



A Cultural Model of Internationalization

An Anthropological Study of the Motivations to Study Abroad Within a
Group of Chinese Students



Master's thesis in Social Anthropology

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Abstract

The present study is a qualitative exploration of the motivations to study abroad within a group of Chinese students. The insights presented here are founded on an ethnographic fieldwork at Fudan University in Shanghai, China. The fieldwork entailed participant observation and qualitative interviews with students who were either currently enrolled at Fudan University or recent graduates. The puzzle that has inspired the study is how a current doctrine of internationalization within the field of higher education has implications for individuals and how the norms embedded in this field are translated into individual motivations and actions towards internationalization. Perspectives from psychological anthropology are employed to show how the informants interpret the phenomenon of studying abroad and how they themselves have become motivated to study abroad. Schema theory and the conceptualization of cultural models as sets of shared, cultural schemas will form the theoretical framework in which this question will be addressed. A cultural model of internationalization is proposed to reflect which meanings are attributed to the phenomenon, how these meanings are structured, and how they reflect social structures that have been internalized by the informants as a personal belief system. The concept of internalization draws partly on Bourdieu's understanding of the habitus and is included to provide a conceptual bridge between both objectivity and subjectivity as well as between culture and practice. A central assumption of the thesis is that the cultural model reflects a dialectic relationship between the social world and the interpretations the informants make of their own reality. The thesis shows that the motivations to study abroad can be explained with the motivational capacity of the cultural model and that the internalization of the model has motivated the students to study abroad.

Key words: Higher education • Internationalization • Student mobility • Chinese students
• Psychological anthropology • Cultural models

Reader's guide

Shorter quotations (2-3 lines) from literature are included in the text using "double quotation marks". Longer quotes (more than 3 lines) from literature as well as quotations from interview material and field notes are included as separate paragraphs with indentation and no quotation marks. "Double quotation marks" are also used for titles of books and articles when these are mentioned in the text.

Theoretical concepts or terms referring to theory will be introduced in italics. Words that are considered emic will also be used in italics. Underlining is used to put emphasis on certain words or passages in a quote and in such cases it will be noted in the following parentheses. 'Single quotation marks' are used to emphasize when a word is used with irony or to emphasize that something is a concept but not a theoretical one. All names used for informants are pseudonyms. When I refer to the informants it is primarily the 11 Fudan students who participated in an interview although other social agents within the field have also offered interesting perspectives on the topic.

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1 Introduction

When walking in the streets of Shanghai one will be met with large illuminated billboards advertising English language courses and study opportunities abroad. Bookstores in the city center will have entire sections dedicated to test rehearsal material and guides on how to do well on admission tests for foreign universities. Clothing brands in the most fashionable department stores will have their attractive models pose in front of the main entrance of Harvard University and sell not only their products to young consumers but also the idea of studying abroad.

The present thesis is a qualitative study of the motivations to study abroad among a group of Chinese students at Fudan University in Shanghai, China. The primary intention of the study will be to illuminate how the group of students I interviewed interpret and conceptualize the phenomenon of studying abroad and how they have become motivated to pursue international education themselves. The perspectives that will be presented here are based on a three months ethnographic fieldwork conducted at Fudan University from May to August 2014. The primary source for data production has been qualitative, semi-structured interviews conducted with 11 students. Furthermore, the informal interactions I engaged in at Fudan, as well as the mere experience of being in China, have inspired various reflections on the topic, which have also influenced the empirical insights. Drawing on psychological anthropology, this thesis shows that the informants' interpretations of studying abroad reflect a cultural model of internationalization that entails certain logics, norms, beliefs, and goals that the students subscribe to and that have motivated them to study abroad.

When it comes to international student mobility, China holds a leading position as the country that sends the most students to study abroad and Chinese students also make up

the majority of international students at many universities around the world¹. Of course, it should be considered that China has a large student population and the mobility ratio may not exceed those of other nations but that is not a reason to diminish the fact that there is an immense interest among Chinese students to study abroad. The field of higher education is by nature international, and scholars and students have for as long as universities have existed engaged in international cooperation and knowledge-exchange. However, since the 1980s there has been an escalating interest in international cooperation in higher education and the concept of *internationalization* has emerged with an increased strategic focus at institutional and national levels intending to promote international activities (Teichler 2004). International student mobility remains to be one of the key activities of internationalization and despite the international nature of higher education the flow of students across national borders is today more extensive than ever seen before (Brooks & Waters 2011:137).

The inspiration for this study is the question of why studying abroad has become such a popular phenomenon for students around the world who have access to higher education and in particular among Chinese students. Over the last few years, I have become increasingly curious about how studying abroad has become a doctrine within the field of higher education. It seems imperative today that students who possess the resources should incorporate international elements into their university education. Besides the obvious motivations, the phenomenon entails, of exploring the world or pursuing quality education, I consider studying abroad as also facilitated by norms of becoming globalized world citizens. Defining internationalization, and more specifically studying abroad, as a global phenomenon indicates that it could have been studied from many different perspectives and an empirical field could have been constructed nearly anywhere in the world. However, as it has been accounted for, Chinese students take a leading position in the international flow of students, which led to the assumption that there must be an immense interest in studying abroad among Chinese students. Thus, it seemed obvious to conduct a fieldwork in a Chinese context.

¹ <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/international-student-flow-viz.aspx>

Problem statement

The interest described here in the internationalization of higher education and the puzzle on how it has become such an extensive and normative phenomenon has inspired me to address it in the present thesis and has led me to formulate the following problem statement:

How can a cultural model of internationalization contribute to an understanding of how a group of Chinese students interpret the phenomenon of studying abroad and why they have become motivated to pursue international education themselves?

The analysis that will provide an answer to this question is founded on work within psychological anthropology and will employ the concept of cultural models to explore the meanings that are attributed to the phenomenon of studying abroad. A cultural model is understood as shared cognitive schemas through which people construct and interpret their reality and as also possessing a motivational capacity, as it does not only categorize and describe the world, but also define goals (D'Andrade & Strauss 1992). The cultural model of internationalization that will be proposed here is inspired by a cultural model of work in a U.S. American context as proposed by Claudia Strauss in "What Makes Tony Run? Schemas as motives reconsidered" (1992b; 2004). Inspired by this model, the present analysis outlines three schemas that constitute the cultural model of internationalization. The first schema reflects an ideological interpretation of a homogeneous Western culture and the students' curiosity about this. The second schema reflects pragmatic interpretations of the considerations and possibilities the students have when deciding to study abroad. The third schema reflects the individual and self-defining life experiences and goals that students include in their explanatory framework for studying abroad. The analysis suggests that the cultural model reflects cultural meanings that have been internalized by the informants and that by internalizing the norms and beliefs embedded in the model, they have become motivated to pursue international education themselves. Internalization will be used in Pierre Bourdieu's understanding of the habitus as cognitive and motivating structures that reflect the internalization of social structures and through which people manage their social world (Bourdieu 2001:533).

With this position within psychological anthropology, the ontological object of the study is the interpretations and reflections that the informants have expressed on internationalization. However, an important premise of the thesis is that these interpretations engage in a dialectic relationship with the informants' social and cultural context. The term cultural model refers to shared, recognized, and transmitted internal representations, but the model is closely linked with external forms such as objects or events, as these are manifestations of the cultural model (D'Andrade 1992a:230).

A definition of *cultural*

Throughout the thesis, the object of interest is the interpretations and beliefs that altogether form a cultural model of internationalization, but what does it actually entail that something is cultural? Inspired by Roy D'Andrade's understanding, cultural is defined as something that is shared within a social group, it is shared because it is enacted, physically possessed, or internally thought by people (D'Andrade 1992a:230). Whatever is considered cultural must be recognized in a certain way and it must be intersubjectively shared. Finally, it must exist across time and space and have the potential of being passed on to new members of the group (ibid.). The model of internationalization is conceptualized as *cultural* as it has been inspired by the apparently shared interpretations expressed by the informants and as it is embedded with cultural meanings that are acted on as the informants pursue international education. The meanings embedded in the model have the potential of existing across time and space as they are founded on the informants' collective history and social context. The use of cultural indicates that the study does not try to reflect any uniform representations of a 'Chinese culture' but rather that the object of interest is cultural meanings among the informants.

D'Andrade's definition of cultural is relevant in this study as it emphasizes the psychological aspect of culture. In this perspective, culture does not solely exist in external symbols or representations but these are manifestations of internal cognitive schemas. The perspective of D'Andrade and other cognitive anthropologists is that

culture is both public and private and is to be studied in both material and ideational phenomena (D'Andrade 1992a:229). This view relates to a dispute within anthropology on 'where' to actually find culture and 'what' it is, which will be addressed as part of the theoretical framework.

Conceptualization of internationalization

In this thesis, the goal is to explore the concept of internationalization both as a material phenomenon, an activity, but most importantly as an ideational phenomenon, as a set of interpretations among a group of Chinese students. Internationalization has come to include various definitions and activities in the field of higher education. It is a term used for strategies, policies, national and institutional cooperation across borders, and student mobility. Rather than viewing internationalization solely as phenomenon taking place on institutional and structural levels, the aim here is to offer a human-centered perspective on the global trend of studying abroad and the meanings ascribed to this phenomenon.

In this study, internationalization is understood as university-level education taking place outside the students' country of origin, which in this case is China. To some, the term *study abroad*, specifically describes the pursuit of an academic degree outside ones own country but in this thesis the concept will also be used to describe other types of studies in another country such as exchange studies or summer schools. I initiated this study with a great emphasis on the distinctions between *exchange students* and *full-degree students*, but as I conducted my interviews, I became aware that among the students I interacted with, these categories became intertwined as a great part of the students did not only pursue international studies in one way but would try to go abroad more than once, for instance first for exchange and then later for a Master's program.

Throughout the thesis the concepts of 'internationalization' and 'study abroad' will be used interchangeably to describe the activities among the students to become internationalized as well as the interpretations connected to these activities. The term internationalization mainly exists on an etic level and refers to the conceptual understanding of the tendencies that take place within higher education where studying

abroad is an activity that feeds into this concept. In the next section, a more elaborate discussion of emic and etic perspectives will follow.

Emic and etic perspectives

Within anthropology, a distinction has been made between the perspectives of the people being studied, the *insider's* view, and the *outsider's* view, which are the analytical perspective on their culture as presented by the anthropologist. Ethnography entails an ambition to understand *the native's point of view* (Geertz 1974) and such perspectives from inside a culture or cultural group are conceptualized as the emic level. The level that the researcher navigates on, in explaining and analyzing these insights, is referred to as the etic level (Eriksen 2000:38). The study of emic concepts entails an ambition to represent the meanings and understandings of the members of a society whereas etic concepts is the analysis of a culture or cultural concepts that is likely to make more sense to the academic community rather than the people being studied (Tyler 2004:395-6n). However, even the emic level is still "nothing but the emics of the observers" (Levi-Strauss (1974) in Harris 1976:348). Especially the emic perspective has a central position in cognitive anthropology, which form the theoretical framework for this study, as this direction entails an intention of studying how people organize and use their culture.

In this thesis there is a difference between how some concepts are understood by the informants and by the researcher, which should be seen in the light of the distinction between emic and etic perspectives. As the fieldwork conducted for this study took shape, it became clear that the exploration of notions of internationalization would also become a study of the informants' ideas of culture. The concept of culture has been the object of much debate and scrutiny within anthropology, almost to the extent that most anthropologists would feel an immense disciplinary pressure when setting out to define the concept. Coming from such tradition within anthropology, I was surprised with the straightforward use of the word culture among the informants. Many of the informants referred to a category of Western culture to describe how they considered studying abroad in a Western country as a way of becoming familiar with this culture, which many of them considered as very attractive. The informants have constructed an idea of

Western culture based on influences from Western countries, primarily the U.S., and through narratives of Western culture among their friends and family who had been abroad. In this way, influences and narratives of Western culture continuously reproduce the interest in and fascination of Western culture and continue to inspire students to study abroad.

Not only ideas about Western culture appeared to be salient among the informants but also ideas of Chinese culture. These were often expressed in relation to, or even opposition to, ideas about Western culture. It seemed that part of the attractiveness of Western culture lies in the perception that it is very different from Chinese culture and even cultures of other Asian countries, as some informants expressed as too similar to Chinese culture, and thus not as fascinating to them. Thus, studying abroad was also considered a cultural endeavor and a chance to experience a different cultural context. Some students also expressed a great pride in the history and traditions of Chinese culture and expressed hope that it would maintain its characteristics despite the influences from other countries. The emic understanding of Chinese culture was connected explicitly to ideas of collectivism as a characteristic trait of Chinese people:

I think Chinese people are used to be, like, we live in the mainstream, we want to be alike, we behave collectively, not individually, we don't want other people to regard us a very strange person, we just wanna be a whole group (Interview Rú Yi).

Collectivity was believed to characterize Chinese people and their (inter-) actions. To some informants the collectivist orientation of Chinese people also explained the great interest among Chinese students to study abroad as well as their own motivations to do so.

The cultural model of internationalization is to be considered as an etic perspective on the emic understandings of internationalization and studying abroad. The model in its coherence, is an analytical abstraction rather than a thing 'out there' in the world, in the informants' reality. Similar to ideas about schema theory, which will be outlined at a later point, the cultural model reflects the ways in which the informants interpret their world

but the informants do not recognize it as a coherent model. There is a certain transparency to cultural models as people see their world through the models but do not see the models themselves (D'Andrade 1992b:38).

To an anthropologist, the concepts of emic and etic perspectives can offer insight into how people interpret and perceive their reality and the relations they engage in with other people. In this study, which explores the ways in which cultural beliefs have been internalized and influenced the decision to study abroad, it is relevant to have an idea of which concepts are important to the informants and how they are understood. The distinction between emic and etic is also important to continuously remind researchers that their analytical abstractions about a phenomenon do not equal the actual presence of the phenomenon in the informants' view. However, this distinction between emic and etic perspectives is not an attempt to distance the researcher from the research object and much less to suggest that either one of the perspectives holds a greater explanatory potential over the other.

Structure of the thesis

After this introduction, chapter 2 proceeds with a description of the thematic and empirical context for understanding the analytical propositions of this thesis. First, the contemporary landscape of higher education and the orientation towards internationalization within the field is described. Following this, focus is on Chinese higher education and how it has been influenced by the political agendas in China and how the opening-up policy of the late 1970s have encouraged a re-internationalization of the field. The chapter is concluded with a brief account of research on the topic. In chapter 3, it is described how the ethnographic fieldwork, conducted for this study, have taken shape, the various considerations it has involved and which implications the data production has had for the theoretical direction of the thesis. In chapter 4, the theoretical framework of psychological anthropology is introduced with a particular focus on the central concepts of schema theory, cultural models, and internalization. The chapter is concluded by outlining Claudia Strauss' cultural model of work. The analysis will follow in chapter 5 where the empirical insights and the theoretical assumptions will be

combined to illuminate how the informants interpret internationalization and how the internalization of the cultural model has motivated them to study abroad. In chapter 6, the model will be discussed in comparison with Strauss' model, some potentials and shortcomings of schema theory will be addressed, and a dispute on whether culture is to be studied as a mental or as a physical phenomenon will be discussed in relation to the analysis. In chapter 7, the empirical, theoretical, and analytical perspectives are summarized in the conclusion.

2 Thematic and empirical context

In this chapter, I set the framework for the present study and address perspectives that are relevant in order to grasp the topic. First, the stage is set by outlining the contemporary landscape of higher education focusing in particular those strategies and activities that reflect the significant interest in internationalization among students as well as on institutional and national levels. The thesis proceeds with an account of the empirical context with a focus on Chinese higher education and policy developments since the mid-19th Century and how this period is characterized by an increased orientation towards internationalization. The chapter is concluded with an overview of research that has been done on internationalization within higher education.

The higher education landscape

To understand the move towards internationalization within higher education it is important to consider the landscape of higher education and the underlying premises. It has been argued that in the current neo-liberal context of higher education an ideological paradigm exists, which frames universities as new global marketplaces and as both collaborators and competitors (Amit 2010:8). It has also been stated that internationalization is a consequence of “the full submission of education to the pursuits of the global economy” (Brooks and Waters 2011:22). As a result of these developments, there has been a shift from seeing education as a common good to now being an instrument in the global competition between nations and actors (ibid.).

The higher education sector is increasingly confronted with benchmarking, assessments, and evaluations, which have come to influence practices and strategies. Rankings, as an example of a global assessment system, are an explicit symbol of the global competition and continuous responses to new global trends and standards. Such global standards have resulted in an alignment of strategies and practices between education institutions. This standardization is claimed to be a response to as well as a driver of student mobility as it makes it easier for students, as consumers, to assess the education products that the

competing institutions offer them (Brooks & Waters 2011:27-8). Such tendencies towards a global marketplace of higher education constitute the milieu for higher education institutions and should be taken into account when considering the concept of internationalization, which will be the focus of the remainder of this chapter.

Internationalization of higher education

Internationalization is a much-debated topic these days among both scholars and practitioners as it has won terrain within the field of higher education. Although the issue of internationalization is very present, the only thing that can be agreed upon is that internationalization is not so easy to define. Not only is it frequently addressed what the scope of the concept internationalization is and which activities, processes, and levels the concept entail, but the distinction between internationalization and globalization appears to be almost an integral part of the definition as well (Yang 2002:81-2).

The demarcation between internationalization and globalization is concerned with how the two concepts relate to the national level. Globalization is frequently defined as processes that transcend national systems and blurring the borders between these (Teichler 2004:7). Globalization will tend to also have an economic and market-based focus and incorporate activities, which can accumulate profit and contribute positively to the global knowledge economy. Internationalization on other the hand does not dismiss the national framework but rather entail the activities and processes that take place between nation states or institutions within them (ibid.). The premise of this study is that a complete separation of the two concepts is not possible as they are interrelated because “internationalization is changing the world of higher education, and globalization is changing the world of internationalization” (Knight 2004:5). The impression from the interviews conducted for this study is that globalization as a form of awareness has both inspired and facilitated internationalization among the interviewed students. Thus, globalization can be seen as part of the environment of the internationalization of higher education (Knight 2004:8).

As for defining internationalization it is widely recognized that the concept reflects an increasing interest in activities beyond the nation-state. Universities are participating in research and education collaborations and networks with institutions around the world. This international orientation of the university is however not something new but rather characteristic of the university as a central societal institution. From the early days of higher education, universities have constituted an international community in which knowledge exchange and academic recognition across borders were the driving forces (Teichler 2004:8). The most remarkable change is probably that internationalization today has developed as a concept, as an umbrella gathering all activities with an international dimension, which impose certain priorities on higher education institutions (Amit 2010:8). With the recognition that internationalization is becoming increasingly important the concept has also widened and entails a great variety of activities such as mobility of students, scholars and staff, strategic partnerships, research networks, curricula integration, branch campuses, and more recently a focus on internationalization at home to ensure that even students who stay at home can add an international dimension to their education.

Student mobility across national borders are considered one of many aspects of internationalization within higher education and as the field has developed student mobility has become a quintessential cornerstone of internationalization. However, student mobility does not just happen by itself but rather is supported by cooperation between universities as well as national policies that aim to facilitate international studies. The current interest in internationalization inspires both institutional and national level actors to create opportunities for students to become internationalized citizens through studying abroad. On both levels there are different rationales motivating the efforts towards increased internationalization of higher education. On national levels such rationales concerns human resource developments in terms of attracting human capital and 'brain power', making strategic alliances through the exchange of students and scholars, collaboration on education and research, economic benefits from exporting education or attracting fee-paying students, nation-building by importing education programs and institutions, and finally social and cultural development by promoting

intercultural understanding and national identity (Knight 2004:22-25). Institutions will tend to be driven towards internationalization by similar aspects; economic benefits from educational activities, human development in terms of enhancing the international and intercultural skills for students and staff, participation in networks and alliances, production and distribution of knowledge, and a more recent concern for building a strong international brand to secure a lucrative position on the global scene (Knight 2004:25-28).

Conclusively, the scope of internationalization is growing but the core activity remains to be the flow of students across borders. The students play a leading part in this set-up although, as showed, a lot of things are taking place behind the stage to encourage and facilitate their internationalization activities. Internationalization in the shape of student mobility will be the object of interest in this study that offers an analytical suggestion to how students interpret the concept of internationalization and what motivates them to seek international education themselves.

Higher Education in China

When setting out to explore the interest for internationalization in a Chinese context it is necessary to consider the development of higher education in China and the national and international influences that have led Chinese higher education towards internationalization.

Three stages of development have influenced higher education in modern China from the mid-19th century and onwards (Levin & Xu 2006:909). Initially, higher education in China was influenced by the European education model due to mainly three aspects; the introduction of Western missionary colleges in China, the introduction of study abroad programs for Chinese students and scholars, and the modernization efforts introduced by Chinese reformers (Min 2004:56). In 1847, three Chinese students and their teacher were the first ever to go to the U.S. to study. This paved the way for the study abroad program introduced in 1872 when the Chinese government sent 120 students to study in the U.S. on the first formal study abroad program. During the following years, programs came to

include U.K., other European countries, and Japan. The second stage of higher education in China correlates with the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, which had great implications for higher education in China as all higher education institutions were nationalized. By this time, all missionary colleges that had come to represent Western education in China were seen as “perpetrators of Western cultural imperialism” and were either closed or integrated into public institutions (Min 2004:59). At this time, the Soviet model, in which education was considered an integral part of a socialist, centrally planned economy, inspired higher education in China. China and the Soviet Union shared the ambition of bringing all higher education institutions under the leadership of the government. To facilitate this, Soviet experts were sent to China to assist in the reformation of the educational sector and Soviet scholars were sent to teach in Chinese education institutions (ibid.). As a consequence of this model, Chinese higher education institutions became highly specialized and was governed by a total of 60 specialized ministries under the central government (Min 2004:60). From the early 1950s and on, Chinese higher education was not only influenced by the Soviet model but also by the political and societal changes led on by a reform eagerness introducing both the Great Leap Forward in 1958-60 and the Cultural Revolution in 1966-76 (Min 2004:63). The final stage of higher education in modern China is characterized by the open-door policy from 1978 and several economic reforms in the wake of this. With this new political agenda, Chinese higher education once again started looking towards the Western model of higher education with renewed attention to internationalization (Huang 2003:225-6). Furthermore, higher education in China shifted from a centrally planned structure to a market-oriented structure, which also reflects the new economic agenda of China at that time (Levin & Xu 2006:910).

The Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution

During the years of influence from the Soviet education model, the Chinese government also introduced a number of policies that had great implications for higher education as well as many other aspects of society. In 1958, a new plan for economic development was launched with the Great Leap Forward. The economic ambitions of the plan included an expansion of higher education by increasing the number of universities and colleges as

well as enrolment numbers (Min 2004:61). It rejected the very specialized structure inspired by the Soviet model and the number of higher education institutions increased from 229 in 1957 to 1289 in 1960. However, the education system struggled with meeting the political ambitions and by 1963 the number of higher education institutions had decreased to 407 (ibid.).

From 1966 to 1976, the Cultural Revolution was a reality in China with Mao Zedong as the frontrunner. It did not only have implications for the interactions with the surrounding world but also had a great impact on Chinese higher education as universities were accused of promoting ideas combining “Soviet revisionism, Western bourgeois ideologies, and traditional feudalism” (Min 2004:62). Thus, higher education became the symbol of everything the dominant communist forces were trying to fight. As a result of this, universities were banned from enrolling undergraduate students in more than four years and graduate students for 12 years (ibid.). During the Cultural Revolution, young Chinese people were thus restrained from pursuing university education and even though some managed to pursue education after the Cultural Revolution, these years had a significant influence on this generation (Zhou & Hou 1999). This generation is parents of today’s young Chinese and among some of the students interviewed for the present study, the Cultural Revolution was thought to be a great influence on their parents’ hopes and ambitions for them. The limited access to education during the Cultural Revolution is believed to foster certain expectations for the educational choices the students of today make. One student reflects very explicitly on the impact of the Cultural Revolution on his family and his educational ambitions:

My grandpa used to be a factory owner and during the time of Cultural Revolution, the communist party they killed some factory owners because they think it's not good, it's vice versa to the communism. So my father has never got a chance to be educated. Actually he just went to primary school for three years and after that he never go to school, but he is much smarter than all his peers, just not the chances. His ambition influenced me and it was his idea that I should go abroad, maybe not living there, maybe not staying there, but I should go to see the world so that you know who you are, you know your position in the social system so you can see yourself clear, but as to me I think

go abroad he will definitely agree with me and he told me all the time (Interview Hàn Róng).

This statement indicates that the Cultural Revolution and the educational policies of that time should be considered as a context for understanding higher education in China and furthermore that it is considered as influential on education choices and the motivation to study abroad.

The re-internationalization of Chinese higher education

In 1978, the open-door policy was initiated at a time where the internationalization of higher education was picking up speed and this new reform agenda should be considered as part of the framework for this development (Bie & Yi 2014:10).

Initially, internationalization included such activities as sending Chinese students and scholars abroad, inviting foreign scholars to China, and introducing foreign language teaching, primarily in English. From the mid-1980s, regional governments and institutions of higher education were granted permission to select students and scholars to go abroad, which, up until that time, had been the domain of the State Education Commission (SEC) (ibid.). A significant step towards the internationalization of higher education institutions was taken in 1995 as SEC allowed for the opportunity to engage in cooperation and joint operations with foreign institutions, which made it possible for Chinese students to study abroad on exchange programs. In the policy issued by SEC, it was stated that “cooperation with foreign higher education institutions should become an important component in China’s education policy and should constitute a supplementary part of China’s educational program” (Huang 2003:227). This shows the emphasis on internationalization on both national and institutional levels and is a reflection of how internationalization became an objective of education policies in China.

The internationalization of higher education in this period should be considered in relation to the general political climate in China. With Deng Xiaoping’s introduction of the open-door policy in 1978, it became clear that China was striving for economic

development, which entailed the realization of ‘the four modernizations’ meaning development within industry, agriculture, defense, and science and technology. Because of the educational gap remaining from the Cultural Revolution, sending students abroad to become experts within these modernizations was considered crucial and international education became a key aspect of the economic development of China (Huang 2003:235, Min 2004:63). From 1992, the economic development in China was defined by a transition from a socialist, centrally planned economy to a “market economy with Chinese characteristics” (ibid.). After this point, the driving forces for internationalization of higher education in China can be summed up in two interests. First, participating in the global competition by improving academic standards and offering quality education and research. Second, realizing the goal of offering higher education to the ‘masses’ and not just the ‘elite’, which the Chinese education system cannot accommodate due the large population numbers and an increasing interest in and access to pursuing higher education (Huang 2003:235-6). To set an example, the total enrolments at higher education institutions in China increased from around one million students in the early 1980s to 13 million students in 2001 (Min 2004:63). Thus, international education is encouraged by the government, among other reasons, to take off some of the pressure on the Chinese education institutions.

Although it is not the focus of this study, internationalization in Chinese higher education has not only been a one-way street but has also included an interest in attracting foreign students to study at Chinese universities and to create an interest in China through the spread of Chinese cultural and academic influences. China is not solely the receiver of international trends from abroad but also makes its way on to the stage of higher education by sending faculty members to universities abroad and also with the establishment of branch campuses in Asia, Europe, and the U.S. (Huang 2003:238). In general, the tendencies towards globalization in terms of capital, production, labor, information, technology etc, constitute a global framework which along with China’s role in international cooperation on economic and political issues, are furthering the processes and influences of internationalization of higher education in China (Min 2004:64).

Internationalization awareness

The tendencies within higher education that have been described above imply that much work is being done on political levels, both institutional, national and international, to promote internationalization. Such initiatives may foster the awareness of internationalization and further motivate students to seek international opportunities. To follow the theoretical logics of this study, this context has been outlined to show how the social environment, and phenomena within this, has an impact on the interpretations people make about their reality and how they choose to act on these interpretations. Policies and strategies on internationalization constitute a considerable aspect of this social environment as they can be seen as shaping the way individuals construct themselves as subjects (Shore & Wright 2003:3). Policies, and the logics embedded in them, can shape, guide, correct, and modify the way people conduct themselves. It can serve as a guide to behavior and a charter for action (Shore & Wright 2003:5-6). Policy is furthermore embedded in institutional mechanisms and service deliveries, which implies that the presence of exchange programs and other internationalizing activities at universities, is a reflection of the ways policies entail a “capacity to stimulate and channel activity” (Shore & Wright 2003:4-5). They serve as a source for not only awareness on a matter but they also provide implicit instructions on how to act on them. According to Chris Shore and Susan Wright, “individuals constitute themselves in terms of the norms through which they are governed so that although imposed on individuals, once internalized [these norms] influence them to think, feel and act in certain ways” (Shore & Wright 2003:7). This implies that policies as techniques of the self influence the ways in which individuals interpret their social world and how they act on these interpretations. Thus, internationalization policies and the norms and logics embedded in them, should be considered as a context that play an influential role on the interpretations of and motivations to study abroad. The outline of higher education trends that has been provided here is not only included to set the framework for this particular study, but also to indicate that initiatives on all levels of the higher education sector contribute to a milieu of internationalization that (re-) produce the interest in and ambitions of internationalization. Such perspectives on the impact of policy corresponds well with the analytical argument of this thesis, that through processes of interpretation and

internalization, phenomena from the social world can become part of people's understanding and outlook of their reality as well as motivate actions.

Research on internationalization of higher education

Internationalization of higher education has also emerged as a field of research within academia and has been studied from a number of perspectives, which will be accounted for in general terms here.

Borrowing from migration theory, some studies have applied the concepts of push-pull factors in studying international student mobility. In this perspective, the intention is to identify specific factors in students' home countries and host countries respectively that have an influence on their decision to study abroad. The approach is often primarily quantitative in measuring to which extent different factors are influential on the decision to study abroad. The factors that are considered as influential on the decision to study abroad and also the decision on where to study are divided into which factors are seen as pushing the students out of their own country and/or pulling the students into a specific host country. Some of the factors that have been identified are quality, availability and cost of education abroad and at home, recommendations from network, language, visa legislation etc. (Bodycott 2009; González, Mesanza, & Mariel 2011; Mazzarol & Soutar 2002; Rounsaville 2011). A specific culture or cultural traits that are thought to be characteristic of a country, i.e. 'U.S. culture', may also influence students to choose a specific host country (Eder, Smith, & Pitts 2010).

In other studies, focus has been on the institutional level and how the frameworks of internationalization have developed over the years. It is argued that, in recent years higher education has become increasingly market-oriented and commercialized, which has also stimulated the 'business of internationalization'. The consequence of this is a supply-and-demand logic of higher education, commercialization and even commodification of education, and increased focus on marketing and commercial activities (Mazzarol, Soutar, and Thein 2001; Knight 2005). This serves the competition to attract fee-paying international students as a part of both institutional and national

interests in getting a leading position in the global knowledge economy in which knowledge is seen as the most important form of capital. Likewise, institutions of higher education engaged in internationalization, have come to be seen as exporters of education goods (Harman 2004). What these exporters provide students with is not just the mere education but also the advantages that global mobility is believed to entail such as skills and prestige in the home country, opportunities for working in, or permanently migrating to, the host country, and finally landing a globally recognized job due to the international experiences (Marginson 2004:901).

Studies of more evaluative character have focused on the benefits and outcomes of studying abroad, i.e. in evaluations of programs such as Erasmus, with the intention of clarifying which benefits studying abroad provide the students with and how it have influenced their lives and careers (Kehm 2005). A similar focus has been on how institutions or nations benefit from internationalization. Related to this approach is also the study of underlying rationales and perceived outcomes of internationalization; what are the reasons to engage in internationalization? Such studies are concerned with what makes different actors – students, institutions, and national governments – strive for internationalization and what think they will gain from it (Knight 2004). One such rationale is that student mobility, and internationalization of higher education in general, contributes positively to global understanding and human development. On an individual level, internationalization is believed to foster personal development, language proficiency, and cultural understanding (Kehm 2005:21). On institutional and national levels, rationales can include such aspects as human resource development, strategic alliances, trade interests, and social and cultural development (Knight 2004:20).

A considerable contribution to the anthropological body of work on the topic is offered by Vanessa Fong (2004; 2011) who has done extensive fieldwork in Dalian, a city in the Northeastern part of China, following a group of high-school students and their coming of age. While doing this study, Fong realized the interest among her informants to study abroad and she decided to follow them on their endeavors around the world as they enrolled in and graduated from universities abroad. Fong covers many different

theoretical perspectives in her work focusing both on neoliberal systems theory, globalization theory, migration theory, Bourdieu's theory of cultural, social, and economic capital. Fong also describes the imagery among the students of the Western world as an *imagined community* and how they through studying abroad in Western countries attempted to immerse in this community with hopes of being able to immigrate permanently. However, the primary theoretical focus is on citizenship and the students' strategies to obtain citizenship in a Western country and thereby, it is believed, enhance their social, cultural, and social capital. The issue of citizenship is also expressed in terms of doubts about dismissing their Chinese citizenship as well as their relations and obligations in China. Thus, what Fong is arguing, is that as *agents of globalization* the students are aiming for transnational citizenship which will give them access to the opportunities they associate with the Western world while still being able to uphold their position and social relations in China (Fong 2011:6).

This thesis, with its empirical focus on Chinese students and their interpretations of studying abroad, takes a position within the qualitative studies on the topic of internationalization. It has the potential of offering new insights because of the combination of the empirical and theoretical perspectives. As Chinese students constitute a significant portion of the international students at universities around the world this empirical focus is not new. However, it is a new approach to employ a cognitive anthropological framework to construct a cultural model reflecting the interpretations and motivations among the students who have contributed to this study and to furthermore show how this model reflects cultural meanings that have been internalized and acted on in the students' pursuit of international education. The cultural model indicates that internationalization is interpreted partly as a possibility of becoming acquainted with Western culture, that it entails specific choices about pursuing the best available education, and that some interpretations are rooted in the individual life experiences and self-understandings of the informants.

Concluding remarks

In the beginning of this chapter, the field of higher education was defined as a global marketplace in which students are the consumers of education goods. This allegory is meant to capture the current premises of higher education and the role of universities as both competitors and collaborators on internationalization. It was furthermore argued that, although internationalization within higher education is not a new phenomenon, the current globalization trends constitute a new environment for internationalization and for the field of higher education. The policies and rationales within higher education encourage and support internationalization and international student mobility, which is considered a key activity of internationalization in higher education.

After introducing the thematic framework, focus was tuned in on Chinese higher education to show which impact national policies and the mid-20th Century reform-eagerness have had on higher education in China and the orientation towards internationalization. Having outlined both the thematic and empirical context, it was argued that policies and activities have created an internationalization awareness as norms embedded in these are internalized among people confronted with them, which will influence their interpretations of and motivations to study abroad. Following an overview of research on the topic, the potential contributions of this study was defined as lying within its combination of cognitive anthropology and the empirical focus on Chinese students and the analytical efforts to construct a cultural model of internationalization.

3 Methodology

In this chapter, I will focus on how the ethnographic fieldwork conducted at Fudan University took shape from the initial idea for the topic to the actual data production. I will reflect on how different philosophical traditions within the social sciences have influenced the study, I will address different considerations I have had during the fieldwork, and I will discuss which implications the empirical material have for the choice of psychological anthropology as the theoretical framework for the study.

Taking a stand

As I will account for in this thesis, the empirical data will be analyzed employing a theoretical framework from the psychological subfield within anthropology. Although recognizing the early positivist roots of this direction, this study will try to free itself of any assumptions that people are guided by innate drives or motives. Rather, the study will be taken more in the direction of cultural anthropology, borrowing from Claudia Strauss and Naomi Quinn, in viewing culture and cultural meanings as a product of the interactions between the mind and the social world (Strauss & Quinn 1997).

This study is characterized by an interpretive approach that rests on the hermeneutic interest in understanding which meanings social agents attribute their practice and how these meanings also influence their practice (Højberg 2004:339). With this approach, the study will provide an understanding of which meanings the informants attribute to the phenomenon of studying abroad. Thus, I do not set out to account for internationalization as an objective, universal phenomenon but rather to explore how social actors within a specific context understand the phenomenon. In this way, understandings and meanings become an ontological matter rather than an epistemological one. Understanding is not only a way of knowing something about the world but rather understanding is part of what we want to know something about. Understanding becomes *ontologized* (Højberg 2004:321). The object of study here is not a material phenomenon but rather culturally

shared knowledge, interpretations of a phenomenon. In an interpretive perspective, social actors are seen as carriers of meanings and interpretations who navigate according to their horizons of understanding, which is both an individual as well as a collective way of making sense of the world. In this respect, the interpretive standpoint has a great potential within psychological anthropology, as it recognizes that an individuals' understandings and interpretations must also be included in the interpretation of social phenomena (Højberg 2004:338). The interpretive approach furthermore supports the assumption in this study that meanings are situated in a specific context and that the informants' *horizon of understanding* constitutes an important framework for interpreting meaning and practice (ibid.). As part of the theoretical framework for this study it will be discussed how the interpretive approach outlined here differs from the interpretive directions within symbolic anthropology as represented by Clifford Geertz.

As this paper will also show, a constructionist understanding is present in some aspects of the methodology. I deliberately refer to my fieldwork as a process of data production rather than data collection. I do not believe the knowledge produced in this study has been out there waiting for me to uncover it but rather the knowledge is very much a product of many different aspects coming together; the specific context, my own position and focus, and not least the interactions I engaged in with the informants. Furthermore, I acknowledge the postmodernist view that a fieldwork is dialogical in the sense that data are not produced by the anthropologists' actions alone, but are rather a product of the interaction between the anthropologist and the informants (Spiro 1996:760). For this reason, my own position in the field, and equally important the potential perceptions of my position, will be reflected on in this chapter.

The study has been inductive in its execution, as the empirical data has not been produced to confirm or reject a theoretical hypothesis but rather the empirical insights have guided the direction of the study (Olsen and Fuglsang 2004:30). This does not mean, however, that I have been able to engage in the field entirely unrestrained by other studies made on the topic or theoretical bias in general. It is a fine line between becoming acquainted with your field or topic on one hand and on the other hand being blinded by aspects introduced

by researchers on the topic. I do not believe it is possible to exclude my bias, whether theoretical or of any other character, in a strictly positivist sense, but rather, in a hermeneutic perspective, I acknowledge that my own individual horizon of understanding will influence the interpretations I will make (Højberg 2004:339).

This confusion of different philosophical concepts goes to show that it is not necessarily a straightforward task to place an anthropological study within one research tradition but rather that the discipline of anthropology, and the ethnographic craft as an integrated part of it, is an eclectic form of science often entailing a variety of understandings and ways of studying the cultural world. At times it can seem a bit artificial to have to define a study in agreement with a rather abstract scientific standpoint when you are actually out there in 'the real world'. Doing a fieldwork, in my experience, is very much about acting on intuition, going with the flow, taking the opportunities that may occur as well as come to terms with the fact that often it will feel like you are not doing fieldwork but rather that the fieldwork is doing you (Hobbs & Wright 2006). In this view, what philosophical standpoints can provide is not so much practical or methodological directives but rather an awareness of how we interpret the world and how we see our options of obtaining knowledge of it.

Constructing the field

There is no such thing as a merely given, or simply available, starting point: beginnings have to be made for each project in such a way as to enable what follows from them (Said (1978) 2003:16).

Planning a fieldwork entails decisions on what to study and where to study it. With my ambition of exploring ideas of internationalization in a Chinese context, the first step was to define a specific field in which to conduct the study. I started thinking in terms of an appropriate site and initially the intention was very broadly to interview students who had experiences with or plans to incorporate an international element in their education. I soon realized that the field did not exist as an already defined entity ready for me to

immerse in it but rather I would have to construct it myself according to my individual possibilities and limitations (Amit 2004).

The first action towards establishing a field was to contact Nordic Centre at Fudan University in Shanghai. Fudan University appeared to be an appropriate site due partly to its location in Shanghai, considered as an international hub, its wide recognition internationally and in particular in China, and its vision to align with the international expression of Shanghai². The rationale was that a university with an international profile like Fudan's might also attract students particularly interested in internationalization or maybe students at Fudan would be prone to aspire internationalization influenced by the atmosphere at the university. Pursuing this idea, I contacted Nordic Centre (NC) at Fudan University, a platform for cooperation between its Nordic member universities, as I figured that the center could constitute a gateway into Fudan University. NC agreed to accommodate me during my fieldwork and approved that I used my affiliation with them in navigating on Fudan University in regards to establishing contacts and participating in events.

Although having confirmed this cooperation with NC, I was still keen on working within a broader field than just Fudan and I tried to identify other platforms to establish contacts with potential informants. This process of trying to construct a field from different elements led to reflections on which legitimacy I had, as a student in Anthropology, to define this 'field' as a cultural community and thus assigning the actors within it, a certain cultural significance. A question that haunted me for a while was "Is it a field just because I say it is?". In the early years of Anthropology a prevalent idea was that the anthropological object was socially and culturally bounded entities or organic wholes (Hastrup 2010a:22; Rubow 2010:227). Nowadays, the anthropological object has become more diffuse and can also include complex social phenomenon that are not defined by geographical or spatial limits. Fields are no longer constructed just by a specific locality or cultural entity, but are also inspired by interests in themes or phenomena and constructed based on such interests (Rubow 2010:230). Ethnographic work can also

² <http://www.fudan.edu.cn/en/channels/view/71/>

entail focus on a social group identified by the ethnographer and not merely social, self-conscious groups, which members engage in interactions with each other independently from the ethnographer. This way, the ethnographer plays a very central role in the construction of the field (Amit 2004:14). The idea for my fieldwork initiated from a theme, an interest in a phenomenon, more than a specific locality. I could have methodologically justified conducting a multi-sited fieldwork and thereby focusing not only on Fudan students, but constructing the field from different platforms. However, as I will describe later, I felt the need to also identify with a specific physical field, a locality, and for that reason I chose to focus my ethnographic attention on Fudan students only. By reducing the empirical object to the Fudan framework only, I was able to establish a necessary coherence in my study.

Besides the methodological construction of the field there is also a geographical field that makes up the physical setting for conducting the fieldwork. In this study, that physical location was Fudan University. The university has over the past years been ranked within the top five universities in mainland China³. As of today, Fudan University has a student body of 14.100 undergraduate students and 14.800 graduate students and a full-time teaching faculty of 2.700 people⁴. The university was established in 1905 as Fudan Public School. From 1913 to 1936 it was changed to a private university but in 1942 the National Government's Administrative Department decided to make Fudan a public institution under the name Fudan National University. In 1952, The Fudan University Committee of the Chinese Communist Party was established marking the integration between the university leadership and the national government inspired by the Soviet model of higher education. In 1966-76, the Cultural Revolution had severe implications for the university and it could only in a very limited way maintain its teaching and research activities. In 1977, after the Cultural Revolution, the university once again started enrolling students and was furthermore changed to a comprehensive university. In 1994, the "Plan 211" was launched by the National Ministry of Education in which it was stated that Fudan should become a "world-class comprehensive university with a

³ <http://www.shanghairanking.com/World-University-Rankings-2013/China.html>

⁴ <http://www.fudan.edu.cn/en/channels/view/73>

dynamic academic ideology, commensurate with Shanghai's position as an international metropolis"⁵. Due to its key position in Chinese higher education, the leading position in national rankings, and increasing international recognition of the university, it has become a popular education choice among young Chinese. Since 2007, the Foreign Affairs Office (FAO) at Fudan has administrated the exchange programs of the university, which includes agreements with 30 universities in the U.S., six in Canada, one in Mexico, 60 in the Asia Pacific, and 49 in Europe⁶.

In the field

A fieldwork is a means for knowledge accumulation on a specific topic and can involve a number of methods to facilitate this. The primary way to gain insight for this study has been qualitative interviews and participant observation. The latter method is defined here as entailing my presence in Shanghai, the activities I engaged in at Fudan, 'hanging out', doing informal interviews with students at Fudan and recording my impressions in field notes (DeWalt & DeWalt 2011:5). These activities have contributed with inputs to the study and have facilitated reflections throughout the fieldwork process and inspired new questions to ask and directions to take.

The 11 interviews I conducted with former and current Fudan students were semi-structured following an interview guide mainly with topics for conversation. Prior to each interview the format of the interview was explained to the informants along with an encouragement to speak freely and also go off-topic if they wanted. The interview-guide contained headline-questions covering different topics and for some topics there were also sub-questions. In most interviews at least the headline-questions were asked but often the sub-questions became irrelevant as informants either covered them already or they had moved on to another topic in which case it would spoil the flow of the interview to return to the topic of the sub-questions. Inspired by phenomenological interviewing, the intention was to encourage a conversation through which, ideally, I could get insight

⁵ <http://www.fudan.edu.cn/en/channels/view/71>

⁶ <http://www.fao.fudan.edu.cn/1611/list.htm>

into the lifeworlds of the informants and how they understand their reality (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009:44).

During the first weeks of the fieldwork the interview guide was adjusted according to the experiences from the first handful of interviews, which allowed for certain sensitivity to the context and the statements expressed by the informants. The sequence of the questions was changed according to how the first interviews had developed but also from a rationale of starting with the familiar, the individual life-world, and then moving into the more collective aspects of the topic. New questions were added to the 2nd and 3rd (final) version of the interview-guide, inspired by the reflections put forward by the informants in the first few interviews. This process paved the way for rather explorative interviews in which the interviewer seeks new information and new angles to reach this (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009:126). Interviews often ended up also fostering spontaneous questions whenever informants addressed something that I either did not understand or something I wanted them to elaborate on. I worked with two different but still rather similar interview guides as I divided the informants according to whether they had already been abroad or whether they were about to go abroad. The differences in the interview guides concerned the time perspective with more retrospective questions for those who had been abroad whereas students who were about to go abroad were asked about their anticipations for studying abroad.

Although the interviews were the primary tool for data production, I also participated in different activities on campus that had an ‘international feel’ to them, e.g. International Cultural Day, cake-baking with the Nordic Society, mixers for Fudan students and Nordic students etc. Furthermore, I was asked by the FAO to participate in a group interview as part of the application process for students who wanted to go on exchange to one of Fudan’s partner universities. Participating in such activities made my study go beyond being a solely interview-based study, but it did also confront me with the question of which kind of presence actually constitutes participant observation. Is it the mere act of ‘being there’ (Hobbs & Wright 2006:5) or is it active participation in everyday tasks such as Kirsten Hastrup (2010b) has described from her fieldwork in Iceland. Due to my

limited skills in Chinese language, I felt restricted in my possibilities for doing participant observation except from circumstances where the social language would be English or in cases where actors would deliberately switch to English due to my presence. Despite no naïve hopes of being able to be ‘a fly on the wall’, I was frustrated about the fact that I could not engage in ‘natural’ settings and this way truly immerse into the field as it is still thought to be the characteristic of the ethnographic fieldwork (Amit 2004:5). Every now and then during my time in Shanghai, I would ask myself “Am I doing fieldwork now?”. Some days, I would feel like a young woman on an adventure in Shanghai while other days, I would recognize the description of a fieldwork as “a total experience, demanding all of the anthropologist’s resources, intellectual, physical, emotional, political and intuitive” (Okely (1992) in Amit 2004:1).

Finding informants – or informants finding me

Prior to my fieldwork, I had some ideas for how I could initiate contact to potential informants and how I could engage in interactions with them. It turned out rather difficult to plan in advance of the fieldwork and I decided to focus on it when I had arrived in Shanghai. The result was, however, that I spent the first couple of weeks of my fieldwork searching desperately for theoretical guidelines on how to select interview participants. I realized that my approach had been very practical and focused on how to contact people instead of identifying who I actually wanted to interview considering my specific focus. Inspired by the logics of primarily quantitative research I found myself very concerned with defining a *population* and a *sample* based on well-defined criteria. However, it seems to me that the more one moves towards the qualitative end of the research spectrum, the guidelines for selecting informants become ambiguous. In this phase, I was concerned with both having a specific focus, some criteria, in the selection of interview participants but neither too many limitations. However, as the fieldwork carried on, my search for guidelines on selecting interview participants was replaced by a rather pragmatic fieldwork rationale, which was to basically take any opportunity to do an interview rather than coming home with no interviews at all.

Before the fieldwork, I expected that I would be interviewing students within two categories; exchange students and full-degree students. Considering that I was interviewing outgoing students in China the interviews would be conducted with former or future international students. Within the Fudan framework, I decided that I wanted to interview students who had already been selected to go abroad the following semester, students who had recently returned from an exchange study abroad and students who were planning to study abroad for a degree after graduating from Fudan. In this way, Fudan University became the empirical link between the participating informants who have had different international experiences.

Prior to the fieldwork, I had been communicating with the FAO about the possibilities of cooperating with them. As they administrate all exchange programs at Fudan they would be in contact with the students applying to study abroad on one of Fudan's programs. They offered to send my research announcement to students within the different groups I had defined. However, this turned out to be a dead end. After making a few attempts to have this facilitated by sending cautious reminders, I figured that it was not their responsibility to recruit interview participants for my project and I had to come up with a new plan. At this point, I turned to one of my newly acquired friends for help. During the International Cultural Day on campus I had met a first year Law student who was a member of the Nordic Society and seemed very interested in my project. I turned to her for help to contact different student organizations at Fudan, e.g. the German Society, the American Society, the International Studies Society etc. I had soon established contact to the presidents of a number of organizations and after meeting with them they agreed to send my announcement to their members and followers on different social media. Soon after these *recruitment gatekeepers* had posted my announcement, the e-mails started ticking in and I was able to schedule my first interview appointments (Robinson 2013:36).

Self-selection bias

As described above, my interview announcement was communicated to a large group of students and thereafter the initiative was in the hands of the potential informants as they

were to contact me if they wanted to participate in an interview. For this reason I have to consider the possibility of self-selection bias. It is likely that the people that would respond to such announcement would tend to be a more extrovert type who do not mind the attention or the possibility of touching upon personal or sensitive topics. It is unavoidable that either the format, the content or other aspects of the interview may seem more appealing to some groups of people than to others (Robinson 2013:35-36).

The interview announcement was in English and it also states that interviews would be conducted in English. Some students might have been insecure about their language skills and have refrained from contacting me for that reason. I also introduced my project as research, which may suggest that students were expected to offer reflections of a certain quality, which could make some students nervous that they would not be able to contribute with anything 'useful' to the project and maybe lead to only students who are either very self-confident or have beforehand knowledge or opinions on the topic would volunteer. Furthermore, I mentioned in the announcement that I am a Danish Master's student at Lund University, which makes it likely that students who had studied or were going to study in or near Denmark or Sweden would find it more interesting to talk to me than students who did not have any interest in these countries.

Representation

One of the most frequent remarks I got during my fieldwork was to not consider Shanghai as representative of the rest of China. By some of the informants the city was characterized as very different from other places in China partly because it is also believed to be more international:

Shanghai is really different from other places in China, and before I actually came to college I didn't know much about what China actually is because all I knew was Shanghai and that does not really represent China [...] Shanghai is hardly a Chinese city anymore, but knowing these friends who came from different parts of China, I know the regional differences is still really dramatically different (Interview Yǎ Líng).

Some students mentioned such aspects as a part of their motivation to study at Fudan University or along with their ambitions of landing a job in a Shanghai-based company one day. Furthermore, Fudan University is ranked as the third best university in China, which may also influence the group of students it will attract as well as the resources these students possess. So neither the group of informants should be considered as representatives of all young people in China although they most likely share cultural influences and understandings even with students at other universities and from other parts of China.

It is recognized that the generalizability of this study is further limited in drawing on theory from psychological anthropology in the analysis. One of the critiques of this subfield is that the potential for making cross-cultural claims is very little. Thus, it should be emphasized that the focus in this study, both empirically and theoretically, does not aim for universal ideas about internationalization or much less general claims about 'Chinese culture'. Rather, it is a study of a group of Chinese students in Shanghai and their motivations for studying abroad.

Language

A premise for my fieldwork was that I could not conduct the interviews in the informants' native language. Although I started learning Chinese (Mandarin) prior to my fieldwork, my language skills were, at best, a door opener into interactions with Chinese people, but it did not at all suffice for conducting interviews. As my fieldwork was approaching, I became increasingly nervous about the potential language challenges I could encounter but kept passing it off with the argument that students who are interested in internationalization or especially students that have already studied abroad must be good in English. As it turns out, the fact that the interviews were conducted in English gave the informants an opportunity to practice their spoken English skills, which seemed to be an attraction in itself. Not only in interview situations, but also in interactions with Chinese friends and acquaintances, I experienced a great interest in becoming good in English. For many students this was partly a concern for getting a good result in the

dreaded TOEFL⁷ test, which Chinese students are often required to take if they want to study abroad. Thus, an aspect I had worried so much about prior to the fieldwork turned out to be a great advantage in recruiting participants. However, as this concern was put to rest new concerns emerged, which, I guess, is another premise of an ethnographic fieldwork.

Although I did not experience severe difficulties with conducting the interviews in English it cannot be concluded that neither the informants nor myself were able to express ourselves in the same way, as we would have, had we spoken together in a shared mother tongue. Some nuances will be lost and some cultural meanings are also embedded in the language, which I was reminded of whenever an informant made a reference to a Chinese saying with significance for a point they were making. Even though the informants and I were required to communicate with each other in a non-native language it has later turned out to be an advantage that the data was produced in English. If I had been able to interact with the informants in Chinese, I would have, for the purpose of this thesis, been required to translate the statements of the informants, which could have neglected significant nuances of their statements. Of course, as any analysis entails a crude selection of points, I am already neglecting many aspects of my empirical findings, but including statements from informants in the language they were expressed give the informants a certain voice in this study.

Informed consent

With the cooperation I had established with NC, I had created a gateway into Fudan University and the field was opening up to me. However, the approval from NC was merely an approval from an institutional level allowing me to be present at the university and conduct my fieldwork in this particular setting. It cannot be regarded as an approval from all individuals in the field, which raises questions of more ethical character to be dealt with as part of any ethnographic fieldwork.

⁷ Test of English as a Foreign Language

As most of the interview participants were recruited from an announcement that was communicated to students through different forums, I had the opportunity to explain, in writing, the purpose and character of my study to potential participants and letting them decide on this background whether they wanted to participate without being directly confronted by my expectations. Some participants were also recruited through social interactions in which case I would disclose that my purpose of being at Fudan was to do fieldwork, which entailed interactions and interviews with students. It would often come up very early in a conversation as the students I met were always curious about my role at Fudan. When I explained my agenda, many students would react by sharing with me their own experiences or ambitions of internationalization and often also offer to help me by participating in an interview.

Once in a while, I found myself thinking that since my topic is rather harmless, my presence at Fudan could not be that controversial anyway. However, reflecting on that attitude in an ethical perspective, the far most important lesson to be learned is that it should not primarily be up to the anthropologist to categorize the topic as either harmless, uncontroversial or any such terms that may imply that their presence is without effect on the field and the people living in it. Considering the political climate in China, it is not unlikely that young Chinese people may have different ideas of what is controversial or what they feel comfortable with expressing, than I do myself. Some informants would actually explain their motivations to study abroad partly with the fact that they felt constrained by the political control and lack of freedom of expression in China. They had a wish to experience another political climate in which they could state opinions that might be controversial in a Chinese context. Such reflections among the informants contributed to my awareness that ethical standards such as “do no harm”⁸, resting on the shoulders of an anthropologist, should primarily be considered from the viewpoint of the informants.

⁸ <http://www.aaanet.org/issues/policy-advocacy/upload/AAA-Ethics-Code-2009.pdf>

Position in the field

In any local context, the anthropologist can be perceived in many ways and there are different roles that will be either assigned to or taken on by the anthropologist if the desired role is accessible. Regardless of the roles available for the anthropologists are conscious or unconscious, they will have a great significance for the data production.

In the different interactions I engaged in being in the field, my position was interpreted in different ways. In the context of Fudan University, my position was often interpreted differently in university terminology. Informants would once in a while assume that I was also enrolled as a student at Fudan and refer to my experiences of being an international student myself. At other times, I was categorized as a researcher, scholar, or even professor due to my research agenda. I often found myself mediating between these categories explaining my position as a student doing research for my Master's thesis. Some students also saw me as a language partner and had a particular interest in interacting with me to practice their English. I was also assigned a role as someone who could offer guidance on how to be accepted to a program at a Danish university. Because of my position as Danish and university student, I was perceived to have knowledge about specific admission procedures. I became aware of this in an interview with an informant who had been on exchange in Denmark and having completed his undergraduate studies at Fudan and a Master's program in the U.S., he was now looking into doing a Ph.D. abroad. By the end of our interview, the roles of interviewer and interviewee were reversed as he started asking me questions about admission requirements to PhD programs in Denmark.

As I started doing my interviews with informants, I was confronted with the question of how to actually interact with informants and which expectation they might have to our interaction. I had somehow managed to convince the informants to spend time and energy on being interviewed and thereby sharing their thoughts with me, but what would they gain from this? What was in it for them? As I have already touched upon some saw it as an opportunity to speak English, some informants also expressed an interest in interacting

with *foreigners* (referring to the Chinese term *waiguoren*) and others emphasized that they saw my topic as very important and thus wanted to help shed light on it.

My appearance and my status as university student constituted a specific framework for the relationships I was able to engage in with the informants. Surely, the informants could relate to me on other levels than had the study been conducted by i.e. a male, middle aged, Anthropology professor with a different status and attitude than mine. I was able to gain insights that might not have opened up to other researchers due to my particular position, but I do also believe that my position led to certain expectations as to the relationship I could and would engage in with informants. I did not consider my relationship with informants as entirely limited to interview situations and I would also meet some of them for dinner once in a while, chat with them whenever I met them on campus, and interact with them on the Chinese social media WeChat. However, when one of the students I had interviewed, one day asked me if he could add me on Facebook, I felt a resistance to sharing what I considered a personal sphere with an informant despite the fact that I had requested just that from him in the interview situation. Throughout the fieldwork I had to navigate between keeping a professional distance on one side and on the other side allowing at least some reciprocity in the relationship with the informants:

I find it difficult to figure out what my relations with the informants are or should be. I come here and ‘demand’ access to their lives, their time, their thoughts, to accommodate my own agenda, but should I give something back in some way? [...]. Is it fair that I just close the door when the interview is over? (Field notes 13.6.2014).

In especially one interview situation, I realized that I did not engage in the field as a neutral research tool, but that I had to consider some factors related to my subjective position that could influence the data production (DeWalt & DeWalt 2011:99). One such factor was my gender. In this interview, the informant expressed profound frustration of not being able to interact successfully with women and in general not having a very satisfactory social life in China, which he mentioned among his motivations to go abroad. The interview took place a few months prior to his departure to Canada where he had

been accepted to a PhD program. It became clear that he expected his time abroad to allow him to acquire abilities to interact with women, in particular *Western* women. He shared an experience with me from a visit to a bar just off Fudan's main campus, which was known for attracting many international students. At the bar, he had observed how it seemed so easy for male students, whom he classified as Western, to take up a conversation with the female guests, Chinese and in particular Western, and win their interest. Something he had apparently been struggling with. As the interview carried on, the informant expressed his expectations of 'making out' with girls while abroad – and potentially finding a girlfriend. I found myself feeling increasingly awkward with this almost confessional direction the interview had taken especially considering my position as both woman and Western. I did not really know what was expected from me in this situation; did he want me to offer advice on how to succeed with Western women? Or did he hope I would become a romantic acquaintance? It remains unknown whether the informant would have voiced similar reflections had it been a male researcher conducting the interview, but the situation taught me that my individual position as a female researcher had implications for my possibilities for producing data and the shape the data would take.

Empirical implications for the choice of theory

The ambitions with conducting this fieldwork has been to produce empirical data that could provide insight to the reflections on and motivations to study abroad among a group of Chinese students. This study is inductive in the sense that the empirical data has inspired the choice of theoretical framework and the analytical suggestion of a cultural model of internationalization. It was the apparent 'sharedness' of the interpretations expressed by the informants that led to the choice of psychological anthropology and more specifically theories on schemas and cultural models, as the explanatory framework. Employing this framework means that the interview material has been used to explore how the informants make sense of their reality in an attempt to understand this from their own perspective. The key to gaining such insight is the words of the informants themselves although they may never completely represent their thoughts or actions (Strauss 1992a:16). Following D'Andrade, talk is the external matrix of

internalized cultural schemas and therefore the statements of the informants will form the empirical foundation for conducting the present analysis of internationalization (D'Andrade 1992a:230). This perspective corresponds well with the interpretive approach of the study, as hermeneutic studies also consider the interview as a source for understanding the informants' horizon of understanding (Højberg 2004:343).

I have chosen to study internationalization among a group of students in a *dominant group* in the sense that the cultural assumptions constituting the model were very salient among these students as they had been or were actively seeking internationalization (Strauss 1992b:220). Surely, other interpretations would have been voiced had the interviews been conducted with a *non-dominant group*, i.e. students who do not have the same possibilities of or interest in studying abroad.

The explicit inspiration for the cultural model of internationalization has been Strauss' cultural model of work. The empirical foundation of Strauss' model is extensive interview material, which is also the case for this study. However, Strauss' interview strategy differs from mine as she has conducted several interviews with the group of five informants whereas I have only conducted one interview with each of the 11 informants. Strauss' technique allows for a greater insight into the realities of each individual, but my material allows for a marginal broader perspective although there are still not grounds for making conclusions about a general attitude towards internationalization. It is a premise of psychological anthropology that the keen interest in intersubjective realities and interpretations, as a reflection of the cultural context, is a limitation to the scope of the conclusions this theoretical framework is able to accumulate (Strauss 2004:428n).

In treating her interview material, Strauss conducts what she defines as *discourse analysis*, but not as such in a postmodernist sense in seeing discourse as social constructs but rather as 'talk' reflecting their interpretations of specific phenomenon or their social reality in general. However, it is a premise of Strauss' analysis, as well as mine, that talk is not independent of the social context but a reflection of this. The foundation of the analysis proposed here is the interview material, which has been coded according to

topics and concepts that appeared to me to be shared among the informants. These topics have then been categorized as three schemas that make up the cultural model of internationalization.

There are some implications to be considered when using qualitative interview material as the foundation for analyzing cultural models. According to Catherine Lutz, the social science interview, in this case in a qualitative semi-structured form, provide a context in which people share the interpretations on which cultural models are based (Lutz 1992:192). An interview entails expectations about what should be voiced by the interviewer. The interview can illuminate goal-embedded cultural models but also give rise to goals of its own as interviewer and interviewee interact (Strauss 1992a:15). Thus, the statements put forward by the informant may be influenced by the presumed expectations of the interviewer and the given topic of the interview. It has also been addressed how the interview should not solely be considered a dialogue between two equal participants as it entails an asymmetric power structure as the researcher initiates the interview, defines the topic, and sets the scene (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009:50-1). However, it has also been argued that this power structure is balanced as the informant holds knowledge that the interviewer wants insight to (Højberg 2004:343).

Concluding remarks

In this chapter, it has been argued that anthropology is an eclectic discipline in which research processes tend to be influenced by a variety of philosophical assumptions. An interpretive understanding has been influential on this study, as the ontological object is the interpretations and understanding of the informants. The fieldwork process has been illuminated not only as a choice of topic and geographical site but also as a construction of an empirical site that entail many decisions to be made by the ethnographer. I have furthermore discussed how I have been ascribed a number of roles in the field that in different ways have influenced the data production. This led on to reflections on the ethical perspectives to consider when engaging in different relations with informants and how they might perceive my presence at Fudan University differently from than what I may be able to foresee myself. Finally, I discussed how the empirical data has not only

guided the choice of psychological anthropology as the theoretical framework but also which implications it has for the study and the limited potential of making generalized conclusions representative of people beyond the group of informants. The interview situation was also discussed as a context itself for the data production as it fosters certain expectations between both the ethnographer and the informant on what to express. Altogether, this chapter reflects my experience of the fieldwork as a complex process of contradictions; of pros and cons, back and forth, theory and practice, intuition and reasoning.

4 Psychological anthropology

This chapter will outline the theoretical perspectives that form the framework for the analytical suggestions of this thesis. An overview of the field of psychological anthropology will be the foundation for introducing the central theoretical concepts of the thesis; schema theory, cultural models, internalization, and habitus. Following this framework, Strauss' cultural model of work will be accounted for, as it has been an explicit inspiration for the cultural model of internationalization presented in the next chapter.

Motivation for choice of theory

In this study, it is the ambition to show which potential the psychological anthropology has in showing the interaction between the individual and their surroundings. This direction is applied to illuminate how input from the social world are used to create interpretations of the reality people live in and to use these interpretations to navigate within it.

Psychological anthropology can assist us in exploring the interaction between individual and society with a special emphasis on how people understand and process the inputs they receive from a given context and how they translate these inputs to cultural knowledge. This direction within anthropology operates in the intersection between the self and the environment and reflects an interest in both the idiosyncratic and the cultural and how these aspects can be combined in the study of people. The classical anthropological interest in people is narrowed as there is a greater focus on the individual and the self compared to other directions in anthropology where the focus is on peoples' functions in society, their shared rituals, the institutions they navigate in, or the structures that are thought to influence their lives. In psychological anthropology, the center of

attention is not only the human being but in particular their thoughts, the ways in which these are organized, and how these can be understood in relation to a cultural context.

The history of psychological anthropology

Psychological anthropology emerged as a subfield of anthropology in the early 20th century inspired by Franz Boas and his students Edward Sapir, Ruth Benedict, and Margaret Mead among others (Suárez-Orozco 1997:381). The initial ambition was to identify and understand commonalities among human beings. The field aims to combine the anthropological interest for people in interaction with other people and the psychological interest for the self and the mind. Sapir points to the importance of this exact dynamic by stating that “anthropology could not escape the ultimate necessity of testing out its analysis of patterns called ‘social’ or ‘cultural’ in terms of individual realities” (Suárez-Orozco 1997:382).

An early interest within psychological anthropology was represented by culture and personality studies, which studied the relationship between personality, as a set of variables, and culture. By applying ideas from personality theories, borrowing from Sigmund Freud and the psychoanalysis, the aim was to analyze the motivational force of cultural meaning on individuals. Just as well as Freud’s psychoanalytical theory inspired some anthropologists, his interest in the relationship between psyche and culture provoked other anthropologists. Freud’s proposal of the Oedipus complex as a universal human feature was rejected by Bronislaw Malinowski based on his studies on the Trobriand Islands, which marked a clash between psychoanalysis and anthropology (ibid.). The initial search for universals has continuously been the cause of critique of psychological anthropology from more relativist and constructivist traditions within anthropology.

The span of scientific assumptions within psychological anthropology is quite wide with positivist ideas of objectivity at one end of the spectrum and at the other end represented by the relationship with hermeneutic interpretive approaches (Suárez-Orozco 1997:381). The companionship between psychology and the natural sciences has been an annoyance

to some anthropologists as the natural sciences and its ambitions of an objective science are thought to clash with the anthropological interest for intersubjective realities and their influence on social behavior. However, the *interpretive turn* in both psychology and anthropology has influenced the intersection between the two disciplines and introduced a greater emphasis on the human sciences rather than the natural sciences (White & Lutz 1992:12). Also in psychological anthropology there has been a tendency towards a more situated and context-dependent concept of culture moving away from an essentialist idea of culture (White & Lutz 1992:5-6).

In the late 1950s, cognitive anthropology emerged as a subfield within psychological anthropology at a time where the research agenda that had dominated anthropology up until then was reaching a point of exhaustion. This led on a paradigm shift that caused research attention to move away from natural systems and show more interest in idea systems or symbolic systems. Thus, anthropologists became increasingly interested in studying ideas, beliefs, values, and cosmologies. Cognitive anthropology has its methodological roots in ethnoscience, which involves an interest in exploring knowledge systems from an emic perspective. Although the field has moved away from the concept of ethnoscience, the emic perspectives remains to be an important interest among cognitive anthropologists in their quest for reaching an insider's perspective on culture (Warren 1997:165-6). According to Stephen A. Tyler, cognitive anthropology aims to answer two interrelated questions: "What material phenomena are significant for people of some culture; and how do they organize these phenomena?" (Tyler 2004:395-6). Cognitive anthropologists in particular show interest in how social groups perceive and interpret objects and events in their social world and how this knowledge is organized and converted to action (D'Andrade 1995:1). Thus, the object of study is not either material or ideational phenomena by themselves but how they relate to one another. Whereas the psychological use of cognition has an emphasis on the individual's thoughts and knowledge structures, anthropology seeks to use cognition to also understand how the individual is affected by and navigate according to a cultural context. It is believed to be in the combination, in the intersection, of the self and the social context that one can gain insight into how culture emerges, is understood, and practiced.

Geertz and the cognitive anthropologists

A theoretical dispute has become apparent between symbolic anthropologists, represented by Geertz on one hand, and the cognitive anthropologists on the other. In essence, this debate concerns the issue of 'where' culture is to be 'found' and how it should be studied.

One of Geertz's concerns with early cognitive anthropology is the reduction of culture to mental phenomena or patterns of behavior. Culture does not exist in people's thoughts because these are not observable, but rather they are to be discovered in public symbols, institutions, events etc (Geertz 1973:10). Geertz recognizes that patterns of behavior do exist, but claims that these neither can be said to be culture. Instead, he suggests a concept of culture as public, not only in the sense of being shared among people, but also as visible or observable in the public world. Such symbols are for instance rituals or artifacts as opposed to people's thoughts, which only exist in the mind of the individual (Strauss 1992a:5). From the perspective of cognitive anthropologists, the cultural meanings that Geertz is interested in can neither be observed directly, but rather cultural meanings are conclusions made on the basis of what we can observe in the physical world and the mental interpretations of these observations. That is, people have to hold an intersubjectively shared knowledge to be able to understand the cultural symbols they observe in their social world (Strauss 1992a:7). As Claudia Strauss and Naomi Quinn argue, "culture is both public and private, both in the world and in people's minds" (Strauss & Quinn 1993:295). This assumption of a dialectic relationship between the social world and the mind defines the theoretical framework of Strauss and Quinn as well as the analysis put forward here, which considers the social and historical context of Chinese society as influential on the motivations to study abroad.

According to Dorothy Holland and Naomi Quinn, Geertz's distinction between symbols as *models for* and *models of* reality as a way of distinguishing between talk and action is not viable. Cultural meaning cannot be separated as either talk or action as the cultural understandings – expressed by talk – can have implicit goals and therefore lead to action (Holland & Quinn 1987:8). This is also the assumption in both Strauss' model of work

and the model of internationalization as both models are based on interviews – that is talk – but both analyses also presuppose that the statements of the informants are intertwined with their actions. That is the case in the model of internationalization as the informants have all, in different ways, taken actions towards internationalization and it is these actions they reflect on in the interviews.

In his ambition to study *the native's point of view*, Geertz (1974) furthermore neglects that such view is not uniform and does not have one single expression because, as Strauss points to, it differs to which extent cultural constructs are used in either conscious or unconscious ways. Strauss argues that in the cultural model of work, the informants have a meta-awareness of American success values rather than seeing these values as their own or as influential on their individual career choices. Geertz and Strauss share the interest in exploring how people perceive their own reality but they disagree on to which extent the native's point of view can be representative of an entire society.

In general, the dispute between Geertz and the cognitive anthropologists concerns the question of whether culture is to be studied primarily in material phenomena or in ideational phenomena and which expressions of culture, for instance talk or action, are representative of the cultural meanings present in a group or society. Both directions share the interest in interpretations but they disagree on which aspects to interpret as containing culture. Although they share an interest in understanding the native's point of view they do not agree on the uniformity of this perspective. In the present study, the theoretical dichotomy between seeing culture as either present in external symbols or internal structures is rejected. This position is inspired by Strauss' view that culture is public in the sense that it is shared by people, but not in the sense that it does only exist in the public world as objects, artifacts, events, or any such physical symbols. In this study, it has been important to get an impression of both how the informants enact internationalization but also how they interpret this phenomenon. To analyze the cultural model of internationalization it has been fundamental to conceptualize culture as present in the interpretations, understandings, conceptualizations, and expressions of the phenomenon of studying abroad. The assumption is that culture exists in the dialectic

relationship between the public and the private and neither of these realms would have any importance or expression without the other. However, the Geertzian theoretical tradition is not entirely neglected as the study is defined by a cognitive-interpretive approach. The conclusions put forward here are interpretive in two aspects; first of all the informants' statements are their interpretations of their experiences as well as the broader phenomenon of internationalization. Furthermore, it remains that their statements have been the objects of my theoretical and analytical interpretations. Thus, Geertz's interpretive approach is not only plausible in studies of physical symbols but also in a study, such as this, of cultural models and meanings.

Schema theory

As a response to the interest within cognitive anthropology to identify knowledge structures and how these are responded to, schema theory has emerged within the field. D'Andrade defines a schema as a simplified world in the sense that it provides a framework for understanding, which is used when people try to make meaning of certain objects or situations in the world (D'Andrade 1992c:48). It is a cognitive structure in which interpretations about the world are made. Schemas are tools for interpretation and not the actual interpretations and furthermore, D'Andrade argues, schemas are processes and not objects themselves (D'Andrade 1992a:29). Rather, when something is referred to as a schema it is a way of implying that there is an interconnected pattern of interpretations that will be activated by phenomena or events in the social world (ibid.). In D'Andrade's understanding, schemas are not fixed structures but rather flexible templates and there are a number of paths to the same interpretation (D'Andrade 1992c:52). The interpretations facilitated by the schemas often have a goal imbedded in them and once they are activated it will lead to or even guide behavior (D'Andrade 1992c:54). The view that schemas have an influence on action is supported by other theorists in stating that a schema is "a pattern *of* action as well as a pattern *for* action" (Neisser (1976) in Casson 1983:438). Casson sees schemas as building blocks of cognition and elaborates that "schemata are conceptual abstractions that mediate between

stimuli received by the sense organs and behavioral responses”⁹ (Casson 1983:430). These theoretical assumptions that there exists a link between schematic interpretations and action will also be a central assumption in this study in setting out to explore motivations to study abroad.

D’Andrade differentiates between top-level schemas, middle-level schemas and bottom-level schemas. The top-level schemas reflect the most general interpretations and goals; they encompass the *master motives*. Middle-level schemas are linked with more practical and concrete interpretations and goals are often linked with those top-level schemas, but can also encompass goals of their own. Bottom-level schemas reflect everyday-life, duties and obligations and such schemas only reflect goals to the extent that these goals overlap with goals on other levels (D’Andrade 1992c:55). The function of those interpretations facilitated by schemas is to determine action, which, in this particular study would indicate that the interpretations, the students make about internationalization, as a *master motive*, also have implications for the specific actions they take to pursue international education.

Strauss and Quinn suggest that schemas are conceptualized in relation to each other and as mutually influential as they propose a connectionist framework for schema theory. With a connectionist model they try to ward off some anthropological critique that cultural schemas are simply rigid and fixed structures, which do not change over time under the influence of their specific context. In their view, an interpretation of a situation depends on other available interpretations of past experiences and thereby interpretations enter a network of learned associations. Such networks assist people in processing information in a holistic way by drawing on many different experiences in an attempt to reach a proper response to a situation (Strauss & Quinn 1997:49). Schemas are thought as flexibly adaptive rather than rigidly repetitive and therefore they can adjust to new or ambiguous situations (Strauss & Quinn 1997:53). This has implications for schema theory in the sense that schemas are not merely considered as isolated scripts for

⁹ Casson uses *schemata* for schema in plural, but in this thesis *schemas* is used for schema in plural

behavior, but rather as flexible entities that are sensitive to both other schemas as well as the social world.

In their approach to schema theory, Strauss and Quinn also focus more broadly on the concept of cultural meaning in their curiosity about why cultural meaning sometimes have a motivating effect and sometimes not. They suggest a *cognitive paradigm* in which cultural meaning is understood both in terms of stimuli from the social world, and the responses to these, and the ideas that exist inside people's heads (Strauss & Quinn 1997:5). Cultural meaning is the interpretations made by people when confronted with objects or events at any given time (Strauss & Quinn 1997:6). Such interpretations involve an identification of the object or event, which will induce some expectations to it and often also some feelings about it and motivations to respond to it (ibid.). Thus, meaning is the product of mental structures interacting with the surroundings that people live in, the public world, and this meaning becomes cultural when the interpretations are reoccurring and shared with other people. The term cultural also indicates that people with different experiences would reach other interpretations (ibid.). However, at the same time, Strauss and Quinn warn against sharp distinctions such as the one between private and public, as they do not see the inner world and the outer world as isolated, but as interconnected spheres (Strauss & Quinn 1997:8)

Cultural models

Schema theory has come to also contribute to the concept of *cultural models* which is defined as "shared cognitive schemas through which human realities are constructed and interpreted" (D'Andrade & Strauss 1992:preface). Holland and Quinn further this definition by stating that cultural models are "presupposed, taken-for-granted models of the world that are widely shared [...] by members of a society and that play a enormous role in their understanding of that world and their behavior in it" (Holland & Quinn 1987:4). Holland and Quinn argue, that conceptual models, in D'Andrade's understanding these would refer to the top-level schemas, which includes a model of internationalization, can seem natural and influence people's ideas of how they want to live their lives (Holland & Quinn 1987:11). Cultural models are part of what D'Andrade

terms as the internal side of culture in that they refer to the shared internal representations and not to external forms such as objects or events. However, D'Andrade and Strauss assume that these two sides, the internal and the external, are always linked. Otherwise we would either have a concept of culture as external symbols without any meanings attached to them or we would have internal meanings but no way of expressing them (D'Andrade 1992a:230). Integrating this assumption into the present study would indicate that internationalization is the external symbol of which we are seeking to explore the internal interpretations.

Finally, cultural models are thought to possess a motivational capacity as they do not only categorize and describe the world but also define goals that people aim for both consciously and unconsciously (Strauss 1992a:3). However, according to Strauss, cultural models vary in scope and in the directive force they may have and furthermore points to the difference between cultural models actually having a directive force or whether their impact is more of an ideological character (Strauss 1992b:217).

Internalization

Strauss' ambition with applying the concept of cultural models is to show how cultural messages "get under people's skin" (D'Andrade & Strauss 1992:preface). She argues that to understand people's action it is necessary to study how people internalize the dominating constructs of a society (Strauss 1992a:4). Strauss is concerned with how the transmission of values from the social world to the individual takes place and how such processes of internalization can best be understood. To elaborate on this interest in internalization, Bourdieu's concept of habitus will be accounted for here. Before looking towards Bourdieu, however, internalization is conceptualized within the framework of cognitive anthropology.

D'Andrade proposes a definition of internalization as "the process by which cultural representations become a part of the individual, that is, become what is right and true" (D'Andrade 1995:227). D'Andrade also draws on the work of Spiro and his definition of internalization as a process through which external culture, such as symbols, become

internal culture, such as interpretations and understandings (Spiro 1997:7). Spiro furthermore claims, that if a cultural model is internalized, it is both a producer and a product of practice. The internalization of a cultural model is the product of mental actions and the adoption of a cultural model is one, but not the only, producer of social action (Spiro 1997:5). Spiro recognizes four levels of internalization. On the first level, people are aware of the cultural system, but do not subscribe to its norms. On the second level, cultural beliefs are acquired superficially as *clichés*. On the third level, the cultural system is internalized as a personal belief system. On the fourth and final level, the cultural model is not only internalized but held as very strong beliefs (Spiro 1997:8-9).

Bourdieu is also occupied with the concept of internalization through the conceptualization of *habitus*. *Habitus* is internalized and embodied social structures; it is the “common sense” of a society or a community. From Bourdieu’s perspective, the concept of *habitus* is an attempt to bridge subjectivism and objectivism and the dialectic relationship between them. *Habitus* consists of cognitive and motivating structures through which people manage their social world (Bourdieu 2001:533; Ritzer 2008:530-1). According to Bourdieu, people are equipped with schemes through which they both produce their practice and evaluate it (Ritzer 2008:531). However, *habitus* does not take the same shape among all people within the group as it depends on the individual position they hold in the social world. Those who have similar positions may also share *habitus*, which could be argued of the informants in this study as they, at least, share the positions as students at Fudan University. Furthermore, *habitus* can also be collective in another way, as it is created on the basis of collective history, which, through *habitus*, creates collective and individual practices (*ibid.*). *Habitus* does not only help people make sense of their social world but also assist them in how they should navigate appropriately within a social context. The concept concerns two simultaneous and interacting processes: the individual’s acquisition of the knowledge that makes it possible to act in a meaningful way in the world (the internalization of objective structures) and the way the individual translates this knowledge into practice (the externalization of internalized structures) (Wilken 2006:43). *Habitus* also concerns practice and Bourdieu argues that “the *habitus* is necessarily internalized and converted into a disposition that generates

meaningful practices and meaning-giving perceptions” (Bourdieu 1984:170). He furthermore argues that people’s actions are systematic in the sense that they are the product of similar schemes within a group of people, which also differentiates their actions from those of people who share other schemes (ibid.).

Bourdieu’s conceptualization of habitus is similar to the connectionist framework that Strauss and Quinn refer to in their work (1997). The two concepts share the idea that knowledge is constructed from many different aspects of the mind and does not only exist in isolated boxes in the mind. Connectionism assumes that schemas are linked together in networks, which is similar to the process of learning the dispositions of the habitus that Bourdieu describes. Furthermore, both consider knowledge as networks of schemas or categories rather than fixed and hard rules. Accordingly, there is a certain flexibility of the mind that allows it to construct interpretations from a variety of input and associations (Strauss & Quinn 1997:53).

Strauss’ cultural model of work

With the preceding outline of the theoretical framework for this study, moving from the broader field of psychological anthropology to the specific concepts of schema theory and cultural models, the remainder of this chapter will focus on Strauss’ cultural model of work in an U.S. American context. This model constitutes the analytical inspiration for the cultural model of internationalization, which will be presented in the next chapter.

With her cultural model of work, Strauss wants to show the cognitive elements that have motivated the specific career choices her informants have made. She does this by exploring the cognitive representations of cultural knowledge, the schemas, that underlies the informants’ thoughts about work and success. Strauss explores the concept of success by looking at three types of knowledge that, according to her, constitute a cultural model of success in an American context. These three types of knowledge are seen as schemas with different motivating effect, which Strauss accounts for in her analysis. The main argument in Strauss’ analysis is that cultural models are different not only in their scope

but also in the directive force they have and it is exactly the relationship between culture and motivation she wants to illuminate (Strauss 2004:425).

Strauss' analysis is based on semi-structured interviews with five male, blue-collar workers who were all either neighbors to or workers at the chemical plant Cranston in Rhode Island, U.S. Strauss conducted six to seven interviews with each informant and she used a combination of questions and statements, which the informants were requested to respond to (Strauss 2004:412). Based on the interview material, Strauss identified three schemas, or types of knowledge, that reflects the ideas about work that the informants expressed.

The first type of knowledge is based on the idea of the 'American dream'. Strauss states that the informants were aware of this value, but primarily on a meta-level in seeing it as an actual shared value in society. Furthermore, the idea was conceptualized in a bounded way, which implies that it had little relation to other types of knowledge or values. Strauss claims that this value, despite the awareness of it among the informants, did not significantly influence the career choices they made, which, according to Strauss, shows that people can also be aware of a schema without acting on it (Strauss 2004:411, 416-7).

The second type of knowledge was the "breadwinner model". The informants do not consider this a value, but see it very pragmatically as an obligation, as an 'inescapable reality'. This idea influenced the actions of the informants as it has an implicit goal in terms of being able to provide for ones family and put food on the table (Strauss 2004:411, 420). The ideas of the obligations connected to being a male breadwinner are not widely shared in society but rather gender and class specific assumptions, according to Strauss (Strauss 2004:418).

The third aspect is the individual outlook and values of the informants, their personal semantic networks. By using the term *webs of significance*, Strauss draws on symbolic anthropology in considering the informants' individual life experiences, self-understandings and interpretations about the world as influential on their goals and

behavior (Strauss 2004:411). Strauss claims that “each man’s personal semantic network has directed him toward an idiosyncratic pattern of self-defining goals and styles of behavior” (Strauss 2004:420). These semantic networks are believed to be unbounded and connected to a wide variety of experiences as opposed to the American dream value, which was bounded and poorly integrated with other values (ibid.).

Strauss’ analysis can be considered as a movement from an intersubjective, social value of success qua the idea of the American dream, to a shared, but also personally interpreted and applied idea of working men’s assumptions of their role as breadwinner to, finally, an idiosyncratic network of experiences and interpretations. Considering the epistemological focus of psychological anthropology as in the intersection between the mind and the social world, this model reflects three levels; an entirely social level, a social thus also personally interpreted level, and an individual level. Strauss reflects on how these schemas, or types of knowledge, have been acquired and influenced by different channels. The conceptualizations of American success values have primarily been acquired through verbal symbols or key terms influenced by explicit sources such as media, books, and TV-shows . The breadwinner assumption is primarily influenced by personal observations of other men’s job situation or their aspirations of getting ahead or of men who have failed in their career. The personal semantic networks are influenced both by the explicit symbols and by the personal observations, and by self-defining experiences (ibid.). This reflects how people’s interpretations about the world are both a product of interactions with the social world and also individual reflections on their role in the world.

The three aspects that Strauss have concluded in her analysis as being significant for a cultural model of work, resembles aspects that can also be identified in the empirical data in this study. Strauss’ idea of the three types of knowledge and their respective interpretations and implications will be the foundation of the analysis of internationalization that will follow in the coming chapter.

Concluding remarks

This chapter was initiated with an introduction to psychological anthropology in general and more specifically the field of cognitive anthropology, to set the theoretical framework for this study. A number of concepts have been introduced here such as schemas, cultural models, internalization, and habitus. These concepts and their theoretical relations have explanatory potential for the analysis that will be presented in the coming chapter. The apparent ‘sharedness’ of the interpretations expressed among the informants on the topic of studying abroad has inspired this theoretical framework in which the focus is on how interpretations become shared, cultural, and even come to appear as natural and taken-for-granted inferences about the world. The integration of psychological anthropology and the empirical data allows for an analysis that suggests that cognitive schemas function as interpretive tools that help the students to understand the phenomenon of internationalization, make inferences about it, relate it to their own reality, and act on their interpretations as they consider appropriate in their specific cultural context. Extending the framework of schemas and cultural models with the concept of internalization, and specifically habitus, offers a theoretical suggestion to how the informants’ statements can be viewed as internalized cultural meanings that have become natural to the informants and have influenced their aspirations towards internationalization.

The cultural model reflects how the informants conceptualize internationalization, how they interpret the phenomenon and the related activities, and how they have become motivated to pursue internationalization. Strauss’ model of work has inspired the processing of the empirical material and the way this has been analyzed. The primary source of empirical material are the semi-structured interviews conducted with the group of informants. These interviews have provided an impression of which ideas the informants hold not only on studying abroad but also on diverse topics such as culture, China and the surrounding world, education, their future, job opportunities, experiences, obligations, family relations, and many other perspectives. These ideas have been organized and analyzed with Strauss’ model as the explicit inspiration and will be accounted for in the next chapter.

5 A cultural model of internationalization

In this chapter, the cultural model of internationalization will be presented along with the analytical point that the model reflects cultural meanings that have been internalized among the informants and that the adoption of these beliefs have motivated them to study abroad. First, the choice of analytical framework is motivated where after the three analytical propositions that constitute the model are outlined. Following this, the concepts of internalization and habitus will be employed to show how the cultural model has come to be motivating to the students.

Motivation for analysis

A puzzle that has encouraged the present analysis is the apparent ‘sharedness’ of some interpretations expressed by the informants. Some of the perspectives they have on internationalization are very similar to one another as well are the points of references they consider as influential on their decision to study abroad, which led to reflections on how interpretations become shared or even cultural. This analysis will focus on the phenomenon of internationalization and show how it can be related to a cultural model. The model is shaped by interpretations that the informants make of internationalization when they are confronted with this phenomenon as they or their peers go abroad to study. The cultural model will be explored by looking into the aspects that has been mentioned in relation to studying abroad specifically or international experiences and influences in general. There are a number of qualities, which have been attributed to the experiences or expectations of studying abroad, which will be unfolded as part of this analytical model.

The object of the analysis are schemas at a higher-level of interpretation, in the terminology of D’Andrade, as it is concerned with the phenomenon of internationalization and more specifically how this is organized and perceived by the informants as both a personal experience and an investment in the future (D’Andrade 1992b:55). Thus, this analysis is not to be compared to cognitive analyses of low-level

schemas such as taxonomies of furniture, food, colors etc. This analysis attempts to go beyond such systems by focusing on a rather abstract concept and how this interacts with the worldview of the informants. Some of the interpretations made by the informants are made in retrospect, looking back on events that have already taken place while others express anticipations about their future experiences with studying abroad. Schema theory can capture these temporal differences as it encompasses both experiences from the past, current events as well as expectations about the future in the interpretations facilitated by a schema (Strauss & Quinn 1997:49).

The analytical inspiration for the cultural model of internationalization has already been outlined with the introduction of Strauss' cultural model of work. The purpose is to show which meanings are ascribed to the concept of internationalization and to show how these meanings are a product of the interactions between the phenomenon of studying abroad and the interpretations the informants express about this phenomenon. The cultural model of internationalization will take its shape inspired by the structure of Strauss' model in the way that it proposes three schemas that altogether make up the model. These types of schemas will be introduced in the next section as analytical propositions where after the analysis will continue with a focus on how the cultural model can be considered as both a reflection of the informants' interpretations as well as influential on these interpretations.

Analytical propositions

As it has already been accounted for, a cultural model of work as proposed by Strauss has inspired the analysis in the present study. The inspiration is found in the three types of knowledge that Strauss identifies as characteristic of the informants' interpretation of work. To initiate the analysis, three analytical propositions will be presented; the idea of Western culture, pragmatic ideas of education choices, and finally the idiosyncratic and self-defining ideas among the informants. These propositions will also be referred to as schemas, but this reference should be understood according to D'Andrade's idea that schemas are not so much objects but rather processes of interpretations. When the ideas held by the informants are referred to as a schema it is a way of implying that there is an

interconnected pattern of interpretations that are activated by phenomena or events in the social world (D'Andrade 1992b:29).

The idea of Western culture

The first perspective that was salient in the interviews, is an emic category of *Western culture*. Many of the informants expressed their curiosity about Western culture as an aspect of their motivation to study abroad as they wished to experience this culture themselves by living in a Western country. The ideas about Western culture expressed by the informants reflected that Western countries were perceived as an entity sharing the same culture in terms of their styles of behavior, their education system, their ways of socializing, and the possibilities of the people of this culture. However, the concept was not always expressed as a tangible definition but more as a general idea of ideological character. Pursuing international education, which would tend to mean education in a Western country, meant becoming familiar with this perceived shared culture and acquiring some of its traits. Although some informants recognized that Western countries do not constitute a culturally homogenous entity they still defined it as a category that stands in opposition to Chinese culture:

I mean, to me it's just non-Chinese, non-Asian culture, I think it's, it includes like the countries in Europe and in the U.S., but they're different, I know, they're very different, but compared to China they're more like, they more like fit into the same category, if you know what I mean, and China is definitely the opposite, not the opposite, but the counterpart, if you know what I mean? (Interview Ān Róng).

While still acknowledging that there are cultural variations between the Western countries, this statement indicates how this informant conceptualizes Chinese culture as belonging to an entity of Asian culture and furthermore as conceptualized as something different than those cultural aspects that he thought of as characteristic of the U.S. and Europe.

Among the students, Western culture was conceptualized both as a set of skills and as ways of behaving and socializing. Knowledge about Western countries and their culture

was imagined to be important to meet their educational ambitions and obtain a good job, as they wanted to work either in a specific country or on an international platform:

Interest. In Western culture. It's the major motivation. And also, I can learn some knowledge and skills in my area by studying abroad. As you know, the teaching method is different in foreign countries so I may learn a lot of things there (Interview Xiū Bó).

Thus, either specific knowledge of a culture or cross-cultural competences were strived for to meet specific ambitions. Others explained that their exposure to what they thought of as Western culture came from TV-shows, music, internet etc., had come to be very attractive to them and they saw studying abroad as a way of attaining a certain lifestyle:

I get to know Western culture, Western life in Western countries mostly through movies, Hollywood movies and some TV-series. So I'm interested in it and I think that life abroad is more free than it is in China. And you know, in Western countries, many people believe in Jesus and in China we believe in the Communist Party. Most of us don't believe in God, so I think that interests me (Interview Xiū Bó).

This statement also indicates that ideas of Western culture are structured in relation to ideas about Chinese culture and society and the possibilities the students believe they have at home in China and abroad. Another student voiced similar ideas about how he imagined the lifestyle of young people abroad compared to students in China:

For example if I go to Denmark, if I go to your place, maybe in the weekend or Friday night you and your friends will go to party and have a drink and dance and make out and something, but our Chinese students as to my knowledge we're just... [...] It's a cultural difference. I think for us we need to practice these communication skills (Interview Hàn Róng).

Thus, ideas of Western culture were connected to ideas of a certain lifestyle and traits and among young people that were not believed to be characteristic of young Chinese people.

Perspectives like this would often come up in interviews when talking about which countries would be attractive to the informants to study in and which countries they would not want to study in. Most of them had a very clear idea of which countries they

considered as potential study abroad destinations and these ideas would tend to be related to their categorization of Western versus non-Western. Among some informants such distinction was also expressed along the lines of developed versus non-developed countries. Both set of distinctions seemed to have a great influence on their choice of destination, as many students rejected the idea of studying abroad in either a non-Western or a non-developed country. These countries were in general not thought to be able to deliver the quality in education that the informants demanded and there was an explicit link between ideas of Western countries and ideas of quality education. This aspect was expressed to such extent that it almost came to reflect a hierarchy of countries suitable for education. This goes to show, that internationalization in this specific model, does not have as broad a scope as one could think from the concept but rather it is in practice limited to only some regions in the world. This suggests that, rather than speaking of motivations of internationalization, the aspirations to study abroad among this group of students was just as much a quest for 'Westernization'. These aspirations entail both the interest in becoming familiar with Western culture as well as the intentions to pursue education of a higher quality than is believed to be available in China.

The conceptualization of Western culture resembles the description Strauss offers on the idea of the American dream as a shared value. Not only would informants express their own curiosity about Western culture and their desire to become familiar with this, they would also state that this was a general sentiment and thereby implying that Western culture holds a certain position in Chinese society:

It's kind of because of the strange view that the things Western countries have is always better than us and if I go abroad, no matter where it is, it will be better (Interview Yǎ Dé).

This statement reflects recognition that this value is shared among Chinese people and thus implies a meta-awareness of the idea of Western culture as an actual value and not just considering it as a concept in itself. However, as opposed to Strauss' description of the American success values, ideas of Western culture did not as such appear to be bounded but rather influenced many aspects of the idea of studying abroad, however, in a quite intangible way. Not only did this concept influence their choice of a study abroad

destination in terms of choosing a Western over a non-Western country, it also entailed ideas about a certain lifestyle and certain personal qualities that one could acquire by living in a Western country.

Considering these interpretations it seems that among the informants, the idea of studying abroad is not explicitly connected to ideas about internationalization but rather to ideas about 'Westernization'. This indicates that internationalization, and student mobility as a part of it, does not so much involve a circular flow of students between all regions and countries in the world but rather it reflects a vertical hierarchy of countries and institutions that are considered attractive to study in and that the countries perceived as Western take the leading position in this hierarchy. In this way, the informants do not consider the entire world as their 'playground' but rather the motivation to study abroad is explicitly connected to intentions of becoming familiar with a certain lifestyle or set of opportunities that are attributed to their category of Western culture.

Making the best education choice

A second perspective that was voiced among the informants concerns the specific education choices they make. It concerns ideas about what studying abroad will contribute with in the informants' lives and how they decide on the specific country and institution to study in. This aspect reflects more pragmatic ideas of what the students aim for and which possibilities are available to them. A variety of ideas were reflected within this schema; ideas about the quality and content of the education, studying abroad as a way of enhancing the opportunities of landing an attractive job, and finally ideas about the fierce competition among young Chinese, which makes it almost a necessity to study abroad if you want to get ahead in the future.

The idea of the quality of education abroad compared to education in China was concerned with the content of the education, that is the specific curriculum for some courses, the teaching style of their lecturers and the requirements to them as students. Especially the latter point was salient, as students believed that, in China, they were expected to study really hard and learn their syllabus by heart just to be able to perform

well on exams, but without necessarily being able to apply the acquired knowledge beyond the test they would take at the end of the semester. Some students expressed that they thought professors promoted this style of studying by focusing too much on the final grade point average of a class rather than the academic outcome the students would have from the class. On the other hand, there was a conceptualization of the Western education style as the counterpart to this, which was expressed in the belief that universities abroad would encourage the students to think independently and critically as opposed to Chinese universities:

They way of teaching is people talk, you write, you take notes and before you go to the exams you just recite everything and then you wrote everything and then you forgot everything, but in Germany they have the seminars and they make you to do the research and make you read a pile of books and I think it's a good way for you to think, to think deep and to learn on your own instead of being imposed and I think they make you do presentation, right, so it forces you to express yourself in an effective way instead of being passively sitting there and memorizing everything, I think that's what German universities will... Ehm... Improve me (Interview Ān Nà).

Either from their own experiences abroad or from narratives from their peers, some informants had a general idea that education abroad would entail more group work and more discussion in class, which would require them to state their reflections on the material they would read for class and foster a more independent approach to learning.

Besides the ideas of the actual content and quality of education abroad the students also expressed ideas of studying abroad as a way of enhancing their possibilities to land a good job in the future. Some students had the impression that studying abroad had become a requirement in order to be considered for a position in some companies and government agencies:

If you're going to work, ehm, maybe in multinational companies so you need a foreign background, at least you need a foreign educational background, at least it is an exchange for like half a year so, like, ehm, add some color to my resume (Interview Rú Yi).

However, it was not only a matter of being selected to a job on the basis of having studied abroad but also having the opportunity to strive for an attractive job and choose which environment to work in:

There are more and more international companies, like multinational companies, in China and I prefer their working atmosphere more than Chinese, national companies because they're more liberal, flexible and allows you to express yourself freely but in Chinese national companies you have to consider about the personal, the net, the basis, yeah, have many *guanxi*, like... For example, you have to do something against your will in order to, like... Flatter the upper, the leaders and stuff like that. Because Chinese really care about the net, the social net (Interview Ān Nà).

In this statement, the student address the Chinese concept of *guanxi*, which some of the students considered as influential on their opportunities to land a good job. The concept is a combination of the Chinese words for *connections* and *relationships* and describes traditions of promoting people within once network. The practice of *guanxi* is considered a powerful structure benefiting those who have good connections and by the informants it was expressed that they also believed it would influence their own career-path.

The concerns about landing a good job after graduation was very much related to the perception that there is a fierce competition among the large number of Chinese students to do good in the future, partly for their own self-fulfillment but also due to their perceived obligations in the future:

I just think we are more stressed perhaps because it's more competitive here in China because we're constantly worrying about getting into a good university, landing a good job, finding a good husband or wife, supporting our own children to go the next life, I think. But I think American students are a little more, ehm, easier on their living, I don't know, I just feel that way (Interview Jing Yi).

This statement reflects the view that Chinese students navigate in a highly competitive environment, which indicates that the great interest in studying abroad is also part of the competition among the students to do well and get ahead in the future.

These perspectives reflect a rather pragmatic view that studying abroad also entails considerations, decisions, and aspirations for the future. Similar to Strauss' presentation of the breadwinner model, it suggests that studying abroad will also have very tangible outcomes such as a diploma, specific skills acquired through the teaching style, and the chance of getting ahead in the competition for a good job. In the students' perspectives there is an extreme competition in China to do well; get the best grades, the best education, and land the best job. For this reason, education choices become crucial, as it is believed to be very determining for one's future. The students are confronted with decisions about their education as well as their future as a part of an *inescapable reality* similar to the one that Strauss describes as present to her informants in viewing themselves as breadwinners (Strauss 1992b:199). Thus, as opposed to the first schema, which had a more ideological character, this is more related to actual opportunities and choices to be made.

Some of the ideas encouraged by this schema also reflect considerations of what is actually realistic for the informants when it comes to pursuing education abroad. To some of the informants this concerns financial issues, for instance, whether or not they can receive scholarships to pursue degrees or whether their living expenses abroad will be too big of a financial burden on their parents. Other informants expressed that their choice of university abroad was determined by their English proficiency and how they did on the TOEFL test or by their grade point average. These types of influences on the opportunities to study abroad reflect the point made by Strauss, that specific life conditions can have an influence on the ways in which schemas come to function as goals (D'Andrade 1992b:38). Despite the interpretations and aspirations the informants may hold of internationalization, their actual motivation to study abroad is also influenced by factors such as economic and academic resources.

Idiosyncratic and self-defining ideas

In this perspective, the reflections on studying abroad are expressed in an individual explanatory framework based on the specific life experiences of the informants and how they make sense of these. These ideas become salient as the informants make explicit

references to events that have taken place in their lives, special character traits they believe to have, or their specific family background. These interpretations are rooted in the individual past of the informants but they also express desires for the future in which studying abroad plays a role.

One student explained how he thought of his individual motivation to study abroad as different from what he believed would be the typical motivation among Chinese students. He mainly considered studying abroad as a self-fulfilling adventure rather than a strategic move in the competition to get ahead:

I'm kind of an exception, I'm not that utilitarian, most of my classmates are, especially in our major, international finance, I mean, in Fudan this major has the highest requirements [...] So I'm kind of an exception from them. I'm just doing a lot of things for fun (Interview Ān Dū).

With this statement, the informant does not only express his own reasons to study abroad but also differentiates himself from other students. He implies that studying abroad, in general, is considered as having a specific purpose or function, whereas his own motivations to go abroad are more along the lines of having fun and experiencing the world. In a similar way, one informant explained that she had chosen to study in Sweden because of her *personal taste* and her interest in Nordic countries.

Among the informants there were also a variety of interpretations that referred to their family and their specific background as an influence on their motivation to study abroad:

My father is a salesman in a multinational company so he had some business relationship with foreign traders so he told me "You should go abroad and see what the world is like" (Interview Rú Yì).

Another student included her family background in a similar way in explaining her motivations to study abroad:

Because my father works for a German company, so I think they're kind of liberal and open-minded people, yeah. And as I study German I think it's better if I know the real things in Germany instead of learning something on the book (Interview Ān Nà).

This statement is furthermore linked to her specific field of study as a factor in her choice of a study destination. This demonstrates Strauss' point about the unbounded way in which personal interpretations of different experiences are integrated in the reflections about studying abroad.

Some students also refer to the decisions their parents have made for them, such as the choice of an international school or English language courses, as inspirations to why they have chosen to study abroad. One informant shared a particular experience from her childhood as her own explanation of how she had become inspired to go abroad:

I also wanted to go abroad when I was young because, like, I was born in 1991 and during those years there weren't many foreigners in Shanghai, sometimes I saw a foreign face at the Bund or near the Oriental Pearl TV Tower or Yuyan Garden [...] I went to these places with my parents and my friends [...]. We had some activities at the Bund, I saw foreigners, then, ehm, some teachers asked us to say hello to the foreigners and the foreigners were so nice [...] so I felt that maybe talking to these people and living with these people would be a very nice experience (Interview Rú Yì).

Some informants also included their specific field of study or their desired jobs as part of the explanatory framework for not only the decision to study abroad but also the choice of a specific destination. For some of them this was a matter of pursuing a specific interest academically that they either could not pursue in China or if they believed that the courses within this interest would be better at a university abroad. To others, it also had to do with their chances of pursuing these particular interests in their later career:

The reason why I chose UCS [University of Southern California, ed.] is first that it's in California and California is like the ideal place for us to pursue electronic engineering and maybe computer science major. And also because of its location it can have a wide network with the companies around and it's near the Silicon Valley and it's near to Hollywood [...] so it's a really good place for me to pursue my master's degree and then

find a, it's small potential for me to find a good job at that place so that's why I choose UCS. (Interview Yă Dé).

Furthermore, this statement goes to show that studying abroad was seen as a potential step stone into the job market of a foreign country. It furthermore reflects how his choice of destination is based on his individual interests and ambitions for the future.

This aspect of the cultural model is what Strauss characterizes as the personal semantic networks, which reflect the informants' self-defining goals and personal styles of actions. The term *network* indicates that this knowledge is extracted from different realms of experiences and does not only relate to the interpretations about studying abroad but can be included in this framework in many different ways. Personal semantic interpretations can be expressed as explicit self-descriptions and often with a hint of identification in contrast to other people expressing an informant's view of himself or herself as unique. Studying abroad is explained in terms of individual ambitions for the future or how it will be an advantage because of a specific background, i.e. field of study, or due to specific plans for the future. The interpretations included here are fragments of the personal semantic networks of the informants and have been emphasized to reflect how the idea of studying abroad is rooted in significant life experiences and self-understandings. Everyone holds such cognitive networks but they differ from each person not just in their specific interpretations but also in the ways that they guide behavior or define goals (Strauss 1992a:211).

The perspectives presented here have reflected that the motivations to study abroad is also to be found in the individual interpretations expressed by the informants that altogether express their personal explanatory framework for studying abroad. It should be understood as personal in the sense that the interpretations within it draw on individual life experiences and self-defining ideas that the students themselves believe have been influential on the decision to study abroad. However, because these interpretations are characterized as individual it does not mean that they exist in a vacuum or are not influenced by the specific cultural context that the students are a part of. Rather they are

individual in their content, but they may be the product of some of the same cultural influences and internalization of cultural meanings that are intersubjectively shared.

Channels of influences

In Strauss' analysis, the possible channels of influence on the schemas are touched briefly upon. In this section, the influences will be considered in relation to the cultural model of internationalization and it will be suggested that Strauss' focus on influences is not extensive enough.

Similar to the schema of the American Dream, the ideas of Western culture are influenced by explicit symbols and key terms such as webpages, online interaction, TV-shows, movies and music from Western countries, primarily the U.S. Some of the informants would explicitly state that they build their images of Western culture and also more specific images of the life as a student abroad from i.e. American TV-shows. Thus, the interpretations that were expressed about Western culture were founded on socially negotiated ideas and public symbols.

The specific ideas about the possibilities and obligations connected to education choices can be seen as based on the students' observations of other students and how they have navigated in the field of education and either succeeded or failed. It is plausible that if students are familiar with friends or relatives who have studied in a particular university or country and afterwards have managed to land a good job, this could become an inspiration to the choices they make themselves or at least the ambitions they have for the future. One student describes this inspiration from other people with reference to the collective orientation that seems to be salient among Chinese people:

Chinese tend to do things together. Once someone goes to some places the others will also go there and to see if this thing is good even if it's not good, they will also tend to think since so many people are here this is at least not bad (Interview Hàn Róng).

This is similar to the argument Strauss makes about the breadwinner model and how this interpretation is based on the informants' observation of other men's career choices.

However, by stating that these are personal observations, Strauss implies that these influences do not have a social element, which is not believed to be the case in the present analysis. Although the inferences and the interpretations made by the informants are influenced by their own observations, these observations are made of the social world and of actions that are themselves not free of social and cultural influences.

A more dialectic relationship between the individual observations and the public symbols is suggested by Strauss to define the influences on the idiosyncratic motivations. Both public symbols and the observations of other people's actions influence which aspects from their social world and personal interpretations the informants draw on in defining themselves and their goals. The unbounded character of these networks was revealed in the ways the informants constructed their individual explanatory framework for studying abroad. They would explain their motivations drawing on different aspects like their family background, their future career plans, their individual interest in a particular region, or with personal motivations that they believed differentiated them from other students.

As mentioned already, Strauss and Quinn suggest a cognitive paradigm in which cultural meaning is a result of interactions between the social world and the interpretations of these that exists in people's head (Strauss & Quinn 1997:5). In the cultural model of internationalization, Strauss' focus on influences from the social world is broadened to also consider historical perspectives because, as Bourdieu reminds us, the habitus is created on the basis of collective history, which makes it relevant to also explore historical factors that may influence the shared interpretations expressed about studying abroad (Ritzer 2008:131). As it has already been indicated in defining the empirical framework for this study, the changing political and ideological agendas in China since the mid-19th Century have had a significant influence on not only the relationship between China and the surrounding world, but have also constituted the framework for educational policies and the development of the current higher education system in China including an escalating interest in internationalization. Such historical context can through internalization processes create both individual and collective practices (ibid.).

Thus, it is crucial in understanding the informants' motivations to study abroad to consider the collective history as internalized social structures that at the same time create awareness about internationalization and facilitate actions towards becoming internationalized such as studying abroad. Some of the informants would refer explicitly to a period of Chinese history, the Cultural Revolution, to explain partly how their parents' experiences with education had been and how it had influenced their aspirations for their children to pursue the best possible education, which, to some of them, implied studying abroad.

The cultural model as internalized beliefs

Having already touched upon Bourdieu's concept of habitus, the analysis continues with a more elaborate exploration of how a cultural model of internationalization can be considered as internalized cultural meanings. The analysis assumes a dialectic relationship between the cultural context and the cognitive interpretations, and therefore it is relevant to explore what constitutes the bridge between these two realms.

To Bourdieu, the habitus entails a dialectic relationship between the internalization of externality and the externalization of internality. Bourdieu's intention is to use the concept of habitus to construct a conceptual bridge between subjectivism and objectivism, the mind and the *field* (Ritzer 2008:530-1). Practice is considered the mediator between habitus and the social world as habitus is created through practice but at the same time the social world is also a result of the practices that take place within it (ibid.) Thus Bourdieu's concept of habitus has an analytical potential in the exploration of how the practice of internationalization is transformed into cultural understandings and vice versa how such understandings create practice. The cultural model of internationalization reflects the interpretations of internationalization as expressed by the informants and at the same time it reflects the *logic of practice* surrounding the phenomenon of internationalization (Ritzer 2008:532). This logic entails that the practice of internationalization, such as studying abroad, is performed with certain naturalness or 'of-course-ness' as the motivation to study abroad has emerged through the internalization of the cultural meanings attributed to the phenomenon. As ideas about

internationalization are internalized and embodied among the informants, constituting a collective habitus, it will contribute with the principles, which the informants use to make decisions and choose the strategies they want to make use of in their navigation in the social world. In this way, the internalization of internationalization, when considered as a social structure, suggests, rather than determines, which actions people should take (Ritzer 2008:532).

Bourdieu introduced the term *field* as a representation of the social world, which he thought of as relations between positions rather than a structure itself. It is relational as it consists of a network of relations among the positions that are held by either agents or institutions within the field. These positions do not themselves constitute the structure of the field but they are, however, constrained by the structures of the field. The social structures of a field define the opportunities of agents and institutions within the field (ibid.). Bourdieu furthermore states that there are a number of semiautonomous fields in the social world and identifies higher education as such a field with its own specific logics and beliefs (Ritzer 2008:532). The structure of the field sustain and guide the strategies applied by the people within the field – individually or collectively – to improve their position in the field. Such strategies will tend to be used by agents to promote a hierarchical structure in which their own position is favorable. For this reason, Bourdieu understood the field as “a field of struggles” (ibid.). The field shapes the habitus but on the other hand the habitus also constitutes the field as meaningful and worth investing in (Ritzer 2008:534). In this study, it is also relevant to recognize higher education as a field with its particular logics and beliefs that are influential on the strategies of the informants and their decisions to study abroad. Considering the contemporary landscape of higher education, the logics within the field promote internationalization through the policies and strategies that are continuously under development but also through actual activities of internationalization such as exchange programs and student mobility. With the naturalness that internationalization comes to possess within the field of higher education, it becomes an imperative to students if they want to promote their own position within the field or maybe even within the larger field of society. The dialectic relationship between the field and the habitus contribute to a

reproduction of internationalization as meaningful and worth investing resources in or maybe even a necessary action to take to ensure a favorable position in the hierarchy that exists within the field. As students are immersed into the field of higher education qua their status as university students they will also be influenced by the logics and beliefs present in the field and they will integrate these meanings with other interpretations they hold of their social world and their individual life experiences.

However, the empirical material indicates that it is not only the logics and beliefs specifically within the field of higher education that has influenced the way the informants interpret internationalization. Some of them reflect on how the awareness of and inspiration to study abroad came early in their life:

This idea of studying abroad actually comes very early in my life. It's kind of after my primary school. I don't know why but my family, the atmosphere, they just encourage me to go abroad and see the world (Interview Hàn Róng).

Some of the informants would point to specific life events in their childhood or certain attitudes among their parents that they considered as inspirations to the idea of studying abroad. The explanatory framework that some of them drew on included political and historical aspects of Chinese society, such as the Great Leap Forward or the Cultural Revolution, that, with its constraint on China's interaction with the surrounding world, had spurred the interest in seeing the world when the opening-up policy was introduced and in the years that followed. This suggests, that there are general attitudes present in Chinese society, beyond the specific field of higher education, that encourage students to see the world and influence their decision to study abroad.

As it has already been accounted for, Spiro offers a perspective on internalization similar to that of Bourdieu in considering internalization of cultural models as both a producer of and a product of social action, or in Bourdieu's term, practice. Spiro identifies four levels of internalization. On the first level people are aware of the cultural model, but do not subscribe to its norms. On the second level cultural beliefs are acquired superficially as *clichés*. At the third level, the cultural model is internalized as a personal belief system.

On the fourth and final level, the cultural model is not only internalized but held as very strong beliefs (Spiro 1997:8-9). On the first two levels, the cultural meanings have very little, if any, motivational capacity. It is only if a cultural model is internalized as a personal belief system, that is on the third and fourth level, that the cultural schemas within the model come to serve as goals (D'Andrade 1992c:36-7). Considering that the informants in this study have all taken actions towards internationalization, it can be argued that they have internalized the cultural meanings of internationalization as a personal belief system or maybe even as very strongly held beliefs, which explains why they have become motivated to study abroad. Had the study been conducted among a different group of informants it is plausible that the cultural meanings embedded in the model had been held in a different way, which could have an influence on the degree to which these ideas were internalized and whether they would have motivational force to them.

Motivation as a link between culture and practice

As it has been argued in this analysis, there is a connection between the internalization of cultural models and the motivational capacity a model possess. Strauss states that motivation should be understood as "the product of interaction between events and things in the social world and interpretations of those events and things in people's psyches" (Strauss 1992a:1). A similar premise has been stated as the foundation of the cultural model of internationalization, that is, the model should be understood as a reflection of the assumed dialectic relationship between the phenomenon of international studies and the interpretations of studying abroad among the informants.

Cultural models can have motivational capacity as they not only contribute to labeling and describing the world but also define goals. Thus, motivation can be seen as embedded in cultural models (Strauss 1992a:3). However, as D'Andrade points to, this perspective should not encourage the simplistic view that "people do what they do because their culture makes them do it" (D'Andrade 1992c:23). The study of motivation should go beyond this explanation and take a closer look at how cognitive schemas that are learned in specific cultural contexts are connected to each other and to the actions

they encourage. If, for instance, a cultural model is believed to entail a reward, or if striving for the goals embedded in the model have some chance of meeting with success, it is plausible that the model will have a great motivational strength (D'Andrade 1992a:227). This suggests that when the informants conceptualize studying abroad as something that can contribute positively to their future, in terms of gaining skills, landing a good job etc., it is associated with success and the motivation to act according to the model is increased. Furthermore, if the conditions that the model entails are perceived as right or natural, then the motivational force of the model is further increased (ibid.). As it has been argued here, internalization is a process, in which cultural meanings become natural and obvious, which suggests that, as the informants have internalized the cultural meanings that are attributed to studying abroad, the cultural model has come to possess an even greater motivational force.

In the present analysis of the cultural model of internationalization, it has not so much been the agenda to establish whether the informants were motivated to act on their interpretations and pursue international studies, but rather how this link between their interpretations and their actions could be made. The concept of internalization offers an explanation of how the ideas connected to studying abroad have been acquired by the informants and how they have come to see them as natural interpretations and express them as their own. Such internalization does not only include the interpretations about studying abroad but also the goals embedded in the schema and as these are adopted by the informants, the cultural model of internationalization can be argued to have also motivated the informants' practice of studying abroad.

Internalization of a complex social order

In Strauss' view, the study of motivation can neither be reduced to universalist formulations or simplistic internalization processes but rather have to take into account that the social world is complex and processes of internalization is not just a copy of the social world (Strauss 1992a:13). In the cultural model of work, Strauss concludes that the aspects within a cultural model differ in the extent to which they become motivations to people and that motivation is not automatically acquired when cultural descriptions of the

world are learned (Strauss 1992a:10; Strauss 1992b:217). This argument is extended here by stating that it is not the cultural model itself that influence people's motivations towards certain actions but also to which extent the model has been internalized. This argument builds on Spiro's four levels of internalization and Bourdieu's consideration that internalization processes are diverse and dependent on the specific positions people hold in a society.

Strauss' understanding of internalization rejects *the fax model* of internalization and thereby the idea that the social world, in the shape of *social facts*, is transmitted into internal schemas as a copy of the social world (Strauss 1992a:10). Strauss argues, that the social world is too complex and changeable for this to be the case. Even if this view was viable to some degree it is still problematic as social facts take different forms and can present themselves either as explicit rules or as information that is only implicitly available (ibid.). This is similar to Spiro's view that culture is not held in the same way by people and that it differs to which degree cultural models are internalized (D'Andrade 1992b:36). The purpose of these views is to acknowledge that agents within a social field is not just passive receivers of social and cultural 'instructions' that determine their actions. The point is rather that these agents also undertake self-conscious goal-directed actions. So when this analysis suggests that the informants' motivation to study abroad is a product of internalization processes that make them see studying abroad as a logical action, it is not to indicate that they do not at the same time engage actively and consciously in the actions they take towards internationalization.

Concluding remarks

The apparent 'sharedness' of the interpretations expressed by the informants has inspired the construction of the cultural model of internationalization that has been outlined here. The model has been presented in terms of three different schemas that entail different types of interpretations. The first one had an ideological character and entailed ideas about Western culture. The second one described the informants' pragmatic considerations and decisions about whether to study abroad and where to study. The third one reflected how the informants drew on individual life experiences and self-defining

goals in constructing an explanatory framework for studying abroad. It has been discussed how these interpretations have been influenced by both external symbols and the informants' own observations and argued that the collective Chinese history has also influenced the interpretations about studying abroad. The cultural model was considered as embedded with cultural meanings that the informants had internalized and acted on as they pursued international education. In this way, the norms and beliefs that the cultural model reflects was adopted by the informants, which have motivated them to study abroad. Bourdieu's concept of habitus was included to show how practice, in this case studying abroad, becomes a mediator between habitus and the social world. This point entails that the informants have internalized the cultural meanings as their personal beliefs system, drawing on Spiro, which implies that the interpretations they expressed on internationalization have become 'natural' to them. Drawing on the theoretical perspectives of cognitive anthropology, it was argued that when cultural meanings become natural they will also possess a great motivational capacity and thus it was showed how motivation constitutes a link between culture and action.

6 Discussion

In this chapter, I want to address a number of issues in the light of the analytical suggestions made in this thesis. First, I discuss the different premises the model of internationalization and Strauss' model have been constructed on. Thereafter, I reflect on an issue that has been reoccurring in the process of analyzing the cultural model on whether such can be seen as merely an analytical abstraction or if it is 'out there' in the 'real world'. This leads to a discussion of the potentials and shortcomings of schema theory that has constituted the overall theoretical framework for the analysis. Finally, I return to a dispute that has already been addressed on whether culture should be studied in physical expressions or in mental interpretations.

The model of work vs. the model of internationalization

In constructing the cultural model of internationalization, the starting point has been the external symbol of internationalization as a phenomenon and as a variety of activities. From here I have proceeded to identify the cultural and personal schemas, which give meaning to this object and the associated events; these are the schemas that altogether constitute the cultural model of internationalization. The study has been conducted inductively, which means that the empirical data has guided the choice of theory as well as the analytical construction of the cultural model. The empirical context for the study has previously been rather unknown to me, so the study has also been a process of becoming familiar with Chinese history, society, customs and narratives. In this way, the model of internationalization has been constructed on different premises than the model of work in an U.S. American context proposed by Strauss. First of all, Strauss has explored a model in a context of which she is herself a part of and thus very familiar with. It seems that rather than discovering a model, Strauss has intended to confirm a model, which she has been aware of setting out to do the study. So, as I argued that my model had been constructed inductively, moving from the schemas to the model, Strauss' model is more deductive in the sense that she had certain ideas of the whole, the model,

and has wanted to explore the specific parts of this model, the schemas. These different approaches have implications for the perspectives that Strauss and I have been able to include in our study as we may have been 'blind' to some aspects in each our way. This study has been guided by the empirical insights but there may also be perspectives that I have not been able to acknowledge due to lack of knowledge of the specific context. Due to her familiarity with the context, Strauss may have overlooked certain meanings that could have either offered new perspectives or challenged the model.

As it has been mentioned, the present study has been conducted within a *dominant group* in the sense that all the informants in some way have actively sought internationalization (Strauss 1992b:220). For this reason, it has been less relevant to ask the question of *whether* the informants are motivated to study abroad but rather the intention is to show *how* they become motivated and *what* motivates them, that is, how they construct an explanatory framework, which in its coherence can be argued to constitute a cultural model of internationalization. Strauss, on the other hand, intends to show whether, and in which ways, the three schemas she outlines have motivated the specific career choices among her informants. However, Strauss and I share the interest in showing the cognitive elements, the schemas and interpretations, that have motivated the specific choices our informants have made either in their working life or in their aspirations towards internationalization.

The cultural model as an analytical abstraction or as a model of 'reality'

In the process of analyzing and constructing the cultural model of internationalization, I have been confronted with the conceptual schism of whether cultural models exist in themselves as reflections of the interpretations people within a group hold or, on the other hand, cultural models are analytical abstractions constructed by the anthropologists on the basis of the interpretations expressed by people in a certain context. In cognitive anthropology there is a tendency to refer to schemas or cultural models as concrete entities rather than conceptual abstractions but what is actually the criteria for making such models? Strauss and I have constructed each our model, but it is likely that other anthropologists would reach other suggestions (Strauss 2004:428n). However, it is

important to notice, drawing on D'Andrade, that although people may not recognize the actual schema or model, they are still present to them to the extent that they see their world through these (D'Andrade 1992b:38). Thus, it can be argued that cultural models both exist as analytical abstractions – or at least constructions – and that they also constitute a way of seeing the world among the people that subscribe to them.

Constructing cultural models implies also identifying and interpreting the schemas that the informants are believed to hold. Such analytical selection is a requirement within any theoretical direction where the researcher is confronted with a number of and decisions to take to form an analytical argument. Tyler addresses this issue in stating that the unitary description of culture that a cultural model entails is the result of the anthropologist's analysis. It is only the anthropologist who transcends the various cultural models that may exist within a group to form a unitary model (Tyler 2004:397). However, Tyler as well as Strauss, emphasize that even cultural models, as uniform as they may be presented, should not be considered as a theory of culture but rather theories of cultures as they are not meant to describe entire cultures but rather cultural meanings (Strauss 2004:427; Tyler 2004:397). This is also the case with the cultural model of internationalization as it is not an attempt to describe 'Chinese culture' but rather reflect the cultural meanings expressed by the informants.

The potentials and shortcomings of schema theory

By drawing on theories on schemas and cultural models, this study takes a position within psychological anthropology, which has implications for the analytical conclusions that can be proposed. In this study, schema theory and cultural models are seen in relation to one another in drawing on the definition of cultural models as "shared cognitive schemas through which human realities are constructed and interpreted" (D'Andrade & Strauss 1992:preface). When setting out to explore a cultural model, the object of interest is the way the informants interpret and understand their world as well as how they act on these interpretations. Although D'Andrade claims that cultural models are part of people's internal world, the assumption here is that the interpretations that constitute the model are closely connected to the external world through the phenomenon of studying

abroad (D'Andrade 1992a:230). The intention with employing the idea of cultural models has been to show how the informants conceptualize internationalization and what it means to them. The explicit inspiration of Strauss' model of work has helped identify the different kinds of knowledge the interpretations reflect, how the informants may have reached these interpretations, and how they have been linked together in an explanatory framework. The purpose of exploring such aspects have been to show what have motivated the students to study abroad and how this motivation has taken shape both within and among the students.

However, there are also aspects that schema theory is not able to grasp. According to Holland, there are particularly two aspects that schema theory cannot describe; *messy situations* and *censorship*. By the first situation, Holland refers to those situations where there are either unsuitable or multiple interpretations within a group of people (Holland 1992:71). Schema theory can account for possible interpretations but it cannot account for the reconciliation of multiple interpretations (ibid.). Holland argues that, in studying cultural models, anthropologists often end up editing out the interpretations that do not fit into the model, the messy situations (ibid.). Holland argues that people often face situations that yield to more than one interpretation, which is similar to Strauss' critique of the fax model of internalization, which assumes that cultural meanings can be internalized as exact copies of the social world. What they are both trying to state is that the social world is more complex than such assumptions give it credit for. However, I argue that scientific work and the analytical conclusions it aims to reach, always involves a prioritizing of the material that may reflect the analytical agenda the researcher has. Although researchers may have the best intentions of representing their informants in a true way, the process of creating analytical propositions would often entail a simplification of the empirical material. Although problematic, it is probably not limited to schema theory that empirically 'messy situations' do not find their way into the final analysis.

Furthermore, Holland argues that schema theory cannot account for when people try to manage or censor their feelings or interpretations according to what they think is

appropriate behavior (Holland 1992:74). Holland draws on Bourdieu's view that "as the basis of self-censorship is the sense of the acceptable" (Bourdieu (1977) in Holland 1992:74-5). For instance, internationalization of cultural meanings can contribute to defining the limits for what is appropriate thinking or behavior. Thus, according to Holland, schema theory cannot fully explain internalization of social control. The result of this theoretical negligence of censorship is that it has fostered an idea that people learn schemas that they simply apply and act on (Holland 1992:75-6). Holland's critique also has implications for the production of empirical data. According to Lutz, the social science interview constitute a context for data production that entails expectation for both the interviewer and the interviewee on how they should interact and what should be stated in the interview, which indicates that the interview itself may also be a situation that entails censorship. However, this critique rests on an assumption that there would actually be situations, or theoretical frameworks, where anthropologists are able to reveal the 'true' interpretations of their informants free of any social or cultural influences.

Where to find culture

In this study, *cultural* has been conceptualized as something that is shared because it is enacted, physically possessed, or internally thought by people within a group (D'Andrade 1992a:230). The cultural model of internationalization is argued to be cultural because it is based on shared interpretations among the informants and as it also evolves around a phenomenon that all the informants have enacted in some way. The model specifically concerns the phenomenon of studying abroad and reflects the ideas the informants hold of this on an ideological, a pragmatic, and a personal semantic level. The model takes a position in the intersection between the external and the internal world, as it suggests that the interpretations expressed by the informants are cultural meanings attributed to the phenomenon of studying abroad that have been internalized and have come to be motivating to the informants in their choice to pursue international education. By employing Bourdieu's concept of habitus, the model presumes a dialectic relationship between the external and the internal world, that is, the social world the informants navigate in and the interpretations they make of it.

As it has already been addressed, the symbolic anthropologists, represented by Geertz, have contested the idea that culture is also present in internal representations and maintain the idea that culture is represented in external symbols such as artifacts, events, actions etc. This involves that culture is public, not only in the sense of being shared among people, but as being observable in the physical world (Strauss 1992a:5). In this study, the informants' statements are considered the external matrix of their internal schemas, which implies that the interviews that have been conducted have been a means for gaining insight to how the informants understand their reality, that is, the internal side of culture.

The cognitive anthropologists who have contributed to the theoretical understandings in this study, such as Strauss, Quinn, D'Andrade and others, suggest a theoretical compromise in which the internal and external worlds are interdependent in the study of culture. The primary object of their interest remains the internal world but they insist that this cannot be studied separately from the social world that it reflects. This assumption has also been the foundation of this study in considering the contexts of both Chinese society and the field of higher education as important social worlds that have had an influence on the interpretations the students have expressed on internationalization. This follows Holland's view that if schemas and cultural models interpreted according to a collective history and tradition, they are powerful cultural phenomena as well as psychological ones (Holland 1992:68).

Concluding remarks

In this chapter, I have addressed different issues related to the theoretical and analytical suggestions made in the thesis. It is argued that the model of internationalization is an inductive model whereas Strauss' is deductive. This distinction leads on to reflections on whether a cultural model is to be considered as an analytical abstraction or whether it is a 'thing' in the 'real world'. I argued that they are both in the sense that it in its analytical coherence reflect the work of the anthropologist, the etic perspective, and that it also exist to the informants as it contribute with a way of understanding their reality, the emic perspective. In this chapter, I have also outlined the purpose of using schema theory in

this study and addressed Holland's critique of this framework. Finally, I returned to the dispute on whether to study culture as a material or ideational phenomenon to show how the intention of this study has been to offer an analysis that reflects the dialectic relationship that I believe exists between these two realms.

7 Conclusion

In this thesis, I have addressed my initial puzzle of why Chinese students choose to study abroad. I have explored this puzzle by conducting an ethnographic fieldwork at Fudan University in Shanghai where I interviewed 11 students on their reflections about studying abroad. The empirical material has informed the cultural model of internationalization, which reflects how the informants understand the phenomenon, which meanings they ascribe to it, and how they have become motivated to study abroad themselves. I have argued that their motivation is to be found in the internalization of the cultural meanings that are attributed to the phenomenon.

The cultural model combines three schemas that reflect three schemas for interpretations. The first one is of an ideological character and reflects ideas about Western culture, the informants' attraction to this category, and the traits and lifestyle they believe it entails. Some informants expressed these ideas as a meta-awareness indicating that they consider these ideas as a value that is shared among people in China. The second schema describes the informants' pragmatic considerations and decisions about studying abroad and presents itself as part of an inescapable reality. It reflects how the students are confronted with making the best education choice in order to secure a good position in the competition among young Chinese to do well now and in the future. The third schema reflects the personal semantic networks of the informants as they draw on individual life experiences and self-defining goals in constructing an explanatory framework for studying abroad. In constructing these interpretations students would draw on specific experiences from their childhood or their family background to explain how they got the idea of studying abroad.

The analysis employed Bourdieu's concept of habitus understood as the internalization and embodiment of social structures and the 'common sense' of a social group. Habitus can explain how objective structures or phenomena are internalized as cultural knowledge and how the individual translate this knowledge into practice. In this

perspective, the cultural meanings that are attributed to studying abroad, such as the ideas of Western culture, the ideas of choosing the best education, and the personal semantic networks, reflect internalized social structures and also entail a logic of practice, in Bourdieu's term, that motivates the students to study abroad.

The analysis showed how the concept of internalization, and habitus specifically, provides a way of connecting the social world with the internal world, the social structures with the mental interpretations. Furthermore, internalization provides an understanding of how cultural meanings, such as those reflected in a cultural model, are translated into action. The more people subscribe to a cultural model, that is, to which extent it has been internalized, will also give the model a greater motivational capacity. The argument here is that, the interpretations expressed by the informants indicate that the cultural model of internationalization has been internalized by them as a personal belief system, it has come to appear natural to them and a way of seeing the world, and thus it also possesses a great motivational force, which explains the steps they have taken towards internationalization. The students, who have contributed to this study with their reflections and interpretations, have become motivated to study abroad as they hold the shared, cultural meanings that are reflected in the cultural model of internationalization.

In defining the framework for this study it was argued that globalization constitutes the environment for the current internationalization of higher education. Within higher education, internationalization is encouraged both through explicit sources such as collaborations, policies, and strategies, but also implicitly through the beliefs and norms embedded in such initiatives. Following the theoretical framework of this study, the field of higher education constitutes a social context, which influences the interpretations that people within the field make about the phenomenon of internationalization. This framework has been outlined to show how the social environment, and phenomena within this, has an impact on the way individuals construct themselves as subjects as well as the way they interpret their social world. It has also been considered how the Chinese society and the collective history of China also constitute a social environment that has influenced the interpretations of internationalization.

This study takes a position within qualitative research on the topic of internationalization of higher education. The potential contributions it can offer to the academic body of work on this topic, lies in the combination of the empirical focus on Chinese students and the theoretical perspectives from psychological anthropology. This theoretical framework has been employed along with an assumption that culture exists in the dialectic relationship between the public and the private and neither of these realms would have any importance or expression without the other. In this study, internationalization is considered as the external symbol of the internal interpretations expressed by the informants.

In exploring how people make sense of their social world, schema theory possesses an explanatory potential as it considers cognitive schemas as a framework for understanding, which is used when people try to make meaning of certain objects or situations in the world. This implies that cognitive schemas are tools with which people make interpretations about their reality. This study has entailed the exploration of schemas of more conceptual character than some of the schemas that are considered as mere scripts on how to behave for instance in a restaurant or any such concrete situations. Schema theory has come to also contribute to the concept of cultural models, which is defined as "shared cognitive schemas through which human realities are constructed and interpreted" (D'Andrade & Strauss 1992:preface). Cultural models holds a motivational capacity as they do not only categorize and describe the world but also defines goals that people aim for both consciously and unconsciously (Strauss 1992a:3). With its motivational capacity, the cultural model of internationalization constitutes an analytical connection between cultural meanings and practice and thereby it offers an answer to the question of how the informants have become motivated to study abroad.

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9 Danish abstract

Dette studie er en kvalitativ undersøgelse af en gruppe kinesiske studerendes motivationer til at læse i udlandet. Indsigterne, der vil blive præsenteret her, er baseret på et etnografisk feltarbejde udført ved Fudan Universitet i Shanghai, Kina. Feltarbejdet omfattede kvalitative interviews og interaktioner med studerende, der enten er indskrevet på Fudan eller for nyligt har afsluttet deres uddannelse der. Selve oplevelsen af at være i Shanghai har også præget de perspektiver, der vil blive præsenteret. Inspirationen til studiet er at finde i en undren over, hvordan en aktuell internationaliseringsdoktrin indenfor videregående uddannelse har betydning for individer og hvordan de normer, der er tilstedeværende indenfor området, oversættes til individuelle motivationer og handlinger i retning af internationalisering. Perspektiver fra den psykologiske antropologi anvendes til at vise, hvordan informanterne fortolker det at læse i udlandet som et fænomen og hvad, der har motiveret dem til selv at gøre det. Skemateori og forståelsen af kulturelle modeller som et sæt af delte, kulturelle skemaer, danner den teoretiske ramme for studiet indenfor hvilken den ovennævnte undren vil blive adresseret. En kulturel model for internationalisering, som der foreslås her, kan afspejle, hvilke forståelser, der tilskrives fænomenet, hvordan disse forståelser er struktureret og hvordan de reflekterer sociale strukturer, der er blevet internaliseret af informanterne og er kommet til at udgøre en personlig forståelsesramme. Begrebsliggørelsen af internalisering trækker delvist på Bourdieu's forståelse af habitus og er inkluderet i dette studie for at danne en begrebslig bro mellem objektivisme og subjektivisme ligeså vel som mellem kultur og praksis. En central antagelse i dette studie er, at den kulturelle model reflekterer et dialektisk forhold mellem den sociale verden og de fortolkninger, informanterne gør sig af deres egen virkelighed. Studiet foreslår, at motivationer til at læse i udlandet kan forklares på baggrund af den motiverende kapacitet som kulturelle modeller besidder og at internaliseringen af den kulturelle model har motiveret informanterne til at studere i udlandet.

Appendix 1: Invitation letter Nordic Centre



February 25th 2014

INVITATION LETTER

The Nordic Centre at Fudan University cordially invites Ms. Clara Katrine Rejnmark Nielsen (passport number: 203985748; date of birth 16th of May 1986; citizenship: Danish), MA-student of social anthropology at Lund University, Sweden, to visit the Nordic Centre, Fudan University, in spring and summer 2014.

Ms. Nielsen will enter China on 2nd of May and exit China on 2nd of August 2014, and she will cover all costs related to accommodation, travel insurance, and air fare herself.

During her stay, Ms. Nielsen will conduct research related to her master's thesis about international education and student mobility in China. The Nordic Centre is happy to invite Ms. Nielsen as we believe her research is of mutual interest and benefit for her home institution, Fudan University, and the Nordic Centre, and thus in line with the Nordic Centre's vision of promoting collaboration between the Nordic countries and China.

If there are any questions pertaining to the invitation you are welcome to contact the undersigned.

Yours sincerely,



Natalie Wheeler
Programme Manager
Nordic Centre, Fudan University

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Appendix 2: Interview guide future students

Interview with soon-to-be exchange student (has already been accepted to go abroad)

Briefing:

Thank you for taking the time to come talk with me today. This interview will be used for my master thesis research and any statements you make during the interview will not be linked directly with you. If I wish to include any of your statements in my thesis, I will use another name for you. Also, I hope that you do not mind that I will be recording the interview. The recording is only for my own use and to help me refer back to what we talked about today and write it out to include in my thesis.

I will ask some questions to guide the interview but please feel free to say anything that comes to your mind. I might be taking some notes during the interviews but these are mainly as a help to remember if there is anything I would like you to elaborate on.

Interview:

1. Could you tell me about yourself? Anything that comes to your mind.
 - a. What are you studying at Fudan?
 - b. What do you think about studying at Fudan?

2. Can you tell me about your reasons for choosing Fudan?
 - a. Did you consider any other universities?

3. I know that you are studying abroad next semester. Can you tell me about that?
 - a. How did you get the idea of studying abroad?
 - b. What motivates you to study abroad?
 - c. When did you start thinking about it?
 - d. When did you start planning it?

4. What did you consider when you chose X (country) as a study destination?

5. What are the three most important factors to you in choosing a study abroad destination?
6. If you could choose any country in the world to study in, what would your top three choices be?
 - a. Are there any countries that you would NOT want to study abroad in?
7. Would you recommend students from other countries to choose China as a study abroad destination?
8. How do you think your life will be like while you are abroad?
 - a. What do you think you will miss in/about China while you are abroad?
9. What is your goal with studying abroad?
 - a. What do you think you will gain from studying abroad?
 - b. What do you think you can have abroad that Fudan cannot offer you?
 - c. What is so important about having an international profile?
10. What do your family think about you going abroad?
11. What do your friends think about you going abroad?
 - a. Do you have friends going abroad as well?
12. What do you think about so many Chinese students going abroad?
 - a. Should all Chinese students have the chance to study abroad?
 - b. Should the Chinese government support studying abroad?
13. What are your ambitions for the future?
14. Where do you see yourself in five years?
 - a. What about 10 years?
15. Could you imagine living abroad for longer than a year after you graduate from Fudan?
 - a. Why?

b. Where?

Debriefing:

Thank you very much for your thoughtful answers. Do you have anything you want to add or ask me about?

Please feel free to contact me if you come up with any questions, thoughts or comments!

Husk:

Opfølgende spørgsmål – spørg ind til noget der er blevet sagt/noget, du ikke har forstået

Sonderende spørgsmål – “Kan du sige noget mere om det?”, evt. gentage udtryk informanten har brugt

Specificerende – operationalisere, “hvad gjorde du da...?”

Indirekte spørgsmål – “hvad tror du dine venner synes om...?”

Tavshed – give informanten tid til at snakke færdigt og evt. Selv fortsætte/tage noget nyt op

Fortolkende spørgsmål – omformuler en udtalelse til et spørgsmål

Appendix 3: Interview guide returned students

Interview with returned student (has been abroad on exchange or full-degree)

Briefing:

Thank you for taking the time to come talk with me today. This interview will be used for my master thesis research and any statements you make during the interview will not be linked directly with you. If I wish to include any of your statements in my thesis, I will use another name for you. Also, I hope that you do not mind that I will be recording the interview. The recording is only for my own use and to help me refer back to what we talked about today and write it out to include in my thesis.

I will ask some questions to guide the interview but please feel free to say anything that comes to your mind. I might be taking some notes during the interviews but these are mainly as a help to remember if there is anything I would like you to elaborate on.

Interview:

16. Can you tell me about yourself?
 - a. What are you studying/did you study?
 - b. What did you/do you think about being a student?

17. Can you tell me about your reasons for choosing Fudan/X University?
 - a. Did you consider any other universities?

18. I know that you have studied abroad. Can you tell me about that?
 - a. How did you get the idea of studying abroad?
 - b. What motivated you to study abroad?
 - c. When did you start thinking about it?
 - d. When did you start planning it?

19. What did you consider when you chose X (country) as a study destination?

20. What were the three most important factors to you in choosing a study abroad destination (country + university)?
21. If you were going to study abroad again and you could choose any country in the world to study in, what would your top three choices be?
 - a. Are there any countries that you would NOT want to study abroad in?
22. Would you recommend students from other countries to choose China as a study abroad destination?
23. How would you describe the life you had when you were abroad?
 - a. What did you miss in/about China when you were abroad?
24. How has studying abroad influenced your life after returning to China?
 - a. Are there any advantages or disadvantages?
25. What could have made you stay abroad / in X country?
26. What is so important about having an international profile?
27. What did your family think about you studying abroad?
28. What did your friends think?
29. What was your goal with studying abroad?
 - a. What do you think you gained from studying abroad?
 - b. What did you have abroad that Fudan/Chinese university could not offer you?
30. What are your ambitions for the future?
31. Where do you see yourself in five years?
 - a. What about 10 years?

32. Could you imagine living abroad again?
- For how long?
 - Where?
 - What would make you move abroad?
33. What do you think makes so many Chinese students study abroad?
- Should all Chinese students have the chance to study abroad?
 - Should the Chinese government support studying abroad?

Debriefing:

Thank you very much for your thoughtful answers. Do you have anything you want to add or ask me about?

Please feel free to contact me if you come up with any questions, thoughts or comments!

Husk:

Opfølgende spørgsmål – spørg ind til noget der er blevet sagt/noget, du ikke har forstået

Sonderende spørgsmål – “Kan du sige noget mere om det?”, evt. gentage udtryk informanten har brugt

Specificerende – operationalisere, “hvad gjorde du da...?”

Indirekte spørgsmål – “hvad tror du dine venner synes om...?”

Tavshed – give informanten tid til at snakke færdigt og evt. selv fortsætte/tage noget nyt op

Fortolkende spørgsmål – omfumlere en udtalelse til et spørgsmål