

A Study of Chinese Youth's Immigration Motivation in the Post-pandemic Era

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Abstract

This thesis examined the motivation for Chinese youth to immigrate in the post-pandemic era. The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on Chinese economics, society, and political environment. This paper aimed to understand how these factors had influenced the immigration decisions of Chinese youth. The research adopted qualitative methods and gathered data from interviews with nine young mainland Chinese, to explore the impact of China's Covid-19 pandemic on their willingness to immigrate. A hypothesis was brought up that pandemic caused economic inequality, political inequality, and deterioration of social trust might increase Chinese youth's migration tendencies. And the findings had confirmed the hypothesis.

Key words: Covid-19, pandemic, mainland China, international migration motivation, young people, social trust

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1. Introduction

In December 2019, several cases of an “unidentified pneumonia” were reported by hospitals in Wuhan, the capital city of Hubei province. In the next month, while the Spring Festival was approaching, the pneumonia spread quickly not only in the city of Wuhan but also all across China due to the extremely intense festival travel rush. On the night of January 22, the Wuhan municipal government announced that at 10:00 a.m. the following day, just one day before the Spring Festival, the city would be strictly locked down (Yang, 2022).

The Wuhan lockdown eventually lasted for 76 days. By January 25, 2020, 30 provinces of China initiated the “level one response” to major public health emergencies. On January 30, WHO declared the Wuhan coronavirus outbreak a “public health emergency of international concern”. On February 11, the pandemic was given the name “Covid-19” by WHO. And later, on March 11, WHO declared that it upgraded to a global pandemic (Tang and Li, 2021; Yang, 2022).

Covid-19 is an unpredictable catastrophe for everyone. Numerous people were infected or even died from the novel coronavirus. The latest statistical data show that the global Covid-19 cases have reached 700 million, and the cumulative number of deaths is nearly 7 million (WHO, 2023). While governments across the world enforcing various epidemic prevention policies, China has the most comprehensive and strict ones. Nevertheless, the Covid-19 pandemic has shocked both the economy and society of China (Liang et al., 2022; Tang and Li, 2021).

Studies have shown that high infection rate can lead to mass unemployment and drops in income (Aum et al., 2021; Qian and Fan, 2020). Moreover, in China, strict lockdown and quarantine policies have directly led to the bankruptcy of a large number of small and medium-sized enterprises. It results in high rate of unemployment and huge reduction of GDP (Liang et al., 2022).

At the same time, people's dissatisfaction with the pandemic policies is hard to ignore. Some Chinese netizens directly criticize the government and the policies as *formalism* (*xingshi zhuyi* 形式主义). Although this kind of opinions are usually considered "too sensitive to appear in public" by China's strict censorship, they still receive a lot of attention and support on the internet (Yang, 2022).

Under these circumstances, a buzzword has emerged on the Chinese internet: *run* (*run* 润). The Chinese word 润 is the transliteration of the English word run (Jia, 2022). While using this word, Chinese netizens are expressing an intention of escaping from somewhere. In this case, they are usually expressing a desire of leaving the area where Chinese Covid policies are implemented, that is mainland China.

With several friends telling me similar desire, this phenomenon attracts my attention. After searching for relevant literature, I find that there has been a lot of research regarding the Covid-19 pandemic. Researchers from all over the world examine the coronavirus and pandemic outbreaks from perspectives of medical science, psychology, economics, sociology, etc. At the same time, plenty of international migration studies have been found, covering Chinese migration history, international migration motivations, etc. However, very limited research relating the Covid-19 pandemic with international migration has been found.

Therefore, questions are aroused. In this post-pandemic era, what makes Chinese people want to leave mainland China? Does China's Covid-19 outbreak affect people's migration intent? If yes, how does this pandemic affect their migration motivation?

1.1 Research question

The research question of this thesis is why Chinese youth leave mainland China in the post-pandemic era? This paper will approach the research question by discussing the following sub-questions:

1. What contributes to Chinese overseas migration?

2. What impacts has the Covid-19 pandemic brought to mainland China?
3. Will the impacts of pandemic affect Chinese youth's willingness to immigrate?

In order to answer the questions, there are concepts need to be defined first. Mainland China refers to the territory under direct administration of the Chinese Communist government of People's Republic of China, which usually excludes Taiwan, Hongkong, and Macao. In this research, as the main purpose is to analyze why people have the intention of leaving mainland China, the cases of immigrating to Taiwan, Hongkong, and Macau are also within the scope of discussion. These areas are also claimed to be part of China. However, to avoid verbosity, the movement of mainland Chinses to Taiwan, Hongkong, Macao, and overseas countries will be described as international migration in this thesis.

Besides, to narrow down the scope and make it feasible, this research will only focus on the immigration tendencies of Chinese youth who were born after the year 1995.

1.2 Structure of the thesis

The thesis includes the following parts: 1) a general introduction including the research question and thesis structure; 2) a literature review of necessary information and relevant studies regarding Chinese overseas migration and China's Covid-19 outbreak; 3) the theoretical framework with hypothesis and assumptions; 4) methodology including research design, data collection, ethical considerations, and limitations of the thesis; 5) analysis and results; 6) conclusions and possible future academic direction; 7) references and 8) appendix.

2. Literature review

The topic of this thesis is the reason why Chinese youth leave mainland China in the post-pandemic era. However, since Covid-19 outbreak is still a quite new global event, during the writing period of this paper, very limited research can be found regarding the influence of the pandemic on international migration. As a result, this part provides a review of literature relating to two topics: 1) Chinese overseas migration and 2) China's Covid-19 outbreaks and social impacts.

2.1 Chinese overseas migration

In the past, when human beings' mobility was not as strong as today, people had already started to migrate. Now, in a highly globalized world, it is much easier for one to travel a long distance while only spending a very short period of time. Therefore, during the last 30 years, international migration has emerged as a major force throughout the world (Massey et al., 1993).

Generally speaking, the volume of immigrants has greatly increased all around the world. At the same time, a diverse pattern is shown when it comes to the list of immigrant-receiving and immigrant-exporting societies. On the one hand, a significantly increased number of people has migrated to both traditional immigrant-receiving societies (such as Australia, Canada, and the United States) and newly emerged ones (such as Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Japan, who was sending immigrants only decades ago but started to receive now). On the other hand, the composition of international immigrants has changed decisively. European used to be the majority of immigrants across the world. However, now, immigrants from Africa, Latin America, and Asia account for an increasing proportion (Massey et al., 1993).

In the case of China, the economic, social and demographic changes that are occurring in China are unprecedented. The magnitude of these occurrences surpasses anything witnessed before, guaranteeing far-reaching consequences that will be felt worldwide. They have sparked widespread migration, both internal and international,

resulting in significant population displacements. With a huge and still increasing population of 1.4 billion, China acts as an important immigrant-exporting country. There has been a long history of Chinese people immigrating to other countries, especially western ones. Since the Reform and Opening-up Policy which was conducted in 1978, the issuance of passports offered Chinese people a lot of opportunities to move abroad. In recent decades, an increasing scale of Chinese international migration has been witnessed. Different from internal migrants, Chinese international migrants are usually urban residents, well-skilled and tertiary educated (Iredake, and Guo, 2015; Li, 2020).

Before the Covid-19 outbreak, the number of international migrants from China has significantly increased over time. According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), there were 4.1 million Chinese migrants in 1990, which grew to 5.5 million in 2000 and 9.3 million in 2013. This makes China the fourth largest source country of migrants, representing 4 percent of the world's migrants. The trade in Chinese products, which has evolved from selling silk, tea, and porcelain in the past to now include clothes, shoes, toys, and household items, has also contributed to the increase in international migration (Haugen and Carling, 2005; Lincoln, 2009; Xiang, 2015).

The patterns of international migration from China have been changing in recent years. In the 1990s, the majority of registered international migrants came from cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou. However, the relative importance of these cities as sources of migrants decreased to only 14 percent. On the other hand, there has been an increase in the proportion of migrants coming from rural areas of three coastal provinces - Fujian, Zhejiang, and Yunnan. Reports suggest that much of the irregular migration from China also originates from these provinces (Pieke, 2004).

Furthermore, there has been a shift in the destinations of Chinese international migrants. Besides the traditionally dominant receiving countries such as the US, UK, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, there is now a variety of new destination countries covering South Africa, Middle East, South America and North and Eastern Europe. This

change is partly due to the increasing scale of Chinese international migration, especially in the form of student and skilled migration. However, the increase in migration is not evenly distributed across all types. However, the percentage of Chinese migrants going to developed areas such as Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand has increased from 53.4 percent in 1990 to 58.6 percent in 2013. On the contrary, the share of Chinese migrants going to developing countries has decreased from 46.6 percent to 41.4 percent during the same period. (Ceccagno, 2003; Li, 2009; Lin, 2014; Nyiri, 2003; Thuno, 2003; Winders, 2014).

The rise in migration from China is not limited to unskilled labor migrants. Studies show that highly educated individuals with university degrees are now five times more likely to emigrate compared to the national average. Wealthy and well-educated people are moving to select developed countries in the global north. Additionally, there has been a significant increase in student migration from China, driven by the pursuit of elite international education (Xiang, 2015).

However, after initial outbreak of Covid-19, international travel was greatly hindered due to pandemic policies enforced by governments. On June 8, 2020, the Civil Aviation Administration of China announced the launch of the *circuit breaker rule* (*rongduan jizhi* 熔断机制) and *five one policies* (*wugeyi* 五个一) for international passenger flights. The circuit breaker rule means that a carrier's operations would be suspended for two weeks if five or more passengers tested positive for COVID-19 on landing in China. If 10 or more passengers tested positive, the suspension was extended to four weeks. As for the five one policies, domestic airlines have to reduce their international routes to one per country and cap their number of flights at no more than one per week, while foreign carriers are allowed to maintain only one air route to China and operate no more than one flight a week. Under the strict restrictions, China's inbound and outbound arrivals drop sharply (China Daily, 2022).

Chinese central government optimized its epidemic prevention policies on January 8, 2023, when the circuit breaker measures and five one policies were also ended (China Daily, 2022). As the number of international passenger flights have steadily increased

and personnel exchanges between the mainland, Hong Kong and Macao have fully resumed, entry and exit traffic and the number of applications for entry and exit documents have rebounded significantly. As of March 7, immigration management agencies across the country had inspected a total of 39.722 million people entering and exiting the country, a year-on-year increase of 112.4 percent. On February 25, the number of arrivals and departures reached 1.013 million, the first time since 2020 that the number of people entering and leaving the country exceeded one million in a single day. The national immigration management agencies issued a total of 3.362 million ordinary passports, 12.672 million document endorsements for traveling to Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, and 122,000 foreign visas and residence documents, witnessing an increase of 1220.9 percent, 837.7 percent, and 33.1 percent respectively compared with before the implementation (National Immigration Administration, 2023).

According to the press conference held by the National Immigration Administration on July 19, in the first half of 2023, the national immigration management agencies inspected a total of 168 million people entering and exiting the country, a year-on-year increase of 169.6 percent, of which 80.276 million were mainland residents (National Immigration Administration, 2023).

Based on the research and data above, we could see that Chinese people have been immigrating to other countries for a long time. Although the Covid-19 pandemic and its policies brought many restrictions to Chinese overseas migration, the number of cross-border travelers has bounced back after the restrictive measures were lifted in 2023. But why people immigrate? Especially, why Chinese people immigrate? Actually, the topics regarding migration motivation has already attracted a lot of interest and attention from researchers.

One major factor for causing international migration is economics. In the Philippines, young women will migrate for meeting the economic needs of both the family and themselves (Lauby and Stark, 1988). In Spain, Chinese migrants have been increasingly migrating to Barcelona in recent years because Barcelona offers better economic opportunities compared to their hometown. Many Chinese migrants come to

Barcelona in search of employment and business opportunities. They are attracted by the growing economy, job availability, and the potential for entrepreneurship. Barcelona's vibrant tourism industry also provides opportunities for Chinese migrants to start businesses in the hospitality sector, such as restaurants and hotels (Wladyka, D. and Morén-Alegret, R., 2015).

Similarly, many Chinese immigrants with higher levels of education and job skills move to the US in search of better job prospects and higher incomes. The strong economy of the US which is known for its entrepreneurial opportunities attracts immigrants who want to start their own businesses (Zhang and Logan, 2015).

Chan et al. investigates the factors influencing individuals' intention to emigrate from Hong Kong. The study shows that the recent surge in outward migration from Hong Kong can be attributed to the escalating level of economic inequality in the society. Many people believe that the biased economic structure in Hong Kong is a consequence of economic integration with mainland China. This perception has resulted in a lower intention to migrate to mainland China, as people are concerned about the inequality there as well (Chan et al., 2022).

Another reason for international migration is social anxiety and political uncertainty prevailing in the home country. For example, Chinese migrated to overseas countries such as Spain seek for a more inclusive and tolerant environment comparing to China (Wladyka, D. and Morén-Alegret, R., 2015). Political and social factors also play a role in Chinese migration to the US. Some Chinese immigrants may leave their home country due to political instability, lack of personal freedoms, or concerns about human rights. They see the US as a place where they can enjoy greater personal freedoms and pursue their dreams (Zhang and Logan, 2015).

In Hong Kong, the proposed Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill in 2019 sparked social movements in Hong Kong. These socio-political changes may have contributed to the current wave of migration. People who are dissatisfied with the political situation in Hong Kong and have concerns about the legal system and governance may be more inclined to migrate (Chan et al., 2022). The movement of

Turkish people to Northern Cyprus provides another example of politically motivated migration (Vural et al., 2015).

In the case of mainland China, deep social anxiety and the volatility of the labor market have created conditions where individuals seek opportunities abroad. In addition, the privatization and closure of state-owned enterprises have led to layoffs, prompting a surge in international labor out-migration, especially from regions like the northeastern 'rust belt' (Xiang, 2015).

Generally speaking, in the pre-pandemic era, though economic status has become more important in determining the actual capability to migrate in China, economic opportunities have become less important compared to the overall quality of life in influencing the desire to migrate. In exploring the reasons for Chinese international migration, Xiang (2015) suggests that one main factor is the association between economic growth and the increasing skills and finances of migrants. As countries experience economic growth and deeper integration into the global economy, individuals who have benefited from this growth may choose to migrate in search of better opportunities and a higher quality of life. This is particularly true for wealthy and skilled individuals who are able to perform better globally and have the capability to migrate (Xiang, 2015).

Another example is the Chinese immigrants who migrated to Portugal through the Golden Visas program. Immigrants from China make up the largest group of beneficiaries of this program, comprising 50 percent of the residency permits issued in Portugal. They see not only investment and economic stability, but also western education, and a better environment as their goals. Similar desire can also be found among Chinese migrants in the US (Santos et al., 2023; Zhang and Logan, 2015).

However, study about the causes of Chinese international migration in the post-pandemic era can be rarely found.

2.2 China's Covid-19 outbreaks and social impacts

In his 2022 book, Yang analyzes how the pandemic policies were affected by China's political environment and why the spread of coronavirus was not efficiently controlled at the beginning. He suggests that the emergence of novel coronavirus was at a bad timing, which coincided with the Spring Festival and the **National People's Congress and the Chinese Political Consultative Conference**. Therefore, in December, 2019, the emergence of unidentified pneumonia cases was not honestly reported in order to make way for the New Year's celebrations. And information about the novel coronavirus was not updated on time because the Wuhan municipal health commission was not working normally as its leaders were attending the National People's Congress and the Chinese Political Consultative Conference (Yang, 2022).

Yang further suggests that a tightened political environment hostile to free expression, especially in the era after Xi Jinping became the CCP's general secretary in 2012, was responsible for the government's delayed response. Before Xi took office, crisis of trust plagued public institutions, the elite power struggle within the party was fierce, political uncertainty loomed the Chinese regime. At that time, the internet emerged to be an important space for civil society. After Xi's succession, one of his strategies for ideological and social control was the special operation in mainland China aiming at building a "*clear and bright (qinglang 晴朗)*" cyberspace, which advocates "*positive energy (zhengnengliang 正能量)*" while silencing the unfavorable ideas. Therefore, the whistle-blowers of Covid-19 were quickly silenced after reminding others on the internet (Yang, 2022).

As a result, on January 23, 2020, the municipal government of the city Wuhan enforced strict lockdown measure all of a sudden. Although it was just one day before the Spring Festival, no one was allowed to leave or enter the city. All of a sudden, the novel coronavirus and the pandemic policies started to affect every Chinese's life (Yang, 2022).

After the initial outbreak of Covid-19, the Zero-Covid strategy was implemented

by the central government. The strategy focuses on controlling the spread of coronavirus to keep cases as close to zero as possible. By January 25, 2020, 30 provinces of China initiated the “level one response” to major public health emergencies. Governments issued stay-at-home order. In response, many residential communities implemented *closed management* (*fengbi guanli* 封闭管理), which means all the residents should not leave home unless he/she held a special pass issued by homeowner associations and property-management companies. Large-scale shutdown and postponement of school term were also implemented across the country. It was called “people’s war of disease prevention and control” by the central government. (Henry, 2022; Tang and Li, 2021; Yang, 2022).

Violent forms were taken when enforcing pandemic policies due to the weakness of institutions. During the lockdown period, panic swept across the nation. Due to the insufficiency of medical resources, social medias were full of stories and photographs of Wuhan citizens crying for help. While sympathizing the suffering people in Wuhan, ironically, outside Hubei province, people from Hubei were stigmatized. Stories were widely circulated and supported on the internet of villagers in rural areas setting up road barricades or even destroying roads to prevent vehicles from passing through. Especially, the escapees, who fled the city before the lockdown was enforced, were heavily criticized on Sina Weibo, China's microblogging site. The relevant discourse on Weibo involved impoliteness and the construction of negative identities for the escapees. Animal metaphors were used to highlight their irresponsibility and call for their punishment, intensifying the hostility towards them (Ho, 2021; Yang, 2022).

The Wuhan lockdown eventually lasted for 76 days. On April 8, 2020, the lockdown measures in Wuhan were finally lifted. The first wave of China’s Covid outbreak came to an end. However, China’s Covid policies were still carrying out by governments.

On March 28, 2022, strict lockdown measures were implemented in Shanghai, coping with the Omicron variant of COVID-19 in the city. Initially, when cases of the Omicron variant were detected in Shanghai in March 2022, the government decided to

impose a 9-day lockdown in two phases for screening and managing the virus. However, due to the rapid increase in cases, a city-wide lockdown was enacted on 1 April 2022 and lasted for a total of 2 months. A large wave of online protests emerged because of large-scale food shortages and officials' chaotic management. Anger and despair occupied the internet. The Shanghai lockdown brought significant psychological impacts on the population, both within Shanghai and outside of it, leading to increased levels of loneliness, perceived stress, and mental health problems. On June 1, the Shanghai lockdown ended (Li et al., 2023).

On October 13, 2022, several banners were displayed on Beijing's Sitong Bridge. The time when the banners appear coincides with the Chinese Communist Party's 20th National Congress, where President Xi Jinping consolidated his power and was awarded an unprecedented third term. The banners cried for lockdowns, authoritarianism, food shortages, and called for the step down of Xi. The identity of the man who hung the banners has not been confirmed but the photographs of the banners circulated quickly on social media (Henry, 2022).

Information about the Sitong Bridge banners were quickly censored by the government. However, even larger-scale protests followed. In the next month, a Covid outbreak happened in a Foxconn factory in Zhengzhou, the capital city of Henan province. As a consequence of the outbreak, a lockdown was enforced, leading to a situation where workers felt compelled to leave due to being quarantined alongside their infected colleagues, despite testing negative for the virus. The company made efforts to attract new hires by offering signing bonuses, but regrettably, these bonuses were never delivered as promised. As a reaction, the workers organized and took to the sprawling manufacturing complex, rallying against corporate entities and raising their voices in protest. However, their demonstration was met with a heavy-handed response from the authorities, resulting in numerous videos capturing instances of police officers forcefully dispersing the crowds, widely shared on social media platforms (Henry, 2022).

Protests started to emerge in other cities. On November 24, 2022, a fire broke out

at an apartment building in Urumqi, the capital city of Xinjiang. By then, Urumqi had endured a stringent three-month lockdown for combating a COVID outbreak. This resulted in the majority of its residents being confined to their homes, suffering from isolation, intermittent food deliveries, and a deteriorating infrastructure. It was said that the casualties of this fire could have escaped but due to the lockdown, the building's fire escape doors were locked and the access to the building was blocked by barriers. Large-scale protests started from Urumqi and later spread to other cities like Shanghai and Beijing (Henry, 2022).

The protests were suppressed immediately. The protesters were met with force by the police. The state-controlled media rarely discusses protest activities, but social media has emerged as a new channel for spreading images and information about these events. Those videos of officers beating and kicking protesters had been circulated on social media, however, the internet in China is tightly monitored, and authorities move swiftly to censor posts related to protests. Not only posts about protests were removed but other posts with key words relevant to the pandemic were restricted from viewing.

China's Zero-Covid strategy and pandemic policies lead to economic struggles and limited promises of modernization generally speaking, the policies mainly benefited a few rather than the majority of the population. Widespread discontent and a feeling of unfulfilled promises have been aroused. Moreover, the use of force by the police against protesters and the government's strict censorship cause further frustration among the population. When freedom of expression was deprived, a slogan emerged on the internet: we all know what we want to say even if there is only a blank sheet of paper. Protesters all across the world started to hold a white paper to express their grievance and anger. Therefore, the probably largest protests in China after the People's Movement in 1989 was known as the White Paper Revolution (Henry, 2022).

On January 8, 2023, after three years combating with Covid-19, Chinese central government finally announced the end of Zero-Covid policy. Pandemic restrictions were lifted all of a sudden, just like how the policies were implemented in Wuhan for the first time (Yang, 2022).

After reviewing the major Covid-19 outbreaks and protests in mainland China, we could see that people's grievance and dissatisfaction with government and pandemic policies is increasing over time. At the same time, the feeling of discontent is spreading across the country. At first it was mainly among people trapped in Wuhan. Later it was among citizens suffering from timeless lockdowns. Finally, it swept through the nation and the world.

As the most widespread and far-reaching public health emergency since the beginning of the 21st century, the impact of China's Covid-19 outbreak has attracted academic interests.

In Jiang and Liu's study, utilizing monthly nighttime light data, the impact of the Covid-19 lockdown in Shanghai on human activities and the urban economy in the Yangtze River Delta region is examined. The results show a significant decrease in human activities in counties across Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Anhui during the lockdown period (Jiang and Liu, 2023).

The lockdown measures reduced human activities, brought economic downturn, and cut people's income at the same time.

Pei et al. (2022) apply a differences-in-differences approach to analyze the monthly export data from January 2018 to April 2020 at the city level. Their findings reveal that holding other factors constant, Chinese cities under lockdown experienced a 34% decline in the year-on-year export growth rate. The lockdown measures affected both the intensive and extensive margins of exports, leading to a decrease in new market entry and an increase in exit from foreign markets (Pei et al., 2022).

Qian and Fan (2020) examine the individual-level economic impact of the Covid-19 outbreak in China. The study analyzes data collected in March-April 2020 to understand how individuals' income has changed in relation to the pre-outbreak period. The findings reveal that factors such as education, family economic status, Communist Party membership, state-sector employment, and urban hukou mitigate the adverse effects of the outbreak on individuals' income losses. Moreover, individuals living in families or regions heavily impacted by Covid-19 are more likely to experience income

losses. The study emphasized that the pandemic not only exacerbates existing social inequalities but also creates new disparities (Qian and Fan, 2020).

As social inequality has been exacerbated by the pandemic, social groups with vulnerability are suffering. Liang et al. (2022) examines the effects of the pandemic on Chinese vocational high school graduates' full-time employment, monthly income, and hours worked per week. The study uses survey data from vocational schools in six provinces and exploit variations in the intensity of the pandemic across time and space. The results show that being located in areas with high pandemic intensity significantly reduced vocational graduates' full-time employment and monthly income. The study suggests that the labor market effects of Covid-19 resulted from a contraction in labor demand from enterprises hiring vocational graduates (Liang et al., 2022).

Tang and Li (2021) have explored how the vulnerable social group, the rural migrants, cope with the pandemic outbreak. Through face-to-face interviews with rural migrants in Nanjing, the study finds that rural migrants experienced significant social impacts, particularly during the lockdown period. The impacts of Covid-19 varied among rural migrants at different life-cycle stages, influenced by factors such as human capital, family burdens, household roles, and employment opportunities. Lacking support from governments and employers, rural migrants relied on household strategies to navigate the challenges posed by the pandemic. Within households, they supported each other and worked collectively to maximize resources and minimize risks. Traditional family values were highly valued and played a crucial role during this period (Tang and Li, 2021).

It is well-proved that the Covid-19 outbreaks have shackled both the economic and society of mainland China. We could indicate that the Covid protests in China were a result of economic disparities, unfulfilled promises of modernization, police brutality, and a desire for political change. From a perspective of individuals, the pandemic brought psychological impacts on numerous Chinese people.

With A total of 219 Chinese university students participated in an online study, it was revealed that Chinese university students are at higher risk of developing anxiety

problems during a collective trauma like the COVID-19 pandemic. Besides, more students studying overseas exhibited high levels of anxiety compared to students studying in mainland China (Feng et al., 2021). Research has found that during the first pandemic outbreak in 2020, the "mask gap," which refers to the incongruent mask use norms between Chinese individuals and others in the host country, has a significant impact on perceived discrimination. It largely contributed to the increasing of anxiety among overseas Chinese during the COVID-19 pandemic (Zhang et al., 2023).

Liu et al. (2023) examines the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on general trust, political trust, and trust in physicians in China. In this research, a national longitudinal dataset is used and the Difference-in-Difference estimation is employed to analyze the short-term effects of Covid-19 exposure on trust levels. The findings indicate that increased exposure to Covid-19 risks leads to a significant decrease in general and political trust among the Chinese population, except for individuals aged 8-22. It is also emphasized that higher exposure to Covid-19 during the formative years of trust formation (8-22 years) may negatively affect general trust but positively influence trust in local officials and physicians. Furthermore, the study reveals that Covid-19 exacerbates general trust among vulnerable groups, while political trust remains stable (Liu et al., 2023).

This quantitative research provides a thorough analysis of the impact of Covid-19 on trust dynamics in China. It brings an insight of exploring the relationship between Covid-19 and social trust. The authors assert that since historical events could decrease trust, the research result of higher political trust for the younger generation is due to the lack of experiences of major social event such as the Cultural Revolution, the great famine in the 1960s, and the failed health care reform in the 1980-1990s (Liu et al., 2023). However, my opinion is that since the pandemic has negatively impacted Chinese youth's life and health condition, the long-lasting war of disease prevention and control itself can be regarded as a collective trauma which could bring negative effect to trust. Therefore, it is possible that political trust is decreasing among some Chinese youth who have experienced China's pandemic outbreaks.

As the impact of Covid-19 on various sectors has been discussed by researchers, the relationship between Covid-19 outbreak and Chinese international migration still remains unknown. Therefore, this thesis is going to explore whether the pandemic has affected mainland Chinese's migration tendency.

3. Theoretical framework

After reviewing all the literature mentioned above, my hypothesis is that China's Covid-19 policies do have impact on China's youth migration. To some extent, China's strict pandemic policies lead to an increase in Chinese youth's migration willingness. Therefore, to further explore how do the policies effect youth migration, two parts of the theories are introduced in this sector: 1) theories of migration motivation; 2) trust study.

3.1 Theories of migration motivation

There have been many theoretical models employing different concepts, assumptions, and frames of references, trying to explain the same question, that is why international migration happens (Massey et al., 1993).

Among all the theories, the one often heard and well-remembered is probably the push-pull effect from Brinley Thomas. It suggests that when economic down-turn or environmental degradation occur, the country will naturally generate a power to push its residents to leave. On the contrary, countries with prosperity and livable natural environment will attract people to move there. Therefore, international migration happens under the combined action of push from the immigrant exporting country and

pull from the importing country (Thomas, 1973). The other traditional immigration theories mentioned in this sector can all be said to have the impression of the push-pull effect, or can be seen as its extension. Although these theories are not as extensive as the push-pull effect, they all have a deeper understanding of the reasons for the formation of immigrants.

While discussing the origin of international migration, some consider it from a macro perspective. As the most forceful proponent of the dual labor market theory, Piore (1979) argues that international migration originates from the inherent labor demand in modern industrial society. According to him, international migration is largely demand-based and is initiated by recruiting practices in developed societies. This model mainly talks about the international movement of labor and approaches the question from a perspective of labor market itself as the major actor.

Different voices come from a group of sociological theorists who builds the world system theory. This model suggest that the international movement of population is not originated from the labor market within particular national economies, but from the world market which has developed and expanded since the 16th century. As capitalist expand and penetrate from the core-capitalist countries to non-capitalist countries, a growing portion of population is integrating into the world markets economy. Under the influence and control of the world market, following the flow of goods and capital, international migration happens inevitably (Wallerstein, 1974; Petras, 1981; Sassen, 1988; Morawska, 1990).

However, as the main purpose of this thesis is to explore the reasons why Chinese youth show immigrant tendencies in the post-pandemic era, what we focus here is the migration decisions made by every individual. Thus, instead of the dual labor market theory and the world system theory, other theoretical models from the viewpoint of individual actors are adopted.

The probably most well-known theory was developed from neoclassical economics. It claims that the geographic differences of labor supply and demand is the primary cause of international migration. Countries with rich labor force relative to

capital have a low equilibrium market wage, while countries with limited labor resource relative to its capital have a high equilibrium market wage. The differences can result in labor flow from low wage countries to high wage countries. At the same time, there is a flow of investment from capital-rich countries to capital-scare countries. Human capital is also included in the investment, which leads to the movement of skilled workers. According to this theory, the labor market is the main driving force for international migration while other markets only have limited influence (Lewis, 1954; Ranis and Fei, 1961; Harris and Todaro, 1970; Todaro, 1976).

Comparing to the macroeconomic model above, a microeconomic model can better explain individual's migration motivation. It says that international migration is caused by the differences in earnings, which usually refers to wages. In order to attain the higher wages, investment, involving learning languages and cultures, money for travel, etc., is needed. Therefore, international migration happens when the expected earnings out-weight the indispensable investment. However, there are other factors that may affect one's migration proclivity. For instance, individual characters such as education, experience, language skills, social conditions, etc. can highly influence the probability of international movement. Besides, according to this model, the employment rate is not fixed and it can determine the expected earnings, hence, affect individual's movement (Sjaastad, 1962; Todaro, 1976; Todaro and Maruszko, 1987).

The neoclassical models are very concise and can be widely applied in many international migration cases. These theories assume that all the immigrants are economically motivated. It means that all the immigrants are assumed to be economically rational and the only reference factor for making migration decision is to maximize their asset (Shaw, 1975). Although for the interviewees in this research, money is a key factor that needs to be well-considered while making their migration plans, there are other reasons why they want to leave mainland China.

A "new economics of migration" has emerged in recent years, challenging the neoclassical theoretical models. This model provides a new approach in explaining the origin of international migration, that is from the perspective of production or

consumption units. It suggests that the decision of migration is not made by an individual but by a unit of related people, which can be seen as a production unit and the most common example is family or household. From the perspective of households, especially in developing countries, migration is a way to ensure or expand the total earnings. Since the ultimate goal of migration is to avoid “putting all eggs in one basket”, the difference in wages is no longer a necessary motivation in this model (Katz and Stark, 1986; Lauby and Stark, 1988; Stark, 1991).

Although it still views economics as the only motivation for international migration, the new perspective offered by this theoretical model is quite innovative and reasonable. But since this thesis is mainly analyzing the migration motivation of individuals, this model will not be widely applied. Nevertheless, it will be used as a supplementary theory as the research group of this thesis is mainland Chinese youth and many of the interviewees are currently students, whose family play a significant role when they make migration decisions.

While most of the theoretical models approach the question from an economic perspective, some argue that there are other factors that worth paying attention to. International migration is a powerful symbol of global inequality. At the same time inequality can be seen as a major cause of both internal and international migration. Despite the fact that a lot of migration is economically motivated, inequality does not only include differences in wages, it can also refer to working opportunities, career plans, even political aspects, such as the inequality in access to power and rights (Black et al., 2006).

In this thesis, the research question focuses on Chinese youth’s migration motivation, to be specific, why they want to leave mainland China. Under the scope of the push-pull effect, what we try to analyze here is the “push” part from mainland China. And as China’s pandemic policies bring both economic impact and political dissatisfaction, the theory of migration and inequality suits the best. With other theories as supplement, this thesis is going to testify the impact on interviewees’ migration tendency of two types of inequality: 1) economic inequality; 2) political inequality.

3.2 Trust study

Trust exists ubiquitously in human society. It refers to the willingness of one to become vulnerable to another. Contemporary trust study begins in the 1950s with a psychological approach, which considers trust as an individual's psychological event and focused more on the cognitive content and emotional characteristics that make up "trust". Since the 1970s, trust, as a social, economic, and cultural issue, has increasingly attracted researchers' attention and reflection, forming a sociological and economic path for trust study (Yue and Tian, 2004). Although that most writing about trust is still theoretically vague and the concept of trust is left with a very loose definition, it has emerged as a central topic in the sector of social science (Cook, 2005).

Sociology regards trust as an important dimension of social relations, breaking through the psychological perspective of only focusing on individual trust, making the study of social trust and institutional trust extremely important. According to Niklas Luhmann's 1979 book, trust is an essential social lubricant. It makes cooperation possible and contributes to the maintenance of social order at the micro level (Luhmann, 1979; Yue and Tian, 2004).

Economics initially studied trust issues from the perspective of rational economic analysis, but later pioneered the path of economic cultural research on trust by integrating social and cultural factors that commonly present in economic life. In the book *Trust: the Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*, Fukuyama (1996) applies the sociological notion of trust on economic studies. He asserts that the inherent level of trust in a national culture can reduce transaction costs, thereby affecting a country's economic development. In other words, by improving market efficiency to achieve a more prosperous economy. In contrast, a lower level of mutual trust can lead to an increase in social transaction costs, thereby limiting market activities and limiting commerce in a society (Fukuyama, 1996; Yue and Tian, 2004).

Generally speaking, trust is the 'social glue' in societies. When people trust each other, they will tend to be more cooperative. In societies with more trust, social and political institutions operate more effectively while economic activities are also conducted with more efficiency. The above results will then lead to positive economic and social growth. Therefore, trust contributes to economic growth and efficiency in a market economy, facilitates the provision of public goods, promotes social integration, cooperation, and harmony, and even contributes to health and longevity. Last but not least, trust is conducive to the satisfaction of personal life and the stability and development of democracy (Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002; Delhey and Newton, 2003; Fukuyama, 1995; Knack and Keefer, 1997; Putnam, 1993; Nikolakis and Nelson, 2019; Zak and Knack, 2001).

The generation and deterioration of trust can be influenced by various factors. It has been indicated that trust is highly related with cooperation, social interaction, and moral dilemmas.

In agriculture societies, unfavorable weather conditions may have encouraged cooperation, and therefore created differences in trust over time (Buggle and Durante, 2017).

Trust can also be affected by great social events. During the Culture Revolution, the moral dilemmas generated by this episode, where individuals could benefit from signaling one's political loyalty at the potential cost of others, makes it difficult to sustain inter-personal trust (Bai and Wu, 2020).

Besides, studies have shown that during pandemic era, social contacts are reduced for fearing of the highly contagious disease. Measures of public health and the general encouragement from the authorities and the media to avoid inter-personal contacts also lead to the decline of social interactions. As the consequence, a profound climate of suspicion and mistrust is created (Cohn, 2018). The pandemic could have a significant impact on trust. It has led to a decrease in social and political trust as people exposed to imperfect risk information often rely on heuristic strategies. The spread of virus can bring panic and suspicion, which hinder cooperation and trust-building among

individuals, leading to a decline in trust. The deterioration of trust could then result in dissatisfaction and migration willingness (Liu et al., 2023).

Other historical events such as the slave trade in Africa, the 9/11 terror attack, and the Spanish flu epidemic have all demonstrated the long-term adverse effects on trust (Aassve et al., 2021; Cohn, 2018; Devine et al., 2021; Nunn and Wantchekon, 2011;).

In this thesis, since China's youth migration is a social issue, only the approach from a sociological perspective will be adopted. Therefore, based on the research mentioned above, we could infer that the pandemic outbreak and the Covid policies in mainland China may lead to a deterioration of social trust, which then contributes to the migration tendencies of mainland Chinese.

To sum up, based on the theoretical framework of both migration motivation and trust study, a possible hypothesis can be proposed to answer the research question: China's Covid outbreak and strict pandemic policies lead to 1) economic inequality, 2) political inequality, and 3) deterioration of social trust, thus result in the youth migration of mainland Chinese in the post-pandemic era.

4. Methodology

This sector of the thesis is about the methodology. Three major parts are included: 1) research design and data collection; 2) ethical considerations; 3) limitations.

4.1 Research design and data collection

This thesis aims to explore the reasons why Chinese youth migrate in the post-epidemic era. The thesis will be qualitative research regarding migration motivation. The data for this thesis is mainly collected from interviews with young mainland

Chinese to see the reasons why they leave, or want to leave mainland China.

Doing interviews is a common method for doing research in the social sciences. While conversation is one of the basic interactions for people to know each other. Interview is where researchers have conversations with people to know their lives, experiences, and opinions. As Covid-19 is a quite new topic and China's pandemic situation is constantly changing, not much research in this area has been found when I write this thesis. Therefore, in order to know people's opinions and reasons of their actions, having direct conversations with them is the best way. (Kvale, 2007).

There are three types of interviews: structured interview, semi-structured interview, and unstructured interview. It takes much confidence and experience for researchers to do unstructured interviews. For novices like me, taking notes before and after talking to people is very helpful and important in structuring decent interviews. Besides, for this thesis, the topic is specific that is the reason why Chinese youth leave mainland China in post-epidemic era. Questions can only be partly prepared since the interviewees' responses are unpredictable and alterations in questions may be needed while interviewing different people. Therefore, semi-structured interview with specific topics and a list of probe questions is going to be used in this thesis (Bryman, 2016; Luker, 2008).

In this research, the main purpose of the interviews is to explore the migration motivation of young mainland Chinese in the post-pandemic era. In order to prepare the interview guide, a general understanding over China's Covid policies and Chinese society under pandemic is indispensable. The impacts of China's Covid-19 outbreak on multiple sectors has been introduced above. In addition, the latest statistical data and China's continuously altering Covid policies have been cited from official sites.

Based on the literature review about China's pandemic outbreaks and international migration, possible theoretical frameworks are used to answer the research question. The hypothesis is brought up that the Chinese youth migration in this era may be motivated by three major factors: economic inequality, political inequality, and the deterioration of social trust. Therefore, three sectors of questions are prepared.

The first part is to explore the relationship between pandemic caused economic inequality and Chinese youth migration. After operationalization, three sub-questions are raised regarding bankruptcy, unemployment, and the decrease of income. Similarly, in the second part, which discusses the influence of political inequality, three sub-questions regarding social inclusiveness, political instability, and human rights have been set. The third part is to see whether the deterioration of social trust during the pandemic has affected Chinese youth's migration tendencies. Therefore, three sub-questions related to cooperation, social interaction, and moral dilemma are included in this part. Other questions are asked based on the interviewees' reactions. For the detailed interview guide, please see the appendix.

The main purpose of the interviews is to find the reasons why Chinese youth immigrate and discuss the influence of the pandemic and CCP's Covid policies over youth migration. Thus, the interviewees are young mainland Chinese who have already left mainland China or wish to leave in the future, no matter it is permanent or temporary migration.

Therefore, while selecting the interviewees, the necessary condition is that they must be mainland Chinese who have the intention of immigration. And a priority was given to those who have experiences in living outside of mainland China. To meet the representativeness of sampling, both male and female interviewees, with different ages and coming from different areas of mainland China were invited. But considering the sensitivity of political topics involved in the research, the participants were not randomly sampled but those who have built mutual-trust with the interviewer.

In this research, all the interviewees were born between the year 1996-2000. In total, there are nine interviewees (4 female and 5 male) participated in this research. Among them, three participants come from Zhejiang province, two come from Jiangsu province, one from Anhui province, one from Hebei province, one from Henan, and one from Shanxi. Currently, four of them are living in mainland China while three of them live in Sweden, one live in Japan, and one in Taiwan.

There are interviewees currently living in mainland China and in other countries

and areas, therefore, the research is conducted both inside and outside of mainland China. And since it is difficult for the author to meet participants in person, all the interviews are conducted through video calls. Since the interviewees all have different backgrounds and live in different countries and areas, the interviews are conducted in mandarin for better communication and understanding. The questions and answers are translated by the author after doing the interviews.

4.2 Ethical considerations

While doing research, it is critical to pay attention to positionality, reflexivity, and the power relations in the process of producing knowledge and every stage of doing the research. Ethical research is generated through negotiation space and reflexive practice, which is crucial to the issue of multi-scale status and power relations. Since interviews are going to be conducted, there is the necessity of paying extra attention to non-hierarchical interactions, understanding, and mutual learning. That is to say, if the data is going to be collected from people, the researcher shall be attentive to the research questions and data collection methods to avoid falling into unequal relations with the research participants (Sultana, 2007). The knowledge production achieved through interviews requires a delicate balance between the interviewer's interest in pursuing meaningful knowledge and ethical respect to the participants. There is always a tension of knowledge and ethics in qualitative interviews (Kvale, 2007).

In doing my research, especially in conducting interviews, due to the sensitivity of the topic, close attention is paid on the protection of interviewees, which means the interviewees' subjective wills are fully respected, and the collected data is cautiously dealt with.

First of all, the interviewees' consent is gained before the interviews are conducted. It is very important to make sure that the interviewee understand the purpose and risks of participating in interviews. An introduction of my thesis and myself is presented to

help in explaining the significance of interviews and building mutual trust relationship.

Secondly, it is completely understandable if the interviewees refuse to be recorded because of the sensitivity of the topic. While doing this research, all the interviewees refuse to be recorded in the concern of China's strict censorship and sensitive political topics. Under this circumstance, the interviews are proceeded with the interviewer taking notes.

Thirdly, because of China's strict censorship, all of the interviewees are anonymous when appear in the thesis and all of their personal information are used after obtaining consent. The data is carefully protected without sharing. And since it is impossible for me to meet participants in person, coordination and interviews have to be conducted through internet. As much as possible, social medias and meeting tools from Chinese companies are deliberately avoid from using. Except using Wechat for early contact, the interviews and information exchange are conducted through messenger and Gmail.

Last but not the least, due to Chinese people's strict self-censorship, mutual-trust is greatly needed in order to talk about sensitive issues about an authoritarian country. The interviewee may refuse to talk or not tell the truth if the interviewer is considered untrustworthy. Besides, as the author is mainland Chinese as well, I also tend to discuss sensitive issues only with trustworthy interviewees for safety reasons. Thus, regarding the sensitivity of the topic, the interviewees are those who the researcher has built up a strong rapport with, who fully understand the risks of the interview and have given informed consent to being part of this research. Therefore, in this research, some of the interviewees are found among the author's acquaintances while others are introduced by existing participants.

4.3 Limitations

First of all, as qualitative research, it is inevitable to be too subjective and

impressionistic. The findings of the thesis largely depend on the author's opinion of what is significant. That is to say, even if the research topic is exactly the same, different researchers will choose to observe and analyze different things. As a result, different researchers may come up with completely different findings (Bryman, 2012). In this thesis, I focus more on the influence of economic and political inequality and social trust on Chinese youth immigration rather than the influence of environment, etc.

Secondly, when interviews are conducted, the results are unpredictable and time-sensitive. On the one hand, interviewees' behavior is very likely to be affected by the interviewer's attitude, response, performance, etc. (Bryman, 2012). On the other hand, the interviewees' opinions over certain topic (in this case, China's Covid policies) could be time-sensitive if the situation is constantly changing. For instance, people's attitude towards CCP's Covid policies could be completely different before and after the White Paper Revolution.

Thirdly, since the topic is very sensitive to mainland Chinese, and also, because of time limitation, it is quite difficult to find a large group of interviewees with all kinds of backgrounds, which leads to a limited research result. In this research, all the interviewees are well-educated university graduates. They come from 6 different provinces, which covers around 20 percent of mainland China's provincial level administrative regions.

5. Analysis and Results

The collected data is analyzed in this sector. The research question of this thesis is why Chinese youth leave mainland China in the post-pandemic era. And after reviewing relevant literature and theories, the possible hypothesis has been brought up: China's Covid-19 outbreaks and pandemic policies bring 1) economic inequality, 2) political inequality, and 3) deterioration of social trust, therefore, contribute to the migration tendencies of young mainland Chinese.

Three parts of questions regarding the mentioned three possible consequences are asked during the interviews. In this sector, the relationship between these three possible consequences and Chinese youth's migration tendencies is going to be analyzed one by one based on the data collected from interviews.

Before the analysis, a brief introduction of the interviewees is presented below:

Aiguo, male, born in 1998 in Anhui province, currently living in Sweden.

Erik, male, born in 1996 in Jiangsu province, currently living in Sweden.

Grant, male, born in 1997 in Henan province, currently living in mainland China.

Peng, male, born in 2000 in Shanxi province, currently living in mainland China.

Sara, female, born in 1998 in Zhejiang province, currently living in Taiwan.

Susan, female, born in 1999 in Zhejiang province, currently living in mainland China.

Wan, female, born in 1998 in Zhejiang province, currently living in Japan.

Xiaomei, male, born in 1996 in Jiangsu province, currently living in Sweden.

Zoe, female, born in 1999 in Hebei province, currently living in mainland China.

The provided names are pseudonyms and all the information are used in this thesis with the interviewees' consent.

5.1 Economic Inequality

In order to see whether pandemic caused economic inequality can affect Chinese youth's willingness on immigration, questions are asked regarding bankruptcy, unemployment, and decrease of income.

After analyzing the collected data, the results show that for the participants, the Covid-19 pandemic and relevant policies indeed bring economic inequality including corporate bankruptcy, unemployment, and decrease in income. And generally speaking, the pandemic caused economic inequality does contribute to the

migration tendencies of some Chinese youth.

A pattern has been found that for the interviewees, the less their own lives are affected, the less their willingness of migration will be influenced. Since the interviewees are either students or young people who have just entered the workplace, the impact of bankruptcy is not as significant as unemployment and income reduction. Besides, because of the same reason, an interesting opinion has been found, that is due to their financial dependency on families, the economic downturn caused by the pandemic will reduce some Chinese youth's willingness to immigrate on the contrary.

5.1.1 Bankruptcy

When asked about cases of corporate bankruptcy during and after the Covid-19 pandemic in mainland China, all the participants claim that they have heard a lot of them. The most common cases are the closures of restaurants and small shops.

Aiguo: when I went back to pack my luggage after the Wuhan lockdown was lifted in 2020, I found that many business districts and restaurants around my undergraduate school had closed down.

Zoe: there are some restaurants and shops near my residential quarter. Those I saw before going abroad in 2022 were all closed down when I returned home in 2023.

Cases of labor-intensive factory closures during the pandemic have also been mentioned.

Susan: my aunt runs a shoe factory. During the epidemic, some shoe factories she knew closed down due to serious losses, and some people committed suicide by jumping off buildings.

Wan: my dad runs a mold factory, and some of the hardware factories he knew really went out of business during the pandemic. There are even factories closing down this year.

The bankruptcy of some larger enterprises has also been mentioned, such as

shopping malls, supermarkets, travel companies, etc.

Meanwhile, all participants believe that the epidemic is related to corporate bankruptcies. Peng suggests that he thinks it was not pandemic itself but the epidemic prevention restrictions that affected business operations. Susan and Wan believe that for labor-intensive industries, especially factories involved in import and export trade, the Covid-19 epidemic has dealt a fatal blow, that the pandemic has directly caused the factories to be unable to make ends meet and thus went bankrupt.

Susan: I think there is a direct correlation between the epidemic and corporate bankruptcies. Strict epidemic prevention policies do not allow people to gather, but factories are labor-intensive industrial production and there is no possibility of remote working from home. Policies at that time required factories to shut down, so orders could not be fulfilled. In this case, the factory not only has no income, but also needs to pay liquidated damages. At the same time, the frequency of international transportation has been significantly reduced, so even if factories can complete orders, goods cannot leave the port. If the goods cannot be shipped, the order cannot be completed, the factory cannot receive payment, and the capital chain will be broken, and the factory will eventually go bankrupt.

Although most of the participants believe that the epidemic is only part of the cause of corporate bankruptcies, they still admit that the pandemic and related policies have a strong correlation with corporate bankruptcy.

However, as the epidemic has caused a large number of Chinese companies to go bankrupt has become a consensus, only one participant claims that it leads to an increase in his willingness to immigrate.

Aiguo: business operations are part of the market economy. China's market economy has no freedom and autonomy due to the epidemic and its control measures. The consequence of politics overriding the economy is that companies are not optimistic about the Chinese market. Therefore, in order to ensure my future economic expectations, I will consider leaving China and going to a country with a free and healthy economy.

Others think that corporate bankruptcy is far away from their lives since themselves and their families are not directly affected. Therefore, its impact on their

willingness to immigrate is very limited.

5.1.2 Unemployment

It is widely recognized among the participants that the Covid-19 pandemic and epidemic prevention measures have caused unemployment in mainland China. All of the interviewees say that they have noticed people losing their job even if it is not someone close to them.

Grant: I have heard relevant news talking about the unemployment, such as the government no longer publishing the youth unemployment rate and the news that some companies are laying off employees.

Peng: for me, the most intuitive feeling is that jobs are hard to find, and a large number of experienced labor forces have re-entered the job market.

Zoe: I didn't look for a job during the pandemic, so I don't know much about it. Now after the pandemic, all the Chinese international students I met while studying in the UK are currently unemployed. There is a lot of university graduates cannot find jobs.

Susan: some low-level employees in my aunt's factory resigned or were laid off because the factory could not pay wages. But the entire shoemaking industry is in a slump, it's difficult for unemployed workers to find another job.

The correlation between the pandemic and unemployment in mainland China is also commonly recognized. It is generally believed that the pandemic and epidemic prevention policies are one of the reasons for the economic contraction in mainland China, and layoffs are a choice for companies to survive and reduce costs.

For the impact of mainland China's unemployment on their migration tendencies, Wan and Susan thinks that the unemployment is nothing worth worrying about since herself and her family are not affected. Therefore, it does not bring significant impact on their migration intention.

However, seven out of nine participants say the widespread unemployment will increase their willingness to immigrate, in searching for a better employment environment.

Peng: the rise in unemployment means more intense competition, and escaping from fierce competition is one of my original intentions for immigrating.

Sara: in mainland China, the epidemic control period was very long, and strict control measures were repeatedly implemented. The economy has been unable to recover, giving me a sense of instability. The unemployment rate proves that the employment environment is not good. Although I have not experienced unemployment, I feel scared.

Zoe: my parents have been urging me to find a job, but the unemployment rate is high and jobs are hard to find. I am very anxious and want to go abroad.

5.1.3 Decrease of income

The decrease of income is also widely noticed by the interviewees. A lot of cases from state-owned enterprises, public institutions, service industries and manufacturing industries are mentioned.

Aiguo: many friends have told me that their overtime wages cannot be paid and bonuses are in arrears. They all work in state-owned enterprises and public institutions, and the situation in other private enterprises is probably even worse.

Wan: my aunt works in a state-owned enterprise and is a middle-level manager. This year I heard that she will have her salary cut by 30 percent. Besides, after the initial pandemic outbreak, the number of orders received by my father's factory decreased significantly, resulting in a decrease in income. Workers in my father's factory are paid based on the hours they work, and accordingly, their income has also been reduced.

Sara: amidst the epidemic, the income of our family-owned restaurant has witnessed a noticeable downturn. On the one hand, there was no business at all during the lockdown period. On the other hand, people were afraid of being infected, so fewer people went to restaurants.

While talking about the possible impact of the pandemic on the decrease of people's income, all the participants agree that the pandemic has more or less contributed to the reduction of income. As for the possible impact of reduced income on their migration tendencies, two participants think that their migration intention is not affected because their lives have not been influenced, while five participants say that they tend to move abroad in searching for better job opportunities.

Erik: even if only considering the income gap, I will give priority to the opportunity of overseas employment.

Grant: compared with developed countries, China's income level is not high. At the same time, China has problems such as high housing prices and high medical prices, which makes me feel less confident in living in China.

Sara: I think relatively speaking, in foreign countries, the welfare protection is better, the salary changes are not significant, and the income is stable. So, the decrease in domestic income will make me to want to try going abroad.

But interestingly, Susan and Xiaomei hold different opinions. Susan says that, in the long run, the decline in people's income in mainland China has confirmed her future immigration plan. But in the short term, the economic downturn makes her views more conservative. Xiaomei also believes that the reduction in income will result in him not having enough money to immigrate.

Susan: I don't dare to go abroad during recent years, because as a newcomer who has just entered the workplace, I have no savings. Whether I go to study abroad or work abroad, in the short term, my financial resources will have to rely on my family in China. As the domestic economic situation is not good, I feel that my life will not be guaranteed after going abroad. But the reduction of income in China has contributed to my future immigration plan due to the poor workfare in Chinese workplace, where overtime is common in enterprises, and the salary structure is unreasonable.

5.2 Political Inequality

To explore whether pandemic caused political inequality has an impact on Chinese youth's willingness to immigrate, questions regarding social inclusiveness, political instability, and human rights have been asked during interviews.

After analyzing the collected data, the result is that low social inclusiveness, political instability, and lack of human rights during the pandemic era have more or less contributed to the feeling of political inequality in mainland China. And the migration tendencies of all the participants are increased by pandemic caused

political inequality.

5.2.1 Social inclusiveness

First of all, eight out of nine participants admit that they have experienced or have heard of cases of discrimination against Covid-19 patients and people from infected areas. Plenty of stories are mentioned.

Aiguo: in 2020, the parents of my primary school classmate worked at the subdistrict office, responsible for restricting the travel of people returning home from Wuhan and visiting their homes every day to take their temperatures. The classmate complained on WeChat that the people returning from Wuhan were not cooperating. I said that it was really unfair and was criticized by the classmate. In the following two years, various inhuman references to patients such as "little Yang people (xiaoyangren 小阳人)" and "sheep (yang 羊)" make me feel very uncomfortable.

Erik: I know that during the pandemic era, a large number of netizens openly discriminated against returnees from abroad, being very hostile to them. They told them not to return to China, demanded that their quarantine time should be extended, and even abused them online.

Susan: in the early stages of the epidemic, people returning from infected areas would be reported. An employee of my aunt's factory is from Hubei. After Wuhan was locked down, he was worried that he would be stuck in his hometown, so he fled back to Wenzhou overnight during the Spring Festival holiday. According to my parents, in the village at that time, people who had been close to the epidemic areas would be taken away and quarantined as soon as they were discovered.

Wan: During the epidemic, I did not go back home because traveling from Japan to China was very complicated and expensive. I had to be quarantined for a long time and might also be bullied online.

Xiaomei: I was once forced not to go home during the epidemic. In addition, when I traveled from Hangzhou to Sweden in 2021, the hotel in the center of Hangzhou refused to accept me because I came from the area with confirmed Covid-19 cases.

Zoe: in 2022, I set off from Beijing to study in the UK. At that time, Beijing required that no one could pass through epidemic areas within 7 days before entering Beijing. So, I had to leave home early and went to live with relatives in Dingzhou for 7 days. That morning, my mother learned that a confirmed case had appeared near our home. I quickly packed my bags and left that afternoon, and our community was locked down in the evening.

The participants who have experienced such discrimination show obvious

disappointment and anger when asked about their opinions toward the phenomenon. As for those who have heard relevant cases but do not have such experiences, some believe that at the early stage of the epidemic, it is understandable that people might discriminate others due to great panic, however, the discriminatory behavior itself is considered incorrect. Peng says that he did not know any case of discrimination, but he agrees that discriminating against patients is unacceptable.

While talking about the impact of such discrimination on their willingness to immigrate, six participants state that it makes them want to leave mainland China. They commonly agree that this kind of social phenomenon makes them feel that the general environment of Chinese society is unfriendly and intolerant.

Aiguo: discrimination reflects social divisions and sharp contradictions. I do not want to live in a society full of hostility, where people are on guard against each other.

Grant: people have negative attitudes towards patients and people from infected areas, but the government did not take effective measures to alleviate this discrimination. Some community workers, in particular, are adding fuel to the fire. This social atmosphere makes me feel insecure.

Susan: I think that in China, some people are standing on the moral high ground and discriminate against others as if they would never be discriminated against. This strengthened my belief in leaving China.

Zoe: I think in China, everyone stands on the moral high ground and condemns Covid patients, and there is an atmosphere where as if this behavior should be allowed. This is a terrible thing. Everyone thinks that online violence is right, and everyone thinks that only perfect victims will not be abused online. I am afraid that if I am infected, I will also be discriminated against online.

At the same time, three participants think the widespread discrimination does not bring impact on their migration tendencies. Sara and Wan believe that different kinds of discrimination are ubiquitous all around the world. Leaving mainland China does not prevent them from encountering discrimination. Peng believes that those who will engage in discriminatory behavior is unlikely someone he will come into contact with, so it has nothing to do with him.

5.2.2 Political instability

As it has been discussed above, Chinese pandemic policies were affected by political issues. The opinions toward China's epidemic prevention policies and measures are collected in the interviewees. Aiguo and Erik think that China's pandemic policies and relevant restrictions are wrong and inhumane. Sara and Wan believe that the policies were correct, reasonable, and effective in the early stages of the epidemic, but strict restrictions in the middle and late stages are quite problematic. Others think that the strict measures in mainland China cannot be said to be correct, but are understandable. However, what is widely recognized is that China's pandemic policies in the late stages of the epidemic were extreme and unreasonable.

Wan: I think the measures China has taken at the beginning are precise and effective, and there is no problem because they are indeed for the benefit of most people. These policies are very effective in order to avoid panic and riots caused by the spread of the virus. But high-pressure policies in the late stages of the epidemic were inappropriate because everyone has basically understood the virus and was no longer afraid of the virus. I think China's pandemic policies did not keep up with reality, lockdowns were unpredictable and have caused trouble to people.

Susan: I do not think it was right to take strict measures in the early stages of the epidemic, but it is understandable because the government might want to control the epidemic quickly. However, in the middle and later stages of the epidemic, people were required to take nucleic acid tests every day. If they do not take tests, they will not be able to travel normally. This kind of measure has seriously affected people's daily lives.

Xiaomei: I do not support China's epidemic prevention policy, but I can understand it. Trading human rights for temporary health is too extreme, but it works in Chinese society.

And all the participants agree that generally speaking, politics did not take a glorious role during the pandemic era. Especially in the late stages of the pandemic, epidemic prevention was no longer the primary purpose of China's pandemic policies.

Aiguo: I believe that the formulation of epidemic prevention measures is completely decided by the political chief. As a political order, epidemic prevention measures are one of the indicators for official evaluation.

Grant: I think politics plays a leading role in the formulation and implementation

of epidemic policies, because these large-scale quarantine measures are difficult to implement without government involvement.

Peng: Some officials have vested interests, because pandemic prevention and control is included in the consideration of officials' performance, which is a strong support for seeking promotion. China's pandemic policies are also conducive to enhancing the status and image of the ruling party among the people, and is a powerful propaganda tool.

Wan: I think the policies in the late stages of the epidemic were outrageous. They changed from epidemic control to compliance testing, and politics wanted to have absolute control over the masses. I think some people don't want the pandemic to end and enjoy the power it brings.

With no doubt, all the participant agree that the unpredictable and unreasonable pandemic policies affected by political instability lead to an increase of their migration tendencies. After discovering the decisive role that politics take in mainland China, they feel like their personal interests must yield to politics. And everyone must comply with the rapidly changing policies, no matter it is reasonable or not. All the participants are unwilling to accept such rules and therefore want to immigrate.

Wan: I had never thought about immigration before, but starting from the late stage of the epidemic, I felt that China's policies were too much, so I started to pay attention to immigration information.

Sara: before, I thought mainland China was definitely better, but in the late stages of the epidemic, I felt that Taiwan's policies were more humane than those in mainland China, which made me want to stay in Taiwan.

Susan: I feel that China's pandemic policies have had a great impact on personal life. It makes me worry about whether my job will disappear suddenly and whether I will be arrested in the next second. I feel that the privacy of my life and property is not guaranteed. In China, personal privacy, dignity, and rights will be forced to surrender to politics.

Peng: I hate that personal interests are tied to collective interests. In order to avoid more similar things in the future, I will be more inclined to move to somewhere with stable political environment.

5.2.3 Human rights

With the exception of Peng, who feels uncertain about his grasp of the pandemic-related incidents and thus refrains from classifying them as human rights violations, the

other eight participants express awareness of multiple instances where human rights have been violated. News about forced quarantine, forced home disinfection, pet killing, online censorship, etc. are mentioned.

The 8 participants think these human rights violations are unacceptable to them, while some of the participants say that it is the pandemic that makes them pay attention to human right issues in mainland China for the first time.

Aiguo: On the one hand, power is decentralized to the grassroots. Volunteers and community workers have certain powers of life and death in the implementation of epidemic prevention measures. Unfettered political-movement-style epidemic prevention will amplify the evil of human nature, just like the Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution. On the other hand, it is a manifestation of politics overriding everything, where personal dignity, freedom and even life can be sacrificed for the sake of political correctness and abstract grand narratives. This is undoubtedly inappropriate and inhumane.

Sara: it makes me reflect and panic. I feel that the ideas we were taught have been subverted. I used to think that Chinese people had human rights, but later I discovered that during special periods, such as the epidemic, people lost their human rights, and they could not resist. Although this has not happened to me yet, I don't know if it will happen in the future.

Wan: after watching the news, I found that the government can really do whatever it wants. I feel very angry and feel that my privacy and property are not protected and could be invaded at any time. And I have no power to resist, only helplessness and despair. It reminds me of the Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution, who could do whatever they wanted as long as they stood on the political high ground.

And these eight participants also think the human rights violations during the pandemic era have contributed to their migration tendencies.

Aiguo: Xi Jinping's speech control and populist incitement since he came to power have made everyone indulge in the grand narrative of the rise of China. The human rights violations during the epidemic have undoubtedly torn off a fig leaf, allowing some people to see part of the cruel truth about this country and society. If you think that this situation cannot be changed and you are unwilling to endure such a life, leaving China is the only option.

Susan: these incidents have greatly enhanced my desire to immigrate. Although I don't know where is better, at least I don't want to stay in China.

5.3 Deterioration of social trust

As it has been discussed above, social trust can be shaped and weakened by three key elements: cooperation, social interaction, and moral dilemmas. Therefore, to explore whether pandemic caused social trust deterioration has an impact on Chinese youth's willingness to immigrate, questions regarding these three elements have been asked during interviews.

The analytical results show that degree of cooperation, frequency and quality of social interaction, and the emergence of moral dilemmas have all been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Most of the participants state that the changes in social interaction have limited impact on their migration tendencies, but the decreasing willingness of cooperation with policies is a sign of reduced trust on government and institutions, which makes them want to leave mainland China. The emergence of moral dilemmas during the pandemic era shows that people are afraid of being attacked by others, that they cannot trust each other. For some participants, it is also regarded as a reason why they wish to immigrate. So, we could say that the pandemic does cause deterioration of social trust among Chinese youth and it leads to an increased willingness to immigration.

5.3.1 Cooperation

It is widely agreed among the participants that during the pandemic, their willingness to cooperation with epidemic prevention policies gradually decreased. Notable changes happened especially after the White Paper Revolution.

Susan: Personally speaking, my subjective willingness to cooperate has decreased, but I am still very cooperative in action. There is no way to resist coercive measures. Even if you are unwilling to do so, you must cooperate. But in the later stages of the epidemic, during and after White Paper Revolution, some people began to refuse to obey the mandatory restrictions

Zoe: In the early stages of the epidemic, everyone's degree of cooperation and willingness to cooperate was very high. In the middle and later stages of the epidemic, strict one-size-fits-all policies were still implemented, I was less willing to cooperate. I think subjectively people's willingness to cooperate is decreasing, but the degree of

cooperation in action remains the same because we can't resist.

It is mentioned repeatedly by the participants that their increasing unwillingness in cooperation is because they no longer trust Chinese government as they used to do. While some participants' migration tendencies are not affected, some state that they do not want to live in a place where the government is not trustworthy.

Grant: when the pandemic initially broke out in 2020, people showed high degree of cooperation with the policies and restrictions, because at that time, people believed that Chinese government was protecting them. However, after the second half of 2022, mainstream countries in the world have canceled control measures while China was still enforcing very strict restrictions. People were obviously dissatisfied with Chinese government.

Sara: I feel that after the epidemic, I have become disenchanted with authority. In my heart, the party and the country have been untied. There is no choice for the Chinese people not to cooperate. The people have no choice because they will be arrested if they don't cooperate. The day you can resist is the day you leave China. Although this kind of thing has not happened to me yet, it will make me feel a sense of crisis, and I will consider immigration as an option if I can.

Susan: people's lack of cooperation with the policy can prove that at that stage of the epidemic, the public's trust in China's epidemic prevention policy has declined, and the government's credibility has also declined, leading to large-scale resistance.

Wan: Before the pandemic, I was very patriotic and very cooperative with national policies. After the epidemic, too many unreasonable incidents occurred, and my trust in Chinese government was greatly reduced, so I was unwilling to cooperate with unreasonable epidemic prevention policies. I feel like my feelings for home and country have been crushed by the government itself. I used to think that I would never immigrate, but now nationality is just a status to me, and immigration is not a bad idea.

5.3.2 Social Interaction

According to the participants of this research, the changes in social interaction is noticeable. Generally speaking, during the pandemic era, the frequency and quality of online social interactions remained unchanged for some people, and was enhanced for the others. On the contrary, the offline social interaction has been greatly hindered. And the scope of social interaction has shrunk, usually it was only among those closest, and many unnecessary social interactions was reduced. Therefore, for people who prefer

online socializing than offline socializing, the pandemic has actually increased their social satisfaction. But for those who prefer offline social interactions, China's strict epidemic prevention policies make them feel depressed.

However, as now the pandemic has ended and their social relationships are not affected, most of the participants think the changes in social interaction do not have impact on their willingness to immigrate. Excepting Sara, who dislikes online socializing and wants to live in a place where offline socializing will not be overly interfered with.

5.3.3 Moral dilemmas

Since moral dilemma is a relatively abstract concept, the interviewees are asked whether they have heard of unreasonable epidemic prevention incident first. Excepting Peng, eight participants say that they have heard of incidents such as releasing patients' private information, killing animals, forced quarantine, violent suppression of protestors, etc. And the eight participants all claim that they feel such incidents are quite unfair, and they are angry about it.

When asked whether they have ever spoken up for the victims on the internet, only Susan answers yes, while the other seven interviewees admit that even if they feel disappointed, they did not say anything to support the victims for fear of being attacked by others.

Aiguo: I think it is very possible to be attacked as a traitor after condemning unreasonable phenomena, so in order to avoid unnecessary trouble, I do not want to speak on public social media.

Grant: I have heard countless related messages and news, but unfortunately, I do not have the courage to speak out on China issues. If there were no high-pressure policies, I might also express some opinions.

Wan: I try to avoid speaking on public platforms because many people in China take quotes out of context and label others as traitors.

Xiaomei: I sympathize with the victims, but I don't dare to support them on the internet myself. I only dare to forward other people's posts, for fear of being attacked and being blocked.

Although such moral dilemmas are widely experienced among the seven participants, three of them think it has very limited impact on their willingness to migrate. They believe that such incident of people attacking each other will also happen in other countries and areas. For the rest four participants, they think this kind of situation makes them want to leave mainland China.

Erik: I feel very depressed and hope to live in a democratic and civilized society with sound laws in the future.

Xiaomei: it allows me to see clearly the driving force behind this kind of immoral social phenomena in China, and makes me even more disappointed with the country, society and the government. I don't want to live in a society where everyone is on guard against each other.

6. Conclusion

After analyzing, the hypothesis brought up earlier in this paper has been confirmed. Based on the analysis of collected data, we could say that it is widely agreed among young Chinese that the Covid-19 epidemic has brought economic downturn, tightened political environment, and deterioration of social trust in mainland China. Under these circumstances, some Chinese youth want to leave mainland China in searching for a society with better job opportunities, free and stable political environment, and more trust.

The most significant reason is the political inequality caused by China's pandemic policies. Although the oppressive political atmosphere has existed in mainland China for a long time, the Covid-19 pandemic has further intensified people's dissatisfaction, making more people unwilling to compromise and want to escape.

The economy is the second largest factor influencing Chinese youth's willingness to immigrate in the post-pandemic era. It is recognized that the long-lasting and always-strict epidemic control measures have exacerbated the deterioration of the employment environment in mainland China. Most people will consider moving to other countries

and areas with better employment environment, however, some state that due to financial dependency on their families, the economic downturn in home country will reduce their willingness to immigrate. It is a quite interesting finding because all the participants in this research are either students or newcomers in work place with little savings, but their immigration decisions made in the face of pandemic caused economic inequality are completely different. Probably certain pattern can be found in further researches.

The deterioration of social trust is also experience by most Chinese youth. But comparing to the other two factors mentioned above, it only affected limited amount of people while making immigration decisions.

The results have proved that Brinley Thomas' push-pull effect applies to the immigration motivations of mainland Chinese in the post-pandemic era. There are various factors in mainland China pushing those young people outside, making them feel the inequality between countries and eras, therefore, they wish to leave. But as it has been mentioned by Black and other researchers, economics is not the only driving force of Chinese youth immigration. The results find that in the post-pandemic era, political factors such as the oppressive political environment and high-pressure policies are the most important reason which contributes to Chinese youth's immigration intention.

Although social trust does not show a significant impact on the participants' immigration tendencies, it has been recognized that Covid-19 epidemic in mainland China has more or less similarities with traumatic historical events, such as the Culture Revolution. The results of this research indicates that the Covid-19 pandemic in mainland China does deteriorates social trust, which echoes with many studies mentioned above regarding social incidents and trust. However, in this research, the deterioration of trust only affects limited amount of people on their immigration decisions.

Generally speaking, the reasons why Chinese immigrated in the pre-pandemic era can still be applied in the post-epidemic era. Just like the studies have shown, for

decades, dissatisfaction with political environment, deep social anxiety, and pursuit of economic opportunity are persistent immigration motivations of mainland Chinese. The Covid-19 pandemic further intensifies the conflicts. On the one hand, the pandemic strengthens some people's determination on immigration. On the other hand, it has led some people who were originally unwilling to immigrate to the idea of immigrating.

All in all, this paper explores the impact of Covid-19 epidemic on immigration motivation of Chinese youth in the post-pandemic era. Due to various limitations, there are still much space for further studies. Hope this paper can serve as a supplement to existing research and contribute to future studies on Chinese international migration.

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8. Appendix

Interview guide

Research Question : why Chinese youth leave mainland China in the post-pandemic era?

论文中将会使用以下个人信息

The following personal information will be used in the thesis

化名:

Pseudonym

性别:

Gender

出生年份:

Year of birth

出生地 (省份):

Place of birth (province):

居住地 (国家、地区或省份):

Place of residence (country and area, or province)

以下问题均针对中国大陆

The following questions are all for mainland China

1. Economic inequality

1) 企业破产 Bankruptcy

您有没有听说过疫情期间或疫情后的企业破产相关案例?

Have you heard of any cases related to corporate bankruptcies during or after the pandemic?

如果有，您主观上认为疫情和破产有什么关系？

If so, what do you subjectively think is the relationship between the pandemic and bankruptcy?

事实情况是疫情确实导致了国内大量企业破产，得知这件事后，移民意愿是否被影响？如果有，是什么样的影响？

The fact is that the pandemic has indeed caused the bankruptcy of a large number of companies in China. After learning about this, has your willingness to immigrate been affected? If so, what is the impact?

2) 失业 Unemployment

您有没有感受到疫情导致国内失业率上升？

Have you experienced an increase in unemployment in China due to the pandemic?

如果有，您主观上认为疫情和失业率有什么关系？

If so, what do you subjectively think is the relationship between the pandemic and the unemployment rate?

事实情况是疫情确实导致国内失业率大幅上升，得知这件事后，移民意愿是否被影响？如果有，是什么样的影响？

The fact is that the pandemic has indeed led to a significant increase in domestic unemployment. After learning about this, has your willingness to immigrate been affected? If so, what is the impact?

3) 收入减少 Decrease of income

您有没有感受到疫情导致国内人民收入减少？

Have you felt that the pandemic has reduced the income of Chinese people?

如果有，您主观上认为疫情和收入减少有什么关系？

If so, what do you subjectively think is the relationship between the pandemic and the decrease of income?

事实情况是疫情确实导致国内人民收入大幅减少，得知这件事后，移民意愿是否被影响？如果有，是什么样的影响？

The fact is that the pandemic has indeed caused a significant reduction in the income of Chinese people. After learning about this, will your willingness to immigrate be affected? If so, what is the impact?

2. Political inequality

1) 社会包容性 Social inclusiveness

您是否知道新冠病人或从感染区撤离的人在国内受歧视的案例？

Do you know of any cases of discrimination against Covid-19 patients or people evacuated from infected areas?

如果有，您怎么看待疫情期间的歧视现象？

If so, how do you think about discrimination during the pandemic?

事实情况是疫情期间有很多病人和疫区人员受到歧视，得知这件事后，移民意愿是否被影响？如果有，是什么样的影响？

The fact is that many patients and people in pandemic areas were discriminated during the pandemic. After learning about this, will your willingness to immigrate be affected? If so, what is the impact?

2) 政治不稳定 Political instability

您怎么看待中国的防疫措施（例如封城，航班熔断）？

What do you think of China's epidemic prevention measures (e.g., lockdown and *circuit breaker rule*)?

您认为在防疫措施的制定中，政治扮演什么样的角色？

What role do you think politics plays in the formulation of China's epidemic prevention measures?

您认为中国的疫情防控措施对您的移民意愿有没有影响？如果有，是什么样的影响？

Do you think China's epidemic prevention measures have an impact on your willingness to immigrate? If so, what kind of impact is it?

3) 人权 Human rights

您是否知道中国疫情期间发生的侵犯人权的事件（例如强制隔离，入户消杀，杀害宠物）？

Do you know the human rights violations that occurred during the pandemic in China (e.g., forced quarantine, forced home disinfection, killing pets)?

您如何看待这些侵犯人权的事件？

What do you think of these human rights violations?

您认为中国疫情期间的人权侵犯事件对您的移民意愿有没有影响？如果有，是什么样的影响？

Do you think the human rights violations in China during the pandemic have an impact on your willingness to immigrate? If so, what kind of impact is it?

3. Deterioration of social trust

1) 合作 cooperation

您认为中国疫情期间人们对政策的配合程度是否有变化？如果有，是怎么变化的？

Do you think people's cooperation with pandemic policies has changed during the pandemic in China? If so, how did it change?

您有这样的变化有什么看法（例如为什么变化）？

What do you think of the changes on people's cooperation (e.g., why)?

您认为人们对疫情政策配合程度的变化对您的移民意愿有没有影响？如果有，是什么样的影响？

Do you think changes in people's cooperation with pandemic policies have an impact on your willingness to immigrate? If so, what kind of impact is it?

2) 社交 social interaction

您是否发现疫情前后社交频率和质量有变化？如果有，怎么变化？

Have you noticed any changes in the frequency and quality of social interactions before and after the pandemic? If so, how does it change?

您对这样的变化有什么看法（例如为什么变化）？

What do you think of the changes on social interaction (e.g., why)?

您认为疫情前后的社交变化对移民意愿有没有影响？如果有，是什么影响？

Do you think the changes on social interaction before and after the pandemic have any impact on your willingness to immigrate? If so, what kind of impact is it?

3) 道德困境 moral dilemmas

您是否听说过不合理的防疫事件（例如公布病患隐私信息，杀害动物，强制隔离，暴力镇压抗议群众）？

Have you ever heard of unreasonable epidemic prevention incidents (e.g., releasing patients' private information, killing animals, forced quarantine, violent suppression of protestors)?

您是否经历过疫情期间的道德困境（例如因为害怕遭到攻击而不敢声援不合理政策的受害者）？

Have you experienced moral dilemmas during the pandemic (For example, being afraid to support victims of unreasonable policies for fear of being attacked)?

您认为这样的道德困境对移民意愿有没有影响？如果有，是什么影响？

Do you think such moral dilemmas have any impact on your willingness to immigrate? If so, what kind of impact is it?