



## **Lost and Found**

### **The Development of Identity Among Chinese Immigrants to Sweden**

**Author: Fiora Xin Cheng**

**Supervisor: Tomas Sniegon**

**Master of Arts in European Studies**

**Submission date: 30 July 2015**

## **Abstract**

Although previous researches have covered various kinds of identity studies, the identity issues particularly among the Chinese immigrants to Sweden remain poorly understood. Therefore, this thesis contributes to the vast amount of research by focusing on how and why the Chinese immigrants' identities have developed after immigration. Based on nationalism and national identity theories in modern Chinese history, four assumptions are brought up to test their identity development patterns. By using narrative analysis, the Chinese immigrants are grouped into four categories and this study aims to find out whether the four categories correspond to the four assumptions. The results suggest that while some of the identity development patterns fit into some assumptions, others remain under defined or they represent new phenomena that are open for future research.

## **Key Words**

Identity Development, Chinese Immigrants to Sweden, Nationalism, Narrative Analysis

## Table of Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 1. <u>Introduction</u> .....   | 1  |
| 2. <u>From Culturalism to Nationalism, what has changed?</u> .....                 | 3  |
| 2.1 <u>Historical Memory and Collective Identity</u> .....                         | 6  |
| 2.2 <u>Theories of Chinese Nationalism in Modern Chinese History</u> .....         | 8  |
| 2.2.1 <u>Ethnic Nationalism</u> .....  | 9  |
| 2.2.2 <u>Liberal Nationalism</u> .....   | 11 |
| 2.2.3 <u>State Nationalism</u> .....   | 12 |
| 2.3 <u>From Nationalism to Globalization—Nationalism in a global context</u> ..... | 14 |
| 3. <u>Methodology</u> .....  | 16 |
| 3.1 <u>Survey Analysis</u> .....   | 17 |
| 3.2 <u>Individual Interview</u> .....  | 19 |
| 3.3 <u>Narrative Analysis</u> .....  | 21 |
| 4. <u>Findings and Results</u> .....   | 24 |
| 4.1 <u>Category I—“Where do I belong?”</u> .....                                   | 24 |
| 4.2 <u>Category II—“I am not one of them.”</u> .....                               | 26 |
| 4.3 <u>Category III—“Life is double-sided.”</u> .....                              | 29 |
| 4.4 <u>Category IV—“Does it matter?”</u> .....                                     | 33 |
| 5. <u>Analysis and Discussion</u> .....  | 36 |
| 5.1 <u>The three approaches and the four categories</u> .....                      | 36 |
| 5.2 <u>The four categories and the four assumptions</u> .....                      | 38 |
| 6. <u>Conclusion</u> .....   | 43 |
| <u>Bibliography</u> .....  | 46 |
| <u>List of Appendix</u> .....  | 49 |

## 1. Introduction

Where are you from? This is one of the most commonly asked questions during the daily social interaction among people. What's the meaning behind this question? Does it simply question the written nationality on one's passport or does it mean one's actual sense of belonging to a certain country?

The problems brought forth by this study focus on the identity issues of Chinese immigrants who moved to Sweden during the past decades for different reasons. The aim of the research is to find out how their self-definitions of identities have developed after immigration and what factors influence such development. It is impossible to cover all kinds of nationalism and identity theories without thinking critically and narrowing down the research area. Therefore, this thesis mainly focuses on the Chinese nationalism: its influences and contents in modern Chinese history, as well as its applications to the Chinese immigrants' identities. Previous researches have shown that the development of Chinese nationalism can mainly be categorized into three types in modern Chinese history: liberal nationalism, ethnic nationalism and state nationalism.<sup>1</sup> What I try to study in this thesis is the mental changes of the Chinese immigrants. Who do they think they are? Four assumptions are brought up based on this question. First of all, have they developed from closed Chinese nationalism to keeping the Chinese identity after immigration? Secondly, have they developed from closed Chinese nationalism to adopting other identities? Thirdly, have they developed from open Chinese nationalism to adopting other identities? Finally, have they developed from open Chinese nationalism to keeping the Chinese identity?

The literature review section follows the timeline by starting with the historical memories and collective identities of Chinese people, followed by the development and categorization of nationalism in modern Chinese history and thereafter nationalism and its relationship to

---

<sup>1</sup> Suisheng Zhao, *A Nation- State by Construction: Dynamics of Modern Chinese Nationalism* (California: Stanford University Press, 2004), 8-29.

globalization. The methodology part is divided into three parts, which include survey analysis and individual interview as methods to collect empirical data as well as narrative analysis as the method to analyze the research findings. Findings and results after the collection of survey and interview data are analyzed in the discussion part and a conclusion is drawn in the end. The reason why this area of study is chosen is because, first of all, identity studies meet my interests. Secondly, there is a lack of research particularly regarding the identity development issues among the Chinese immigrants to Sweden. Zhao supports this statement by indicating that previously in the international scholar world, there was a lack of interest in Chinese nationalism. It remained poorly studied and understood. He also suggests that Chinese nationalism was not a subject as popular as other disciplines or theories in social sciences.<sup>2</sup> China has been undergoing an incredible transformation throughout the past decades. Not only the dramatic economic development has increased the domestic life quality of Chinese people in general, the status of Chinese people has also been rising on the world stage, making the westerners start to rethink their perceptions about China.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, this study contributes to the research area of identity issues particularly among the Chinese immigrants to Sweden—Sweden as part of Europe. Last but not the least, I personally have a sense of belonging to the Chinese group that has immigrated to Sweden for different reasons. I came to Sweden for higher education in 2009 and have stayed in Sweden ever since because I find myself largely fascinated by the Swedish culture and the Swedish lifestyle. Meanwhile I am aware that as a “foreigner” here, there are some cultural and social gaps that shouldn’t be ignored. Considering the other Chinese immigrants might have also gone through the same social and cultural adaption process as I did, I find myself easily connected with them. Therefore, being “Chinese” in Sweden automatically becomes one of the most important common grounds between the Chinese immigrants and me.

---

<sup>2</sup> Zhao, *A Nation- State by Construction*, 3.

<sup>3</sup> Zheng Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 222.

## 2. From Culturalism to Nationalism, what has changed?

Previous studies have shown that universal culturalism was the origin of Chinese nationalism and a sense of Chinese identity was rather “culture-centric” than nationalistic.<sup>4</sup> Harrison observes “the traditional Chinese self-image has generally been defined as ‘culturalism’, based on a common historical heritage and acceptance of shared beliefs, not as nationalism, based on the modern concept of the nation-state”.<sup>5</sup> Tracing back to history, the Confucian image of China shows that China was rather a “culturally defined community” than a “politically nation state”.<sup>6</sup> The imperial Chinese identity was based on the common cultural heritage of Chinese people, before culturalism was replaced by nationalism. The definition of “culturalism” is rather complex and unique for China, but the key concept of culturalism is universalism—the “common identity of humanity”.<sup>7</sup> It means that Chinese culture is the evidence and focus of Chinese people’s loyalty. In traditional China, people do not have an idea of how a politically established nation state is like. According to Duara, “[c]ulturalism referred to a natural conviction of cultural superiority that sought no legitimation or defense outside of the culture itself”.<sup>8</sup> Chinese people view China as the only civilization in the universe and the center of all sets of ideas and values. This concept is largely applied and used in education, monarchy, “foreign” relations, thinking and laws.

Nationalism has long been a broad and complex research topic. Identity is a deep abstract concept, not to mention its various kinds. Nationalism and national identity are two separate concepts but inter-connected. Smith came up with an interesting definition of nationalism: (nationalism) is “an ideological movement for autonomy, unity and identity for a human population”.<sup>9</sup> Nationalism is a political ideology, which identifies attached individuals as

---

<sup>4</sup> Zhao, *A Nation- State by Construction*, 41.

<sup>5</sup> James Townsend in “Chinese Nationalism” quoting James Harrison, *Modern Chinese Nationalism* (Hunter College of the City of New York, Research Institute on Modern Asia, New York, n.d. 1969), 2.

<sup>6</sup> Zhao, *A Nation- State by Construction*, 12.

<sup>7</sup> Zhao, *A Nation- State by Construction*, 43.

<sup>8</sup> Prasenjit Duara, “De-Constructing the Chinese Nation” in *Chinese Nationalism*, ed. Jonathan Unger (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc: 1996), 32.

<sup>9</sup> Anthony D. Smith, “Nationalism and Global Culture,” in *Nationalism and Globalisation—Conflicting or complementary?*, ed. Daphne Halikiopoulou and Sofia Vasilopoulou (New York: Routledge, 2011), 153.

citizens or “belongings” of a nation in political terms. In the words of Gellner, people are all current nationals and nationalism is the ‘taken-for-granted’ ideology that binds people to the nation state.<sup>10</sup> Huyseune, who brings the definition of nationalism to another level, indicates that nationalism is the “political and public expression of national identity”, which includes “doctrine, cultural practices, and sets of symbols, myths and rituals”.<sup>11</sup> According to Huyseune, nationalism can both be applied under the context of an existing nation state and by the minorities challenging the political status quo. Furthermore, he explains that nationalism “expresses the identification of citizens with their state, and the policies of governments to reinforce such identification. It is based on the existence of a shared national identity”.<sup>12</sup>

National identity, on the other hand, is individual’s own sense of belonging to a nation or a nation state, influenced by important factors such as history, common culture and traditions of a group of people or a piece of territory, common languages, food culture etc. For example, one can have “Spanish” as nationality shown in the passport, while considering himself/herself as “Catalan” as national identity. It is up to every individual to define his or her national identity and sense of belonging, regardless of legal citizenship status. According to Huyseune, “[t]he difficulties of defining national identities is the cause of the continuously disruptive nature of nationalism”.<sup>13</sup> So what exactly is identity and why does national identity matter? Three reasons can be concluded according to Bechhofer and McCrone. First of all, identity, including national identity, is rather a cultural, sociological, political and psychological phenomenon than the preserve of social science discipline. Secondly, national identity matters because “added fixes of ‘nationalism’ are required to hold the citizenry closer

---

<sup>10</sup> Frank Bechhofer and David McCrone, “National Identity, Nationalism and Constitutional Change” in *National Identity, Nationalism and Constitutional Change*, referring to Ernest Gellner, ed. Frank Bechhofer and David McCrone (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 3, accessed July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015, [http://www.law.ed.ac.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/35939/chap1\\_intro.pdf](http://www.law.ed.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/35939/chap1_intro.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> Michel Huyseune, “Nationalism and Identity Politics in International Relations,” *International Relations* Vol. I: 1-3, accessed June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2015, <http://www.eolss.net/sample-chapters/c14/e1-35-01-06.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

to the state precisely at the moment at which it can deliver less and less in a ‘globalized’ world”.<sup>14</sup> Thirdly, to quote Bechhofer and McCrone,

National identity also involves quite basic social, political and economic issues such as the legitimacy of public policies, matters of social inclusion and exclusion, prejudice and discrimination, whether we judge the actions of organizations to be in the ‘national’ interest, that is, the interest of the collective ‘we’, and whether we are willing or not to move away from ‘us’ and live among ‘them’.<sup>15</sup>

After having discussed the meaning and importance of national identity as well as the interconnected relationships between nationalism and national identity above, this research in the following sections intends to discover the development of identities among the Chinese immigrants to Sweden by using nationalism theories to explain the Chinese roots, China as a nation state and those immigrants as previous citizens of China.

Chinese nationalism was gradually developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century when more and more Chinese people began to think beyond the cultural concept of their country and more in political terms—China as a nation state. Factors that construct Chinese nationalism include history, culture, religion, traditions, common social values, language, self-identification and territorial boundaries etc. Although those factors have existed throughout time, the national consciousness of Chinese identity did not change before the external sources, particularly globalization of the “European dominated nation-state system” pushed forward the reform in the Chinese society. According to Zhao, new dangers and threats to the national identity from both internally and externally are the crucial causes for the construction or reconstruction of nationalism.<sup>16</sup> In other words, the humiliation of foreign powers pushed forward the appearance of Chinese nationalism. As Zhao mentioned in his book, “[m]odern Chinese nationalist consciousness was a product of recent history, sparked by China’s defeats in a series of wars against the Western powers and imperial Japan in the nineteenth century”.<sup>17</sup> China, at that time, started to be challenged by Western civilizations.

---

<sup>14</sup> Bechhofer and McCrone, “National Identity, Nationalism and Constitutional Change”, 6-12, quote on page 6.

<sup>15</sup> Bechhofer and McCrone, “National Identity, Nationalism and Constitutional Change”, 15.

<sup>16</sup> Zhao, *A Nation- State by Construction*, 19.

<sup>17</sup> Zhao, *A Nation- State by Construction*, 37-38.



## 2.1 Historical Memory and Collective Identity

Historical collective memory is what binds a group of people together. Why is historical memory important to nationalism and what influences does it have? Nationalism is closely linked together with historical memory, because shared common myths and cultural heritage, memories, languages as well as traditions are all essential factors for the rise of nationalism.<sup>18</sup>

As Markovits and Reich explained in their book:

The politics of collective memory—impossible to quantify, hard to measure with the methods of survey research, yet still very real—is a major ingredient of the political arena, the public discourse, and the policy setting in every country. It circumscribes the acceptable. It defines such key ingredients as pride, shame, fear, revenge and comfort for a large number of a country’s citizens. It is central to an understanding of the forces of nationalism.<sup>19</sup>

Furthermore, as Wang mentioned in his book, Smith thinks that “ethnic, national, and religious identities are built on historical myths that define who a group member is, what it means to be a group member, and typically who the group’s enemies are”.<sup>20</sup> Although China was once the oldest civilization and most culturally rich empire in the world, the Chinese collective memory in reality is filled with poverty, clear class division and inequality. In the Chinese history, wealth was always concentrated among the first class people (royal families, rich businessmen, ministers of states etc.), leaving the majority of the population in poverty, shame and starvation.<sup>21</sup> The fact that China was bullied by foreign powers in modern history made the Chinese realize that a country with poor people would never become a strong country. Thus, after the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) founded the People’s Republic of China, the primary goal was to seek equality and let the rich help the poor to become rich. Although China has largely modernized its financial system after P.R. China was founded and indeed increased the living standards of the majority Chinese people, it still has a long way to go in the process of updating the political system and citizen education in order to become a real modern nation state that keeps up with the globalizing trend in the twenty-first century. It

---

<sup>18</sup> Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 26.

<sup>19</sup> Andrei S. Markovits and Simon Reich, *The German Predicament* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1997), 9.

<sup>20</sup> Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 20 referring to Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford, England: Blackwell, 1986).

<sup>21</sup> Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 237.

is not difficult to find patriotic education materials in Chinese schools, which aim to remind the younger Chinese generations about China's past traumatic experiences and educate younger individuals about how to react to and defeat the collective humiliation so that it does not happen again in the future. This is one of the reasons why educated young Chinese people are more nationalistic and are the ones that spread nationalistic ideas, speeches and writings on the Internet, although they did not necessarily experience the humiliation directly. The government also uses internet as a political tool to constantly remind Chinese people about its history and memory, as well as spreading Chinese nationalism and patriotism, especially whenever there is a national anniversary coming up that is related to humiliation, victory from wars, or bloody and painful memories that shall never be forgotten.<sup>22</sup>

Historical memory is one of the basic foundations of collective identity. It plays a significant role in how a group of people categorizes and identifies themselves. It solidifies the group members' ideas and influences policy behaviors. Historical memory also provides contents for group members to compare and refer to other groups. Modern Chinese history was rather complex and historical memory of Chinese people was largely influenced by the "century of humiliation" when China was weak and attacked by external sources. Many Chinese people share a strong collective historical consciousness due to the "century of humiliation", which has become an essential element in shaping the national identity of Chinese people.<sup>23</sup> Previous scholars have come up with three approaches to look at historical memory and collective identity. First of all, "primordialist" approach indicates that historical memory and collective identity are based on "primordial ties of blood, kinship, language and common history", which means that the older generations have made their choices on what to tell and how to tell their younger generations about their memories. The second approach is "constructivist" approach, which emphasizes that identity is later manufactured rather than originally given. Scholars following this approach argue that both "ethnicity and identity are socially constructed". They also claim that younger generations learn about history not only through family memory and story telling but also largely through formal education, books, media as well as other socially accepted means. The third approach, described as "instrumentalist" approach, claims that

---

<sup>22</sup> Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 233-241.

<sup>23</sup> Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 227.

leaders make use of history and memory to promote individual and collective interests and fight for power.<sup>24</sup> As Wang explained in his book, “[e]thnic categories can also be manipulated to maintain the power of a dominant group and justify discrimination against other groups...the instrumentalist approach treats ethnicity primarily as an ad hoc element of a political strategy”.<sup>25</sup> This approach also suggests that ethnic conflicts are not always as fierce as they seem to the public. It might be because the leaders of the ethnic groups exaggerate facts to meet their own interests. In the Analysis and Discussions section of this thesis, research findings will be analyzed in order to test those three approaches and see if they can be applied to the Chinese immigrants’ identity development patterns.

## 2.2 Theories of Chinese Nationalism in Modern Chinese History

China is a country with long and complicated history. Zhao indicates that Chinese nationalism is a result of mixed national and social revolutions. From the Japanese invasion in the 1930s to the Korean War in the 1950s, China has struggled to resist external sources and construct a Chinese nation state.<sup>26</sup> The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union brought territorial conflicts and the rise of nationalism in many parts of the world. China was one of the countries that was largely influenced by the fact that all of a sudden it was left alone by the “older communist brother”—the glorious Soviet Union, given the fact that China was still struggling to find its way to become a modern nation state. Dramatic changes were brought to China and its policies domestically and internationally; in other words, “the Chinese communist state repositioned itself as the defender of China’s national interests in an attempt to block criticism from both internal and external sources”.<sup>27</sup>

Zhao argues that nationalism in a modern context means a combination of political and territorial self-identification, national cultural notion as citizens’ primary identity, as well as a moral idea of justification to protect the nation’s rights against any other external forces.<sup>28</sup> In his book, Zhao indicates three types of nationalism in modern Chinese history: liberal nationalism, ethnic nationalism as well as state nationalism. Liberal nationalism, in other

---

<sup>24</sup> Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 21-22.

<sup>25</sup> Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 22.

<sup>26</sup> Zhao, *A Nation- State by Construction*, 20.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Zhao, *A Nation- State by Construction*, 16.

words, means the building of “nationhood”, common citizenship, territory, and a united and single voice in its political participation in the international world. As Zhao explains liberal nationalism, it “proclaims the civil right of participation in the government”.<sup>29</sup> Ethnic nationalism means the construction of a single ethnic state, dominated by an existing ethnic group. To quote Zhao, “[e]thnic nationalism sees the nation as a politicized ethnic group defined by common culture and decent, shared historical experiences, and usually a common language”.<sup>30</sup> State nationalism emphasizes the importance to maintain the boundaries of the existing territory and people, to give the government the right and power to “reinforce its identity, and to justify the use force to preserve its sovereignty against external as well as internal threats”.<sup>31</sup> State nationalism also defines the nation as a territorial political unit and it functions as a system to gather its citizens and make sovereign collective decisions.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, state nationalism acknowledges the ethnic diversity among its people, but emphasizes that despite of ethnicity and historical internal dissension, everyone binds together as part of a larger nation.<sup>33</sup> Zhao’s categorizations of the three types of Chinese nationalism are suitable for the uniqueness of the Chinese model. Therefore, the theories and challenges of ethnic nationalism, liberal nationalism and state nationalism are used in this research. This study intends to find out what types of nationalism the Chinese immigrants belong to both before and after immigration, and what factors influence their self-identification development. Do open or closed ethnic, liberal and state nationalism apply to the Chinese immigrants? Why do they define themselves as they do? What has influenced their self-definitions of identity and what is the outcome? The three types of nationalism are applied later in the Analysis and Discussions part in order to be connected to the research findings from both the surveys and interviews.

### **2.2.1 Ethnic Nationalism**

The People’s Republic of China consists of approximately ninety-three percent of Han Chinese and other seven percent of “non-Chinese” including fifty-five minority ethnicities.

---

<sup>29</sup> Zhao, *A Nation- State by Construction*, 20.

<sup>30</sup> Zhao, *A Nation- State by Construction*, 21.

<sup>31</sup> Zhao, *A Nation- State by Construction*, 20.

<sup>32</sup> Zhao, *A Nation- State by Construction*, 26.

<sup>33</sup> James Townsend, “Chinese Nationalism” in *Chinese Nationalism*, ed. Jonathan Unger (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc: 1996), 18.

Scholars have come up with the argument that China was formed through joint forces of different ethnic groups over five thousand years of history and with Han Chinese being the core nationality, together with every other ethnic minority “nationality” it forms the greater Chinese nation.<sup>34</sup> According to Zhao, the modern Chinese nation state is a product of the history of conflicts, interactions, interethnic wars and conquests between different ethnic groups within the Chinese boundary and the formation of the Chinese nation lasted centuries long involving multiple competing states and ethnicities.<sup>35</sup> Throughout history, different ethnic groups were barely united and they were constantly competing in wars in order to become the ruler of the state. Expansions of the Chinese nation during different dynasties came with painful and violent ethnic tensions and conquering. Although many scholars claim that the study of Chinese ethnic nationalism is the study of the Han Chinese people’s revolution history, it should not be forgotten to mention that the Manchus, as an ethnic minority group, ruled China for two hundred sixty eight years.

Most of the literatures I have found about Chinese ethnic nationalism mainly emphasize the internal ethnic issues within the Chinese nation state and what policies the Chinese government throughout history have imposed in order to prevent ethnic conflicts and interethnic wars. Given the limitation of the allowed length of this thesis and since the chosen research group members all come from the Han ethnicity and this research is about Chinese immigrants living in Sweden, I hereby refer to the Chinese immigrants as a united ethnic minority group in Sweden with shared common history, myths, language, culture and traditions. I look at their identity development under a broader and international context rather than being limited to the ethnic issues within the Chinese boundary. I focus on how much “Chineseness” is left after their immigration to Sweden and intend to find out what factors are behind their identity development.

In Han’s book, he did research about what other factors influence the national identity of an ethnic minority group:

---

<sup>34</sup> Zhao, *A Nation- State by Construction*, 166-167.

<sup>35</sup> Zhao, *A Nation- State by Construction*, 168-169.

External cultural ties can also play a substantial role in an ethnic group's identity contestation...[N]ational identity contestation can be generated within a triangular relationship involving the majority state, an ethnic minority group, and the group's external national "homeland"...[T]here is a nationalizing state, where the "core nation", represented by the ethnic majority, uses state power to promote its specific interests in ethnocultural terms...[T]here is also a minority group, which might have interests in defending its cultural autonomy and resisting the nationalizing and assimilating force coming from the majority state.<sup>36</sup>

In the case of the Chinese immigrants in Sweden, they already have China and at least partial Chinese culture as their "external cultural ties", and thus their self-definitions of identities and senses of belonging are largely based on personal historical experiences as well as social, political and economic interactions with other social groups (the majority) in the Swedish society. Apart from the identities, as Han points out, "a certain group's value standards are set against a reference framework that involves some other groups with which this group identifies (or is thought to do)".<sup>37</sup> This statement can be applied to the Chinese immigrants' common value standards, which is to be analyzed in the latter sections of this thesis.

### **2.2.2 Liberal Nationalism**

In the nationalist discourse, it is not hard to find the conflicts between the national and personal rights. The concepts of liberalism and nationalism were brought to China around the same time in the twentieth century by the Chinese revolutionists who were calling for social reform and changes of status quo. The Chinese revolutionists intended to use both nationalism and liberalism to make the citizens of China become new members of the society by refreshing their self-consciousness on both patriotism and individualism. However, after a century of humiliation, when the Chinese Communist Party founded People's Republic of China in 1949, the national dignity was far prioritized to the individual rights. Liberalism was weak when compared to the struggle of survival and independence of the Chinese nation. Zhao argues that the liberalist idea and the nationalist idea are often incompatible because liberalism recognizes and emphasizes individual rights across national borders and nationalism

---

<sup>36</sup> Enze Han, *Contestation and Adaptation- The Politics of National Identity in China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 9.

<sup>37</sup> Han, *Contestation and Adaptation- The Politics of National Identity in China*, 12.

indicates the ruling by an authoritarian government that often do not care about individual rights.<sup>38</sup> However, Zhao also indicates that liberalism and nationalism did somewhat work together in twentieth-century China because the struggle of national independence brought forth a non-universal liberalism, which was similar to the nineteenth-century European liberal nationalism.<sup>39</sup> Thus, the core concept of Chinese liberal nationalism to build a modern nation state, at that time, was to “build a China that was powerful enough to protect the rights of the Chinese nation but also liberal enough to protect the rights of the Chinese people”.<sup>40</sup> After national independence was achieved, although Chinese liberal nationalism still recognized the importance of collective right of the national state, the protection and struggle of individual rights have become more and more obvious and influential.

Many liberalist movements were going on in China after the death of Mao, such as the May Fourth Movement and the 1989 Tiananmen Square pro-democracy movement. Many liberalists blamed the Communist system in China and even heavily criticized and rejected traditional Chinese culture as they favored the models of modernization in the Western countries, which they believed would help build a new, modern and “free” China.<sup>41</sup> Zhao summarizes that the liberalists were struggling between “Western culture and Chinese culture and the relationship between the trend of globalization and the principle of nationalism”.<sup>42</sup>

### **2.2.3 State Nationalism**

As mentioned earlier, the imperial China was based on culturalism for thousands of years until it was replaced by nationalism. Townsend claims that culturalism could lend its ideas to state nationalism, meaning that it supports a new China-centered political community ruling the old empire.<sup>43</sup> The difference between state nationalism and liberal nationalism is that state nationalism emphasizes the collective sovereignty of the nation and sees individuals as members of the greater nation. Zhao indicates that the difference between state nationalism and ethnic nationalism is between “the nationalism of peoples who possess a state, and the

---

<sup>38</sup> Zhao, *A Nation- State by Construction*, 121.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Zhao, *A Nation- State by Construction*, 120.

<sup>41</sup> Zhao, *A Nation- State by Construction*, 132-134.

<sup>42</sup> Zhao, *A Nation- State by Construction*, 147.

<sup>43</sup> Townsend, “Chinese Nationalism”, 15.

nationalism of those who do not”.<sup>44</sup> Townsend has also come up with an interesting and relevant argument on the definition of Chinese state nationalism in comparison to Chinese ethnic nationalism:

The state cannot deny the potential for ethnic nationalism on behalf of a particular ethnic group, or deny that many of its citizens lack strong attachments to larger political communities. Hence state nationalism requires ‘nation-building’; creation of a new Chinese nation that incorporates all of its nationalities; concentration of political loyalty on the state; and repudiation of the idea that Chinese history and culture are purely a Han affair.<sup>45</sup>

Chinese state nationalism in modern history thus indicates that all citizens of China are members of the greater nation of China regardless of their ethnicity. It was largely influenced by “international norms emphasizing the indivisibility of territorial sovereignty and citizenship”.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, in the twentieth-century China, state nationalism was favored by the Chinese Communist Party in order to build a united with ethnical diversity, independent, sovereign and centralized nation state, based on the collective Chinese identity—China’s survival, cultural uniqueness and the glorious Chinese history. Freedom was pursued rather for the nation state than the individual citizens and individuals were educated to subordinate personal interests and destiny to national interests and destiny.<sup>47</sup>

In the early stage of modern China’s nation building, this kind of socialist patriotism worked well because China was in desperate need of getting out from the shadows of the century of foreign invasion and humiliation. However, the overlay of Marxism and Maoism and the struggle of class during the 1960s and 70s led to a crisis of public believe in Marxism and Maoism during the years of reform between 1980s and 90s.<sup>48</sup> As Zhao analyzed, “[t]his crisis forced the communist state to construct a new national identity incorporating the changes brought about by the market-oriented economic reform”.<sup>49</sup> This is when modern China started

---

<sup>44</sup> Zhao, *A Nation- State by Construction*, 26.

<sup>45</sup> Townsend, “Chinese Nationalism”, 18.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Zhao, *A Nation- State by Construction*, 26-28.

<sup>48</sup> Zhao, *A Nation- State by Construction*, 28.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.



to open up itself to the outer international world and Chinese nationalism started to modernize in a globalizing world.

### 2.3 From Nationalism to Globalization—Nationalism in a global context

History has its turns. The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union have regained people's faith in capitalism and meanwhile brought a new aspect of an existing ideology to the modern society's attention—modern globalization. Why isn't the concept of globalization new? International integration has long existed throughout the past centuries from the East to the West, the West to the East, from the Chinese invention of gunpowder to the transmit of firearms in the Middle East, Europe and Africa and from the English invention of electrostatic telegraph to the spread of modern telephones in the rest of the world. Many countries already opened up their capital markets for foreign investments in the nineteenth century.<sup>50</sup> Thus, many types of modern science and technology, along with industrialism and capitalism, not to mention liberalism and democracy, religion and Christianity were all exported from Europe to the rest of the world during the nineteenth century.<sup>51</sup>

Looking back history, the phenomenon of global integration is not new but what should be admitted is that the impact and extent of globalization today are not the same as in the history. The increasing mobility of international integration has brought forth fierce debates about its advantages and disadvantages as well as its impacts on nation states. Researchers have conducted extensive studies in order to find out whether or not globalization undermines the nation state.<sup>52</sup> While many researchers claim that globalization is a threat to nationalism, Wolf thinks "globalization does not make states unnecessary... Global governance will not come at the expense of the state but rather as an expression of the interests that the state embodies".<sup>53</sup> According to these scholars, contemporary globalization is not only a modern phenomenon,

---

<sup>50</sup> Martin Wolf, "Will the nation-state survive globalization?", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 80, No.1 (2001): 180, accessed July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015, <https://srliebel.files.wordpress.com/2009/08/wolf-fa-2001.pdf>.

<sup>51</sup> John Hutchinson, "Globalization and Nation Formation in the Longue Duree," in *Nationalism and Globalization—Conflicting or Complementary?*, ed. Daphne Halikiopoulou and Sofia Vasilopoulou (New York: Routledge, 2011), 91.

<sup>52</sup> Daphne Halikiopoulou and Sofia Vasilopoulou, "Bridging the Gap Between Nationalism and Globalization," in *Nationalism and Globalization—Conflicting or Complementary?*, ed. Daphne Halikiopoulou and Sofia Vasilopoulou (New York: Routledge, 2011), 2.

<sup>53</sup> Wolf, "Will the nation-state survive globalization?", 190.

but also a process that connects different types of nationalism, definitions of national identity and national sovereignty. Furthermore, globalization is a modern supplement of nationalism, a positive mixture of ethnicities, and an effective intermediary for nation states to express their economic, political as well as social interests. It is not the end of nationalism rather a new social developing trend. Therefore, nationalism and globalization are inter-connected and have positive influences over each other. The relationship between nationalism and globalization must be analyzed from different angles, taking into consideration not only the political, economic and historical factors, but also the cultural and international relations. The statement above is based on what Halikiopoulou and Vasilopoulou have mentioned in their book, that there are many patterns of interaction between nationalism and globalization and they are constantly changing across time and space, given that nationalism has both influenced and been influenced by the different impacts of globalization throughout history.<sup>54</sup> Smith's argument about the delicate relationship between nationalism and globalization supports the statement above even further:

Globalizing trends of science and technology, economic interdependence, mass communications and migration, by compressing time and space and bringing into close contact so many peoples, faiths and cultures across the world, are actually encouraging localism, ethnicity and ethnic nationalism (and hence multiculturalism) rather than eroding or transcending them, as is so often claimed.<sup>55</sup>

Speaking from the angle of international labor mobility and migration, with the development of transportation, Internet and foreign language education, globalization today has risen to a much higher level. Citizens become more “free” to move around the world with the help of modern resources and the conveniences, which largely contribute to migration at a global level. The frequent movement of labor has contributed to economic integration at an international level. Global economic integration, according to Wolf, is a choice rather than destination. He claims that (globalization) is “a choice made to enhance a nation's economic

---

<sup>54</sup> Daphne Halikiopoulou and Sofia Vasilopoulou, “Nationalism and Globalization: Conflicting or Complementary?” in *Nationalism and Globalization: Conflicting or Complementary?* ed. Daphne Halikiopoulou and Sofia Vasilopoulou (New York: Routledge, 2011), 186.

<sup>55</sup> Smith, “Nationalism and Global Culture”, 158.

well-being”.<sup>56</sup> In other words, globalization not only brings rapid growth of citizens’ mobilities, but also increases economic interests and promotes international cooperation across the established national borders. On the other hand, the increasing conveniences brought by the improvement of transportation and Internet have made it easier for the migrants to stay well connected with the countries of origin, which largely contributes to many areas such as global cultural exchange. While the governments’ control and policies over migrants seeking international employment tightened noticeably over the past century, a good example of how beneficial global labor integration is the establishment of European Union, where free movement of labor is allowed and migration is relatively more flexible when compared to other countries in the world. As Hutchinson argues, “European nationalists were potent carriers of globalization in the modern period”.<sup>57</sup>

To conclude, globalization does not endanger or make states unnecessary. On the contrary, for citizens who can afford global integration and who are following the trends of social development, they still need states to provide security and support to maintain their senses of belonging and national pride. Last but not the least, to quote Halikiopoulou and Vasilopoulou’s conclusion, “[n]ationalism is one manifestation of modern globalization, and the intensification of globalization will not bring the era of nations to an end”.<sup>58</sup>

### 3. Methodology

Methods that are used in this research include survey analysis, individual interview as well as narrative analysis. Surveys are largely limited by the length and number of questions that can be included and thus survey answers do not cover all my interests. Therefore, a combination of survey analysis and individual interview is chosen in order to minimize the limitations and to collect more interpretive and complete data from the respondents. Survey analysis is chosen as the primary method, and individual interview as a follow-up for the interpretation of the survey results. It is interesting to find out how the respondents react to and expand their own

---

<sup>56</sup> Wolf, “Will the nation-state survive globalization?”, 182.

<sup>57</sup> Hutchinson, “Globalization and Nation Formation in the Longue Duree”, 91.

<sup>58</sup> Halikiopoulou and Vasilopoulou, “Nationalism and Globalization: Conflicting or Complementary?”, 189.

responses of the survey when surrounded by unfamiliar settings in the interviews, in places such as local cafés, restaurants, university buildings and so on. Since the interviews are mainly conducted in Chinese and it is impossible to translate all the transcripts within the given length of time, only the relevant parts are translated. The complete original transcripts are available in the external archive. A group of Chinese immigrants are chosen for this research. All of them have lived in Sweden for more than eight years and the ages of the chosen participants vary between twenty-four and fifty-five. Out of respect and support to the participants and since most of them request to stay anonymous, none of their names or backgrounds that could possibly lead to the identification are mentioned. Instead, this research focuses on their arguments.

### 3.1 Survey Analysis

Surveys are designed to produce statistics on a certain research topic based on a certain target group.<sup>59</sup> The first step before designing the survey is to describe the target group—the expected respondents, about who they are, why they are chosen and how they are going to contribute to the research topic. Through the respondents' answers to the surveys, one can find out the characteristics, preferences and thoughts of the participants. Although the survey methodology is efficient and informative, it is important to mention that there are usually two types of errors, which might occur during the survey process. The first type of error to be concerned is random variation of the target group instead of every single member of the population. This type of error is usually called “sampling error”.<sup>60</sup> The second type of error refers to “bias”, meaning that the chosen respondents of the survey can be different from the target population as a whole in some systematic way.<sup>61</sup> It is possible that the chosen group of participants cannot correctly and precisely represent the whole existing population. Furthermore, surveys are largely limited by the number and depth of the questions that can be included.

---

<sup>59</sup> Floyd J. Fowler, "2 Types of Error in Surveys" in *Survey Research Methods* (4th ed.)(Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2009), 11, accessed December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781452230184.n2>

<sup>60</sup> Fowler, "2 Types of Error in Surveys", 14

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

The chosen target group for this research—the participants for both the surveys and individual interviews are a group of Chinese immigrants who moved to Sweden for different reasons during the past decades. They work in a variety of professions and have different understandings of the Chinese and Swedish cultures and societies. What is in common among these respondents is that they all have been living in Sweden for more than eight years, which is a minimum reasonable length of time to be able to have deeper insights and comparisons between the two societies. Besides, they were all Chinese citizens before they moved to Sweden and some of them have even kept their Chinese citizenship after having lived in Sweden for many years. Furthermore, they all speak Chinese, understand Chinese culture, society and traditions, have attachments to China but meanwhile they are all legally recognized by the Swedish society—they are either current Swedish citizens or permanent residents in Sweden. They contribute to this research by providing data for both the surveys and the later follow-up interviews. Through their responses, category divisions are made and by comparing and analyzing the categories, answers to the research questions can be found. Chinese is chosen as the main research language for both surveys and interviews. All respondents are required to send the completed surveys back at least one day before the scheduled interviews to allow for reasonable amount of time for creating follow-up questions for the interviews. Below are the translated survey questions that are sent out to each respondent.

- 1) When did you come to Sweden?
- 2) For what reasons did you choose to move to Sweden?
- 3) Before you moved to Sweden, were you a traditional Chinese person or a person with international mindset who always wanted to go abroad and look for new experiences?
- 4) What do you work with now? Or if you are a student, what do you study?
- 5) Did you think it was hard or easy to integrate into the society here? Please explain why you think this way.
- 6) Could you remember your experience of learning Swedish language? How did the Swedish language learning experience influence your self-definitions of identity?
- 7) What language(s) do you speak at home here? If not Chinese, have you tried to teach your family members Chinese? And why?
- 8) Would you like your children/future children to learn Chinese? And why?

- 9) Do you prefer to eat Chinese food than other types of food? How important is the Chinese food culture to your self-definition of identity?
- 10) What do you feel about your identity; do you think you are Swedish or Chinese, or perhaps a mixture of both, or neither of them?
- 11) Do you feel Sweden is your home country when you travel abroad or do you feel China is your home country when you travel abroad? And why?

While survey analysis is chosen as the primary method, its limitations and errors are taken into consideration. The “sampling error” cannot be avoided because it is impossible to choose every single member of the Chinese immigrant group to Sweden for this research and therefore only a random variation of the group are able to be invited as participants for the surveys. The “bias” error can also exist in the chosen samples because everyone has different backgrounds and experiences, which makes it difficult to differentiate whether or not the chosen participants can correctly and precisely represent all the Chinese immigrants to Sweden. Individual interviews take place after the survey responses are submitted, which is explained in the next section.

### 3.2 Individual Interview

Interview is one of the most commonly used methodologies in researches within social sciences and humanities. There are many different kinds of interviews and the purposes of interviews vary from researcher to researcher. Interviews produce materials on people’s understandings, attitudes, opinions, feelings and experiences. Compared to surveys, in-depth interviews are more exploratory and qualitative. Interviews concentrate on the “distinctive features of situations and events, and upon the beliefs and personal experiences of individuals”.<sup>62</sup>

This research is largely interview-based because interview makes it easier to capture multiple opinions of a chosen topic. Moreover, by observing the interviewees’ behaviors during the interviews, it helps to get deep insights about how the chosen target group members think

---

<sup>62</sup> Ariadne Vromen, “Debating Methods: Rediscovering Qualitative Approaches,” in *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, ed. David Marsh and Gerry Stoker (England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 258.

about their identities and national belongingness, which matches the aim of this research. Puskas in his PhD dissertation describes the advantage of individual interviews as “they give a detailed picture of how individuals make use of national and ethnic modes of identifications”.<sup>63</sup>

The type of individual interview method chosen in this research is called oral history interview. An oral history interview contains an interviewer and at least one interviewee, both of whom intend to create a record for understanding of some parts of the past. It gives the interviewee sufficient time to tell stories, and it seeks in-depth connection of personal experience, memories and reflections.<sup>64</sup> One of the important reasons why oral history interview is widely used as a method and strategy is that it collects information from the past, which do not exist in written copies about history, people, memories, important historical events and much more. Truesdell explains the definition and use of oral history interviews very well in her article, which is quoted below:

Oral history interviews are grounded in memory, and memory is a subjective instrument for recording the past, always shaped by the present moment and the individual psyche. Oral history can reveal how individual values and actions shaped the past, and how the past shapes present-day values and actions.<sup>65</sup>

Indeed, one can see how history influenced the individual values and memories through interviews. Each and every interview process is unique and it is interesting to find out how different participants, who have different historical and social backgrounds, ages, professions as well as memories respond to the same questions. The interviews themselves are not comparable but the empirical materials based on collective stories produced by those interviews are the valuables to be compared and analyzed. This research aims to find out how history, time, memory, culture, traditions, immigration and society shaped the identities of the

---

<sup>63</sup> Tünde Puskas, “ ‘We belong to them’ Narratives of Belonging, Homeland and Nationhood in Territorial and Non-territorial Minority Settings”(PhD diss., Linköping University, 2009), 66.

<sup>64</sup> “Principles for Oral History and Best Practices for Oral History”, Oral History Association, accessed June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015, <http://www.oralhistory.org/about/principles-and-practices/>.

<sup>65</sup> Barbara Truesdell, “Oral History Techniques: How to Organize and Conduct Oral History Interviews ” (Indiana University, Center for the Study of History and Memory), 1, accessed June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015, URL: <http://www.indiana.edu/~cshsm>.

Chinese immigrants, and in-depth oral historical interviews to those Chinese immigrants produce the materials needed and largely help to test the research questions. This is one of the main reasons why individual interview is chosen in this research. Besides, one of the steps in this research is to see how people recall their own historical memories and their relations to others in a social setting, as well as their reactions to the social surroundings, a different culture as well as the society itself and by using individual oral historical interview as a method, it highlights their in-depth perspectives about self-identifications.

The interviews are conducted in different places, such as interviewees' work offices, local coffee shops, restaurants and so on. Those places are chosen because the interview atmosphere is meant to be casual and calm, in order to get to know how the interviewees behave normally in daily life. The interviews last from half an hour to two hours, depending on if the interviewees are willing to reflect and recall more in their historical memories. Some of the interviewees find it difficult to understand questions related to identity because the definition of identity itself is too abstract. In the case of lack of understanding, expansions and explanations to those questions are provided and examples are listed in order to reduce the difficulties. The research findings are listed in the Findings and Results section.

### 3.3 Narrative Analysis

Narrative analysis is a method that is widely used in studying personal life stories, political, historical and social movements. Storytelling is a collaborative activity that gathers attentions from both the interviewers and interviewees. It is descriptive, situated, and open to public critics. In narrative analysis, events are particularly selected and evaluated and the stories as well as interpretations shared by the storyteller are meaningful and useful for the intended research. The definition of narratives has no set standard and can vary from research to research and area to area. Different interviewers thus use different methods of analysis, but what's in common is that they keep all the data filed and they make good use of the transcripts for the later analysis. Narratives are particularly important in the representation and analysis of identity in various contexts.<sup>66</sup> According to Somers, there are mainly four features of

---

<sup>66</sup> Catherine Kohler Riessman, "Analysis of personal narratives" in *Handbook of Interviewing*, ed. J.F. Gubrium and J.A. Holstein (Sage Publications, 2001), 24, accessed June 13th 2015, <http://alumni.media.mit.edu/~brooks/storybiz/riessman.pdf>.



narrativity: “relationality of parts”, “causal emplotment”, “selective appropriation” and “temporality, sequence and place”. He also emphasizes that “evaluative criteria” is crucial to narrativity.<sup>67</sup>

Riessman indicates that there are mainly four types of narrative analysis: thematic analysis, structural analysis, interactional analysis and performative analysis.<sup>68</sup> Thematic analysis focuses on the results more than the process. The interviewer collects the data and creates categories and groupings inductively. The narrative analysis categorized under this theme uses a “representational strategy, with case studies or vignettes providing illustration”.<sup>69</sup> According to Riessman, the thematic approach is helpful when conducting a wide range of case studies among participants by discovering common thematic elements and thereafter elaborating a developing theory. Language acts only as means of communication instead of the actual topic of investigation. However, this type of narrative analysis does not apply in wider institutional and cultural discourses. It assumes that narratives grouped into a certain thematic category are exactly the same. It ignores the unspoken responses that do not fit in the set category.<sup>70</sup>

The second type of narrative analysis, structural analysis, on the other hand focuses more on the storytelling process instead of the results. Language plays a much more important role here when compared to the first approach. In this approach, structure plays the most important role, meaning that it consists of abstract, orientation, complication action, evaluation, resolution and an ending coda.<sup>71</sup> It focuses on how the narrative is telling the story and thus this approach is not suitable and practical for large numbers of interviews, rather a small number of more detailed and in depth case studies.

---

<sup>67</sup> Margaret R. Somers, “The Narrative Constitution of Identity: A Relational and Network Approach”, *Theory and Society*, Vol. 23, No. 5 (1994): 616, accessed June 13<sup>th</sup> 2015, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/658090>.

<sup>68</sup> Catherine Kohler Riessman, “Narrative Analysis” in *Narrative, Memory & Everyday Life* (Huddersfield: University of Huddersfield, 2005), 2-5, accessed June 13<sup>th</sup> 2015, [http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/4920/2/Chapter\\_1\\_-\\_Catherine\\_Kohler\\_Riessman.pdf](http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/4920/2/Chapter_1_-_Catherine_Kohler_Riessman.pdf).

<sup>69</sup> Riessman, “Narrative Analysis”, 3.

<sup>70</sup> Riessman, “Narrative Analysis”, 4.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

In the third approach, the focus shifts to the collaboration between the interviewer and the narrative. This interactional analysis takes form of discussion, which requires joint participation for both the story teller and the interviewer. All participants, events, stories, interactions, even pauses, environment, interruptions as well as topic chaining during the discussions are required to be transcribed.<sup>72</sup> This approach is far more than being detailed. On one hand, it helps to develop in-depth analysis of the narrative itself and the possible factors that influence the storytelling; on the other hand, unlike making a videotape, it is hard to record everything in transcripts, for example gestures, silence and other displays are hard to be documented correctly.

The last approach, performative analysis, is an extension of the interactional analysis. The focus shifts from “telling” to “acting”. Futures of this type of analysis include: “actors allowed on stage in an oral narrative”, “settings”, “the enactment of dialogue between characters” and “audience response” that includes the listeners and the researchers.<sup>73</sup> Riessman describes this type of narrative analysis in a professional way, which is quoted below:

The performative view is appropriate for studies of communication practices, and for detailed studies of identity construction – how narrators want to be known, and precisely how they involve the audience in “doing” their identities. The approach invites study of how audiences are implicated in the art of narrative performance.<sup>74</sup>

Although narrative analysis is a rather effective method of collecting and analyzing data from storytelling, it is often criticised to be over personal. Unlike survey, narrative analysis is not suitable for a large number of participants. Besides, the process of storytelling can be painful for the narratives, as they might not want to recall the traumatic experiences or hurtful memories. It can also be troublesome and time-consuming for the interviewers, as the interviewers have to pay attention to every detail such as gestures, silence, facial expressions, emotions and other displays in the storytelling process.

---

<sup>72</sup> Riessman, “Narrative Analysis”, 5-6.

<sup>73</sup> Riessman, “Narrative Analysis”, 6.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

In this research, thematic analysis is chosen because the results of the interviews are more important than the processes. Since this research intends to find out what types of nationalism the Chinese immigrants belong to, what collective identities they represent and what factors influence their identity development, it is more important to focus on the common thematic elements in the group instead of how individuals tell their stories. After the collection of interview data, groupings and categories are made in order to test the research questions. The limitations in this type of narrative analysis are taken into consideration, as it assumes that the Chinese immigrants as narratives in each category are exactly the same.

## 4. Findings and Results

While only a few of the respondents immigrated to Sweden with their families during their childhood, most of them came to Sweden when they were already adults, for either university education, career or marriage to Swedish citizens. Some of the respondents emphasized during the interviews that there are mainly two factors related to time that influence one's self-definition of identity: the age of the person when immigrated to Sweden and the length of stay in Sweden. According to the research findings, the Chinese immigrants to Sweden are grouped into four categories, which are to be described one by one as follows.

### 4.1 Category I—“Where do I belong?”

While time seems to be an important factor in the research findings, other factors such as family, education, language and food culture are also brought to my attention. Through observation, I have discovered that family traditions and food culture play particular important roles in one's self-identification under this category. Some of the respondents immigrated to Sweden as teenagers together with their family members after having received part of the compulsory education in China. Thus, coming to Sweden wasn't a personal choice; rather they had no other options. Two of the respondents mentioned that they moved to Sweden because both their mothers married Swedish citizens and they did not have any thoughts or preferences.<sup>75</sup> The Chinese immigrants under this category may eat Chinese food at home

---

<sup>75</sup> Anonymous interviewee, interview by the author, June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015, interview 5, transcript translated from Chinese. And anonymous interviewee, interview by the author, July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015, interview 11, transcript translated from Chinese.

every day, speak Chinese to their family members and celebrate traditional Chinese holidays, but meanwhile they have learnt Swedish language, have finished compulsory education in Sweden, have been educated in Swedish universities taking courses in Swedish and speak Swedish in everyday social life outside or sometimes even within the families. Learning Swedish was relatively easy so language isn't a barrier for them. As respondent 5 mentioned, "I was relatively young when I learned Swedish, so it didn't take me long. I think the language environment is very helpful and important. I went to school with all the Swedish kids, so learning Swedish became a natural process".<sup>76</sup>

Respondents under this category particularly struggle between their Swedish identity and Chinese identity. When I asked them about how they define their identities, they gave me similar answers: "Sometimes I think like a Swede because I am used to it. But on the other hand, I don't think I am a real Swede. I cannot clearly identify. I think I am more Chinese".<sup>77</sup> They find it difficult to clearly identify their senses of belongings in both societies—they feel Chinese in Sweden and Swedish in China. They mentioned that because their families follow the Chinese traditions, they do realize how different they are when compared to other Swedish children who grew up in traditional Swedish culture. These findings above are based on their responses to the surveys and in-depth oral interviews. One of them is quoted below in order to support the statement above:

I have never actually thought about my identity. Although my parents are both Chinese, I have been influenced by both Swedish and Chinese cultures growing up in Sweden. I went to school with all these other Swedish kids and most of the time I felt I was just like every other one of them. But now that I've grown up, sometimes I feel that I don't belong to either Sweden or China. I have a good balance of private and work life, which is very Swedish; but meanwhile I like to take responsibilities, which is typical Chinese. When I go abroad, I have never thought about if Sweden is my home country or China is my home country. Sometimes I say Sweden but some other

---

<sup>76</sup> Anonymous interviewee, interview by the author, June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015, interview 5, transcript translated from Chinese.

<sup>77</sup> Anonymous interviewee, interview by the author, June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015, interview 5, transcript translated from Chinese. And anonymous interviewee, interview by the author, July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015, interview 11, transcript translated from Chinese.

times I say China. My passport is Swedish and I guess that's all what it matters. When I was in China, I felt that I was only a very small part of an unfamiliar society. I couldn't understand Chinese society at a lot of times although I have been trying hard to learn. I have also difficulties understanding a lot of history issues.<sup>78</sup>

To conclude, participants in this category struggle between the traditional Chinese identities that are influenced by their families and their integration into the Swedish society, culture and values. It is confusing for them to clearly identify themselves. They feel that they are outsiders in both Sweden and China and they lack senses of belonging to both countries. It is a painful, difficult, controversial but also interesting and meaningful process for them to figure out who they really are and who they want to be.

#### 4.2 Category II—"I am not one of them."

While the teenage immigrants are struggling to find out how much "Chineseness" is left in them, it is quite obvious that many of the adult immigrants are certain about their Chinese identity. Within this category, the respondents immigrated to Sweden when they were already adults, after having received education in China and experienced in the domestic job market. Therefore, at the time of immigration, they already had established values and network to a certain degree. They were relatively less open-minded when compared to other categories. Immigration to Sweden wasn't planed at all; rather they followed the possible opportunities of education, research and career. Although some of them have been living in Sweden for almost twenty years, they still think that being Chinese is just the way they are, in this society, thousands of miles away from where they call "home". Length of stay in Sweden seems to be less important for this category; on the contrary, age at the time of immigration, history, personal values, traditions, food culture, family and language weigh much more for respondents under this category. One of them is quoted in order to support the categorization for this group:

I think that a person's self-identification is related to the age when he or she moved abroad. When I came to Sweden, I already had my own family and I was older, so I

---

<sup>78</sup> Anonymous interviewee, interview by the author, June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015, interview 6, transcript translated from Chinese.

was relatively slow in accepting and acknowledging the changes in the new society. I did not think learning Swedish would make me become a Swede. Now, after so many years in Sweden, I realize that no matter how good you speak Swedish, you will always have some kind of accent. Your appearance is Asian. Even if you identify yourself Swedish, the Swedes may not agree. If you moved to Sweden when you were young, then it is perhaps not so important whether or not others approve your self-identification; but to me, this is very important. Besides, I have also worked in China. The working environment, culture and interpersonal relationship all have great impacts and influences on my personal way of thinking.<sup>79</sup>

The Swedish language is a common barrier for this group. Some of them experienced a hard time learning the language both because they were relatively old when they received Swedish language education and because Swedish isn't their working language so they have not had sufficient time to practice Swedish in an everyday working environment. As one of them mentioned, "learning Swedish is just a practical necessity. I neither was forced to learn it nor liked to learn it. I just had to. It definitely helped to look for jobs and communicate with the Swedes".<sup>80</sup> They speak Chinese at home, celebrate traditional Chinese holidays and visit their relatives in China on a regular basis. They eat Chinese food almost every single meal and think the glorious Chinese food culture is very important to their identity. One of them indicated his opinion about Chinese food culture:

I think the Chinese food culture has a big influence over the Chinese people's identities. Speaking from a Chinese taste, I think that Chinese food has more varieties than Swedish food and the fact that most of the Swedish food are frozen, imported or cold, I find Chinese food more fresh and therefore I have never gotten used to Swedish food. Especially in the dark and rainy winter days, I find it hard to make it through without Chinese food.<sup>81</sup>

---

<sup>79</sup> Anonymous interviewee, interview by the author, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015, interview 3, transcript translated from Chinese.

<sup>80</sup> Anonymous interviewee, interview by the author, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015, interview 1, transcript translated from Chinese.

<sup>81</sup> Anonymous interviewee, interview by the author, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015, interview 3, transcript translated from Chinese.

A few of the respondents under this category even seem to be quite negative about the Swedish culture, value standards, society, tax system, health care and education. The reasons why they have this negative feeling towards the Swedish society are rather complex. Based on my observations during the interviews, the reasons can be concluded as follows: too high or wrong expectations on Sweden before immigration; difficulties learning Swedish language and integrating into the mainstream society; small family business paying high tax; fear of being excluded in the society; unpleasant experiences and misunderstandings with local Swedes; unsatisfied with Swedish education for their young kids; receiving very little help from the so-called “free” Swedish health care system. One of them is quoted in order to support the reasons above:

To be integrated into the Swedish society is not easy. I still don't have good feelings towards Sweden even until now. I think the people are hypocritical and deep in their hearts they discriminate outsiders, no matter how good you are in speaking their language. Even though my son was born and raised here, because of his outward appearance, he has never been considered as a Swede. Although the living environment is good here, I think Sweden is far behind China in education. The study atmosphere is too relaxed here and teachers do not have the respect they deserve from the students. Because of this, it is very hard for the kids to learn something real from schools. In China, although schools are very strict to the kids and children experience very much pressure, pressure becomes motivation and they learn much more. No one is going to force you to do anything here. Even if you are the last one in school, the teacher still says you are the best. No wonder the unemployment rate is high here. From my perspective, children are too relaxed here and they do not respect teachers. I have spoken to the local teachers from my son's school, and they also seemed very negative about those facts here, although they did not want to say it out aloud.<sup>82</sup>

What's worth mentioning is that, among this group of respondents, they particularly feel that it is very important for their children to speak Chinese, to understand Chinese culture, to

---

<sup>82</sup> Anonymous interviewee, interview by the author, June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015, interview 8, transcript translated from Chinese.

appreciate Chinese food and to carry forward their Chinese identity. One of them expressed a strong opinion about this:

Of course I want my kids to learn Chinese. Their roots are in China so learning Chinese language and culture is a necessity. Although they are growing up in the Swedish society and are influenced every day by the Swedish culture, I would very much like them to carry on the Chinese culture and traditions. I try my best to teach my kids Chinese because I do not believe in the Chinese language schools in Sweden.<sup>83</sup>

To conclude, participants under this category have clear definitions of their identities. The Chinese identity remains very strong in them. Age at the time of immigration has big influences on them, together with existing Chinese values, traditions, food culture, history, family and language factors. They are quite critical or even negative towards the Swedish society, values and standards.

#### **4.3 Category III—“Life is double-sided.”**

This category includes the Chinese immigrants who have both Swedish and Chinese identities. Respondents under this category came to Sweden for university education in their twenties and stayed ever since they finished their education and found jobs in Sweden. They formed families in Sweden and their kids were born and raised in Sweden. Time is an important factor that influences their self-identification, in the meaning of both their ages at the time of immigration and the lengths of stay in Sweden. It is interesting to see their processes of becoming “Swedenized” throughout the years, from when they first came to Sweden as international students until now that they define themselves as “double citizens”. For them, coming to Sweden wasn’t intentionally planned; rather it was because they got the opportunities and funding to support them during their initial stay in Sweden. They claimed themselves to be the open-minded young people who were willing to walk out of the national border and experience something different. Before they came to Sweden, they only had basic knowledge about how Sweden was like. Their understandings of the Swedish society were built upon their personal experiences and education after immigration to Sweden. One of them told me her story of coming to Sweden in a very humorous way:

---

<sup>83</sup> Anonymous interviewee, interview by the author, July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015, interview 12, transcript translated from Chinese.



I got this opportunity to study in Sweden because I got a scholarship that was a result of cooperation between the Chinese and Swedish governments. Before I came to Sweden, my understandings of Sweden were limited to the Swedish pop music group ABBA. I liked ABBA very much and knew they were Swedish but sang in English—how funny is that! But later on I realized that it was because Swedes in general have good knowledge about English language.<sup>84</sup>

When I asked them about what kind of difficulties they went through when trying to learn Swedish language, making new friends, integrating into the society and looking for jobs, they seem to have very deep reflections about each and every aspect. First of all, because they thought that learning Swedish was a “must-do”, they pushed themselves hard in learning Swedish both in schools and via radio, television, daily conversation with classmates and colleagues. Thus, learning Swedish wasn’t as painful and difficult. One of them reflected on her experience of learning Swedish:

It didn’t take me long to learn Swedish, because I knew I needed to use it to read newspapers, watch television and listen to radio. Living in this country without understanding the language is unimaginable. I didn’t want to be living in a world of my own. It took me half a year before I got fluent in the language. My husband and I both thought learning Swedish was necessary and important. We made up our minds to learn Swedish and we influenced and supported each other. We even asked our colleagues to only speak Swedish to us.<sup>85</sup>

Another respondent also has very interesting insights on the process of learning Swedish:

When I first started learning Swedish in SFI<sup>86</sup>, I found the study environment rather complex. I had a very strong feeling towards the fact that I was only a very small part of this complicated study group coming from all kinds of backgrounds and societies. I thought everyone who came this far had colorful life stories to tell but studying a new language from zero in this class with a group of adults was definitely not what I expected. But because I realized that learning Swedish was the only shortcut for me to

---

<sup>84</sup> Anonymous interviewee, interview by the author, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015, interview 4, transcript translated from Chinese.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Swedish for immigrants, free Swedish language courses provided by the Swedish government.

learn about Swedish culture and the more I learn, the more I would understand what it means to be a Swede, I became more relaxed in many ways and found my own position in this big “family”. When I think about it now, I realize how interesting this process was. It feels like the things I couldn’t understand back then could easily be understood now with “a pair of glasses”. I’ve also realized now that in order to integrate into the society, to be able to speak the language is not enough. You have to feel, to explore and to discover by yourself.<sup>87</sup>

Secondly, when it comes to social integration, they think that to be able to deeply integrated into the main stream Swedish society is rather complicated and difficult, regardless of how long one has been living in Sweden and how good one speaks the Swedish language. Integration itself is never as simple as eating the same types of food, speaking the same language, reading the same books or going to the same schools. The social and cultural factors behind integration should not be forgotten. To quote one of the respondents:

Speaking from the angles of culture and personal experiences, I think it is very hard to truly integrate into the Swedish society. Everyone grows up having different backgrounds and history, and when I moved to Sweden, I was already an adult. I missed the childhood and teenage time when kids were deeply influenced by the Swedish society, education and values, which makes it impossible for me to make it up with my existing knowledge and understandings. A lot of things cannot return if you once missed them. I often feel that there is still a huge gap between Sweden and me, which I can do nothing about.<sup>88</sup>

Thirdly, Chinese food culture and Chinese language are of importance to only a certain degree for them. They like Chinese food but they can also accept other types of food and even cook more food from other countries at home. They do feel more connected to China when they eat Chinese food but it has no influence on their self-identifications. What’s interesting to bring up here is that they would very much like their kids to learn Chinese. They think that by learning Chinese, their children can somehow be attached to the Chinese culture and understand where they come from. Considering the fact that China is growing rapidly on a

---

<sup>87</sup> Anonymous interviewee, interview by the author, June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015, interview 10, transcript translated from Chinese.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

world stage, it is always beneficial to know the language in case in the future their children want to find jobs that are related to China or in China. They are quite liberal towards their children's self-identifications; it means that they think it is up to their children to decide whether or not they want to carry on the Chinese identity. Children are completely free to choose and they do not want to force the younger generation to accept anything. Despite their wishes for their children to learn Chinese, their kids seem to reject the Chinese part in them, which makes speaking Chinese at home difficult and unpleasant at times. One of the respondents came up with an interesting statement in her storytelling:

I think the Chinese identity to my daughter, is more based on her ethnic background. She was born and raised in Sweden and her understandings about China and Chinese culture all come from me. She needs to discover and build her identity on her own. I think this is a painful process but I've always thought if she knew Chinese language, it would make the painful process much smoother.<sup>89</sup>

Last but most interestingly, when it comes to self-definitions of identities among this group of respondents, they think that they are both Swedish and Chinese. The Chinese identity for them is rather ethnical and cultural than ideological—it is a fact, their background, their appearance, their ethnicity, where they came from and where they began. They feel that they are well included in both societies and they have found their unique positions in both China and Sweden. To support this finding, one of them is quoted:

Speaking from the angle of citizenship, I am Swedish. But I think the question of identity is never that simple. I define myself as a “Swedenized” Chinese or a Swede that has Chinese background. I think both identities are very important to me and they cannot be separated. I lived in China until I was an adult and being Chinese is just a fact and an ethnic background. I cannot change the fact that I have yellow skin and black eyes. My values were influenced by the Chinese culture and I cannot deny that I am a member of the Chinese group. The Swedish identity, however, is my present and future; it is what I need to grasp and strive for. I acknowledge the Swedish culture and

---

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

values and they match my way of thinking and my personality. At present, the Swedish ideology influences me more than the Chinese.<sup>90</sup>

To conclude, Chinese values, traditions, food culture and language are less important factors for this group. Instead, time (including both age at the time of immigration and length of stay in Sweden), education, ideology, working environment and family weigh much more in their self-identification process. They have a sense of belonging to both the Swedish society and the Chinese society and they are barely outsiders in any of the countries. They define themselves as Chinese, and Swedish.

#### 4.4 Category IV—“Does it matter?”

The last category describes the immigrants who view themselves as “world citizens”. They do not care about or do not have a clear boundary sense between different nationalities. They are practical, open-minded, and have very interesting stories to tell. To quote one of the respondents under this category, as she described her experience of immigration in laughter:

I’ve always wanted to go abroad. I attended four years of university education in China all in English. And from my personal experiences with foreigners, they seemed to be more friendly and equal. I liked their lifestyles much more. And later on I married a Swede, who I met in China and moved here!<sup>91</sup>

Time is described as an important factor, but is somewhat contradictory to traditions, culture, values and family. They think that they have become more Swedish throughout time and have successfully integrated into the Swedish society; on the other hand, since they came to Sweden as adults, they already had established values, which remained a big part of their ways of thinking and their behaviors. Chinese food culture is particularly important for this group. By eating Chinese food and spread the Chinese food culture to their foreign family members, they achieve some kind of national or ethnical pride. One of the respondents is quoted in order to support this finding:

Not only me, but also my whole family likes Chinese food. We Chinese express everything in food. Cooking Chinese food everyday is my practice of being Chinese

---

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Anonymous interviewee, interview by the author, July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015, interview 13, transcript translated from Chinese.

and a way to remind my daughter that she has Chinese blood in her veins. Although my partner now is from England, he also likes to eat Chinese food everyday under my influences. I think a woman is the main force of a family and she can change the whole family's eating habits and preferences. And I am that woman.<sup>92</sup>

There is a saying called “love me love my dog”. Learning Swedish for them was exactly as described in the saying. They came to Sweden and got married to Swedes and therefore the motivation of learning Swedish came from their family members.

The experience of learning Swedish was actually my first step into the mainstream society and also the first contact with other Swedes outside my family. Loving someone gives me the best motivation to learn his culture. Sweden became my second motherland so of course I should learn the language. I am particularly interested in foreign languages, and I always think learning a foreign language is very helpful both for job hunting and personal accomplishment.<sup>93</sup>

However, although learning Swedish seemed to be natural and pleasant, social integration was rather complex and painful for them. Because of personal and family reasons, their social network was rather limited at the time of immigration. With limited time, resources and possibilities, they could not live the life they wished for.

For me it was difficult to integrate into the society mainly because I came to Sweden as an adult and the only contact I had with Sweden was my husband and his family. If work or study took me here, the situation would have been much easier. I couldn't find a slot to cut into the mainstream society, and the first contact I had with Swedes outside of my family was actually my midwife after I got pregnant—how ironic is that! I started to feel integrated when I started studying in the university, where I created my own network of contacts. I think the Swedish society is rather cold. It is very hard to make real friends.<sup>94</sup>

Participants under this category have particular attachments to the Chinese language. They expressed their strong wishes for both their foreign partners and children to learn about the

---

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

Chinese language. They also want their children to carry forward the quintessence in the traditional Chinese culture and understand where they come from. They are proud of the fact that China has grown strong nowadays and having Chinese blood in the veins is considered to be an advantage that other people would admire. Chinese culture is thus dominant in their families.

We speak English, Swedish and Chinese at home. Both my partner and my daughter are actively learning Chinese with my help. I am very interested in teaching Chinese and my daughter thinks I am the best teacher. Of course I want my daughter to learn Chinese, to have contacts with her roots in China, and to know her mother's country, history and values. Now that China is playing a more and more important role in the world's economy and politics, language skills in Chinese will be favorable for her future career. I also want my daughter to carry on the good ways of being in the Chinese culture. I want her to be modest, to respect old people, to care about the young people and to be loyal to her parents.<sup>95</sup>

Last but most interestingly, they think that it is too complicated to explain where they come from because although they claim themselves to be Chinese, they have been deeply baptized by the Swedish culture and values throughout the years under the influences of their families. They feel that they are outsiders in China because they missed out those years when China was rapidly growing and now they cannot and perhaps do not want to catch up anymore. They become rather practical and pragmatic. Identity seems to be a meaningless topic for them. They would rather be referred to as world citizens, because they think that in the globalizing world today, the definitions of citizens have changed and national borders are not important anymore. People should look beyond the borders and explore new ideologies and values that fit into the contemporary society.

I think the definition of identity is completely meaningless. It is not important to me at all. People should just be categorized as "good" or "bad" instead of nationalities. I have very indifferent understandings towards nationality. I don't have a strong sense of nationalism or sense of belonging. I changed my Chinese passport to a Swedish one

---

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

simply because it is easier for me to travel abroad. It is just practical and I do not feel that I am Swedish just because I have a Swedish passport. I am a world citizen.<sup>96</sup>

To conclude, respondents under this category have very indifferent opinions towards national boundaries and national identity. They think it's meaningless to clearly identify who they are. As everyone lives in a globalizing world, they would rather be referred to as world citizens. Time is described as an important factor in their self-identification process, but is somewhat contradictory to the influences from other cultural factors, which means, they are influenced by the lengths of stay in Sweden but their existing Chinese values, identities, and attachment to the Chinese language, culture and traditions remain noticeably strong.

## 5. Analysis and Discussions

### 5.1 The three approaches and the four categories

Historical collective memory is what binds a group together. Common historical memory is one of the most important foundations of collective identity. As is mentioned in the theory section, previous scholars have come up with three approaches to look at historical memory in identity formation, including the “primordialist” approach, the “constructivist” approach and the “instrumentalist” approach.<sup>97</sup> Based on the research findings, the “primordialist” approach and the “constructivist” approach can each be applied to two categories. However, the results do not show any clear applications of the “instrumentalist” approach because this approach claims that leaders make use of history and memory to promote individual and collective interests and fight for power<sup>98</sup> but my research areas and findings do not cover the contents of this particular approach. Reasons and analysis are given as follows.

The “primordialist” approach can be applied to Category II and Category IV. According to Wang’s definitions of the three approaches, the “primordialist” approach emphasizes that primordial ties of blood, kinship, common history and language are the “objective cultural

---

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 21-22.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

criteria that distinguish one group from another”.<sup>99</sup> As can be easily seen in Category II and IV, the existing Chinese values, traditions, food, culture, history, family and language have significant influences on the participants’ self-identifications. Those factors are what they use to distinguish themselves from other groups in the Swedish mainstream society. Members in these two categories have strong attachment especially to the Chinese food culture and Chinese language. As parents and family members, they want their younger generations and other family members to learn about and carry on their traditions and values. They choose what to teach and tell their children in a way that Chinese traditions, culture, values and language become dominant in the family. Especially in Category II, they have a clear definition of their identity—the Chinese identity they were born and given, the identity they grew up being familiar with and the identity that remains strong and clear even after (chosen) unsuccessful social integration. In Category IV, although participants have very indifferent attitudes towards national identity and they are rather pragmatic and practical on nationality issues, it cannot be denied that they remain heavily influenced by the Chinese culture when placed in a Swedish social setting. They think that the primordial ties of common history, traditions, values, food culture and language are what distinguish them from other groups in the Swedish society. Therefore, the “primordialist” approach is suitable for these two categories.

The “constructivist” approach, however, can be applied to Category I and Category III. According to Wang, constructivists claim that identity and ethnicity are socially constructed and manufactured instead of born and given and that “the past is reconstructed with regard to the concerns and needs of the present”.<sup>100</sup> Younger generations learn about history and traditions not only through family members but also through formal education and mass media. Participants in Category I are influenced both by their families’ Chinese traditions, culture and language as well as by the Swedish society, values and culture. They are confused about their identities because although their families have big influences on them, they still learn about what they choose to accept through formal education in Swedish schools. They are placed in a mixed social setting with other people from various cultures and backgrounds.

---

<sup>99</sup> Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 21.

<sup>100</sup> Wang concludes Halbwachs, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 22.



They were relatively young at the time of immigration, which made it easier for them to accept other cultures and values. Their identities are rather socially constructed and manufactured. Category III view internationalized education, ideology and working environment as more important factors than traditions and values in their self-identification processes. They view their Chinese identity as ethnicity and a past they couldn't change about; meanwhile they define their Swedish identity as a socially constructed fact and a sign of successful social integration. Thus, their double identities are a result of reconstruction of the past. Based on the analysis above, the “constructivist” approach is suitable for these two categories.

## 5.2 The four categories and the four assumptions

As is mentioned in the theory section, there are mainly three types of Chinese nationalism in modern Chinese history: ethnic nationalism, liberal nationalism and state nationalism. This research brought up four assumptions based on the question “Who do they think they are?”. First of all, have they developed from closed Chinese nationalism to keeping the Chinese identity after immigration? Secondly, have they developed from closed Chinese nationalism to adopting other identities? Thirdly, have they developed from open Chinese nationalism to adopting other identities? Finally, have they developed from open Chinese nationalism to keeping the Chinese identity? Based on the research findings, the four categories are analyzed one by one in order to find out if the four assumptions correctly respond to each category.

Category I describe respondents that neither belong to Sweden nor China. They do not have a clear sense of belonging mainly because they grew up with Chinese culture and traditions and are still influenced by their families who brought Chinese traditions with them to Sweden, although they came to Sweden as teenagers, received Swedish education and were influenced by the Swedish values, culture, language and society. Based on the research findings, none of the four assumptions fits into this category. First of all, the respondents in Category I came to Sweden as teenagers, together with their families. Thus, coming to Sweden was rather a “must” than a choice. Secondly, since they were relatively young at the time of immigration, they did not have enough knowledge about the complex identity issues. They did not have set Chinese values at the time of immigration, not to mention that they were later influenced by the Swedish values when attended Swedish schools. Therefore, neither open nor closed

Chinese nationalism can correctly describe them. As a development of their social integration, they did not completely adopt the Swedish identity; rather they were constantly trying to find a balance between both identities but ended up being confused about who they really are, which proves the assumptions unsuitable for this category.

Respondents in Category II have clear senses of belonging and are certain about their Chinese identity. They immigrated to Sweden as adults, when they had already been educated in China, worked in the Chinese domestic job market, established values and created networks of contacts. When it comes to factors that influence their self-identifications, length of stay in Sweden is less important for them when compared to other factors such as age, family traditions, Chinese culture, language, food culture as well as personal networks. Some of the respondents are quite critical or even negative towards the Swedish society, values and standards. They have a very strong Chinese national pride. Based on the research findings, respondents in this category have developed from closed Chinese state nationalism to closed Chinese state nationalism and they have kept their Chinese identity after immigration. As is listed in the theory part, Chinese state nationalism emphasizes the collective sovereignty of the nation and sees individuals as members of the greater nation regardless of their ethnicity. China, in the eyes of those respondents, is represented by the collective Chinese identity of all its citizens, meaning that they as Chinese people share common history, value, culture, language, traditions, and links to other Chinese people in the society, and those factors clearly determine what their identity is. They see themselves as citizens of China who live in Sweden. Because they had already established values at the time of immigration and they were deeply influenced by the Chinese culture, they constantly compare Sweden and China at a national level. Their arguments and opinions towards the negativity of Sweden as a nation state are rather biased. For example, when one of the respondents was criticizing the education system in Sweden, he ascended the criticism to a national level as he was criticizing the Swedish society: “[a]lthough the living environment is good here, I think Sweden is far behind China in education”.<sup>101</sup> Furthermore, respondents in this category impose very strong pressures to their children to learn about Chinese culture, traditions, values and language regardless of the fact

---

<sup>101</sup> Anonymous interviewee, interview by the author, June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015, interview 8, transcript translated from Chinese.

that their children were born and raised as Swedish citizens. Because they consider China as their homeland and they believe in China as their nation state, they want their children to be able to find their “roots” in China. As one of the respondents wishes, “Of course I want my kids to learn Chinese. Their roots are in China so learning Chinese language and culture is a necessity”.<sup>102</sup> Therefore, to connect with the theoretical approaches, it is obvious that participants in Category II developed from closed Chinese state nationalism to closed Chinese state nationalism and they kept their Chinese identity.

Category III includes respondents that have double identities. Chinese traditions and culture are only small parts of their daily social interaction. Therefore, traditional Chinese values, food culture and language are less influential in their self-identification process; instead, factors such as age at the time of immigration, lengths of stay in Sweden, education, ideology, working environment and family have more influences on them. They are better integrated into the Swedish society than respondents in the other categories. They have differentiated senses of belonging to China and Sweden, which means, they have double identities. Based on these findings, respondents under this category have developed from open Chinese ethnic nationalism to open Chinese ethnic nationalism. They belong to the Chinese ethnic minority group in the Swedish society and when facing the majority in the Swedish society, they come up with unique definitions of their identities as a result of social integration. Looking back to the theory part, a quote from Han supports the argument above: “[e]xternal cultural ties can also play a substantial role in an ethnic group’s identity contestation...[N]ational identity contestation can be generated within a triangular relationship involving the majority state, an ethnic minority group, and the group’s external national ‘homeland’”.<sup>103</sup> This argument from Han can be applied to Category III. Respondents under this category have Chinese culture and the past traditions and values they grew up with as their “external cultural ties”; therefore, their self-definitions of identities are largely based on personal experiences and more importantly, social, political and economical interactions with other social groups (the majority) in the Swedish society. After integration, they kept their Chinese identity but

---

<sup>102</sup> Anonymous interviewee, interview by the author, July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015, interview 12, transcript translated from Chinese.

<sup>103</sup> Han, *Contestation and Adaptation- The Politics of National Identity in China*, 9.

meanwhile adopted the Swedish identity, which means, open Chinese ethnic nationalism is also the result of their identity development.

Category IV describes a rather interesting group who refer themselves as “world citizens”. Respondents under this category think that as we all live in a globalizing world today, it is meaningless to clearly identify where each and every one comes from. In their words, people should just be categorized as “good” or “bad”. In their self-identification processes, although they are influenced by the lengths of stay in Sweden, since they came to Sweden as adults, they already had established Chinese values, identities, and strong attachment to the Chinese language, food culture and traditions. They adopted the Swedish values and marrow of the Swedish culture throughout the years and now they find it difficult to explain clearly where they come from. Therefore, they think being “world citizens” clearly matches their definitions of identity. Based on these findings, this category has developed from open Chinese liberal nationalism to globalizationalism. Although this development does not fit into any of the four assumptions, it is rather interesting to be analyzed.

Dating back to the theories of Chinese nationalism in modern Chinese history, Zhao summarizes that the liberalists were struggling between “Western culture and Chinese culture and the relationship between the trend of globalization and the principle of nationalism”.<sup>104</sup> Zhao’s description is precisely suitable for respondents under this category. Before they immigrated to Sweden, they were open-minded young people who wanted to go abroad and grasp their lives at their own hands, which was not necessarily common in China at that time. As a liberal nationalist, one of the respondents insists that choosing her own life path is an individual right that should not be sacrificed for and subordinated to the national rights. Under the influences of this ideology, she refused the so-called “work allocation” by the Chinese government, resulting in her losing her registered permanent residence in her city. And yet this became a motivation for her to migrate to a country where democracy is basic but not luxury and where equal living standard is created by her own hands instead of given by the state.<sup>105</sup>

---

<sup>104</sup> Zhao, *A Nation- State by Construction*, 147.

<sup>105</sup> Anonymous interviewee, interview by the author, July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015, interview 13, transcript translated from Chinese.

So how did they evolve to become globalizationalists from liberal nationalists? As is mentioned in the theory part, globalization is seen as a modern supplement of nationalism, a positive mixture of ethnicities, and an effective intermediary for nation states to express their economic, political as well as social interests. Nationalism and globalization are interconnected and have positive influences over each other. According to Smith, globalizing technology, communication, economic interdependence and migration are bringing many peoples and cultures from different parts of the world together, which is in fact encouraging nationalism and multiculturalism.<sup>106</sup> Because the Chinese respondents in Category IV have been influenced by Chinese and Swedish cultures, values, languages, and traditions throughout time, they find globalization a good supplement of their self-redefinitions of identity and also a reasonable, modern excuse to avoid the complications in the self-identification process. Speaking from their perspectives, globalization has brought China and Sweden much closer than before and the fact that they can easily stay connected with their roots in China through social media and communication tools makes immigration and new society integration less painful, difficult and troublesome. They find it comfortable to spread and live with Chinese culture, language and traditions in Sweden and Sweden as a globalizing country has largely increased its tolerance towards multiculturalism. As previous Chinese liberal nationalists, they have found their unique places and life paths in Sweden thanks to globalization, which match their original intentions of immigration. Therefore, their evolution from open Chinese liberal nationalism to globalizationalism is actually a result of modern social development and integration.

To conclude, based on the research findings and analysis above in connection with the theories, Category II has developed from closed Chinese state nationalism to closed Chinese state nationalism and Category III has developed from open Chinese ethnic nationalism to open Chinese ethnic nationalism. While only two of the four assumptions are matched by these categories, the other two assumptions including closed nationalism to open nationalism as well as open nationalism to closed nationalism remain uncovered. Category I and Category IV represent two under-defined phenomena that do not reflect these two uncovered assumptions.

---

<sup>106</sup> Smith, "Nationalism and Global Culture", 158.

## 6. Conclusion

This research has brought forth four assumptions regarding to the development of identity among the Chinese immigrants to Sweden, by using existing nationalism and national identity theories within the modern Chinese history. The four assumptions are mainly based on the question “Who do they think they are”. First of all, have they developed from closed Chinese nationalism to keeping the Chinese identity after immigration? Secondly, have they developed from closed Chinese nationalism to adopting other identities? Thirdly, have they developed from open Chinese nationalism to adopting other identities? Finally, have they developed from open Chinese nationalism to keeping the Chinese identity? Before nationalism replaced culturalism in the late nineteenth century, China was largely based on the common cultural heritage and historical collective memory of its people. Theories used in this research start with culturalism, historical memory and collective identity, followed by three types of Chinese nationalism in modern Chinese history, which include ethnic nationalism, liberal nationalism and state nationalism. Researchers in previous studies of identity have come up with three approaches to look at historical memory in identity formation, including the “primordialist” approach, the “constructivist” approach and the “instrumentalist” approach. Following the trend of modern social development, theories concerning the relationships between nationalism and globalization are also described in the literature review part of this research.

The methodology section includes three different methods: survey analysis, individual interview and narrative analysis. The primary method to collect data is survey analysis. Follow up individual interviews thus act as supplements for survey analysis, in order to produce more in-depth materials. Narrative analysis is chosen for analyzing the collected data. The research findings are based on the survey results and interview transcripts. Based on the findings, four categories are divided to represent different identity development patterns among the Chinese immigrants.

In response to the three approaches and the four assumptions, I have developed interesting research results. The “primordialist” approach is applied to Category II and IV because for these two groups, the primordial ties of common history, traditions, values, food culture and language are what distinguish them from other groups in the Swedish society. The

“constructivist” approach is applied to Category I and III because their identities are rather socially constructed and manufactured than born and given. Unfortunately, there are not enough research findings showing the applications of the “instrumentalist” approach. When it comes to the assumptions, Category I do not fit into any of the four assumptions. Respondents under this category do not have a clear identity; they feel that they do not belong to either Sweden or China. Identity development becomes unclear and thus none of the assumptions is suitable for this category. Category II have developed from closed Chinese state nationalism to closed Chinese state nationalism. They constantly compare the Swedish and Chinese societies at a national level. They have no identity confusions; rather the Chinese identity remains noticeably strong among respondents under this category. Category III have developed from open Chinese ethnic nationalism to open Chinese ethnic nationalism. They have been well-integrated into the society and they have double identities—both Swedish and Chinese. The Chinese identity to them is rather their ethnic background and a fact they cannot change, while the Swedish identity is socially constructed and is a choice of their own ideology. Category IV have developed from open Chinese liberal nationalism to globalizationalism. Although none of the four assumptions is suitable for this category, it is somehow related and rather interesting to find out why and how Chinese liberal nationalists turn into globalizationalists. They have been deeply influenced by the existing Chinese culture and meanwhile the length of stay in Sweden has brought complexity in their self-identifications. As everyone lives in a globalizing world, they think it is meaningless to clearly identify themselves. Therefore, they would rather be referred to as world citizens.

The conclusions above are based on the chosen theories, methods and research findings. However, I am aware that this research has its limitations. First of all, the chosen theories are considered to be “Chinese speciality” but I have not been able to prove why they are different from nationalism theories in other countries. In future studies, it will be interesting to compare different cases from various countries by using the same theories and see if these theories are also suitable elsewhere. Secondly, the chosen participants do not cover a good variety due to limited time and resources. Therefore, there is a risk that the chosen samples cannot precisely represent all the Chinese immigrants to Sweden, which may result in a lack of relevance in my categorizations. In future studies, different ethnicities among the Chinese immigrants can be

included in order to add to the relevance of ethnic nationalism. Thirdly, because Category I and Category IV do not fit into any of the assumptions, I would suggest more theories related to “non-identity” and “global-identity” to be included in future studies, in order to broaden this type of research. Last but not the least, the “Europeanization” part of this research is largely based on the fact that Sweden is part of Europe and by studying the Chinese immigrants in Sweden, it automatically becomes part of the study of Europe. In future studies, Chinese immigrants in other European countries can also be included in order to compare whether different European countries influence their self-identifications, which may strengthen the relationship to “Europeanization”.



## Bibliography

### Books

Duara, Prasenjit. "De-Constructing the Chinese Nation." In *Chinese Nationalism*, edited by Jonathan Unger, 31-55. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc, 1996.

Halikiopoulou, Daphne and Sofia Vasilopoulou. "Bridging the Gap Between Nationalism and Globalization." In *Nationalism and Globalization: Conflicting or complementary?* edited by Daphne Halikiopoulou and Sofia Vasilopoulou, 1-13. New York: Routledge, 2011.

Halikiopoulou, Daphne and Sofia Vasilopoulou. "Nationalism and Globalization: Conflicting or Complementary?" In *Nationalism and Globalization: Conflicting or Complementary?* edited by Daphne Halikiopoulou and Sofia Vasilopoulou, 186-93. New York: Routledge, 2011.

Han, Enze. *Contestation and Adaptation- The Politics of National Identity in China*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Harrison, James. *Modern Chinese Nationalism*. Hunter College of the City of New York, Research Institute on Modern Asia, New York, n.d. 1969.

Hutchinson, John. "Globalization and Nation Formation in the Longue Duree." In *Nationalism and Globalization: Conflicting or complementary?* edited by Daphne Halikiopoulou and Sofia Vasilopoulou, 84-99. New York: Routledge, 2011.

Markovits, Andrei S., and Simon Reich. *The German Predicament*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1997.

Puskas, Tünde. "'We belong to them' Narratives of Belonging, Homeland and Nationhood in Territorial and Non-territorial Minority Settings." PhD diss., Linköping University, 2009.

Smith, Anthony D. *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. Oxford, England: Blackwell, 1986.

Smith, Anthony D. "Nationalism and Global Culture." In *Nationalism and Globalization: Conflicting or Complementary?* edited by Daphne Halikiopoulou and Sofia Vasilopoulou, 153-70. New York: Routledge, 2011.

Townsend, James. "Chinese Nationalism." In *Chinese Nationalism*, edited by Jonathan Unger, 1-30. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc, 1996.

Vromen, Ariadne. "Debating Methods: Rediscovering Qualitative Approaches." In *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, edited by David Marsh and Gerry Stoker, 249-66. England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Wang, Zheng. *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012.

Zhao, Suisheng. *A Nation- State by Construction: Dynamics of Modern Chinese Nationalism*. California: Stanford University Press, 2004.

### Online Resources

Bechhofer, Frank and David McCrone. "National Identity, Nationalism and Constitutional Change." In *National Identity, Nationalism and Constitutional Change*, edited by Frank Bechhofer and David McCrone, chapter 1, 1-25. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. Accessed July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015. [http://www.law.ed.ac.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/35939/chap1\\_intro.pdf](http://www.law.ed.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/35939/chap1_intro.pdf)

Fowler, Floyd J. "2 Types of Error in Surveys." In *Survey Research Methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2009. Accessed December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781452230184.n2>

Huyseune, Michel. "Nationalism and Identity Politics in International Relations." *International Relations* Vol. I: 1-5. Accessed June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2015. <http://www.eolss.net/sample-chapters/c14/e1-35-01-06.pdf>

Morgan, David L. "Focus Groups." *Annu. Rev. Sociol.* 22 (1996): 129–52. Accessed June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015. doi: 0360-0572/96/0815-0129\$08.00.

Oral History Association. "Principles for Oral History and Best Practices for Oral History." Accessed June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015. <http://www.oralhistory.org/about/principles-and-practices/>

Riessman, Catherine Kohler. "Analysis of personal narratives." *Handbook of Interviewing*, edited by Gubrium, Jay F. and Jim A. Holstein. Sage Publications, 2001. Accessed June 13<sup>th</sup> 2015. <http://alumni.media.mit.edu/~brooks/storybiz/riessman.pdf>

Riessman, Catherine Kohler. "Narrative Analysis." *Narrative, Memory & Everyday Life*. Huddersfield: University of Huddersfield, 2005. Accessed June 13<sup>th</sup> 2015. [http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/4920/2/Chapter\\_1\\_-\\_Catherine\\_Kohler\\_Riessman.pdf](http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/4920/2/Chapter_1_-_Catherine_Kohler_Riessman.pdf)

Somers, Margaret R. "The Narrative Constitution of Identity: A Relational and Network Approach." *Theory and Society*, Vol. 23, No. 5 (1994): 605-49. Accessed June 13<sup>th</sup> 2015. URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/658090>

Truesdell, Barbara. "Oral History Techniques: How to Organize and Conduct Oral History Interviews." Indiana University, Center for the Study of History and Memory. Accessed June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015. URL: <http://www.indiana.edu/~csh>

Wolf, Martin. "Will the nation-state survive globalization?" *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 80, No.1 (2001): 178-90. Accessed July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015. <https://srliebel.files.wordpress.com/2009/08/wolf-fa-2001.pdf>

## List of Appendix

Anonymous interviewee. Interview by the author. June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015, interview 1. Transcript translated from Chinese.

Anonymous interviewee. Interview by the author. June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015, interview 3. Transcript translated from Chinese.

Anonymous interviewee. Interview by the author. June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015, interview 4. Transcript translated from Chinese.

Anonymous interviewee. Interview by the author. June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015, interview 5. Transcript translated from Chinese.

Anonymous interviewee. Interview by the author. June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015, interview 6. Transcript translated from Chinese.

Anonymous interviewee. Interview by the author. June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015, interview 8. Transcript translated from Chinese.

Anonymous interviewee. Interview by the author. June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015, interview 10. Transcript translated from Chinese.

Anonymous interviewee. Interview by the author. July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015, interview 11. Transcript translated from Chinese.

Anonymous interviewee. Interview by the author. July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015, interview 12. Transcript translated from Chinese.

Anonymous interviewee. Interview by the author. July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015, interview 13. Transcript translated from Chinese.