and felt a little fortunate. What followed was grievance. If I lived in my own country, these issues would not be within my scope of thinking. It was at that moment that I suddenly realized that I did not belong here. I was a stranger from a foreign country and could not integrate into the environment and society here at all.

The next day I woke up and lay in bed reflecting on my thoughts of the day before. Interestingly, I realized that before this incident, I had never experienced such a strong sense of not belonging during my time in the UK. The experience of exclusion crystallized around an invisible boundary, through which ethnicity became both accentuated and available for reflection. In other words, if this incident had not happened, I might never have realized the particular salience of my ethnic identity. This led me to recognize that ethnicity is not always salient in the same way across different contexts; rather, it emerges with force in specific situations—such as the one I encountered that day.

Similarly, class—or more broadly, social hierarchy—is not a fixed or uniformly operative structure, as implied by its conventional use in state categorization or statistical frameworks. As I reflected on why I was unable to respond assertively to the aggressors—the group of British teenagers on bicycles—I came to understand the constraining role of hierarchical positioning. More specifically, their privileged status as citizens afforded them a form of embodied authority, while I, as a migrant, remained acutely aware of my precarious legal position, including concerns about my visa and right to stay. This form of hierarchy is subtle yet powerful; it surfaces in mundane encounters and operates as a relational reference through which dynamics between individuals and groups are structured and felt.

Furthermore, the relationship between the two is particularly worth reflecting on. For me, the realization that I do not belong here ethnically stemmed from my more vulnerable legal status. Therefore, class may have brought ethnic-related issues to the forefront—or rather, ethnicity in that context appeared to be a class-related matter. It reflected a reality about hierarchy, and I chose to interpret that reality through the lens of ethnicity.

Meanwhile, I realized that those were very extreme thoughts. Compared with my experience of being treated by friendly gentlemen in the UK in previous years, being splashed with water is a very low probability event. Therefore, it seemed unreasonable to make a

conclusion about Glasgow or even the UK based on such an incident. However, it also seemed inappropriate to discuss issues related to identity and belonging always from a rational perspective, because it largely belongs to the realm of subjective experience. In other words, it was too harsh to ask one to calmly use a rational and scientific attitude when facing some abnormal encounters. Therefore, a more common phenomenon was that, as I experienced on the previous day, one often had strong emotional fluctuations after experiencing similar events, which prompted her/him to hastily draw a negative conclusion about a larger group. After realizing this, I thought that maybe I should restore my trust in Glasgow society, but it is not easy. I had to be vigilant all the time when walking on the road for a long time.

Trust required courage, and belonging took time to build. A pernicious incident may create a deepening cycle of distrust, and society cannot restore its credibility in the short term. Just like the government described in the Tacitus Trap, once it loses trust, any policy or action it takes will be seen by the public as further evidence of its untrustworthiness, making it difficult to rebuild trust. Therefore, I am more acutely aware than ever before that ethnicity is far from being merely a symbolic concept. Nor can it be fully understood through the lens of rational tools such as strategic choices or boundary delineations. Instead, ethnicity means more as a feeling, an attitude, and a state of being, tied to a broader sense of emotional connection. As Weber understands and emphasizes, this connection involves a sense of honour and dignity. It is difficult to imagine one maintaining a strong sense of attachment to a society or group in which they are ignored, defamed, or humiliated—though this is not absolute, as certain specific circumstances may allow for exceptions. Generally speaking, however, a sense of belonging cannot be built on feelings of isolation and rejection. Rather, it is more closely tied to security, acceptance, and identification. This may also explain one of the reasons why ethnic identity and integration into a collective are essential in our daily lives: because in most cases we need to be recognized, to feel safe, to share common ground with others, and to live with greater dignity. At the same time, I also feel so deeply that ethnicity is not a completed state, but a process that is happening. “Perhaps we are always gradually becoming a certain group of people,” I thought, and the ‘ethnicization’ I read in the book was now presented to me in a real and concrete way. It is bound to the practices and relations we experience in our everyday lives, mixed with various emotions, and vividly constitutes a part of our unique life.

This realization has drawn my attention to the sense of belonging and ethnic identity of immigrants living abroad. Some of them may have lived here for many years, while some might need to continue living here for a long time. If the impact of a single malicious incident is so profound for someone like me, who has lived here for only a few years, what kind of impact might it have on them? When they decide to settle in another society and country for the long term, how do they navigate the various social and cultural phenomena they encounter in daily life? More importantly, I wonder what ethnicity truly means to them, and how do they understand these social phenomena.

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that since then, social media has started to push content about discrimination against Chinese people in the UK to me more frequently. This might be because artificial intelligence recommended such content based on the keywords I searched for, or perhaps because I was more sensitive to such incidents at that time and thus tended to browse them more often. This made me think about the impact of media on identity. At the same time, the pushed content included not only cases of Chinese students in the UK being bullied by local teenagers but also complaints from other Chinese communities, such as university or corporate employees experiencing differential treatment from their supervisors and colleagues, as well as cases of restaurant or supermarket employees being harassed. The different experiences described in these posts, along with the varied reactions of different groups, sparked my additional interest. In my view, these experiences and responses seem to be related to their social position and class, a connection that has been partially substantiated by the literature I have consulted (e.g. Hellgren and Gabrielli 2021, Ghekiere et al. 2022, Blachnicka-Ciacek and Budginaite-Mackine 2022). Furthermore, during the course of my reading, another feeling became apparent to me: compared to other immigrant groups in the UK, Chinese immigrants have been relatively overlooked in academic research and receiving less attention—especially Chinese women (Yuen 2008). This not only helped define the direction and positioning of my research but also highlighted its significance.

2. British Chinese Immigrant Research in the UK

Since this study takes Chinese immigrants in the UK as its subject, it is necessary to sort out the relevant research here. The history of Chinese immigration to the UK can be traced back to the mid-19th century. Early Chinese migrant groups mainly consisted of sailors and

labourers who settled in British port cities such as Liverpool, London and Glasgow (Pan and Center 1999, Benton and Gomez 2007, McFarland 1991). In the late 20th century, particularly after the 1980s, waves of immigrants from Hong Kong, a new generation of mainland Chinese students, and illegal immigrants from Fujian arrived, making the Chinese migrant community in the UK more diverse (see Song 2011, Luk 2009). At the same time, research shows that the Chinese in the UK are one of the fastest growing ethnic minorities (Lau-Clayton 2011). In some cities, such as London and Manchester, relatively concentrated Chinese communities have formed and have gradually expanded from specific areas, such as Chinatown, to more dispersed urban neighbourhoods (Luk 2009). At the same time, Scotland is also a region with a significant Chinese community. According to the 2011 census, there were 34,000 Chinese people living in Scotland, making them the second-largest ethnic minority in the region, and a large proportion of this population is concentrated in the Glasgow area (Cheng 2018). At the same time, with the passage of time, their residential areas have expanded from the initially designated regions to a wider urban scope, and their occupational distribution has also evolved from early employment in the catering and retail industries to a broader range of business sectors (McFarland 1991, Pacione 2005).

As a result, Chinese migrants in the UK have gradually integrated into a broader range of social class, with occupational diversification being a prominent feature. Initially, the economic activities of Chinese migrants in the UK were primarily concentrated in the catering industry. Porter’s research (2009) indicated that Chinese restaurants once formed the backbone of the Chinese economy in the UK, particularly in an industry dominated by Cantonese migrants. However, with rising educational attainment and changes in industrial structures, the new generation of Chinese migrants has increasingly expanded into fields such as finance, technology, and academia (see Yao 2012, Song 2015). The cultural adaptation of Chinese migrants has therefore become a focal issue, involving language barriers and identity recognition (e.g. Lei 2017, Zhuang, Liu and Wang 2024). Recent studies have highlighted the challenges faced by Chinese immigrants in terms of identity recognition and social integration. For example, research by Ng et al. (2014) indicates that Chinese immigrants in the UK often exhibit a tendency toward dual cultural identity. However, as local social networks in the UK primarily support immigrants' British cultural identity, Chinese immigrants find it difficult to fully integrate into British society.

Although research on British Chinese immigrants has increased in recent years, several

critical research gaps remain. One major issue is that existing studies often treat the Chinese community in the UK as a homogeneous group, whereas there are significant internal differences in terms of education, employment, and cultural identity (Lam et al. 2009). This may relate to the contemporary perception of Chinese migrants as a "model minority" (Yeh 2014), necessitating further research on the internal heterogeneity of this group. Moreover, most studies on Chinese immigrants in the UK have focused on student groups (e.g. Mau 2014, Yeh 2014, Gu and Maley 2008), while research on other social classes remains relatively scarce, particularly regarding the experiences and identities of the working class.

In light of this, the study makes several original contributions relative to existing literature. First, it draws on qualitative data collected through life-history interviews with Chinese immigrants from diverse social backgrounds, with a particular focus on the experiences of working-class and marginalized individuals. This extends the empirical focus beyond the student and middle-class professional populations that dominate much of the existing research.

Second, the study emphasizes the internal heterogeneity within the Chinese working-class migrant population. By documenting varied trajectories, perceptions, and strategies among this group, it challenges the prevailing tendency in migration scholarship to portray marginalized populations as uniform, and instead foregrounds the diversity and contextual specificity of lived experience within subaltern groups.

Third, this study provides ethnographic accounts of a Chinese language school and a Chinese church in Scotland, offering rare insight into the lived experiences of British Chinese immigrants in these two important community spaces. By analysing two spaces, this study reveals how individuals' ethnic identities are shaped differently depending on the institutional logic and relational dynamics of each space.

Finally, by exploring how multiple social categories—such as class, religion, gender, and educational background—intersect in shaping ethnic identification, the study offers a more nuanced and contextual account of identity formation among Chinese migrants in the UK. This intersectional lens moves beyond static or essentialist understandings of ethnicity and demonstrates how ethnic identity is embedded in broader structures of inequality, negotiated in everyday life, and continuously shaped by migrants' shifting social positions.

3. Research Aim and Questions

This study aims to explore how social class affects and shapes ethnic identity by focusing on and analysing the identity expression and ethnic experience of immigrant groups in their daily lives and relating them to the broader social, cultural and class context.

More specifically, I pursue the following research questions in my study:
1) In what specific situations is ethnicity important or salient in daily contexts?
2) How do Chinese immigrants in Glasgow view their ethnic identity? What does ethnicity mean to them?
3) What role do stereotypes play in the establishment and dissemination of ethnic identity and identification?
4) How do immigrants from different classes treat their ethnic identity differently?
5) How do actors in different positions in the same social space differ in their ethnic identity experience and practice? What are the influencing factors?
6) How does ethnic identity reproduce itself? How is this process related to class?

4. An Outline of Chapters

The thesis will consist of seven chapters, divided into four main sections: literature review, methodology, data analysis, and conclusion.

Chapter 1 will provide a literature review on the current state of ethnic studies, exploring its intersections with class. It will also discuss the significance of migration studies and highlight various research perspectives. **Chapter 2** will focus primarily on the methodology used in this research, detailing the project design, the process and reflections on fieldwork, as well as the data analysis procedures.

The next four chapters will present the results of my data analysis, organized around four key themes. **Chapter 3** examines how participants understand ethnicity in their daily lives, connecting these understandings to their social contexts and life experiences. **Chapter 4** explores the formation and dissemination of ethnic stereotypes in everyday life. It further analyses how gender, ethnicity, and class intersect—but to varying degrees of saliency—in shaping participants' understanding of their own identities, incorporating insights from their habitus and the fields they inhabit.

In the final two chapters, the focus shifts to specific spatial contexts, aiming to interpret how power and class influence and shape ethnic identities within these spaces. Specifically, **Chapter 5** examines a religious space in Scotland, revealing how power dynamics and hierarchical relations impact ethnic identity. It also analyses how cross-class experiences and interactions within different social spaces, traced through an individual's life trajectory, shape their understanding of ethnicity. **Chapter 6** focuses on a Chinese school in Scotland, investigating how ethnic identity is reproduced along class lines within this specific context.

Finally, **Chapter 7** summarizes the key findings and the central contribution of the study, as well as to discuss some findings in a broader sociological context. This includes thinking about how they relate to relevant current sociological scholarship, as well as indicating some possible directions for further research, and some limitations of the current study.

Chapter 1: A literature Review on the Intersection of Ethnicity and Class in the Context of Migration

Building upon the aforementioned research aims and questions, this chapter provides a literature review of the key areas relevant to the study. Centred on the core concepts of ethnicity, class, and migration, and drawing on the theoretical perspectives of sociologists such as Bourdieu, this chapter positions the study and elucidates its contributions by synthesizing the current state of research and identifying gaps, outlining the theoretical framework and illustrating how these elements interact and integrate.

1. Understanding Ethnicity and Ethnicity research

As a complex and multidimensional concept (Jenkins 2008, Fenton 2010), the development of ethnicity has undergone a series of diversified and multi-focal changes, which are still present in current research. On the one hand, it is entangled with other similar concepts, and their meanings sometimes overlap, such as race, nation, etc. (Fenton 2010). On the other hand, different research paths have also developed around different focuses, such as its cultural identity composition (Hall and Ghazoul 2012), its boundaries(Barth and Universitetet i 1998), its context (Banton 1983), its performance in daily life (Jenkins 2008), and its formation process (Brubaker 2004). Pursuing a clear and unambiguous definition seems too complicated and impractical. Some scholars thus use a series of statements to describe ethnicity. For example, the four items summarized by Jenkins in *Rethinking Ethnicity* (2008, 14):

> • Ethnicity is a matter of cultural differentiation – although, to reiterate arguments I have explored in detail elsewhere, identification always involves a dialectical interplay between similarity and difference.
> • Ethnicity is centrally a matter of shared meanings – what we conventionally call 'culture' – but is also produced and reproduced during interaction.
> • Ethnicity is no more fixed or unchanging than the way of life of which it is an aspect, or the situations in which it is produced and reproduced.
> • Ethnicity, as an identification, is collective and individual, externalized in social interaction and the categorization of others, and internalized in personal self-identification.

These items clearly convey the basic content of ethnicity and cover nearly all current research perspectives, including cultural differences, contextual variations, and individual/collective identities. Therefore, this will be the main reference and way of understanding what it is that referring to when we use the term ethnicity in this study. In view of the intricate and intertwined development of ethnicity and the research status, in order to avoid falling into the entanglement of over-narration and the confusion of over-focuses, this review will focus only on the aspects involved in the research, that is, the ways in which ethnicity as an identity is constructed, (re)produced and practiced and its dynamic processes.

1.1 Constructivism, Between Situations and Everyday Life

Ethnicity is socially constructed rather than inherently or permanent. This has almost become one of the consensuses in the development of ethnicity theory in recent decades (Jenkins 1996, Jenkins 2008), or say, a view that has occupied the dominant discourse in current ethnic studies (see Brubaker 2009, Wimmer and Oxford University 2013). Different from the early essentialist view that ethnicity is fixed and innate (Herder 1968, Weber 2019), modern constructivism believes that ethnicity is the product of social interaction, and its boundaries are constructed by a series of social, political and economic forces under specific historical conditions (see Barth and Universitetet i 1998, Jenkins 1996, Brubaker 2004, Wimmer 2008). In other words, ethnicity should be seen as a fluid process, which is constantly (re)shaped in historical contexts and varies based on historical, political, and social circumstances (Brubaker 2004). Ethnic studies therefore emphasize dynamics and situationally (Brubaker 2004).

Today, more and more studies demonstrate that ethnicity and ethnic identity should not be regarded as essential, stable and self-evident units of analysis (Brubaker 2004), but rather the process of their formation should be examined (see Brubaker 2006, Wimmer and Oxford University 2013). Some scholars thus focus on analysing the process of ethnicization of specific groups and linking it to the broader social context. Yeh (2014), for instance, explored how British Chinese youth challenge the "model minority" stereotype through nightlife culture, and reveals their negotiation and re-creation of identity in the process of racialization. Other scholars pay more attention to the practical consequences of categories of ethnicity. Brubaker (2013), for example, explores the significance of Muslim as an analytical and

practical category by analysing the changing identities of “Muslim” in the context of immigration to Europe.

However, constructivist ethnic studies have been questioned for being overused and overemphasized. For example, Brubaker (2004) pointed out that constructivism has sometimes become a cliched and intellectually slack academic lingua franca. This is because, he argues, it sometimes excessively emphasizes the fluidity, contingency, and instability of ethnic identity in a plainly erroneous way (Brubaker 2014). Other scholars have pointed out that excessive focus on the de-essentialism and objectification of ethnicity has led to an exaggeration of the constructivist position, thereby ignoring the empirical differences in how ethnicity shapes individual lives (Wimmer 2013). To this end, by introducing the research method of comparative analysis of ethnic forms, Wimmer's (2013) research explored how and why the significance of ethnicity varies in degree and form across different social and historical contexts. This is considered a successful synthesis of constructivist ethnic studies (Brubaker 2014). By focusing on institutions, power and networks and incorporating them into a Bourdieusian struggle analysis, he developed a multi-level theoretical process to explain the changes in ethnic boundaries (Wimmer 2013). This largely makes the constructivist position more refined and accurate.

Wimmer’s study reminds us of the importance of exploring ethnicity in particular social contexts and situations, and the need to consider the degree and approach in which it works, rather than simply applying ethnicity as a self-evident social classification in research. However, it is worth noting that it seems to ignore the consideration of ethnic solidarity maintained by emotions. As Jenkins (2014) pointed out, he ignored the ethnic ties generated by common history and symbols and therefore failed to explain why ethnic issues sometimes arouse real emotions. In fact, since Anderson (2006) proposed the imagined community - which allows members to build collective identity based on shared cultural symbols, narratives and communication media—common history, symbols and other cultural expressions have always been one of the core places for scholars to explore ethnic solidarity and emotional connections. Recent studies have also revealed this. For example, Esmailzade, Gheibi and Taiiebzad (2024) explored how symbols and narratives can be used as carriers of ethnic solidarity and emotional connection through literary analysis. Lan (2024), similarly, discussed how handicrafts, as a form of cultural expression, can promote emotional connections and solidarity between ethnic groups. However, emotional identification and

boundary strategies seem to follow two different paths to influence and shape ethnic identity. The former includes common culture and symbols, while the latter refers to power, policies, and member rights.

Therefore, what I am trying to illustrate here is that the two are not always opposite and incompatible. In fact, they are often intertwined. The emotional factors that identity relies on may change due to cultural conflicts and social adaptation (Vepachedu, 2024), and community factors may also shape family resilience by affecting the relationship between emotions and identity (Korom et al. 2024). Therefore, ethnicity as an identity is quite complex. We cannot claim to have solved the issues of identity generation or identification simply by understanding a certain group division, identifying a certain shared symbolic experience or focusing on certain forms of ethnic practice. The continuity and multidimensionality of ethnicity, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, suggests that we need to constantly capture ethnic identity expressions in situations and social interactions, rather than focusing only on boundary activities. This may be a possible direction for understanding ethnic identity. As Jenkins (2014) mentioned, it is time to go beyond the constructivist focus on boundary making and boundary maintenance.

There are two points to note, in my opinion, when capturing and understanding ethnic identity in situations and social interaction. First, identity is fluid and continuous, so it cannot be clearly cut and divided. In other words, even if we try to capture and analyse the expression of identity in a specific context, we need to realize that identity is always connected to the past and the future with emotions and *interests* - the interest here refers to the academic concept of Bourdieu, which goes beyond the narrow meaning of the economic realm and is defined as any social value or capital, such as cultural capital or symbolic capital, that gives meaning and purpose to actions (Bourdieu 1990a, Bourdieu 2018).

It may be helpful to refer to Tavory's thinking on the time dimension of interaction theory. Tavory (2018) believes that actors do not simply jump from one situation to another, but reside between them. Therefore, the social action that takes place in a particular situation, in addition to the pressure brought by such a present, also carries its history and expected future, which therefore pushes us, in Tavory's view, to think from the perspective of "between situations". This inspires us to recognize that actors' current understanding of ethnic identity should not be detached from its attachment to the past and orientation toward the future, and

the ways it is influenced and shaped are the same. From this perspective, ethnicity and ethnic identity always have a sense of stickiness. And Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* will therefore be a powerful tool in analysing the performance and impact of identity. *Habitus* is a long-term tendency and behaviour pattern internalized by individuals in the process of socialization, which can guide individuals' perception, behaviour and thinking (see Bourdieu and Nice 1977, Bourdieu 1990b). As a tool that can connect individual actions and social environment, it can be used to analyse how individuals' understanding and practice of ethnic identity in specific situations are influenced by past experience and social structure, and how they point to the future (ibid). Exploring how actors' understanding of ethnicity and ethnic identity develops in different situations, and paying attention to the changes in actors' articulation of their ethnic identity along their life trajectory will help explore the dynamic process of ethnic identity and the joint influence of multiple aspects. This will be presented in Chapters 3 and 5 of this study.

Second, we need to pay attention to how ordinary people use and understand ethnic identity in their daily lives, which represents the interaction and practice of a certain ethnic identity. This comes from Brubaker and Cooper's critical discussion of the use of identity. In their article "Beyond Identity", they (Brubaker and Cooper 2000) argue that the use of the concept of "identity" in social science is too broad and vague, and therefore easily causes confusion in analysis. They therefore distinguished between "categories of practice" and "categories of analysis". The former refers to the concepts and terms used by lay people, social actors and the media in daily life. These categories are tools used specifically in social interactions to describe, classify, and construct reality. Therefore, they are usually vague, ambiguous, and subjective, and are rooted in specific social situations, with strong operational and practical purposes. The latter is a theoretical tool created or adopted by researchers to explain and analyse social phenomena. Therefore, it is often clear, obtained through critical reflection, and transcends specific situations. In my opinion, the exploration of ethnic identity should pay more attention to its significance as a category of practice, rather than just working in terms of categories of sociological analysis.

This reminds us that, on the one hand, we need to pay attention to the practical significance of ethnic identity. That is, to explore the way ethnicity is practiced and experienced in daily life. Many studies have focused on the practice and ethnicization processes of specific ethnic groups. However, given that different ethnic groups have specific modes of expression, more

empirical research needs to be conducted. On the other hand, it is important to focus on the ethnic expression of actors in the context of everyday life. This is an aspect that is easily overlooked, because people's expression of their identity in daily life is often full of confusion and disorder, and sometimes it is considered difficult to sort out, and therefore lacks research significance. However, Smith (2015) reminds us that everyday life has a particularly “unbounded or disorderly quality” (Smith 2015, 1138) that results in identity categories that may be disrupted and fluctuated by “everyday relations and practices” (see Smith 2015, 1138-1140). At the same time, these disordered and chaotic expressions may also imply many factors and clues that affect ethnic identity and categories, so it helps to reveal how the understanding of ethnic identity is complexly affected by multiple factors. At the same time, Neal and Murji (2015) also emphasized the importance of the everyday life approach, arguing that it helps capture and identify the slight, subtle, and mundane practices in daily life. These practices reflect intersections with broader social factors, structures and categories, which can contribute to sociologists' understanding of certain social conflicts or abstract concepts.

In addition, it is worth mentioning the role of the media in the construction and dissemination of ethnic identity. With the rise of social media and digital technology, the online expression of ethnic identity and the impact of the media on ethnic identity have become a new research field. Some studies have explored this topic. For example, Bonilla and Rosa (2015) analysed how social media can be used as a tool for racial protest to reshape ethnic and social identity through "label culture"-included language, discourse, and labelling practices in society. Verkuyten (2018) explored the role of social media in shaping the social psychological dimension of ethnic identity. However, more research needs to be conducted to further explore the diverse role of social media in influencing ethnic identity.

1.2 Boundary Theory in Ethnicity Studies

Since Barth's (1998) seminal work, the concept of boundaries has been a key conceptual tool in ethnic studies (see Lamont and Molnár 2002, Jenkins 2008, Fenton 2010, etc.). On the one hand, focusing on the formation and dissolution of ethnic boundaries helps to resist the tendency to think about ethnicity in terms of static entity and groupism (Brubaker 2014). On the other hand, shifting the focus of research from the ethnic landscape of common culture to inter-ethnic relations (Lamont and Molnár 2002) helps to explore the interaction of ethnic

group and the process of generation and practice of identity. At the same time, the capture and attention of relations (Somers 1994, Emirbayer 1997) enables the concept of boundaries to point to fundamental relational processes across broader range of social phenomena, positions and institutions (Lamont and Molnár 2002). Therefore, more social topics and factors are included in the range of ethnicity research around boundaries, allowing cross-domain and cross-disciplinary exploration of ethnicity to occur. Today, boundaries theory is widely used in many important social science fields, such as group classification, social and collective identity, ethnic positioning, cultural capital, immigration, etc. (ibid.).

Symbolic Boundaries, Material Conditions, and Stereotypes

One of the core themes that links these cross-perspective and multi-field studies revolves around exploring how symbolic resources contribute to the creation, reinforcement, challenging, or dissolution of institutionalized social distinctions (Lamont and Molnár 2002), which relates to the recent rise in interest in symbolic boundaries (Lamont, Pendergrass and Pachucki 2015). Symbolic boundaries refer to conceptual distinctions that social actors make to categorize individuals, groups, and forms of practice. They can distinguish “us” from “them” through shared cultural symbols, values, or ideas, and generate feelings of similarity and group membership (Epstein 1992). These distinctions can be expressed through cultural attitudes, customs, behavioural norms, etc. (Lamont et al. 2015). In contrast, social boundaries are objective forms of social difference that manifest themselves in unequal distribution of resources and unequal access to social opportunities and are reflected in the practice of social interaction (Lamont and Molnár 2002).

Over the past 20 years, both social identity theory and boundary theory have paid special attention to symbolic boundaries and symbolic distinctions (Lamont et al. 2015, Edgell et al. 2020). Some studies explore the role of symbolic boundaries in identity division (Lamont and Molnár 2002, Edgell et al. 2020). This question involves how people use symbolic boundaries to divide and define social members, thereby dividing us and them (Edgell et al. 2020). For example, some scholars study how boundaries can create group membership in a culturally and historically specific way by providing a series of assumptions about others (e.g. Bonikowski and DiMaggio 2016, Martin and Desmond 2010); while other scholars focus on social exclusion and study how the construction of symbolic boundaries defines specific groups as outsiders (e.g. Jaworsky 2013, Chiricos et al. 2014).

At the same time, other studies are committed to exploring the relationship between symbolic boundaries and social boundaries (Lamont and Molnár 2002, Edgell et al. 2020). Since Bourdieu (1984) revealed in his famous work *Distinction* how cultural capital delineates social boundaries through symbolic violence and contributes to and is embodied in class divisions, boundary theorists have generally suggested that symbolic boundaries underlie social hierarchies, justifying the unequal distribution of material and symbolic resources (Lamont 1992, Edgell et al. 2020, Lamont and Molnár 2002). However, some recent research has challenged the view that symbolic boundaries necessarily translate into material inequality. For example, research on political tolerance emphasizes that people can hold prejudiced attitudes without engaging in discriminatory behaviour (Eisenstein 2012). Others have viewed symbolic boundaries as an ex post facto rationalization of inequality (Alwin and Tufiş 2016).

This challenge arises because, as Edgell et al. (2020) points out, research on symbolic boundaries often assumes that they lead to inequality without investigating how this inequality occurs. In addition, research on the impact of symbolic boundaries often assumes that inequality is caused by uniform biases that vary little between or within different social contexts. Therefore, more research is needed to focus on the invisible connection between symbolic boundaries and material inequality in the process of inequality.

Therefore, I would like to draw attention here, on the one hand, to the importance of material things in the construction and maintenance of symbolic boundaries. In other words, while we explore how symbolic resources help to produce and reinforce institutionalized social differences, we must also be aware of the role that social differences, especially unequal distribution of materials, resources and opportunities, play in the construction of symbolic boundaries. This is often easy to overlook, as Bourdieu (see Bourdieu 1990b, Bourdieu 1996, Bourdieu, Nice and Bennett 2010) reminds us of that social relations often take shape or become forceful because the underlying 'material' parameters of those relations might be concealed by ideas about 'truthfulness' or value or other kinds of symbolic meaning.

At the same time, it is necessary to investigate the process of the generation and spread of prejudice and stereotypes, especially the prejudice of ordinary people in everyday life contexts. On the one hand, this will help to reveal how the construction of symbolic boundaries actually occurs and spreads, rather than just taking it as an assumption. This

requires us to examine the generation and spread of specific prejudices and stereotypes of specific groups rather than assuming that they can be applied to any group in any context. On the other hand, this will help explore how the identities of ordinary people as categories of practical distinguish groups and produce stereotypes, and further contribute to the study of group generation or ethnicization. Bourdieu's concept of *doxa* will be a powerful tool. It refers to beliefs, values and rules that are generally accepted and taken for granted in society. They are considered "natural" or "legitimate" without questioning or justification. These ideas are internalized into individuals' habits through socialization, thereby maintaining existing power relations and social order (see Bourdieu 1990b, Bourdieu and Nice 1977, Bourdieu and Eagleton 1992, Bourdieu 1996).

Moreover, the two points mentioned above reflect the powerfully relationship between ethnic identity and issues of power, inequality, and even oppression in a wider sense. On the one hand, the unequal distribution of resources—both material and symbolic—can lead to exclusion or oppression from the community or society, whether explicitly or implicitly. This necessitates a more comprehensive and detailed examination of the various forms of exclusion. On the other hand, it is important to recognize that ethnic stereotypes impose constraints on both the subject and the object. In other words, the understanding of ethnic identity is not just a matter of how individuals or groups see themselves, but also how they are positioned, seen and treated by others, as Jenkins (2008) has pointed out. This is a process deeply tied to belonging and self-identification and may be connected to deeply ingrained histories of ethnicization, such as Meer's (2013) reflections on Islamophobia. Therefore, we could say that self-identity is linked to the historical oppression of ethnic groups and the stereotypes that emerge from it. In a sense, ethnicization can be understood as a response to historical oppression. This calls for a deeper exploration of ethnic identity and the external categorizations resulting from power and resource inequalities.

From this perspective, Lamont (Lamont and Molnár 2002) may be helpful in their methodological suggestions. Lamont believed that an inductive, interview-based method could be used to study symbolic class boundaries to assess the permeability and relative importance of different types of boundaries (socioeconomic, moral, cultural) in national and group contexts. And suggested this will go beyond Bourdieu's focus on cultural capital and taste (ibid.). This is one of the reasons why I employed some aspects of a grounded theory approach as part of my methods in the research. The part about methodology will be

introduced in the next chapter.

Boundary Metaphor, Spatial Theory and Social Space

Another focus of boundary theory research is the typological system or inferences about similarities and differences that groups mobilize to define who they are. From this perspective, the focus on the content and interpretation of boundaries becomes the core of research, rather than the process within individuals (Lamont and Molnár 2002). In this field, Wimmer's (2013) recent research contributes to the interpretation of ethnic groups and ethnic boundaries. Through comparative studies of multiple countries and regions, he revealed that the formation of ethnic boundaries is not only related to local cultural and social factors, but also influenced by globalization, state construction and transnational networks. Drawing on Bourdieu's theory of social struggle, he therefore advocates that the process of ethnic boundary formulation should be viewed from the perspective of how actors strategically participate in struggles about which boundaries are relevant, and summarizes the changes in ethnic boundaries in different social contexts into five boundary strategies: reinforcement, weakening, crossing, shifting and dissolution. The dynamic framework developed by Wimmer overcomes many previous criticisms of boundary theory, such as the view that the emphasis on boundaries actually promotes essentialist positions (Cohen 1978) and the view that it represents a denial of power and an unwillingness to deal with it (Jenkins 2008).

Nevertheless, Wimmer's boundary metaphor has been questioned because he attempts to regard all differentiated associations as strategies for boundary formulation (Brubaker 2014), which leads to an oversimplification of the explanation of the formation of some gradually homogenous ties (Jenkins 2014). In the previous section, I suggested that this might be alleviated by exploring more about how people use ethnicity in their everyday lives as a kind of "category of practice" (Brubaker and Cooper 2000) and thinking about how ethnic identity emerges in between situations (Tavory 2018).

However, I have tried to highlight here the spatial metaphorical associations that arise from the focus on ethnic boundaries, which involve conceptions of how ethnicity is organized and represented in certain specific spaces, and how it intersects with other social categories in social space. The “spatial and physical overtones” of boundaries (Jenkins 2008, 21) evokes associations with processes such as establishment or dismantling, crossing or shifting,

reinforcing or weakening positions. However, such association, as Brubaker (2014) points out, does not seem to be suitable for describing all forms of ethnicization processes, such as the process of moving from one level of categorization to another. In my opinion, the meaning of this space may be expanded to a broader sense of social space to explain more complex grouping phenomena.

According to Beyes and Holt (2020), recent years have witnessed a growing body of research connecting space and organization (also seeWeigel 2009). This approach not only calls for attention to the organizational impacts of architecture and location but also represents a spatial way of thinking and writing. It involves considering interactions, the formation of interactional boundaries, and the relationship between space and emotions. Space, therefore, offers a broader venue where more elements can be incorporated. Within a specific space, we can explore not only the workings and flows of power and their impacts—because "it is interspersed with the workings of power and resistance" (Beyes and Holt 2020, 4). For example, we can focus on how power infiltrates space to influence boundary-making and the construction of ethnic identities. Additionally, emotions can also be incorporated into analyses, whether by examining how emotions materialize within architectural forms (eg. Giovannoni and Quattrone 2018) or by exploring the role of collective formation and solidarity through the complex networked trajectories of space (eg. Vismann and Winthrop-Young 2008).

Furthermore, contemporary spatial thinking conceptualizes space as a process involving "fluidity and fixing, openness and opacity, a going along on foot" (Beyes and Holt 2020, 5). And As Simmel (2008) noted, any organizational form, practice, or process is inherently tied to a specific location. This perspective allows for analysis of concrete social practices within particular spaces. In this sense, the practices and reproduction occurring in space may, to some extent, connect with the reproduction of ethnicity and class.

Moreover, the connection between spatial theory and ethnic identity research is also reflected in their shared focus on social structure, power relations and symbolic production. It may be helpful to invoke Bourdieu's social space theory. Bourdieu uses social space to refer to a large number of possible positions because he believes that these positions can be occupied in a given space or time (Bourdieu 2005, Bourdieu et al. 2010). Therefore, the concept of social space here focuses on the metaphorical expression of social relations and regards

social space as a symbolic structure of capital and power distribution. This allows us to analyse the production, division and maintenance of ethnic identity by power and social structure in a specific space, though this is different from the idea of 'space' as used by human geographers. In a broader sense, this provides a place for more interdisciplinary and cross-field analysis, especially intersectional research involving different social categories.

Relevant research has been increasing in recent years, mainly around ethnicity, class and gender. For example, Erel and Ryan (2019a) established a multi-level spatio-temporal analytical framework to focus on how the spatial and temporal journeys of immigrants are influenced by their opportunities to mobilize resources and transform them into capital. Anthias (2020) also developed a "translocational lens" to deal with power modalities by exploring the multiple forms and changing locations of boundaries and limits in social life related to difference and belonging, emphasizing the spatio-temporal, the relationality and the processual in social relations.

On the other hand, we can also explore the construction of ethnic identity in different forms of social space, including those which are symbolic as well as concrete, virtual as well as real. For example, by focusing on how a specific social media space proves ethnic prejudice and stereotypes and spreads them, we can explore the process of prejudice generation in daily life and how identity works on the social practice of actors as a practical classification. Only a few studies have explored relevant content on limited topics. For example, Lai (2019) showed that social media plays an important role as an informal learning environment in Chinese learning and cross-cultural participation of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong.

2. The Intersection between Ethnicity and Class

The previous section pointed out that the exploration of ethnic identity requires an analysis of power relations and symbolic boundaries within specific social spaces and situations, with a particular focus on the role played by material conditions and unequal resource distribution. These elements all point to the importance of associating ethnic identity with social class. In this section, therefore, I will focus on the ways in which ethnicity and class intersect, and clarify the understanding of class as a social category.

2.1 Intersectionality Frameworks

Since intersectionality was introduced into the field of social theory and knowledge production by Collins (2000) to illustrate the multiple systems of oppression suffered by black women, it has been very widely used in multiple disciplines (see Hill Collins and Bilge 2016, Al-Faham, Davis and Ernst 2019). Generally speaking, intersectionality mainly explores the interaction between gender, race and class, and a large number of social debates and explorations revolve around the connection between them (see Yuval-Davis 2006, McCall 2002, Bilge 2010, etc.). Currently, as intersectionality is applied to more fields as an analytical tool, more social categories have come to be integrated, such as ethnicity, sexual orientation, nationality, etc. (Winker and Degele 2011). In this study, my understanding of intersectionality is mainly based on the description of Collins and Bilge (2016, 11) provides.

> Intersectionality is a way of understanding and analysing the complexity in the world, in people, and in human experiences. The events and conditions of social and political life and the self can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor. They are generally shaped by many factors in diverse and mutually influencing ways. When it comes to social inequality, people's lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other. Intersectionality as an analytic tool gives people better access to the complexity of the world and of themselves.

In short, as a way of understanding daily experience and a tool for analysing complexity, intersectionality provides a theoretical and framework for exploring the complexity of actors being affected and shaped in their everyday lives. This makes it particularly suitable for exploring the complex expressions and influences of ethnic identity in this study.

The expansion and refine of intersectionality research in the past two decades has provided us with new research directions (Anthias 2013). For example, McCall's (2005) classification of intersectionality further improved the scope and scenarios of intersectionality as an analytical tool. She distinguished three paths to analyse intersectionality. The first is anticategorical complexity, which refuses to use fixed social categories for analysis, but instead emphasizes the dynamics and diversity of individual identities and social relations.

The second is intracategorical complexity, which focuses on the differences within a single social category, with a particular focus on the specific experiences of marginalized groups. Simply put, it focuses on the intersection of multiple identities in a particular group and the complex situations it brings. From this perspective, it is possible to analyse a particular group or individual as an expression of a single dimension of identity in several categories. This also makes it the most suitable path to study how different categories intersect. The last one is intercategorical complexity, which focuses on the relationship between social categories (such as race, gender, class, etc.) and studies how they jointly construct social inequality. Winker and Degele (2011) pay more attention to how the intersection of these categories works at different levels. They argue for the need to explore the ways in which intersectionality operates at the levels of social structure, identity construction, and symbolic representation, as well as the ways in which these three levels interact with each other.

My research refers to the exploration and application of intersectionality in these studies. In general, the exploration of this study focuses on the level of intracategorical complexity, that is, I am interested in analysing the complex experiences and narratives of a specific group in a certain dimension of the category in everyday life. At the same time, it also focuses on how this intersectionality works at different levels of analysis, such as how social structure and symbolic representation affect ethnic identity construction. In addition, I also try to set up an additional timeline to the analysis, and pay attention to the changes in a certain category brought over time, which increased the dynamics of the analysis. For example, I explore on the ethnic experience of actors of a specific ethnicity in the process of class changes over time.

Furthermore, there are also some studies that apply intersectionality to a transnational framework (see Purkayastha 2010, Radhakrishnan 2008). These studies focus on the transnational dimensions of time and background. For example, Erel and Ryan (2019b) explored how immigrants used and obtained different forms of capital by focusing on how the temporal and spatial journeys of immigrants are affected by their opportunities to mobilize resources and transform them into capital. This process involved their class, gender, ethnic and national status. From this perspective, immigrants become a good subject for discussion in the exploration of intersectionality because their transnational background involves a more complex change in multiple social categories. This study therefore focuses on immigrant groups, which will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

In addition, it is worth mentioning that intersectional studies pay special attention to the lived experiences of marginalized groups (Yuval-Davis 2006), which is particularly reflected in the study of intracategorical complexity (McCall 2005, Al-Faham et al. 2019). Marginalized groups refer to groups that are excluded, neglected or disadvantaged due to social, political, economic or cultural factors. These groups are usually oppressed or discriminated against at multiple levels because of their identity characteristics (such as race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, ability, religion or immigration status), and cannot participate equally in the allocation of social resources and the operation of power (see Crenshaw 2013, Collins 2022, McCall 2005). Exploring these marginalized groups not only helps to reveal the specific manifestations of multiple oppressions that are often ignored (Spivak 2023), but also reveals and identifies the differentiation processes that distinguish marginalized groups from dominant groups, such as racialization (Al-Faham et al. 2019). More importantly, this revelation will help to study how identity intersections work together within marginalized communities to produce unique forms of oppression, rather than treating these groups as a homogeneous whole. In this study, I specifically focus on the marginalized groups of Chinese immigrants in the UK. Not only do they deserve greater attention as an under-researched group, but focusing on the lived experiences of different actors also shows the 'heterogeneity' within groups, even if they are in the same marginalized situation, face unique and different life experiences and forms of oppression.

At the same time, some potential dilemmas of intersectionality need to be noted. For example, the social categories that intersectionality focuses on, such as class, gender, and ethnicity, may become taken-for-granted categories in social analysis, as Anthias (2013) reminds us, leading to their essentialization. Some studies show that they have different saliency in different contexts (see Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1983, Nash 2008, Dhamoon 2011). This reminds us that on the one hand, these social categories always need to be explored in specific contexts, and on the other hand, they should be examined in terms of the way they work in a certain context rather than assuming that their saliency are the same.

Since one of the focuses of ethnicity studies in recent years is to break the treatment of it as a self-evident unit of analysis, as mentioned in the previous section, I pay special attention to this in the use of intersectionality. Therefore, in exploring the intersection of ethnic identity and class, I have thought a lot about, and have reflected on how to understand and deal with class issues. And this process in turn affects my understanding of the intersection

of them.

2.2 Understanding the Ways in which Ethnicity and Class Intersect

The way ethnicity and class intersect, in addition to the perspective of intersectionality, as mentioned in the previous section, also depends on the understanding of class. As a classic concept, class has always been at the core of the development of sociology (Nisbet 1970). Today, our understanding of class is more complex and multi-faceted than at any time in history, though this does not always signify an improvement. As many sociologists argue, such as Bourdieu (1984), economic status - particularly the relations of production - remains at the core of class distinctions.

This may be partly due to the "fuzziness" of the concept of class, as Anthias (2013) points out. It constitutes a shorthand way to understand economic inequality (Anthias 2001b), which is reflected in the fact that more social divisions, such as culture and ethnicity, are incorporated into the boundaries of class, rather than relying solely on economic factors. This is mainly driven by Bourdieu's theoretical framework (Anthias 2013). Bourdieu distinguishes four forms of capital to outline class relations and to locate the positions of actors in society (Bourdieu 2018).

> **Economic capital:** refers to capital directly related to economic resources, such as money, property and quantifiable forms of wealth. It is the easiest form of capital to measure and exchange in the market.
>
> **Social capital:** refers to resources obtained through social networks, including interpersonal relationships, social trust and group support. Its essence lies in using social relationships to achieve goals.
>
> **Cultural capital:** refers to personal qualities such as cultural knowledge, educational background, and artistic taste, or cultural abilities recognized by society. It is divided into three states: embodied, objectified, and institutionalized.
>
> **Symbolic capital:** refers to capital based on reputation, fame, and social recognition. Its power comes from the recognition of its legitimacy by others and can be transformed into other forms of capital.

Although Bourdieu considers economic capital to be the most important resource in

contemporary capitalism and argues that other forms of capital can be seen as involving the "transubstantiation" of economic capital (see Bourdieu 1985, Bourdieu et al. 2010, Bourdieu 2018), symbolic capital legitimizes and provides value to all forms of capital (Bourdieu 1985). A lot of research has therefore been devoted to exploring these aspects of class (Anthias 2013). In particular, Bourdieu's famous discussion of the class differentiation of tastes in *Distinction* (2010) has drawn attention to the cultural aspects of class (Anthias 2013, Savage 2000, Devine and Savage 1999), which is one of the current focuses of the class debate in the UK (Anthias 2013).

Some scholars have pointed out the potential dangers of using Bourdieu's class framework. Anthias (2013) argues that these diacritical markers of class are overly diverse and constantly evolving, with some distinctions, such as taste, being neither universally effective nor suitable as analytical principles for class relations. It may be more helpful to understand from the perspective of social practice. In my opinion, these are not fixed principles for analyzing class, but indicators for understanding the complexity of social practice. In other words, what Bourdieu truly focuses on is practice, not the classification of classes, which is why he refuses to provide any typology of classes (Grenfell 2012). Referring to the above division of identity, Bourdieu seems to use class more in terms of "categories of practice". More specifically, "class," for Bourdieu, can be expressed in people's everyday practices in response to social distinctions—practices that reproduce and reinforce hierarchical structures. This is why Bourdieu advocates the need to maintain attention to social class in culture and lifestyle (ibid.), and many activities, values, performances and strategies of people in daily practice can be described and reflected as "class" (Anthias 2013). From this perspective, these different forms of capital, along with the aforementioned concepts such as habitus and field, are integrated around practice.

This focus on social practice is particularly reflected in Bourdieu's distinction between "classes on paper" and "real classes" (see Bourdieu et al. 2010, Bourdieu 1990b, Bourdieu et al. 1991, Bourdieu 1996, Grenfell 2012). "Classes on paper" are categories constructed by researchers through theoretical frameworks and statistical tools. These classes classify social members into different groups based on indicators such as economic capital, cultural capital, and social capital. They are the product of academic analysis, representing an abstract classification model (Bourdieu et al. 2010). By relying on statistics, data analysis, and taxonomies, individuals are placed into specific categories according to quantifiable

standards, thereby anchoring their relative positions. Therefore, studying class within specific social spaces or fields is necessary because it helps us think more directly about how the axes of classification are constructed. According to Bourdieu, different fields operate according to different logics, meaning that when delineating groups and positions, the forms, significance, and weight of different types of capital in class classification must be adjusted accordingly (Bourdieu et al. 1991, Bourdieu et al. 2010). This may explain why analyses of taste are not universally applicable in other studies. Furthermore, this approach facilitates deeper reflection on the complexity of actors' daily lives from an intersectional perspective. One may occupy different relative positions in different spaces due to the varying dominant forms of capital in each space. This, in turn, may expose them to different forms of oppression. This concept serves as the general framework I use in my research to position the relative locations of actors.

However, in Bourdieu's view, such classifications may fail to fully reflect social reality because they overlook individuals' subjective perceptions, agency, and the dynamic relationships within social interactions (Bourdieu et al. 1991). As a response, Bourdieu proposed the concept of "real classes," which refers to groups that actually exist in society. These groups develop a certain class consciousness through shared interests, cultural practices, and modes of action, exhibiting collective identity and cohesion in social relationships (Bourdieu et al. 2010). Unlike "classes on paper" as a tool for theoretical analysis, "real classes" emphasize the outcomes of social practice. They are dynamic and continuously shaped by social relationships. Bourdieu thus cautions against relying solely on "classes on paper" to understand society, reminding us to should focus on the actual lives, subjective experiences, and social interactions of class members. Therefore, from Bourdieu's perspective, class as a classification process is constrained by two factors: on one hand, the boundaries delineated by objective positionality, and on the other, the shared consciousness constructed by individuals, which is itself shaped by social positioning (Grenfell 2012).

Relationality and practicality thus, in my opinion, can be read as key points for understanding Bourdieu's concept of class. On one hand, Bourdieu emphasized that "social class is not defined by a property ... nor by a collection of properties..., nor even by a chain of properties strung out from a fundamental property... in a relation of cause and effect, conditioner and conditioned; but by the structure of relations between all the pertinent properties which gives its specific value to each of them and to the effects they exert on

practices." (Bourdieu et al. 2010, 100) This implies that understanding class cannot simply rest on viewing it as determined by one or several inherent social properties or categories. Instead, it should always be grasped through structured relations within specific fields, which distinguish the particular value of those properties - this also aligns with the aforementioned point that intersectional research should not preset all social categories as having equal saliency.

On the other hand, when discussing the class trajectories of actors in social movements, Bourdieu suggested that "individuals do not move about in social space in a random way, partly because they are subject to the forces which structure this space... and partly because they resist the forces of the field with their specific inertia, that is, their properties... To a given volume of inherited capital there corresponds a band of more or less equally probable trajectories leading to more or less equivalent positions..." (Bourdieu et al. 2010, 104) This means that class is also reflected in individuals' movement within social space and the inheritance of capital. It reminds us to focus on the practical experiences and trajectories of actors and analyse the class characteristics and forces embedded within them. Bourdieu thus portrays a dynamic class landscape continuously molded by social relations, which is similar to the ethnic landscape described above. Both serve as forms of group organization and involve objective and subjective dimensions of analysis. Exploring the intersection of these two dimensions in daily life, particularly in terms of identity, could be an intriguing topic for further investigation.

A recent series of qualitative studies exploring class identity also demonstrates the importance of focusing on "real classes". Some research highlights a trend of disidentification of people in the Northwest of England, where class identity is more likely to be rejected (Skeggs 1997) or replaced by ideas of ordinariness and of “people like us” when they were asked questions about class identity (Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst 2001, Southerton 2002). Other studies reveal that a kind of "elective belonging", that is, local or place-based identity is key to class belonging, especially for the middle class (Savage, Warde and Devine 2005, Savage 2010). This again demonstrates that people's understanding of class in the context of everyday life is complex - shaped by specific spaces, groups, and practices, such as lifestyle choices (Savage et al. 2005). Anthias suggests this might be related to broader forms of collective identity, such as ethnicity and transnationalism, calling for further investigation into how class is shaped in connection to transnational migrant

"others" within specific local contexts.

Another focus of class studies lies in the reproduction of class structures. Bourdieu examines how existing class structures are maintained through various mechanisms, thereby perpetuating inequality across generations. He places particular emphasis on the roles of capital, the influence of educational systems, and the latent support of symbolic violence in class reproduction. For example, in his collaboration with Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction: In Education, Society and Culture* (1990), Bourdieu highlights the central role of education in class reproduction. He argues that while the education system appears neutral and egalitarian, it actually transmits the dominant class's culture and values through hidden curricula, enabling children from upper and middle classes to adapt more easily and succeed. Meanwhile, the education system aligns with the cultural habitus of the upper and middle classes, allowing their children to integrate naturally, whereas children from lower classes face greater challenges. Similarly, the reproduction of ethnic identity is also a significant concern in ethnic studies. Many studies explore how ethnic identity is reproduced through social and cultural constructions, particularly focusing on immigrant groups. However, few studies have examined the intersection of class and ethnicity in this context. This research will also investigate how the reproduction of class in specific spaces intersects with processes that influence the reproduction of ethnic identity.

3. Focusing on Migration

The aforementioned literature and research have focused our attention on immigrant groups. Whether it is boundaries theory and symbolic capital emphasized in ethnicity studies, such as the work of Lamont (2015) and Wimmer (2013), or the transnational frameworks and marginalized groups highlighted in intersectionality studies, such as the work of Anthias (2020) and Erel (2019b), they all demonstrate the significant value and potential of the sociological study of immigrant experiences in exploring the construction of ethnic identity and its intersections with class. Therefore, they deserve additional attention.

Bauman, through his discourse on globalization and mobility, explored the dissolution of traditional social structures and identities, linking it to power and inequality in modern society (Bauman 2007, Bauman 2011, Bauman 2013). He sketched a “liquid” landscape in which personal identities are continually reshaped amid shifting power dynamics and

relationships (Bauman 2013). This underscores the research value of immigrant groups as a quintessential embodiment of global mobility. Bauman argues that “super-mobility” is a key feature of the globalization era. Technological advancements and the globalization of capital have divided society into “movers” and “stayers.” The former possess resources and power, allowing them to freely choose when and where to migrate. The latter, however, often lack the option for mobility and are compelled to endure the negative impacts of globalization (Bauman 2011).

This special landscape of mobility also creates a duality of freedom for the elite and constraint for the lower strata. On one hand, global elites can effortlessly move across the world, accessing resources and opportunities. On the other hand, ordinary people, particularly vulnerable groups, are often trapped in local environments, unable to escape unfavourable social conditions, or only able to do so by undertaking journeys that are dangerous. This dynamic contributes to a new form of inequality, exacerbating social disparities both between nations and among individuals. Those who can adapt flexibly to mobility benefit, while those unable to keep up are further marginalized (Bauman 2011). Bauman's theory, despite facing some criticisms—such as viewing immigration as a "crisis" rather than a norm, which may lead to stigmatization—profoundly highlights the situation of immigrants and the significance of immigration issues. On one hand, this mobility challenges traditional definitions of "identity" and "belonging." On the other hand, immigration issues reflect the deep contradictions of socioeconomic and political inequalities. This makes immigrants a highly suitable group for examining the dynamic construction of identity and its interactions with class influences.

The transnational background and life experiences of immigrants have made them one of the most prominent groups in the study of identity construction. Over the past two decades, extensive research has been conducted on immigrant communities to explore the dynamic processes of ethnic identity construction. For example, Anthias (2012, 2013, 2016) introduced the concept of "translocational frame" to illustrate how immigrants position themselves at the intersection of ethnicity and class. She emphasized the hierarchization of identities, particularly the role of ethnicity in socioeconomic inequalities. Erel (2018) focused on how immigrant women reconstruct their identities through cultural and social capital, challenging traditional boundaries of gender and class. These studies not only explore the complex ethnicization process of immigrants and reveal the complex and

entangled identities of immigrants, but also discuss how ethnicity, class, and gender intersect to shape immigrant identities from an intersectional perspective.

While these explorations have contributed to unveiling the complexities of ethnicity, identity, and class among immigrants, additional research is needed to better understand the dynamic construction of identity in daily interactions, which requires us to pay attention to how ethnic identity is influenced and shaped in interactions as a "category of practice" in everyday life. Moreover, the intersectionality of ethnicity and class warrants further investigation, particularly given that many current studies still assume homogeneity among immigrants, treating them as a unified group. On one hand, we need to break this assumption by focusing on and exploring the diverse experiences within immigrant groups—especially those of marginalized individuals—to reveal the heterogeneity within the group. On the other hand, we also need to test existing results by conducting empirical analyses of immigrant groups from diverse backgrounds, especially through qualitative studies, to assess the applicability of these conclusions across different immigration contexts. Additionally, as Anthias (2013) reminds us, it is essential not to assume that the saliency of social categories in intersectionality remains the same across different contexts. This underscores the need to analyse how class and ethnicity play a role in specific immigrant groups and environments based on specific circumstances. This point ties back to a central focus of ethnicity studies discussed earlier: understanding why ethnicity, as a social category, is significant in some situations while less so in others (Wimmer and Oxford University 2013).

Moreover, it is worth noting that Bourdieu's theoretical framework appears to be particularly popular in the analysis of immigration. Numerous studies have employed Bourdieu's concepts to examine the performance of ethnicity in destination countries, with a special focus on cultural capital. For instance, the studies by Anthias and Erel emphasize the importance of capital in the integration process of immigrants. Anthias (2001c) introduced the concept of "classed cultural capital," analysing how immigrants elevate their social status through specific cultural expressions such as language, etiquette, and cultural knowledge. Erel (2011) explored how immigrant women use community-based networks to gain economic and emotional support, thereby affirming their identity. Wallace (2017), interpreting Bourdieu's analysis of race, investigated how Black middle-class students leverage cultural capital to gain advantages in schools.

While Bourdieu's framework is especially effective in analysing identity construction and class positioning among immigrants, the heavy focus on cultural capital can sometimes lead to the neglect of other forms of capital, particularly economic capital. This emphasis might obscure the role of economic and material conditions, which can mask deeper explorations into the formation and maintenance of social relationships related to ethnicity or class. Furthermore, as Anthias (2001a) highlighted the regional limitations of Bourdieu's theories of capital and field and called for a revaluation of his framework in the context of globalization, other concepts within Bourdieu's theoretical system deserve further exploration and application. These concepts, such as hysteresis and doxa, may prove particularly powerful in analysing the intersections of ethnicity and class. Given the limited research in this area, this study aims to explore the potential of these concepts in analysing the construction of ethnic identity among immigrants.

4. Conclusion

This chapter has provided a literature review on the intersection of ethnicity and class in the context of immigration. It included an overview of the current state of research on ethnicity, an examination of the ways ethnicity and class intersect, and a demonstration of the importance of analysing the dynamic construction of immigrant identities and how they are influenced by social and class factors.

Grounded in a constructivist perspective, recent ethnic research, on the one hand, commits to breaking the view that ethnicity is an essential, stable and self-evident unit of analysis, and attempts to examine the dynamic formation and practice process of different ethnic groups; on the other hand, it attempts to correct the over-emphasis of constructivism on the fluidity of ethnic identity, and thus explore the varying degrees and ways ethnicity is shaped and delimited by factors that may not be within the control of those concerned. At the same time, around ethnic boundaries, especially symbolic boundaries, the ways and strategies of individuals and groups to establish, maintain and cross boundaries are also at the core of the research. Critical voices highlight an excessive emphasis on boundary strategies, and border-focused ethnic studies seem unable to integrate power and emotions as influencers of ethnic identity. Furthermore, we need to better understand the relationship between symbolic boundaries and material inequality, especially how they influence each other in the construction of boundaries and the shaping of ethnic identities.

To this end, I emphasize the importance of examining ethnic identity as a "category of practice" in everyday life, analysing how it operates in social interactions and between situations. Furthermore, I call attention to the role of material conditions in the construction and maintenance of boundaries, and the need to conduct research in specific social spaces.

The ways in which ethnicity and class intersect are complex. From an intersectional perspective, this involves an attention on intracategorical complexity—focusing on the interplay of multiple identities within specific groups and the resulting complex situations. On this basis, more empirical studies are needed to explore the lived experiences of transnational migrants and marginalized groups, highlighting the complexities of everyday life while avoiding their treatment as homogenous entities. On the other hand, the intersection of ethnicity and class depends on the understanding of class. Drawing on Bourdieu's class theory, I emphasize two key aspects of class: relative positionality within social space and class consciousness shaped by habitus and field. The former relates to how I position actors, while the latter serves as a reference for examining how class and culture influence group consciousness in the daily lives of specific ethnic groups.

Finally, centring on migration studies, I stress the importance of studying immigrant groups and their suitability for this study because the experience of migrants might well put questions of class and ethnicity, and their intersection. On one hand, due to super-mobility, the identity crisis faced by immigrants and the impact of economic and political inequality in globalization are becoming increasingly serious, so it is necessary to explore the fluidity of ethnic identity and how it is affected by inequality. On the other hand, the transnational background of immigrants places them at the intersection of ethnicity and class, making them ideal subjects for study. However, given the potential danger of essentializing social categories in intersectional research, I argue that it is necessary to examine the ways in which class and ethnicity work in specific immigrant groups and contexts. Moreover, I advocate for further exploration of the possibilities of other concepts in Bourdieu's theoretical framework being further explored and applied in immigration research. In addition, by reviewing the current status of research on Chinese immigrants in the UK, I emphasized the importance of paying attention to the heterogeneity within the Chinese immigrant group.

The next chapter will discuss the methods used in the research and the process of field work.

Chapter 2: Methodology and Reflection

1. Introduction

When I conducted my pilot study with my colleagues and friends, I realized that talking about ethnicity and ethnic identity was a slippery and sticky thing that often made people feel that it was difficult to grasp and explore accurately. On the one hand, questions about ethnicity often involve reflecting in an abstract way on ideas that are mostly not considered abstractly in everyday life (Bourdieu and Ferguson 1999), so when participants were suddenly asked to talk about ethnicity or ethnic identity, they often felt confused and did not know where to start or how to talk about it. On the other hand, when we tried to talk about it directly, it was easy to get out of touch and fall into the conversation about other social topics. In other words, my experience was much like that reported by Byrne (2006, 72) who found it difficult to maintain a race-centred conversation when talking directly about race in the interview. Therefore, as Anthias (2002) pointed out, researchers may not be able to find useful or interesting answers by asking identity questions directly in most cases. I thus decided to follow Anthias' approach, that is, to let the participants talk about their own experiences so that their identities can be revealed in the narrative.

At the same time, as mentioned in the previous chapter, fluidity and changing ethnic boundaries are seen as one of the manifestations of ethnic identity (Jenkins 2008, Wimmer and Oxford University 2013, Bauman , Bauman 2013). Accordingly, this implies the adoption of a methodology focusing on the process of ethnicization rather than one which treats ethnicity as a self-evident concept (Brubaker 2004). For example, attempting to observe the shaping and formation process of ethnic boundaries in a dynamic manner (Wimmer and Oxford University 2013), as well as capturing the characteristics and manifestations of identity in certain specific scenarios in everyday life, such as a specific power relationship (Jenkins 2008), are several methods of current identity research. At the same time, I kept in mind what Jenkins reminded us of, that we need to pay attention to the specific practices of ethnicity rather than just discuss their theoretical significance (Jenkins 2008). Therefore, I realized that if I could know about at least a certain period of the complete life experience and the feelings of social actors, it might be helpful to understand identity in flux by analysing its process. Therefore, I decided to invite participants to tell their life experiences, share some unique and impressive stories and their feelings about these things,

so that I could explore their cognition of their own identity. And by sorting out their identity confirmation process, I could explore how various factors affect their identity construction.

Furthermore, I also employed participant observation, which requires gathering with the people we live and work with at specific conjuncture of space and time, in order to understand and experience the world as fully as possible through their perspectives and actions (Shah 2017). This potentially revolutionary praxis enables us to deeply immerse ourselves in others' lives and become a part of their lived experiences, thus challenges our own fundamental assumptions and existing theories about the world (ibid.). Therefore, I also went deep into the daily life and work space of the participants as a researcher, tried to taste their life feelings, experiences and sufferings, and observed their performances, behaviours and strategies in particular spaces and explored how these are related to their position. This ethnographic approach proved to be very helpful in trying to focus on the 'formation' of identity in real, concrete situations and relations.

Generally speaking, this study adopted both inductive and deductive methods to advance exploration. On the one hand, the above-mentioned inductive approaches allowed me to summarize patterns from these empirical data or real-world observations, which also helped to generate new possible theories from experience or to provide some potential paths to discover new patterns, thereby promoting ethnic identity exploration research (see Glaser and Strauss 2017). On the other hand, some general ethnic and class-related theories and hypotheses were be used to position and guide this research. In this way, we could start with a general theory or principle, and place the exploration path in a direction with clear significance and contribution, and at the same time help to test the validity and applicability of existing theories and frameworks (see Merton and Storer 1973).

This chapter will introduce the design and describe the conducting of the fieldwork, the subsequent data processing, as well as some reflections on the fieldwork. More specifically, this chapter mainly consists of three parts. First, it will detail the steps of designing and conducting the fieldwork, including the design of my sample and recruitment, the actual recruitment process and some of the adjustment plans. The second section focuses on the methods and process of data analysis, and introduces the way I present data in subsequent chapters. Finally, I offer some reflections on my fieldwork, which focus on some of the difficulties encountered during the fieldwork and some attempts of solutions or adjustments,

and relate these difficulties to the broader methodological and sociological context.

2. An Overview of the Field Work Process

2.1 Designing the Sampling Strategy

According to the previous chapter, the core purpose of this study was to focus on the intersection of ethnicity and class, and explore how class affects and shapes the ways in which individuals asserted or understood their ethnic identity. To achieve this goal, my general strategy was to select a specific ethnic group, recruit and select participants from different classes. I then set out to collect data, explore the intersection of class and self-ethnic identity from their personal life experiences, and further explore the specific influences and processes that shaped those experiences.

Interview Format

The plan of the interview, as mentioned in the introduction, is to understand the life trajectories and long term experiences and the feelings of social actors of at least a certain period, so as to obtain the expressions and practices of ethnicity in the daily lives of the participants and further analyse their relationship with the broader social context.

Life history interviews thus were selected as my primary data collection method. This is because 1) The narrative based on everyday behaviour in oral form represents a practice, “which takes seriously an account of the everyday as temporally and spatially embedded”, thus it is more conducive to revealing the effect of memory, history and tradition in processes of social construction (Jackson and Russell 2010, 2-3). This feature fits well with the focus of this study on identity-related topics in the context of everyday life, since they facilitate uncovering the "tangle of relationships and symbiotic interactions" which exist between the memories of individuals and those that circulate in the broader cultural and social background in which the individual is embedded (Jessee and Hinch 2019, 2, see also Jackson and Russell 2010, Summerfield 2004), thus closely linking individuals' views on ethnicity and ethnic identity with their unique trajectories and experiences. 2) Another benefit of life history interviews is that (a segment) of the participant’s life can be recorded “in the round", and this high degree of "integrity" can be maintained and restored in subsequent data analysis (Jackson and Russell 2010, 7). This gives the collected data a temporal and causal continuity and integrity, which allowed me to more systematically explore the ways in which ethnic

identity is constructed at a certain stage, and also helps to broaden the perspective and dimension of the research. 3) In addition, life history interviews also mean that the power of narration is given to the participants to a great extent, allowing them to become the subject of the interview, so that they are less restricted by the power relationship between researchers and participants (Jackson and Russell 2010, 8), and this would help to minimize the risk of some certain forms of symbolic violence (Bourdieu and Ferguson 1999). At the same time, visual data presentation was also used as an auxiliary data collection method. In other words, invited participants to show photos, videos and other forms of life records to help them present more details of their lives and recall past events, thereby providing a richer discussion form for life history interviews, and also helping participants to have more autonomy in the way they told their stories. It is worth noting here that these life records were only tools to help participants recall and catalyse our conversations, rather than being gathered and analysed as a form of data.

Target Location and Group

The target location and population were then selected. Glasgow was selected as the target location primarily due to its convenience and familiarity. Interviewing based in Glasgow allowed me easier access to conduct fieldwork and recruit participants through my established social connections. My familiarity with the city also helped in selecting the best interview times and locations, creating a comfortable atmosphere to ensure the interviews ran smoothly. In addition, the city has a high population of Chinese people and long history of Chinese migration to Glasgow, as mentioned in the previous chapter, which provided objective support for Glasgow as a suitable sampling location. Chinese communities living in the city were thus were selected as my target group. This is primarily because I am Chinese myself, so similar cultural background and language usually help me to communicate with participants with less barriers.

In addition, I realized that when facing such a sensitive topic as identity, it would be easier to gain trust if I was also Chinese. In particular, life history interviews required participants to talk a lot about their past life experiences, including those which were positive and negative, happy and unhappy, and sometimes even sad and painful. This is a great test of the participants' trust in me, and having a similar cultural background, especially similar daily habits such as diet, help to quickly bring me closer to the participants and further establish a

good and trusting relationship. In addition, the proportion of Chinese in Glasgow was relatively high and they were widely distributed after 2001 (Pacione 2005), cultural identities are more likely to transform due to urban and community reasons (Salama and Remali 2018), which provided me with important objective conditions for recruiting samples from as many social classes and diverse life trajectories as possible. At the same time, there are significant generational and class differences within the Chinese immigrant community in Glasgow (Pacione 2005). Earlier Chinese immigrants were mostly from the working class, which may have led to noticeable differences in life trajectories and identity compared to the increasingly well-educated and relatively affluent groups of today. This has sparked my additional interest in the relationship between ethnic identity and class among Chinese immigrants in Glasgow. So far, the location and target group for case studies and field surveys were preliminarily determined.

Participant Recruitment

After initially establishing the target group for case study and recruitment, it was necessary to further consider the definition of the participants, the scope of selection, and the method of recruitment in order to conduct a feasibility assessment and further determine the specific recruitment strategy.

The first thing to consider was the definition and scope of "Chinese immigrant" in this research. Given that I would be focusing on the life trajectory of individuals - because of the fact that the experience of migrants might well put questions of class and ethnicity, and their intersection, into especially clear relief, life histories thus provided an excellent method for this study, with a sample that has rich experience as possible in multiple societies. At the same time, in order to avoid ambiguity, I decided to limit the scope of sample recruitment to first-generation immigrants, that is, individuals living in the host country but born in a foreign country (Carliner 1980, Borjas 1992). The definition of "Chinese immigrant" in this research is thus clear, that is, the first generation of immigrants from China to the UK can be counted as belonging to the target group to be recruited.

A second sampling criteria initially was length of residency in Glasgow. Two factors are mainly considered here. One is the potential relationship between the length of residence in a certain place and the impact on one's ethnic identity, and the other is the regional mobility

required in real life, such as short-term mobility with different frequencies due to work or travel needs. First, although the relationship between place and identity process is quite complex and is difficult to measure with a few indicators (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell 1996), intuitively speaking, it often takes a period of time, once one has migrated to another place, to get familiar with and experience the life of the place, understand the local customs, and establish a social circle. In other words, it seems reasonable to suggest that someone who has lived in the UK for 10 years seems to be more suitable to be selected as a sample for this research than someone who has lived in the UK for 1 year, because the life trajectory and life experience of 10 years seem to be richer than that of 1 year. Therefore, although it is impossible to find an accurate quantitative indicator for the correlation between identity impact and length of life, given the huge differences between Chinese and British societies, it seems that there should be requirements for the length of time participants have lived in the UK, such as setting a minimum residence time requirement. Second, it is necessary to consider the highly unstable and involuntary (even forced) physical mobility of immigrants in modern society, compared with the "selective mobility" of elite groups (Bauman 2013). For example, one of my friends needs to frequently travel between Glasgow and Edinburgh for work, so it seems a bit harsh to have the sample stay in Glasgow for a period of time as a mandatory requirement. Combining the above two points, I set the sample recruitment requirements as: 1) at least living in the UK for more than 5 years (not including 5 years), and 2) living in Glasgow at the time of the interview.

In addition, class is another very important indicator for sample recruitment. As mentioned in the previous chapter, classes are distinguished by a series of indicators, such as the amount of capital possessed, the habitus formed, etc. (Bourdieu et al. 2010, Grenfell 2012). A more intuitive response and feasible standard is to distinguish by occupation. There are three main reasons for this choice. First, using occupation as a class indicator is easy to operationalize and allows for the efficient grouping and differentiation of participants, which facilitated the timely implementation of the study. Second, this classification basically follows the UK's National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) [1], which is based on occupational status and is widely considered both valid and useful for understanding social stratification (Pevalin and Rose 2002). Finally, occupation-based classification can be linked

[1] For more details, please refer to *The National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC)*. https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/classificationsandstandards/otherclassifications/thenationalstatisticssocioeconomicclassificationnssecrebasedonsoc2010

to employment relations and labour market position, thus offering a relational account of individuals' positions within the social hierarchy (Goldthorpe 2000).

At the same time, I also reflected several potential limitations of using occupation as a sole class indicator. Most notably, it may oversimplify the multidimensional nature of class, overlooking other important aspects such as education, income, and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984, Crompton 2008). However, considering that in this study the method is only used for recruiting participants, and that in the subsequent analysis, participants' life trajectories and their relative positions will be more heavily relied upon as concrete references for class, occupational classification is still adopted.

Furthermore, I also realized that the occupations of the recruited participants should be diverse and heterogeneous to ensure class coverage. At the same time, it is necessary to recruit participants from obviously different classes, such as practitioners from the middle class (such as lecturers) and practitioners from the lower classes (such as restaurant waiters), to ensure a specific balance between given classes. Since I have established a relatively wide social circle in the local area at that time, I decided to first invite eligible friends and then recruit other participants through a snowball approach. In addition, in order to make the sample selection heterogeneous and diverse, I reminded myself that other factors also need to be considered, such as maintaining gender balance and covering all age groups as much as possible.

Strategies for accessing participants

Networks and Snowball Sampling

As previously discussed, this project required a sample of participants who not only met specific criteria but were also sufficiently diverse in terms of background, occupation, and class. Therefore, I needed a practical and effective recruitment strategy to ensure that I could reach enough eligible individuals.

As mentioned above, I planned to use personal networks and snowball sampling as my primary strategies for participant recruitment. More specifically, I first intended to approach potential participants through the social networks I had established during my two years of living in Glasgow—both online and offline—and invite them to participate in interviews.

Second, I would ask these individuals to recommend others whom they considered suitable for the study, thereby expanding the reach of my sample.

Snowball sampling is often used in qualitative research to access hidden, hard-to-reach, or socially networked populations. It relies on the initial participants to refer further contacts from their own social circles, allowing the researcher to build a sample progressively through chains of referrals (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981, Atkinson and Flint 2001). While this method is practical and effective in many cases, it also comes with significant limitations—one of the most obvious being the risk of sample homogeneity (Noy 2008).

This concern was particularly relevant in my case. Although I had built a reasonably wide social network in Glasgow, including people from various occupational and class backgrounds, the majority of my contacts were still affiliated with the university, and many of them worked in academic or professional roles. As a result, participants recruited through snowball sampling were likely to come from similar class positions, given that people tend to refer individuals from within their own social milieu (Atkinson and Flint 2001).

Social Space and Ethnography

Anticipating the limitations of relying solely on my existing connections and snowball sampling, I developed alternative strategies to access a broader and more diverse group of Chinese migrants. One key strategy was to gain access to specific social spaces where Chinese migrants from a range of backgrounds gathered, so that I could expand my social network beyond the university circle. This would allow me to later continue using snowball sampling, but from a more varied initial base.

When identifying these potential social spaces, I considered both literature and my everyday observations of Chinese communities in the UK. These included Chinatowns, Chinese restaurants, supermarkets, churches, Chinese language schools, student associations, legal aid centres, and Tai Chi groups. These spaces were crucial to my research not only because they served as physical sites where I could access a wider pool of participants, but also because they enabled me to conduct ethnographic observation of Chinese migrants' everyday lives. Through such immersion, I was able to gain more nuanced, detailed, and grounded understandings of their ways of thinking and acting—thus offering deeper insight into how

ethnicity and class were practiced, experienced and negotiated in daily life.

This approach proved especially fruitful during fieldwork. My work experiences in Chinese supermarkets and restaurants not only helped me expand my social network and recruit more working-class participants, but also allowed me to observe how class and ethnicity were manifested in daily interactions—for instance, how one's choice of vocabulary and language use could reflect their class position. I discuss these reflections further in the reflective section of this chapter under *"Not Clear Enough" Statements and Marginalized Groups*.

In addition, by chance I met a Chinese church preacher and the principal of a Chinese language school, who invited me into their respective spaces. I soon realized that both the church and the school held significant ethnographic value—not only because they contained a large number of Chinese migrants from diverse social backgrounds, but also because each space had its own internal hierarchy and forms of capital. The presence of people occupying different positions within these hierarchies reminded me of Bourdieu's notion of the "real class"—that is, a class formed through shared social conditions, life situations, and practical logic, as opposed to "classes on paper", which are abstract categories constructed by researchers (Bourdieu et al. 2010). The Chinese migrants I encountered in these two spaces were concrete embodiments of such real classes, which ultimately led me to focus my ethnographic work on these two specific social spaces.

Ethical Issues

Relevant ethical issues, at the same time, were also considered. All participants would be invited to participate after being fully informed and understanding the research project. Before the formal interview, they needed to voluntarily sign an informed consent form, which described the main content of the project and their rights.

When designing the interview questions, I summarized some key points that might have caused potential harm to the participants, such as psychological discomfort. Since identity-related issues were sensitive topics, this was treated with particular care during the actual interview process, and the values and cultural backgrounds of the participants were fully respected.

After the interviews were finished, the data involving the personal privacy of the participants was carefully handled to ensure that personal information would not be leaked. All participants presented in the paper were pseudonymized, and other personal information that might be identified, including age and some place names, are blurred.

Ethical Reflections on Participant Observation

Conducting participant observation in two specific space sites—the church and the Chinese language school—raised important ethical considerations that warrant further reflection. A core ethical responsibility in ethnographic research is to ensure informed consent from all relevant parties. In both field sites, this required making my identity and research project clearly known to all individuals involved, including church members, teachers, students, parents, and associated staff.

To achieve this, I made use of collective gatherings to clearly communicate my role as a researcher and introduce the focus of my study. At the church, newcomers are typically welcomed in a short ceremony during their first service. The preacher who brought the newcomer is responsible for introducing them to the congregation. During my first visit, the preacher clearly stated my role as a researcher and the purpose of my project before the service began. I then followed with a short self-introduction, outlining my project and explaining the kind of data I would be collecting.

A similar opportunity arose in the Chinese language school. Each September, the school holds an opening ceremony to mark the start of the new academic year. All students, parents, teachers, school administrators, and relevant staff from the local college (from which the school rents classrooms) are required to attend. During the ceremony, the headteacher introduces all key personnel, including school leaders, teachers, and parent representatives. I used this moment to introduce myself to the entire school community and provide a brief explanation of my research project.

In addition, it is necessary to further explain how I obtained informed consent from the students, particularly because they were minors and a central focus of my observations. To ensure clarity and transparency, I included several slides in my introductory lesson PowerPoint presentation outlining the goals of my project. I explained these slides in simple

language and created space for students to ask questions. Recognizing the different cognitive and emotional capacities of children, I adapted the presentation to include visuals, simple terms, and short videos to make the content accessible. Moreover, in later classes, I would often link the teaching content to my research and present it again to help the students continuously remember my identity and the basic content of the project. Interestingly, the children showed even greater curiosity than I expected. In the first class alone, they asked more than ten questions about my project, and many continued to ask thoughtful and sometimes inspiring questions. I have to say, this kind of interaction was completely beyond what I had originally anticipated.

However, it was also this kind of warm, daily and genuine interaction with the children that sometimes made me forget my identity as a researcher, and instead enter a state of deeper immersion and focus on teaching. I thus often reflected on how to balance my dual roles as teacher and researcher. At times, I found myself fully immersed in teaching, momentarily forgetting my analytical role. This led to frequent self-reflection on how to ethically and practically balance these two identities. In practice, the boundary was often blurry. While I tried to focus on one role at a time—for example, prioritising teaching in the classroom—I sometimes found my researcher perspective surfacing unexpectedly. For example, when I got angry because of a few students' naughty behaviour, I would sometimes suddenly realize that part of the reason might be that their parents had not instilled so-called "good behavioural or thinking habits" in them, which seemed to reflect a kind of class-related trait. At that moment, I would feel a kind of guilt for having just thought to myself that this child was "poorly raised."

Therefore, navigating these dual roles was ethically and practically complex. What I could do was to try my best to stay focused on the role I was currently performing—for example, playing the role of a teacher during class—while at the same time recording any thoughts that came up during observation for use in subsequent data analysis. By doing so, I aimed to maintain both pedagogical commitment and ethnographic integrity.

2.2 Positioning and Recruiting Samples and Conducting Interviews

Before conducting the formal interviews, I first carried out some pilot interviews. The primary purpose was to assess whether the questions were clear and comprehensible while

avoiding ambiguity or misleading wording. Except for the absence of audio recording, the pilot study followed almost the same specifications as the formal interviews, including the interview process, selection of locations, and questioning methods. The pilot interviews proved to be beneficial not only in helping me refine the interview questions but also in optimizing the interview process. For example, I fine-tuned the chronology between the icebreaker questions and the participants' life history narratives.

After the ethical application was approved, I started recruiting participants and conducting formal interviews quickly. The entire fieldwork process could be divided into three stages according to the chronological order and the general characteristics and strategic adjustments of sample recruitment.

The First Stage

The work went smoothly in the first stage. I invited all eligible friends to participate in the interviews, and invited all of my friends to introduce their eligible friends to participate in the study. It is worth mentioning here that I was clearly aware that since part of your sampling involved my friends (albeit only a very small number of them, 2, as many of my friends participated in my pilot interviews), there were still ethical challenges in conducting research with people with whom I had a personal relationship. At the same time, this could be a recruitment method that has been criticized because it tends to produce fairly homogenous samples - as actually happens, which will be discussed below.

10 life history interviews were conducted in the first 3 months. Since I always established a good and trusting relationship with the participants and showed full respect and good communication skills during the interviews, plus I paid attention to the privacy and comfort of the interviews, most of the participants were happy to participate in my interviews and enjoyed the process. In addition, I provided the participants with a very relaxed and autonomous narrative environment so that they could speak freely based on their own narrative rhythm and life trajectory. Most of the interviews thus usually lasted a long time, about 3 - 4 hours. Some individual participants conducted multiple interviews, and the longest interview with an individual participant lasted more than 8 and a half hours. This resulted in a heavy workload for me to sort out the transcripts, reread and code, which will be described in detail in *Data Analysis* section below. Despite this, I still decided to maintain

my interview style because I realized that even when participants' accounts seemed less related to the research questions, they often actually contained potentially useful information, including possible clues for thinking about the research questions from different angles or adding new content in the subsequent grounded analysis, thus helping to enrich the dimensions and content of the research.

However, an important difficulty is the diversity of the sample, as I anticipated when designing the field work. Because of the inevitable limitations of my social network and the selection bias of the sample recruited by snowballing (Parker, Scott and Geddes 2019), the recruited samples in this stage were highly homogeneous. Among the 10 participants at this stage of the project, the vast majority of participants came from a few particular universities in Glasgow due to their overlapping social networks, and were studying or working at universities in Scotland when they participated in the interview. Only 2 participants were engaged in relatively differentiated occupations, but these were middle class occupation: namely a lawyer and an architect. In addition, the gender was relatively balanced, with 6 females and 4 males. The age distribution ranges from 20 to 55 years old, but the majority of those taking part were concentrated in the 20-30 age group. The 10 participants are listed below. It is worth mentioning that in order to protect privacy, each participant uses a pseudonym, and some personal information is blurred to increase the degree of unrecognition, such as using age ranges instead of actual age.

Table 1: An information sheet for participants in the first stage

Pseudonym	**Gender**	**Age**	**Occupation**
Yara Vedia	Female	50-55	3rd-year PhD student / GTA at university
Volini Gia	Female	40-45	Senior Lecturer in University
Freddy Peter	Male	45-50	Senior Researcher in University
Mattias Boris	Male	30-35	University Research Assistant
Xander Raid	Male	30-35	University Research Assistant
Yorick Gerald	Male	25-30	Lecture in University
Yana Xenia	Female	30-35	7th-year PhD student / Mechanical studio researcher
Victoria Grace	Female	25-30	5th-year PhD student looking for a career
Keisha Ida	Female	25-30	Lawyer
Wanda Xania	Female	25-30	Architect

As shown in Table 1, the high degree of homogeneity is a dominant characteristic of the interviews at the first stage. More importantly, I realized that it was not only their occupations that were homogeneous, but also their life trajectories. In other words, many of them followed roughly similar learning and career trajectories, which could be seen from the fact that they all obtained PhD degrees, which was also a feeling I had when conducting interviews. For example, all 10 participants chose to come to the UK from China to study at the Master's or doctoral level, and chose to stay in the UK to find a job after graduation. Even the types of screening they mentioned when looking for a job were similar. I understanded that this did not mean that they were all necessarily in the same class or that the elements of class always affected their ethnic identity in a similar way, because 1) the social origins of these participants were different, so from the perspective of some class distinguishing elements, they would inherit different social and cultural heritage, had different habitus, etc., which might lead to their class differences; and 2) even if they have roughly similar life trajectories at a certain stage, the life experiences and feelings about these experiences of different participants would also be different. However, it is reasonable to believe that a more diverse life trajectory and more differentiated life experience would be of great help in analysing the complex impact of class on ethnicity. Therefore, my research needed to recruit samples from more diverse backgrounds and occupations.

The Second Stage

To this end, in the second stage, I increased the recruitment of samples from colleagues and friends through multiple parties and contacts, paying special attention to the recruitment of marginalized groups – immigrants who were unable to integrate into mainstream society and were in a disadvantaged position due to some social, cultural or economic reasons, such as language barriers and lack of skills, and were thus often excluded and ignored. As mentioned in the previous chapter, I believe that this group is under-researched.

In addition, I also tried to expand my social circle and try to get to know more friends in different professions, such as by finding a part-time job in a Chinese restaurant. It turned out that my strategy was effective. Colleagues working in the Chinese restaurant and their friends introduced me to a wider circle and that allowed me to extend the sample to include people from different backgrounds, especially marginalized immigrants from the bottom of society, they often come to the UK as refugees. Due to their inability to speak English, lack

of skills and economic capital, they had only access to extremely limited social resources and job opportunities. Interviews with such participants, according to my experience, often required extra interaction costs and were not always possible, because they were sometimes more likely to feel insecure or even hostile, especially for those actors with sensitive professions or past experiences. For example, Layla Emma, a woman from southern China who came to the UK more than 10 years ago through marriage with a British man, fell into trouble after spending the first few years of happy life. Because she insisted on this transnational marriage, her relationship with her parents and relatives in China was very bad, so she was full of suspicion towards everyone around her, especially the Chinese. For this reason, it always needed to take extra time to gain trust and build friendships, but interviews with them were usually more valuable because they were not easy to access, at least to me. The next 7 participants are listed below.

Table 2: An information sheet for participants in the second stage

Pseudonym	**Gender**	**Age**	**Occupation**
Kathy Gwen	Female	55-60	Unemployed (previously worked as a restaurant waiter)
Yasmine Xena	Female	30-35	Chinese supermarket clerk
Layla Emma	Female	50-55	Freelancer (formerly a jewellery store clerk)
Rachel Whitney	Female	25-30	Bank Project Specialist
Rose Winnie	Female	25-30	Doctor
Wesli Zoey	Female	40-45	Restaurant owner
Xerxes George	Male	35-40	Cross-border e-commerce practitioners

As shown in Table 2, these participants had diverse occupations, life trajectories, and ages, which ranged from 25 to 60 years old. However, most of them were female, especially those from the lower classes. Interviews with them showed that women seem to be more susceptible to multiple pressures from society, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4. These participants greatly enriched the diversity of the research sample, because they included social actors from more occupations and social backgrounds, which meant that the research was able to capture richer data with more diverse life trajectories and life histories.

Furthermore, the ethnographic experiences in Chinese restaurants and supermarkets led me to a deeper understanding that ethnicity and class are not simply tools for categorising or describing people—they are emergent, lived phenomena that are continually produced and reproduced in everyday life. More specifically, the ethnographic method enabled me to observe subtle and often implicit boundary-making processes that would be difficult to capture through interviews alone.

These insights encouraged me to further explore how class and ethnicity are practiced, performed, and generated through daily routines and interactions. I realised that conducting ethnography within a specific social space inhabited by Chinese migrants might offer a unique opportunity to investigate these dynamics more deeply. Because it allowed me to engage in long-term immersive experience and participant observation, enabling closer attention to subtle differences in behaviour, language use, spatial positioning, and social relations. In addition, this might also resonate with Bourdieu's idea of "real class"—classes formed not through theoretical classification, but through shared conditions and everyday practices that take place in social space. By observing how class and ethnic differences are formed and negotiated in real-life settings, I could better understand the everyday production of inequality and identity as a living and dynamic process.

The Third Stage

My strategy in last stage broadened my social circle and way of making friends, it made it possible to further recruit more widely. At the same time, I also kept in mind the idea of conducting ethnography and interviews within certain social spaces where Chinese migrants were concentrated.

In August 2022, by chance, I met a Chinese barber working in Scotland. During the chat, I learned that he was also the head of a church somewhere in Scotland. Due to my interest in religious studies and Christian history, we quickly became friends. Through him, I learned about the local church and became interested. After obtaining consent, I entered it as a researcher. In the following year or so, I participated in almost all the daily activities of the church and became good friends with many people in the church.

The large number of potential participants in the church showed me the possibility of perhaps

interviewing connected actors in a given social space in order to analyse them within a power structure. Therefore, after getting familiar with the operation of the church and with social relations within the church, I decided to select samples from different parties in the church space to obtain relevant data on the class and ethnic experiences of social actors who are in different positions in the same power structure and have daily interactions. This is valuable for Bourdieusian analysis. For Bourdieu, social space connects "class on paper" with real class (Grenfell 2012). Thus, the abstract question of "class on paper" can be materialized into the relationship between those with similar capital volume and composition and other groups, the former establishing a group with a clear identity. In other words, because they share similar positions in social space, they thus also share similar habitus and its consequences (Grenfell 2012). At the same time, a particular social space can be seen as a microcosmic and autonomous field, and studying the relationships between groups in different positions in a field and the individuals within it can also help explore how symbolic violence is possible and achieved through class domination. Therefore, the relative position of groups in a given space can be seen as a more direct manifestation of class, while their daily interactions are a concrete manifestation of symbolic violence between classes. Therefore, I thought that selecting samples in different positions in the same social space and having daily interactions might help analyse how class affects individuals' views of their own identity through power relations and symbolic violence.

Therefore, my plan was to enter the church through the head of the church I knew, get to know more members during worship activities, and then recruit suitable participants through their recommendations and referrals. A total of 5 participants were selected from different groups in the church, listed as follows.

Table 3: An information sheet for participants in religious spaces

Pseudonym	**Gender**	**Age**	**Occupation**	**Role in the Church**
Celina Oria	Female	40-45	Restaurant owner	Management
Victor Paul	Male	45-50	Barber	Preacher
Roslyn Qin	Female	55-60	Preacher	Preacher
Richard Murray	Male	55-60	Driver	Member
Zheng Rayden	Male	40-45	Restaurant staff	Member

Coincidentally, in September 2022, through the introduction of a colleague, I met the leader of a Chinese school in Scotland and participated in their recruitment notice. After obtaining consent, I entered as a researcher and teacher, responsible for the designer of their cultural module and the daily teaching work of two classes. In the following year and a half, I participated in or organized almost all activities of the school, including daily teaching activities, curriculum design, parent meetings, Spring Festival parties, spring outings, etc., and established good relationships with many people in the school during this period. Similar to the church space, 7 samples from different groups were recruited in this social space, as listed below.

Table 4: An information sheet for participants in Chinese School spaces

Pseudonym	**Gender**	**Age**	**Occupation**	**Role in the School**
Yunah Wendo	Female	50-55	Chinese school administrator	Management
Waniya Xielo	Female	45-50	Chinese school teacher / British private school teacher	Teacher
Rodney Xzavier	Male	35-40	Chinese school teacher / British public school teacher	Teacher
James Eric	Male	40-45	Chinese school teacher / British private school teacher	Teacher
Kevin Walker	Male	40-45	Chinese school teacher / British private school teacher	Teacher
Vannesa Randa	Female	40-45	Associate Professor at the University	Parent of Student
Kayli Yanet	Female	40-45	Restaurant staff	Parent of Student

As shown in Tables 3 and 4, the 12 participants recruited from the church and Chinese school further enriched the sample, and more participants from different occupations and social backgrounds joined my research.

This stage was crucial to my research. The two social spaces not only allowed me to expand and diversify the social backgrounds of the participants I recruited, but also brought together individuals who occupied different hierarchical positions within the same setting. This

internal stratification created forms of social connection and comparison that enabled a deeper understanding of the relationship between ethnicity and class.

Moreover, the ethnographic work conducted within these spaces further enriched my understanding of ethnicity and class as emergent and relational processes. Through long-term immersion and participant observation, I came to realise that these were not simply educational or religious institutions, but vibrant social arenas in which Chinese migrants actively practiced and reproduced distinctions, senses of belonging, and identity formations.

Interviews

All participants, as mentioned above, were invited to conduct life history interviews after signing informed consent. In addition to discussing topics related to ethnic identity and class, participants were invited to share one or more of their life experiences and trajectories, including impressive events, migration experiences, their feelings about these, etc. In order to ensure the smoothness and well focus of the interview, I prepared a topic guide for the interview in advance to remind myself of the issues that need to be focused on in the conversation. Please see Appendix 3 for the specific interview guide. In addition, they were also invited to share various forms of photos and videos for further description or narration. In order to ensure that the participants' expressions were as clear, sufficient, and comfortable as possible, as well as smooth communication, participants were invited to interview in their preferred language (generally Mandarin or English).

The vast majority of participants chose to use Mandarin for the interview, because Mandarin is their mother tongue so they could express themselves more freely. 2 participants chose to interview in English, one because Cantonese was her first language, and the other said that she was more comfortable with the English way of expression. The issue of language translatability emerged in the dialogue with participants and the translation between Chinese and English, which will be discussed in more detail in the reflection section.

In addition, participants were invited to conduct interviews face-to-face as much as possible, in order to communicate more fully with participants, such as by providing a more comfortable interview environment, and also to obtain some non-verbal data, such as micro-movements and micro-expressions, which were considered to be a kind of valid data.

Meanwhile, a virtual method was also allowed, mainly through Zoom, WhatsApp or WeChat video for those who preferred this way of contact, taking into account some possible regional restrictions and other unexpected arrangements. In the end, except for 3 participants who used virtual methods for various reasons, the remaining interviews were all conducted face-to-face. Finally, all interviews were audio-recorded for subsequent transcription and coding, while some other non-verbal data, such as micro-expressions, were recorded by taking physical notes during the interviews for further analysis.

A total of 29 Chinese migrants were recruited into the research project, covering more than 20 occupations and ages from 20 to 60 years old. The male-to-female ratio is approximately 1:1.6. For ease of viewing, I have listed all the participant information below, see Table 5.

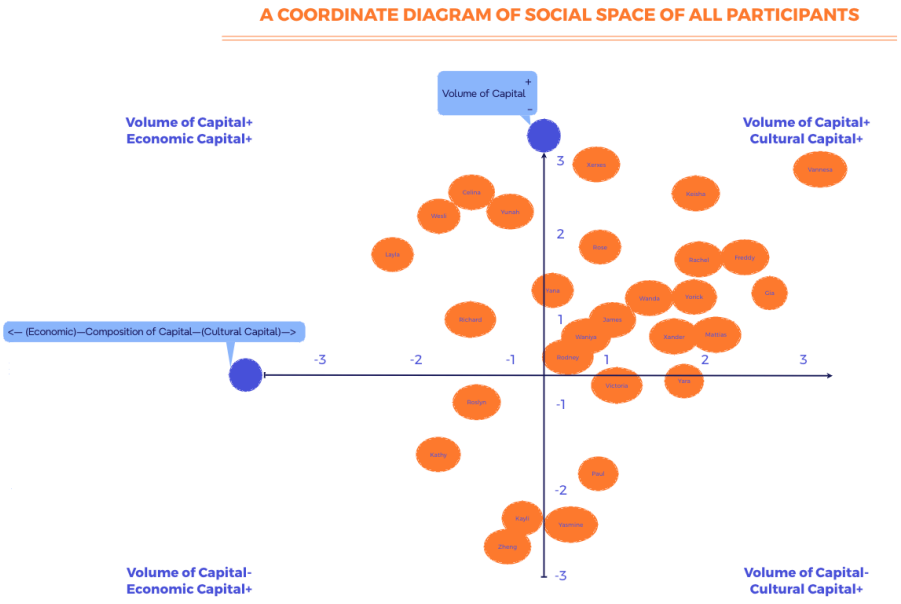
Table 5: An information sheet for participants of all participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Occupation
Vedia Yara	Female	50-55	3rd-year PhD student / GTA at university
Volini Gia	Female	40-45	Senior lecturer in University
Freddy Peter	Male	45-50	Senior Researcher in University
Mattias Boris	Male	30-35	University Research Assistant
Xander Raid	Male	30-35	University Research Assistant
Yorick Gerald	Male	25-30	Lecture in University
Yana Xenia	Female	30-35	7th-year PhD student / Mechanical studio researcher
Victoria Grace	Female	25-30	5th-year PhD student looking for a career
Keisha Ida	Female	25-30	Lawyer
Wanda Xania	Female	25-30	Architect
Kathy Gwen	Female	55-60	Unemployed (previously worked as a restaurant waiter)
Yasmine Xena	Female	30-35	Chinese supermarket clerk
Layla Emma	Female	50-55	Freelancer (formerly a jewellery store clerk)
Rachel Whitney	Female	25-30	Bank Project Specialist
Rose Winnie	Female	25-30	Doctor
Wesli Zoey	Female	40-45	Restaurant owner
Xerxes George	Male	35-40	Cross-border e-commerce practitioners
Celina Oria	Female	40-45	Restaurant owner
Victor Paul	Male	45-50	Barber
Roslyn Qin	Female	55-60	Preacher
Richard Murray	Male	55-60	Driver
Zheng Rayden	Male	40-45	Restaurant staff
Yunah Wendo	Female	50-55	Chinese school administrator
Waniya Xielo	Female	45-50	Chinese schoolteacher / British private school teacher
Rodney Xzavier	Male	35-40	Chinese schoolteacher / British public-school teacher
James Eric	Male	40-45	Chinese schoolteacher / British private school teacher
Kevin Walker	Male	40-45	Chinese schoolteacher / British private school teacher
Vannesa Randa	Female	40-45	Associate Professor at the University
Kayli Yanet	Female	40-45	Restaurant stuff

Meanwhile, since class is a relational reference used to describe actors' relative positions in society (Bourdieu et al. 2010), I prefer to present the participants' class status through their relative positions in mainstream society. This approach also provides a more intuitive representation of the amount and forms of capital they possess. Referring to Bourdieu's classification of capital forms and using these diagrams to map the relative positions of different classes (Grenfell 2012), I have also created a diagram to illustrate the social positional relationships of all participants in mainstream society, see the Figure 1 below. The vertical axis represents the total amount of capital held by the participants, while the horizontal axis represents the types of capital they possess. The left side indicates economic capital, whereas the right side represents cultural capital.

It is important to note that this diagram is intended only to depict the general social positioning of the participants rather than to precisely determine their exact positions. This was because some participants chose to conceal certain crucial pieces of information. Additionally, the information they provided was not always accurate. For instance, some participants were reluctant to disclose their income and prefer to describe it in general terms (e.g., "*My income is just about middle level*" or "*My income is not high*"). In this case, I can only infer their approximate positions based on my understanding and the other information they have shared and then place them accordingly in the diagram.

Figure 1: A Coordinate diagram of social space of all participants



3. Data Analysis

It should be noted that the data analysis process and sample recruitment were carried out almost at the same time and complement each other, though they are separated into two sections for the sake of narrative clarity. In other words, the strategies of the two need to be constantly adjusted according to each other. For example, the sample recruitment strategy of the second stage mentioned in the previous section was adjusted after completing the data organization and an initial reflection on the data collected in the first stage. Moreover, it is necessary to realize that this approach is particularly obvious in grounded theory, because it requires researchers to conduct a “constant comparative method” (Charmaz 2007, 54). This provides researchers with the possibility of timely understanding of the distribution of the samples, and adjusting the specific research and recruitment approaches in a timely manner based on this information.

This section sets out the specific methods and processes of data processing and analysis after collection, including the approaches and steps of rereading, transcribing and coding data, and how a grounded theory-style research approach continuously adjusts the sample recruitment strategy and the analysis of new data through various coding and constant comparison.

3.1 Phase 1: Transcription, Re-reading and Initial Coding

After the interview was completed, the rough materials collected needed to be made familiar and preliminarily abstracted and refined. This stage involved three steps: transcription, re-reading and initial coding. First, based on the recording and the notes taken during the interview, all the content was transcribed into a Word document in text form to facilitate subsequent review and open coding. Since the length of the interviews was generally 3-4 hours, as mentioned above, this was a quite long process, and the length of the edited transcripts were generally more than 70 pages (with 12-point font and single spaced). To achieve this, I needed to transcribe the content in text form while listening to the recording. At the same time, the non-verbal data recorded in the interview, such as some micro-expressions, was also added to the document synchronously to be presented in a separate table next to the main content for subsequent analysis. The transcription process was also a re-reading process, which was crucial for data organization and analysis. The "rereading strategy", as mentioned by Doucet and Mauthner (2008), allows researchers to obtain a

preliminary data overview through repeated reading of the records, and at the same time retain an impression of recurring topics, events and themes.

After transcription, the collected data were initially coded. This is an open coding step, which aimed to search concepts or key ideas hidden in the transcript that may be related to the research questions and themes. To this end, all transcripts were carefully read line by line, and each data fragment was given a label through a concise description of the content, which I called a "concept". This was about identifying and marking as many potential discrete events, incidents, actions, opinions, and related interactions as possible. In the initial coding process, I kept in mind a series of rules mentioned by Charmaz in relation the initial coding: "remain open, stay close to the data, keep your codes simple and precise, construct short codes, preserve actions, compare data with data and move quickly through the data" (Charmaz 2007, 49).

To achieve these, I was especially careful not to rely on theories or concepts to guide my thinking before coding (Charmaz 2007, 48). Instead, I tried to focus on the raw data and tried to allow it to "spark [my] thinking and allow new ideas to emerge" (ibid.). At the same time, due to the length of the transcripts and the intersection of many paragraphs that may hide useful and invalid information, I did not adopt the line-by-line coding strategy (Glaser 1978). Instead, I adopted a coding incident-to-incident approach, which could ensure that important information was not missed while achieving faster data browsing through the method of focusing and "comparative study of incidents" (Charmaz 2007, 53). In addition, I kept in mind that grounded theory requires researchers use "constant comparative methods" at each stage to build analytic distinctions and make comparisons at every stage of the analytical process (Charmaz 2007, 54). I concentrated on two aspects of comparison in this phase. The first involved comparing data to identify and document similarities and differences; the other one involved comparing the same participants' statements at different stages during the interview, particularly for those participants who were interviewed multiple times.

It is worth mentioning that memo-writing was carried out simultaneously and throughout fieldwork and at each stage of coding, which means that I sometimes stopped coding and quickly recorded some informal analysis notes in any way, including any unformed analytical ideas and some conceptual associations (Charmaz 2007, 72). Although this is usually considered the final stage of grounded theory (Glaser, Strauss and Strutzel 1968,

Charmaz 2007), it was very important for me to immediately record some phenomena, fragments, themes, and possible concepts or theories that impressed themselves upon me, because it helped 1) ensure that I recorded some ideas and intellectual connections in detail so as not to forget them later, and 2) helped me further explore the data, including refining existing categories, drafting potential new categories or patterns, etc. In the interview stage, memos were different from non-verbal data records, but more about recording the way phenomena were combined with theories and how they were conceptualized. In the initial coding stage, memos were mainly used to record potential connections between events and concepts and between concepts.

The initial coding process not only familiarized me with all the collected materials, but also provided me with a wealth of "concepts" and "concept clusters". According to my rough statistics, I summarized about 150-200 concepts for an average transcript (based on a single interview). This provided me with a sufficient and rich foundation for refining core concepts and categories in the subsequent coding and analysis stages. In addition, the constant comparative methods mentioned above also made me realize the areas where I lacked necessary data (Charmaz 2007, 48). As previous mentioned, this step provided directional guidance for me to adjust the sample recruitment strategy.

3.2 Phase 2: Focused Coding and Axial Coding

After the initial coding, a large number of preliminary concepts and concept clusters need to be further refined and sifted, and the core concepts with more explanatory power in theoretical development should be selected through a higher level of abstraction, and then a preliminary theoretical framework was developed based on these core concepts. Therefore, I decided to adopt Focused coding and Axial coding for the next step of coding. The former refers to finding the most analytically meaningful initial codes by frequency or importance, while the latter requires linking different categories and subcategories to make the analysis more coherent (Charmaz 2007, 57-61). This meant, in my analytic work, choosing which initial concepts make the most analytical sense to accurately and thoroughly classify my data (Charmaz 2007, 57) and then identifying and developing categories and linking them through an organizing scheme set by Strauss and Corbin (1998).

Specifically, the process involved the following four steps. First, the frequency, significance

and relevance to the research questions of the initially coded concepts were examined (Charmaz 2007, 57). All data were moved into NVivo for a preliminary stratification of these initial concepts. Secondly, I integrated them according to the relevance to the research questions, the degree of abstraction, and the relationship between concepts. A series of core concepts were further extracted from the high-frequency and more significant concepts sifted in the previous step. Then with the core concept as the theme, related concepts of the same type were selected and divided into some subcategories according to their relationship with it. This step further narrowed the scope of concepts that need to be focused on, and categorized these important concepts, and preliminarily clarified the relationship between them. The next step was to associate a series of concepts according to the organizational scheme determined by Strauss and Corbin (1998, 128), including *conditions, actions/interactions, and sequences*, to form a preliminary theoretical structure. For example, among a series of high-frequency concepts, "*participants' stereotypes of the UK*" was extracted as a core concept due to its higher degree of abstraction and its closer relationship with the research question. Secondly, with this as the theme, a series of subordinate sub-concepts were selected and divided, such as "*participants' stereotypes of the UK medical system*", "*participants' stereotypes of British restaurants*", etc. Finally, an event "*compared to seeing a doctor immediately in China, participants had to wait 2 weeks for an appointment with the NHS for a cold in the UK*" was associated with "*participants' stereotypes of the UK medical system*" as *actions/interactions*.

At the same time, it is worth mentioning that there is no clear boundary between the first and second phases. As Charmaz (2007, 58) mentioned, “moving to focused coding is not entirely a liner process”, and so I needed to constantly review the original material when I was working on it. Especially when I had summarized a new core concept, I often needed to go back to the relevant fragments of the original material and re-read it, line by line, and repeat the first phase so that capture some new inspirations.

Through this phase, a large number of preliminary, rough concepts obtained in the initial coding were simplified and refined into more core and fewer concepts, thus becoming more organized and logical. At the same time, the focus on the abstract degree of core concepts could help me achieve preliminary theorization from specific phenomena. This also laid the foundation for the final step of theoretical coding.

3.3 Phase 3: Theoretical Coding

After the core concepts had been refined and selected, the data analysis came to the final step, theoretical coding, which meant that these “substantive codes” were associated with each other and "integrated into a theory" (Glaser 1978, 72). In other words, this phase required me to focus on the relationships between these core concepts and the categories formed based on them, and develop these identified potential relationships into a systematic and coherent analytical story (Charmaz 2007, 63).

To achieve this, I first reviewed the core concepts and their categories in the previous phase to ensure that my understanding of them was accurate and clear. Secondly, I selected appropriate relationship patterns to organize and develop these categories according to their own characteristics. Here I mainly referred to a series of 18 theoretical coding families put forward by Glaser (1978, 74-82), among which the most commonly used were *Process* and *The Mainline Family*. This usually meant further improving the level of abstraction of analysis, so that the results of coding and analysis was not limited to individual cases, but would be applicable to a wider range of situations and phenomena, thus having higher generalization and applicability. Let me take an example of using *Process* to link. Process means “a way of grouping together two sequencing parts to a phenomenon” (Glaser 1978, 74). "*Participant elevated different social medical systems to different characteristics of ethnic groups and formed stereotypes*" and "*(the same) participant summarized similar views in the police registration system a few weeks later, and he was more in favour of the stereotype*" was thus connected and I related them to the concept of "*the formation and consolidation of ethnic stereotypes and thus gradually deepens*".

In addition, the difference from the Axial coding in the previous phase was that in addition to developing independent categories, I also focused on the relationship between categories to build a coherent theoretical framework. For example, by linking "*participants constructed and consolidated stereotypes*" with "*different participants' different responses to stereotypes*", and then relating stereotypes to Bourdieu's doxa and habitus theory, the main framework of *doxa and ethnicity* in Chapter 6 is summarized.

This was the last phase of grounded theory formation. Through this phase, I associated and further abstracted the core concepts and categories extracted in the previous phase to present

my analytical results into a coherent and unified theoretical framework. Among them, developing these categories through appropriate relationship patterns allowed me to expand and integrate the categories formed in the previous phase, thereby establishing the logical relationship between different parts of the chapter and ensuring the multi-dimensional presentation of a core category. For example, in the second section of Chapter 8, I chose to understand the relationship between class and ethnic identity through analysing the continuous life trajectory of a participant in the UK for more than 20 years, which was a different presentation method compared to the previous one.

Meanwhile thinking about the relationship between categories helped me to establish the logical relationship between different chapters. In the end, I decided to present the results of my data analysis in three main ways. First, with a focus on understanding Ethnicity and Ethnic identity in the context of everyday life. This part – addressed in Chapter 3 – will focus on the different reflections of different participants on ethnic issues and will analyse the ways and processes of their understanding of ethnic identity in daily life. Second, understanding ethnic identity in fields and habitus. This part will analyse, from the perspective of intersectionality, how gender, class, and ethnicity are intertwined to influence actors' understanding of identity in their everyday lives, and will be discussed in Chapter 4. Finally, understanding Ethnicity and Ethnic identity in Social Space. This part will focus on two specific social spaces, a church and a Chinese school, and show the impact of class on ethnic identity through the way of symbolic violence and reproduction, which will be shown in Chapters 5 and 6, respectively.

4. Reflection on the Methodology

4.1 "Insider" and "Outsider"

In the initial stages of designing this research project, I deliberately chose Chinese migrants as my research participants. I assumed that our shared language and cultural background would allow for easier access, smoother communication, and more trustful relationships. I believed that being "one of them" would reduce the social distance between myself and the participants, and make it easier for them to open up during interviews and everyday interactions.

However, as fieldwork progressed, I became increasingly aware that the reality was far more

complex. While there were indeed moments when my perceived insider status facilitated access—particularly in informal conversations, emotional expressions, and culturally specific references—this did not always translate into automatic acceptance or effortless understanding. Ethnic sameness, I thus realised, did not eliminate social or experiential distance.

In fact, my positionality was constantly shifting between being an 'insider' and an 'outsider', depending on the participant, context, and topic of conversation. Some participants, especially working-class migrants, viewed me as different—someone with academic credentials, speaking Mandarin with a "standard" or "foreign-trained" accent, and whose migration trajectory (through higher education) did not resemble their own. I was occasionally described as someone who had "Never suffered" or "had it easier." These comments pointed to an implicit boundary that ethnic similarity could not fully bridge. In moments when participants discussed topics such as legal precarity, financial hardship, or class stigma, I sometimes sensed caution or distance—subtle reminders that I was still, in some respects, an outsider.

At the same time, my insider position—being able to speak Mandarin, recognise cultural codes, and navigate social rituals—did allow me to build rapport in many contexts more easily than a non-Chinese researcher might have. In both the church and language school settings, participants occasionally confided in me or included me in private conversations because I was seen as familiar and trustworthy. However, these advantages depend on the specific situation and they are not guaranteed.

These moments made clear that "being Chinese" or "speaking Mandarin" did not guarantee belonging or intimacy. Rather, my position as both an insider and outsider shifted depending on the setting, the participant, and the topic of conversation. It required constant negotiation and reflexivity. This complexity echoes the idea that positionality in ethnographic work is not fixed but relational and fluid—constructed through interactions, perceptions, and power dynamics within the field.

This experience made me rethink the assumptions I made during the design phase and recognize that trust, openness, and insight must be continually earned and navigated—even among those who appear, on the surface, to be "like us."

4.2 Communication, Translatability and Cultural Capital

Communication with participants was not always smooth and unobstructed. In fact, we failed to accurately grasp the meaning of each other at some times, so we had to stop and clarify to ensure a clear and accurate conversation later, or sometimes we even needed to continue the conversation with some confusion or misunderstanding. Therefore, how to conduct conversations in a consensus-based manner to ensure effective communication became one of the things I needed to pay attention to every moment during the interview. I had to admit that the frequency of encountering these situations in interviews was much more than I expected. I thus tried to summarize these phenomena in many mismatched communications, in order to summarize the reasons and ways of their occurrence, and to seek potential solutions.

It turns out that communication difficulties can arise almost anywhere, in vocabulary, sentences, grammar, and the way of expression. Just like a Trojan horse, secretively and dangerously, once we are not careful, our conversation can fall into a situation where everyone is talking at cross purposes. The phenomenon of incomprehension in some special cases, through my summary, could be roughly classified into two categories. One was that some of the words translated by me were sometimes not accurately understood by the participants or readers, and the second was that some of the words or ways of explanation described were not commonly used by my participants in their daily life. The former involves the issue of the translatability of language, while the latter is related to the issue of cultural capital of different classes.

Translation is one of the problems faced by many bi-lingual researchers (Qun and Carey 2024), due to language translatability issues and broader cultural background factors (Hermans 2019). There were two types of translation issues in this study. One was how to translate the English concepts to be discussed into Mandarin or vice versa in the interview, and the other was how to translate the participants' statements into English as accurately and in ways that were as appropriate to their specific cultural background as possible in written work (Simon 1996).

In the face of the first problem, my strategy was to try to construct a concept area through the direct translation of the concept and many other synonyms, so as to cover the possible

missing parts generated by translating with a separate Mandarin Chinese concept. For example, at the beginning of the first interview, I immediately realized that the choice of the vocabulary of ‘ethnicity’ was quite a tricky issue, especially in the context of everyday life discussions. Most participants would choose to have conversations in Mandarin, and it was difficult to find a perfectly accurate translation of the word ‘ethnicity’ in Mandarin, plus the only relatively accurate term ‘族裔/族裔身份’ was a bit unfamiliar to most participants, so I had to reiterate with other more widely used synonyms to ensure that participants could clearly understand what I meant and the conversation could flow smoothly. Generally speaking, just as the words ‘ethnicity’, ‘nation’ and ‘race’ can be partly used interchangeably in some situations amongst English speakers, I would also use the Mandarin equivalents of these words in the interviews to paraphrase and interpret each other. By making the participants' understanding of the concept at least within the conceptual area constructed by these concept bundles, it was ensured that their understanding of the concept would be covered in this area. Afterwards, through further dialogue, participants would gradually understand more clearly what the theoretical concepts mean.

The second problem was that I found that in the written stage (including transcription, coding and writing), the transcripts were intermittently untranslatable due to some words or phrases used by the participants with specific cultural backgrounds, which is a common phenomenon in cross-linguistic research (Qun and Carey 2024). For example, many participants used "世故的" to describe the characteristics of some Chinese group they disliked. If the word was directly translated using translation software, the corresponding word is generally "sophisticated". However, after communicating with my readers, including my supervisors, they all agreed that this did not seem likely the corresponding word. Therefore, after careful review, I found that it is impossible to accurately express "世故的" with a single English word. It combined some characteristics such as “worldly”, "snobby", "savvy", and "sophisticated". Given that such a situation only occurred occasionally in my research, my strategy was that when I encountered such words with Chinese-specific patterns, I tried to ensure that the most appropriate words were used as much as possible, while using a few extra sentences to describe the background to further explain it. For example, when the above "世故的" appeared first, it would be noted as *"A person who is "世故的" often values and treats others based on social status, wealth, or influence, which allowing he/she to navigate social situations and relationships with ease. This often implies that they often ignore those*

they deem less important. It is a derogatory word in most cases". At the same time, I also focused on the meaning of these words in context, that is, the sense they are seeking to convey when they were applied to a particular situation.

At the same time, I was deeply aware of the classed nature of the words and sentences I used because I realized that even if I was speaking the same language as the participants, and even if the words or expressions I chose were understood accurately by most of the participants, some participants still expressed confusion. For example, when I was talking to Zheng, a man from southern China who was working as a waiter in a British restaurant at the time of the interview:

> I: Well, so do you think your view of the British healthcare system is a kind of stereotype?
> Zheng: What impression? (In Chinese, two pronunciations of "impression" and "stereotype" are the same.)
> I: Stereotype.
> Zheng: What is a stereotype?
> I: It means that you have a preconceived idea or opinion about something. In other words, do you have a preconceived idea about the British healthcare system?
> Zheng: Preconceived? [Frowning]
> I: Ah, it means that you believe what it is like before you really understand or experience it yourself.
> Zheng: What do you mean?
> I: Ummm… Probably, you have made a conclusion about it without experience or know about it.
> Zheng: …… [Frowning]
> I: In short, for example, you have just arrived in the UK and have not been to the hospital yet, and then someone tells you, such as your Chinese neighbour you just mentioned, that British hospitals are not good in this or that way, will you think or believe that British hospitals are exactly like this?
> Zheng: Well of course, they have said it, why do I choose not to believe……

Therefore, I understand that in the dialogue with my respondents, the barrier to communication was not only the translatability of language, but also factors such as language style and vocabulary selection, and these contents were often class-based or related to

occupation. The different classes mentioned in *Distinction* have different levels of mastery and use of language, thus forming a symbolic segmentation (Bourdieu et al. 2010). Similarly, the language habits of participants in different classes in the interview were internalized into their habitus through the cultural heritages they had received, the education they had received, and the daily social networks they were in, becoming a symbol of a certain class, which was highlighted through our dialogue. To this end, my solution strategy was to quickly familiarize myself with and learn their expressions based on my understanding of the participants and the contact before the interview. For some commonly used interview words, I thought beforehand about some words that they may be familiar with or may choose, so as to ensure that I could be consistent with them in terms of expression and vocabulary selection as much as possible.

4.3 “Not Clear Enough” Statements and Marginalized Groups

As previously mentioned, communication with participants was not always smooth and unobstructed, and we needed to continue the conversation with some confusion or misunderstanding sometimes. One of the reasons was that some participants' statements were "not clear enough", which was manifested in the disordered word order, the incoherence of sentences or the lack of causality between topics. These often lead to ineffective and inefficient communication to varying degrees, because I had to stop the interview frequently to clarify or summarize their statements. However, this did not always work, so when some sentences could not be clarified even after explanation or there were too many such problems in the conversation, I had to continue the conversation with confusion and wondered how well the interview would turn out.

Initially, I thus thought it would be best to avoid recruiting participants who might struggle to express themselves, in order to ensure smooth interviews. As a result, I included a criterion in my recruitment strategy that participants should have a clear understanding of their ethnic identity and be able to express it fully. However, my supervisors pointed out that this requirement could exclude individuals who may not have the resources or confidence to reflect on such questions due to the unequal impacts of class on education and feeling a right to self-expression. This is something Bourdieu mentioned in *Distinction* (Bourdieu et al. 2010, 411-414). I was reminded that silence itself can be a class-related issue. Realizing that this was an unfair restriction, I adjusted my recruitment approach.

My thoughts changed drastically when I met Gwen in the second stage of sample recruitment, an irregular migrant to the UK in her teens. By chance, I got to know and contacted Gwen through a co-worker at a Chinese restaurant. Our first meeting was in a shopping mall, where she was strolling with her children for the upcoming Christmas shopping. I invited them to dinner. During the meal, I gave her a brief introduction of myself and the project. Since most of the theories or topics I talked about were extremely unfamiliar to her, I had to describe each concept in a more popular and social way so that she could understand. At the same time, it was obvious that her narrative was not clear, coupled with a strong local accent and inability to speak English, which made our conversation very difficult and blocked. We even needed her son to constantly translate in English to ensure smooth communication.

Then when I invited her to participate in the interview, she first expressed doubt, "Me? Why do you want (to interview me)?" and said, "What is there to interview about me? I don't have... (job), and I don't have anything about... (perhaps referring to skills)." After my strong invitation, she finally agreed to the interview and asked me cautiously, "Do I need to pay for it?" I felt like I was hit, and suddenly realized that she had never been invited to participate in similar activities, so she did not know anything about these activities. Therefore, she was particularly nervous when she was invited, and had no idea what price she would pay for it. I smiled and said to her, "Of course not. Not only that, if you participate in the interview, I will also bring you a gift" - out of courtesy and gratitude, I would buy a souvenir from the University of Glasgow and gave it to the participants.

After agreeing on the time and place for the interview, we ended our initial meeting. I could not sleep that night when I returned home. I deeply realized that my previous views and comments on "this kind of people" who "did not express themselves clearly enough" were ignorant, even arrogant, and a kind of supercilious assumption that I thought I was clear in my expression and hence had set a threshold for recruiting participants that I thought was appropriate. I never really realized what these manifestations of "not clear enough" in expression meant, at least from a sociological perspective. As my supervisor reminded me, "an interview in which the interviewees find it hard to say something, or to articulate something, may be - in this respect - just as revealing as the interview in which a fluent respondent offers a detailed, reflexive account of their life." In other words, it is necessary to realize that these ways of expression are often not determined by themselves, but are

shaped by life experiences, and can also reflect their past experiences and current situations. This was of great value and significance to my own understanding of sociological research. It must be admitted that I knew this view before, but before I really experienced it, I still had only a very superficial understanding of it. As an ancient Chinese poem says, "Paper will sleep shallow, never know the matter want to practice".

I finally decided to put aside my arrogance, to understand and study everyone's stories with a more objective and equal attitude, and to try to connect these stories, even those that were difficult to understand or lacked logic, with real life, and to try to dig out the social reasons behind the stories. Therefore, during the interview, I recorded all her narratives very clearly and in detail, including a series of her non-verbal expressions. Admittedly, although I tried very hard to get close to her way of speaking and constantly summarize her words, our conversation was still full of confusion and misunderstandings. For example, when she talked about the birth of her third daughter in Glasgow - I present here the original version without adding any speculation:

> Before my little daughter was born, had a stomach-ache. She was born at the door, now in our house on the street. She was born at the door, upstairs at the back. The Hong Kong people helped us call the emergency number, and then the doctor came. …… Yes, my neighbour in Hong Kong called 999 and the doctor came later. I told you at that time, I would not have been born at the door. I had a stomach-ache and vomited at that time. I was making a bed over there. I put the bed up again, but it felt too high, so I made it down again. It took a long time. Then I ran to take a shower. At first, it was a little bit open, it hurt a lot, and then I crawled to the door, thanks to his help.

When conducting the above conversation and sorting out the transcripts later, I could not understand all her words, and could only speculate about the meaning with the help of the context. But what can be read is that behind the seemingly unclear words is the difficult situations and sufferings of marginalized groups who cannot integrate into mainstream society. At the same time, it is important to realize that this is also one of the reasons why they are under-researched groups. In other words, dialogue with the people in higher classes, who like to speak out, and who participate more in social activities always seems to be more easily accepted because they are easier to see. Correspondingly, those marginalized groups

who are in the lower class, have limited ways to speak out, and rarely participate in social activities are always easily ignored. At the same time, they themselves will choose to blur their own values and meanings. Social invisibility is often a two-way fact. The voices from marginalized groups need to be heard more, their stories need to be understood more, and they deserve more research. I think so and will always think so.

5. Conclusion

This chapter has described in detail the methods and processes used in this study, focusing on the design and specific process of sample recruitment, the methods of data research and processing, and some reflections on field work.

The twists and turns of participant recruitment highlight the importance of recruiting samples from different classes. Participants from more than 20 occupations provide sufficiently diverse life trajectories and rich ethnic identity characteristics for subsequent data analysis. After grounded theory coding, analysis, constant comparison and abstraction, the results of the data analysis will be presented in three parts. As you will read in the following chapters, the first part will introduce how the understanding of ethnicity is rooted in life trajectories and experiences, the second part will introduce the way that doxa and power and capital influence the division of ethnic boundaries, and the third part includes the way class influences, shapes and reproduces in two specific social spaces.

The issue of language translation runs through all stages from interviews to written work, which not only makes me aware of the class, professional and cultural nature of language selection and use, but also reminds me that I need to always pay attention to combining the individual's expression with her/his broader social and cultural background. Finally, some moving stories from the lowest-level participants and the interview process make people aware of their plight. At the same time, as a marginalized group, they are often also a group that lacks research due to the lack of channels for expression.

Part 1: Understanding Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity in Everyday Life and Social Factors

Chapter 3: The Self-Awareness and Fluctuation of Ethnic Identity

This chapter will focus on the ways in which ethnic identity is perceived in everyday life and attempts to relate it to broader social relations and contexts. As mentioned in the Chapter 1, ethnicity seems to matter only in certain societies and contexts, and it is sometimes associated with factors such as social exclusion, inequality, loyalty, while at other times it is secondary (Wimmer and Oxford University 2013, 2). By examining the participants' everyday understanding of ethnicity and ethnic identity and the factors associated with ethnicity when it is mentioned, this chapter attempts to answer three questions: 1) When and why does ethnicity become salience in everyday life? 2) Considering the situationist and nested character (see Moerman 1965, Okamura 1981, Wimmer and Oxford University 2013), how is the sense of one's ethnic identity positioned? And 3) What role does social class play in this process?

This chapter consists of two sections. First, I focus on the participants' reactions to ethnicity and ethnic identity. By capturing and sorting out the many chaotic views and articulations of ethnicity in everyday life, I try to figure out the social factors they associate with ethnicity in the context of talking about ethnicity, and the reasons for these association. Secondly, I organize the many moments of identity identification mentioned by the participants in the interviews. I analyse how their senses and understandings of ethnicity are affected by specific situations in daily life by sorting out and highlighting the moments of the participants' understanding of ethnicity (specially focusing on the moments when participants' expression of their ethnic identity changes), and relate these influences to the social class to which they position. Figuring out such issues will help to further understand the generative mechanisms by which ethnicity is understood in everyday life through the invoking of some specific social relations.

1. Intuitive Glance of Ethnicity: How People Understand Ethnicity in Everyday Life

As one of the classic social categories, ethnicity has often been inadvertently treated as a self-evident unit of observation and analysis (Wimmer and Oxford University 2013), which is also one of the assumptions that some scholars are currently criticizing and trying to break (see Brubaker 2004, Jenkins 2008, Wimmer and Oxford University 2013, etc.).

Placing the study of ethnic identity expression in the context of everyday life may help to explore the meaning and way in which ethnicity is present in the lives of participants. Because the everyday life approach allows us to capture and identify the dynamic, slight and complex social relations and practices that occur in ordinary life (Neal and Murji 2015). That is to say that the many complex details and trivial expressions in daily life may prompt participants to think about ethnicity from a richer and more diverse perspective, which would reveal the potential relationship between ethnicity and social factors. This may also be one of the reasons for the lack of research on ethnic identity in the context of everyday life, that is, people's expressions of their identities in everyday life are often chaotic and disorganized, and are sometimes (mis)considered to be difficult to clarify and therefore lack research significance (Smith 2015).

However, in my opinion, this selective neglect of the expression in everyday life has led to insufficient attention and research on social actors' understanding of ethnic identity. Because individuals' thinking in daily contexts often presents a more complex situation, which means that on the one hand, everyday life has a particularly "unbounded or disorderly quality" that results in identity categories that may be disrupted and fluctuated by "everyday relations and practices" (Smith 2015, 1138-1140). On the other hand, these disordered and chaotic expressions imply many influencing factors and clues about ethnic identification and categories. Some research has examined the manifestations of ethnicity in everyday life (e.g. Karner 2007), and generally acknowledges its complexity and hybridity. However, more research needs to be conducted to further pursue for some potential order in such a messy and complex phenomenon, such as in different ways of expression or different influencing factors. Therefore, figuring out the perspective and content that participants articulate when talking about ethnicity will help explore the diversified factors that shape and influence individual ethnic identification and expression in everyday life, further understand that the

mechanism of ethnic identity perception formation, thereby further broadening the research horizons and enriching research content. To this end, I first tried to understand and explore the participants' most daily, natural and intuitive impressions of the concept of ethnicity and ethnic identity.

The opening question was usually "What do you think ethnic identity is" or "What does ethnicity mean to you" or other similar forms. Afterwards, discussions on topics related to ethnicity, identity and nation were naturally brought in. In this session, the main cluster of questions ranged from "What is ethnicity / ethnic identity", "How do you understand ethnic identity", "What do you think your ethnic identity is", and "Why do you think so", etc. Interestingly, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, the issue of translatability of theoretical concepts arose in our conversations once participants were invited to engage in discussions about ethnicity. For this reason, the words such as "ethnicity," "nationality", "race" were used to explain and interpret each other in the interviews to cover all possible meanings and perspectives of ethnicity.

I consciously tried to avoid directly giving definitions of 'ethnicity' in the design of this session in order for the information obtained to be intuitive. I did so because I realized this approach often affected the participants' judgment and train of thought, causing them to enter a set framework directly, just like the previous conversations with my colleagues. For example, in the first interview, Yara, a doctoral student from southern China, wanted me to provide an example to better understand ethnicity.

> I: So, Ummm… What does ethnicity mean to you?
> Yara: What? Doctrine (the word has a similar pronunciation to ethnic in Mandarin)? What doctrine?
> I: Oh no, no, no, it is ethnicity, that is, like race, nation, or ethnic group, something like that.
> Yara: Oh oh oh. (nod). But I don't quite understand what you mean by ethnicity here yet. Can you give a rough example maybe?
> I: Well, it's like, do you think you are Chinese or British? Or should we say the Han people or some other ethnic minority? Or which group do you feel ... (you belong to more?)
> Yara: (Interrupt) Oh oh oh, I understand. You are asking me whether I am Chinese or

British. I think I am Chinese. I can't be a British because…

Two points were revealed here, in my opinion. First, a concept like ethnicity is often understood, in everyday life context, not as an abstract idea but as something that is applicable in real, concrete situations. Therefore, when participants were asked an abstract question about ethnicity, like "what is ethnicity", it was translated into a concrete question — “What ethnicity am I?” Second, it seems like here that once I offered the options first, for example, “Do you think you are Chinese or British (defined in terms of country angle)”, or “From which perspective do you think ethnic identity should be defined, nationality or subjective identity”, participants will fall into the “classic interview structure” and become answerers of questions or selectors of options rather than creators of questions. I was looking forward to getting more diverse and creative answers, so after experiencing the first few less-than-satisfactory responses from participants, I decided to modify my strategy by describing it in more detail rather than giving options directly. The situation changes accordingly, for example, when I was facing Yorick, a university lecturer,

I: So what does ethnicity mean to you? Or what do you think ethnicity is?
Yorick: Ethnicity? Do you mean race?
I: Ummm... Not exactly the same word, but it’s a similar concept—or ethnic group, nation, and so on.
Yorick: So where do you want me to start?
I: Ummm... What do you think? It's like... when we talk about ethnicity, what do you think it is in your first mind? How do you define it yourself?
Yorick: (Thinking)... About different cultural customs, maybe, because I am a minority (in China). So to be precise, I am not the dominant ethnic group in China, cause it's Han, you know...

The results showed that the participants' answers and the logic behind their answers were more diverse, which reflected that when they were suddenly asked about ethnicity-related topics, their way of thought would focus on different aspects. More specifically, on the one hand, there are different perspectives on the first impression of ethnicity. Generally speaking, the participants' thinking perspectives can be divided into three categories. Most participants chose to talk in terms of nation. In other words, when they thought about ethnicity, the first thing that came to their mind was Chinese or British. Some other participants considered it

from the perspective of the majority and minority ethnic groups within China. They emphasised that China is not a single ethnic country, but a multi-ethnic country with 56 ethnic groups. In addition, there would be few participants who thought from other perspectives, such as culture or civilization[2]. On the other hand, different participants may have different reference angles and contents even if the perspectives of their answers are similar. For example, among the same group of people who thought they were Chinese, some people said their self-identified as Chinese because they held Chinese passports and paid taxes to China; while others deemed that this was the salient identity because they had grown up in China, which had nothing to do with nationality but the place where they were born and raised; and the rest believed that it is because they identify more with Chinese culture, such as speaking Chinese more fluently as their mother tongue, understanding more about Chinese history, etc.

The diversity of responses implies that, firstly, ethnicity might not have a fixed, abstract meaning, but that it becomes socially meaningful only as it is asserted or claimed or ascribed in the context of real social relationships and settings. In that sense, what it 'means' cannot be easily reduced to a single, fixed or unified definition because that meaning is always contingent on the context in which it is being asserted. As mentioned above, it was in terms of some real and concrete things, situations or relations that participants used to explain ethnicity.

At the same time, it should be recognized that these perspectives of understanding ethnicity are different and diverse. For example, if the participants assumed that the relevant context is concerned with the experience of migration to the UK, then ethnicity, for them, might be taken to refer to Chinese vs. British identities. Correspondingly, if other participants assumed that the relevant context was a discussion amongst and within those who already 'share' a Chinese identity, then it may associate to regional or ethnic identity within China. Hence it is reasonable to believe that the perspectives that participants choose to understand ethnicity are rooted in the specific, situated context in which they are being asked to claim or name their identity, one's sense of their 'ethnic identity' is something which is always informed by,

[2] They usually quoted the views of a book or article. For example, participants who start from the perspective of civilization mentioned the view in Huntington's *The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order* that China is a civilization disguised as a country. (see Huntington, S. P. & R. Jervis (1997) The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order. *Finance and Development-English Edition,* 34**,** 51-51.)

and shaped by, their social experiences and by the wider context of their lives. This means that so-called 'ethnic identity' is not a fixed 'thing' but one deeply informed by the way in which their social experience has taught them to understand and make sense of the world.

Moreover, understandings of ethnicity also depend on the context in which they become salient, or in which someone has to act on those ideas. For immigrants, for instance, nationality or the experience of living in different countries is a background that makes them come to prominence, which might be one of the reasons why most participants thought of nation first when talking about ethnicity. This also seems to be relevant to how ethnicity is aroused in their daily lives, as well the reason why ethnicity is focused on and important to them in those particular contexts. Accordingly, if these contexts that make them salient change, then whether ethnicity is important to them and the contexts in which it is noticed may also change. In other words, ethnicity is a relational reality, what it means would be different according to the context in which it is being asserted and the social relations which are relevant in that setting.

2. Nationality and Class: Citizenship, Practicalities and An Imagined Community

The participants' understanding of ethnicity, as mentioned above, always tended to relate to some more concrete and realistic things or relations. I noticed that what was very evident across the interviews as a whole, was that understandings of ethnicity and of nationality were closely related. It was undeniable that as a researcher, I might have some inadvertent orientation to the interview for some reason[3]. However, one of the most important reasons, in my opinion, is the migrant attributes of participants. As mentioned above, transnational life experience is their unique experience compared to most "Chinese" in the general sense. Therefore, these backgrounds that make them stand out — whether to Chinese in the general or to researcher, might affect and shape the relational reality that they need to refer to in their understanding of ethnicity in the current context to a large extent.

[3] For example, I am keenly aware that because I am a Chinese national, when I was a questioner, I always seemed to be placed, even if unconsciously, in the identity of 'pure Chinese' or Chinese in the general sense, which distinguished me from or even opposed me to the participants who have lived in the UK for a long time and some of whom have British nationality or permanent residency. This may affect the direction of our conversation.

Correspondingly, their understanding of ‘ethnic identity’ was thus reflected in the reality of national relations. And it was noteworthy here that they showed a high degree of homogeneity in their claims regarding their own identity. Among the 29 participants I interviewed, apart from 2 participants who suggested it was difficult to define their ethnic identity and there was ambiguity and controversy — they seemed to prefer to describe themselves as “cosmopolite” — the other 26 participants expressed very firmly at the beginning of the conversation that they were Chinese.

It should be noted here that I am not claiming that they would hold this view at all times. As the previous section acknowledged, one’s understanding of ethnicity will vary depending on the context in which it is currently claimed or the relevant social relations it is based on. For example, I do not deny that some participants might also recognize other identities at the same time, such as also identifying with their British identity, which will be discussed later; or that they would choose different reference objects when our conversation took place in other contexts. For example, if our conversation took place within Mainland China, then more participants may refer to China’s internal ethnic minorities.

The phenomenon I want to focus on here is this. When the topic came to the discussion of national relations for the first time during the dialogue, and when respondents were facing some questions like "what do you think about your ethnic identity", they seemed to prefer to treat it as a question to which there could be only one answer. Thus the vast majority of participants responded to this question quite firmly that they were Chinese as if this was the ‘correct answer’ to the question. This is an unexpected phenomenon. Because the topic was set up as an open-ended question, there were no fixed options and answers; also, I tried to avoid all possible implicit expressions to avoid shaping their thinking at the very beginning of the conversation. This highly homogeneous answer makes me want to pursue these further questions: i) what were they talking about when they claimed their ‘ethnic identity’ was ‘Chinese’; ii) if their understanding of ‘ethnicity’ tended to treat this as synonymous with national identity, how did such understanding happen? Figuring out such issues will help to further understand the generative mechanisms by which ethnicity is understood in everyday life through the invoking of some specific social relations.

The first reasonable assumption is that, compared to an abstract and difficult-to-define topic like ethnicity (Eriksen and ProQuest 2010), nationality, especially in the narrow sense, has

more understandable and clearer boundaries and content, so that it can be easily and clearly be associated and referenced. Furthermore, it is worth pointing out that it might be further symbolically attributed and ratified by the state and formed as a condition of homogeneity (Anderson 2020) based on education and publicity, instilling a sense of loyalty into the public through symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1996, Bourdieu and Passeron 1990). This is a process that I will explore further in Chapter 6 in the analysis of symbolic violence in the educational process.

This seems to help explain the way some participants understood ethnicity. The results I compiled here show that when they described their ethnic identities nearly half of the participants described their first impressions of ethnicity in relation to clearly defined political phenomena, including passports, legal residency, paying taxes, etc.

- “I am surely a Chinese if we divide it by nationality.”

- “I am just a passer-by (to the British), my passport is a Chinese passport.”

- “I do not pay taxes to them (Scottish government), so why am I a Scottish? I am Chinese of course.”

For these participants, a reasonable explanation is that they analogized the concept of nationality when they first thought about ethnicity. In other words, they chose to understand ethnicity from the perspective of nationality, and chose to endow the meaning of concrete ‘nationality’ to the much more abstract ‘ethnicity’. Correspondingly, when thinking about ethnic identity, they naturally believed that one's ethnic identity is equivalent to one's national identity, and therefore they can clearly express the fact that they are Chinese.

In addition, as mentioned in previous section, in the specific context of these interviews, the Chinese nationality/passport of these participants might have become a feature that they thought made them stand out — or just out of place. Imagine holding a Chinese passport in the UK, and if the social circle around you is almost entirely full of Chinese people with British passports, this may be one of the reasons why they choose to use nationality in a narrow sense as an understanding of ethnicity. In other words, if some elements of the interview were changed, such as the interview location taking place in China, then they may

choose other perspectives to understand ethnicity.

Meanwhile, this feeling of being out of place implies, from a broader sense, the practical implications of state endorsed forms of self-identification. What makes these immigrant participants feel different is not only the nationality marked on their passport, but also the series of practical rights associated with the passport, such as the capacity to work, earn income, and pay taxes; as well as a series of invisible characteristics which arise from it, such as the different treatment they suffer in these areas.

Victoria Grace, for instance, mentioned her bumpy path to finding a job. She was born in a "*quite ordinary*" family in middle part of China, in her own words, "*my father is an ordinary employee of a public institution, and my mother is unemployed*". Since coming to the UK to study in 2017, she had been seeking job opportunities to stay in the UK, but it had not been easy. When the interview happened, Victoria Grace was going through a painful period where she was struggling to find a job but had failed many times after graduation. One of the important reasons for the failure was that a considerable number of the potential job positions on her list did not provide a work visa, which requires her to hold a local passport or have other ways to obtain legal residency. In her view, this is essentially a kind of exclusion and discrimination against her. *"To put it bluntly, these jobs prefer to recruit locals rather than outsiders like me. They (those employers) just did not say it directly.*" Therefore, she believed that her Chinese passport was the most important reason why she had trouble finding a job, and she regarded this as a symbol of ethnic identity. "*Of course you can think of yourself as British, but when you are looking for a job, you will find that the passport is a huge gap that you cannot cross. Holding such a (Chinese) passport means that you cannot take any advantage in the labour market here (British). Sooner or later this will snap you back to reality.*" Her frustration was palpable.

Victoria's distress was that she had to prove her right to stay and work in the UK, otherwise she would most likely find herself rejected by the workplace and have to leave the UK, which was viewed as "*a kind of failure*" by her. Nationality was a barrier here, inscribing a border through the state-granted rights such as residence and work, so that she had to worry about her legal identity and situation for a long time. This long-term worry could, in a sense, be regarded as a kind of chronic violence caused by "precarity and restricted access to the labour market and support services" (see Stewart and Sanders 2024, 403). Therefore, some

participants seemed to make nationality synonymous with ethnicity because the former identity is so practically salient in day-to-day life. They chose nationality to understand ethnicity because of their experiences living in the UK, especially when they have suffered some hardships and bumpy treatment. They understand ethnicity not so much as a property or trait but are more concerned with what ethnicity means as a practical category. This relates to the wider encounters, sufferings and benefits that people experienced in real life. At the same time, it must be recognized that this may be related to other factors, such as class, religion, gender, etc., which involves a broader sense of intersectionality, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

However, not every participant suffered from Victoria's dilemma. Freddy Peter, for instance, was not troubled by it for long. He was born and raised in northern China, lived in the UK for 15 years, became a British citizen five years ago, initially came to London as an international student, and has now been engaged in virus-related research in Glasgow for eight years. In contrast to Victoria's situation, Freddy's family seemed to be more affluent and had greater social capital. "*My parents are both business executives, and they also wanted me to come to the UK because many of their friends are here.*" This made his job search smoother. "*After graduation, I first went to a company for an internship. The boss of that company was familiar with my father. Later, I decided that I still wanted to work in the university, so I went to (my current workplace).*" At the same time, Freddy also mentioned that when he tried to "*stay in the UK [about 10 years ago], the immigration policy was not as strict and tight as it is now*".

From these two cases, we could read that, on the one hand, social policies have a crucial impact on immigration, especially in different period and for immigrants in different social positions, as many sociologists have pointed this out (see Stewart and Sanders 2024, Erel and Ryan 2019a). On the other hand, more importantly, the capital owned by immigrants in different classes affects the difficulty of their obtaining legal status. Compared with Victoria's 'ordinary' family background, Freddy's more "prominent" social origin made him face less resistance when obtaining a visa and residence. Nationality thus had different degrees of saliency and boundary effects for them. This further affected their sense of belonging and legitimate cultural and social participation, as Erel and Ryan (2019b) point out, thus affecting their understanding of ethnicity. Victoria believed that ethnicity meant a boundary or an obstacle between her and other British in terms of practical work and

opportunities, which was difficult to cross, while Freddy felt nothing about it. After the interview, he sought to persuade me to stay in the UK after graduation as if everything was easy. When I mentioned to him that I needed a job opportunity to apply for a visa and it was quite difficult, he said lightly, "*then you can just find one, through your friends or parents.*"

However, this did not mean that Freddy considers himself to be lumped in with the British. In fact, his understanding of ethnicity in the interviews pointed to leisure, hobbies and entertainment.

> Freddy: Yes. Because after all, I have already become a naturalized citizen.
> I: That must be very convenient.
> Freddy: Indeed, compared to before (when I didn't get British citizenship), it is definitely more convenient. Whether it is living here, finding a job, or traveling, because you know that Chinese passports have great restrictions on where to go……
> ……
> I: Well. Ummm… So even if you have become a British citizen now, you still think that you are Chinese and not British?
> Freddy: Well. How should I put it, naturalization this thing, I think it can only represent where it is more convenient for you to live and find a job, and where to pay taxes. But this does not mean that you are from here. So if you ask me where I am from, in my own opinion, I definitely identify myself more as Chinese.
> ……
> I don't think naturalization means becoming someone from anywhere, and the British don't think so either… Like my usual hobbies, I still watch Chinese TV dramas and variety shows in my spare time, because after all, I'm familiar with them. I also watch British [entertainment programs] occasionally, but I don't really have much interest in them… There's also a bit of [differentiation] in career promotion opportunities. I think it actually depends on one's social circle, you know... When considering promotions, it's not wrong to give priority... at least relatively priority to one's own people…

In Freddy's context, we could read that, the so-called "nationality" is more like a bureaucratic tool that can provide life and work convenience, and needs to be distinguished from the "identity" that is more of a subjective form of identification. More specifically, on the one

hand, having British nationality does bring Freddy relatively more expedient job opportunities and social welfare in the UK; on the other hand, having a legally defined nationality does not mean that you can integrate into the local group. There are still huge differences in all aspects of life, from lifestyle to career path, and these differences will also lead to a sense of alienation, which in turn affects the sense of belonging to the mainstream group. Therefore, for Freddy, even if he meets all of the institutional requirements for becoming a British citizen, has conducted and passed the naturalization test, got a British passport, pays taxes for the United Kingdom, etc., he still choses to self-identify as Chinese. Here he distinguishes between objectively definable nationality and subjective ethnic identity and recognizes the coexistence of the two.

The concept of Chinese as a ‘nationality’ mentioned by Freddy here, is different from the narrow citizenship mentioned above, incorporating a broader range of factors including shared language, lifestyle and customs, which are also the things his "usual hobbies" relied on. It is necessary to realize that the concept of nationality in the narrow sense mentioned above, which is symbolically granted or approved by the state, can be easily expanded into a virtual community. "An imagined community" is thus constructed based on a common language and historical narrative, and through education, media and other means of communication (see Anderson 2020). In this sense, the "national identity" that the remaining participants refer to when talking about their ethnic identity seems to have a clear reference.

First, when some participants claim that they belong to the ‘Chinese’ group, they often do not need to have any direct interaction with most other members of the group. Instead, they feel a sense of belonging more through “ethnic” experiences in everyday life. For example, the series of hobbies mentioned by Freddy above, watching domestic entertainment programs - often including a few specific mainstream programs; listening to Chinese music, especially liking a few famous singers; and listening to or reading some Chinese reading materials, including but not limited to books, magazines, news, and especially a wide range of texts and articles on various social media.

— “Do you listen to music?”
“Of course, especially Jay Chou's songs! I love them!”

— “I like the articles on many WeChat[4] public accounts very much, and I will read them whenever I have time. I think some articles are very thorough in analysis...”

— “When I am not working, I will watch short videos, such as Douyin and Kuaishou[5], which are quite interesting.”

Although the preferred form, topics and content vary from person to person, the compilation of the interview transcripts shows that these daily behavioural habits related to “Chinese identity” are shared by the vast majority of participants and are generally extracted when talking about “Chinese identity” for the first time as ‘proof’ of their belonging to this group. It is worth noting that as the interviews progressed, the participants generally nuanced their accounts as they came to reflect on other scenes in their daily lives, such as some living habits related to “British identity”, as will be discussed in the next section. Therefore, we have reason to believe that when these participants claim to be in this group, in addition to any actual connection with other members of the group, they rely more on common media, such as print media and other types of social media, where people can read the same content, learn about the same historical events and cultural symbols, thus creating a kind of "synchronicity" that makes them feel connected to those who are also reading these contents. This is also one of the key reasons for the formation of the imagined community (Anderson 2020).

Second, some participants would emphasize the specificity of the “Chinese” group by asserting some “Chinese”-specific values and cultural concepts, such as some traditional virtues that are generally recognized by most Chinese people. Filial piety, for instance, which is considered an essential quality in China, meaning that children should fulfil their obligation to support their parents, both physically (providing the necessities of life and the quality should be as good as possible) and psychologically (like respecting parents in words and attitude).

— "The virtue of filial piety is the foundation of all goodness (a Chinese proverb). I

[4] WeChat is a widely used application in China, which has functions such as instant messaging, social networking, and payment. Users can establish public accounts to publish articles, long posts, etc.
[5] Douyin and Kuaishou are both Chinese social entertainment platforms that focus on short video creation and sharing. Users can record their lives, express their creativity and interact with global audiences through a variety of content formats.

think this is unique to our Chinese. We cannot throw it away just because we came here (Britain). We must protect these virtues."

— "Then I will go back (to China) every year to see my parents. They are older now. Do we Chinese people pay attention to filial piety? Although I can't stay with them, I still have to go back to visit them regularly."

— "So I still feel guilty when I mention about my parents. I feel that from this aspect, I am not filial enough. When I was young, I often made my parents angry because of many things, until I am old like now, I can't stay with them. Fortunately I have older siblings who help me look after (them)."

These special "cultural concepts" are generally rooted in historical and cultural narratives, and are symbolized as part of national uniqueness through government propaganda and other means, and then internalized by individuals through a series of social practices and daily interactions. Through such a "shared symbol system" (see Goffman 2021, Anderson 2020) constructed by many concepts, values and beliefs, members can establish an imagination of common history and culture, have a shared identity, and thus form a sense of pride and loyalty.

— "Like the people we just talked about, who hate their own country, I look down on them. Our country is so good. With such an excellent culture and such good traditions, I look down on them anyway."

— "I think our country is really great. Whether it's cultural or other aspects, I really think and love that I am Chinese from the bottom of my heart."

— "Don't people all say that? (They) said that China is the only civilization in the world that has not been interrupted. I think it is really not easy. In addition, our country is now stronger, and we are not bullied like before, so no one can look down on us Chinese outsiders."

It is worth noting that this series of symbolized characteristics can easily form some self-evident doxas about ethnicity through education or other forms of social media, so that

people misunderstand that there is some kind of innate connection or quality which distinguishes them from other groups. Once these doxas are formed, they are somewhat arbitrary and can easily form a chain of evidence in different social phenomena, which is difficult to break, as Bourdieu (1992) mentioned. I will discuss this part in detail in the next chapter.

The case of Victoria and Freddy, first, reiterates the fact that people's understanding of ethnicity does not always follow the same path, but needs to be understood as something articulated in specific contexts. More specifically, one's understanding of ethnicity always depends on the attribution or associational context which serves to define the ways in which they feel different. In turn, therefore, we could also say that ethnicity is important to them, or activated, in those particular contexts.

Second, the different ways in which Victoria and Freddy understand, refer and divide ethnic boundaries suggest the influence of class on the way immigrants view ethnicity. More specifically, if one's understanding of ethnicity always depends on the context in which it is discussed or claimed, then class determines, in a sense, which context be chosen or highlighted as the reference background for understanding ethnicity. In other words, class, or the different social positions of actors, affects their experiences and feelings in daily practice, making ethnicity salient in different situations to different degrees and in different ways, thus determining the context in which participants are able to claim ethnicity and the way in which they choose to distinguish between groups.

More specifically, for Victoria and Freddy, where the former had to worry about residency rights and had to find ways to prove her legal status, the latter had already easily solved this problem, largely thanks to certain advantages that came with his class background. Without having to worry about rights such as work and welfare, Freddy had time to experience and think about cultural, history, political and other differences, which meant that he could participate more in cultural and social life. Therefore, we must realize that ethnicity is not just about a series of symbolic boundaries such as shared culture and history, although they undeniably play an important role, but also is related to the social class situation in a broader sense — the rights subjects have, the benefits they enjoy, certain difficulties they have to face, and the ways and orders of practice in life. Therefore, in everyday practice, the boundaries of groups bring different forms and degrees of obstacles to immigrants in

different social positions, as well as different crossing costs, and the encounters and feelings in this process make ethnicity saliency in different ways and degrees, thus playing different roles in the participants' understanding of ethnicity.

3. Ethnic Identity in Between Situations: The Process of Identity Fluctuation

So far, I have illustrated that the expression of ethnic identity always relies on specific social relations and life scenarios, and have demonstrated that how concrete social relations can be equated with ethnicity taking national identity as an example, and also discussed the role of class in this process. Now, I will try to link ethnic identity with particular situations and life scenarios, exploring how ethnic identity is constructed in specific life scenarios, and how one's understanding and feeling of ethnicity might be affected by the transformation of scenes.

As the conversations progressed, another phenomenon that I noticed was that almost all of the participants would gradually waver to varying extents in the articulation of a Chinese identity that they emphasized at the beginning of the dialogue. Their transformations can be roughly divided into three types: i) some of them would describe as themselves "*not Chinese enough*", at least relative to what they thought they were at the beginning of the conversation. For example, some believed that in terms of thinking, especially political thinking, they would identify more with Britain/Western countries after coming to the UK; ii) some of them would reflect that they may be more "cosmopolitan" rather than solely belong to a "Chinese" ethnicity in their subjective identification. For example, some people gradually realized that they preferred food from all over the world in their daily lives instead of just loving Chinese food; iii) some of them would realize and admit that their acceptance in China is much lower than they had initially suggested (e.g. based on their experience of returning to China to visit relatives after settling Britain), resulting in a decreased sense of belonging and a suggestion that "*even if I consider myself Chinese, I am still different from other Chinese people*". Therefore, they acknowledged that in these scenarios they should not be counted as "*the same Chinese as their former selves*."

These transformations, while not necessarily meaning that the strong identifications towards Chinese identity displayed by the participants at the beginning of the interview were just an

illusion, do at least indicate that this identification is not inherent, consistent, and immutable, but rather conditional and contextual. Like Bourdieu (1999) pointed out, our interviews, to some extent, by asking participants to step back from and consider aspects of their lives and experiences which are not usually subject to such consideration, may create spaces of reflexivity.

3.1 Ethnic Identity in Situations

This fluctuation, first, may suggest that even the same person's understanding of ethnic identity depends on the context in which reflection occurs. In other words, participants' understandings of ethnic identity varied when they reflected in different situations, especially when focusing on some daily habits that could reveal the relationships between "themselves" and "others" but were usually unquestioned, such as diet. This may be because that the dialogue simulated a more concrete, practical, and lifelike scene for the participants, thus creating a space for deeper and more complicated reflection of their ethnic experience. Volini Gia, for instance, who came to Glasgow to study during her PhD, has been working as a university lecturer for three years now. Although Gia repeatedly emphasised her Chinese identity at the beginning of the conversation - given the shared Chinese-speaking, understanding of history and culture, etc., her position wavered when we mentioned some specific daily scenes in the subsequent conversation, such as food and housing,

> I: For example, if I ask you now, I mean where are you more accustomed to eating, including where you live? What would you think?
> Gia: I think my diet is okay, (I mean) I mainly eat Chinese food. After all, after living for so many years, Western food can only be used as a seasoning and eaten occasionally, but I definitely eat more stir-fried vegetables and rice from Chinese food.
> I: Well yes, you mean that you can eat pasta, burgers, fish and chips, etc., but you don’t eat them that frequently, right?
> Gia: Probably, but when you put it like that, it seems like I have eaten a lot. Basically every week we eat pizza and pasta. Fish and chips are often eaten near the school, so on average, this is not a few hahaha. Yeah, it seems like a lot, but in short, like I have to eat more Chinese food, like I have to eat everything hahaha.
> I: Hahaha, indeed. After all, you have lived in the UK for so many years. And what

about accommodation?

Gia: I think I actually prefer the accommodation here because I am the kind of person who likes more private space. Over here (in the Glasgow), I think there is more of a sense of boundary. Neighbours don't get very close to each other. The most they do is say hello and chat for a while. But in China feels that there are too many people and it is too dense. Another is that I always feel that everyone is too close, and I also like to talk about others, lacking this sense of mutual space. Anyway, I think living here is more comfortable.

I: This must be a change you made after coming here. You probably didn't feel this way when you lived in China before.

Gia: That's for sure, I've never been exposed to life here before. After coming here for a long time, I actually gradually started to feel this way. Now I feel uncomfortable returning to my country. Hey, don't say that, now I suddenly recalled the question you asked me before, about that.... that standard about being Chinese. I suddenly thought that if this is the case, then I am not as Chinese as I said. After all, I can't accept many things in China anymore, unlike before. This also includes many concepts as well…

The diet and living environments mentioned in the dialogue invited Gia to step back and reflect on these aspects of her concrete life scene. Through her daily diet and the places she has lived before, she could experience the process and differences of "becoming Chinese/British" or "living like a Chinese/British". This provided her a potential space for self-experience, and she could freely release her subjectivity to experience, observe and reflect on her daily behaviour patterns. She thus gradually realized that many of her ethnic experiences and feelings in her daily life had changed since coming to Glasgow. These differences then increasingly sketched a seemingly plausible and believable boundary of ethnicity, and all these changes led her to understand that she had crossed the ethnic boundary, thereby creating a sense of doubt about her previous sense of identification and belonging.

From the perspective of Gans (1979), Gia's ethnic experience might be undergoing a slight transformation from the "core social or cultural life of an ethnicity" to "Symbolic Ethnicity". The former refers to a series of fundamental characteristics and essential elements of an ethnic group's common living, including language, family structure, social networks, and intergenerational relationships, which are important mechanisms for groups to preserve their

identity (see Gans 1962). These had been diluted as Gia migrates out of the host society. The latter includes some surface-level expressions, such as festival celebrations, traditional food, etc. (Gans 1979). As Gia immigrated to the destination country for a longer time, she seems to be able to maintain these symbolic ethnic experiences only in some particular situations and moments.

> Gia: Hey, wait a moment. It's true what you said. I definitely do like to eat Western food more than before, This is indeed a change. And these are changes that can only happen when you come here, because you cannot taste these in China, aren't they? ... And the few times I went back to China, I felt more and more that Chinese society was no longer suitable for me. Their family and social relationships were too complicated (for me). You have to face a lot of social engagements[6] [应酬 in Chinese words].

This suspicion is rooted in social practice, driven from everyday life. She realized that she could no longer blend into the domestic groups in China but had differences in many everyday life practices and experiences. This is also reflected in her use of "they" to describe relatives and friends in China in the above narrative. A boundary was thus drawn between her and "other Chinese", which also caused her to waver in her articulation of her ethnic identity in the current situation.

> Gia: If you say that, it seems that I am no longer so Chinese. Do you understand that? It’s just like… Ummm… like that I am different from who I was before, and also different from Chinese people in general. Yes, it's that feeling, feeling that I am different from who I imagined myself to be.

Unlike Gia's firm declaration of her "Chinese identity" at the beginning of the interview, she had a new understanding of her ethnic identity in the current situation and admitted that she was "not Chinese enough". This transformation, in my opinion, is because the context of our conversation has changed, and the set of social practices she refers to when reflecting on

[6] In Chinese culture, '应酬' refers to social activities or gatherings, often involving meals, drinks, or formal events, aimed at maintaining relationships or fulfilling social obligations. While '应酬' is seen as a way to strengthen personal or professional connections, it can sometimes, like here, feel like a burdensome duty rather than a voluntary choice.

ethnicity has also changed accordingly. More specifically, in the current context, her understanding of identity referred to daily diet, accommodation, family structure, and different modes of social interaction, which was different from the language and understanding of history and culture in the previous one. Therefore, compared with the previous context, she had achieved a redivision of ethnic boundaries and a repositioning of her ethnicity location in society.

At the same time, this transformation also implies that, in my opinion, one's identification with their ethnic identity is not just about thinking about "what they are" - although in most cases this is how we think about ethnicity because it is more direct, more intuitive and more defining, but also about thinking about "what they are not". In this case, one of the reasons why Gia's claim to her ethnic identity changed is that she identified that she did not belong to certain "Chinese" groups based on everyday practice, and repositioned herself through these reflections of "what she is not".

It is worth emphasizing that the division of ethnic boundaries and the repositioning of one's ethnic identity are not a linear process. In other words, this does not mean that Gia has a deeper or more accurate understanding of ethnicity and identity in the current context. This is just a self-direction and reference to different social relations, reality and preferences, representing the capture and positioning of identity in different situations.

The results here again point to the situationality of ethnic identity. This implies that, on the one hand, it should be recognized that social actors' understanding and feelings about their ethnic identity are always situational, and constructed in the situation. In other words, once the context switches, their understanding of their ethnic identity may shift as the reference relationship changes. On the other hand, the research of ethnic identity should always be captured and analysed in context, something which most current identity research focuses on (see Brubaker, Loveman and Stamatov 2004, Brubaker 2006, Wimmer and Oxford University 2013, Ramos et al. 2024). More specifically, the ethnic identity expression of actors should be explored within certain specific contexts, rather than treating it as a universal matter that can be widely applied in various scenarios, thereby blurring its specificity and generalizing a particular situation, as Bourdieu reminds us (Bourdieu 2017).

3.2 Ethnic Identity in Between Situations

As the interviews deepened and continued, I gradually realized that one possible drawback of the situational analysis of ethnic identity may be that it is easy to fall into the trap of oversimplifying identity. In other words, although the study of ethnic identity needs to be captured and analysed in particular contexts, it is necessary to realize that ethnic identity is constantly flowing and difficult to divide by context. As Tavory (2018) pointed out, actors do not simply jump from one situation to another, but exist between them. From this perspective, ethnic identity is sticky and always has temporal and cross-contextual references. For example, even if Gia believed that she was "not Chinese enough" in the current context, it did not mean that she was denying her familiarity with Chinese history and culture in the previous context, nor does it mean that she was refusing to be classified as part of a Chinese group in that situation, but based on these recognitions. From this perspective, Gia's understandings and reflections on her ethnic identity were more complicated than in the previous context because more factors were taken into consideration. In other words, a richer and more diverse range of factors contributes to her perception of her ethnic identity in the current context. This thus requires us, on the one hand, when analysing ethnic identity in a particular situation, to remember that it is necessary to consider its temporal attributes and its connection with other situations, and on the other hand, if the interview covers a period of time, then we may capture how identity exists between situations, so that how multiple factors jointly affect identity construction can be paid attention to and analysed to present the complexity of identity expression in everyday life. Furthermore, it should be noted that many factors that influence ethnic identity, such as class, can have long-term effects on ethnic identity in persistent ways.

Now let me provide another example to present this in more detail. Kathy Gwen, who followed her husband to the UK through illegal immigration in 2001, initially lived in London as a refugee, and then came to Glasgow and obtained British identity four years later. During her more than 20 years of living in Britain, she gave birth to three children and the eldest has entered university to study. Since her husband works as a chef in Chinese restaurants, she does not have to be worrying about her financial situation. Therefore, she has only worked 4 odd jobs within 22 years, each of which did not last more than half a year, and the shortest one only lasted for 3 months.

Although her account sounded a bit messy so that sometimes I was not sure I followed the point through lengthy narratives, as I presented in the methodology, the narrative expressed personal ideas without modification, which often could show the connection between scenes and identities more intuitively. More specifically, the fragmented and messy expression cuts her narrative into different scenes, and she expresses different senses of belonging in these fragmented scenes. Through Gwen's story, I will try to illustrate that i) her ethnic identity has different references in different contexts, including social relations, ways of experiencing ethnicity, and forms of culture, and is combined with a broader social background. Her understanding of ethnicity is therefore also shaped by her social position in a specific situation; ii) When she thinks about ethnicity in different contexts, it includes both which groups she "belongs to" and which groups she "does not belong to". The latter is always used to measure and strengthen her own cognition of her ethnic identity, which highlights the relational quality of ethnicity; and iii) her understanding of her ethnic identity in particular contexts has temporal and cross-contextual references, so as the conversation progresses and she reflects on ethnicity in more contexts, more and more reference realities are taken into account, and juxtaposes more groups that she "does not belong to", her understanding and expression of her ethnic identity becomes more complex. This highlights the long-term impact of class on her understanding of ethnicity.

At the beginning of the interview, her first reaction to ethnicity was "*I hold a British passport, not a Chinese passport.*" Taking passport and nationality as references, I initially thought that she might equate passport with ethnic identity. However, after analysing her entire narrative, I suggested this may be related to her initial arrival in the UK as a refugee. She thus suffered a long period of deprivation of many rights due to lack of legal status, as well as a difficult experience in obtaining a British passport, which will be presented in detail below. As the initial reaction, this was probably the background that she thought made her most prominent and impressive at the time. In other words, her position and experience as a marginalized group made ethnicity salience.

Then I turned the topic to her own views, and asked, "*So do you think you are a British?*" She denied it flatly, "I *am definitely Chinese, I am not (British). You see, I cannot speak English, and I rarely (communicate) with British people, and I have almost no (British) friends.*" When the topic came to her understanding of her ethnic identity, her reference was language, social network and social interaction. Unlike Gia, who had a social circle with

many British people, Gwen's social circle was mostly Chinese, which also affected her social interactions and navigated her ethnic positioning. By endowing the characteristics of "speaking English" and "communicating with British people" to the 'British group' in this context, she realized that she did not belong to this group and instead positioned herself as belonging to the 'Chinese group'. And one of the main reasons for being different from Gia was that Gwen's social background was worse, "*My family is very poor, you northern (people) do not understand, just cannot survive (the kind).*" This directly affected her education level, "*There are almost no people in our village who go to school, and my education level is almost the highest*[7]"; and her attitude towards socializing, "*I do not dare to talk to them [the British], I cannot speak English, there is nothing to talk about (topics), I do not (understand) anything.*"

After a while, we talked about her living preferences in different societies. She mentioned the medical system, she believed that the medical benefits in the UK were much better than those in China, so she clearly expressed her yearning and belonging to British society,

> Because the welfare here is good, if you give birth to a child in China, it will cost a lot of money. But giving birth here is free, and medical treatment is also free, and Ummm … my child's schooling. That is (why) I can raise three children here. This is (impossible) in China [she shook her head], (which is why) I want to live here.

In contrast, the Chinese medical system was,

> As my mother said, what is (the point of) paying for medical insurance now? Public hospitals do not have any equipment or medicines. Now they are all in private hospitals. As soon as you go to (a public hospital), they will push you to a private hospital. If you go to the (private) hospital, private hospital equipment still costs lots of money. Even if you pay for medical insurance, you cannot reimburse it. If you pay for it, it will be in vain. Private hospitals have all the (equipment and medicines), but public hospitals do not have any. Why do you pay for medical insurance like this? ... The last time my mother had (an operation), before the New Year, she had to pay for it out of her own pocket, and she could not be reimbursed. She could not be

[7] In the previous conversation, she mentioned that her education level was technical secondary school in mainland China, and that she hardly learned English during her schooling.

> reimbursed, only the government (people and projects related to the government or those who have had relations with the government) could reimburse her ... I cannot go back, it is not good back there, I, my families are all (belong) here.

Finally, she said solemnly, " *... but even if I go back to China (to see family and relatives for a while), I will still come back. I am not used to living in China, so I will definitely still live here. My family is here.*" In this context, her reflection came to the practicality of ethnicity, focusing on a series of rights and entitlements brought about through citizenship. British society has some medical benefits and advantages that are not available in China, which of course requires her to hold a British passport. Therefore, given the series of benefits brought to her by her British passport and some of her previous terrible experiences such as her mother's medical treatment, she believed that British society was and would be her preferred place of residence in the future. Her reflection on the practicality of ethnicity and the navigation of the boundary in this context include memories of past events and directions for future residence. Her current understanding of her ethnic identity, therefore, was being jointly influenced by these factors, events and social institutions. Moreover, in this context, she identified another "Chinese group" to which she does not belong (or does not wish to belong). For Gwen, this group meant poor health insurance and unaffordable medical expenses in this context. It is important to recognize that this is closely tied to her social class, as it directly affects what she can afford. In contrast, if we took Gia as an example, for instance, when discussing medical system and childbirth, she mentioned the lack of experience of British doctors and fond memories of childbirth, as she did not have to worry about these basic medical expenses. This difference leads them to reference different social realities when considering ethnicity and their sense of belonging.

However, if we shift the focus to another context within the conversation, we can see that Gwen's understanding and navigation of ethnicity fluctuate due to changes in the reference in the given scenario, even when faced with the same subject. For ease of comparison, we still take the healthcare in the UK as an example. When talking about “the moments when she was not adapting to the UK”, she immediately thought of her “unpleasant” experience in a British hospital, and expressed confusion and anger about it. For example, she mentioned the treatment she received during childbirth:

> Everyone in China is afraid of having a fever. If you have a fever, you have to cover

> yourself with a thick quilt and wear thick clothes. Sweat poured out all over my body, and sometimes your pants get soaked when you have a fever. This is what we do in China. You can just sweat, and the fever will be cured. It was different here. The window was also open, and the clothes were not brought. One day my son had a fever, and he was asked to go outside. It was okay if he did not go. If he went there and the wind blew, it would be more troublesome because of the diarrhoea caused by his cold belly button. Sometimes I worry about my children. I feel like I cannot trust (the British). And they (her children) can't adapt.

Her reference here was the different ways hospitals treat fever. In her opinion, this seemed to be attributed to different customs and lifestyles. Based on a series of phenomena and practices in this scene as a reference, she identified another 'British group', characterized by "not being allowed to wear thick clothes when having a fever" or other related customs and ways of dealing with diseases. And thus re-navigated the ethnic boundaries, categorizing herself and other Chinese relatives into a 'Chinese group' with shared customs, and repositioning herself. Her ethnic identity and sense of belonging, in this scenario, had become complicated due to different references and contradictions in reality. "*It seems that medical care in the UK is not that good. Although it is free, it is not easy to adapt to,*" I said. "*Yes, if I could give birth in China, why would I be here. But you said... Alas ... [silence] ... there is really no way to say it...*" She frowned, looked embarrassed, and sighed. In addition to the above factors, the customs of different societies are also taken into consideration, accompanied by the emotional maintenance of different factors-practicality and customs obviously follow different emotional foundations, as well as more memories. They were entangled with each other and mixed together, making her struggle to articulate the group she should or wanted to belong to.

After that, we talked about daily diet, and she expressed a strong preference for Chinese food and her belonging to the Chinese identity.

> I: So do you eat more Chinese food now? Like your husband is also a Chinese chef, isn't he? And you eat less British food like chips and fried fish, right?
> Gwen: Ummm... the main thing is rice, and some stir-fried vegetables. They (British people) eat simply, but the children may be (accustomed to British food). They will eat bread and French fries, but I will eat rice noodles and sweet potatoes, this is how

> we Southerners (of China) eat.
> I: However, you have been here for such a long time now, so I think you should have gradually learned how to cook, right? I think when you first came here, including when you were in London, it might have been inconvenient for you to cook at that time, right?
> Gwen: Before I moved to Glasgow, it was really inconvenient to cook rice. When I lived with refugees, they all unified, unified to cook the rice and we would buy it. We can't cook (not allowed for security reasons), (but) some people cook secretly, and they can make money (by selling cooked rice). So at that time (we) were forced to eat with the British (most of the time) ... If you are not used to eating, some kind people may see your friends giving you more (cooked rice). Maybe these (rice) are too little, and he (the patient) will have a stomach-ache.

Memories of the past brought back sad events, she was a little sobbed, "*So I would regret it very much at that time, just feeling why I had to do this.*" By contrast, when we later talked about her diet in Glasgow, she looked much more relaxed and said,

> Moving to Glasgow now is a bit better (than before). At least you can do whatever you want. But it is definitely not as good as the food I had in China. You see, the food (I ate when I returned home this time) was very good. [She showed me some photos of the delicacies she had eaten during her return to China, as well as some of her children's funny expressions when they tasted Chinese delicacies.] Hahaha... they are my kids, you saw them last night. My kids also love (the food), including the Chinese high-rise buildings. They often clamour to go back. … So when you asked me just now, I must be Chinese, not British. And now even though I am back (from China), I still miss my time in China.

We should realize that in addition to expressing Gwen's preference for diet and thereby juxtaposing another 'British group' to which she did not belong, these moving and poignant testimonies, can also give a glimpse into her experiences at different stages in the UK - for example, vividly showing the suffering she experienced as a refugee in London - and can be used to analyse the formation process of ethnic identity in a broader social context. More specifically, when Gwen told me about her unfortunate experiences in London, in addition to expressing the uncomfortable diet, she was also accusing the deprivation of her dietary

freedom by the environment she lives in, and also implied the difficulty of being forced to make a living when she lacked legal status and was not allowed to work, all of which highlighted the profound impact of the social position she was in at the time. In other words, participants in other classes, such as Gia, did not have to worry about and be forced to deal with the deprivation of these rights caused by illegal status because they had never been in such a predicament. From this perspective, dietary preferences are also a reflection of class because they imply people's ability, scope and rights in consumption and choice.

Similarly, when she arrived in Glasgow, in addition to expressing her preference for Chinese diet and cultural attachment, she might also be expressing her gratitude for being able to freely choose food after obtaining British citizenship, and perhaps the happiness of being able to return home with her children freely - obviously this was something that cannot be done without legal identity. It is worth pointing out here that the efforts that must be made to obtain legal status are also a manifestation of class, as shown in the examples of Victoria and Freddy in the previous section. What surprised me a little was that her children expressed their love for Chinese food, which is different from my conversations with some participants, who all “accused” their children of preferring British food. The children's preferences would also subtly affect their understanding of ethnicity and ethnic identity through the boundaries they draw within the family.

At the same time, the dietary preferences mentioned by Gwen were also framed in terms of temporality. In this dietary context, Gwen's sense of ethnic identity included feelings about diet and suffering in past experiences, current daily dietary preferences and cultural attachments, and dietary and life expectations for a period of time in the future. This suggests that, on the one hand, past experiences and feelings, or one's reflections on past experiences, will have a lasting impact on conceptions of ethnic identity, and will be reflected in ethnic expressions in particular contexts later. On the other hand, one's understanding of his or her ethnic identity at the moment is always located in a given time and place, it is always influenced and shaped by the encounters and experiences they are referring to when they are talking about it. In other words, it is reasonable to believe that once the time referred to and thought about when talking about ethnic identity changes, or their understanding of ethnic identity is interviewed at different times, their expression will also change accordingly.

Therefore, the fluctuations in participants' expressions of ethnic identity during the interview

process can be understood as a reflection of the continuity and complexity of the identification process, like Gwen's understanding, which was always affected by reflections in different situations, that is, between these different situations. Meantime, in this process, claims or ideas about what they are tacitly re-enforced or given weight by the juxtaposition of a different 'other' identity which the respondent feels is not theirs or from which they may feel themselves deliberately excluded even if they wanted to lay claim to it. Just like Gwen's understanding of ethnic identity was always highlighted and consolidated by constantly juxtaposing the ‘British group’ and the ‘Chinese group’ to which she did not belong.

Therefore, a complex way in which social actors understand ethnic identity in everyday life is gradually outlined, along with the fluctuations in the participants' expressions of ethnic identity in the interviews. First, it is not a fixed and clear or given thing even though we are taught to see it that way, and ethnic identity does not have a specific final outcome. Instead, it is a process of constant repositioning and meaning-giving, accompanied by the constant re-delineation of boundaries and constant comparisons between groups. At the same time, new understandings and definitional expressions of identity will emerge. Similar to Derrida's “différance”[8], on the one hand, the meaning of ethnicity is not fixed, but is constantly delayed and generated through relations with different references and groupings; on the other hand, its meaning is defined through analogies with different references and groups, rather than by direct correspondence to a certain "reality" or "essence". Therefore, in this sense, people's understanding of ethnicity in daily life is not fixed and unique, but constantly emerges in differences and deferrals, constantly marked and shown up through wandering and contrasting among these various groups thereby constantly dividing and positioning herself. This process may be a process that is never completed (there are always situations for comparison) and full of uncertainty (depending on the next situation for comparison).

Secondly, in this process, participants generally recognize that their understanding of ethnicity is complex and ambiguous as they step back and reflect in different situations, rather than just considering it as a given fact. Unlike Derrida's use of “différance” to explain the meaning of words, this process is not always or increasingly clear. In fact, it is

[8] Derrida's concept of différance combines the ideas of "to differ" and "to defer," emphasizing that meaning in language is not fixed but emerges through differences and delays in a network of relationships. A word's meaning depends on its distinction from other words and is never fully present but continuously postponed as it refers to other signs. This challenges traditional notions of stable meaning or essence, revealing the fluid and dynamic nature of meaning construction.

increasingly complex and potentially more ambiguous, just like Gwen's final expression in the medical situation, because thinking in more contexts will involve more references, which may include material conditions, emotional connections, practicality, etc. At the same time, the conditions under which these factors are important and mentioned, combined with the previous two sections, always depend on the real social relations that participants think are most prominent in the context.

This reveals that, therefore, on the one hand, the understanding and expression of ethnic identity should always be placed in a particular situation and cannot be generalized into a relational entity applicable to all situations. This can also help to identify the specific references for reflection and understanding of ethnic identity, so that identity can be captured and described; on the other hand, it is necessary to recognize that that this interception is in fact a simplification of ethnic identity. In other words, it is necessary to recognize that the true expression of one's ethnic identity in everyday life is always between these situations rather than simply jumping from one to another. It is difficult to be clearly divided by situation, and it is always stuck and attached with the past and the future. From this perspective, one's understanding of ethnic identity in everyday life may become compounded, ambiguous and knotted as more references are incorporated.

4 Conclusion

Based on the participants' expressions of ethnicity and ethnic identity at different stages of the interview, this chapter explains how participants understand ethnicity and ethnic identity in different contexts and explores the process of their generation.

More specifically, first, by analysing the participants' initial responses when asked about ethnicity, this chapter argues that ethnicity might not have a fixed, abstract meaning, but that it becomes socially meaningful only as it is asserted or claimed or ascribed in the context of real social relationships and settings. Therefore, one's understandings of ethnicity always depends on the relational reality to which they refer and in which they become salient, and is therefore influenced by their social experiences and by the wider context of their lives. Secondly, taking Nationality reference as an example, this chapter summarised three different paths - citizenship, practicalities and an imagined community - in which participants use nationality to refer to ethnicity. It is pointed out that ethnicity becomes

salience when participants encounter obstacles while crossing boundaries. It is thus shown that class shapes participants' ethnic identity by influencing the cost of crossing boundaries as well as their ability and methods for dealing with difficulties.

Finally, by analysing the differences in participants' understanding of ethnic identity in different conversation contexts, it is explained that ethnic understanding should always be captured and analysed in a specific situation. At the same time, I pointed out that ethnicity is always defined not just in terms of what one 'is' but, implicitly (sometimes explicitly) what one is 'not', even though the way we are generally invited to think about ethnicity implies that it is just a way of describing something that we 'are' or 'have' in ourselves. Therefore, when participants understand ethnicity, they are not just talking about what they are but always, also, trying to gauge what they are not. Moreover, one's understanding of their ethnic identity is always between situations. Participants gradually positioned themselves by juxtaposing various "other" identities they perceived as not belonging to them. This is, therefore, a process of continuously redefining boundaries and repositioning, just like Derrida's concept of "différance".

Chapter 4: Ethnicity in Doxa, Habitus and Field

In the previous chapter, by analysing the context and content of participants' discussion of ethnicity, I argued that ethnicity may not have a fixed abstract meaning in everyday life but gains social significance only when it is asserted, claimed, or attributed within real social relationships and settings. This implies that the understanding, proposition and categorization of ethnicity always rely on real-world relationships and contexts. On the other hand, as previously noted, it is important to recognize that ethnicity works in varying degrees and forms in everyday life. This means that the boundaries drawn based on real-world relations do not always inherently point to ethnicity but become connected to it in specific contexts through culture, practicality, or other indicators, thereby highlighting ethnicity. At the same time, I realized that this process may endow these boundaries with certain ethnic stereotypes, and further involve phenomena such as biases and inequality.

In this chapter, therefore, I will investigate how these processes occur. More specifically, I will explore how actors in daily life draw boundaries, associate them with ethnicity, and further develop stereotypes or biases. Furthermore, I will examine whether these stereotypes lead to a group effect, becoming prejudices or bias shared by a particular group—this inquiry that will help bridge the individual and the collective, as well as shed light on how biases vary across different social contexts. As mentioned in the first chapter, research on the effects of symbolic boundaries often assumes that inequality is caused by uniform biases that vary little between or within different social contexts.

In a broader sense, this chapter will further explore the processes through which ethnicity comes into play, focusing on how actors draw boundaries based on specific social relations or practises and how this process relates to and generates ethnic identity. At the same time, by focusing on specific situations and fields, it emphasizes that the forms and mechanisms of bias formation differ depending on certain real-world factors, such as varying social backgrounds and the differing levels of individual reflection.

1. Starting from Gia’s Story

Let us go back to the dialogue with Gia, the scenario about diet and living preferences. As mentioned in the last chapter, when the conversation turned to specific daily practices, she

gradually realized that many of her daily behaviours and views on things had changed. These differences in life practices also gradually outlined a seemingly clear ethnic boundary for her, and all these changes led her to believe that she had crossed the so-called boundary, thus creating doubts about her sense of belonging to this group. Let me try to make the process clearer. Her judgments about ethnic boundaries, as she puts it, seemed to be based on two potential assertions about dietary and accommodation preferences: i) 'Chinese like Chinese food, while British like Western food', and ii) 'Chinese like noisy and crowded places, British like quiet and uncrowded places'. These two assertions, then, established symbolic boundaries for her, and also become the line and basis for distinguishing between ‘us’ and ‘others’.

Moreover, we could say that neither 'side' of these claims makes sense without the other: they are inherently 'oppositional' claims. In fact, as a symbolic system, ethnicity relies on the ascription of difference, on the supposed presence of an ‘other’ who is not like ‘us’. For many migrants, like Gia, it is in part this fact that creates a kind of ambivalence, because their life trajectories meant that they were in some senses traversing that boundary between the 'us' and the 'them. It is thus meaningful to pay attention to these assertions and interpret them to get a better sense of how ethnicity occurs.

These two assertions can be understood as stereotypes because they refer to a simplified and fixed belief or perception about a particular group or category, often describing the characteristics of that group in an exaggerated or rigid manner, and used to categorize others (Fiske 1993). In addition, stereotypes are shaped by social and cultural influences, used to categorize others, but they may lead to bias or unfair treatment (Lippmann 2017). This might help us understand how stereotypes are formed and how they influence Gia. For example, the distinction between Chinese and Western cuisines may involve social and cultural factors, that is, originate from the traditional foods of Chinese culture or the prevailing dietary habits in Chinese society. For Gia, these ethnic foods, due to their cultural expression and emotional connection, were abstracted into a symbol of culture or ethnicity. Gia' dietary preference thus was also endowed with the symbolic meaning of ethnic experience. Just like the symbolic ethnicity mentioned by Gan (1979), individuals express their identification with their ethnic identity through symbolic actions such as celebrating festivals, wearing ethnic clothing, or cooking traditional foods. In this way, a symbolic boundary is drawn, differentiating "us" as Chinese, from "them" as British.

However, what I aim to highlight here is that, for Gia, ethnic food is not merely symbolic - while it indeed carries cultural and ethnic symbolic functions, it is also a crucial material element for emotional connection and cultural linkage. When Gia mentions her dietary preferences and uses them to delineate ethnic boundaries, Chinese food serves not only as a symbol demarcating the boundary—a rather neat and cold boundary—but also evokes her tactile and taste experiences, as well as the sense of familiarity and belonging associated with home. It brought back memories of certain times or settings. For example, I noticed that when Gia mentioned Chinese food, she unconsciously compressed her lips and swallowed, Interestingly, I also did similar behaviour at that time, Gia's discourse on food simultaneously triggered my sensory and emotional recollections about food. As discussed in the previous chapter, Gia's understanding of ethnicity surfaced and emerged in this specific context. Unlike the neat, clear, sharp and abstract of symbolic boundaries, food as a material matter is gentle, soft, and concrete—sometimes ambiguous, yet powerful. Therefore, the generation and maintenance of boundaries rely not only on symbolism but also on material elements, which are also important, and sometimes more effective in forging emotional connections—an aspect that is easily overlooked.

Additionally, another notable point is that these ethnic stereotypes do not seem to apply to other participants. When discussing similar topics with other participants, although they shared their daily dietary habits and clearly stated their preferences, they did not associate these preferences with ethnic identity. In fact, apart from two other participants who expressed views similar to Gia's, most participants rejected the idea of using dietary preferences as a criterion for defining ethnic identity. Some even found the notion absurd. For instance, Mattias Boris, a young man from northern China who, like Gia, completed his master's and doctoral studies in the UK and now works as a research assistant at a university, suggested:

> I think this is too exaggerated, it is ridiculous. People are free to eat what they like. Why do we think that all Chinese people must like Chinese food? I quite like eating white people's food actually, but this does not affect me from thinking that I am Chinese.

This phenomenon not only supports the point made in the previous chapter—that

participants' understanding of ethnicity is always rooted in their life experiences and therefore varies—but also made me realize that ethnic stereotypes are not universally applicable, but rather somewhat arbitrary and "taken-for-granted", just like some ethnic boundaries (Wimmer and Oxford University 2013, 103). In other words, ethnic stereotypes do not always function in similar ways. This is perhaps related to the question posed in the previous chapter: why does ethnicity affect different individuals to varying degrees in different contexts? In other words, each person's response to ethnic stereotypes—which also represents the way ethnic boundaries are drawn and how they categorize their own ethnic identity—is different. This prompted me to further inquire into the reasons behind these varying reactions and whether they are related to social class. More specifically, I aim to explore whether individuals' different responses to ethnicity are influenced by their social positions, ways of understanding society, and their own life experiences.

Examining and unpacking these stereotypes which exist in daily life and are often taken for granted is valuable because it helps us understand how people's ethnic identities are shaped. This understanding aids in comprehending the causes and mechanisms of everyday ethnic-related biases, potentially offering deeper insights into the reasons and various manifestations of social inequalities in daily life. At the same time, as mentioned above, it is important to recognize that such ethnic stereotypes do not always affect different individuals and groups in the same way or to the same extent. Instead, their influence varies depending on individual experiences, reflexivity, and broader social contexts. This calls for attention to the diverse responses of participants to stereotypes, and the need to consider these responses in light of their personal experiences and social class. For example, if we compare Gia's reaction to food with Gwen's statement in the previous chapter, we could realize that those who are wealthier tend to have much easier access to a much wider range of consumer choices. As Bourdieu (1984) discusses in the *Distinction*, for them, food is much more likely to appear as a matter of choice, and of pleasure, than it is for those who are poorer, for whom it has a more immediate, urgent material necessity.

In order to have a more comprehensive understanding of stereotypes, in the following interviews, I conducted some more in-depth discussions and explorations about different ethnic groups (such as British, Scottish, Chinese, etc.) with the participants in a broader sense. In this section, the expressiveness of ethnic stereotypes and the power of the form of assertion are more clearly and comprehensively demonstrated. The participants generally

tried to divide different ethnic groups and demonstrate their differences by stating the characteristics of their respective groups, which sounds like a manifestation of ethnicity as something that is fixed. Although some of the participants were aware that the characteristics they were talking about were not applicable to all individuals in the ethnic groups, most of the statements were still in the form of assertions or claims. Just like most of familiar stereotypes. For example, the most common formulation begins with a statement like: "the British are..." or "the Chinese are..." (for instance, “the Chinese are flexible and efficient, while British are rigid and inefficient”).

At the same time, most of them were keen to talk about the fixed characteristics of different ethnic groups, with some using historical contexts or stories as evidence. For example, Victor Paul, a barber from southern China, illustrates the disunity of the Chinese people by telling the historical story of invasion and colonization in modern China that he learned from junior high school textbooks. These participants firmly believe that this applies to almost all the people in this ethnic group, at least when they state these characteristics. These stereotypes here, therefore, were generally given the formal and symbolic function of distinguishing and identifying specific ethnic groups. Furthermore, it is important to realise that these claims only have force because they invoke a counterpart, an opposite, which serves as the mirror within which the self can be identified. These claims sound as if they are defining the 'content' of a given ethnicity, but they are actually drawing the boundary around it.

These ethnic stereotypes, or assertions take part in the participants’ way of thinking, decision-making and behavioural logic, and influence and shape their claims about their ethnic identities. Therefore, these assertions function as doxa. More specifically, they are shaped by different forms of social arbitrariness and limited personal experience, represent presuppositions and predispositions about ethnic relations, and are unconsciously internalized and practised by social agents, thus producing "a set of fundamental beliefs which does not even need to be asserted in the form of an explicit, self-conscious dogma”(Bourdieu 2000, 16). At the same time, these dogmas, in turn, influence the participants' perceptions of their own identities and guide their lifestyles, and these affected perceptions will be consolidated in practice to achieve the reproduction of doxa. In the following section, I will analyse the above process in more detail, that is, how doxa is generated, how it works and spreads at the individual and group levels, and how it affects an individual's ethnic identity.

2. Doxa in the Social Field

Doxa should be recognized and understood carefully, and be observed and analysed in specific social fields. As Grenfell (2012, 122) pointed out doxa has many empirical guises in modern society because it involves "habitus and the power structure of relatively autonomous social fields which have their own specific logic and necessity". In other words, doxa is concretized and embedded within the field and simultaneously defines the field and endows it with certain characteristics. Thus, the place where doxa appears and works in modern society is in each specific field, which is also the place where doxa gives rise to actions, especially common actions (Bourdieu and Eagleton 1992). This inspires us to find the specific form of the expression of doxa in specific fields.

Drawing on Bourdieu's various analogies for the field (see Grenfell 2012, 68-71), I distinguish two modes of doxa operation here and will discuss them separately. The first employs the analogy of a football field, one of the most common ways the field is conceptualized. In this mode, doxa appears in a disguised form. It is reflected through people's misunderstanding of certain specific social phenomena in the field. And it can operate across the field to reinforce itself. The second mode uses the analogy of science fiction force-fields, where doxa serves as the core, becoming the ‘truth’ of the field. A field thus emerges around the doxa, with corresponding social phenomena appearing as evidence to reinforce it, while heretics are expelled from the field.

2.1 The Disguise and Operation of Doxa in the Social Field

The first mode uses the analogy of a football field, which is a bounded space. Within this space, it is divided further by specific rules that delineate positions and roles. Thus, social actors entering the field must first learn these rules and engage in activities according to the established norms and based on their positions within the field (see Grenfell 2012, 68-69). In everyday life, there are various fields that set the standards and shape how actors understand the world and engage in social practices. For example, in the medical field, patients entering the field must follow specific procedures, such as making appointments, waiting in line, consulting doctors, and collecting medication. Within these fields, doxa becomes embedded by disguising itself as judgments or assertions about the field’s rules or phenomena. Doxa thus generates belief and trust among actors, serving as a guiding principle for understanding the field, defining group boundaries, and shaping potential analytical

approaches and practical actions.

Taking medical-related ethnic doxa as an example, supposed ethnic characteristics are reflected in the view that "the Chinese are flexible and efficient, while the British are rigid and inefficient". Most of the participants I asked either held or agreed with this view, and one of their main reasons for doing so was that "*an appointment is also required for health check up in the UK, which often takes a week to two weeks, and these things can be done in one day in China, it is unbelievable that it takes so long here* (Yana Xenia)". In this case, the differences between different social structures and systems are misrecognized and elevated to essential differences between ethnic groups. In other words, the real experience gets interpreted as reflecting an ethnic reality. The real experiences thus get read as evidence for, and explained in terms of, deep-seated ethnic differences.

Furthermore, this misunderstanding has not stopped here. Such a point of view has been further deepened and consolidated in social interaction and social practice, thus becoming an unquestioned doxa. "*Everyone around me thinks so*", "*Everyone around me thinks that the British medical system is very disappointing, is this the British*", "*I heard before I came to the UK that the British are very rigid here, and you have to make an appointment for everything. It really does look like that when I come here.*" To this stage, the doxa about the difference between the medical system and ethnicity has become a widely recognized and taken-for-granted symbol within this group/field. Moreover, symbolic power continues to work, "*I have an account of Xiaohongshu/REDnote* [a very popular social media in China], *and I will post these to the account.* [She flipped it to me]. *You can also follow me, I will record every bit of my time in the UK, with pictures.*" Under her social account, I saw the article about her appointment for the health check up, which recorded the inspection process and the above opinions.

Therefore, along with the following favourable comments, the symbol was propagated into China, and the characteristics (or say, stereotype) of ethnicity were shared by more people, even those who had never been to the UK, and may be spread further through social interaction. For example, because of the posts, those Chinese students who plan to study in the UK may have stereotyped British people before they arrive in the UK. Since then, this doxa about ethnicity has completed the initial closed loop, accompanied by misunderstanding, sharing, consolidation and dissemination. In addition, once a certain doxa

is widely disseminated (in contrast, some of doxa fail to gain recognition and quickly lose traction), it may form a self-evident camp around it, where supporters continuously reinforce it while dissenters are excluded. This represents the second mode of how doxa operate within a field, which will be elaborated on in the next section.

Furthermore, the doxa can also be multiply reinforced by the similarities between different social practices. For example, when talking about the police registration system[9] that also requires an appointment, the doxa will also shape participants' views on different ethnic groups in a similar way. For example, Xander Raid, who studied in Glasgow for 5 years and now are working as a research assistant at a university, complained:

> In addition, it is very inconvenient to register at the police station. You need to make an appointment in advance. When I went to the police station the first time, they told me that the time was wrong, and I didn't make an appointment successfully. Then when I went there for the second time, it didn't work again, so I was very angry. Oh god, the British are so rigid and extremely inefficient.

Interestingly, however, in China, changing the place of residence also requires registration at a police station in person, although in most cases no appointment is required, just line up. Although the police registration scheme ended on 4 August 2022, when I confirmed this with my participants, most of them did not know because they had not changed their address for a long time. And even knowing that these are true, their performance is just a few casual comments, "Oh, that's good, it is convenient", or "that is really good, and it will be more convenient for international students who come in the future." None of the participants made any further mentions about ethnicity. The doxa disguised in this social phenomenon just disappeared without a trace at all. This case illustrates that once doxa is constructed in the minds of actors, it will naturally be self-evident and unquestionable. A social phenomenon conforming to doxa can be easily used as evidence of the doxa to prove the legitimacy of

[9] The UK police registration policy required students from certain countries (like Mainland China) to register with the local police within 7 days of arrival in the UK to comply with visa conditions. Registration involved providing documents such as a passport, visa, proof of address, and school admission letter, along with a fee (approximately £34).

Since 2022, the UK has abolished the police registration requirement, meaning international students no longer need to fulfil this obligation but must still comply with other visa rules and update their personal information as needed.

doxa. While social phenomena that no longer conform to doxa (such as the above case) are often only seen as phenomena in themselves, and the doxa will not be questioned. In other words, at the same time, once the doxa is established, it is relatively hard to shift, even in the face of apparently contradictory evidence.

Moreover, if we focus on the symbolic significance of this assertion, we can understand and read it in two ways, or say, that it seems to serve two functions. On the one hand, the statement appears to portray certain inherent traditional characteristics or traits of the Chinese people, akin to the cultural values or virtues upheld by a nation or civilization. They appear as something passed down through word of mouth or through some form of education, such as parents socializing their children by advising or instilling certain cultural values and norms (see Minkov et al. 2018). I do not want to get stuck into an ontological trap here, but merely aim to illustrate that such assertions seem rooted in deeper cultural phenomena and traditions. Or rather, real history and culture often serve as evidence for these doxic assertions. I thus argue here that ethnicity is a real social relation as it is rooted in common history, culture and life experiences. It shapes and causes actual social phenomena and consequences, rather than being only a false and socially meaningless fantasy shaped by the current context, as many extreme constructivists claim.

Therefore, in essence, this assertion is just a disguised form of doxa in medical and other specific fields. It comes from different forms of social authority and represents an understanding of a shared history or culture from a certain perspective. The form of doxa and the assertion is similar to Saussure's (2005) distinction between ‘langue’ and ‘parole’. Doxa constitutes an abstract normative principle, while assertion realizes and completes it through endless practices. In a large number of social practices, the outline of doxa can be sketched. Similarly, only by relying on doxa can assertions have their own basis, be effective in social interactions, and avoid being unpredictable. At the same time, it needs to be realized that neither doxa nor assertions are shared by everyone.

On the other hand, given the implicit denigration of the British in this distinction, we may reasonably infer that this doxa attempts to reinforce ethnic boundaries through cultural symbolism. As Wimmer (2013, 103) notes, actors that distinguish themselves often strengthen their boundaries by introducing new cultural symbols to assert that some other groups are culturally distinct or even inferior. From this perspective, this assertion can be

interpreted as an ethnic boundary strategy employed by certain British Chinese: elevating a social phenomenon or practice to an ethnic level, imbuing it with cultural value to make it symbolic, and rendering it with emotional tones (elevating or denigrating) to define and reinforce boundaries. Once such doxa is formed, the unquestioning trust in it becomes an imperceptible trap, leading people to overlook its apparent and structured differences while attempting to explain everything through doxa.

Therefore, we also need to realize that, as Bourdieu (1992) points out, doxa is not merely shared beliefs but also leads to shared actions, reflecting themselves in the social practices of daily life. More specifically, constrained by cultural beliefs, biases, or stereotypes, individuals or societies may find it difficult to break free from established thought frameworks, thereby limiting their capacity for innovation, development, or understanding other cultures. This influence manifests in many areas. For example, Wallace (2023) in *The Culture Trap: Ethnic Expectations and Unequal Schooling for Black Youth* explores how stereotypes and racialized expectations in the education system reinforce low expectations of Black youth, perpetuating educational inequality. Such cultural traps obscure how institutional processes, school structures, and colonial histories contribute to the inequalities experienced by ethnic and racial minority youth in schools.

While doxa often comes with various forms of disguise and is difficult to dismantle, as mentioned earlier, this does not mean that it works in the same way and to the same extent for everyone. Some participants responded to this assertion with varying attitudes. Layla Emma, for instance, was a Chinese woman who married a British man 9 years ago. She was very interested in the medical system in the UK. For this reason, she once tried to volunteer in a hospital for the disabled, and also considered registering to study health and healthcare management (in the end she gave this up because it proved too difficult), and impressively had some insights into the pension system in China and Britain (she believed that the UK's pension system is much healthier than China's, so Chinese people still rely heavily on their children for retirement). Afterwards, I took the opportunity to ask her opinion on this assertion. She suggested,

> I think this is very unfair, because these are two different social systems. British people not only need to make an appointment to see a doctor, but also need to make an appointment for other things. For example, they also need to make an appointment

> in the university, just like when I was writing my graduation thesis as in undergraduate, I also needed to make an appointment with my tutor. I think it is not good to talk about what the British are like because of this stuff. On the contrary, I think this can better reflect a kind of respect. From my personal point of view, maybe it is because I like life here.

This shows the possibility of the emergence of a kind of 'reflexivity' with regard to preexisting assumption. In other words, our response to these kinds of doxa is always 'situated' or 'positional', in that it depends on our social location and experience, as these will shape our different 'habitus', and also lead to different cognitions and practices among social actors. In this process, for Bourdieu (1990b), the mutual reinforcement between field and habitus strengthens the prevalence of doxa power.

2.2 Social Networks and Screening Mechanisms Built around Doxa

Different from the ethnic-related doxas mentioned above that operate in various fields, sometimes a field is formed around a certain doxa. In the second mode, the field here resembles the force-fields of science fiction (see Grenfell 2012, 69-71). It refers to the construction of a self-contained world through the erection of barriers, thereby delineating boundaries and protecting insiders. More specifically, actors occupying certain positions can comprehend behaviours within the field and interpret them through specific doxa, which collectively form the "common parlance within the field“ (Grenfell 2012, 70). The doxa is misrecognized as the logic of the field, so even if some phenomena that differ from it appear, actors can maintain it through explanation.

Doxa, for Bourdieu, is a symbolic form of power that demands a submission to its unquestionable legitimacy and to those in power who hold legitimacy (Deer 2014, 116). Recognition is just an accessory to resist pressure from the external (ibid.), including a series of theories to maintain this doxa and all the explanatory clauses and cases used to give legitimacy to this doxa. More specifically, in the field, for those social actors with similar habitus, doxa leads to an unconditional loyalty to the "rules of the game" in the form of misunderstanding (Deer 2014, 117). Unlike most people's understanding of rules, what doxa creates is a disposition of a field of opinions, that is, different legitimate answers can be given, and these answers are all explanations of the established order. Doxa is both the source

and the core of universal unobjectionable response (ibid.).

Therefore, if we focus on the space with doxa as the core - which is usually virtual, but social media provides a place for it to gather and spread - we could find that a camp seems to have formed around this doxa, which has its own core claims, boundaries, and ways of argumentation, and develops and reproduces itself through social networks. When actors are connected by social networks, based on their understanding and preferences of social phenomena, some of them match their interpretations of many examples in daily life with the doxa, thus becoming believers of the doxa, and these examples also become evidence of the legitimacy of the doxa. Those who do not believe in the doxa or try to deny it are expelled and leave the field because they provide different arguments or examples. The field thus objectively completes the self-construction and improvement. In the process, the boundaries of the field gradually formed, and a series of structures and relationships were built around doxa, among which there were dogmatics, preachers, defenders, believers, and heretics. This seems to be applicable to describing the way ethnic stereotypes are spread in everyday life, especially the formation and dissemination mechanism of virtual ethnic stereotypes and identities along social media.

Let me demonstrate the construction and operation of this field through a case and a social media post. Yana Xenia, a doctoral student who obtained a PhD degree in engineering in Glasgow is now engaged in engineering R&D in a research department. During our interview, we talked about her latest date, she mentioned,

> I recently dated some people on dating apps in the UK, and I found a particularly interesting thing. White men really can't get in touch (I really can't date white men), they really have a natural sense of superiority, and they always criticize others. For example, I dated a white man a few days ago, you would think he is a typical white man who is very hypocritical to the extreme. His family belongs to the upper middle class, his father is a dentist, her mother is also a doctor, and her mother is an ophthalmologist. This is a very good family, but he dropped university, he didn’t finish his studies because of some physical reasons, but he read a lot of books, and then he has some conceited thoughts about himself, and he also thinks that he is in some fields are great. Just to give an example, after I marked him as 'friend', after we both marked each other’s 'friend', I went out with him once, so that day I brought him

> a piece of moon cake. After it was over, he said, well, when we go to the Chinese Super Market, I can buy something for you as a return. After going, he said that you can recommend some snacks for me, but when I recommend this, um, no, um, that, um, no, it's the typical kind of white people who want to judge you in everything, that's what they call not judge but in fact they want to judge everything.

According to about a dozen people she dated, she concluded that,

> I found that I can only date Asian men, at least the three views (views on the world, life and values) will not be inconsistent. But the others will not work, white men are eliminated directly, and Chinese people can't. Especially white men, let me tell you that this is really something in their bones, which cannot be changed at all. So I have really seen this fact now.

She posted this story on a post with the conclusion: "*White men in the UK all have a natural sense of superiority, hypocritical and try to judge everything. Sisters, avoid the trap! When it comes to dating, you still have to look for Asian men!*" Since then, the core/dogma of a doxa has been built, and the post has been liked by more than 1,000 people, and there are more than 60 comments below. Some people expressed surprise: "*That's it, it broke my fantasy about white men*," one comment said. They are believers. Some people agreed: citing their own dating experiences, or they summarized examples of white men who like to evaluate others as evidence in their daily life and work, and said "*cannot agree anymore*". They, along with the blogger, became preachers. There are also some who object, "*Sister, you are too radical. All the white people I have dated are very nice*", one comment said. They are, in Bourdieu's terms, 'heretics'. Some opponents' comments thus became a battlefield for defenders. They believe that "*what you mention is just a particular case and cannot be representative, you need to realise that white people are not trustworthy*", or "*You have been brainwashed and become an accessory of white people*". Many of these 'heretics' thus ultimately had to choose to delete their posts or refuse to reply.

In this case, a clear network of relationships was built around the doxa. Social actors perform their duties in various positions and jointly defend this doxa through habitus (including the extent to which they choose to believe and the way they choose to defend) and fields (such as the examples they cite from different perspectives). As this post develops, the number of

likes and comments increases, and its boundaries gradually expand. In addition, it is reasonable to believe that if there are other examples of posts expressing similar conclusions, these posts will form camps with each other to jointly defend the legitimacy of doxa. And the social actors who are involved in it express unquestionable submission to it. The ethnic stereotypes embedded in this doxa are established and propagated through social networks in the process. On one hand, by contrasting derogatory terms for white men, the perceived virtues of Asian men, such as honesty and humility, are highlighted to characterize the ethnic traits of their own group. This leads to the formation of a shared belief through a large number of supporters, thereby shaping bias. On the other hand, similar to the assertions in the first model, this denigration of white individuals can also be used to delineate and emphasize symbolic boundaries, thereby defining a certain ethnic identity with value.

In the two modes of doxa operation mentioned above, it is often adept at disguising itself, making it difficult to expose, and can reinforce and reproduce itself through social networks. However, this does not mean it affects everyone in the same way or to the same degree, as illustrated by Layla's example in the first model or the inevitable existence of heretics in the second model. Therefore, beyond examining doxa and stereotypes within the field, it is also necessary to explore, in conjunction with habitus, the differing responses of agents when confronted with doxa and the reasons behind these responses.

3. Habitus, Field and Doxa

Bourdieu pointed out in his course at the Collège de France on 1993 April 1, that defenders of the ‘rational action theory’ erred on the principle that by de-historicizing economic behaviour they universalized our particular historical situation. From this, Bourdieu believes that they have made one of the most fatal mistakes in social science: generalizing historically specific cases without knowing that they are special cases. That is, the particularity of a particular situation is given universality, while its special aspects are ignored.

Bourdieu's critique reminded me of two things. First, particular doxa need to be historicized and culturalized. In other words, they should be considered and analysed by placing them in a specific historical and cultural background as well as social context, and should not be arbitrarily elevated to a universal principle applicable to any scenario. Second, the attitude and reaction of any individual when facing doxa should be viewed as situated and positional.

On the one hand, it is shaped, influenced and restricted by specific social situation and field rules; on the other hand, it is rooted in their personal experience, life trajectory and social position. It should not be assumed to follow the same track of being influenced and shaped.

Therefore, when analysing doxa and the way it works, it should not be applied simply, linearly, similarly, and unquestioningly to social actors. Rather, we must realize that the reactions of social actors and the series of practices derived from it should be analysed in the context of individual habitus and the social class in which they live.

It is timely and crucial to invoke Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and class at this time. Through habitus, we will be able to capture how individuals make choices in the face of doxa and behaviours (Grenfell 2012, 51), while the various forms of capital characteristic of a certain position in society will also influence an individual's view and treatment of doxic assumptions.

Habitus, as a theory that has done a lot of work in Bourdieu's approach, has often been questioned with respect to its limits “as currently formulated” and the concept has been accused of falling into the trap of circular argumentation (Maton 2013, 61), as well inviting ambiguous definitions and applications (Swartz 2012, 109). For example, when analysing Gia's argument above, we might frame and respond to a question in this way: "Why does she have pretty-Chinese diet and living preferences? Because she has fairly Chinese habitus"[10]. The reason for this circular argument, in Maton's view, is that habitus have been “stripped of its relational structure” (Maton 2013, 62), and thus the crucial connection between habitus and the dynamic quality of the field of practice has been lost. Therefore, the way to break this is to recognise that the concept of habitus should not be used in isolation, but needs to be understood within the structure of social relations. In other words, the analysis of habitus needs to be combined with concepts such as field and capital, and also need to be analysed in specific social contexts.

The focus of Bourdieu's statements and analysis is more on the practices themselves than on the concepts, while many concepts such as habitus, field and capital are combined, entangled

[10] Like Bourdieu himself admitted that one may assert “Why does someone make petty-bourgeois choices? Because he has a petty bourgeois habitus!” and thus suggested that we need to “keenly aware of this danger” Wacquant, L. J. & P. Bourdieu. 1992. *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. Polity Cambridge. p. 129.

and carried out around practice. This includes not only the (mis)understanding and reaction of social structure by social actors in practice, but also includes their expectations for the future based on the rules and habits of the field. I will analyse this below using cases from three participants.

Rose Winnie, a medical practitioner from eastern China, worked in Chinese hospitals for five years after graduating from a Chinese university in 2010. In 2015, she resigned and went to the UK to study for a master's degree. After graduation, she stayed and worked in a hospital in the UK until now. When I made an appointment with her for an interview, she had just been transferred to her third hospital. She had just moved to a new city and workplace, which made her look a little tired. During the interview, we talked about her work experience in the UK. When talking about why she initially chose to stay in the UK,

> Because in China, medical care is indeed a bit industrialized, and there may be some "unscrupulous" doctors. Because I have only been working as a doctor in China for about four years, and I am still in a relatively grassroots or middle-level position. So I didn't come into contact with kickbacks or anything like that, and at that time I was probably pure heart or relatively [innocent], but I think I can see these behaviours. They may want to prescribe more expensive medicines when prescribing, but not necessarily everyone wants to do this intentionally, but it may be pressured by superior leaders, such as your indicators, effectiveness indicators, etc. So I feel that after arriving in the UK, although the NHS has been criticized and complained a lot, I feel that it is still more basic, how to say, like it does still have the original heart and intention, which is to let everyone regardless of class, rich or poor, They all receive good medical care, and some of his methods and treatments are indeed world-leading. So after that, I felt that if I didn't go back, I might be more inclined to stay, and then I gradually started to stay.

When she said this, her expression was full of longing, as if she had returned to the state of just arriving in the UK to study. However, as the conversation gradually shifted to her recent work status, she started to appear somewhat frustrated, suppressed, and exhausted. She sighed and said,

> Then it's mainly about getting a promotion, because we are dealing with some issues

> such as that level, etc. I think if you enter the management level in the hospital, my personal experience is that it's white men, white men, well, they have more discourse, yes, they have more discourse (She was thinking and repeating for emphasis). And people like me is in the lowest level, just like, because of what my colleague said, there is a white woman who may be about my age, but she is a local British. Then if I want to go to management. In terms of development, I feel like I just can't win or compete with white people.

Therefore, for Winnie, "*After working for so many years, I found that it was different from the beginning, and now I can see it more clearly*". She insisted that "*white men still hold the dominant position and the right to speak. Essentially, you can be promoted because you haven't divided their cake yet. Once you divide their cake, you lose the opportunity*". In addition, from her point of view, her experience was not an exception, "*Maybe you will think what I said is a bit exaggerated, but it is true. I later learned that many people around me were actually blocked when they reached this level. Many of them are very, very good and outstanding people, and their views are the same as mine*". Finally, she said "*This is how it is in the UK. In my, not just my, we all believed. No matter where you are or what profession you are engaged in, white men will always be in the dominant position. People like us can be fine in low-level positions, but it is simply impossible to enter management positions, it's a daydream*". She seemed a little excited.

As she said, she was not alone. Another participant's experience in the educational field elicited similar sentiments and voices. "*I tell you, they [British people in University] are really discriminatory against foreigners. It's very serious, especially when you are promoted, because it will cause a conflict of interest with them.*" Vedia Yara said, full of anger and helplessness. She was also from East China. In 2005, she moved from Hong Kong to London, where she completed her undergraduate degree through a work-study program. After graduation, she chose to return to China to establish an educational training institution. In 2018, she resigned and returned to the UK. After completing her master's and PhD degrees in Glasgow, she chose to stay in the university and engage in teaching. I interviewed Yara twice, and the difference in her responses across those two interviews was telling, allowing us to get a sense of how perspective and attitudes can change.

In the first interview, which took place just eight months ago, her attitude and perspective

were completely different from those in the second interview mentioned above. "*Let me tell you, I think I am more suitable to stay here*". She said in the first interview. One of the reasons was,

> In fact, the domestic model is that you have to be very careful when speaking in the country. People rarely speak the truth, like during the communication. My personality is straight-forward, and I am not used to that. Moreover, the topics they talked about were nothing more than my husband getting promoted again, buying a bigger house, and where my son got in a famous University. I really I'm not interested at all. But in China you have to deal with things like those, [especially] when going out to have dinner. It's not actually eating, it's just people showing off and stuff like those. I feel quite uncomfortable.

And another reason was,

> Because there are many officials in the province in our small place, they will invite me to some occasions, and they also invite me to some groups, but I just feel that. From the very beginning, I felt like it was pretty (good), because I didn't know the officials' (routines), but once you get into this circle, you feel really tired. It's like you can't even finish a meal well, and then you have to toast to the director of the department, or to that (person) or that (person), and you're always eating and toasting, and I feel very tired, and I just feel like, at the beginning, I thought that being able to enter such a relatively high-level position is equivalent to being an official, but after entering, it is really fake and I can't say anything true. Everyone is very hypocritical.

In the end, she thought, "*I just felt like, uh, I have to come out (to the UK).*" Because life in the UK is "*not that snobbish. And people do not care about you and that without a sense of boundaries, and they don't point fingers at your life. I do not have to listen to people showing off everywhere, so I feel very free*". The most important thing is, "*Unlike in China, this place is very tolerant. You can see people of different skin colours and nationalities. Everyone works here. I feel that everyone treats me very well here and there is no discrimination. This is not like what people say all day in China, when many people abroad will discriminate against you*".

One day eight months later, I met her by chance on the street, with blood-red eyes and a bit-tired body. Her words changed a lot during the daily chat, so I made an appointment with her for the second interview. Three days later, when I sat across from her again, her depression was obvious. "*I feel more and more tired. This is not physical fatigue, but mental fatigue. Of course (physically) I am also tired. My tasks now are much heavier. I have to bear a much greater workload than before. Important Yes, actually lots of them are not my jobs, but I can't turn them down. I told you before that you need to stay, but I will not say that now*". I was surprised by her change of attitude, but her words were clear and firm. "*Discrimination and unfair treatment still exist, and there are many, and you cannot compete with the locals at all. So now I think it would be great if you have the opportunity to go back to China*".

The fact that “The field structures the habitus” (Wacquant and Bourdieu 1992, 127) is more clearly presented here, and at the same time, practice as the result of “an unconscious relationship” between habitus and fields, is also revealed (Bourdieu 1993, 76). As the field changes, whether it is Winnie or Vedia, from the Chinese field to the British field, the different compositions, different rules, and their different positions in the field, all affect their understanding and views on ethnicity and society, and it becomes part of their habitus, informing how they understand, make sense of, and navigate the world. More specifically, for example, in the face of the current social scene, whether it is the medical field where Winnie is positioned, or the educational field where Vedia is positioned, ethnicity and gender, just like educational diplomas on some job recruitment flyers, are implied as thresholds and prerequisites for entering higher-level positions (or hegemonic positions) in the field.

In such a field and power structure, ethnicity and gender are therefore, for Winnie, understood and interpreted as two of the fundamental capitals necessary for advancement in the British medical field (especially management positions, in Winnie's narrative), and it can easily be expanded to the understanding of other fields, and then it was elevated to a kind of doxa about ethnicity, as evidenced in her claim that "*[all] jobs in the UK are dominated by white men, it is a daydream for people like us enter high positions*". Perhaps it can be said that it seems a bit extreme and stereotype when it is elevated to the doxa of ethnicity or gender, but it is not entirely a misunderstanding, because these inequalities do exist and produce effects in such social fields. In other words, ethnicity here emerges as a way of explaining real structural inequalities. Therefore, this understanding is not so much a

misunderstanding that has been raised, but rather an understanding of ethnicity and gender that is shaped by the power structure in the field. When participants attributed aspects of their career trajectories to the fact that “we are not white, we are not male,” they were talking about lost opportunities for advancement, futile cries for hard work, and unequal standards of judgment. And their understanding of ethnicity (and gender, etc.) is affected and shaped by this.

At the same time, this understanding and doxa shaped by the field are also internalized into the participants' understanding of the broader social structure, capital and game rules, and thus further become the potential structure and selection basis for the next practical behaviour. It worth noting that this is only part of the evolution of habitus. For Bourdieu, habitus is not an immutable "setting" but something "durable and transposable", something which evolves (Maton 2013, 52). In this process, habitus is constantly influenced and shaped by material conditions and the social landscape we experience. Therefore, even though Winnie and Vedia experienced similar experiences in different fields and came to similar conclusions and doxa, their practices still followed different logics and choices. This is because their previous experiences lead to different underlying structures and selection preferences. Therefore, what constitutes habitus is the "structured structuring structure" (Bourdieu 1990a, 170) that has been shaped by encounters in the individual's life experience for a long time, by the many small and complex concrete contents with practical meaning contained in the social class in which she or he lives, for example, the material conditions in family origin and background.

This can be shown by comparing the future plans of the two participants who are also in pain and confusion after being treated unequally. In Winnie's review, when she was a child, her family was well off and she had a smooth journey. As a result, she approached this field with a greater sense of "playfulness" and navigates it with ease. She said, "*When I understand this, I may choose to return to China in the next 5-10 years*," because "*I will have many good options when I return to China*". However, for Vedia, returning to China was not an option. Although she had "good conditions" when she was a child, she chose to go abroad after a divorce and broke up with her family. After returning to China, she suffered unfair treatment in the country. In her memory, she thought that "*it is difficult for me to deal with the relationship with my family when I return to China" and "China is full of secular people and snobbish. I don't know how to deal with these, so I won't return to China*". Therefore, even

though she also believes that there is serious invisible discrimination in the UK and that the paths and opportunities for promotion are tightly controlled by local people, in her preferences and plans, she will still firmly stay in the UK. "*So what can I do? I cannot go back. It will be worse if I go back*". Without any reason, "*I don't have to think about it. It will definitely be worse if I go back. The environment in China is not as good as here. If I go back, it is definitely not possible*". Their different practices and preferences are influenced and shaped by their respective habits and fields, as are their understanding of ethnicity and their respective ethnic identities.

Furthermore, I would like to draw attention to the fact that the role of gender in this context cannot be overlooked. Xerxes George's case may provide a contrasting description. He is a business practitioner from eastern China who runs his own logistics company. He has stayed in the UK since graduating with a master's degree and has been living in the UK for more than 10 years now. In his more than ten years of work experience, he seems to be more "in his element" in his work field. In his discussion, he never actively mentioned the impact of gender on himself. This perhaps suggests, as someone might argue, that he was always in a position of gender-based advantage—one possible reason why gender is so often overlooked. Individuals in positions of gender privilege (including researchers themselves) seem to rarely truly empathize with the implications of such privilege, as the process of acquiring these advantages appears to them as taken-for-granted and effortless.

These might also potentially affect Xerxes' understanding of ethnicity. In his view, his Chinese identity is a kind of advantageous capital, because it can provide him with a transnational perspective and language convenience, thus putting him in an advantageous position in this field. In addition, when asked about his ethnic identity, he did not deliberately emphasize his Chinese identity, but considered himself more like an "international identity" with a worldwide perspective, "*I do not want to use Chinese to describe myself, because I have been here for so many years and have already possessed many of the characteristics of people here*". In his view, compared with ethnicity or gender, timing was more important. "When I entered, it was still a blue ocean, but now it is a red ocean, so many people's money was tied up as soon as they entered." And when talking about future plans, he showed full confidence, calmness and relaxation. "I have some plans. I may stay and continue to expand my business, or I may return to China and focus more on the domestic market. It depends on the policy."

If we compare the experiences of Xerxes and Winnie, along with their confidence and sadness, we can see that gender plays an indispensable role. On one hand, gender shapes life and career trajectories of given actors by influencing their difficulty level of accessing social resources, which involves varying degrees of social inequality. On the other hand, these experiences in career advancement or resource acquisition also shape their understanding and attitudes toward gender and ethnicity.

This is reflected, one side, in how they perceive and understand the salience of these specific social categories, which may partially answer the question posed from the beginning: why does ethnicity operate in different forms and to varying degrees in different contexts? Perhaps it is because individuals, through their everyday experiences, constantly encounter different advantages, disadvantages, and the resulting challenges and opportunities. As a result, ethnicity is often awakened and highlighted in specific contexts by particular events. At the same time, it is also reflected in how they define their own ethnic identity and how they understand their gender identity—as a socially constructed "second sex". Therefore, Winnie recognizes gender as one of the most significant barriers to her career progression and thus becomes acutely aware of her "forced" identity as Chinese. In contrast, Xerxes remains oblivious to the influence of gender and consequently exhibits a more open or instrumental attitude toward his ethnic identity, seeing it as a kind of resource on which he could draw.

This may partly explain why Bourdieu is less adept at addressing gender and ethnicity issues. He treats gender and race as secondary characteristics in some instances (Bourdieu et al. 2010), so that it seems as if habitus is basically a reflection of class. However, the analysis of the three participants above demonstrates that habitus, as an emergent quality, develops from actors' lived experiences. In this process, it may be more profoundly "coloured" or "inflected" by gender or ethnicity. Moreover, when examining the roles of ethnicity and gender, intersectional analysis enhances our understanding by highlighting how these social structures mutually constitute and shape and inform one another. Crucially, we cannot designate one as "primary" or foundational while treating the others as "secondary." Instead, it necessary to recognize that their salience varies depending on the context.

4. Conclusion

Building on the previous chapter's discussion of people's understanding of ethnicity, this chapter delves deeper into the mechanisms behind the emergence and dissemination of ethnicity-related stereotypes in everyday life and the biases that result from them. Additionally, it explores, from an intersectional perspective, how individuals' understandings of ethnicity yields different outcomes due to their unique habitus, which is continuously shaped by the fields they navigate and by their lived experiences.

More specifically, this chapter first draws an analogy between Bourdieu's concept of doxa and ethnic stereotypes, and by exploring their emergence in specific fields, illustrates how ethnic stereotypes are misrecognized, disguised, reinforced, and disseminated, becoming taken for granted and resistant to change once established. Second, through a comparative analysis of the stories of three participants—Winnie, Vedia, and Xerxes—it demonstrates how their habitus are influenced by family background and the fields they inhabit, and are continuously shaped by their respective experiences. This process, in turn, affects their views and attitudes toward ethnicity and their ethnic identities. Furthermore, from an intersectional perspective, the chapter shows how, on one hand, their trajectories and future expectations are shaped by the interwoven influences of gender, class, ethnicity, and social positions. On the other hand, these experiences also shape their perspectives on social categories such as gender, ethnic identity, and class.

The differing life trajectories and experiences of these three participants reveal the complexity and diversity of people's everyday experiences, as well as the varied impacts of these distinct paths. This reminds us that the understanding of ethnicity and class (including gender and other social categories) must always be discussed within specific social spaces.

Moreover, some may argue that the participants' differing understandings of ethnicity and gender, as well as the emotions they evoke, are largely influenced by the distinct fields and professions they occupy. In other words, the degree to which ethnic identity is valued or devalued varies across different fields, professions, and spaces, which may seem to undermine the value and significance of comparing trajectories and ethnic identities.

Therefore, in the next chapter, the focus will shift to a specific social space. By examining

the experiences of actors who are situated within the same field, interrelated, and thus mutually influential, I will further explore ethnic identity in a more localized and interconnected context.

Part 2: Understanding Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity in Particular Social Spaces

Chapter 5: Boundary Strategies, Hierarchies and One's Cross-Class Trajectory

— Ethnicity and Power relations in a Church Space

In the two chapters of the previous part, by analysing participants' associations and accounts of social relations when discussing ethnicity, as well as their descriptions of ethnicity-related stereotypes, I examined the contexts and ways in which people understand ethnicity in everyday life, and how these understandings are shaped by the realities of social relationships. At the same time, I explored, within a broader social context, how individuals' perceptions and categorizations of ethnicity are shaped within their habitus and fields, and how these are influenced by the intersections of gender, ethnicity, and social position.

However, while I have sought to link participants' expressions and attitudes about ethnicity to their experiences, power dynamics, and the fields they inhabit, the lack of a unified space that integrates these various factors seems to leave the analysis confined to a series of 'snapshots, and therefore lacks an understanding of the complexity of the multiple forces from society and class in daily life that jointly influence identity.

As Bourdieu pointed out, in order to understand the complex practices among actors or a certain social phenomenon, it is not enough to focus on events alone, but it is necessary to examine the social space that frames these interactions and events (Bourdieu 2005, 148). Therefore, the next two chapters will shift the focus to specific social spaces, further exploring the formation process of ethnic identity and how it intersects with class and stratification in such spaces. Focusing on a specific social space will help to more comprehensively analyse how various factors in the space are entangled to jointly influence and shape the individual/collective identity in the particular space. At the same time, Bourdieu's social space theory (see Bourdieu , Bourdieu and Ferguson 1999) tells us that in a particular social space, positional relations, the amount and form of capital (especially the

dominant capital), and the possession and competition for resources will affect the relationship between actors and the space, such as the degree to which actors are constrained in the space and the strategic choices of actors, which will continue to influence and shape their understanding of ethnicity.

This chapter will focus on a religious space in Scotland, by analysing the power relations in the space and examining the expression of ethnic identity by individuals in different positions of such relations to explore the way in which ethnicity and class intersect in that specific space. More specifically, this chapter contains two parts. First, by observing and interviewing the different ways in which individuals in the space experience ethnicity and linking it to their positions, it will analyse how individuals in different positions express ethnicity and formulate corresponding strategies based on the capital they possess and try to fight for. The second part will explore whether and how ethnic identity changes with changes in individual status, by following the life trajectory of one actor in the space. In addition, it is worth reiterating that I have anonymised all the information that could make the space identifiable to ensure that it is as unrecognizable as possible.

1. Background, Activities and Groups

At the end of 2021, by chance, I met Victor Paul, a Chinese barber. During our casual conversation, I learned that he was also a preacher in a church somewhere in Scotland. Due to my interest in Christian history and religious studies, we quickly became friends. As the research progressed, I invited him to an interview, and he readily agreed. Through the interview with Paul, I had a general understanding of the operation and management of the community, which aroused my interest in the space. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, I was interested in the possibility of discussing the impact of power relations on ethnic identity in a specific space.

I thus entered the space as a researcher through his introduction. To my surprise, the church was unusually prosperous, active, and large in number, including nearly 200 families or individuals, with a total number said to be between 250 and 350 people, and the number was still increasing year by year. Over the next more than a year, I participated in almost all

activities in the church, which mainly included on-site worship gatherings and holy meal[11] every weekend, virtual preaching activities and brotherhood in the middle of the week.

1.1 Activities of the Church and its Forms

The most important activity was the on-site worship gathering every weekend. The gathering place was selected in a Christian church building in the city centre. Every weekend at a fixed time, the two floors of the building would be rented for gatherings-the first floor was used for ordinary believers, and the second floor for children's activities, including young-child care and the Chinese school for older children, as well as occasional new preaching venues. Although the church was not used exclusively for Paul's church activities, it is, as Paul told me, "at least Christian" and "the rent is cheaper". In fact, this was their third meeting place since they were founded. The first place was abandoned due to the increase in church members and the "remote location", and they were forced to move from the second place because the landlord suddenly raised the rent after two years of renting.

Taking into account believers who lived far away - some of them even had to take buses from nearby cities to attend, the meeting started in the late morning and lasts for three hours. Generally speaking, the first and third hours were in the form of pre-arranged preachers preaching to the congregants on the platform, and end with singing hymns. The middle hour was a rest and mealtime, the food being generally provided by believers who run restaurants in turn. According to Paul, the ingredients used were foods that were about to expire in the restaurants, in order to avoid excessive financial burden on these congregants - since all food is free. In addition, since Paul was a preacher who was responsible for "recruiting believers and giving them elementary sermons," some newly recruited believers would sometimes attend meetings on the second floor, which usually happens in the third hour. Sermons were always held in the corridors, due to the limited rooms. Generally speaking, there were two rooms on the second floor, one for the care of young children and the other for Chinese education for older children. The former mainly involved singing hymns and popularizing simple Christian knowledge, while the latter also needed to learn the basic content of the church on this basis, which constituted the content of Mandarin learning. Paul's preaching

[11] Here it means a relatively daily meal. However, because it takes place in the church and is organized by the church, they still call "holy" in order to express giving thanks to God. This term is used here to distinguish it from the “Eucharist”. The church has a special Eucharist rite, distributing unleavened bread and grape juice (instead of wine) to show a special presence of Christ in this rite. I happened to participate in the Eucharist rite, but was only allowed to watch because I was not baptized.

was often mixed with the sounds of young children singing hymns and older children reading the Bible, forming a unique concerto in this space.

Generally speaking, the process of preaching was undertaken by a speaker (who must be trained and certified as a preacher by the Church's headquarters, as will be shown in 1.2) and a translator (Chinese to English or vice versa, depending on the language used by the speaker). The content of the preaching was always the original items of the Bible (this is what the church claims as its own uniqueness: that is, everything they believe in comes directly from the Bible) and the preacher's interpretation and extension based on these items. Therefore, two or three additional multimedia staff were required to be responsible for displaying the specific items of the Bible currently being preached on the electronic screen, usually undertaken by Paul and two other young people. In addition, there was always at least one manager at the gathering to take notes. Since there were fewer people upstairs, I feel it particularly clearly. There was always a fixed manager who followed the gathering upstairs and recorded the whole process. In addition, since the congregants upstairs were newly recruited, a staff member was also needed to turn the books and locate the item of Bible for them (usually the translator or manager took on this role).

The church also includes other daily activities. In addition to on-site worship gatherings, the church also offers online preaching activities. It is broadcast live on YouTube every Tuesday or Wednesday night, and a pre-arranged preacher would be responsible for the explanation. 'Brotherhood' and 'sisterhood' were separate gatherings for male and female believers in the church, usually on Tuesday or Wednesday morning, once every two weeks. The gathering location would be rotated in the congregants' houses, and the format was similar to the weekend gathering, but there were fewer people because it was on weekdays, usually between 5-10 people.

1.2 Groups, Relationship and Participants

Through the activities I participated in the church and the different forms of dialogue with individuals in it, I developed a more comprehensive understanding of the church. In this particular religious space, two main forms of power and capital are distinguished. The first is management power, which roughly involves the right to decide the place and form of gatherings, arranging, proposing or leading all activities, and coordinating all activities and

daily expenses of the church. The other is the power to interpret the Bible. This power is identified as the dominant capital because of the religious nature of the organization and its claim that its uniqueness and credibility are because all activities are completely derived from the Bible.

This church, which needs additional explanation, has a strict organizational structure and a strong network. According to Paul, the church originated in mainland China and was initially very popular in southeastern China and Hong Kong. It quickly became popular around the world, with branches in North America, Europe, Oceania and Latin America. When I entered the church, there were branches in more than ten cities in the UK, and its headquarters was located in a city in England. Generally speaking, the basic information of the branch needed to be reported to the headquarters regularly, which was also part of the management power. At the same time, some major decisions of the branch also needed to be approved by the headquarters, such as purchasing its own church. In addition, the headquarters had a preacher-teaching school, where the branch could select outstanding young people to participate. If they pass the test, they could be certified as preachers and given the authority to preach, or say, to be empowered to interpret the Bible. This was the only way I know of to obtain the identity of a preacher in this church.

I divided the actors in this space into three categories, according to the amount of power and capital possessed. The first was management, including managers responsible for various matters in the space, such as those responsible for recording and managing each section of daily activities, and those responsible for reporting to the headquarters regularly. They were elected by all congregants and were mainly responsible for arranging, organizing and supervising all daily activities and allocating expenses. The second was preachers. Authorized by the church, they were mainly responsible for recruiting congregants on a daily basis, understanding the Bible in their own way (according to their own interpretation, all this came from divine revelation), recording them, and preaching to congregants in the weekly one-site and online worship activities as well as at the ‘brotherhood’ or ‘sisterhood’ sessions. It is worth noting that the two groups sometimes intermingled, as some managers were also preachers appointed by headquarters, for example, Paul was both a preacher and a manager for two years prior to the interview. The last was congregants. In addition to regularly participating in various church activities and basic voting rights, they could also participate in the "general meeting of congregation" under the organization of a fixed

convener, and have the right to vote on major church matters (such as requesting a large sum of money from the superior organization to buy a church) or on issues where there were disagreements within the management.

The relationship between groups as well as between individuals and groups was very complicated. On the one hand, everyone maintained the unique harmony of the religious organization style, and everyone called each other brothers or sisters; congregants needed to maintain respect for preachers and managers; preachers and managers needed to maintain a sense of intimacy with congregants, and they also needed to show mutual support each other. However, on the other hand, there were contradictions and sometimes tensions between them. For example, preachers sometimes expressed dissatisfaction with manager's decisions or supervision publicly or privately; preachers might occasionally disagree with each other's preaching content or mode; and congregants sometimes disagreed with the content of preaching, views which were mostly expressed privately. In addition, congregants were often divided, especially when they needed to vote on certain church decisions. This will be presented in detail in the second part by analysing Paul's story.

Power, capital and faith are everywhere. In such a relatively autonomous field, to use Bourdieu's concept (see Bourdieu and Nice 1977), it has its own field logic and independent power relations, which are particularly different from secular society. This demonstrates the possibility that an individual actor can be in different positions in different social spaces. For example, Paul was a barber in secular society, had less economic and cultural capital, and belonged to a marginal group, but as a preacher in this field, he was in an advantageous position of power relations and had more immediately relevant social and cultural capital. In a destination country, the ethnic-related experiences of immigrant actors in this space are therefore worthy of in-depth exploration, and how the particular power relationship position in the field will affect their ethnic identity.

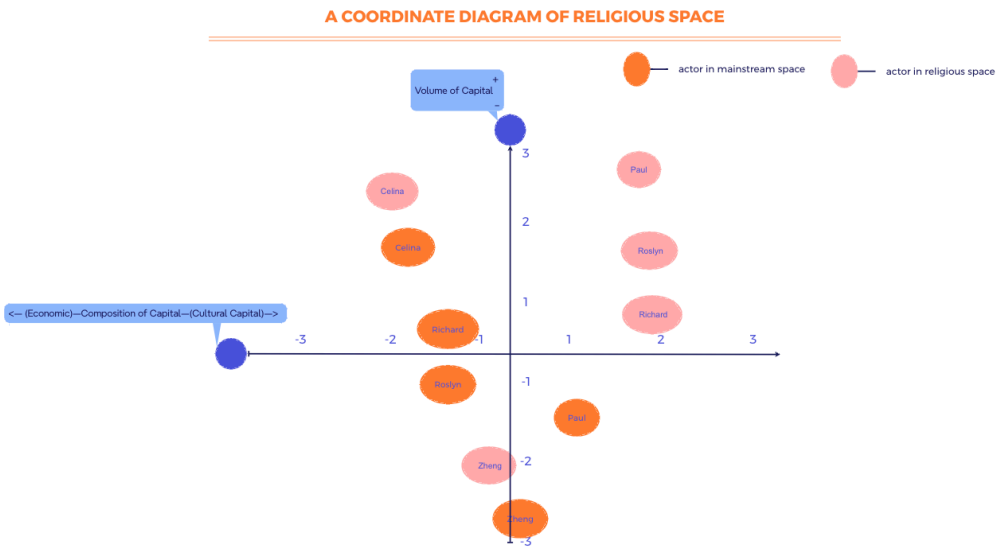
During this period, I met many people and established deep friendships with them. I invited 5 participants, who belonged to different groups for interviews. For a clearer presentation, the following chart is used to show, see table 3.

Table 3: An information sheet for participants in religious spaces

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Occupation	Group in the Church
Celina Oria	Female	40-45	Restaurant owner	Management
Victor Paul	Male	45-50	Barber	Preacher
Roslyn Qin	Female	55-60	Preacher	Preacher
Richard Murray	Male	55-60	Driver	Believer
Zheng Rayden	Male	40-45	Restaurant staff	Believer

In order to more clearly present the relative positions of these participants in different spaces, I drew the following diagram for a more intuitive display, see Figure 2. Orange represents the relative position of the participants in mainstream social space (i.e. within wider society), while pink represents their relative position in the religious space. Similar to the diagram presented in the methodology, the vertical axis represents the total amount of capital held by the participants, and the horizontal axis represents the type of capital held by the participants. The left side shows that capital expressed in its economic form, while the right side identifies cultural capital - in this religious field, it mainly refers to the right to interpret the Bible, which usually means a greater level of relevant knowledge.

Figure 2: A coordinate diagram of religious space



2. Boundary Blurring and Power Relations

What impressed me most when I first joined the church was the absolute conviction of congregants in the Bible, or more precisely, in the biblical doctrines preached by the preachers. This may be because, as Paul said, "*obedience is the greatest virtue recognized and promoted by the church*." This includes two aspects, according to Paul's first sermon when I entered the church, and in fact, it was also the very first thing everyone was taught when they first joined the church. This first obligation is spiritual obedience to the Bible, and the second is practical obedience to the church. Paul often conveyed this idea in his sermons and quoted the original items of the Bible to prove it, such as Psalm 32: 8-9[12]. This was the way they had always preached, connecting their understanding of the Bible, the church, and other aspects, and using the original item of the Bible as a quote to justify their claims or arguments.

Preachers' interpretations could extend the Bible to other aspects, such as virtue. For example, in a sermon at a weekend worship, one preacher claimed that the Bible taught us to value and protect marriage, citing Deuteronomy 24:1-5 and Malachi 2:16. Further, he extended that the Bible taught us to protect and respect women. Furthermore, through the content related to widows and orphans in Deuteronomy 24:10-22, he believed that the Lord Jesus taught us to show extra respect and love to widows and some single women. Based on this, he deemed that all those who want to be saved should follow the teachings of the Bible, and suggested that the Buddhist rule of not having a lustful mind and the Catholic rule that priests cannot get married were contrary to the Bible, and therefore both were unreliable.

Here a boundary was thus drawn and emphasized between the church and some so-called "heresies" - Buddhism and Catholicism, while ethnic boundaries constructed due to linguistic, cultural, social, political and other reasons was ignored or blurred because of shared virtues and behaviour patterns[13]. This might continue to trigger congregants' understanding and judgment of ethnicity and identity. In a broader sense, as some scholars mentioned (see Lyman and Douglass 1973, 358, Wimmer 2013, 62), this strategy aimed to

[12] Psalm 32: 8-9: I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you. Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you.

[13] For example, in the first sermon, an important content emphasized by the preachers was: the Bible was written by Jews and also is mainly applicable to them. As "Gentile", we Chinese can only enter heaven through limited positions, so we must sincerely believe in the Lord Jesus and act in accordance with the teachings of the Bible.

de-emphasize the ethnic or national boundary through such means, and turned it to a global rather than a particular nation or culture-based community of belonging.

These reinterpretations and demarcations of boundaries may affect the way congregants understood ethnicity, such as not emphasizing the ethnic identity of "Chinese" but emphasising instead the boundary between "church-believers" and "others", thereby blurring the boundary. And further through a series of symbols or symbolized claims, such as the above virtues, to enhance the significance of this boundary (see Wimmer 2013, 64). This can be reflected in the interviews with the participants. When asked about their views on identity, Roslyn, as well as Richard and Zheng from the congregants group first said that according to the Bible, they were "*all the Gentiles, who need to compete with Jews for a limited place in heaven*", said Richard. Celina and Paul, although first mentioned their Chinese identity. But when it came to the promised land and the identity of the Gentiles, they immediately agreed. Paul said that this was from the Bible and was absolutely correct. He showed me some original items in the Bible and mentioned that this was the concept that he, as a preacher, would clearly sermon in the first preach of every person who joined the church, and said, "*This is also one of the most fundamental purposes for all of us to serve lord Jesus and enter our church*."

What I want to draw attention to here is the power relationship behind this boundary strategy and the role it plays in the implementation of the strategy. In other words, it is necessary to realize that this blurring and re-delineation of boundaries is organised by power, and that actors in different positions in the power relationship have different understandings of the strategy and their ability to respond.

More specifically, once we recognize that the blurring of boundaries, re-delineation, and other strategies in this space are achieved by a series of claims by a certain group of preachers, we should recognize that the formulation of these strategies is arbitrary and that the preachers who hold/possess the power to interpret the Bible have a monopoly on this. One manifestation of the arbitrariness is that preachers in this particular space do not always have the same interpretation of the Bible, as mentioned in the group relations. For example, Paul once criticized another preacher's understanding and summary of the Bible as too subjective and far-fetched, and suggested that "*(he) needs to read the Bible more times, you know, reading the Bible once and reading it five times is quite different.*" This implies that the

understanding and summary of the Bible seems to depend on the preacher's personal experience and feelings. However, not every actor in this space can legitimately express different opinions when faced with a Bible interpretation that they disagree with. Congregants' questioning of preachers, for instance, was not allowed (of course, they could seek guidance on issues they do not understand, but they should always maintain an attitude of respect and humility toward the preachers). Since they did not have the power to interpret the Bible, which required training and empowerment from the headquarters as mentioned above, they were only allowed to listen and accept. This shows that according to the specific rules of this church space, the power to draw boundaries is in the hands of a certain minority, while the majority of others, including the general congregation and some managers, can only agree as rule-abiding parties.

In fact, I noticed that the hierarchy and relationship of power was presented in various instances in this space. For example, the layout of the weekend worship gathering place. Just as Zhang and Spicer's (2014) study of a pyramid-shaped office building in China revealed a hierarchical rationalized space, the layout of the church reveals solemnity and sacredness everywhere. The pulpit where the preacher speaks was more than one meter above the ground and had three steps. The pulpit was wrapped in red cloth and had two podiums equipped with microphones. The main seat was for the preacher and the side seat was for the translator. There was a huge statue of Jesus behind the pulpit. When sitting under the stage, one could feel the majesty of the speakers and the huge sense of oppression from the statue of Jesus behind them. Such a layout and their relative relationship symbolized the inviolability of the Lord Jesus, the sacredness of the preachers' identity and their unquestionable power to interpret the Bible.

In addition, the church will formulate a series of disciplines to maintain the congregants' respect and faith in the preachers and the preaching venue. For example, during the sermon, you were not allowed to walk around, made loud noises, or even sit in an improper posture at certain times — I was once severely stopped for crossing my legs while following the preacher to read the Bible in unison. All the congregants around me were orderly and abided by the rules, although this seemed a little difficult for some newcomers, such as me, to accept immediately. However, after participating in the worship for a month, I almost understood all the rules, and my discomfort completely disappeared. Like all congregants, I followed and maintained this particular order when I entered the space.

3. Informal Resistance, Double Oppression and Material Conditions

This strategy of boundary blurring and turning to a “global community of belonging”, as mentioned above, is often seen among the most excluded and stigmatized groups (see Wimmer 2013, 62). For example, the study of Michèle Lamont shows that how the Maghrebine and African immigrants in France, and African American working classes, rejected the legitimacy of ethno-racial hierarchies and positioned themselves at the centre of the moral and social world by using a religious universal language (Lamont 2000; Lamont et al. 2002). This blurring of boundaries looks like an approach for excluded collectives to resist social injustice through a strategy of redefining boundaries.

This has proven to be effective in this case. Many of the social actors gathered in this group are from marginalized groups. Most of them were engaged in basic manual work, such as cashiers in Chinese supermarkets, waiters in Chinese restaurants, barbers, and chefs in Chinese takeaway shops. There were also many people who were unemployed (in this case, the other party in the family is often engaged in the above work). Many did not speak English, and thus could not establish their own social circles in mainstream society. For them, one of the main roles played by the church was a shelter. Church space played a crucial role in making a home for immigrants and providing a sense of belonging and solace, as shown by some other scholars' research on the church (Pasura 2012). The church represented a heterotopia in a foreign country which had different functions and meanings from mainstream society, so that they could have different experiences from mainstream society in a particular space. Once entering this space, everyone called each other brothers and sisters, could speak Mandarin, ate Chinese food, and felt at home in the familiar language, discussing topics and diet habits. This will be discussed in more detail in the next section through Paul's story.

In addition, another meaning of this religious space is that, as Michelle (2000) revealed, by dividing and emphasizing the boundaries between the ‘true believers’ of the church and 'others' which usually included the "non-believers" of the secular society and the "wrong believers" of pagans, they firmly believed that they were on the "right" path to salvation, and thus positioned themselves at the social and moral centre, thus achieving an inversion their social position in mainstream society.

However, if we focus on the internal structure of the church space, the situation seemed to be more complicated, which could be reflected in 1) the more complex hierarchical composition of the actors in the space given the particular power relations in the space. This led to 2) the group relations within it, as mentioned above, being often complex and contradictory. For example, although congregants were not empowered to interpret the Bible, as mentioned above, they had no right to question but can only accept the preaching of the preachers according to the rules. However, this did not mean that they always maintained an absolute belief and acceptance of preaching. In fact, many congregants expressed their dissatisfaction with preaching in a more private and informal way. For example, Zheng once expressed his doubts about preaching to me in a tactful way. At a weekend worship, "*I think they are just interpreting it in their own way,*" he whispered to me, frowning, like a primary school student who was not allowed to speak in class, "*I do not think so (to what he said)*". "*Then why do not you stand up and ask him why it is like this?*" I tried to encourage him. He smiled at me, shook his head and quickly turned his head away.

Compared to the criticism between preachers mentioned in the previous section, which could be expressed more directly and formally, the implicit and informal suspicion and resistance of congregants against preachers highlights the unequal power relationship between the two groups (see Scott 1985). The strict power hierarchy was expressed in the fact that congregants in this space, as lacked the dominant capital in this field - neither a managerial power nor the power to interpret the Bible, so they had to endure many forms of symbolic violence from the powerful. This was implied in Paul's words, as mentioned at the beginning of the previous section, as the obedience to the church. On the one hand, congregants should unconditionally accept the spiritual interpretation of the Bible from preachers. On the other hand, they should also unconditionally accept the physical disciplines and other arrangements imposed by the management, which includes a series of regulations in the space, as mentioned in the previous section; and the tasks arranged by the church, for example, when a congregant was designated as the venue for a brotherhood, he needed to provide a place for worship and meals at his residence at the right time on that day.

Bourdieu (1999, 279) pointed out in *The Weight of the World* that the ability to dominate space, especially to achieve this ability physically and symbolically by acquiring the scarcest assets distributed in it, depends on the capital in hand. On the contrary, those without capital have to maintain a physical or symbolic distance from the scarcest social assets and are

forced to associate with the least powerful people or assets. Therefore, lack of capital restricts people and forces them to be tied to a field.

Let us still take the story of Paul and Zheng as an example. In mainstream society, they had similar situations. Due to their low capital possession – not speaking English, low education, and more importantly, low and unstable economic capital – they lack the means to acquire the dominant assets in mainstream society). Through the blurring and re-delineation of boundaries by the church, they had achieved the denial of the mainstream social structure and the re-positioning of themselves, so they seemed to be more willing to stay in this space. In the specific space of the church, Paul claimed that he "*received divine revelation*", so he suddenly "*had fire coming out of his mouth*“ (quoting the Bible, indicating that he was suddenly very good at expressing himself and could convey God's will), but in fact, in my opinion, this was due to his "*connection with the church when he was a child*" and his ability to read books because he had received secondary education and "*diligently studied the Bible*", so he became a preacher. He thus possessed a large amount of one of the scarcest capitals in the space, becoming a member of the symbolically dominant group and having greater authority in the space. Zheng, however, still had less capital and lacks the ability and means to obtain it – "*I did not go to school much. I could not concentrate on reading, so my grades were not good when I was in school*", so he was still one of the lowest in the power hierarchy of the space and had to abide by the rules set by other dominant groups. From this perspective, therefore, Zheng and other congregants like him in the space were actually oppressed by both mainstream society and the structures prevalent in the church space.

Another point worth noting, however, is that Zheng was quite satisfied with his situation in the church during the interview. This is mainly due to two reasons: 1) he believed he was on the road to salvation, which enabled him to obtain self-worth that he did not find in mainstream society – "*My life was terrible before (entering the church), and now I know that we need to have faith and prayer will work*"; and more importantly, 2) he could obtain many material benefits from the church - "*Many people here will help me. When I lost my job, I had no place to live, and the church provided me with a place to live.*" When I asked him why he could not become a missionary, he said, "*I do not have this ability. Look at other people who are very powerful and can understand these truths from God... I pray every time, maybe I need to wait.*" He was very distressed about this, "*Why cannot I always wait for God's revelation?*" In my opinion, on the one hand, the material benefit Zheng obtained from

the church was a crucial reason for his satisfaction in staying in the space. In other words, Zheng's lack of economic capital in mainstream society forced him to be confined to this space which provided material assistance. On the other hand, belief in God and, more generally, belief in the preachers' sermons, symbolically legitimized the violence Zheng suffered in this space, thus becoming a disguise for Zheng's unconscious exposure to these symbolic violences. These all have become the key to maintaining the particular order of the church space. As Bourdieu (see Bourdieu 1990b, Bourdieu 1996, Bourdieu et al. 2010) reminds us, social relations often take shape or become forceful because the underlying 'material' parameters of those relations might be concealed by ideas about 'truthfulness' or value or other kinds of symbolic meaning.

I thus want to reiterate here is that material conditions of social actors need to be given more attention and should be related to the hierarchy and social position in different spaces. More specifically, in the church space, Paul, as a member of the symbolically dominant group, had obtained more symbolic capital and spatial dominance and enjoyed privileges in the space. In contrast, Zheng, as a member of the dominated group, as mentioned above, suffered a series of disciplines and symbolic violence in the space. When we turn our attention to mainstream society, Paul and Zheng, as marginalized groups that also lack material foundations, were both "voluntarily" bound to this space because they could obtain corresponding material benefits and assistance from the church. Therefore, we have reason to suggest that submission to the symbolic order of the church, and to its structures of authority, is sustained by wider experiences of social inequality and a need to cope with those.

A more complex landscape of boundary strategies is presented here. Actors excluded from mainstream society entered a particular church space and achieved collective self-repositioning at the centre of this social world and in terms of its morality through the strategy of blurring boundaries. At the same time, they could also obtain more material benefits in the form of church assistance and mutual assistance among members in this space. This made them more willing to stay in this "shelter". Subsequently, they were further divided into different groups according to particular power relations within the space, and their relational positioning was achieved according to the amount of relevant capital they held, such as the capacity to interpret the Bible, for instance. For actors in different positions, their understanding and practice of boundaries were also different. For example, as a social

actor who was also excluded by the mainstream society, Paul, as a preacher, enjoyed the power to define and interpret boundaries in the space. As a member of the church's privileged group, he could stand on the pulpit in the church and look down at the congregants, confidently using the mainstream language of the church to express his understanding and definition of boundaries by citing the original items of the Bible without being questioned, and at the same time enjoyed full respect from the congregants. However, Zheng could only listen to the understanding of the Bible from different preachers, accepted the potential boundary division in their words, and at the same time obey all the arrangements as much as possible.

Therefore, after being further differentiated, in this particular space, some actors occupied a dominant position, had more capital and the qualifications to dominate the space; while the others were in a dominated position, had less capital, and suffered from the dual oppression from the mainstream society and the church space. From this perspective, although the division of boundary strategies applied to both, they had different powers, understandings and practices. Moreover, the particular rules and material assistance of the space, for both, were more favourable than their marginalization in mainstream society, so the social space and the particular social relations and order within it were maintained, as were the corresponding boundary strategies and identity recognition.

4. The Story of Paul

So far I have demonstrated the composition of this religious space and the group relations within it, and now I will focus on the individual layer in the space. In this section, I will analyse Paul's life experience and psychological process by showing his life trajectory. Through Paul's story, we could see how an immigrant on the margins of society entered and stayed in a social space, and how, fortunately, gained respect, trust and self-confidence in this social space. As is shown in the diagram 1 above, Paul is in completely different positions in the mainstream space and the religious space, as well as the way he came to experience ethnicity in the process. At the same time, this section will also explore how different encounters and feelings in the social spaces affect and shape his expression of his ethnic identity.

Paying attention to Paul's life trajectory has another research significance. As a member of a marginal group who cannot integrate into the mainstream British society, for reasons such as language, culture and social network, studying his story will help explore the life experiences of marginal ethnic groups, the ways they try to fit into society, and the many challenges and difficulties they face in the process.

4.1 Life Experience in Early Life and London Chinatown Barbershop

Paul was born in southeastern China into a not well-off family. His parents were "*ordinary shop employees*", "*did not have much money*", and "*did not receive much education*". He was sent to a barbershop as an apprentice when he was 13, but after being bullied by his master, he decided to leave, although this move was opposed by his parents. Because of a determination to "*do something better to make master and parents look up to me*", he studied hard and was admitted to a technical secondary school, majoring in hairdressing. "*I had some achievement... won the second prize in the city's hairdressing design competition,*" he told me. After that, he opened his own barbershop and became "*slightly famous*" in the local area, so he quickly "*saved a lot of money*". However, because he was too complacent and made bad friends, he lost all his savings within a few months, and the barbershop was also forced to closed. Amid the constant and sharp accusations from people around him, he felt extremely ashamed and depressed for a time, refusing to socialize, and his life fell into deep trouble.

In this difficult time, under the persuasion of his relatives living in London, he decided to come to the UK to "*start a new life*". Although many years have passed, Paul described his mood and attitude at the time in extraordinary detail. It can be imagined that such an experience put Paul in a very embarrassing situation —— he could not easily choose to return to China even facing lots of challenges. As he said, "*No matter how difficult it is to go abroad, I have to make a lot of money before I can come back, otherwise I will not have the face (feel ashamed) to come back.*"

However, life was not always as good as expected, especially living in a foreign country. When he first arrived in London, he boarded at a relative's house. Living under someone else's roof was not pleasant because "*I always had to live cautiously, afraid that they would kick me out and leave me with nowhere to live.*" Later, he moved to a multi-person apartment,

but he couldn't sleep well because of the noise, and he had to pay more money for it. "*I spent half of my salary on the house, so I couldn't save money at all.*" In addition, he didn't know English because he came too hastily. In order to facilitate communication, his relatives introduced him to a local, informal English school[14]. However, he gave up after only three classes because he felt that the people he met when cutting hair were all Chinese, so he didn't need to learn English. However, I identified another perhaps more important reason. "*The teacher spoke Cantonese so I couldn't understand*[15]", and "*every class asked me to stand up and answer questions. I felt embarrassed because I could not answer them. I don't have a basic knowledge of English like other students*". Dignity cannot solve everything. Not being able to speak English severely limited his social circle, which isolated him. Coupled with many other life difficulties, such as incompatibilities in diet and living habits, he began to feel disappointed, painful and confused, and the feeling of loneliness surrounded by a strange foreign environment.

In addition to these social pressures, his work was also making him miserable. One month after arriving in London, he chose to work in a Chinese barbershop in Chinatown on the recommendation of his relatives. In fact, given that he could not speak English and only had barbering skills, he did not have many other options. The boss of the barbershop where he worked was from Hong Kong, and almost all his colleagues were also from Hong Kong. "*They looked down on mainlanders, and believed that mainlanders were poor and backward, so they discriminated against us.*" In addition, there were significant differences in hairdressing aesthetics between Hong Kong and the mainland, which led to a certain degree of stigmatization for him. He was regarded as a "*stupid man who doesn't understand fashion and aesthetics*", which made him feel extremely insulted. He was thus always excluded by his colleagues and criticized by his boss. "*[When closing the barbershop every day], two people were responsible for cleaning [the barbershop], but every time it was my turn, the Hong Kong colleague [who should clean with me] always left with the others, leaving me alone to clean such a large place.*" The boss would also choose to ignore it, "*I told the boss, but the boss didn't care at all. He said, then you should talk to them yourself. I told them, they would deliberately speak some Cantonese that I couldn't understand... In fact, they all*

[14] Just to clarify in case there is any ambiguity, Paul only mentioned here that it was an English school, mainly for those non-English speaking immigrants who have just arrived, so I understand it as an informal English school run by the community to help immigrants integrate into society quickly.
[15] It should be noted here that Paul is a Mandarin speaker. He cannot understand most of the Cantonese spoken by the teacher because the two languages are not interoperable in terms of extensive speaking and application.

can speak Mandarin, because they communicated with many customers who come here in Mandarin." His salary was also lower than others. "*I went to ask the boss, and the boss said it was the same. Bullshit, the new Hong Kong employees who came in later all had higher salaries than me.*" Paul suffered a lot from this, which could be reflected in his helpless expression, frequent silence, and occasionally excited tone during the narrative. What he could not understand the most was why, even after arriving in Chinatown and going to a barbershop run by Chinese people, he was still the one being isolated and excluded.

An incompatible life, a shattered illusion and a terrible job tortured him. He wanted to escape and reunite with his family, but could not even change his job. Because the barbershop owners in Chinatown knew each other, he was unable to find a job in another barbershop if he fell out with one barbershop owner. Quitting his job meant that he would lose this only source of income, which was unbearable for him as an immigrant living in the lowest social class in the destination country, so he couldn't stop enduring the bullying and humiliation. In a sense, he was trapped in this space.

In the social space of the Chinatown barbershop, we could read that, first, its special geographical location and diverse personnel composition constitute a multi-ethnic social interaction place - located in London Chinatown, the boss and the staff include people from Hong Kong and mainland China, and the ethnic composition of the customers is also complex. Paul, who is in it, can thus easily associate many of his experiences in this place with ethnicity. Moreover, all the words and deeds that happened might be elevated to the ethnic layer and evolve into doxa. In other words, this is how Paul experienced and encountered ethnicity in his view. Ethnicity, as a visible stitching interspersed in the barbershop, was reflected in the daily interactions in the place, making all encounters understood as reflections of ethnic realities.

Second, the power relationship in the space and Paul's position affected his views and attitudes towards ethnicity - the rules of the barbershop were monopolized by the "Hong Kong boss" and "Hong Kong colleagues", and Paul was in a disadvantaged position. More specifically, the many unequal encounters he suffered in this place, the discriminatory words and deeds of his boss and colleagues, and the language and rule restrictions he suffered in the social process all affected his views on "Chinese" and his own "ethnic identity", drawing a boundary between people from "mainland" and "Hong Kong", and symbolically

classifying Hong Kong people as "others" rather than "us". The "nested structure" of ethnicity in individual's vision arose and was established in such scenarios.

Therefore, I noticed that in the interview, when he was first asked about his views on ethnicity and ethnic identity, he deliberately emphasized two points. First, the so-called "Chinese" should be divided according to region rather than being treated as a whole. People from Hong Kong and mainland should belong to two camps - "*You must remember that we are not in the same group, and we cannot be in the same group with others, because they look down on us,*" he expressed to me many times. Second, one of the characteristics of Chinese is that they are not united and always fight among themselves. Because in his opinion, even if people in the Chinatown barbershop were all ethnic minorities living in the UK and belonged to the category of so-called "Chinese", his colleagues still chose to exclude him rather than accept him. In other words, his views about ethnicity were influenced by his experience in the barbershop at that time. More specifically, when we talked about this topic, he always recalled this life experience. These aching experiences inspired him to reject his "former Hong Kong colleagues" and come to such a viewpoint.

It is worth mentioning that an example of doxa is shown here. Paul's two most capable assistants, were both from Hong Kong, which will be mentioned below. They helped Paul a lot, and they had a good relationship with each other. Paul had never made any negative comments about their identities, as if they never belonged to the "Hong Kong people" camp that he calls those insidious people who look down on people from the mainland. Despite this, when discussing ethnic topics, he still expressed negative views on "Hong Kong people", "Hong Kong identity" or "Hong Kong camp" based on his experience in the barber shop in London's Chinatown. This shows us, again, that ethnicity is a flexible process of boundary drawing: it's dependent on context, not on a set of fixed characteristics. In one case, the idea of the HK/mainland distinction becomes salient; in other it is not salient.

4.2 Life Experience in the Church

Paul's painful life in London lasted for more than 2 years, "*I must have had a mental illness during that time. Work was not going well, and everyone bullied me. Life was not going well either. I did not speak English and could not communicate with others. I always wondered, what am I living for, what is the meaning? What hope is there?*" Paul recalled. And the church

appeared.

Paul knew about the church in London through street preaching. In fact, this is a church he was very familiar with from when he was a child. According to his recollection, when he was a child, his parents were busy with work and had no time to take care of him, so he often went to the church after school, and his parents also tacitly entrusted the responsibility of taking care of their children to the church. At that time, the church took an important social responsibility in the local area, taking care of children, providing them with a safe place to eat and play. A large number of children like Paul "*grew up in the church since childhood*", which made them establish a sense of trust and belonging to the church from an early age. For them, the memories of the church are full of food, warmth and childhood playmates. However, after being sent to a barber shop as an apprentice, Paul never went to the church again. "*For more than ten years, it really seemed like there was a wall separating me from the church.*" The excitement of encountering the church again in a foreign country after a long absence was expressed vividly even when he was interviewed. He described this "*reunion*" as "*this must be the arrangement of the Lord Jesus.*"

This church, which was almost entirely made up of Chinese people and provided free Chinese meals, provided Paul an excellent place for communication in Mandarin. Meanwhile, there was almost no discrimination among the primary congregation, and everyone was treated fairly and reasonably, and they called each other brothers and sisters. Unlike everything he suffered in the British mainstream society, Paul could participate in the daily activities of the church with dignity as a "*normal individual*", which gave him a great sense of satisfaction and security. Through the preaching of the preachers, he officially joined the church and firmly believed that "*it was the Lord Jesus who guided me to this place.*" Because he had received education, he began to spontaneously read the Bible day and night, and carefully pondered the principles in it.

With "*very hard work in reading and studying the Bible*" and "*fully obeyed the tasks given to me by the church*", he was soon promoted to a preacher. Unlike the church's simple role as a nursery when he was young, the church currently could provide almost everything Paul needs at that time, daily communication, familiar food, integration into a group and the feeling of being respected, like a shelter in the end of the world, compelled him to entrust his whole body and mind to it. "*I have nothing here [in Britain], all my family members are*

in the country [China]. My mission here is only to make money. So, in addition to making money, I spend all my time praying to God and studying the Bible," he said excitedly and firmly.

Then came an incredible turn of events at work. In his words, "*It must be that the Lord Jesus heard my prayer [for a better job].*" One of his customers, who he recalled looked like a British Indian, admired his barbering style and asked him if he would like to go to Scotland with him and promised to set up his own barbershop for him. After a whole night of prayer and thanksgiving, with the help of the church, he embarked on the journey north. The customer fulfilled his promise and rented his street-front house to Paul at a relatively low price. In this way, he had his own barbershop and could also live in the shop, which saved him a lot of money. Compared with living in London, owning a barbershop without having to endure discrimination and bullying, his life became better. "*With the help of the Lord Jesus, my life is so good that it is unreal.*" Paul's exhilaration was beyond words.

The smooth days, however, only lasted for a few short months. The customer suddenly wanted to take back the house before the contract expired due to cash flow reasons. Paul lost his barbershop after the argument, which triggered the stereotype of British Indians. In his view, they are basically "*capitalists who are not committed to their promises. You cannot expect them to really help you.*" The church once again played the role of a saviour when he was disappointed. With the help of church staff, he found a house suitable for a barbershop. He attributed all this to prayer and the Lord, "*It must be that the Lord Jesus heard my prayers and gave me such a good house and job opportunity.*" He decided, "*I will continue to serve Him devoutly, because I understand that since He can give me all this, He can also take it away from me*."

At this time, the church undoubtedly meant a lot to Paul. Imagine a suffering outsider who, in an unfamiliar place with a different language and culture, and struggling in an inescapable space due to discrimination and oppression at the bottom of society, suddenly encountered a place where communication was unimpeded, cultural and customs were the same, and everyone seemed equal. Like a beam of light, it illuminated his dark life. More importantly, the church provided a social space different from the mainstream for marginalized immigrant groups including Paul, allowing these immigrants from different regions of China who were in the same bottom social class in the destination country to live more comfortably, equally

and with dignity. Individuals in this space have therefore formed a close community, and the rich and mutually supportive life and interaction they experience in it are not available in the mainstream society. At the same time, this feeling of comfort, equality and respect in the community was also the emotions they cannot get in the mainstream, which makes them have an affective connection with each other and a sense of attachment to the community. These all helped to build a shared identity and shape their sense of belonging to the community.

Furthermore, if we explore this community from the perspective of group connection and solidarity, we could find that the original reason why they were willing to be in this group was because they could get ethnic-related things that could not obtain in mainstream society, such as their mother tongue, familiar meals, topics that they could discuss more freely, etc. These shared cultural, historical, and geographical backgrounds provided them with a foundation for communication and unity, and coupled with a common faith (for people like Paul who had lived in the church since childhood, this was also one of the familiar cultural backgrounds), it was enough to establish a large and emotionally closely connected community. Therefore, in my opinion, the good experience that Paul had obtained in the church space was largely an ethnic experience, which was a manifestation of the satisfaction of similar needs formed based on a common historical and cultural foundation.

Moreover, material provision and assistance are also crucial. It should be noted that Paul and similar marginalized immigrants, due to their position at the bottom of society, had extremely limited resources and ways to obtain them, and the social networks they can build was also limited, hence why he dared not resign from the barbershop in London Chinatown, as mentioned above. In addition, the mainstream society did not seem to provide appropriate and sufficient teaching for immigrants at the bottom of society: see Paul's English training experience mentioned above. At the same time, it should be realized that the establishment of a community often means not only shared beliefs, culture, language, etc., but also material construction, assistance and protection for members in it. Therefore, for marginalized groups such as Paul, a community means more abundant resource provision, more comprehensive physical assistance, a wider social network in the space, and a more solid shelter, which can be seen from the assistance Paul received from the church several times. In such ways, a community with a shared cultural background, carrying common experiences and emotions, and providing rich and sufficient material assistance was constructed. And when individuals

are willing to experience, interact and co-build in this social space for a long time, a common identity and sense of belonging were also established.

After solving work and basic living problems, Paul noticed that there was no church in the new city where he lived, so he always had to go to the church in the next city every week to complete the worship activities. By chance, he met some customers who came to get a haircut from the same church. After learning that there were a large number of congregations in the local area, they planned to establish a new church in the city, and finally got approval after applying to the headquarters. It was at this time that Roslyn and Richard were sent by the church in the next city to assist Paul in organizing and handling the establishment, recruitment and other affairs of the church. With the help of these two and others, Paul chose a suitable gathering place for the worship activities every Saturday, and has been applying to the headquarters to buy their own church (so far this was not been approved because the purchase of a church requires a certain number of believers).

Paul had his own way of setting rules. First, he valued the gathering place of the church. In my opinion, the “place” has a special symbolic meaning to him, which might relate to his understanding of "being Chinese". In his words, "*I am a very traditional person. Chinese people are attached to their land, so I always think it is very important to have a fixed and suitable place to do everything.*" Second, he valued education highly, which he believed was also one of the characteristics of the Chinese, and this refers to both education in Chinese and education in the church. Therefore, he founded a nursery and a Chinese school within the church. "I*t is very important to let them (the children) be exposed to our (Chinese) language and our (church) culture from an early age,*" he told me. The establishment of the nursery and Chinese school solved the problem that many believers could not balance attending weekend gatherings and taking care of young children, which also led to a significant increase in the number of church members, even including some foreigners, mainly locals with similar beliefs as well as marginalized Africans. As one of the founders, Paul initially had a very high status and power in the local church. However, he later resigned from the position of manager because, according to him, he had to take on the task of preaching and recruiting believers across the country[16].

[16] The reason why Paul stopped being a manager may be questionable, because another believer in the church mentioned a different reason in the interview, that is, he did not continue to serve as a manager because he lost the election.

Since he no longer served as a manager, he had also lost his right to handle rules and affairs and the leadership power. Paul was not satisfied with the current managers, thinking that they had made a "*mess*" of the church, and "*no longer worry about buying a church because they think it is not important*." At the same time, they were not very concerned about daily organizational activities, resulting in "*losing a lot of believers*" (of course, other participants had different opinions). At the same time, the current management "*did not pay attention to other people's suggestions, because my suggestions to the management several times had not been taken seriously*", so he was "*very disappointed*" and decided to "*continue to run for the next election.*" Although his position in the church had changed, Paul was still passionate about the church and had a high sense of participation and belonging. On the one hand, although he was no longer a manager in the local church, as a preacher across the UK, he often received invitations to preach from churches in cities across the UK. On the other hand, in my opinion, there was still a huge gap between life in the church and life in mainstream society, and obviously, Paul enjoyed the daily life in the former social space more.

We could read that although Paul was always in the same church, as his power position in the church changed, the daily activities he participated in, the way he was treated and his feeling about life in the church were different. His identity within the church and the way he experienced daily ethnicity also changed accordingly. This is why I distinguish his different stages in the church. In other words, as I argued in Chapter 3, the views and claims on ethnicity and ethnic identity should always be analysed in a specific context, so the changes in Paul's background in the church will directly lead to his claims and attitudes towards ethnic identity.

More specifically, first, from church in London (for the sake of narrative convenience, I call it Church Space 1) to church in Scotland (which I call Church Space 2), from an ordinary believer to one of the founders and managers, the way he experiences ethnicity has changed a lot. Church Space 1, for Paul, was more like a shelter for marginalized people in mainstream society. As a person of lower power in the church, his ethnic experience included basic items such as speaking Mandarin, eating familiar Chinese food, and communicating with people of similar cultural backgrounds. In Church Space 2, he became the rule maker, and the one with the upper hand in power. This empowered him to experience more ethnic-related affairs in this space. Therefore, in addition to the above, we could see that he, in this scene, can set up relevant institutions based on his understanding of ethnicity, such as

founding a Chinese school, and was also able to set goals of the church at a certain stage, such as finding a suitable gathering place and trying to buy a church. In other words, the way of experiencing ethnicity became more various and advanced as more empowered.

Meanwhile, his view of the group has also changed accordingly. A very intuitive manifestation is that his way of dividing "us" and "others" has changed. Through the interview with Paul, in Church Space 1, Paul's boundary division mainly refers to the British mainstream and the church community, based on daily communication language, cultural background and diet. In Church Space 2, Paul's boundary division mainly refers to the groups within the church that support him and those that oppose him (“others” refer more to "current managers" in the interview context), based on the power to formulate policies related to ethnic experience.

4.3 Position and Ethnicity in Social Space

Now let us try to sort out Paul's position/class, feelings, and the way of dividing the boundaries of groups in the four major social spaces in his life trajectory after he came to the UK. That is to say, in chronological order: mainstream British society, the Chinatown barbershop, church space 1 and church space 2. When Paul first arrived in the UK, he was at the edge and bottom of the social space in the mainstream British society due to the extremely limited resources to which he had access. At the same time, the dislocation of habits brought by the language and cultural background of immigrants produced a hysteresis effect, making him feel an embarrassment similar to that of the lower class "using the wrong salad plate" in the upper-class society. In such a social structure, he was constantly experiencing the discomfort and anxiety caused by this exclusion and dislocation. For these reasons, he seemed out of place in this space. He could only experience familiar ethnicity in a limited form in an extremely limited social circle. Ethnic identity, for him, was more about being excluded and marginalized by the ethnic majority. In this scenario, he divided the ethnic boundaries between the British and the Chinese in a broad sense.

In contrast, the differences in cultural background in the barbershop in Chinatown were slightly smaller, the language was similar so that he could communicate, and it was a familiar field of work for him, which made him qualified to enter the space. But as an employee and a mainlander, he was still at the bottom of the power structure in this social space. Coupled

with the aesthetic differences between the mainland and Hong Kong, he suffered from cultural discomfort and symbolic discrimination in this space. But in the face of more serious exclusion and resource acquisition methods in mainstream society, he could only be firmly bound in this space. The discrimination from "Hong Kong people" who he believed were "also Chinese" broke his previous division of "Chinese", and thus in this scenario, an ethnic boundary distinguished people from "mainland" and "Hong Kong".

Church Space 1 is undoubtedly the dawn of light in the darkness. In this social space, the differences in terms of language and culture are almost eliminated, and the familiar diet and communication largely alleviated his embarrassment and anxiety. Material assistance and the expansion of his social network greatly alleviated his physical difficulties in life. Coupled with the completely different social structure in this space, there were few conflicts and discriminations among the primary believers. Especially in contrast to the first two spaces, he had an unprecedented sense of identity and belonging to this community. In this scenario, Paul experienced a richer ethnicity in a wider social network in a foreign country, which led him to view church space in clearly ethnic terms, as well as simply religious or devotional terms. The group boundary was also divided between church members and non-church members.

Differently, in Church Space 2, Paul became a powerful person in the church. As his position in the church space changed, the embarrassment and anxiety caused by the previous dislocation disappeared in this space, accompanied by a huge sense of accomplishment, satisfaction and security. At the same time, his position in the church, his stable social circle, and the assistance he received meant that material matters were no longer a problem. At this time, his experience of ethnicity had become more diverse and advanced, as mentioned above. Therefore, in this scenario, his division of group boundaries was more based on questions of power. Thus and some foreigners who supported him could also be classified as "us", which was a huge difference with respect to his views in the first social space.

However, it is worth noting that this sense of security and satisfaction is also limited to this specific social space. It is conceivable that once he exits this space and returns to mainstream society, just like the experience in the first space mentioned above, the anxiety and embarrassment brought about by "dislocation" will also follow. Obviously, when I talked to him, he still maintained many of the characteristics when he first arrived in the UK. He

cannot speak English and he still follows his own hairdressing aesthetics. Therefore, we could say that for Paul, these multiple boundaries coexist in daily interactions. In other words, his claims about ethnicity and his own identity always depend on the topic and the context of current discussion. Therefore, in the interview, it can be seen that the above divisions of various groups often appear in turn according to the context of our discussion. It is foreseeable that he will also divide boundaries based on other life experiences, such as the boundaries between local and headquarters, the boundaries of churches in various cities, etc. The relationship between these groups is also constantly changing, with unions and contradictions. We can see the nested structure of boundaries, as well as the increasingly contradictory phenomena such as the superposition of boundaries. In addition, it is necessary to point out the significance of space as a medium. It is important to realize that Paul's demarcation of boundaries in various spaces not only divides corresponding groups, but also means the cutting, connection and suturing of space itself. In other words, ethnicity can be highlighted, reflected and carried through the medium of space. In short, the claims of ethnicity and ethnic identity will also change according to different social spaces.

5 Conclusion

This chapter is divided into two parts. First, by focusing on a religious space in Scotland, observing, experiencing and analysing the power relations, member composition and ways of different ethnic experiences, this chapter explains how the actors in this space reposition themselves through a blurring of ethnic boundaries, thereby re-placing themselves at the centre of morality and a given social context. In addition to emphasizing the function of the church as a "shelter", as previous religious space studies have focused on, this study also shifts the perspective to the power relations, hierarchy and relative positions within religion. By analysing the differences in the understanding and practice of actors' identities and boundaries in different power positions, this research demonstrated that the actors in a symbolic dominant position in this space have a higher decision-making power and richer forms of practice in the formulation and practice of boundaries. In contrast, the actors in a disadvantaged position can only accept the division of boundaries and limited ethnic experience, meanwhile are constrained in this space under the pressure of mainstream society, thus suffering from double oppression.

The second part of this chapter focuses on a preacher in this religious space. By combing the

life trajectory of this actor after he immigrated to British society, the changes in his work, living environment, social network, and a series of corresponding changes in his social status, and analysing how his ethnic experience changed accordingly, it shows that one's understanding of ethnicity and ethnic identity will be constantly influenced and reshaped as status and position change.

The role of schools within church spaces, as well as their specific teaching content and methods, has sparked my interest, particularly regarding their potential involvement in the reproduction of ethnic identity and the hidden inheritance of capital embedded within this process. Therefore, in the next chapter, I will focus on a Chinese school in the UK to examine how the educational system facilitates the reproduction of ethnicity and ethnic identity.

Chapter 6: Identity Reproduction, Intergenerational and Education

— Ethnicity and Class in a Chinese School Space

Similar to the religious space in the previous chapter, this chapter will focus on a Chinese school in the UK. By analysing the positional relationship of the groups in this space and the class characteristics implied in pedagogic actions, it reveals how the “real classes” (differentiate from "class on paper", see Bourdieu et al. 2010, Bourdieu 1990b, Grenfell 2012, etc.) — groups in different positions in the same space interact and shape ethnic identity through a series of cultural arbitrariness. In addition, due to the unique cross-cultural establishment and teaching background of overseas Chinese schools, this chapter will also focus on the reproduction of ethnic identity and explore the ways in which students’ ethnic identity are influenced by their families and schools through a series of pedagogic actions, and explore how forms of symbolic violence played out in this space through this influence. This will contribute to the exploration of the intersectionality of ethnicity and class in the field of education, as well as the relationship between identity reproduction and symbolic violence.

1. Background, Significance and Groups

Through the introduction of one of my colleagues, I met the principal of a Chinese school in the UK and participated in the school's teacher recruitment notice. My research project was fully affirmed in the communication with the principal, so I joined the Chinese school as a researcher, as well as a teacher in charge of a class and cultural section designer after obtaining consent.

After that, I stayed in the Chinese school for more than a year, participated in the teaching work for a total of three semesters, and participated in or organized almost all the activities of the school during this period, including daily teaching activities and curriculum design, including parent meetings, Spring Festival parties, spring outings, etc. This gave me a more comprehensive understanding of the ordinary work and operation of the school, and at the same time established good relationships with many people in the school. The groups in the school were clearly divided and closely connected with each other, which gave me the idea of recruiting participants in different positions of power structure in the Chinese school to

focus on the relationship in a specific social space between real class and ethnic identity construction. In particular, the reproduction of ethnic identity could be included in the analysis perspective due to the particularity of the educational background and content of Chinese schools in the UK. To this end, I first need to clarify the basic information and group relations of the space.

1.1 The School Structure, Daily Activities and Characteristics

Similar to other local schools in the UK (observing the same holidays and days off), the school holds an opening ceremony on a weekend in August or September to announce the start of the semester—a rather Chinese ceremony, including a speech by the principal, an introduction to the school, teacher information and courses, and an emphasis on safety projects such as fire prevention. After that, each head teacher will lead the students and parents back to the class to hold the first-class meeting. From then to December is the first semester, with classes once a week and a break once a month. After the Christmas holiday, the second semester will last from January to June in the same format. The final closing ceremony will include a summary of teaching work, as well as recognition of outstanding students in various competitions and the final grades of each class (usually the top three), and end with some performances. During the semester, daily teaching activities are held on Saturdays, one class in the morning and one in the afternoon. All courses (both offline and online) will be concentrated in these two time periods. There is a half-hour break between the two courses for students to hand over and for teachers to rest and prepare for the next courses. At the same time, the school also offers optional courses such as mathematics and programming on weekday evenings. In addition, the school also holds parties and other activities at some important traditional Chinese festivals.

The school consists of 10 grades, and each grade has 1-2 online and offline classes depending on the teaching mode and the number of students - the school strictly regulates the number of students, generally not more than 9 per class, and claims that this is conducive to allowing each student to receive adequate attention and teaching. Small-class teaching, which is what the school calls the "elite teaching model", is one of the characteristics of this Chinese school that is different from other local Chinese schools, which generally have larger classes. For example, another Chinese school in the same city usually has a class size of 40-50 members. Students will be assigned to classes mainly based on their Chinese proficiency - other factors

will also be taken into account, such as age.

The emphasis on Chinese traditional culture is another hallmark of the school. Unlike some other Chinese schools that "*regard language as just a tool, as long as it can be used for communication*" (as it was put in a comment from a teacher who once worked in another Chinese school), this school regards language as a way to spread, inherit and promote culture, and therefore claims to attach great importance to the teaching of Chinese studies, Chinese history and culture.

The Chinese textbooks are selected from a set of Mandarin textbooks compiled by Jinan University, China for use by overseas Chinese children. There are a total of 12 volumes, each with four units and 12 texts. Similar to Chinese language classes in China, the textbooks are composed of fables, stories and ancient poems, covering history, technology, culture, science, etc. Teachers generally explain things in the form of “Chinese Pinyin”[17], words, sentences, paragraphs and compositions. The teaching content and methods of different grades and classes will be determined according to the Chinese proficiency of the students in the class. For example, the teaching content of senior grades will generally skip pinyin, start from words, and pay more attention to writing skills. The content and steps of the course, in general, include one and a half hours of regular courses and half an hour of Chinese studies courses. An additional Chinese music class of about 15 minutes was added starting from the second semester.

There are usually two teachers in one class. One online teacher is responsible for giving lessons, and is usually a Master's student of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language from a famous Chinese university. The other offline teacher is responsible for maintaining class order, cooperating with the online teacher in teaching, and correcting homework, which is often an experienced local Chinese teacher or a Master's or doctoral student from one of the local universities. The configuration of each class varies according to the actual situation. For example, some classes have two experienced offline teachers, while in very few classes, such as my class, I can take charge of a class alone, responsible for all matters including teaching, maintaining order, and correcting homework.

[17] Chinese Pinyin, meaning "phonetic spelling of Chinese", is the official Romanization system for Mandarin Chinese, developed in China in the 1950s. It is used to transcribe the pronunciation of Chinese characters into the Roman alphabet, making it easier for learners to pronounce and understand the language.

1.2 Groups in School, their Relationships and the Samples Recruited

People in school, generally speaking, can be divided into four groups. The first is the management group, including the principal, vice principal, director and other people involved in management – these are often prestigious figures within the community and can help the school in some way, such as some former leaders of the local Confucius Institute; the second is the teacher group, including online and offline teachers; the third is the parents' group; and the last is the student group. The relationship between the groups seems simple and clear, but it is actually quite complicated. On the one hand, because the school was established not long ago, the rules need to be improved and the relationship between groups is not stable. On the other hand, due to the unique geographical and cultural background, the relationship between groups is thus hybrid and sometimes distorted due to various cultural situations. For example, the teaching philosophy and modes of the managers from the mainland and some local teachers, parents and students sometimes have great differences, and even disputes arise.

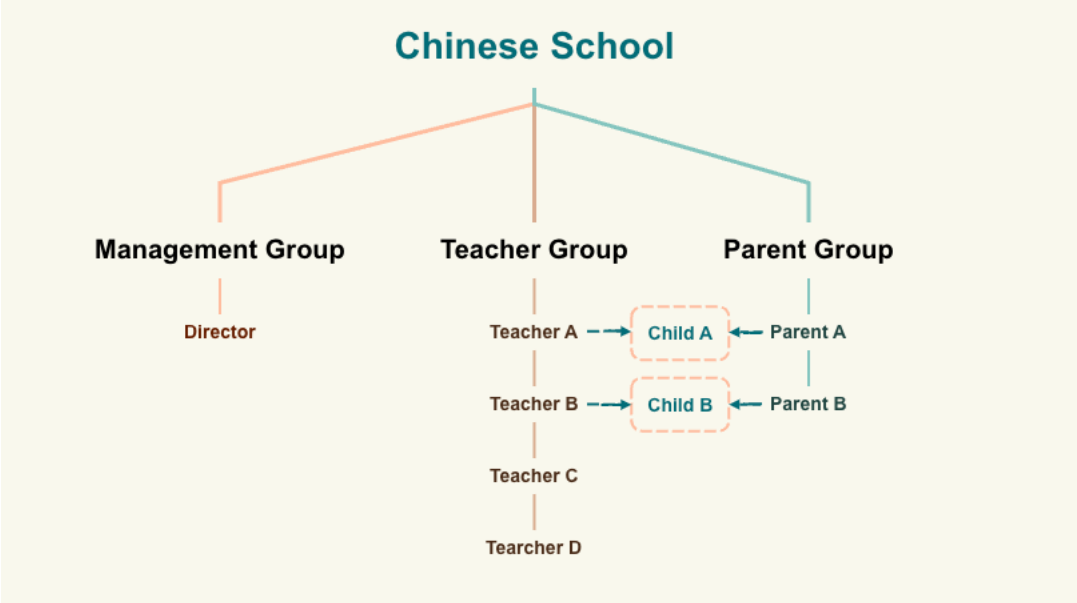
More specifically, the relationship between managers and teachers is an employment relationship. Managers have the power to manage and make orders, but in fact, more negotiation and compromise are needed, because managers need to rely on the teacher group to complete the teaching tasks, while most teachers in Chinese schools work part-time, so they do not have to obey the requirements of the management completely and can resign at any time. Teachers' teaching philosophies and methods often need to follow the guidance of managers (at least on the surface for the sake of respect for authority), but they often have their own set of teaching rules, and sometimes show scepticism towards the manager's teaching philosophy (mostly in private), deeming that those are outdated or inapplicable.

Teachers seem to have absolute authority over students, because this is usually the case in Chinese domestic schools (see Liu 2018). However, because of the British education policy and the unique educational background of British Chinese, many teachers said in interviews that students here were difficult to manage and did not obey classroom rules, and at the same time, it was difficult to adopt the Chinese-style strict constraints and management model for students in the UK, so they were they were limited in what they could do. Parents usually show full respect for teachers in person, but they often privately express their dissatisfaction

with teachers to the principal, and sometimes ask to change teachers or classes. Parents' attitudes towards managers are also complicated. On the one hand, following Chinese domestic practices, they need to have a good relationship with managers to prevent their children from being bullied and getting more attention than other students. But, on the other hand, because it is a private school and in the UK, parents usually express dissatisfaction with the management and operation mode of managers, which can be seen from the complaints of the director to parents in the interview.

During my time teaching in the school, I invited seven participants from three groups to participate in interviews. They were a director from the management group, teachers A, B, C, D from the teacher group, and parent A and B from the parent group. At the same time, for the convenience of comparison, teacher A is the class teacher of parent A's child, and teacher B is the class teacher of parent B's child. For ease of viewing, I use the following diagram to show the relationship between them, see Figure 3.

Figure 3: A relationship diagram of Chinese school



2 Discussion of the Impact of Class on Identity and the Modes and Processes of Reproduction within School Space.

In the conversation with teacher A, I heard a very interesting narrative. The teacher mentioned that there was a very 'popular' student in her class, who she described as a role model. She emphasized her good study habits, the fact that she always completed homework on time and had an aptitude for thinking logically and expressing herself - sometimes she might even be appointed as a "temporary little teacher" to teach in place of teacher A. Indeed, the teacher suggested that she only needed to teach this student part of the time and she would still receive excellent scores, and be in the top two in each final test. Finally, she attributed all this to family background and parental cultivation - "*other people's parents are very good, so the children they cultivate are also very good*". Similarly, when she mentioned another "unpopular" student, she gave an almost opposite description, not completing homework, not listening in class, test scores were only in the single digits (out of 100), and finally a similar attribution, "*parents don't care much, how can the child be good*".

The main reason for the difference between the two, in teacher A's view, seems to be their different family backgrounds, or we might say, their social origins, and the resulting differences in learning and daily behaviour habits. I thus realized that there is a clear correlation between students' performance in school and their family background, which suggests that the social class of the students' families and the series of social conditions and capitals they inherit may implicitly influence their performance in school. At the same time, these performances will also be captured by teachers and fed back to students in some form. In other words, there may be real strengths and weaknesses in particular family backgrounds that may help explain different student performance, and teachers' assumptions about students and their backgrounds may also influence how they treat, teach, or respond to students, which can also have an impact on their academic performance.

This point was confirmed in subsequent interviews with parents and managers. In this social space, students from higher social classes have certain privileges, which affect students' habits, abilities, and hobbies in direct and indirect forms and influence their identities in a symbolic form.

2.1 Social Origin and the Knowledge and Ability System Influenced by it

In his famous book *The Inheritors: French Students and Their Relation to Culture* (1979), Bourdieu discussed the powerful impact of social origin on the differences in choices, attitudes and abilities towards education of college students through the investigation of French college students, and showed that it influences more strongly than other influencing factors such as gender and age (Bourdieu et al. 1979, 8). This is because social origin is the only factor that extends its influence on all aspects and levels of college students' experience (Bourdieu et al. 1979, 12). Although there are some inconsistencies, students in the Chinese school are also under similar influences, that is, the different social origins and family backgrounds of students are one of the strongest reasons for their differences.

The first thing that is affected is the condition of existence. For example, daily lifestyles, financial resources and their distribution, the attachments between family members (Bourdieu et al. 1979, 12). Unlike college students, students in Chinese schools are often more attached to their families because of their young age. Therefore, living conditions are mainly reflected in the material conditions that their families can provide them, the time and way of accompanying them. Generally speaking, material conditions depend on the income and work of parents, the time of accompanying depends on the leisure time of parents after work, and the way of accompanying depends on the lifestyle, hobbies and education level of parents. Interviews with different parents show that there are significant differences in the way different family backgrounds treat their children, and these methods usually have strong class colours (Bourdieu et al. 2010).

For example, Parent A and her husband both work in two local Chinese restaurants. Their jobs are unstable. She was fired not long ago and just found a new job in a restaurant as a cashier when the interview happened, so she said she only had about half an hour to chat. The couple graduated from primary school in China, worked in Argentina in their early years, and came to the UK to settle down 15 years ago. She said that she was very busy at work, and working in the restaurant was very hard, so after returning home, she basically didn't have much free time to accompany her children. When she mentioned this, she also complained that the couple didn't have enough time to spend alone. They rarely travelled, and even if they did, they would focus on the surrounding areas of their residence, one

because of their limited free time, and the other because of economic pressure. Although they don't need to pay off their mortgages like in China, they still want to save more money, at the same time, they also want to change their children to a better private school. In addition to the Chinese school and the math and programming classes it offers, there are no additional extracurricular tutoring classes for the children.

In contrast, Parent B and her husband are in professional occupations at two local universities respectively. Their income and work locations are relatively stable, and both husband and wife have doctoral degrees. She said that although she is usually busy at work (obviously she has much more free time than Parent A, as reflected in the stable weekends and holidays, and the fact that she can basically guarantee that she will not work after about 6 pm), she still takes a lot of time to accompany her children. For example, before the children went to middle school, they would play games together after dinner, and after middle school, the activity was changed to reading. There are many opportunities to travel, and most of the places in the UK have been visited. They will take their children abroad on holidays and have been to the United States and most parts of Europe (when the interview was conducted, their family had just returned from Italy, and showed me photos of their family in Italy). In addition to attending the Chinese school and all tutoring classes, they also participated in extracurricular tutoring classes for piano, horsing and skiing. She also emphasized the importance of children's speaking ability. "*I see many college students in class who cannot express themselves clearly, so I feel I have to focus on cultivating my child. For example, this time we went to Rome, after the trip I asked him to narrate his experience and describe his feelings. Now (the child's expression) feels pretty good*".

Such different lifestyles and experiences mean the two students have very different habits, abilities and hobbies. This can be concluded through interviews with their teachers. For the convenience of comparison, I asked teachers A and B whether they had any impression of students.

> Teacher A: Of course, student A... is a very obedient kid and very well behaved. I have a deep impression of him because once when I asked them what their hobbies were, he said he liked eating. Hahaha, yes, I thought he was quite cute…
> .....
> Ummm… He has a serious attitude towards learning. He completes the assigned

> tasks well every time, and does well in exams. He got a lot of words right every time when he wrote dictation… But his oral Mandarin seems not so good. Sometimes he spoke, even the simplest questions, for example, if you asked him to describe something, he seemed to be very scared… Yes, yes, yes, not particularly logical.

Teacher B, in comparison, was full of praise for student B, "I know, the principal told me at the time that this child is good, and I should pay more attention to him in class... (The child) is very smart, I like him very much. He is very outspoken and expressive, and his expression is very clear and logical. Last time when I asked him to describe a place he had been to in class, he described it very well. He said he went to such and such, I remember it was France, and then he did something, why he liked this place, and he spoke very clearly."

As Bourdieu mentioned, students can be seen to differ “through a whole set of predispositions and prior knowledge which they (students) owe to their background" (Bourdieu et al. 1979, 21). With a wealthier and better-educated family background and upbringing, student B has inherited a large amount of "cultural heritage", "more discretely and more indirectly, and even in the absence of any methodical effort or overt action" (Bourdieu et al. 1979, 20). Indeed, Student B's excellent logical thinking, broad knowledge, and appropriate expression skills can be easily acquired through the interaction with parents every night after dinner, every experience of travel, and simple inquiries during the trip. In contrast, parent B "can only transmit cultural good intentions" (ibid.).

Such a "cultural heritage" provides students from the upper class a certain privilege, so that they can acquire these splendid abilities without very hard study, which students from lower classes must work very hard to acquire and usually only acquire in the classroom. For people from the most deprived background, school is the one and only way to receive culture, which is the case at all levels of education (Bourdieu et al. 1979, 21). This ability inherited by students is sometimes mistaken for the students' talent. For example, Student B's expression and performance in class are more fluent and effortless — usually teachers will attribute it to "smartness" — but in fact this expression and logical ability is more due to the fact that he can easily learn and practice repeatedly at home or other places, such as during travel. Therefore, while students from different social backgrounds in Chinese schools appear to be sitting in the same classroom and receiving the same education, they are actually differentiated by the different cultural heritages they have inherited to a large extent, outside

of the classroom. This is why Bourdieu suggested that “students are only formally equal in their acquisition of high culture” (ibid.).

Furthermore, it is predictable that these abilities and this knowledge will be internalized into their habitus and continue to play a role in their later lives. There are, however, exceptions and as Bourdieu argues, this cultural heritage does not work "in the form of a mechanical determinism" (Bourdieu et al. 1979, 25). For example, in the interview with Teacher C, he mentioned that a child from a "*prominent*" family in the class did not show performance "*matching it*", and he was even a little "*disappointed*" because he felt "*it was a waste of such precious resources*" — but at least students from upper social class still have more opportunities and generous resources. In fact, the disappointment in Teacher C's words implicitly proves it, that is, he has different expectations for students from the upper social class than other students, and this expectation is based on their "*noble*" social origin.

2.2 Social Origin, Teacher Classification, and other Manifestations of Privilege

Teachers’ different expectations for students from different social backgrounds, such as the example of Teacher C mentioned above, sometimes go beyond attitudes and turn into actual differential treatment, even if some of these behaviours are unconscious. In fact, through conversations with teachers and managers, I found that teachers would divide students in their classes into groups based on explicit performance such as grades, class performance, and management difficulty, and link these students’ performance to their social origins and family background (some of which would be directly attributed to social background). At the same time, consciously or unconsciously, they would give students from upper social backgrounds more recognition, closer attention and a better attitude, which would in turn give them more positive influences in a way similar to privilege.

By sorting out the conversations with teachers, the students that attracted the attention of teachers can be roughly divided into three groups. It is worth mentioning that the students mentioned in the interviews are usually more distinctive (whether based on their performance in class or by virtue of being asked for special care), so they often attract attention. Therefore, these three groups are only relatively extreme, and it is undeniable that there may be less remarkable students who have not been paid attention to or mentioned.

Group 1 is those who are seen as having poor learning attitudes, including those deemed to be guilty of "*not completing homework*", "*not being serious in class*", not being able to answer or refusing to answer when asked, and often having unsatisfactory test scores. This group of students is often described by teachers as "*children from problem families*". There are usually two situations. The first one is that both parents are completely indifferent to their children. Teachers will attribute it to the fact that parents cannot understand the importance of family education due to their work - such as working in a restaurant or delivering takeout, which is a very busy job, and the low level of education of parents. "*They always think that everything will be fine if they send their children to school*". This type of student is usually attributed to the "*unpopular*" or "*unmanageable*" group, and when mentioned, it is often accompanied by the narrator's exaggerated frown.

Group 2 is comprised of students with a good learning attitude, including "*always completing homework on time*", "*(usually) very focused in class*" and "*always doing well in exams*". This group of people is attributed to "*children from normal families*" by teachers, and some managers call them "*these so-called middle classes*". In the teachers' narratives, this group of families owns some small-scale industries, such as restaurants, supermarkets, etc. Due to their limited education, they devote themselves to the education of their children and treat them with "*particularly strict*" attitude, which has shaped very disciplined learning habits. This group of students is usually regarded as the "*(most) favourite*" or "*(most) easy to manage*" group.

Group 3 is a category that is classified separately, and is considered to be "*the children of their families do not need to study deliberately*". Generally, they are "*able to complete homework*" and "*it doesn't matter whether they do homework or not*"; their attitude in class is "*not bad*", and "*sometimes they don't need to study at all*"; their test scores are "okay", and "*in fact, they (the students and their family) do not care that much about grades*"; they usually have excellent oral expression and logical thinking skills. During the interview, it was obvious that the parents of this group of students often have a good relationship with teachers and even principals, so the teachers interviewed also mentioned their parents and family conditions when narrating - for example, student B, whose parents both work in college, was considered to be from a family to which other families *"can't compare*".

Although all the teacher participants recognized in the interviews that "*all students should*

be treated equally" and also claimed that "*all students should be able to answer questions in class as much as possible*", some differences in the treatment of the three groups can still be captured from their narratives. For example, when taking an oral test or being asked to make a long statement in Chinese in class (such as “describing a scenic spot you visited during the holiday and your feelings”), the answers of students in the Group 3 are often considered "*answers that can be used as templates*" and are highly praised for this — "*this is a role model for other students in our class to learn from*", said Teacher D. The reason is mostly because of their rich experience, broad knowledge and "*superb logical ability*", and some are even rated as exhibiting these talents naturally, as something "*not achieved by hard work*" (this is a way of praising familiar in Chinese contexts, used to describe someone who is talented in something). Group 2 is often praised for their serious learning attitude and hardworking learning behaviour, such as when mentioning the completion of homework or their listening in class. In contrast, Group 1 is often paid attention to in some negative ways, such as being asked questions because of inattention in class, or being reprimanded for not completing homework.

In addition, when faced with some abnormal situations, such as students being late or absent without reason, the Groups 2 and 3 are often treated more leniently. They will assume that perhaps there was something urgent at home and they forgot to ask for leave. Because it is a rare occurrence, it seems easier to understand and tends to be tolerated. However, the Group 1 is often treated with more negative emotions. For example, during an interview with a manager, it was mentioned that a student was often absent and thought it was all because "*his father was too lazy, so the child gradually changed*". The whole story was, "*He was taken care of by his mother during the previous weeks. Later, because his mother changed to work in a further restaurant, she had to go out very early, so she could not get up early to send the child (to Chinese school). His father thus took over the job of picking up the child, but the father was too lazy. He often didn't get up in the morning, did not send the child, and did not supervise the child to take online classes. So later, whenever I found that he (the student) did not come, I knew that this was the situation. Gradually, the child did not like to come anymore, and became lazy. He was happier playing (electronic) games than attending classes*". This shows that children are sometimes labelled negatively because of their family background.

In addition, the Group 3 is also the one mentioned most frequently in interviews with

managers, because the parents in this group are often familiar with the school managers. Some parents, such as representative of the parent committee, can even directly participate in management, such as organizing activities. Therefore, it is worth noting that the privileges of higher-class families enable them to, and usually do, obtain more resources in their "crudest form" (Bourdieu et al. 1979, 20). That might include, for example, recommendations, connections or extra teaching (ibid.). In the conversation with Teacher B, as mentioned in the previous section, due to the social background of Parent B and the good relationship with the principal, Student B was placed in the class by the principal and greeted by Teacher B and accorded special care. In addition to receiving special attention from the teacher, the principal will often understand the situation with the teacher and give feedback to their parents. Moreover, their names always appear on the list of students honoured at the school's closing ceremony: in addition to being honoured according to their academic rankings, they will also be honoured for awards they have won outside of school, such as recitation competitions. This more direct expression of privilege may allow these children to gain more good abilities, qualifications and qualities. For example, in addition to receiving various awards and honours, additional praise and recognition from the classroom, inside and outside the school will also make them more confident, and may develop into a greater security about their future during college (Bourdieu et al. 1979, 15).

Such a whole system will put upper-class students in an advantageous position in the social space. "Not only do the most privileged students derive from their background or origin habits, skills and attitudes" that can directly serve their studies, but they also inherit knowledge, taste and hobbies, as Bourdieu mentioned (Bourdieu et al. 1979, 17). Moreover, their prominent family background can also continuously provide their children with opportunities to obtain more resources in more direct ways (such as special recommendations) or indirect ways (such as more attention and praise from teachers unconsciously). In the scramble for resources, they constantly gain the upper hand, thereby maximizing the opportunities for class reproduction. More importantly, it makes everyone take it for granted, such as higher expectations than other students from teachers, assumptions of their performance should be commensurate with their resources, as well as the extra encouragement and praise naturally given. At this point, in the given social space of Chinese schools, students from higher class achieve class reproduction through the inheritance of cultural heritage, the sifting of the education system, and the operation of social capital.

2.3 “The Twofold Arbitrariness of Pedagogic Action”, Resistance and Ethnic Identity

So far, I have demonstrated the relationship between social origin and student differences at play in this Chinese school, showing how students from higher social classes inherit some kind of "cultural heritage" directly or implicitly and obtain more resources through certain forms of privileges, thereby gaining an advantage in school competition. Next, I will turn my attention to ethnic identity and continue to explore the impact of different social origins on students' self-perception of ethnic identity.

2.3.1 Cultural Arbitrariness, School Authority and Identity Reproduction

To clarify this issue, it should be first understood and acknowledged that the various teaching and other pedagogic actions that take place in Chinese schools are a form of cultural inculcation in the form of symbolic violence. As Bourdieu pointed out in *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990),

> PA (pedagogic action) is, objectively, symbolic violence, first insofar as the power relations between the groups or classes making up a social formation are the basis of arbitrary power which is the precondition for the establishment of a relation of pedagogic communication, i.e. for the imposition and inculcation of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary mode of imposition and inculcation". (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990, 6).

According to this statement, in order to understand the relationship of a pedagogic action, it is necessary to analyse the “power relations between groups or classes” within its social formation to clarify the basis of the arbitrary power that occurs in this structure. In the given social formation of the research object — the Chinese school, the groups involved, as listed and analysed in the first section of this chapter, can be divided into four: managers, teachers, parents and students. Three pairs of relationships play a key role in understanding the power structure. The first is the relationship between parents and students. Due to the dependence of children on adults and the characteristics of the patrilineal system, parents (especially fathers) have the power to impose pedagogic action on their children. The power is tacitly

accepted by society and can therefore be understood as legitimized[18]. (Bourdieu emphasized the power that fathers have over their children in a patriarchal system, but here parents are regarded as "parents" in a holistic sense, so their power is assigned to this whole).

The second is the relationship between the family as a whole, which is composed of parents and children, and the school as a whole, which is composed of managers and teachers. In Bourdieu's view, "because every PA (pedagogic action) that is exerted commands by definition a PAu (pedagogic authority), the pedagogic transmitters are from the outset designated as fit to transmit that which they transmit, hence entitled to impose its reception and test its inculcation by means of socially approved or guaranteed sanctions" (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990, 20).

Therefore, in Chinese school, from the moment parents decide to send their children to study here, any pedagogic actions implemented thereafter are based on the premise that the family recognizes the authority of the school, and recognizes the authority of any content accepted as well. The former means that parents and students who make up the family, as the recipient party of education, necessarily recognizes the legitimacy and authority of the school as an institution to teach. Although students usually have no power to make decisions most of the time as the real recipients of education, but only become educational implementers as a dependence of their parents, they still follow the principle of this relationship. The latter means that the legitimacy and authority of the content taught by the school must be recognized by the family, that is, everything about Mandarin and Chinese culture. Here, managers and teachers, as the implementers of education, appear as a whole on the opposite side of the family. These two recognitions must exist because they are the basis for the formation of an educational relationship. The family has autonomy in choosing whether to go to a Chinese school and which Chinese school to go to, which means that once the family refuses to make any recognition, the educational relationship can be terminated immediately. Such examples are not uncommon in Chinese schools. This is what Bourdieu calls "the twofold arbitrariness of pedagogic action", that is, "recognition of the PAu of the pedagogic agency and recognition of the legitimacy of the product which it offers" (Bourdieu and

[18] In the gloss on the above statement, Bourdieu analysed that in patriarchal societies, fathers can use juridical sanctions to impose their pedagogic action in the name of "represents the power of society as a force in the domestic group", and that society also explain the social determination of adult-child relations based on of children on the biological condition dependence of adults. (see Bourdieu, 1990, 6-7)

Passeron 1990, 38).

The final one is the relationship between students and teachers. This is the specific embodiment of the second pair of relationships in the classroom. When students enter the classroom, they (as well as their parents) have already tacitly recognized the authority of the teachers and the content of the teachers' classes, as well as the culturally imposing actions that teachers can carry out in various ways, which include both normal teaching activities, such as exams, group discussions, game teaching, etc.; and all physical disciplines, such as encouragement, criticism, and appropriate punishment. Therefore, the arbitrariness of symbolic violence can be implemented based on the recognition of the authority of all pedagogic actions from the school by parents and students.

With the basis for implementing arbitrary power, we need to then figure out the content of cultural imposition and its successful forms in order to understand the class effect of cultural inculcation and reproduction process. For Bourdieu, pedagogic action helps to reproduce the cultural claims and assumption characteristic of that social structure (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990, 10, see 1.3.2), and this system is always in accord with the "objective interests (material or symbolic) of the dominant groups or classes" (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990, 9, see 1.2.3). In the social formation of Chinese schools, Mandarin and all the content of Chinese culture, including Chinese identity, are what teachers want to emphasize and inculcate. In the Chinese school, the more people who identify themselves with Chinese identity, the more families who need Chinese education, and the stronger the demand for this pedagogic relationship, the rule of the dominant cultural arbitrary will be more realized. At the same time, this is also in line with the objective interests of the ruling class (mainly referring to managers) - the more people who think they are Chinese and think it is important to learn Chinese and Chinese culture, the more people come to study in Chinese schools, and the better the benefits of Chinese schools (including reputation, student sources, tuition fees and other income).

Meanwhile, all the content about Chinese culture that students learn in Chinese school, like other pedagogic work, will produce an irreversible process (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990) (Bourdieu, 1990, 42), forming an initial habitus of understanding ethnicity and ethnic identity. In Bourdieu's view (ibid.), pedagogic work has the effect of "producing, in the time required for inculcation, an irreversible disposition, i.e. a disposition which cannot itself be

repressed or transformed except by an irreversible process... [it] produces a primary habitus, characteristic of a group or class, which is the basis for the subsequent formation of any other habitus". Therefore, all the content about Chinese culture will become a tendency and initial habitus of students' Chinese identity, and become one of bases for the potential continuous deepening of their Chinese ethnic identity in the future. It is worth emphasizing that this is not an equal and open process as some clichéd slogans would suggest: “You are free to choose your identity” and so on. In other words, being able to access or lay claim to the symbolic resources which define a particular cultural or ethnic identity is not just a matter of choice, but is structured in deeply unequal ways which mean that some people are more able to lay claim to the dominant or symbolically privileged expressions of that identity, rather than others. Therefore, as I mentioned at the end of 3.2, a series of behaviours that result in class reproduction. When such reproduction extends to ethnic identity, we can see that the reproduction of ethnic identity is also a classed process.

Finally, like the success in all pedagogic actions - "a function of the degree to which the receivers recognize the PAu of the pedagogic agency and the degree to which they have mastered the cultural code used in pedagogic communication" (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990, 29) - the educational success of Chinese schools is reflected in: i) The recognition of the school's pedagogic authority by families (including parents and students), which is also reflected in the school's reputation and reputation and the number of students; ii) The student's mastery of the Chinese language and Chinese culture. This is shown in various ways, such as class performance, test scores, and results in some extracurricular competitions, such as recitation competitions.

So far, all the effects of social origin on student differences in the specific social formation of Chinese schools described in the previous two sections will continue to affect students' identification with ethnicity and the construction of their own ethnic identity. More specifically, the cultural heritage inherited by students with higher social class puts them in an advantageous position in school competition, and they can easily master more abilities related to the dominant culture — Chinese culture, such as Mandarin organization and expression ability. Therefore, they are more likely to be evaluated as "successful" in school pedagogic actions and educational system, receive more attention, and may therefore receive more honours and praise. Such honours and attention may in turn allow them to acquire more relevant abilities. At the same time, the more abilities they master and the more honours they

obtain, the more familiar they become with Chinese culture and Mandarin, the stronger their primary habitus and tendencies regarding Chinese culture and Chinese identity, and the easier it is for them to potentially recognize and assert Chinese identity. In contrast, students with lower social class, according to this way, seem to be less likely to show recognition of Chinese identify, or say, recognition of a symbolically privileged way of recognizing or asserting that identity. This principle is reflected in a simple logic mentioned in the interviews with the teachers. Students who study well will be more enthusiastic, and vice versa. For example, Teacher B said, "*the better they study, the more praise they get from teachers, and the more confident they will be. The more enthusiastic they are about learning Chinese, and the better they will study*", meanwhile "*students who study well get more encouragement, and this enthusiasm and confidence often lead to their love for more cultural content*".

2.3.2 Resistance and Identity Expression

Although in the social relations of Chinese schools, as analysed above, there is the recognition of the authority of the school by families and the content and form of the teacher's pedagogic actions by students, and this recognition and the power relations between the groups make cultural inculcation possible, it should be taken into account that in reality, the process of imposition and inculcation is not always smooth and neat. This is especially the case in a social space like Chinese schools, because it is not completely compulsory, but optional, and different from the real compulsory education (like S1 — S4 in the Scottish system). For parents, it is much easier to change a Chinese school for their children than to change a primary or secondary school, and there are fewer factors to consider. The children are obviously more aware of this. They can realize that the Chinese they learn is only the dominant culture in Chinese school, not the dominant culture in British society (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990, 40). In other words, this wider context is more likely to allow them to recognize the 'arbitrary' quality, in Bourdieu's words, of the cultural material that they are being asked to learn.

In addition, parents have different attitudes towards different schools. Compared with their primary or secondary schools in the UK, there is a clear difference between the non-mandatory nature of going to Chinese schools and the punishment for resistance. This gives them the possibility to resist and completely refuse to enter the pedagogic action. Therefore,

a symbolic direct resistance often occurs in schools, which also involves the group frequently mentioned in the interview with the director, in addition to the privileged class mentioned above. For example, the director mentioned several cases of pupils dropping out of school. One of the cases was, "*once before, the child didn't approve of this school from the bottom of his heart and said that he didn't want to go to school. Whenever he was sent here, he would cry and make a fuss, and the parents couldn't do anything about it. In fact, the parents had agreed with us and paid the money (tuition fee), but in the end, they had no choice but to drop out*". Another type is that even if the child is sent to the classroom in some form, he still puts up a fierce and direct resistance. "*Like there was a student before who also made a lot of noise. In the end, the parents agreed to try a few classes first, and if he didn't want to learn, he wouldn't come. Then you will find that this child is very resistant when he comes to the class. He always lies on the table, wears headphones, doesn't talk to other children, and doesn't listen to the class. In the end, there was really nothing we could do, so he only came for 3, or maybe 4 classes, and finally went back*".

It is worth mentioning that this kind of situation is often interpreted by managers as showing a situation in which "*parents cannot control students*", so they would consider and suggest that "*students should be actually more strictly managed*" and "*you can't give them (students) too many choices. Once they understand can choose not to learn, they will choose the easier ones*". And these examples of resistance will be told to more parents as negative teaching materials to exhort them. There is no judgment on pedagogic methods here, but this behaviour does show that in an educational system, any phenomenon that does not conform to the claims of the dominant culture, or does not conform to the objective interests of the dominant class in the social structure, will be regarded as harmful and need to be criticized and fixed. In Chinese schools, therefore, any negative behaviour towards the school and teaching content and methods, such as refusing to come to school, refusing to attend classes, or denying Chinese and Chinese culture, will be labelled as negative and reduced its occurrence through various means.

In addition, it is worth noting that this kind of criticism is more effective than more direct and arbitrary expressions because it is routed through a claim to loyalty to culture. Imagine another school leader saying to you: "do this because I have the power to ask you to do this," or if they say: "do this because it is in my interest that you do it". Such claims are always likely to provoke resistance. But if they are phrased in a way that turns it into: 'your

behaviours' or 'the behaviours of your children' is 'a betrayal of Chinese identity or Chinese ethnicity', that appeal has a much more forcefully, emotional, effective quality. Just as the "call to order" mentioned by Bourdieu—the maintenance of social values, order, and power structures through a series of symbolic means to discipline individuals (see Bourdieu and Passeron 1990, Bourdieu 1996, Bourdieu et al. 2010, etc.), this kind of criticism by managers and teachers is essentially an appeal to the maintenance values and order of the Chinese school through a sense of cultural identity loyalty. Ethnicity is a very effective way of enacting symbolic violence in that sense. This perhaps especially so in the context of a diasporic community who may well find themselves facing racism and stigma, precisely on the basis of their ascribed ethnicity, in wider society.

In addition to the extreme, symbolic and direct resistance mentioned above, the more common forms of resistance are daily, indirect and informal in the classroom. For example, various kinds of non-cooperation in class, dissimulation, pretending to listen to the class, feigned ignorance, etc., have been mentioned by every participant in Chinese school. This kind of behaviour, in my opinion, is an everyday form of resistance. Similar to the resistance of the weak, such as farmers, in power-laden situations studied by Scott (1990, x), students in the classroom also avoid using "direct, symbolic confrontation with authority", but instead use "a form of individual self-help" to implement confrontation (Scott 1985, xvi). The analogy between students' everyday resistance behaviour and the many dominant and dominated relationships studied by Scott is because the power relations behind pedagogic actions also have a similar structure. As Bourdieu mentioned, "insofar as the relation of pedagogic communication within which PA is carried on presupposes PAu in order to be set up, it is not reducible to a pure and simple relation of communication" (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990, 19, see 2.1.2). And this power relation comes not only from pedagogic action, but also from "misrecognition" of the truth of pedagogic action. The latter determines the recognition of the legitimacy of pedagogic action, which is the condition for the implementation of pedagogic action (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990, 15, see 2.1.1). In other words, in the social formation of Chinese school, parents' misrecognition of pedagogic action and their recognition of school authority lead them to form a temporary alliance with teachers and managers, while students are forced into a dominated position and have to suffer bodily discipline and symbolic violence from this alliance. Therefore, under this similar degree structure of domination, the elicit resistance reactions and patterns are also "broadly comparable" (Scott 1985, xi).

Resistance is common among students (see Coleman 1961, Cusick 1973, Davies 1995, McFarland 2001, Bidwell 2013, etc.), but once the behaviours are placed in the context of Chinese schools, it is thus tinged with ethnic colour. Since pedagogic actions involve the dominant group and dominant culture (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990, 9), and pedagogic work involves the producing of the initial habits of a group (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990, 42), it should be realized that the analysis of pedagogic actions in a specific social information cannot be separated from its specific context and the struggle between classes or groups (especially the dominated group against the dominant group). Therefore, the series of resistance behaviours that occurred in Chinese schools need to be discussed in conjunction with special information such as the groups, classes, and pedagogic content in the context. The class in this space is composed of school teachers (perhaps parents) as implementers and students as recipients, and the pedagogic content includes Mandarin and Chinese culture. Once it is realized that the content taught has ethnic colours in the specific scene of Chinese schools, in other words, it is endowed with symbolic meaning, then it is reasonable to believe that the pedagogic actions of Chinese schools is a cultural identity reproduction. Accordingly, students' attitudes and behaviours towards schools and teachers accordingly can also be understood and interpreted as attitudes and behaviours towards these symbols. Therefore, students' resistance to teachers and schools has multiple meanings. On the one hand, it is a resistance to the immediate experience of domination, or the dominant coalition (managers, teachers and parents) in the educational system. On the other hand, it also expresses resistance to Mandarin, Chinese culture and Chinese identity.

This can be reflected in interviews with any participants. In the interview with the director, "*I feel that this child's rebellion is already serious. He insists on one thing, it's useless for me to learn Chinese, because I am not living in China*". In the interview with teacher B, "*once a student asked me directly in class why I had to learn these things*" and said that "*he had no interest in what he learned, and did not think he should learn these things because he was not Chinese*". In interviews with parents, "*My elder daughter refuses to come (to Chinese school). She keeps asking me why she should learn Chinese since she is already in the UK*". It can be seen that students' dissatisfaction and resistance to the school, teachers or pedagogic actions can easily be elevated to dissatisfaction and resistance to Mandarin, Chinese culture and Chinese identity.

Therefore, the effects of social origin on student differences in the specific social formation of Chinese schools mentioned above are still keep working in similar ways. Those privileged students who are in a favourable position in school competition tend not to have resistance to going to school, and are usually less resistant when facing teachers and various forms of pedagogic actions in class. In other words, because they are more comfortable in learning and often have outstanding achievements, as a successful group in the educational system, they usually recognize the content taught in their school and the abilities they have learned, and are less likely to have a resistant attitude or behaviour, so they are not likely to reject their Chinese identity. On the other hand, students in disadvantaged positions are often not valued, praised, or honoured in teaching behaviours because of their lack of ability in the dominant culture. Therefore, as a non-successful group in the educational system, they are more likely to question and resist the content they receive, and raise it to the level of rejection and resistance to ethnic identity.

3 Conclusion

This chapter first examines Bourdieu's classic statement in *The Inheritors: French Students and Their Relation to Culture* (1979) that social origin is a decisive factor influencing an individual's performance in the education system and his ability to acquire cultural capital. This study shows that in this Chinese school students from better family backgrounds can more easily obtain more cultural and social heritage from their families in different forms and thus gain more preference in the education system, so they are often at an advantage in the competition in schools.

Then I argue that this influence extends to the impact on ethnic identity in a series of ways, in the Chinese school, a space that imparts specific ethnic knowledge and has symbolic meaning. More specifically, class affects the reproduction of students' ethnic identity through the following three approaches. 1) Students from higher classes tend to obtain more ethnic-related cultural and social heritage from their families, which often provides a better foundation for them to recognize their ethnic identity, which also leads to their better performance in school, such as better Mandarin expression; 2) Students from higher classes tend to be more likely to receive various preferences from the school education system, including praise from teachers and more awards from the school. These better experiences help motivate them to learn ethnic culture; 3) Students from higher classes are in an

advantageous position in various competitions in Chinese schools due to the above reasons, so they have less rejection and resistance to the teaching and indoctrination of ethnic culture, and are more likely to accept their ethnic identity.

In addition, this chapter highlights three points. The first is that these three approaches are often entangled and consolidated together to establish a privilege-space-identity pathway (a privilege in particular space shape particular identity). For example, students from higher classes perform better in Chinese school because they obtain more cultural and social heritage about China from their families, so they are more likely to receive more attention, praise and other preferences from the education system. These preferences can in turn stimulate students to study Mandarin and Chinese cultural harder, and reduce resistance in the education system, and thus achieve a greater degree of identity reproduction. The second is that the reproduction of ethnic identity is also a classed process. Because the first point reveals that students' access to ethnic-related resources is an unequal process, but depends on the resources that can be provided by the family background and the preferences of the education system. Therefore, those students with better social origins are often more able to lay claim to the dominant or symbolically privileged expressions of that identity. The third is that the ethnic discipline of students by pedagogic action is often symbolic violence in the guise of cultural loyalty, maintaining the dominant order in the space by stigmatizing resistance behaviours. This may be particularly applicable to diaspora community because of their unique background environment.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and Discussion

Following the research aim I proposed in the Introduction chapter, I have shown in this thesis how social class, in different ways, in different spaces, combines with different other social factors (such as other social categories, particular capital and power relations in specific spaces, etc.) to inflect immigrants' understanding of ethnicity. Building on this, at the end of this thesis, I would like to summarize the main findings of the study and the central contribution which it makes, as well as to discuss some findings in a broader sociological context. This involves thinking about how they relate to relevant current sociological scholarship, as well as indicating some possible directions for further research, and some limitations of the current study.

1. Conclusion

As noted at the beginning of the thesis, this study raised a number of specific research questions in order to more specifically pursue the ways in which class affects ethnicity. It is worth revisiting these questions here, which are:

1) In what specific situations is ethnicity important or salient in daily contexts?
2) How do Chinese immigrants in Glasgow view their ethnic identity? What does ethnicity mean to them?
3) What role do stereotypes play in the establishment and dissemination of ethnic identity and identification?
4) How do immigrants from different classes treat their ethnic identity differently?
5) How do actors in different positions in the same social space differ in their ethnic identity experience and practice? What are the influencing factors?
6) How does ethnic identity reproduce itself? How is this process related to class?

The research explored these questions in a variety of ways and to varying degrees. In response to these questions, in a concluding way, this research has argued that one’s understanding of ethnicity always depends on the specific context, social relations, and social space in which it is discussed and claimed. Understandings of ethnicity are therefore influenced by the position (or class) occupied in a particular social space, and everyday practices in that position. For the participants in this study, the social practices, individual

experiences and life trajectories of actors in the same or different social spaces lead to their understanding of ethnicity in a constant state of flux and iteration. Such practices and trajectories, meanwhile, are largely a reflection of their class or class trajectories. They are, in other words, dependent on the capital they possess and the habitus they form in specific fields. Therefore, many class-related factors in their life trajectories, such as the dominant capital, power relations, and forms of symbolic violence in a particular space, influences, shapes, and reproduces their understanding of ethnicity in different ways. I will now set out the main findings of the thesis on a chapter by chapter basis, showing how this overarching conclusion is reflected in the more specific discussion in each of these chapters.

Different chapters focused on different issues in different ways. Generally speaking, chapters 3 and 4 analysed the different ways in which participants in different social positions understood, disseminated and accepted ethnicity in their everyday practices in different scenarios and fields. It explored how class shapes migrants' attitudes and cognitions of ethnicity through the dilemmas they face in practice and the ways and strategies they deal with those dilemmas, and emphasized that ethnicity becomes salient in these specific contexts. This was mainly oriented towards the first four research questions. Chapters 5 and 6, focused on a Chinese church space and a Chinese school space in Scotland, respectively. By analysing how participants of different social positions within these spaces understood and experienced ethnicity differently, these two chapters explored how class and power in social spaces shaped and reproduced ethnicity through the unique forms of capital, relational hierarchies, and symbolic violence inherent to these contexts. This was mainly aimed at the last two research questions.

More specifically, Chapter 3 focused on the way participants talked about and understood ethnicity in their daily lives and related these understandings to their class. This chapter has argued that ethnicity does not have a fixed abstract meaning, and one’s understanding of it always depends on the specific context in which it is discussed and claimed, and always needs to be referred to other forms of social identity or relation which have a concrete, institutional expression that can be pointed to, such as nationality. Moreover, by analysing and organizing the ways in which participants conducted analogies, references, and distinctions between ethnicity and nationality, I demonstrated how immigrants’ understandings of ethnicity are shaped by a range of social practices in their daily lives that are influenced by class, such as the need to prove legal status, find a job, and so on. This

represents the reality-referential nature of ethnicity. In other words, it makes clear that ethnic identity, while understood as a matter of shared culture and history, is also related to matters of practical significance, and is therefore also largely related to a subject's class - which affects the forms of boundary barriers they face and the extent to which they are forced to deal with these barriers. This finding has also explored the conditions and situations that make ethnicity salient. That is, ethnicity is salient in specific contexts in which participants encounter or feel ethnic boundaries. This further supports and develops the current constructivist perspective on ethnicity, emphasizing that ethnicity is fluid and constructed under the influence of class, rather than fixed and stable. Finally, this chapter has also explored the participants' process of positioning their own ethnic identity, referring to Derrida's conception of "différance". It demonstrates that one's definition of their ethnicity is not a matter of defining what 'they are', but is also a matter of marking what they 'are not' by listing the groups they do not belong to. This finding, not only reaffirms the fluidity of ethnicity and its character as a process, also emphasizes the relational quality of ethnicity, suggesting how the process of asserting or ascribing ethnicity, precisely because it plays out in specific situated ways, is necessarily shaped by the classed location of the people involved.

Chapter 4 focused on how ethnic stereotypes spread along different fields to become taken-for-granted doxa, profoundly affecting actors' understanding of ethnicity. This finding highlights how a combination of material foundations, ethnic experiences, and cultural evidence shape the participants' understanding of doxa. It emphasizes that ethnicity is a real phenomenon, rooted in particular social relationships, shared history, and culture, as well as unique ethnic experiences—material and symbolic—built upon this foundation. This challenges the claim that ethnicity is merely a construct of the imagination. Furthermore, this chapter has also advocated understanding social practice using the Bourdieiusan framework of doxa, fields and habits. Therefore, it has focused on the way actors in different fields understand ethnicity in different daily practical situations and has related this understanding to the rules of the field they are in and to their respective habitus. The analysis revealed the complex relationship between these factors: a person's habitus is consistently influenced by their family background and the field they are in, which leads to their different experience trajectories and future strategies, which in turn affects their views and attitudes towards ethnicity. More broadly, this chapter explored the intersection of ethnicity, gender, and class, highlighting how gender and class jointly influence actors' understandings of ethnicity and how these three intersect to influence actors' everyday practices. This has

contributed to a fuller and deeper understanding of the complexity intersections of 1) how different social categories affect actors in different intersecting ways and 2) how different categories take on different salience in different contexts.

Because the ways in which class works are so complex and embedded in everyday practices, I narrowed my focus in the next two chapters to discuss the more specific and elaborate ways in which class works within clear and given boundaries, according to particular, situated relations of power and hierarchy.

Thus, in chapter 5 the focus of the study turned to religious belonging and community. It explored that how class influenced the understanding of ethnicity of congregants in different positions and consolidated this influence through a series of arrangements, furnishings and regulations within a religious space. In addition to focusing on the function of the churches as shelters and as sites of identity reconstruction for immigrants, as previous studies of religious space have also shown, my research emphasized the perspective of power relations, hierarchy and relative positions within religious spaces. It highlighted the double oppression suffered by some immigrants who are in a disadvantaged position both in religious spaces and in mainstream society. This interpreted the circumstances of immigrants, especially marginalized group, at the destination from the perspective of oppression and hierarchy, thus contributing to a more comprehensive and profound understanding of the role of the church in immigrants. At the same time, the stratification of groups in similar social positions and classes and the different oppressions they suffer as a result also contributed to the exploration of the heterogeneity of marginalized groups.

Moreover, the study also explored the ways in which actors can reposition themselves and reshape their ethnic identity through the experience of different social spaces. In other words, crossing different spaces may benefit actors (like Paul) or cause them to encounter multiple oppressions from different spaces (like Zhang). By considering the intersectionality of class, ethnicity, and religion, this chapter reveals how immigrants experience the multiple, knotty, and complex impacts of these three phenomena, thereby contributing to the understanding of the complexity of the ways in which different social categories intersect. Finally, the study also explored the impact of class mobility on the ethnic identity of actors by tracking the life trajectory of one participant (Paul's story) in this chapter. This emphasized the way in which class affected ethnicity from another perspective, that is, how class mobility affects the

capital an individual actor possesses, the situation they face and the strategies they adopt, thus shaping the way they navigate ethnic boundaries. This finding, on the one hand, reaffirms that ethnicity always needs to be discussed in relation to specific contexts, and these contexts are invariably contingent upon one's class position. In other words, once an actor's class status shifts, the context under which they claim ethnicity also transforms, along with the relational realities they reference—all of which shape their understanding of ethnicity. On the other hand, it reveals the fluid and spatiotemporally shifting quality of ethnic identity, supplementing dynamic models of migrant capital accumulation and identity formation (see Erel and Ryan 2019b). This contributes to a deeper understanding of how the ethnicization of migration and class dynamically intersect.

At the same time, Chapter 6 explores how class affected the understanding of ethnicity of participants in different positions of educational power in a Chinese school space, including managers, teachers and parents. This part of the study specifically focused on how forms of symbolic violence played out in this space, specifically in relation to understanding of culture, and as a result examined how ethnic identity is influenced by class factors in this particular context. I emphasized how schools and parents, through mechanisms such as cultural transmission, evaluation criteria, and reward-punishment systems, facilitated students' identification with and acceptance of dominant cultural norms, thereby achieving the reproduction of ethnic identities. This finding expanded the application of Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction to issues of ethnicity. At the same time, I also paid attention to the different forms of resistance on the part of students, and associated them with resistance to ethnic identity, due to the specific cultural commitment in this public space. I argued that students with better social origins resisted the ascription of a specific form of ethnic identity less because they heritage a greater cultural capital and receive recognition, and praise from the school, compared to students from less advantaged backgrounds. Therefore, the chapter has emphasized, in a broader sense, the intersection of ethnicization and the process of how class procedures in this specific context. In other words, students' resistance or acceptance of their ethnic identity are both in terms of the ethnicity they are educated and inculcated in, and in terms of the class they are in.

Overall, by analysing the multiple ways in which class affects ethnic identity, this study contributes to sociological debates related to ethnicity construction, class understanding, intersectionality, and Bourdieusian scholarship.

2. Contributions

This thesis makes several original contributions to the sociological understanding of the intersection between ethnicity and class in the lived experiences of Chinese immigrants in the UK.

Empirically, this study provides ethnographic accounts of a Chinese language school and a Chinese church in Scotland, offering rare insight into the lived experiences of British Chinese immigrants in these two important community spaces. It thus makes a significant contribution to research on Chinese migration in the UK by exploring the internal heterogeneity of the British Chinese community. In particular, this project pays close attention to working-class and marginalized Chinese immigrants, offering rich, underrepresented data on their lived experiences and perspectives.

Furthermore, it makes a distinctive contribution to the literature on the ethnicity–religion nexus in the UK by showing how religious spaces are not merely sites of cultural maintenance or spiritual refuge, but also arenas in which ethnic identities are shaped, contested, and hierarchically organized in relation to class and power - a matter of (double) oppression and negotiation. By analysing two spaces simultaneously, this study reveals how individuals' ethnic identities are shaped differently depending on the institutional logic and relational dynamics of each space.

Methodologically, this thesis offers a key insight: exploring how class and ethnic identities intersect across time and context in extended individual participant narratives through life history interviews. This approach allowed for a deep, temporally layered understanding of how ethnic identity is not only fluid but also situated within classed trajectories and relational spaces. In particular, the focus on spatial mobility and shifting social positions (as in the case of Paul) highlights the analytical potential of tracing individual lives across multiple community spaces.

Analytically, the thesis develops a novel framework that integrates Bourdieu's theory of social space with ethnic boundary-making theories, providing a fresh analytical lens for examining the intersection of class and ethnicity. It argues that the analysis of ethnic identity must be grounded in specific social spaces and attentive to their hierarchies, power relations,

and dominant forms of capital. This spatially approach contributes to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of how ethnic identities are shaped and contested in everyday life.

Theoretically, the project makes a clear contribution to sociological debates on the intersection of ethnicity and class. It demonstrates that the processes of asserting or ascribing ethnicity are inevitably shaped by actors' class positions, reinforcing the dynamic, relational nature of ethnic identity. By showing how ethnic identity becomes salient in specific contexts shaped by symbolic and material hierarchies, the thesis adds an important class-based inflection to constructivist theories of ethnicity. Additionally, the findings advance Bourdieusian theory by applying key concepts—such as capital, habitus, symbolic violence, and doxa—to the concrete interplay between class and ethnicity in diasporic Chinese contexts.

3. Discussion

At the end of this chapter, which is also the end of the thesis, I would like to discuss some thoughts regarding the research process, which also involve some limitations of the research and point out possible future research directions.

3.1. Understanding Ethnicity and Class in Social Practice

From the very beginning of the research, I have been maintaining a continuous understanding and thinking of the two core concepts: ethnicity and class. Before conducting field work, I spent a lot of time reading literature and trying to grasp them from existing research. However, strangely, the more literature I read, the more confused I became about how to understand them. As I have repeatedly mentioned in the literature review and methodology, ethnicity is a slippery concept that cannot always be accurately grasped. On the one hand, it is always difficult to distinguish it from some other concepts that divide groups, such as nationality, race, etc., which have both overlaps and distinctions. On the other hand, the ways of defining and using it are diverse and complex, and its references are also different in different works and projects. Similarly, the understanding of class seems to have become more and more complicated and fuzzy - even if we need to realize that this does not always mean improvement. It can not only be used as a social classification in the sense of some measure of social statistics, but also can be used to describe a certain group from broader and different perspectives. Meanwhile, in a more concrete sense, ordinary

people seem to be expressing a refusal to compartmentalize and define themselves (or be divided) into fixed categories. There is a growing body of research showing that people, especially ethnic minorities, go out of their way to downplay their identities to particular ethnic groups (see Cheryan 2005), and that people refuse to talk about class or define themselves along classically classed lines (see Savage et al. 2001). I quickly became lost in the vast sea of literature, not knowing how to define, understand or capture these meanings and relationships.

Fieldwork provides me a possible solution, which is to start from the narratives of the participants and analyse what can be regarded as the manifestation of ethnicity or class based on their experiences and stories, rather than trying to search for, or grasp, what they are from a theoretical perspective. These narratives, of course, were focused on the 'real' difficulties they faced, the 'real' suffering they encountered, and the choices they made when facing these. Therefore, the meaning of class and ethnicity is coordinated and highlighted through an attention to the social practices and experiences of the participants. This is similar to what Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1990b) pointed out: i.e. that the relationship between habitus, capital and fields should be studied and understood in and through an attention to actual social practice.

However, I would like to draw attention to two points here. First, different ethnic groups may have different ways and logics of social practice, which may be related to differences in their culture, lifestyle and established social networks. For example, when I learned through interviews with British Chinese that some of them chose to think about the social phenomenon of the medical system from the perspective of different cultures and ethnic characteristics, I cannot assume that immigrants of other ethnic groups always chose to understand the phenomenon in a similar way. Therefore, although my research explores ethnicity and class relations in a broader sense, which is more widely applicable to some extent, it still means that my research has limitations in explaining the obstacles that certain ethnic groups face when crossing boundaries and the ways they choose to understand certain social phenomena. More research on different ethnic groups needs to be conducted in order to understand the relationship between the two in different ethnic and cultural contexts.

Secondly, it must be recognized that Bourdieu's work is based on a large amount of empirical work. A larger sample and richer data allow for a deeper and more comprehensive

understanding of any issue. I really became aware of this during my own research. Although I have completed a huge amount of field work in nearly two years - including over 500 hours of translated and transcribed interviews, and two periods of participant observation - personally speaking, I recognize that the number and diversity of my participants could still be expanded. To explore the relationship between ethnicity and class in even greater depth, a larger and more varied sample would be ideal. Of course, achieving this would require long-term research and greater financial support and human resources.

3.2. Ethnicity and Class from an Intersectional Perspective

Intersectional studies show us how ethnicity and class as social categories are intertwined and affect social actors, as well as the differences in the impact of the entanglement as experienced by different groups. Such complexity contributes to the fuzziness of these concepts and reminds us that, on the one hand, the salience of social categories varies depending on the situation. On the other hand, different social categories always influence each other. In other words, as factors that affect the practices of actors, we seem to no longer be able to clearly separate them and claim the causal relationship from the influence of a single social category.

The intersectional lens was important to the analysis of the different chapters presented in this thesis, on the one hand, one of the focuses of this study was to explore when ethnicity becomes salient, which was also one of the core issues of current ethnic research. In the complex statements of the participants, the findings have shown that ethnicity always becomes prominent in situations where ethnic boundaries are highlighted, but the ways in which this happens, and how it happens, often depends on the class of the participants. At the same time, the study also focused on the life experiences of participants in different fields and social positions, and explored how class, ethnicity and gender jointly affected social actors in different situations with different degrees of salience. These contributed to the exploration of intersectionality from different perspectives and to different degrees.

However, as the study pointed out, although gender, ethnicity and class intersect and have different salience in different contexts (chapter 4), this does not mean that one of them is more important than the other categories or can be attributed to others. On this point, Bourdieu was criticized for not paying enough attention to ethnicity and gender - he believed

that ethnicity and gender can be considered somewhat secondary (e.g. Bourdieu 1984, Bourdieu 1990b). However, since the core focus of this study is ethnicity and class, it was not possible to study gender in great depth, although I have sought to draw special attention to the importance of gender in daily practice. More research is needed from different perspectives to better explore the intersections between these categories, especially gender.

At the same time, an intersectional lens provides us with a more comprehensive perspective to more deeply examine the complex relationship between power and identity. Therefore, the study also adopted intersectional methods as an analytical framework in many places to reveal how different social categories - mainly including gender, race, and class - intersect and jointly shape individual experience and social inequality. For example, Chapter 5 discussed how marginalized groups in the church suffered from the common oppression of class and ethnicity from different social spaces; and Chapter 6 explored how students in Chinese schools face a form of symbolic violence associated with the reproduction of the dominant culture in the space by their parents and schools, this process reflected the joint role of class and ethnicity. These findings have effectively expanded the study of ethnic identity construction through an intersectional perspective. Therefore, I encourage more social categories to be included in the research of ethnic identity through the framework of intersectional analysis. For example, we could certainly explore the role of gender in the hierarchical shaping and ethnic identity construction in the church space.

3.3. Ethnicity and Class in Different Social Spaces

My fieldwork in the Chinese school and the Chinese church prompted deeper reflections on how ethnicity and class operate in different social spaces within the same ethnicity. Both spaces share important similarities: they are community-anchored, voluntary in nature, and aim to preserve cultural heritage and provide social support. They also serve as important hubs for intergenerational contact, language maintenance, and cultural expression. However, their institutional logics and the ways they organize social relations differ significantly. Comparing these two spaces offers valuable insights into how class and ethnicity are experienced and expressed differently depending on context, and why such spatial comparisons deserve further investigation.

The Chinese language school, as an educational institution, mirrors many of the formal

structures of mainstream schooling, with an emphasis on discipline, academic success, and performance. Here, class can surface through differences in parents' educational backgrounds, their ability to support their children's learning, and their engagement with the school's expectations. Ethnicity, meanwhile, is often framed through cultural transmission—teaching Mandarin, celebrating Chinese festivals, and emphasizing heritage—but is also shaped by how "Chineseness" is defined and taught in a diasporic setting. These processes may privilege certain higher-class Chinese families, giving them advantages in school education and competition, and are reflected in the understanding and construction of ethnic identity.

In contrast, the Chinese church functions as a more emotionally and spiritually oriented space, where collective identity and belonging are emphasized over performance or competition. While it appears more egalitarian on the surface — they called each other "brother" or "sister", class distinctions are still present—evident in who holds leadership roles (both manager and preacher), whose voices are most heard, and how resources are mobilized. Ethnicity in this space is often experienced more holistically and communally, grounded in shared migration stories, language use, and religious practice. Churches can both mitigate and reinforce class distinctions depending on how authority and influence are distributed within the congregation.

What is particularly interesting is how the same individuals can experience shifts in their social position depending on the space– such as in Paul's story. We can therefore also imagine that a working-class parent who feels disempowered in the language school setting may hold a respected leadership position in the church. This fluidity highlights how ethnicity and class are not stable traits but are relational and shaped by institutional contexts. The comparison between the Chinese school and church underscores the importance of examining how different spaces shape identity and hierarchy in complex, sometimes contradictory ways.

The contrasting logics of school and church thus highlight how social categories are shaped not only by identity but also by institutional context. Examining these two spaces in parallel reveals how power operates differently depending on the social setting. Understanding these dynamics is valuable, as it sheds light on the multi-layered nature of social inequality and belonging. Comparing how ethnicity and class unfold across different spaces offers rich

analytical potential and deserves further exploration in future research.

3.4. Methodological Reflections: Life History and Extended Narratives in Ethnicity and Class Research

This study offers several methodological insights that may be valuable for future research on ethnicity and social class, particularly concerning the use of life history interviews and extended single participant narratives. The life history approach proved highly effective in capturing the temporal, spatial and relational complexity of identity-making process. By tracing participants' trajectories across time and space, the method allowed for a more nuanced understanding of how class and ethnicity are not fixed and static categories, but rather shift in meaning and significance over the lifespan of an individual. More importantly, we can identify the moments and causal conditions under which ethnicity and class emerge through these stories and trajectories, thereby challenging the assumption that they are salient in the same way and to the same degree at all times.

Life history interviews provide space for participants to demonstrate agency, rethinking past events, and construct meaning around their social position and stories. In this sense, the method helps bridge the macro (structural) and micro (personal) levels of analysis, which is particularly important in ethnicity and class research, as life experiences and social positions are closely intertwined. It is therefore especially useful in revealing how structural forces such as social policies, educational institutions, and religious communities shaped participants' opportunities and self-perceptions.

Moreover, the use of extended single participant narratives—such as the case of Paul—highlight the analytical value of focusing on one life in depth. Through Paul's story, we are able to explore how one navigated different social spaces (church and school) while occupying different classed and ethnic positions within each. This in-depth narrative reveals profoundly the fluidity and contextual dependence of social class and ethnic identity. Although Paul's case may not generalize across all Chinese migrants in the UK, it demonstrates deeper and different social contradictions and perspectives, making it a powerfully lens for theory construction.

Overall, this thesis powerfully and profoundly reveals the relationship between class and

ethnicity, based on a rich, multi-class and well analysed data set. One of its most striking aspects is its demonstration of how the process of asserting or ascribing ethnicity is inevitably influenced by actors' class positions, which adds a newer inflection to the dynamic and relational nature of ethnicity concerns. Moreover, research on Chinese immigrant communities in this country is relatively lacking, especially concerning the working class, given that existing studies tend to overrepresent students. This study stands out for its strong focus on the life trajectories, struggles, and coping strategies of the working class, especially marginalised groups. This enriches the understanding of Chinese immigrants in the UK across different class backgrounds.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Information sheet for participants

University of Glasgow
College of Social Sciences

Participant Information Sheet

Study title: How does social class shape and influence the ethnic identity of immigrants? A Case-study of Chinese migrants in Glasgow.

Researcher Details:
Name： Zhaowei Yin
Position: PGR in sociology in University of Glasgow.
Email: xxxxxxxx@student.gla.ac.uk

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask the researcher/s if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take some time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

The project aims to research how social class shape and influence the ethnicity expression and ethnic identity of Glasgow Chinese. Life-history interviews will be used to collect data. Participants will be invited to an approximately 2 hours interview, which will include your subjective narrative of what happened and how you felt in a past period of your life, as well as communication of some questions that may arise along the way. Interviews could be conducted online (via zoom or other communication software) or in person (locations will be selected in mutually agreed public places such as cafes, tearooms, etc.), depending on what you find most comfortable. Please note that in order to obtain the full content and capture all the details for subsequent transcription, interviews will be recorded only with your consent, and this option is outlined in the *Consent Form*. In addition, follow up interviews may be conducted if needed, in a similar manner and process, and the content will be used primarily to supplement the first interview. After the interview, every participant's personal details will be kept confidential, and will be presented as pseudonymous data in the paper. More specifically, each participant will be assigned an ID

number, which will be displayed in the paper in lieu of their real name. Please note that you have the right to request a copy of your transcript from the researcher by email, which will be sent to you in an encrypted email to maximize the confidentiality of your personal data.

Please note that although the data is protected by pseudonymization, due to the fact that the participants of this project are from a specific region (Glasgow), a specific ethnic identity (Chinese), and the recruitment method of the snowball, the participant's information may still be identified by a specific person. This will be avoided as far as possible by obscuring keywords such as related places and events.

Please note that interviews will be conducted in English or Mandarin, depending on what you find most comfortable. However, if interviews are conducted in Mandarin, they will be translated for the purposes of transcription. Please note that this may pose some potential risks, for example, some English may not adequately express the emotions of the participants' discourse. You have the right to ask to see a transcript for further confirmation.

Please note your participation is voluntary. Participants have a right to withdraw at any time without prejudice to their job, studies, or well-being and without providing a reason. Participant' full rights can be found in the *Privacy Notice*.

Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases the University may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.

Data collection will be used to complete the researcher's PhD project and will be presented on the researcher's PhD thesis. Meanwhile, the result might also be used in the researcher's journal articles, conference papers and written summary of results to all if requested. All personal data collected will be stored electronically and securely on the University of Glasgow Social Sciences computer. Only the researcher will be able to access the computer on which this data is stored. It is expected to be destroyed before Proposed Project End Date (31/12/2024). As no paper files are involved, all electronic files involving personal data will be erased by secure removal software. At the same time, for future re-use, the research data repository will be available for other authenticated researchers only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in the *Consent Form*. Relevant research data will be retained for 10 years after completion of the project (expected until 31/12/2034) according to University Code of Good Practice in Research.

This project has been considered and approved by the College Research Ethics Committee

To pursue any complaint about the conduct of the research: contact the College of Social Sciences Lead for Ethical Review, Dr Susan Batchelor: email socsci-ethics-lead@glasgow.ac.uk

_____End of Participant Information Sheet_____

Appendix 2: Consent form for participants

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Consent Form

Title of Project: **How does social class shape and influence the ethnic identity of immigrants? A Case-study of Chinese migrants in Glasgow**

Name of Researcher: Zhaowei Yin
Name of Supervisor: Andrew Smith
Name of Supervisor: Teresa Piacentini

Basic consent clauses

Please tick as appropriate

Yes ☐ No ☐ I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

Yes ☐ No ☐ I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

Consent on method clause

Yes ☐ No ☐ I consent to interviews being audio-recorded

Yes ☐ No ☐ I understand that interviews will be conducted in English or Mandarin, depending on what I find most comfortable. I understand that, where

interviews are conducted in Mandarin, they will be translated for the purposes of transcription

Confidentiality/anonymity clauses

Yes ☐ No ☐ I acknowledge that participants will be referred to by pseudonym.

Clauses relating to data usage and storage

I agree that:

Yes ☐ No ☐ All names and other material likely to identify individuals will be anonymised.

Yes ☐ No ☐ The material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times.

Yes ☐ No ☐ The *personal data* will be destroyed once the project is complete.

Yes ☐ No ☐ The *research data* will be retained in secure storage for use in future academic research for a period of 10 years.

Yes ☐ No ☐ The material may be used in future publications, both print and online.

Yes ☐ No ☐ I waive my copyright to any data collected as part of this project.

Yes ☐ No ☐ Other authenticated researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

Yes ☐ No ☐ Other authenticated researchers may use my words in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

Refer to Privacy Notice in relation to processing of personal data.

Yes ☐ No ☐ I acknowledge the provision of a Privacy Notice in relation to this research project.

Consent clause, tick box format

I agree to take part in this research study ☐

I do not agree to take part in this research study ☐

Name of Participant …… Signature ……

Date ……

Name of Researcher ……Signature ……

Date ……

…… End of consent form ……

Appendix 3: Interview guide

Potential Interview Question

This document will show some indicative questions that I may plan to ask participants. The questions listed below will be used for practical reference rather than scripted adoption.

About ethnic identity

Would you rather identify yourself as Chinese or British? Or do you wish to treat it in a more open way?

What do you associate with or understand as a British/Chinese identity?

What sort of characteristics with being British/Chinese?

Do you feel your ethnic identity has changed, or has a little fluctuated? What happened to cause this feeling?

Have you ever experienced feelings of not belonging? What happened to cause this feeling? Would you fight it / how did you fight it?

Has your self-perception ever contradicted how you are viewed by other people?

Do you think you have changed a lot since coming to the UK? Does everything around you make you feel a lot of pressure, both in life and psychologically?

About social class

What are you doing now? Have you had any other career before this?

What social class do you think you are in now? Elite, middle or working class? Why?

How many years have you been in the UK? Has anything happened in the past few years? Have any of these things affected your own identity?

Has your lifestyle (diet, work schedule, etc.) changed significantly since you came to the UK? What do you think is the difference between Chinese and British lifestyles? Do you prefer the Chinese way of life or the British way of life now?

Could you talk about your social circle in your daily life now? Are there more Chinese or more British? Who do you prefer to socialize with? Do you think your social circle changes your identity?

Do you find it difficult to integrate into your local social circle? Or rather, harder than you think.

How much leisure time do you have in a week? What will you do with this time?

About Culture and Language

What are your usual ways of entertainment? Do you have any sports/music hobbies? Do you usually/sometimes visit museums or galleries, and do you have a preferred art form?

Do you know much about Chinese culture? Do you think some traditional Chinese concepts, such as filial piety advocated by Confucianism, are still important today? Do you think learning about these traditional cultures is necessary for your children?

Are you familiar with British festivals? How do you and your family usually celebrate?

Do you celebrate Chinese traditional festivals such as Spring Festival, Lantern Festival, etc.? In what way? Do you think it is important for you and your children to celebrate traditional Chinese festivals?

About Education (education received from parents/educational philosophy for children)

How did your parents educate you? Do you feel that your parents had an educational philosophy when they raised you? Do you apply these philosophies or methods in the process of educating your children?

Do you usually communicate in English or Chinese? Do you think it is important for Chinese people in the UK to learn Chinese? Will you let your children learn Chinese? Why?

Will you deliberately emphasize his/her ethnic identity when educating your child? For example, should he/she think that being Chinese is just being British?

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