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# International Student Mobility in Higher Education in China: Tensions between Policies and Practices

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Graduate Program in Education

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## Abstract

Under globalization, the Internationalization of Higher Education (IHE) has intensified. International Student Mobility (ISM) as a key part of IHE has attracted more attention as well. China, traditionally an exporter of students, is becoming a popular host country for international students as well. By examining relevant policies and international students' experiences, this study constructs a comprehensive portrait of ISM in China. Analyzing the ISM policy and student perspectives with attention to underlying ideologies of IHE (Stier, 2004) illuminates the tensions between the policies and practices. At the policy level, *instrumentalism* is the primary ideology driving the Chinese government and the university's *approach to* ISM; but from the perspective of international students, *educationalism* is representative of their primary motives for studying in China. In the light of the findings, recommendations for policy revision are provided.

Keywords: internationalization of higher education, international student mobility, Chinese incoming international student, policy, motivations, tensions

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

This chapter gives a brief introduction of this study. First, the background and rationale of the study are introduced to set the context of the study. Then, I present the purpose of the study, the research questions, the researcher's positioning, and the significance of the study.

### 1.1 Background and rationale of the study

In global markets, massive movements of capital depend on information, communication, and knowledge (Carnoy, 2014, p. 21). A main base of globalization is information, which enables globalization to be highly knowledge-intensive.

Internationalized and fast-growing information industries produce knowledge goods and services that underpin and propel the knowledge economy on a global scale. Thus, in this context, higher education, especially the Internationalization of Higher Education (IHE) has risen to the fore. As Ennew and Greenaway (2012) argue, "The main social and economic processes that are driving globalization more broadly have also created the conditions which have driven a step change in international activity in institutions of higher learning" (p. 1).

On a practical level, IHE manifests as a large variety of activities, including: curricular reforms, the development of international courses, a variety of academic mobility schemes for students and staff, the establishment of off-shore campuses, courses or programmes, international research projects as well as cooperation on international development and capacity-building activities (Egroun-Polak, 2012, p. 58).



Additionally, Egron-Polak emphasizes that among these activities, the top-level activity strongly focuses on International Student Mobility (ISM), which remains a representative feature for IHE. Zheng (2010) also argues in her research that, with an increasing number of international students crossing borders for higher education every year, ISM particularly bears the specific social and educational meaning of internationalization, and produces global effects.

Traditionally, as Verbik and Lasanowski (2007) explain, more than 90% of international students have chosen countries belonging to Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as their main destinations (as cited in Zheng, 2010). Dominant in this asymmetric flow, China is the largest exporter of international students, comprising 15.2% of all the international students in the world enrolled in higher education outside of their home countries (Institute of International Education, 2013). However, evidence from Shields and Edwards (2010), and Welch (2010) suggest that, “The growth of incoming students to China, Japan, and South-east Asia has dramatically outpaced that of established destinations” (as cited in Shields, 2013, p. 611). This evidence suggests that some Asian countries have become popular destinations for at least some international students.

Looking back, we can see China has a long history of importing international students from other countries. Tao (2012) reveals that since the Sui Dynasty (AD 581-618), there have been many international students coming from other countries, such as Japan, Korea, Russia, and various Middle Eastern countries. The Tang dynasty (AD 618-907), the empire after the Sui Dynasty, was a golden period for international students studying in China because the Tang Empire was a global powerhouse at that time. Many

international students came to China for its advanced civilization and technology. Thus, Tao concludes that international student mobility has been an important part of the communication between China and other countries, and reflective of periods of China's strong power and international status.

As for today's China, according to official statistics from the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (hereinafter referred to as MOE), there were 377,054 international students from 203 countries and/or areas studying in 755 higher education institutions on the Chinese mainland in 2014. Compared to 2013, the number of international students increased by 5.77% (2015). Official statistics from UNESCO illustrate that among the top ten destinations, China is ranked ninth (2015). Thus, one can see that China has become one of the most popular host countries for ISM. In light of the increasing number of international students, China's MOE adopted the *Project of Studying in China* (MOE, 2010). The main goal of this project is to bolster China as the biggest host country in Asia, and increase the total number of incoming international students to half a million by 2020. Thus, it appears that attracting foreign students to study in China is becoming increasingly important in Chinese strategies for IHE.

Given China's modernization and dramatic economic growth, it is not surprising to see this development, nor is it difficult to understand its significance to educational researchers. This study explores this emergent phenomenon of 'inward' ISM in China. Entailed in that exploration is an examination of the conditions and policies that have given (and, are giving) rise to this shift, as well as the motivations and experiences of international students who choose to study in China. Such a focus further offers insights

into the larger terrain of IHE in China and, relationally, in the context of the global knowledge economy and cultural flows and logics.

## 1.2 Research purpose and questions

Within the larger context of globalization, in which China is a key player, the development of IHE has become a prevailing trend – particularly in China. As for ISM, along with the increasing number of outgoing students, the number of incoming international students also has seen an upward trend. Accordingly, in order to construct a more fulsome understanding of IHE in China, it is necessary to explore both the IHE policy context and the motivations and experiences of international students choosing to study in China. On the one hand, by reviewing the relevant government and university policies and rules of importing international students, my study explores the larger purposes and approaches. On the other hand, from the individual perspective, my study focuses on the factors and expectations that motivate international students to choose China as their destination. Furthermore, through connecting and comparing these two levels, I discuss the tensions between China's official policies and their enactments as experienced by students. This approach helps to show how the official policies and rules both achieve and miss their mark.

My study posits the following research questions:

- 1) What are the relevant policies and rules of international student recruitment and support adopted by the Chinese government and higher education institutions? What are the main purposes of these policies and rules?

- 2) What are the factors and expectations that motivate international students to choose China as their destination country? How do the students' actual experiences relate to these factors and expectations?
- 3) What are the tensions between these policies and their enactments as experienced by students? What are the alignments and misalignments existing between policies and practices?

### 1.3 Researcher's positioning

In this study, I position myself as both a researcher and an international student studying in Canada. As an international student, I have experienced the struggle involved in of deciding to go abroad, and the challenge of choosing a host country and university. Ultimately, I chose to study abroad with the expectations of gaining a better education, experiencing a different culture, and broadening my horizons. I chose to study here because Canada as a developed country has, from my perspective, a higher quality of higher education than China. I am curious about the motivations and experiences of international students deciding to study in China.

As a researcher, my objective is to construct a comprehensive portrait of China's inward ISM. Apart from exploring the motivations of international students choosing China as their host country, I also explore the larger conditions and policy contexts that support ISM into China. I hope this portrait offers a way to better understand China's IHE, and how ISM policies might be enhanced.

### 1.4 Significance of this study

In the context of globalization, increasing competition in the international economy among nations facilitates the demand for highly skilled labour. Education,

especially higher education, becomes an important symbol and potential driver of nations' capacities to compete. Further, IHE is an outcome of the processes of globalization while simultaneously an engine that promotes the development of globalization. So, IHE is at the forefront of both university development and nation-state prestige. China as a developing country is dependent upon processes of globalization. Outward and inward, IHE plays an important role in China's economic development as well as their soft power in the Asian region and relations with the West.

However, detailed research on China's IHE and ISM, especially inward ISM, is scant and incomplete. My study on inward ISM in China addresses this gap. Additionally, by connecting national and institutional perspectives with individual international students' perspectives, this study provides China's government, higher education institutions, and policy makers' insights into inward ISM policy enactments and enhancements.

Furthermore, my study provides a vantage point from which to compare the larger Chinese phenomena of ISM with that in OECD countries, which have been much more researched. By comparing China's ISM phenomena with the more traditional host countries (i.e. Western countries), we can analyze the features of Chinese IHE and ISM can be relationally.

## 1.5 Structure of the thesis

This thesis comprises five chapters. Following this introductory chapter is the literature review (Chapter two). Chapter three elaborates the theoretical framework and methodological approach of this study. Chapter four presents the findings of policy content analysis and international students' interviews. And finally, based on the study's

findings, Chapter five presents the conclusions and implications, as well as considerations for future research.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

A literature review is, "... an objective, thorough summary and critical analysis of the relevant available research" (Cronin et al., 2008, p. 38). The goal of literature is not only exposing readers to current literature on the key issues in the field to be explored, but also identifying gaps in the field that need to be addressed (Cronin et al., 2008, Cohen et al., 2011).

In this study, based on the main topic about China's inward international student mobility, the relevant literature is presented in four streams: (1) the definitions and forms of globalization; (2) the state and higher education in the contemporary globalized world; (3) the internationalization of higher education; (4) international student mobility; and (5) empirical studies on international student mobility.

#### 2.1 Globalization: definitions and forms

Torres (2009) emphasizes that, "Globalization is a multiple and contradictory phenomenon, with deep-rooted historical causes" (p. 15). He proposes four layers of globalization as follows: the first layer is a *globalization from above* in which, "... an ideology of neoliberalism has called for the opening of borders, the creation of multiple regional markets, the viability of faster economic and financial exchanges, and even the presence of forms of state other than the nation-state, shrinking state services, and its overall presence in civil society" (p. 15). Additionally, the motto of this globalization process is "selective deregulation". The second layer is known as *anti-globalizer or globalization from below*, which represents the antithesis of the first layer. Its motto is,

“no globalization without representation”. The third layer of globalization is “the globalization of human rights”, which is not so much related to markets, but to rights. The motto of this globalization process is “advancement of cosmopolitan democracies and plural citizenship” (p. 15). The fourth layer, “Goes beyond markets and to some extent against human rights [but pertains to] the globalization of the international war against terrorism” (p. 15). “Security, as a precondition of freedom” is its motto.

Although there are multiple layers of globalization as theories and prescriptions (Rizvi & Lingard, 2009), there are still some key empirical features of (intensifying) globalization processes. For instance, Green (2002) defines globalization as, “The rapid acceleration of cross border movements of capital, goods, labor, services, and information” (as cited in Larsen, 2015). Knight (2004) considers globalization as: “The flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, value, and ideas... across borders [that] affects each country in a different way due to a nation’s individual history, traditions, culture and priorities” (p. 8).

We can find, in each of these articulations, related words that appear frequently, such as “cross border” and “permeable boundaries”, “movements” and “flows”. From this perspective, globalization can be seen as a dynamic process that happens within and beyond national states.

This study adopts the definition proposed by Ennew and Greenaway (2012), which considers globalization as a set of broader economic, social-cultural, and political processes that heighten interconnectedness and interdependency between and beyond nation states. From this perspective, there are some key features of this process, which



include, “The blurring of national boundaries, the remaking of identities and the cross-national integration of economic, social and cultural activities” (p. 2).

Phillips and Schweisfurth’s (2014) globalization can be classified into three forms: economic globalization, political globalization, and cultural globalization. Economic globalization involves integration of all nations into global economic networks and tends to favor rich countries rather than poor countries, especially in the division of labor and profit. Political globalization, “...reflects the changing role of the nation-state, with global and local forces pulling in opposing directions” (p. 64). For instance, countries are joining larger units such as the EU or being influenced by transnational actors like the OECD, but at the same time smaller units are breaking away from nation states. Cultural globalization is manifested in changing cultural identities through transnational connections and flows, such as migration and the formation of diaspora, studying abroad, media flows and the construction of post-colonial legacies.

## 2.2 The state and higher education in the contemporary globalized world

Salter and Tapper (2013) state that, “State pressure on the universities, and on higher education in general, is a fact of life” (p. 1). To be specific, the pressures of the state on higher education can be seen as “the result of the interaction of three dynamics generated by the economy, the dominant state bureaucracy, and political institutions and interests” (p. 3). The modern economy is fueled by a mix of manpower and scientific knowledge, and requires the education system to train “the appropriate educational products necessary for optimum economic advance” (p. 3) At the same time, “intervening between the economic dynamic and its potential impact upon education is the central

bureaucracy of the state and the political institutions and interests, each with its own identity and concerns” (p. 3). Thus, one can see that higher education is closely tied to the state’s interest. In the view of Halsey and Trow (1971), the state’s interest derives from the fact that

Universities are a crucial foundation of the economy, conceived as integral to a higher education system which supplies scientific manpower and technological innovation for economic growth and widening opportunities to a rising proportion of the population. They are thus of crucial political importance and are in any case pressed into responsibility, or at least responsiveness, to the state as manager of economic growth, and the dispenser of individual opportunity for participation (as cited in Salter and Tapper, 2013).

From this perspective, it is easy to understand why the state needs higher education, and why higher education possesses the importance that it does.

More recently, under globalization and the imaginary of the knowledge economy, higher education plays a *more* significant role in the interaction with the state (Brennan, 2008). Altbach comments on the role of higher education in the new century:

Higher education in the twenty-first century is a multifaceted phenomenon, combining a variety of institutions and systems, as increasing diversity of students, and a range of purposes and functions ... and ... higher education is a central enterprise of the twenty-first century and a key part of the knowledge-based economy (as cited in Zheng, 2010, p. 18).

Guruz (2011) also emphasizes that higher education is closely tied to the knowledge economy and the interests of competing nation-states, and continues to play a key role in the development of national cultural identity and nation building. Gurria (2006) pays more attention to the economic significance of higher education, and emphasizes its importance in today’s knowledge economy era.

In order to respond to these changes, states have to carry out a series of educational reforms. Carnoy (2001) classifies these reforms into three types. The first type is “competition-based reforms” that respond to the demand for better-qualified labour in the national and international labour markets. The second type of reform is termed “reforms based on financial imperatives”, and responds to the restriction of budgets in the private and public sector. The third type is “equity oriented reforms” that try to improve the political role of education as a source of mobility and social equality (as cited in Torres, 2009). Yang (2006) also highlights that along with the emergence of the knowledge economy, there is a prevailing trend towards the marketization of higher education in western countries. He says this marketization is mainly manifested in three ways: first, the state decreases funding support for higher education, and presses institutions to find additional revenue streams; second, the relationship between higher education and market forces and logics are strengthened; third, this strengthening advances privatization of higher education and its institutions. The OECD (2006) emphasizes that “there are four primary reforms for universities related to efficiency and accountability, accreditation and universalization, international competitiveness, and privatization” (as cited in Zheng, p. 15).

Although the above perspectives mainly refer to western countries, Altbach (2009) examines higher education in China and India, which are the world’s two fastest growing economies. Together the two countries account for almost 25% of the world’s postsecondary student population. He states that China and India are already major global forces in higher education and moving toward international norms of access to higher education. With this background, Altbach points out that these two countries could be

expected to account for over half the global increase in student numbers. This will mean that they should expand the academic profession and infrastructures, increase in financial support, and promote the growth of the private sector and distance education. Thus, he predicts that China and India will play a major role in global higher education through continuing to send large numbers of student to go abroad for advanced study, and increasingly becoming hosts for students from other countries. He thinks that “China will have considerable success in building internationally competitive research universities” given the 985 and 211 projects<sup>1</sup> enacted to develop top universities. He thinks that it is much less likely for India to achieve the same level of success with China because India is without a realistic strategy.

Mok and Chan (2012) go on to explain that in order to achieve the aspiration of becoming a global power, the Chinese government has invested heavily in higher education and conducted a series of reforms. Some important strategies include developing world-class universities and reducing the monopolistic role of the state in educational provision. Yang (2012) points out that to some extent these strategies could be considered effective, because Chinese universities beat India in almost every international ranking. However, he also emphasizes that China has a considerable distance to go to create truly world-class universities, and that Chinese higher education has often neglected institutional establishment.

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<sup>1</sup> Project 985 is a construction project for founding world-class universities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century by Chinese government; Project 211 is another Chinese government’s endeavor aimed at strengthening about 100 institutions of higher education and key disciplinary areas as a national priority for the 21<sup>st</sup> century (China Education Center, 2016).

## 2.3 Internationalization of higher education (IHE)

As discussed above, in present times higher education is significantly influenced by globalization. The concept of internationalization as strengthening the international dimension of higher education is a case in point, where globalization is viewed as setting the conditions and demands for internationalizing higher education (Knight, 2004). Guruz (2011) emphasizes that the advent of globalization catalyzes the internationalization of higher education. Ennew and Greenaway (2012) also describe internationalization as “a process within higher education that constitutes the sector’s response to globalization” (p. 3). Thus, internationalization becomes one of the key change processes affecting the development of higher education. Knight (1994) defines internationalization as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education” (p. 7).

There are multiple dimensions of IHE. Knight and de Wit (1999) distinguish four approaches to examining IHE as the: activity approach, rationales approach, outcomes approach, and process approach. The activity approach describes internationalization in terms of categories or types of IHE activities. Ennew and Greenaway (2012) offer a comprehensive list of IHE components as follows:

- 1) An international curriculum (in terms of both skills and content)
- 2) An international environment and experience (food, community and entertainment)
- 3) Inward and outward student mobility (which may include exchange, study abroad and fee-paying international students)
- 4) Inward and outward staff mobility
- 5) Engagement with international networks
- 6) International collaborations, whether with universities, businesses, governments, NGOs or others

- 7) Research collaborations (whether at level of individual subjects or at institutional level, formal or informal)
- 8) Teaching (joint, dual degrees, spilt site programs, validations, franchises and articulations)
- 9) International operations (delivering teaching or research in a different location internationally).

The rationales approach defines internationalization from the perspective of its purpose or intended outcomes. Knight (2004) proposes four broad types of rationales, namely: social/cultural, political, academic and economic. Moreover, she considers the four types working at both the national and institutional level. The rationales approach is utilized as a theoretical frame of this study, which is elaborated in chapter three.

The outcomes approach is also formerly called the competency approach. Along with this approach, internationalization is presented “in the form of desired outcomes such as student competences, increased profile, more international agreements, and partners or projects” (Knight, 2004, p. 20). Meanwhile, the process approach looks at internationalization as “a process where an international dimension is integrated into teaching, learning, and service functions of the institution” (Knight, 2004, p. 20).

Knight also differentiates IHE as ‘at home’ or ‘abroad’. She states that at home, internationalization focuses on a culture or climate on campus and aims at promoting international and intercultural understanding through campus-based activities. IHE ‘abroad’ is framed as “the cross-border delivery of education to other countries through a variety of delivery modes (face to face, distance, e-learning) and through different administrative arrangements (franchises, twinning, branch campuses, etc.)” (p. 20).

Although there are various understandings of IHE from different perspectives there is little doubt that internationalizing higher education promises benefits at all levels.

For instance, individual learners can learn from the experience of foreign lecturers, and broaden their horizons; faculty members and researchers can join the international team of scholars to acquire and share more resources; national states can benefit from IHE in their economic development and competitiveness (Egron-Polak, 2012). However, Egron-Polak emphasizes that there are also significant risks with IHE, such as the commodification and commercialization of education, brain drain, and growth of foreign degree mills (p. 66).

## 2.4 International student mobility (ISM)

International student mobility (ISM) is one of the most important components of IHE activities. Zheng (2010) regards ISM as one of most important global flows that bears specific social and educational meaning. Hence, studying ISM represents a significant activity for understanding IHE.

ISM refers to students' physical mobility from one country to the other. Larsen (2016) points out that there are a variety of terms being used to distinguish different ISM schemes, such as credit mobility (short-term study abroad) and/or diploma or degree mobility which result in the acquisition of a qualification, and/or educational immigration. Students involved in ISM are often labelled as "foreign students" or "international students." The OECD defines these students as "persons admitted by a country other than their own, usually under special permits or visas, for the specific purpose of following a particular course of study in an accredited institution of the receiving country" (OECD, glossary). The definition proposed by UNESCO (2006), emphasizes that educational purpose is "students who have crossed a national or territorial border for the purpose of education and are now enrolled outside their country

of origin”(p. 178). The term “host countries” refers to the countries or areas that international students choose as their destinations, and the “home countries” is used to describe students’ countries of origin, namely, the places where they come from (Zheng, 2010).

In recent decades, ISM, as a key activity of IHE, has increased dramatically. As Verbik and Lasanowski (2007) state, “International student mobility has over the past 10-15 years become an increasingly important part of the global higher education landscape” (p. 1). The 2014 statistics from UNESCO (2014) indicate that, around the world there were at least 4 million students going abroad to study, up from 2 million in 2000, representing 1.8% of all tertiary enrolments or 2 in 100 students globally.

Traditionally, as Verbik and Lasanowski (2007) point out, more than 90% of international students choose countries belonging to the OECD as their host countries, and the main destinations (i.e. the U.S., the U.K., Germany, France and Australia) host over 70% of them. The official statistics from UNESCO (2014) also show that in 2012, five destination countries hosted nearly one-half of total mobile students, which are the United States (hosting 18%), United Kingdom (11%), France (7%), Australia (6%), and Germany (5%). Especially, English-speaking countries in the global North have particularly high levels of incoming international students in terms of the total number (Shields, 2013). As for international students’ home countries, China is the largest exporter of international students, comprising 15.2% of all the international students in the world who enrolled in higher education outside of their home countries (Institute of International Education, 2013). In 2012, there were 694,400 Chinese students studying



abroad, followed by India (189,500), and the Republic of Korea (123,700) (UNESCO, 2014).

Shields and Edwards' (2010), and Welch's (2010) studies suggest that "the growth of incoming students to China, Japan, and South-east Asia has dramatically outpaced that of established destinations" (as cited in Shields, 2013, p. 611). UNESCO (2014) statistics also show that the top five destination countries' share of international enrolment decline from 55% in 2000 to 47% in 2012, while the newcomers, such as China, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and New Zealand, which hosted 6% of the global share of mobile students in 2012, experienced an upward trend.

## 2.5 Specific focus on ISM and Chinese focus

According to relevant literature, existing studies of ISM can be classified into two perspectives: the national and institutional levels from a macro perspective, and the individual level from a micro perspective, namely the international student perspective.

### **National and institutional levels**

Shield's (2013) study offers three theoretical perspectives to analyze ISM, which are "neoliberalism", "world culture", and "critical theories". As he states, neoliberal perspectives associate globalization with the knowledge economy in which economic value derives from the production of intellectual property. The labour market of this knowledge economy demands highly skilled labour, which increases competition sharply in higher education, because higher education is not only closely related to human capital, but also can be revealed as an export industry to increase revenue, especially for those countries experiencing economic recession. Thus, this trend promotes a greater dispersion of student flows, and leads to the establishment of new "world class" IHE

institutions and global rankings. Torres (2009) also suggests that, IHE may help “bring down barriers for pushing open markets while simultaneously training more competent workers to compete in those international markets” (p. 12). Brooks and Waters (2011) also work on exploring the link between neo-liberalism, globalization and education. They stress that international education is usually seen as a direct manifestation of globalization, and tends to focus solely on its economic drivers. Their studies shed light on the ISM of East Asia, mainland Europe, the UK and Australia, and they consider Australia and the UK symbols of (these) countries that see ISM as a revenue source supporting services of domestic education and students.

What is more, Brooks and Waters also point out that educational institutions (particularly in Western economies) are increasingly aware of the importance of developing and maintaining a “brand image” and their “global positioning”, and countries are subject to seeking a national education “brand” as well. Zheng’s (2010) study looks at the policies on ISM in some OECD countries from the perspective of neoliberal globalization to explore the reasons why these countries aim at attracting more international students because, as mentioned above, OECD countries are the most popular host countries for international students. She concludes that political, economic, social-cultural, and academic rationales are the major considerations of promoting IHE and ISM in these OECD countries. Moreover, she emphasizes that the economic rationale plays the leading role in recruiting international students in the major OECD countries. For these countries, higher education has been regarded as an export industry, which offers national development of human capital (i.e. the talent of international students) and revenue sources (i.e. the high fees from self-paying international students).

Boli and Thomas (1999) define world cultures as being imagined as the “global or transnational institutional solutions applied to common human problems” (as cited in Baker & LeTendre, 2005, p. 11). World culture theory sees ISM as a constituent process of globalization and a result of cultural associational processes, which expands with the “diffusion” of world culture (Shield, 2013). From this perspective, recruiting international students is driven by cultural values rather than economic rationales.

Critical theories assert that “hegemony and power are essential features of globalization” (Shield, 2013, p.616). From this perspective, Shield argues that higher education is not human capital, but rather a form of cultural capital benefiting elite groups to perpetuate the dominance of their status-group culture. Thus, at the national level, IHE would enable nation-states in advantageous positions to leverage their status, which influences the flows of international students to become increasingly polarized and centralized, and promotes the formation of unequal geopolitical relationships. The studies of Zheng (2010), Egron-Polak (2012), and Shield (2013) also suggest that the flows of ISM are very unidirectional, which is from developing countries to English-speaking developed countries.

### **The individual level**

The studies of ISM at the level of perceptions of individual international students can be grouped in two types. One branch of research focuses on students’ motivations or determinants for studying overseas (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; Sanchez, Fornerino & Zhang, 2006; Wintre, Kandasamy, Chaboshi, & Wright, 2015). The other branch focuses on international students’ overseas experiences, especially the challenges they face when studying in foreign host countries (Domville-Roach, 2007; Flynn, 2011; Huang &

Klinger, 2006; Marginson & Sawir, 2011; O'Reilly, Hickey, and Ryan, 2015; Sherry, Thomas, and Chui, 2010). The following paragraphs outline some key findings of these studies.

**Motivations and determinants of studying overseas.** Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) propose “push and pull” factors to explain international students’ motivations for studying abroad. According to the results of four surveys undertaken in Taiwan, India, Indonesia, and on the Chinese mainland, there are five push factors influencing international students’ decisions to studying abroad. The majority of these students stated that they study abroad for better quality courses. The next important factor was to gain a better understanding of Western culture. The third reason was to access courses not available at home. Difficulties in gaining entry to post-secondary education at home and intentions of migrating to the host country were the factors respectively ranked fourth and fifth place. As for the pull factors influencing students’ choice of host country, there were six main categories: knowledge and awareness of the host country, recommendations from friends and relatives, cost issues, the environment, social links, and geography. The top three pull factors influencing the choice of host institution were as follows: the institution has a reputation for quality, the institution was willing to recognize previous qualifications, and the institution has a reputation for quality and expertise of its staff.

Sanchez, Fornerino, and Zhang’s (2006) study received usable data from 477 respondents in the U.S., France, and China. Their study indicates that the motivations of studying abroad for the students included improving their professional and social situations, searching for a new experience, searching for liberty and pleasure, and learning a new language.

A study by Wintre, Kandasamy, Chavoshi and Wright (2015) investigated 64 international students studying in a Canadian university. Their findings on students' motivations presented eight themes as follows: education, new experience, qualities of the university, future prospects of career/immigration to the host country, friends/relatives in host country, characteristics of the country, financial concerns, and location. Among these themes, the most frequently cited motivation of studying abroad for international students was educational (78.1%). These students expressed that they chose to study in Canada to get a better education, and to improve their English. Gaining new experience and the quality of the university were the next common responses (67.2%).

Based on these studies, it seems that students' motivations for studying abroad are similar, with the notion of accessing "better" education and engaging "new experiences" as common features.

**International students' overseas experiences.** There are many studies focusing on the students' experiences, especially on the challenges involved in studying abroad. According to these studies, the major difficulties students encounter include language issues, acculturation, building relationships with locals, and financial difficulties. For instance, the study of Sherry, Thomas, and Chui (2010) examines social, cultural, and academic experiences of international students at the University of Toledo through an online survey. They highlight the problems international students experience such as adapting to a new culture, language problems, financial problems, and lack of understanding from the broader university community. The authors' recommendations include raising the profile of international students, improving financial assistance and

scholarships, and creating opportunities for international students to become more involved in the university and local community. O'Reilly, Hickey, and Ryan's (2015) study examines the experiences of American international students in Ireland. In this study, they elaborate the students' experiences around social support, academic adjustment, sociocultural challenge, distress and discrimination. They offer important implications for those involved with preparing students for study abroad, as well as service providers in the institutions to which international students travel.

Based on these studies, it should be noted that the language issue is usually the biggest challenge faced by most international students, which has great influence on their academic performance and social life; and many other challenges are rooted in language difficulties. However, it can be seen from these studies that international students from English-speaking countries experience fewer challenges, because the destination countries chosen by most international students are other Anglo-Saxon countries (Egropolak, 2012), and English acts as a global language or dominant world language (Crystal, 2003; Raine, 2012; Xue & Zou, 2013). This dominance of English and its effects are also explained by critical theories as reported above.

### **Chinese focus on ISM**

As for studies about China's ISM, they also can be categorized at each of the national, institutional or individual levels.

**National and institutional levels.** At the national level, studies mainly focus on reviewing the related China's system and policies on ISM. Li (2005) reviews the history of sending students to study abroad from 1949 to 1993 through sorting out related documents, policies and rules. Yu's (2008) study sorts out the contemporary study system

of Chinese international students, emphasizes the importance of encouraging Chinese students to study abroad, and proposes related suggestions to attract graduates back to China. The studies of Qi (2003) and Shao (2006) also highlight the importance of studying abroad for Chinese higher education, and propose that the Chinese government should support students to study abroad and encourage them to return home. Apart from the studies about China's outgoing students, there are also a few studies related to incoming ISM. Liu's (2009) study reviews the policies on incoming international student education since 1980s, when China started to reform policies to open up to the outside world. His study mainly focuses on the contents of policies, and, based on their contents, classifies policies into four categories: policies of organizational system, funding policies, policies on faculty, and qualification policies. Zhang's (2010) study examines China's policies of overseas students in China in the context of China's politics, economy, diplomacy, and higher education since 1949, when the People's Republic of China was founded. According to his results, these policies can be divided into five temporal stages: the start-up period (1949-1956), the reform period (1957-1965), the "Cultural Revolution" period (1966-1976), the rapid development period (1977-1992), and the standardized developing period (1993-present). Additionally, Liu's (2013) study presents the history of Chinese educational assistance to Africa, which refers to China's recruitment of African students and provision of higher education.

At the institutional level, studies mainly look at how higher education institutions change their management model to cope with the increasing number of incoming international students (Bian, 2014; Liu & Zhang, 2007, Meng, 2015). These studies indicate that with the increasing number of international students, Chinese universities

need to improve their management systems. The core goal is to improve their educational quality. Meanwhile Liu and Zhang (2007) further suggest that strengthening an effective and comprehensive management mechanism is necessary, which covers international student's recruitment, punishment and reward, academic degree granting, and employment.

**The individual level.** At the individual level, the available studies also can be divided into two themes: motivations and experiences. As for the motivations of international students, most studies focus on Chinese outgoing international students. Apart from the studies of Mazzarol and Soutar (2002), and Sanchez, Fornerino and Zhang (2006) cited above, Zwart's (2012) empirical study identifies the trend of ISM, and the factors that motivate Chinese students to study overseas. She finds that most Chinese students involved in this study (51%) intended to choose the United States as their destination country; the United Kingdom ranks second (23%), followed by Australia (16%) and Canada (10%). The major factors affecting and motivating students to study abroad also include each of the economic factor, social-cultural factor, and educational factor as elaborated above.

As for international students' experiences, again most studies focus on the experiences and challenges of Chinese outgoing international students (Huang & Klinger, 2006; Marginson & Sawir, 2011; Wang et al., 2011; Yan & Berliner, 2011; Zhang & Zhou, 2010). Based on these studies, like other international students, Chinese international students also experience difficulties in language, study, making friends, and cultural adjustment. Among these challenges, language issues were always the biggest problem perceived by these Chinese international students. When it comes to the



experiences of incoming international students, the study of Akhtar, Pratt, and Bo (2015) presents the cross-cultural adaptation of African students in Chinese universities. According to the results of their quantitative study, seven themes were used to measure and describe student's adaptation: awareness of cultural differences, weather as a barrier to adjustment, submitting assignments in English, over-expectation of China, broad social circle of friends, prior cross-cultural experience, and satisfaction of life experience in China.

Additionally, there are some quantitative studies designed to describe the geographic distribution of incoming international students' home countries (Center for China and Globalization, 2015; Cheng, 2009; Li et al., 2015). According to their studies, most international students studying in China come from Asian countries, especially the countries surrounding China, such as South Korea and Thailand. Europe and Africa, as source places for international students, are ranked second and third respectively.

## 2.6 Summary

The literature review engages academic research on IHE, especially ISM, as one of the most important components of IHE activities. The research not only defines the characteristics of IHE and ISM, but also situates their significance in the globalized world, which helps to situate my study on internal ISM in China as an emergent area of inquiry.

In the literature, western scholars pay more attention to inward ISM, while Chinese studies of ISM mainly focus on outgoing students because of the traditional unidirectionality of ISM flows. Major western countries are the most popular destinations for international students, so most scholars concentrate on exploring rationales,

recruitment strategies and international student experience. As for China, the largest *exporter* of international students, the concentration of research is on outgoing students, and aims at researching the students' motivations of studying abroad, and their experiences in host countries. A few recent studies on incoming international students are quantitative studies that simply portray a geographic sketch of inward ISM at the macro level, or prescriptive accounts on how to change the management of higher education institutions to expand recruitment.

Indeed, research of inward ISM in China is very rare. Additionally, most scholars of these studies are in the position of government or policy makers, namely from the national or institutional perspectives, so the perspectives of students themselves and more independent researchers remain mostly absent.

## Chapter 3

### Theoretical Framework and Methodology

#### 3.1 Theoretical Framing

My exploration of inward ISM in China is guided by three theoretical framings: Knight's (2004) "rationales approach" to IHE, the "push-pull" explanatory model of international student flows, and the ideological underpinnings of IHE as proposed by Stier (2004).

Knight (2004) proposes four different approaches to IHE, which reflect or characterize the values, priorities, and actions representing forms of IHE. The "rationales approach" is one of the approaches, which defines internationalization from the perspective of its purpose or intended outcomes at both the national and institutional level. More specifically and according to Knight, at the national or sector level, "internationalization of higher education is presented in terms of why it is important that a national higher education sector become more international", and rationales are related to "human resources development, strategic alliances, commercial trade, nation building, and social/cultural development" (p. 19). At the institutional level, IHE is "described with respect to the primary motivations or rationales driving it", which can include "academic standards, income generation, cultural diversity, and student and staff development" (p. 19). Furthermore, these rationales at the two levels can also be classified into four categories, namely, social/cultural, political, economic, and academic. Across national and institutional levels, *social/cultural* rationales are related to "national cultural identity, intercultural understanding, citizenship development, and social and community development." Moreover, *political* rationales can refer to foreign policy, safeguarding

national security, developing technical assistance, promoting peace and mutual understanding, and building national and regional identities. *Economic* rationales are driven by “economic growth and competitiveness, labour market, and financial incentives [and *academic* rationales are related to the] international dimension to research and teaching, extension of academic horizon, institution building, profile and status, enhancement quality, and international academic standards” (p. 23). This rationales approach is utilized in this study to focus on the motivations of Chinese government and higher education institutions to import foreign students based on the policies and rules they adopt.

The second framing employed in this study is the “push and pull” model. Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) state that “the global pattern of international student flows may be explained by a combination of ‘push and pull’ factors that encourage students to study overseas” (p. 82). They define the “push” factors as the factors that operate within the source country, and initiate a student’s decision to undertake international study, while the “pull” factors “operate within a host country to make that country relatively attractive to international students” (p. 82). They also emphasize that the decision process of studying abroad involves three distinct stages. First, the student should make a decision of whether to study abroad, which can be influenced by a series of “push” factors within the home country. Once the student has decided to study internationally, the next decision is the selection of host country, where “pull” factors play important roles in making one host country relatively more attractive than another. In stage three, the student should select the education institution that he wants to attend. A variety of “pull” factors make a particular institution more attractive than its competitors. This

“push-pull” model in this study is seen as a framework to analyze international students’ factors for studying in China.

Stier (2004) argues that higher education institutions’ multiple and divergent understandings of the term “internationalization” lead to difficulties in the implementation of internationalization policies in higher education. To map these potentially different understandings, he names three core internationalization ideologies, which are idealism, instrumentalism, and educationalism. Idealism stems from a normative assumption that *internationalization is good per se* (p. 88). This ideology emphasizes that “through international cooperation, higher education can contribute to the creation of a more democratic, fair and equal world” (p. 88). The higher institutions that privilege this ideology aim at fostering citizens “that adhere to an emancipatory outlook on the world” (p. 88). Alternatively, instrumentalists consider “higher education to be one means to maximize profit, ensure economic growth and sustainable development, or to transmit desirable ideologies of governments, transnational corporations, interest groups or supranational regimes” (p. 90). From this perspective, internationalizing higher education is assumed to “meet the demands of the capitalist, global and multicultural world”, and strengthen higher education institutions’ and countries’ competitiveness in the world (p. 90-91). For educationalists, the purposes of IHE “extend beyond mere idealistic and professional aspirations of policy-makers,” because educationalism considers education as life-long learning with a strong emphasis on the value of learning itself rather than organized education with the intent of obtaining a given set of skills (p. 92). From this perspective, IHE may contribute to personal growth and self-actualization. This study utilizes this mapping of these three internationalization

ideologies to analyze both the purposes of governments' and institutions' policies and rules, as well as international students' individual motivations. Through analyzing and comparing their internationalization ideologies, I discuss the alignments and misalignments existing between them, which represent certain tensions between policies and practice.

### 3.2 Methodology

Creswell (2007) defines methodology as the process of research. Martino (2015) also points out that methodology refers to “how the study is undertaken and involves justification and explanation of the methods used in conducting a particular research project” (p. 7). This study is a qualitative study, characterized by “a group of designs that elicit verbal, aural, observational, tactile, gustatory and olfactory information from a range of sources including, amongst others, audio, film, documents and pictures, and that it draws strongly on direct experience and meanings, and that these may vary according to the style of qualitative research undertaken” (Cohen et al., 2011). This study not only focuses on policies, a kind of document, adopted by a government or institution, but also elicits students' perceptions of their experiences. Qualitative methods are a good fit for both of these parts of the study.

Additionally, according to the literature review, it can be noted that most research about incoming international students in China is quantitative. Thus, in order to develop an intricate and detailed understanding of these students, qualitative research is necessary, which can augment some limitations of quantitative research.

#### **Participants**

The ten participants involved in this study are international students who study in “S University” (pseudonym) in mainland China. This university is not only one of the top universities in China, but also considered a “world-class” university in global rankings. One criteria of a university’s ranking is based upon the number of international students it enrolls. Thus, this university has been a logical choice as the case site for the study.

The international students involved in my study include both undergraduate and graduate students from developing and developed countries. Some of the students study in the English program and some in the Chinese program. Their distinct backgrounds offer multiple perspectives on international students’ motivations and experiences at S University.

### **Sampling**

In order to access the participants expeditiously, I utilized volunteer sampling and I asked classmates, colleagues, and friends to participate. After obtaining approval to conduct this study from Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board, I sent an email to some of my Chinese friends studying in S University, requesting they introduce and describe my study to the participants I had contacted for interviews. Then I asked my friends to pass on information about my study to other international students who might be interested in it so that prospective participants could contact me. Additionally, before starting an interview, a letter of information was explained to each potential participant. Signed consent was received from each of my ten participants and then interviews were conducted from November 2015 to January 2016.

It should be noted that volunteer sampling is attributed as non-probability sampling targeting a small group of participants (Cohen et al., 2011). Furthermore, the

samples in volunteer sampling are not selected randomly and are more affected by subjective intention. So the generalizability and representativeness are diminished with this approach. However as an exploratory study this limitation was not a significant concern.

### **Data Collection**

There are two kinds of data being collected in this study. One is the data found in documents which are related to policies and rules adopted by the Chinese government and S University to import international students, the other is international students' motivations and expectations of studying in S university and in China, which is acquired through semi-structured interviews.

To be more specific, the documentary research method is utilized to provide access to, and facilitate insights into three related areas of knowledge about human social activity. These insights refer to the past, the process of change and continuity over time, and the explanation of current structures, relationship and behaviors in the context of recent and longer term trends (Cohen et al., 2011). Broad distinctions may be drawn between types of documents, and one of the distinctions that can be made is between primary documents and secondary documents. According to the definitions proposed by Cohen et al. (2011), *primary documents* are produced as “a direct record of an event or process by a witness or subject involved in it [while *secondary documents* are formed through] an analysis of primary documents to provide an account of the event or process in question, often in relation to others” (p. 249). Primary documents in this study are official policies and rules adopted by the government and the university, while the secondary documents refer to scholarly reviews and analyses of these policies and rules.



As Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest, “The structured interview is useful when the researcher is aware of what she does not know and therefore is in a position to frame questions that will supply the knowledge required, whereas the unstructured interview is useful when the researcher is not aware of what she does not know, and therefore relies on the respondents to tell her” (as cited in Cohen et al., 2011, p. 412). So, the semi-structured interview takes on a balanced position between these two kinds of interviews. I chose semi-structured interviews because, on one hand, I am aware of what information I need to acquire from international students – their motivations and expectations of studying in China but, on the other hand, I also want to explore more information about their lived experiences and reflections (of which I am little aware). Semi-structured interviews not only help me acquire the information I want, but also give the respondents the space to express their views and experiences related to research problems which provide more information for researchers around the boundaries of the study parameters.

In my study, participants were encouraged to describe their motivations and experiences from their individual perspectives. Additionally, although I tried to conduct face-to-face interviews one by one as much as possible, interviews with three participants were conducted by telephone because there was no convenient time for them to meet face-to-face.

### **Data Analysis**

In terms of the analysis of qualitative data in my research, I have used coding and content analysis. Coding, as defined by Kerlinger (1970) is, “the translation of question responses and respondent information to specific categories for the purpose of analysis” (as cited in Cohen et al., 2011, p. 559). Flick (1998) and Mayring (2004) define content

analysis as “a strict and systematic set of procedures for the rigorous analysis, examination and verification of contents of written data” (as cited in Cohen et al., 2011, p. 563). So the coding is an important step of content analysis, which makes the content more clear and explicit.

Following the specific steps of content analysis proposed by Cohen et al. (2011), I first extracted some important information related to the research purpose from documents and interviews, and gave them interpretive comments as codes. Second, according to these codes, I sorted data into different categories with key headings. Third, I listed the topics within each category and recorded frequencies in which items are mentioned. Fourth, I went through the list generated in the third step and put the issues into groups (avoiding category overlap). Fifth, I commented on the groups of results in step four and reviewed their messages

### 3.3 Ethical considerations

In this study, some participants’ personal and private information is involved and seen as data to analyze, such as their nationalities, daily experiences, future aspirations, and personal opinions. Asking such private information could give rise to participants’ fear of scrutiny and exposure. Additionally, for those participants who are in the programs with a low-enrolment of international students, their program information may potentially identify them in combination with other information.

In order to minimize these potential risks, some useful strategies were taken. First, before starting the interview, I explained the purpose of my study to the participants and stressed that the participants were to take part in surveys voluntarily. Furthermore, I promised to protect the privacy of participants’ thoughts and reflections acquired through

interviews, and ensure these data only be utilized or published for the stated academic purpose. An information letter is a useful strategy to cope with these risks (Cohen et al., 2011). Second, during the interview, I made efforts to establish and maintain a good rapport with each participant to ensure the communication is clear positive and respectful, and to help them begin to trust me and minimize their concerns of personal information leakage (Cohen et al., 2011) Third, when analyzing data and reporting the results, direct identifiers of participants, such as their programs, have been deleted. As per ethical protocol I did not share any personal participant data with anyone except my supervisor.

## Chapter 4

### Findings

This chapter presents analysis of the data as organized by the research questions. The data are collected from two data sources: the Chinese government's and S University's policies and rules; and ten interviews with international students. Through selecting, sorting and analyzing ISM policies and rules, the answers to the questions on why China recruits international students, how the government and university recruit and manage them, and how these policies change, are revealed. Simultaneously, analysis of the interviews with students offers another perspective to explore ISM by revealing why international students choose to study overseas and come to China, and how they experience study abroad at S University.

#### 4.1 Chinese government's policies on incoming international students

The policies and rules, as written documents, to which I refer in this study are educational policies adopted by the Chinese government and S University for incoming international students. According to Sun's (2001) study, Chinese educational policies should be classified as: policies of organizational system, funding policies, policies on faculty, and qualification policies. Based on his study, Liu (2010) suggests that this classification is appropriate to study policies about international students. In her study, she defines policies of the organizational system as the policies that aim at explaining the purposes and main goals behind the policies, and coordinating different related institutions' roles and their relationships in the affairs regarding international students. Funding policies focus on how to collect, distribute, and use funds. Policies on faculty

should address the goal of how to build a team of ample and high-quality administrators and professors to serve and support international students. Qualification policies identify quality standards for recruiting and cultivating international students and stipulate the criteria around how to qualify them. Policies of the organizational system are the premise and basis that affect the adoption of other policies. According to Liu's definition and classification, this study also sorts out all the policies into these four areas. Meanwhile, policies are always relational across time and space, so it is necessary to start with the original policies since 1945, when the People's Republic of China was founded.

### **Policies of the organizational system**

The earliest policies were presented as the agreements between China and some other communist-aligned countries. There were four important agreements (as cited in Li, 2005, p. 16) as follows:

**Table 1: *Four agreements in 1950s***

Year	Country	Policy
<b>1950</b>	Romania	<i>A memorandum about exchange of students</i>
<b>1953</b>	North Korea	<i>An agreement on North Korean students studying in Chinese higher educational institutions and secondary specialized schools</i>
<b>1954</b>	German Democratic Republic	<i>A protocol on exchange of students and graduate students</i>
<b>1955</b>	Vietnam	<i>A protocol on cultural cooperation</i>

According to these policies, during this period, all the students that China recruited came from a “democratic republic” and socialist states. From a political perspective, all these countries had similar socialist ideology and diplomatic relations with China. Alongside the increasing number of incoming international students, China’s government started to adopt related policies internally instead of reaching agreements multilaterally, and started to recruit international students from a wider array of countries. Based on this shift, three main policies were adopted, which were *Amendments of accepting international students from capitalist states* (1956), *Trial regulations on the affairs of incoming international students* (1962), and *The rules of accepting international students studying in Chinese higher education institutions* (1963) (as cited in Li, 2005). In the “*Trial regulations*”, the most important theme is “accepting international students studying in China is China’s incumbent internationalist duty,” while “*The rules*” emphasize that “the exchange of students is always important part of the cooperation between countries” (p. 34). Also during this period, many countries proposed making exchange-student agreements with China, and considered it a breakthrough in their relationships with China.

However, it should be noted that although “The rules” seem to be aimed at all international students, it mainly targeted students from Africa, because one of the main goals at that time was maintaining friendly relationships between China and the “unaligned” African countries, and providing international assistance to African countries (Zhang, 2010; Liu, 2013). Meanwhile, according to these policies, there were two categories of international students: exchange international students and international students with scholarships. All the fees of the former students were paid by their sending

states, while the Chinese government paid for the latter students. Thus, there were no self-paying international students at that time. Additionally, because recruiting international students was seen as a foreign affair, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as embassies, and the Ministry of Education played significant roles in the affairs of incoming international students. However, higher education institutions' needs and reality were largely ignored. Thus, the sharp rise of international students exceeded the bearing capability of higher education institutions. This caused a shortage of teachers and educational resources (Sun, 2010).

Since the 1970s, China has experienced a series of economic reform agendas and has been gradually opening up to the outside world. Under these wider conditions, the policies regarding incoming international students also underwent great changes. In 1979, at the Second Conference of Incoming International Students, the Vice Minister of the MOE emphasized educational opportunities as an important part of the mutual opening among nations that can promote China's domestic development (Li, 2005).

In 1985, the *Decision of the CPC Central committee on education reform* (MOE, 1985) proclaimed it necessary to give higher education institutions greater autonomy in their operations. Thus, on the major premise of carrying out the government's policies and tasks, higher education institutions are to have the autonomy for recruiting and cultivating students, and running themselves. Based on this policy, in the same year, China's State Council adopted *Regulations on foreign students* (State Council of the People's Republic of China, 1985). This policy also highlights that on the premise of completing the tasks stipulated by the government, higher education institutions are allowed to recruit international students based on their own needs. It should be noted that

this policy change was a radical change compared with former policies, because this was the first time that higher education institutions' needs were to take precedence. And from here on the autonomy of higher education institutions have been given more attention.

Further, this policy continues to strategize the core benefits, as follows:

accepting and cultivating foreign students is of strategic importance to China to promote the cooperation in the field of education, technology, cultural communication and economic trade between China and other countries. Meanwhile it also benefits the people of China and other countries to strengthen mutual friendly relationships and understandings.

In the 1990s, with expanded processes of 'opening up' and for the purpose of constructing a peaceful circumstance for the development of its domestic economy, China actively established diplomatic relations with other developing and developed countries and regions. This situation definitely enhanced prospective and actual educational exchange between China and other countries. Markedly, in 1993, the State Council adopted *Program for the Reform and Development of Education in China* (State Council of the People's Republic of China, 1993). Article fourteen of this program states that "it is necessary to open education wider to the outside world, strengthen the communication and cooperation of international education, and draw on the educational experience of other countries". It also proposes reforms to the educational system in consideration of international students, such as: establishing the China Scholarship Council; changing the single scholarship system; carrying out the Chinese Language Examination (HSK); adopting more policies and laws to rule international education; and simplifying the application process for obtaining a Chinese Visa.



In 1995, the *Education Law of the People's Republic of China* (MOE, 1995) started to be carried out, which contains a special chapter called “Foreign exchange and cooperation in education.” The theme of this chapter includes encouraging foreign exchange and cooperation in education, advocating the principles of independence, equality, mutual benefit and mutual respect, and protecting the lawful rights and interests of people who come to China to study, do research, engage in academic exchange or teach in schools or other institutions of education.

During this period, the autonomy of higher education institutions was further guaranteed and broadened. Article thirty-six of *Higher Education Law of the People's Republic of China* (MOE, 1999), published in 1999, states that “higher education institutions independently decide on personnel employment and the setting up internal organizational structures such as teaching, scientific research and administrative functional departments in the light of actual requirements and in accordance with the principle of streamlining and efficiency.”

In the new century, China has experienced some new changes. Because of political stability and rapid economic development, China actively engages in international communication and its international status is also rising with each passing day. In 2001, China became a member of the WTO (World Trade Organization), which promoted China's globalizing processes. Meanwhile, during this period, many higher education institutions started to expand their enrollment creating more opportunities for more students to access higher education. All of these developments open a way for greater numbers of international students to come to study in China. In response to these

new changes China has adopted a series of new policies that aim at the increasing number of international students.

In 2000, the MOE adopted *Regulations on the administration of international students in higher education institutions* (MOE, 2000). This policy states that the main goal of promoting student exchange is to intensify friendship and understanding between China and other countries, and further enhance international communication and cooperation among higher education institutions in different countries. Additionally, this policy also states that “the Ministry of Education shall be in charge of the nationwide educational work of international students, formulate related policies and rules of international students, manage the ‘Chinese Government Scholarship’ (CGS), coordinate and guide international student’s affairs of different areas and higher education institutions, and estimate the educational work of international students.” This statement implies that China’s international student education was experiencing a process of de-politicization, directing concentration more on education itself.

In 2005, the *Principle of International Student Education* policy (MOE, 2005) indicated that China should actively create conditions to expand the scale of incoming international students and optimize international student’s teaching-work and life management.

In 2010, the MOE adopted the *Project of studying in China* policy (MOE, 2010). Its fundamental goal is to enhance the communication and cooperation between China and other countries, and improve the level of educational internationalization. Based on this purpose, the main goals for the coming decade are that China will become the biggest destination country in Asia and that the total number of incoming international students

will reach *five hundred thousand*, of which a *hundred and fifty thousand* would be studying in higher education institutions. According to its national strategy and development needs, China should gradually increase the Chinese Government Scholarship, diversify and balance its incoming waves of international students, establish a team of high-quality teachers for incoming international student's education, attract high-quality students, and enhance understandings and friendly attitudes towards China more generally.

According to these policies stated above, it can be seen that international and domestic environments of politics and the economy play vital roles in the formulation and changes of these policies. Initially, ISM was seen as an effective way for China to consolidate state power and reverse the unfavorable international geopolitical situation. At that time it was an important part of opening up to the outside world. Now, it offers to build up international collaboration and enhance reform within Chinese higher education. No matter how the world changes and China develops, ISM can still be seen as a vehicle for politics, the economy and culture, which allow China to embrace the world while letting the world access China.

### **Funding policies**

According to the earliest four agreements elaborated above, before the 1970s there were no self-paying international students, because all their tuition, accommodation and medical fees were covered by the Chinese government or the home country's government.

After initiating a series of reforms and the process of opening-up, China started to accept self-paying international students. Because in this period the number of incoming

international students was increasing while China was still in an initial stage of economic construction, the rationale used was that there was not enough funding to support all international students.

In 1980, the MOE adopted *Regulations on international students studying Chinese higher education institutions* (as cited in Li, 2005). It is clear in this policy that higher education institutions are allowed to recruit self-paying international students. In the subsequent 1985 policy, *Regulations on adjusting scholarship grants and charging standard of international students* (as cited in Zhang, 2010), the charging standard for international students should be raised. That means international students would pay more for their study in China than before.

In 1989, the MOE adopted the *Related regulations on recruiting self-paying international students* policy (as cited Liu, 2010). This policy emphasizes that expanding the recruitment of international students especially self-paying students is necessary, and sets definite charging standards for international students, such as tuition fees, accommodation fees, and medical fees.

In 1993 and 1999, the charging standard was raised again according to two notices of adjusting scholarship grants and charging standard (MOE, & Ministry of Finance, 1993; MOE, & Ministry of Finance, 1999). Fees were raised because in the 1990s, cost levels in China were rising and teaching and administrative expenses were also increasing (Zhang, 2010). The *Charging standards of self-paying international students* (MOE, 1998) policy clearly states that in the consideration of different conditions of higher education institutions, institutions are allowed to independently set charging standards within specified ranges. This policy cannot only be seen as the

manifestation of higher education institutions' autonomy, but also as a boost to their initiative in recruiting international students.

In the new century, alongside the adjustments to the charging system, the Chinese government started to set definite rules to classify and grant scholarships. In 2001, the Department of International Cooperation and Communication (2001), an institute directly under the Ministry of Education, adopted a policy to manage the grants of the Chinese Government Scholarship (CGS). According to this policy, the China Scholarship Council (CSC), entrusted by the MOE, is responsible for the enrollment and the administration of CGS. Briefly, CGS can be sorted into student and program categories. Based on the student category, CGS can be classified as shown in the following chart (CSC, 2015):

**Table 2: Student's category of Chinese Government Scholarship**

Supporting Categories	Major Study	Chinese language (Preparatory Study) (year)	Duration of Scholarship (year)
Undergraduate students	4-5	1-2	4-7
Master's students	2-3	1-2	2-5
Doctoral students	3-4	1-2	3-6
General scholars	Up to 1	Up to 1	Up to 2
Senior scholars	Up to 1	Up to 1	Up to 2

*Note.* Reprinted from “The introduction of Chinese Government Scholarship”, by China Scholarship Council (CSC) (2015).

As for the amounts and coverage of CGS, they are shown in the following table (CSC, 2015):

**Table 3: Amounts and coverage of Chinese Government Scholarship**

Supporting Categories	Field of Study	Tuition		Accommodation		Stipend		Medical Insurance		Total	
		CNY per year	CAD Exchange	CNY per year	CAD Exchange	CNY per year	CAD Exchange	CNY per year	CAD Exchange	CNY per year	CAD Exchange
Undergraduate students	I	20,000	4,000	8,400	1,680	30,000	6,000	800	160	59,200	11,840
	II	23,000	4,600	8,400	1,680	30,000	6,000	800	160	62,200	12,400
	III	27,000	5,400	8,400	1,680	30,000	6,000	800	160	66,200	13,240
Master's students/General scholars	I	25,000	5,000	8,400	1,680	36,000	7,200	800	160	70,200	14,040
	II	29,000	5,800	8,400	1,680	36,000	7,200	800	160	74,200	14,840
	III	34,000	6,800	8,400	1,680	36,000	7,200	800	160	79,200	15,840
Doctoral students/Senior scholars	I	33,000	6,600	12,000	2,400	42,000	8,400	800	160	87,800	17,560
	II	38,000	7,600	12,000	2,400	42,000	8,400	800	160	92,800	18,560
	III	45,000	9,000	12,000	2,400	42,000	8,400	800	160	99,800	19,960

*Note. Field of Study I includes Philosophy, Economics, Legal Studies, Education, Literature (Fine Arts excluded), History, and Management; Field of Study II includes Science, Engineering, and Agriculture; Field of Study III includes Fine Arts and Medicine. The exchange rate of Chinese Yuan against Canadian Dollar is about 5.0.*  
Reprinted from “The introduction of Chinese Government Scholarship”, by China Scholarship Council (CSC) (2015).

Apart from some CGS recipients of specific majors, most recipients must register for the Chinese-taught program. Those recipients of Chinese-taught programs without adequate proficiency in Mandarin must take language courses for one to two years to reach the language requirements of their host universities before moving on to their major studies. Failure to reach the required language proficiency will lead to the automatic termination of the scholarship. The CGS covers both major study and Chinese language (preparatory) study (CSC, 2015).

The CGS awards are offered via the programs in the following table:

**Table 4: Program category of *Chinese Government Scholarship***

Program	Recipient
<b>Bilateral Program</b>	Students from the countries, institutions, universities or international organizations that reach educational exchange agreements or consensus with China
<b>Chinese University Program</b>	Outstanding international students in graduate program who are directly recruited by Chinese higher education institutions
<b>Great Wall Program</b>	General scholars and senior scholars from developing countries. This is a full scholarship offered for UNESCO.
<b>EU Program</b>	Students from EU member countries
<b>AUN Program</b>	Students and teachers from ASEAN University Network (AUN)
<b>PIF Program</b>	Students from Pacific island countries
<b>WMO Program</b>	Students studying and conducting research in meteorology, hydrology, and water resources supervision and management. This is a partial scholarship for the WMO.

*Note.* Reprinted from “The introduction of Chinese Government Scholarship”, by China Scholarship Council (CSC) (2015).

The Bilateral Program offers both full and partial scholarships, the WMO Program only offers a partial scholarship (including a tuition fee waiver, free on-campus accommodation and the Comprehensive Medical Insurance), and other programs offer

recipients full scholarships (including a tuition fee waiver, free on-campus accommodation, stipend and the Comprehensive Medical Insurance) (CSC, 2015).

Thus, it can be found that the CGS Program is set up according to the agreements reached with other countries, and for the purpose of promoting mutual understanding, cooperation and exchange in various fields between China and other countries. Most recipients of the CGS are the students belonging to China's nationally planned enrollment. There are fewer recipients being directly recruited by higher education institutions through the Chinese University Program.

In order to attract more international students, *Regulations on the administration of international students in higher education institutions* (MOE, 2000) indicates that local governments and higher education institutions can also set up scholarships for international students based on institutions' actual conditions. Upon receiving the permission of higher education institutions and the Provincial Departments of Education, any Chinese or foreign enterprise, institution, social organization, or individual can set up a scholarship for international students as long as they do not place unreasonable conditions on students.

In order to better support the needs of the increasing numbers of incoming international students and to construct a safe environment for these students, the MOE signed a cooperation agreement (MOE, 2003a) with an insurance company in 2003 to offer international students comprehensive medical insurance. This agreement can be seen as an important sign of medical reform for incoming international students, and a beginning of the construction of a medical insurance system.



The *Project of studying in China* policy (MOE, 2010) emphasizes that China should increase scholarship programs, promote the monetization reform of scholarships, and encourage local governments and social organizations to set up a variety of scholarships. The ultimate goal is to establish a comprehensive scholarship system with government leadership and various organizations' participation.

Based on the funding policies, it is clear that these policies concentrate on two aspects: recruiting and better supporting self-paying international students; and, enhancing scholarship grants. Recruiting self-paying international students means that apart from those programs provided by the government and institutions of China (not to mention the students' home countries) students have other ways to study in China. This action undoubtedly increases the number of international students. Additionally, various scholarships not only relieve students' financial stress, but also attract more excellent students. Thus, it can be said that these two measures expand the scale of incoming international students, and promote the development of Chinese international students' education.

### **Policies on faculty**

In 1985, China's State Council adopted *Regulations on foreign students* (State Council of the People's Republic of China, 1985). In this policy, it was the first time that special rules were set out focusing on the teachers of incoming international students. This policy points out that in order to establish a team of stable university teachers and administrators, it is necessary to pick out teachers and administrators with a good political background and high professional competence to conduct teaching, work, and management. Political background is stressed because the affairs of international students

are always tied to Chinese politics and diplomacy. Therefore, the staff involved in these affairs is required to have eligible political status, such as the party member of the Chinese Communist Party.

In the 1990s, because the Chinese Language Examination (HSK) was initiated, the need to develop qualified Chinese language teachers for foreign students was heightened. Thus, in 1990 the MOE issued the *Criteria of qualification examination for Chinese language teacher for foreigner policy* (MOE, 1990). These criteria refer to teaching theory and method, linguistics and literature, Chinese history and folklore, and other related aspects. In 1996, based on these criteria, detailed rules were delineated. The 1996 version of criteria not only provides greater details, but also makes new rules about expectations for the teacher's capability in foreign language and their educational degree (MOE, 1996).

In 2003, the MOE proposed that it was necessary to conduct training courses for administrators to improve their capability in integrated business practices; every administrator was to attend these courses at least once a year (MOE, 2003b). The *Project of studying in China policy* (MOE, 2010) also emphasizes the necessity of building a team of teachers with high quality and good educational background, and the importance of optimizing the administrators' training system. In 2014, the MOE adopted *The Notice of building national training system for the administrators of incoming international student's education* (MOE, 2014). This policy prescribes that the administrator training system consist of integrated business training, specialized business training, and overseas training. Integrated business training aims at familiarizing administrators with international and domestic politics, the economy, diplomacy and education. The purpose

of specialized business training is to foster administrators' specialized capabilities, such as using information management systems. Overseas training offers opportunities for them to go to other countries that have advanced international student education to learn how others conduct management.

It can be seen from these policies that building a team of high-quality teachers and administrators for international student education is the role of the policy process of institutionalization. This process undoubtedly promotes the development of the international student education system.

### **Qualification policies**

There are a number of relevant policies on qualification summarized in this section. In 1981, the *Regulations of the People's Republic of China on academic degrees* (MOE, 1981) was adopted. This policy, for the first time, provided definite rules on international student qualification. Article twenty-one of this policy states that international students and scholars who conduct teaching or research in China can apply for an academic degree.

In 1988, the MOE issued *Regulations on recruiting and cultivating international graduate students* (MOE, 1988). This policy prescribes that graduate students can be conferred academic degrees after successfully passing all course examinations and thesis or dissertation defenses.

In 1991, the State Council decided to carry out *Interim measures for conferring academic degree on international students* (State Council of the People's Republic of China, 1991) in some higher education institutions. This policy institutes different criteria

and processes for conferring different levels of degrees that include bachelor's degrees, master degrees and doctorates.

In 1993, the MOE adopted a series of rules around the academic level of international students recruited by Chinese higher education institutions. These rules stipulate that it is necessary to increase the number of graduate students coming to study in China, and increase English or French language programs to attract more international students.

The policy *Regulations on the administration of international students in higher education institutions* (MOE, 2000) states that higher education institutions should arrange reasonable teaching plans for international students while considering students' psychological and cultural characteristics, and properly adjusting international students' compulsory and elective courses on the premise of ensuring teaching quality.

In 2011, the MOE issued the *Notice of further optimizing the systems of certificate management and electronic registration* (MOE, 2011). This notice aims at offering criteria for every higher education institution in granting academic certificates, as well as efficiency and convenience for international students in accessing their registration information.

These qualification policies, either setting up a recruitment threshold for international students or making rules on how to confer academic degrees, mainly aim at stabilizing the system for, and improving the quality of, international student education.

### **China's rationales for the policies**

The main purpose of these policies as a whole is to expand the scale of incoming international students, and develop the institutional capacities to support them. For my

policy analysis, it is necessary to explore China's motivations for expanding internal ISM in HE.

As elaborated in chapter three, Knight (2004) proposes that there are four rationales driving internationalization: social/cultural, political, academic, and economic rationales. She also argues that it is necessary to analyze these four rationales at both the national and institutional level. For my focus on internal ISM, I found that the *political* rationales are the most important for China. Initially, China recruited international students through agreements reached with other countries who had the same socialist ideology and diplomatic relations with China under wider bipolarity. During that period for the People's Republic of China, a newly established country, the matter of prime importance was building diplomatic relations with friendly countries to break the blockade of western countries and reverse unfavorable international conditions. Thus the exchange of international students became an effective way to build bridges between China and other countries, particularly the unaligned countries (Zhang, 2010). From the 1980s, China started to carry out economic reforms and *open up* to the outside world, and education was seen as an important domain to do so. Thus as the 1985 *Regulations on foreign students* (MOE, 1985) says, the purpose of recruiting international students is to promote mutual communication in various fields between China and other countries. That means, ISM is seen as a window for China to present itself to the world and let more people have the chance to come to know about and sympathize with China. This action shows China's internationalist attitude of going out to the world and welcoming others to China. In that way, China not only shows the world that it is becoming a modern country, but also that it can absorb developing experiences and acquire assistance from other

countries. This in turn effectively promotes China's development. In the new century, China became a member of the WTO, and more deeply enmeshed in the economic globalization processes. Thus, as Zhang (2013) says, the secretary of the Department of International Cooperation and Communication, that incoming ISM is an important part of international communication and cooperation for China, which benefits mutual understanding between China and other countries, and promotes the development of China's soft power. Thus throughout the internal ISM policy trajectory, the *political* rationales of recruiting international students are dominant for the government. Even where higher education institutions begin to have more autonomy in recruiting students at the turn of the century, they must first follow the government policy in recruiting for their own needs.

Economic rationales started to be highlighted in 1980s. With a series of economic reforms and the adoption of opening-up policies, the exchange of students promoted relationships between China and other countries, which further promoted mutual commercial trade. The 1985 *Regulations on foreign students* (MOE, 1985) on the purpose of recruiting international students, continues to include enhancing mutual economic cooperation with other countries, but adds the purpose of boosting domestic economic development. Initially, recruiting self-paying international students was seen as a strategy to reach the aim of increasing the numbers of international students. However, on the other hand this action also helped relieve China's economic stress, especially during the initial stage of opening-up when China had to concentrate various resources to develop its economy. Simultaneously, since the late 1980s, the Chinese government has started to gradually raise the charging standard for international students, which has meant that

students have had to pay higher fees for their study in China. Although these fees are still much lower than that in most western countries and are not currently used by the Chinese government as revenue generation, considering self-paying students as a source of producing revenue is likely to become a new trend for Chinese ISM. In the new century, China is further involved in the world economic system. Although attracting more self-paying students, China also offers various programs with scholarships to attract a wider pool of talented and professional students and scholars to come in. Therefore it is likely that, like western countries, Chinese IHE also reflects a gradual neoliberal trend, albeit this trend is entering slowly.

With the increasing autonomy of higher education institutions, academic rationales also become more important. Promoting educational communication and developing Chinese higher education for the purpose of recruiting international students is starting to be emphasized. As Zhang (2013) says, recruiting international students plays a significant role in building world-class universities, and developing international education. Based on these policies, various scholarships and related programs set by the Chinese government suggest that China wants to attract more international students and scholars to promote academic exchange and cooperation. Simultaneously, the actions of recruiting more post-graduate students and optimizing academic degree granting also show China's determination of improving the quality and internationalization level of higher education. All these measures aim at building world-class universities and China's educational brand.

When it comes to social/cultural rationales, recruiting international students opens the doors of China, permitting people from other countries to come to know China, and,

so to speak, brings the world to the Chinese people. ISM can act as a bridge for Chinese people and people from other countries to understand and respect each other, and view the world and others with diverse perspectives. What is more, alongside China's economic development and enhancement of national strength, ISM plays a vital role in spreading Chinese culture, and improving its international status and influence.

To synthesize, the most important rationale for China might be what Knight (2004) calls *strategic alliances*, which are a mixture of political and economic rationales. Knight points out that ISM can be seen as “productive ways to develop closer geopolitical ties and economic relationships” (p. 23). Through increasing international education activities, countries can achieve stronger economic and political alliances, which improves countries' international reputation as well as their competitive advantage in the global market. There is always a close link between politics and economics particularly under the ascendancy of neoliberalism. In the contemporary period, China still mainly considers the exchange of students as a strategy for building friendly relationships with other countries and improving its international status and influence. But in the light of development of the domestic economy and the involvement of the globalized market, the economic rationale is becoming more emphasized as well. This shift means that China expects to gain more economic benefits from close political relations with other countries. All of these are the fundamental reasons why China vigorously supports international student recruitment work.

Additionally, according to these policies it can be also found that with the increasing power of autonomy that higher education institutions have, these institutions play more important roles in the education work of incoming international students.



Meanwhile, higher education institutions are the institutions housing and supporting international students, and they are also the main policy executors. Thus, it is necessary to more fully explore the policies and rules that higher education institutions make and adopt for their international students. To do so, my research focuses on the case of S University.

## 4.2 S University's policies on incoming international students

The higher education institution this research chooses to study is S University, which is one of the Ministry of Education's 71 key universities; it is famous for programs in finance and economics. S University began to recruit international students in 1996. In 2001, it was listed as one of China's key universities for recruiting and training international students. There have been hundreds of self-paying, scholarship and exchange students from over 82 countries around the world (Faculty of International Education, 2015a).

Alongside the increasing number of international students, the Faculty of International Education was established in 2004, which is responsible for all of the affairs of international students. The main duties of this faculty include the following: enrolling and training non-degree students who pursue Chinese language training; examining applications and enrolling students pursuing degree study; implementing exchange programs and other international programs; cooperating with other institutes, organizations and enterprises on the various international student programs (Faculty of International Education, 2015a).

The policies S University has adopted for international students can be classified according to Sun's (2001) framework as well. I use his framework to organize this section.

### **Policies of organizational system**

In 2015, S University adopted the *Regulation on the management of international students* (S University, 2015a). Article two of this policy states that the purposes of recruiting international students involve cultivating a group of international students with high academic quality and a friendly attitude towards China, and promoting communications around politics, culture, and the economy between China and other countries. It also emphasizes that because cultivating international students is work related to China's national interests and especially with many political considerations, the university must treat it with a high degree of political responsibility.

Article seven of this policy elaborates the division of each department's functions. The departments involved in the management of international students include the Faculty of International Education, the Office of Educational Administration, the Department of Student Affairs, the Department of Logistics and Security, and the different faculties the students study in. The functions of the Faculty of International Education have been described above. The Office of Educational Administration is in charge of guiding and examining the training programs for the international students that every faculty submits, and supervising and guiding the training process. The Department of Student Affairs manages students' daily lives, and takes the power of rewarding and disciplining international students. The Department of Logistics and Security is responsible for offering students various services and security. The faculties in which the

international students study undertake the work of making and carrying out training programs, and managing students' study and daily lives.

According to the Chinese government's requirements and the actual situation of S University, there are mainly three programs for international students, which include the Chinese Language Program, Degree Programs and the Exchange Program (Faculty of International Education, 2015a). The Chinese Language Program is set up for students who are non-Chinese citizens and over eighteen years of age, and aim at learning the Chinese language. This program offers students regular language courses, selective cultural courses, one to one tutoring and a home-stay program. As for the Degree Program, according to the *Regulations on Application for SWUFE 2016 Degree Program* (Faculty of International Education, 2015b), the applicants must be non-Chinese citizens, over eighteen years of age, and meet the requirements of academic degree. There are two kinds of programs for the Degree Program. One is the Chinese-instructing Program, and another one is the English-instructing Program. If applying for the former program, applicants must pass through HSK 4 (the Chinese Language Examination). If applying for the latter program, the minimum English language examination scores applicants must acquire are IETLS 5.5 or TOEFL 70 for the bachelor program, and IETLS 6.0 or TOEFL 80 for the Master's and PhD programs. As for the Exchange Program, there are nine main programs offered to students. Most of these exchange programs come from the cooperation between S University and other universities from different countries and encourage the mutual exchange of students.

### **Funding policies**

The funding policies refer to three categories, which include: the charge of tuition and accommodation fees, scholarship granting, and insurance. In line with the *Regulations on the administration of funds* (S University, 2015b), the tuition and accommodation fees are presented in the following two tables:

**Table 5: The tuition fees of S University**

Tuition fee		
(Unit: person/academic year)		
Chinese Language Program		
	CNY	CAD Exchange
<b>Application fee (New student only)</b>	400	61.2
<b>Tuition</b>	14,000	2,142
Degree Program		
	CNY	CAD Exchange
<b>Application fee (New student only)</b>	400	80
<b>Bachelor (conducted in Chinese)</b>	16,000	3,200
<b>Bachelor (conducted in English)</b>	20,000	4,000
<b>Master (conducted in Chinese)</b>	20,000	4,000
<b>Master (conducted in English)</b>	25,000	5,000
<b>MBA (conducted in Chinese)</b>	25,000	5,000
<b>Doctor (conducted in Chinese)</b>	25,000	5,000
<b>Doctor (conducted in English)</b>	30,000	6,000
Other fees		
<b>Insurance</b>	CNY 150 ( $\approx$ CAD 30) /year (Younger	

than 35); CNY 300 ( $\approx$  CAD 60) /semester  
(older than 35, including 35)

*Note. The exchange rate of Chinese Yuan against Canadian Dollar is about 5.0.*

Reprinted from “Regulations on the administration of funds”, by S University (2015b).

**Table 6: Accommodation fees of S University**

Accommodation fee (Unit: person/month)		
	CNY	CAD Exchange
<b>New dormitory</b>	800	160
<b>Old dormitory</b>	500	100
<b>Deposit</b>	1,000	200
<b>15-Day temporary stay (New dormitory)</b>	500	100
<b>15-Day temporary stay (Old dormitory)</b>	300	60
<b>Electricity</b>	30kwh is free each month, extra usage charged is CNY 0.4( $\approx$ CAD 0.08) /kwh	

*Note. The exchange rate of Chinese Yuan against Canadian Dollar is about 5.0.*

Reprinted from “Regulations on the administration of funds”, by S University (2015b).

The four scholarships offered to international students are the Chinese Government Scholarship (CGS), the scholarships from sister cities, the Performance Scholarship, and the University President Scholarship. The CGS is specially offered to graduate international students, appropriately called the “Chinese Government Scholarship –University Postgraduate Program”. This is a full scholarship set up by the

Ministry of Education of China in 2008, aiming at “promoting Chinese higher education brand on an international level” (Faculty of International Education, 2015c). According to the *Regulation on Application for “Scholarship for International Students from City C’s Sister Cities”* (Faculty of International Education, 2015d), this kind of scholarship is set up for international students who come from City C’s sister cities. The purpose of this scholarship is “to further push forward the educational exchange and cooperation between the City of Chengdu and its international sister cities (includes internationally friendly and cooperative cities), as well as to attract more international students to study in higher education institutions located in City C” (Faculty of International Education, 2015d). The Performance Scholarship is set up to encourage international students to study hard, abide by the laws and perform well in university, as well as attract more students to study in S University (Faculty of International Education, 2015e). The *Regulation on University President Scholarship for International Students* states that this scholarship is set to “enhance the friendship between Chinese people and other people from other countries, promote world-wide exchange of economy and culture, encourage and help those international students who perform well both morally and academically” (Faculty of International Education, 2015f).

As for insurance, according to the *Regulations on the administration of funds* (S University, 2015b), the Faculty of International Education must buy group comprehensive insurance for all international students. During their period of study in S University, if international students encounter accidents or their rights are violated, the Faculty of International Education will safeguard students’ legal rights on behalf of S University and settle the accidents with consultations with related institutions, such as

public security organizations, insurance companies, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and so on.

### **Qualification policies**

The qualification policies focus on international student recruitment, cultivation, and conferring academic degrees. Article eight of the *Regulations on the management of international students* (S University, 2015a) stipulates the process of examining students' applications. This process focuses on examining students' educational background and academic qualifications, and aims at recruiting high-quality international students.

As for the training plan, the *Regulations on the management of international students* (S University, 2015a) points out that on the premise of guaranteeing the teaching quality, it is necessary to adjust the courses for international students based on their actual situations. This policy also states that after successfully finishing all courses and passing through their thesis defense, international students can be conferred academic degrees.

As for the policies on faculty, S University does not adopt an independent policy in this field. However, the *Regulations on the management of international students* (S University, 2015a) emphasizes that it is necessary for the university to build a team of highly qualified teachers who have experience studying overseas.

### **Rationales behind the university's policies**

According to all these policies, it appears that like the government's rationales, the main rationales of S University are also political rationales. As the *Regulations on the management of international students* (S University, 2015a) states, to a great extent, recruiting international students is like a political task given by the Chinese government

to S University. Additionally, through the exchange of students, S University has the opportunity to establish *international institutional linkage*, which is also defined as *strategic alliances* by Knight (2004). Just as Knight states “the rationale for developing key, strategic, international-education alliances at both the national and institutional level is not so much an end unto itself but a means to achieving academic, scientific, economic, technological, or cultural objectives” (p. 27). Simultaneously, because of the increasing autonomy, S University has the power to independently set its charging standards according to its own conditions, which to some extent brings some revenue for S University. Additionally, according to the *Introduction of the Faculty of International Education* (Faculty of International Education, 2015a), it can be found that S University also wants to construct and promote its own brand on IHE by recruiting international students. This can help S University build and maintain an international reputation. With an improving reputation, S University “can attract the best students, researchers and institutional partnerships on a global scale” (Tarc, 2013, p.7). From this perspective, higher education is seen as a commercial product exported to other countries like that in OECD countries. However, this is an emergent and slow process for S University because it now just has limited autonomy and has to give priority to the government’s needs.

At the same time, S University as a higher education institution aims at promoting its own educational development and cultivating high-quality international students. All actions and measures, such as strict examination of recruitment, the comprehensive training plan and the scholarships that encourage international students to study hard, are conducted to enhance the quality of international education, and to do what Knight



(2004) called *research and knowledge production*. As she says “the role of higher education institutions in the production and distribution of knowledge should not be minimized” (p. 28).

As for the social/cultural rationales, promoting mutual cultural communication between Chinese students and students from other countries is another purpose for S University. Especially in the Chinese Language Program, the cultural courses offer international students opportunities to learn more about Chinese culture. However, compared with other rationales, S University’s policies are less related to social/cultural rationales.

According to these rationales, it can be found that the rationales behind the Chinese government and S University are similar, and S University’s policy is very much a mirror of the government’s policies. That is because most universities in China are public universities that are directly under the Ministry of Education, and universities’ own policies must align with those adopted by the Ministry of Education (Liu, 2010). It also illustrates that the autonomy of a university is indeed gradually increasing, but, as Liu (2010) says, the Chinese government still has the main control over universities, and universities have a subordinate status and limited autonomy. Meanwhile, compared with national level policies, S University’s policies pay less attention to social/cultural rationales, and this shortage is also reflected in international students’ responses (below).

The national and institutional rationales for recruiting international students can be found by analyzing these policies. In order to explore the tensions between policies and practices, and potentially expose limitations of existing policies, it is necessary to discover the practical implementation of these policies from students’ perspectives.

### 4.3 Students' perspectives of studying in China

The participants of this study are ten international students studying in S University. Related participants' information is shown in the following table:

**Table 7: Research Participant Information**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Home country</b>	<b>First language</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Year in China</b>	<b>Gender</b>
<b>A</b>	Zimbabwe	English	Undergraduate in English program	Two	Male
<b>B</b>	Thailand	Thai Language	Undergraduate in English program	Two	Female
<b>C</b>	Indonesia	Indonesian	Undergraduate in English program	Two	Male
<b>D</b>	Italy	Italian	Exchange undergraduate in English program	Three Months	Female
<b>E</b>	Ghana	English	Graduate in English program	One	Male
<b>F</b>	Ghana	English	Graduate in English program	One	Male

<b>G</b>	Malaysia	Malaysian and Chinese	Undergraduate in Chinese program	One	Female
<b>H</b>	Malaysia	Malaysian and Chinese	Undergraduate in Chinese program	Two	Female
<b>I</b>	South Korea	Chinese	Undergraduate in Chinese program	Nearly twenty	Female
<b>J</b>	Japan	Japanese	Exchange undergraduate in Chinese program	Half a year	Male

Additionally, for the sake of preserving confidentiality and protecting the privacy of participants, English capital letters are used to identify these participants.

In order to build comprehensive perspectives of international students studying in China, three main aspects are discussed: international students' motivations for studying in China, their application process for the university and for obtaining a Chinese Visa, and their experiences of studying and living in China.

### **Motivations for studying in China**

Sanchez, Fornerino and Zhang (2006) define "motivation" as "what drives a person to obtain satisfaction from a class of stimuli" (p. 29). In this study, international students' motivations for studying in China can be seen as the factors that motivate an international student to choose China as their destination country. Mazzarol and Soutar

(2002) point out that in the global pattern of ISM, there are “push” and “pull” factors that encourage students to study overseas (reviewed in chapter two).

**Motivations influencing the decision to study overseas.** The factors motivating students to make a decision to study abroad can be seen as students’ expectations that seem to be unachievable within their home countries, but might be met through studying in a host country. The most common factor initiating my participants to study abroad was the expectation that they could go to different places to learn about different cultures and gain different experiences. For instance, student F said, “I’d like to go to different countries, and I think this is a good way to enjoy life. Compared with travel, study overseas is a better choice, because I can not only go to different places, but also learn something and get an academic degree.” Similarly, student H said: “I would like to broaden my horizon and explore a different world. I wonder what the life is like in other places of the world.”

Four students (A, B, E and J) also expressed that they chose to study abroad for a better education. In contrast, Student A said that an international education background would make him more competitive in the job market. Student I went abroad with her parents, because her father was working overseas.

**Motivations influencing the choice of host country.** When it comes to the factors that influence students’ destination choices, in this study these factors are the motivations most influencing international students to choose China as their host country. All interviewees stated that they were interested in China, and would like to understand China and learn the Chinese language. They thought studying in China would provide an

opportunity for them to be close to China and know China's culture, history, and current situation. For instance, in student C's words:

China's economy develops rapidly and my major is economics, so I think it is a good choice for me to learn why China develops rapidly and know the differences between China and my country. Meanwhile, many products of Indonesia are made in China and they are very cheap, I also wonder the reasons behind them. I also would like to learn Chinese Kung Fu, I think that's cool.

Student F said:

First of all, it is learning Chinese. Learning a language is the best way to understand the culture behind it. Apart from culture, I am always fascinated in the lives of people living in other parts of the world. I wonder how they live, how they are educated, how they celebrate their festivals. Maybe I should major in anthropology. But in order to find a good job, I have to choose a more practical major like what I am studying now.

The second important factor for these interviewees was that they had social links in China. Four students (A, E, G and I) had parents, relatives, friends or knew senior students in China. They thought the presence of the social links would help them more easily adapt to a foreign environment. Student C and J had indirect social links to China. One of Student C's grandmothers came from China, and his parents also encourage him to study in China. As student J explains, "When I was young, I have lived in China for a long time, so I can speak Chinese very fluently and there is no language barrier for me."

Four students (B, E, F and J) chose to study in China for academic purposes. Student B and F studied in China to seek an academic degree from a Chinese university that could help them find a good job. For student E and J, China has good courses for their majors. Student E's major was computer science, and he thought: "Although China is a developing country, it develops very rapidly, and has a good reputation in natural

science and technology.” Student J majored in Chinese economy, so he wanted to come to China to get first-hand experience.

Economic factors also motivated three students (A, F and G) to choose China as their destination. Student A thought that compared with western countries, China’s tuition fees and living expenses were lower. For student F and G, the Chinese government offered them full scholarships.

For student B, geographic proximity was also an important factor influencing her choice of China. She viewed China as not far away from her source country so that she could go home on holiday more easily.

**Motivations influencing the selection of education institution.** For all interviewees, the most important factor influencing them to choose S University was its good reputation for quality. They knew S University was one of the key universities in China, and had a good reputation in their majors. Five students (A, D, E, F and G) stated that they chose S University because they had relatives, friends, or knew senior students there. They became familiar with S University through these acquaintances’ introductions and recommendations, and they could also gain help and support from these people. The cooperation program between universities was also an important factor. Four students (D, F, G and J) said that the cooperation program provided an opportunity for them to study in S University. Meanwhile, some students said that they chose S University because they liked the city in which S University was located. For example, student D said:

I always heard from M [A Chinese student of S University who has studied in the same university with student D in Germany as an exchange student], City C (the city S University is located in) is a beautiful city with many famous scenic sites. Compared with Beijing with polluted air and crowded people, I think City C is

quiet and clean. So when I found the exchange information of this university online, I instantly applied for it.

### **Application process of university and the Chinese Visa**

For all international students who want to come to study in China, the university and the Chinese Visa applications are two essential and important steps.

All interviewees expressed that it was not very difficult to apply for S University. These interviewees said that if you simply met the admission requirements and submitted related documents such as transcripts, language certificates, curriculum vitae, and a study plan, you could be admitted. Some students (G and J) applied to the university through the host organizations of the cooperative program. Student G shared her experience:

I applied through Dong Zong (United Chinese School committees' association of Malaysia). Once the minimum requirement is achieved, they will call you for an interview. The process is quite simple. It wasn't that difficult to apply for it as well.

Student J said:

First, I got through the selection to gain the qualification of this exchange program. Then I submitted my online application to the International Office of Chinese [S] university and mailed related documents. The process was not complicated and can be finished online, but it spent long time to wait for the application result.

Student B and E said they applied to more than one Chinese university, and got admission letters from these universities.

As for applying for a Chinese Visa, no student thought it was difficult. As student J said:

It was much easier than what I expect to get the Chinese Visa. What I did was just submitting the essential documents to consulate. Then less than one week later, I got the Visa. Totally, I think it was not complicated.

They thought that as long as one had admission letters, one could also get one's Visa. The process of Visa application was not complicated and did not take much time. Student F said:

Actually, it is not difficult. There are guides and instructions on official website. You just offer some documents as what it says, such as your admission letter, application form, etc. It took me a few weeks to get it.

### **Experiences of studying and living in China**

As elaborated above, the motivations supporting these international students to come to study in China are related to what they expect to achieve studying and living in China. Thus, it is useful to explore whether these expectations are met through analyzing their experiences of studying and living in China. According to the interviewees' statements, their experiences can be portrayed from six aspects: language, study, making friends, scholarship and cost, support and service, and future aspirations.

**Language.** The language issue is usually a big challenge faced by most international students, which has great influence on their academic performance and social life (Sherry, Thomas, & Chui, 2010). However, of the ten interviewees, not every international student experienced language learning difficulties. The six students (A, B, C, D, E and F) who study in the English program expressed that they had language issues, while others (G, H, I and J) studying in the Chinese program said there was no language barrier for them. For those students studying in the English program, the language issue did not seriously affect their study because they could use English in attending classes, finishing assignments and examinations, and communicating with



classmates and teachers. When I interviewed them in English, I found they were fluent in English and they told me they had studied English for a long time before they came to China. However, the language issue limited their access to online resources. As student E stated:

There is a big problem in getting information. Google cannot be used in China. What we can use is Baidu (a Chinese search engine), but most information is presented in Chinese. It is difficult for us to search information and find something. As for library resources, Chinese resources are more [plentiful] than English.

Further, in their daily life, language barriers brought much inconvenience especially when off the university campus. As student C and F said, it was difficult to talk to salespersons when they went shopping or ordered meals in restaurants. Student C added, “language becomes a barrier to accessing Chinese culture and Chinese friends.” According to their experiences, “not speaking Chinese” made it very difficult to become close to local people and their lives, because language was the medium to express their own ideas, and communicate with and understand others. In light of this situation, these students suggested that there should be Chinese language courses for them. As student B said:

The language barrier is always a big issue for most international students. So although we study in an English program, I think it is necessary to set some Chinese language courses for us that at least help us handle daily communications, such as paying phone charge, ordering dishes, going to hospital, [etcetera].

Student C and D hoped more English services should be offered to them, and language partners was also a good way to learn Chinese. As student C said:

I hope university can offer more English services, while it can offer us chances to learn Chinese. Such as there should be a supermarket where all products are labeled in English, and the salespersons can speak English. By the way, the university can also offer us some Chinese students as language partners, so that we can learn the language from each other.

The four students enrolled in the Chinese-medium programs had different experiences. All four students started to learn Chinese when they were young and spoke Chinese very well. Student G and H said they spoke Chinese with their families, because their ancestors came from China. Student G stated that she always studied in a Chinese school in her home country. They spoke Chinese in all courses and communications in this school. Student I and J lived in China for a long time, especially student I, as she has been living and studying in China since she came to China with her parents at a young age. Thus, for these students, the language issue affected neither their study nor daily life.

**Study.** Students in both the Chinese and English programs complained of school workload, and felt pressure and exhaustion when they dealt with the heavy demands of courses, assignments, and examinations. Student E in the English-medium program shared his experiences:

This is the second year of [my] master program. The first year what I did was taking many courses, but this year apart from taking courses I have to do many experiments. The schoolwork is so heavy that I almost have no leisure time.

For student H who studied in the Chinese-medium program:

I make many new friends from different countries. However I think the study work is too heavy. I think I need more space to do what I want instead spend all time in dealing with heavy schoolwork ..... Long hours of lecture are quite stressful and tiring. I need to take many subjects in one semester .....

Additionally, apart from Chinese language courses, some students also said that it was necessary to set up a series of courses about China, such as China's history, culture, traditional custom and so on. As a key motivation initiating them to study in China, these students expected to learn more about China, to know places different from their own home and see the world from diverse perspectives. As Student B said:

There also should be some courses that introduce us [to] Chinese culture and history, or courses that allow us introduce our own culture to each other, so that we can know what other countries are like, such as their history, religions and legend. If there was a course like this, it must be fascinating and may become the most welcomed course. I think it is a rare opportunity that people from many different countries can get together.

One participant in the Chinese program expected that English-medium courses and more diverse courses should be added. Student G said:

I was also hoping the curriculum to be more globalized [...] In my major, nearly all the courses are taught in Chinese, I was hoping that there would be a bit more English courses.

She thought the university should become more globalized, so that the university should have students and teachers coming from different countries, and its staff should have individuals with international backgrounds who can speak different languages. She also expected that the courses would be taught in various languages to meet the needs of students from different countries. Student I also proposed that the university should offer more exchange programs for international students to let them have chances to learn about different places.

**Making friends.** In my interviews, making friends emerged as one of the most important parts of students' daily lives. For these interviewees, different students had different experiences making friends. For most students studying in the English program, their friends were the students from their home country or other international students

who spoke English, because they said that language was a barrier to becoming close to local Chinese friends. Student A and C also pointed out that Chinese students were always too shy to talk with them, they were not confident in their English ability. Student A stated:

Most time, I spend time with other international students who are from my country and other countries, cause we all can speak English. But most Chinese students are too shy to speak English [...] we have different circles. Chinese students always stay with Chinese students, while international students always stay with international students.

Student B also said:

It is not very easy to go into Chinese student's circle. We have the same classes, sometimes we also chat with each other, but we are just classmates but not friends. We rarely hang out with Chinese students. Certainly we also have some Chinese friends, but not . . . a lot. Most Chinese students are very shy. Sometimes it is hard to talk with them.

These students expressed that they expected to make friends with Chinese students and go into local social circles, but it was more difficult than what they had expected. In the light of this situation, these students hoped S University would create opportunities that closely combined international students and Chinese students to promote mutual understanding.

However, compared with the undergraduate students studying in the English program, two graduate students in the same program shared their positive experiences of making friends, especially Chinese friends. These friends were their classmates, and the students or senior students who had the same supervisor as them. They not only studied together in the same research groups, but also 'hung out' in their spare time.

In student E's words:

I have many Chinese friends. We're always hanging out and playing football. I think there is no language barrier. We can communicate with each other and understand each other. Their English is good and sometimes they also teach me Chinese.

Student F also said that he had many Chinese friends and that language was never a barrier between them. He shared his experiences:

Some of Chinese students are too shy to communicate in English. But if you get along with them for a long time, they are willing to talk with you and offer you help ardently. I think their English capability is good enough. In my research group, there are some Chinese students. They can present in English, discuss with us in English, and when we talk to our supervisor they also speak English. So I think they are just too shy.

For the students who studied in the Chinese program and spoke Chinese very well, they expressed their satisfaction in socializing with Chinese students. They thought Chinese students were nice and patient, and always eager to help them. Additionally, student I said that her Asian appearance also brought Chinese people closer to her. Although language barriers did not block their relationships with local students, they also hoped there would be more opportunities to have further social experience with Chinese students, such as holding activities allowing them to introduce their own culture to each other, or offering mixed dormitories to have international students and Chinese students live together.

**Scholarship and cost.** Five interviewees were offered scholarships. Two African graduate students in the same major acquired Chinese Government Scholarships that cover all their tuitions fees and living expenses. For these two students, it was not difficult to apply for this scholarship, and most students who studied the same major as they did, and had applied for CGS, acquired it successfully. The other three scholarship

students were undergraduate students. These students studied at S University with scholarships through the cooperation programs. Two Malaysian students are supported by a Malaysia commercial foundation while, one Japanese exchange student was offered, by S University, the exchange scholarship and free accommodation and his Japanese university also offered him a scholarship.

The remaining undergraduate students did not acquire any scholarships, and some of them did not even know how to apply for them. For these self-paying students, their parents offered them financial support. They also pointed out that there was not convenient or timely access to information about scholarships. Student B said:

I'm not quite clear about that [scholarship application]. I think if I search for related information on university website I can find them. However most information on website is presented in Chinese, it is not convenient for international students to read and understand them.

Although they are self-paying, the students reported that they did not have financial difficulties, because the tuition fees or living expenses were low.

Meanwhile, student F also proposed S University should offer more kinds of scholarships for international students to let more international students get chances of acquiring them, and to encourage students to study hard.

**Support and Service.** For international students, when they come to a new and foreign environment, they hope to acquire support and help. Most interviewees said they usually asked for help from their friends and senior students. When asked whether they were offered support and services by any organization or institution, some of them said that they did not know what organization could provide help and support for them. As student F stated:

Actually, my supervisor and friends help me a lot. I don't know whether there are other organizations that can help me. There is an office serving international students. You can get some information from its website, such as how to reach university from airport, how to use library, how to register. But they are useful just for new students.

Student A and B expressed that they could sometimes get some help from the International Student Union. This organization holds some activities for them where they can make friends with other students and learn from senior students how to better adapt to school life. Some students knew that there was a special office serving international students, but indicated that it played a small role in serving and supporting them. In student C's words, "They rarely offer help actively. They may help you if you go to ask for, but we seldom go there. At least I never go." Student E said that the language barrier made the communication with the service staff difficult and further made the services and support rarely effective.

**Future aspirations.** When asked of their future aspirations, the interviewees imagined multiple possibilities. Six of the students said that they may continue to study in China for a Master's or PhD degree. Another common choice for them was to return to their home county to find a job, because their country needed them. Three of the participants hope to study in a different country after graduating from S University. For instance, student C wanted to study in a North American or European country because he liked to travel and see different places. Student H also would like to apply for a Masters program in America because it is easier for a graduate student to apply for a scholarship program in America than an undergraduate student. Student E said he intended to study in a PhD program in Australia, because there was a cooperative program for which his supervisor recommended him to apply. Apart from student G who did not care which

country to work in as long as the pay was good, the students did not intend to seek a job in China because they thought it would be very difficult to compete with so many Chinese people in the job market. Meanwhile, student F also pointed out that there was little job information being offered to international students, and the language issue was also a big barrier for finding a good job in China.

### **Summary**

The interviews reveal that the expectation of understanding China and knowing the world were the most important factors that motivated these international students to come to study in China. In their study and daily experiences they were also eager to learn the Chinese language, know about Chinese culture and history, and to be close to Chinese people and make friends with them. Their social links in China were another important pull factor, and became their main support in the absence of effective university support. The presence of scholarships, low tuition fees and cost of living were also pull factors that motivated these students to choose China as their host country. Additionally, there were also students regarding geographic proximity as an important factor attracting them to study in China. In terms of their decision of choosing to study in S University, they hoped the university could offer them a relatively high-quality education – so, in this case, the university's reputation for quality became the most important factor influencing their decision. Their social links in S University and the cooperation programs between universities were also the factors commonly mentioned by students.

Based on these students' lived experience in S University, it is worth repeating that language barriers had a significant influence on their study and daily life. The students in the Chinese program, as fluent Chinese speakers, face less challenge in



studying and making friends than those non-Chinese speaking students in the English program. Compared with undergraduate students, graduate students were more likely to be offered better conditions and showed advantages in adapting to their school life. Additionally, just as S University's policies ignore the social/cultural rationales behind recruiting international students, most participants complained that there no courses about China, little contact with local people and students, and a lack of other means to learn more about China's language and culture in S University. That means S University did not play an effective role in spreading China's culture and promoting the exchange of different cultures.

#### 4.4 Summary

This chapter presents the analysis of my data set, which includes the inward ISM policies of the Chinese government and S University on inward ISM and the perceptions of international students in S University. Through the analysis of the policies, it can be found that to a great extent, both the Chinese government and S University see recruiting international students as a political maneuver for soft power and to construct *strategic alliances* (Knight, 2004) with other countries. That means the main rationales for recruiting international students at national and institutional levels are political. However, it cannot be denied that economic rationales are becoming more highlighted on both national and institutional levels because of China's rapid economic development and further involvement in a globalized economic system. As for international students, their motivations and experiences indicate that their expectations of gaining new experiences and perspectives of the world, as well as their interest in China, were the most important factors motivating them to study in China. Meanwhile, the interviews also reveal the

challenges they face while studying and living in China – and that their different backgrounds contribute to different experiences and challenges.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

The above findings of relevant policy statements and student experience are directed at the phenomenon of increasing internal ISM in Chinese universities. The policy analysis focuses on the more macro level of intentions of aims and rationales, while the analysis of student perceptions considers the on-the-ground experiences of the ten international students. In combining these two perspectives, this chapter explores the tensions between policies and their enactment, as experienced by students, in order to consider how the policies both achieve and miss their mark. Simultaneously, this chapter also further discusses the features of Chinese inward ISM by comparing the phenomena of international students in Chinese higher education with those of other nation-states, especially the traditional host countries for international students (i.e. OECD countries). Through this comparison, one can see both the differences and similarities between China and other countries, and the areas of improvement regarding internal ISM in China.

#### 5.1 The tensions between policies and practices

As described in chapter three, Stier (2004) proposes three internationalization ideologies (i.e. idealism, instrumentalism, and educationalism) that inter-combine to shape the adoption and implementation of internationalization policies in higher education. This study utilizes these three ideologies in articulating tensions emerging from the findings.

As elaborated above, the most important rationales for China to attract more international students are rooted in political purposes across different periods. These include China's consolidating of state power, promoting opening to the outside world /

domestic economic development, partnering with other countries to promote strategic alliances, and developing soft power in a modernizing international order. In brief, internal ISM is considered an effective mechanism to help China through educational exchange to achieve stronger political and economic alliances with other countries, and to, as aligned with neoliberal reform of IHE in the West, become more competitive in the global knowledge economy. In each of these rationales a strong pragmatic or instrumental agenda is evident.

Thus, the primary ideology behind this set of political rationales is instrumentalism. As stated in chapter three, instrumentalism holds the idea that IHE is always tied to national interests, profit maximization and economic development. However, Stier's instrumentalism emphasizes the economic benefits brought by IHE, which aligns with the situations in western countries. However, for China, the government seems to pay more attention to its political interests in internal ISM which highlights that the exchange of students promotes diplomatic relations and various forms of cooperation between China and other countries – thus improving China's international status, image and influence.

From this perspective, ISM is closely related to the country's soft power. Nye (2004) defines *soft power* as the ability to get what you want through co-opting people rather than coercing them. Moreover, this kind of power comes from getting to know the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and foreign and domestic policies. Exchange of students between China and other states have always played a significant role in enhancing China's soft power. Whether at the beginning of the People's Republic of China or in contemporary times, recruiting international students is an effective way to

build alliances with other countries, thus turning people's exchange into the exchange of political and economic interests. This is one of the manifestations of soft power produced by IHE. As the Project of Studying in China (MOE, 2010) makes explicit, China aims at cultivating international students as people not only familiar with Chinese culture, but also holding a friendly attitude towards China, and thus improving China's international status and influence. This closely reflects what Lo (2011) explains about the relationship between higher education and soft power – higher education can be seen as a nationalist approach to expand individual countries' influence through *wing hearts and minds*.

Certainly, the process of globalization and fierce competition in world markets also make China gradually more attuned to the economic values behind internal ISM. On the basis of political relationships, China starts to build economic cooperation and promote trade with other countries. Additionally, the actions of expanding the recruitment of self-paying international students, raising charging standards, and increasing the recruiting threshold can be seen as a series of neoliberal changes in IHE for China which considers IHE as an instrument to gain economic benefits. On the other hand, the presence of full scholarships and a lower overall cost of education suggest that internal ISM in China might depart from whole-scale neoliberal trends in IHE. It would appear that IHE in China remains more accessible than in the top host countries in the West.

As Stier (2004) said, nation-states or higher education institutions do not adhere to merely one of these ideologies, but often vacillate between them. Thus, another ideology behind China's incoming ISM is idealist. Idealism emphasizes that the purpose of IHE is to build a "more democratic, fair, and equal world" (p. 88). Based on this

ideology, the task of university is to endow the citizens with global knowledge and an emancipatory outlook on the world. Although Stier's definition is articulated from a Western perspective, idealism no doubt is in play, at least rhetorically, in China's IHE. Here, the goals of this ideology are to promote mutual understanding and respect among people, and to reduce the gaps between developing and developed countries through knowledge sharing, international cooperation, and human resource exchange. Although recruiting international students is an action for political and economic purposes, it also undoubtedly presents a platform for China to enter the world and enable the world to know about China.

Further, this platform can help to reduce the misunderstandings and gulfs between them, and contribute to the construction of global community inclusive of different ideological positions. For instance, as Zhang (2010) said, there is a long history of China assisting and supporting a number of African countries through recruiting and fostering African students because compared to those countries China has a higher quality education and more educational resources. China helps to cultivate these students and then sends them back to their home countries to make contributions to their own countries. In the early stage, in the consideration of many African countries' low level of basic education, China deliberately lowered the entry threshold for African students (Zhang, 2010). Additionally, the scholarship funding for African students has been increasing over time (Liu, 2013). China also provides educational assistance for some surrounding countries that have fewer resources for higher education (Zhang, 2010). From this perspective, ISM promotes an international redistribution of educational resources, which to some degree, helps build bridges between countries and shows a

tendency towards mutual assistance and care. Of course, supporting international students from West Africa is also founded on instrumentalist aims. China is heavily investing in this region as a form of development and so there are clearly strong economic / pragmatic reasons for this investment.

With the ongoing development of China's higher education and the increasing autonomy of higher education institutions, universities play more important roles in ISM. However, it can be found that S University, to a great extent, primarily sees international student education as a political task, despite beginning to recognize its economic values. Thus, according to its policies and students' experiences, the main ideology that S University holds for international education is largely instrumentalist as well. S University, on the one hand, considers recruiting international students as an opportunity for building strategic alliances with other countries' higher education institutions, while on the other hand, recruiting international students helps S University increase its level of internationalization and improve its reputation because the percentage of international students, as an indicator, has great influence on the university's appearance as a world-class university. However, the idealism is largely absent for S University – this aligns with the lack of social/culture rationales. This might be ascribed to the low percentage of international students and the limited autonomy of the institution, despite certain policy shifts in the Ministry of Education. Instead of serving international students and offering them a platform to exchange cultures and cultivating their global perspectives, S University more likely provides a place for these students to stay in and simply finish the tasks set out by the government, rather than more proactively engaging the social/culture rationales for internal ISM.

Although Stier proposes these three ideologies for examining the national and institutional levels, they can also be used to frame students' experiences with IHE. For these international students, the ideology behind their understanding of studying abroad is educationalism. Accordingly, the purpose of education should be aligned to the individual's learning process and personal growth rather than basic skill acquisition. As for IHE, its purpose should be fostering students' intercultural understanding and developing their capacities to see the world with new perspectives and knowledge. As Stier says "the role of education is to assist him or her, not merely in detecting cultural differences and similarities, but in understanding, scrutinizing and respecting them" (p. 92). These international students consider going abroad an opportunity for broadening their horizons, acquiring different experiences, and learning about people living in different places. When studying in China, they expect to be proximate to Chinese people, to learn about Chinese culture and history, and to understand the differences between China and their own countries. However, this commitment to intercultural engagement appears to be just what S University is lacking. What the university provides for them is still the heavy professional training and an academic degree, which may be useful for their careers.

Apart from making efforts to understand Chinese culture and learn Chinese language, international students also hope there are chances for Chinese people to learn and understand their cultures. Thus, they asked the university to create the bridges between them and Chinese students, such as cross-cultural activities and internationalized courses to enable them to communicate, and develop relational understanding and respect. These recommendations are consistent with the ideology of idealism and also



align with China's rationales for IHE. However, recruiting international students is just the door which has been opened by Chinese government, and more opportunities and platforms should be created by the universities where international students are studying and living. This is also what students would like S University to change and improve upon.

Additionally, it should be noted that instrumentalist goals are also in play, as students come to China, at least in part, seeking useful competencies and qualifications to advance their future career prospects. For example, when asked what factors influence their choice of university, most of them stressed the university's quality and reputation. However, it should be noted that most of these participants seeking for better education in China were from Africa or the surrounding developing countries, which lack enough educational resources and good-quality higher education.

To summarize, there are indeed misalignments existing between the Chinese government's rationales and international students' experiences. As for S University, it should act more as a. The university is not only a subordinate institution that obeys and implements government policies, but it is also a partly-autonomous education institute responsible for supporting its international students both inside and outside the university. However, S University, to a great extent, only begins the task given by the government. It fails to substantively take into account international students' life-wide needs and expectations. Thus, the lack of enacting the idealism and educationalism through on-the-ground promotion of student's personal growth and intercultural learning is the main tension existing between policies and practices. Additionally, for the Chinese government, S University and international students, as Stier (2004) argues, manifestations of

internationalization should not allow only one of the ideologies to exercise hegemonic influence on higher education, but find an acceptable balance among them.

## 5.2 The features of Chinese incoming ISM

The features of Chinese incoming ISM can be discussed from both the country's perspective as well as the international student's perspective. The country's perspective includes two aspects: the rationales for recruiting international students, and the distribution of international students' country of origin. The international student's perspective also consists of two aspects: their personal motivations and experiences of studying abroad.

### **Countries' perspectives**

**Rationales for recruiting international students.** As elaborated above, the main rationales behind China's recruiting international students are political. With these rationales, international students are considered a way for China to build relationships with other countries, broaden China's influence, and further improve China's international reputation as a modern and knowledge-intensive nation. In contrast, for the major OECD countries, as Zheng (2010) says, it is the "economic values [that] are emphasized and economic rationale towards recruiting international students dwarfs other considerations" (p. 68). For these OECD countries, higher education plays a significant role in increasing the state's competitiveness in the global knowledge economy. As Gurria (2006) says at the Meeting of OECD Education Ministers:

The economic significance of higher education is great, and it is growing. Throughout the world, it is now understood that a high-quality system of higher education is central to the ability of nations to participate successfully in the global knowledge economy (p. 13).

For the major OECD countries, their economic rationales are represented in two ways: one is considering talented international students (and potential immigrants) as the human capital to help develop their knowledge economy, the other is recruiting self-funded international students as a revenue generation stream. Taking the United States as an example, alongside the end of the Cold War and the emergence of knowledge economy, the importance of higher education is emphasized and closely tied to economic competition. Thus, recruiting and retaining talented international students becomes a strategy to contribute to the country's economic and political development. Meanwhile, with the marketization of higher education, which is manifested as the reduction of government funding for higher education and privatization of public higher education institutions, recruiting self-funded international students who pay much more fees than local students becomes an effective way to increase revenue and ensure sustainability of programs (Yang, 2006). Simultaneously, in order to respond to the knowledge economy, the European Union launched the Lisbon Agenda and Bologna process, which aim at making the EU more competitive and dynamic in the knowledge economy era.

Thus, a series of reforms have been conducted to make "European higher education more compatible and comparable, more competitive and attractive for European and for students and scholars from other countries" (Zheng, 2010, p. 47). Therefore, the EU considers higher education as a strategy to target talented international students, and even gradually build an export industry of higher education. The same situation has occurred in Canada, especially after the global recession in 2009. As Zheng says, "in such a period of recession, economic pressure may result in the government's policy adjustment towards the higher education export services by recruiting more

international students” (p. 64). Additionally, in Canada, as an immigrant country, international students can be seen as an important source of high quality human capital.

Looking at the 1980s, we can see that China also started recruiting self-funded international students. However, the purpose of this action was not to increase revenue for domestic sustainability but to release overall economic pressure, as the international student fees are relatively very low. Additionally, instead of human resources, international students are considered as a link and bridge of communication and cooperation between China and other countries. However, alongside more attention being paid (these days) to economic development and competition in globalized market, the economic value behind ISM is highlighted more in China. It is more likely that China may experience a series of neoliberal reforms in IHE like the OECD countries, because China is continuing to increase the number of self-funded students, raising charging standards and encouraging more talented scholars and students to study in China by offering them various scholarships tied to performance.

**The distribution of country of origin.** According to official statistics from the Ministry of Education (MOE), in 2014, there were 377,054 international students from 203 countries studying on the Chinese mainland (59.80% of them from Asia; 17.90% from Europe; 11.05% from Africa; and 9.58% from the United States. The fewest students (1.33%) came from Oceania (MOE, 2015). Among Asian countries, the country exporting the most students to China was South Korea (27.90%). Thailand was ranked in the second place (9.44%) and Japan third (6.68%). Hence, most international students studying in China come from China’s surrounding countries. However, regarding major OECD countries, the main origin countries for international students are not limited to

surrounding countries. Moreover, a significant number come from developing countries, especially China (UNESCO, 2015).

Additionally, although China is becoming a new popular host country for international students, the number of outgoing students is still much greater than the number of incoming students. According to statistics from the MOE, in 2014 there were 459,800 students from the Chinese mainland who studied abroad, which still surpasses the 377,054 incoming international students (MOE, 2015). Comparatively, for the OECD countries, the number of students they host is much more than the number of students they send abroad. For instance, in 2015, the United States hosted 784,427 international students but sent only 60,292 students to study abroad, the United Kingdom hosted 416,693 students but exported 27,377 students, and Canada hosted 151,244 students but exported 45,813 students.

### **Students' perspectives**

**Student motivations for study abroad.** According to the analysis above, the most important “pull” factor attracting students to China is their interest in China, such as the Chinese language, culture, economy, people’s lives, the present status of China’s development, and so on. However, for international students in OECD countries, the most important attraction is the perceived high-quality education. Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) review four studies (involving various countries / areas) that investigate the factors influencing international student’s choice of host country. These countries and areas include India, Indonesia and the Chinese mainland. The most popular host countries for students from these countries and areas are the aforementioned OECD countries. From these studies, Mazzarol and Soutar conclude that the most important pull factor is

“quality of education in the host country” (p. 85). These students thought they could have access better courses when studying overseas. In the study of Wintre, Kandasamy, Chavoshi and Wright (2015), 64 international students of a Canadian university were involved. The results of this study also indicate that seeking a better education was the most common response to the motivation of studying in Canada. These students thought Canada offered a quality of education not available in their home country, and the opportunity to improve their English. Zwart’s (2012) study investigates the factors influencing Chinese students’ host country choice. She finds that the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada were the popular host countries for Chinese students, and their main attraction for these students was the high-quality education and world-class status.

There are two reasons that may contribute to these differences. One is that China is a country still cautiously opening to the outside world. It not only has a time honored civilization and history, but has also has been developing very rapidly and has an increasingly strong reputation in the world in recent years. Thus, there are undoubtedly more and more people interested in and attracted to China. Another reason is that the quality of Chinese higher education is lower than that of OECD countries. As Liu (2010) said, generally speaking the quality of Chinese higher education is on the low level. There is no superiority in the subjects of sciences and engineering, while the disciplines of the humanities and social sciences are considered less innovative. What is more, traditionally Chinese higher education thinks highly of imparting knowledge and theory but ignores practice and the cultivation of creative capability (Liu, 2010).

However, according to the interviews, compared with the high expenses of studying and living in these OECD countries, the lower fees of studying and living in China are a strong attraction for international students. Meanwhile, geographic proximity also attracts students from China's surrounding countries. What is more, as Zhang (2010) says, although China's higher education cannot be considered equal to those of Western countries, China has more educational resources and superiority in some subjects than some surrounding countries. This is another factor that attracts surrounding-country students to study in China.

### **Students' experiences of studying abroad**

Many studies indicate that the language barrier is a big problem for the most international students, and negatively affects their study and daily life. Because of this language barrier, they may suffer academic pressure, and difficulty in making friends and integrating into local circles (Sherry, Thomas, & Chui, 2010; Marginson and Sawir, 2014; Yan and Berliner's, 2011; Zhang and Zhou's, 2010). As for the participant international students in China, only some encounter a language barrier. Based on the interviews, it was found that only the students studying in the English program experienced language as having negative influences on their out-of-school lives. For those students who could not speak Chinese there was no Chinese language course offered to them, so it was difficult for them to do daily activities such as going shopping, asking for help, and communicating with local people. In contrast, the students studying in the Chinese program did not experience language difficulties because of their proficiency in this local language. However, it should be noted that they did not learn the Chinese language through going into language courses, but their Chinese language proficiency came earlier

from their family histories.

The reason why most international students encounter a Chinese language barrier is that the status of Chinese language in the world is not high enough and the range to which the Chinese language is popularized is not wide enough. Perhaps this will change if China's economy and influence continue to grow. Interestingly, English is still considered the global language or dominant world language (Crystal, 2003; Raine, 2012; Xue & Zou, 2013) although Chinese is spoken by the most people in the world (Raine, 2012). As Crystal (2003) proclaims, it is much more to do with *who* speaks the language. In other words, economic, technological, and cultural power of speakers determines whether the language they speak can become a global language.

As for the English language, it is past British colonialism and current American hegemony that empower it as a global language. Thus, in order to be involved in globalized processes and compete in global markets, many non-Anglo-Saxon countries set English as their official language or first foreign language that all the citizens of these countries are required to learn. For instance, in China, English language courses are the required courses that every student must attend from elementary school to university; some city children even start learning English in kindergarten. Hence for those interviewees studying in the English program, even though some of them are not from English speaking countries, they are still able to finish their schoolwork in English. However, although there are many Confucius Institutes<sup>2</sup> all over the world, people go there to learn Chinese language just for their interest, and there is no mandatory rules

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<sup>2</sup> Confucius Institute, as a public institution affiliated with the Chinese Ministry of Education, is committed to providing Chinese language and cultural teaching resources and services worldwide to meet the demands of foreign Chinese learners (Hanban, 2016).



requiring people to learn it.

Meanwhile, Huang and Klinger (2006) point out that apart from the language issue, financial difficulties are also a big challenge for international students. In their study, Chinese international students studying in the United States encountered financial difficulties and had insufficient financial support. Similarly, O'Reilly, Hickey, and Ryan's study (2015) also indicates that international students studying in Ireland experience financial problems. However, as for the international students involved in this study, no one said they suffered financial difficulties; even those students who had no scholarship did not indicate financial problems. This might be because the tuition of Chinese universities is low and the scholarship students receive enough support to meet their needs.

## 5.2 Implications and recommendations

Through analyzing the policies of the Chinese government and university on incoming ISM and international student's practices of studying and living in China, this study illuminates the tensions between the policies (national and institutional perspective) and practice (international student's perspective). Through further discussing the differences of incoming ISM between China and major OECD countries, this study shows some problems existing in China's incoming ISM. In light of these tensions and problems, there are five implications and recommendations for the policies of the Chinese government and higher education institutions on incoming ISM.

First, the fundamental and long-term strategy is to continue to develop China's economy and enhance its national strength. Only strong national power enables China to actively engage in global affairs and disseminate its influence all over the world. As

Zhang (2010) says, along with the advance of globalization and China's rising international status, China, as the second largest economy and a country with rapid economic growth and a stable society, is undoubtedly attracting more concern and arousing more people's interest. The similar phenomenon also emerged in the Chinese Tang Dynasty, as Tao (2012) states, in that period China was becoming the biggest and most advanced country in the world, so that people from other countries were attracted to study in the empire of the Tang Dynasty. Hence, strong national power and great international influence offer the possibility that more international students would be attracted to study in China.

Second, China should continue to adopt its opening up policies not only in the fields of politics and the economy, but also in education. The latter can be manifested as actively building educational cooperation and communication with other countries and their higher education institutions, so that more cooperation programs can be offered to the students of these countries. In this study, four of the interviewees came to study in China through cooperation programs. What is more, these cooperation programs usually provide funding or scholarships to students and this is certainly attracting students. From this perspective, educational cooperation and the exchange of students become effective tools to establish and maintain friendly alliances. Additionally, for China, cooperation with developed countries also brings advances in knowledge and technology, and with the cooperation with other developing countries not only promotes mutual understanding but also offers assistance to those countries that need help and support. Meanwhile, in light of China's rapid economic development and the improvement of international status, a fear of potential Chinese dominance may be emerging and intercultural understanding

is critical to reduce this kind of fear and build mutual trust between economic powers and regions.

Third, improving the quality of China's higher education and thinking highly of the idealism and educationalism behind IHE are the pressing matters of the moment. Although the Chinese language and time-honored culture, and low tuition fees and living expenses are also factors attracting international students to China, pursuing high quality education and realizing personal growth are typically the primary goals for students. That is why more students, even many Chinese students, choose to study in OECD countries rather than China. What is more, apart from considering recruitment of international students as a political strategy, China should also emphasize other values of international student recruitment for the IHE – especially considering today's knowledge economy era. Stier (2004) emphasizes that:

By providing internationalized education of good quality, the long-term relevance and usefulness for all sectors of society, commercial or non-commercial, private or public, will eventually become evident to everyone. Internationalizing higher education will have positive effects on future society (p. 95).

Thus, China should treat international students not only as a bridge among countries or an important economic and human resource, but also as a way to continue working on building a democratic and tolerant world through creating the bridge of mutual understanding and assistance.

Fourth, it is necessary for the Chinese government to make efforts to popularize the Chinese language and spread Chinese culture. It can be found from this study that most international students study in China because of their interest in Chinese culture and language, but the language barrier was a big issue that had a great influence on their daily

life. Meanwhile, the language barrier may also prevent students who cannot speak Chinese to study in China. As stated above, Chinese is unlike English, for which many countries set up mandatory courses in schools to require all students to attend. Those students who want to learn Chinese have to come to China to take non-degree language programs or go to a local Confucius Institute, if one exists. Thus, more platforms like the Confucius Institute are necessary. These platforms not only can serve for those people interested in China, but also can spread Chinese culture and present China to the people who are unfamiliar with the country.

Fifth, the roles of higher education institutions should be concerned, because they are the links between policy (government's perspective) and practice (student's perspective). As Stier (2004) states, there should be closer cooperation between policy-makers and students in IHE, because "today there is a mutual lack of familiarity with the other's expectations, obligations, ideologies and understanding of internationalization"(p. 95). Thus, these institutions should be given more autonomy, especially in the affairs of international students, so that they can better understand, guide, and support student expectations and needs, in relation to government rationales. With the consideration of both government and international students, institutions should carefully balance instrumentalism, idealism, and educationalism, to optimize the benefits and minimize the risks and negative outcomes. Specifically, these institutes should make some changes and improvements in their curricula, faculty, activities and services, scholarships, and international student employment.

As for curricula, as student G said, global curricula are needed for international students in particular. Apart from professional knowledge and skills, the curricula on the

one hand should aim at enabling students to recognize “the increasingly interconnected nature of nations, and so in that sense is international (i.e. between nations)”, and “the importance of a level of responsibility and governance above and beyond individual countries, at the global level” (Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2014, p. 58), and stimulating their empathy and compassion to learn how to understand, respect, and tolerate others from different countries and with different cultures (Stier, 2004, p. 94). On the other hand, the curricula, as Stier emphasizes, should also concern students’ “personal growth”, stimulate their “self-awareness” and “self-reflection”, train their “intercultural competence”, and teach them to see the world with new “perspectives and knowledge” (p. 94). Akhtar, Pratt and Bo (2015) also point out that “curricula need to be structured in a manner that provides opportunities for students to expose themselves to a smattering of courses in intercultural and global practices” (p. 109). For instance, there should be related courses about China, such as courses of Chinese language and Chinese culture, being provided for international students, especially those students studying in the English program. Other intercultural courses that allow students to reciprocally introduce and present their own culture and countries are also necessary.

Professors and staff of these institutions are the people who directly interact with international students. For professors, in order to conduct global curricula for international students, it is necessary for them to have international education backgrounds and experiences, and be aware of the interconnected and sometimes competing ideologies behind IHE and the expectations of students. Additionally, both professors’ and staff’s proficiency in foreign languages is required so that professors can set more diverse courses for more students from different countries, and staff can better

communicate with students, know their needs, and more effectively offer them help and support. Additionally, as CCG (2015) proposes, importing foreign experts and professors is also a good way to promote universities' internationalization.

When it comes to activities and services, learning local culture and having close connecting with local people are always important expectations for international students. So, as Akhtar, Pratt and Bo (2015) say,

it is important that China's universities engage their international students in cross-cultural activities that bring them into contact with their hosts on a platform from where issues in cross-national education are discussed [and] promote strong relationships between international and Chinese students through students organizations and through engaging them in different activities base on language and culture (p.108-109).

For instance, cultural exhibitions and mixed dormitories of Chinese and international students are methods that universities could try. As for services, apart from special service offices for international students in their faculty, student organizations with students from different countries can also be organized to offer more services for international students, such as help to those students needing to learn Chinese to communicate in their day-to-day lives. Certainly, it would be better if there were campus shops and canteens with multi language services, including English services. For instance, Akhtar, Pratt and Bo (2015) propose that in order to achieve this "... a maximum number of students can know more about the local rules, conventions, practices, environment, and education system [the university should] provide on-campus orientations in several languages to them" (p.109). To summarize, the standing of the relationship between university and international students should change from "managing students" to "serving students" with consideration of their needs.

As for scholarships, regardless of the scholarships offered by the government, higher education institutions need to provide more kinds of scholarships for international students. For instance, they can cooperate with local enterprises and social organizations to set up scholarships for students. Additionally, the information on scholarship applications should be timely and actively sent to international students.

More attention should be paid to international student's employment, because offering them job opportunities is an effective method to retain them in China. However, as Meng (2015) says, there have not been any services offered by the university for international students to guide and help them find jobs in China so far. CCG (2015) proposes that in order to gain a *talent dividend*, constructing international student's employment service system is necessary. Thus, universities should offer timely job information for international students, and provide suggestions to guide their employment.

### 5.3 Limitations of my study

As a researcher, I should consider and evaluate the credibility and reliability of this qualitative study. First, the analysis of policy only focuses on policy documents. In this study, I explored the rationales of recruiting international students through reviewing and coding related policies' contents. This study lacks the direct interaction with policy-makers, who could have offered me richer and more direct information and interpretations about the rationales and reasons as to why they adopt these policies and how they may be read less literally.

Second, this study is a qualitative study and small in scale, so the findings are not generalizable. I conducted my study in only one university and chose ten international

students as my participants through volunteer sampling. Therefore, my findings may not resonate with other higher education institutions in China.

Third, when transcribing the information from face-to-face communication, misinterpretations are possible, because we communicated with each other in English or Chinese but for most of us neither of these languages are our mother language. But I made efforts to make our communication understood by each other and tried to make interviewees feel comfortable. Meanwhile, my own values and understanding as a researcher and current international student might be unconsciously imposed upon my research findings. My own experiences and background may be involved when I analyze the data. Again, I used multiple sources to work to minimize bias.

#### 5.4 Considerations for possible future research

This study examined ISM at one Chinese university by considering policy statements of the government and the university and perceptions of ten students. In terms of future research, the following points are potential guides:

- A future study could compare the similarity and difference among multiple higher education institutions within China.
- A future study could compare the motivations and experiences of international students based on country of origin and their specific policy push factors. For example, one could choose one international student's country of origin, such as South Korea, to analyze the incoming ISM through both the policies and situations of the host country and country of origin. Involving the host country's perspectives may help China's government to enhance ISM.



## 5.5 Final Reflection Post-Defense

Upon reflecting on the discussion at my defense, there are two brief points that I wish to make here. First, through analyzing policy texts, my study found that political rationales are most important in China's recruitment of international students, even though economic rationales are evident as well especially where Chinese universities take on more autonomy. Although a series of neoliberal reforms are evident in China's IHE, it is political goals not economic benefits that continue to occupy the dominant position for contemporary China. This is a key difference between IHE in the West given the dominance of the economic rationale in IHE in Western universities. This difference is related to the whole international situation and China's evolving political system. China is a developing country and also a socialist country vying to be competitive and deemed 'modern' under global capitalism. The political benefits of IHE can potentially counter some trends and forces related to anti-Chinese or anti-socialist sentiment internationally. Considering this situation, what matters most to China is building alliances with other countries and institutions through IHE.

Second, the role of universities in IHE should be much further explored. In my study, as I said above, the voices of university's administrators were absent. S University's internationalization policies seemed like a mirror of the government's. However in Chinese government's policies, there was a trend evident that higher education institutions were authorized more autonomy across time. I think the most important thing for China is to clarify the authority boundaries between these institutions and government instead of authorizing complete autonomy to institutions. Currently power is very much centered in government and most universities seem to remain subordinate in terms of policy making. So to a great extent, universities' policies must

align with those of government and give priority to national interest and needs. Again, this study did not engage with policy enactments at the institutional level. Understanding the dynamic between government control and institutional autonomy for IHE is beyond my study's focus, but is an important dynamic or tension to be further explored.

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# Appendices

## **Appendix A: Letter of information**

**Project Title:** International Student Mobility in Higher Education in China: Tensions between Policies and Practices

**Principal Investigator:** Paul Tarc, PhD, Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario

**Student Investigator:** Kang Chen, Master candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario

### **Letter of Information**

#### **1. Invitation to Participate**

You are invited to participate in a research project exploring the motivations international students have in coming to study in China because of your identity as an international students studying in China.

#### **2. Purpose of the Letter**

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with information required for you to make an informed decision regarding participation in this study.

#### **3. Purpose of this Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore the reasons behind increasing number of international students coming to study in China, and construct a comprehensive understanding of inward international student mobility in China from the perspectives of policies and practices. By connecting and comparing these two perspectives, it is possible to discuss the tensions between official policies and their enactments as experienced by students.

#### **4. Inclusion Criteria**

The criteria for participating in this study are:

- Be an international student (undergraduate or graduate student) studying in China.
- Be available for an interview at a mutually convenient location, date and time.
- Consent to participate

## **5. Study Procedures**

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to take part in an interview, which is anticipated to last about 30-40minutes. But the specific length of the time depends on the progress of our communication, and one hour is the maximum. All the interviews will be audio-recorded for data collection and analysis. You can refuse to allow our communication to be audio-recorded, and Kang Chen will transcribe the main content of your response.

## **6. Possible Risks and Harms**

In this study, some participants' personal and private information will be involved and seen as data to analyze, such as the age, nationalities, daily experiences, future aspiration, and personal opinions. Asking the private information would give rise to participants' fear of security and exposure. Additionally, for those participants who are in the program with a low-enrolment of international students, their information of programs may potentially identify them in combination with other information.

## **7. Possible Benefits**

This study may help Chinese government and higher education institutions rethink their policies and rules of Chinese international higher education, especially of international student recruitment and support. Additionally, international students who are studying in China now and want to study in China in the future may benefit from this study as well, because they can have a comprehensive understanding about Chinese international higher education, which can help them study in China more easily and acquire more support.

## **8. Compensation**

Some Chinese incense sticks will be as a small token of appreciation given to participants of this study.

## **9. Voluntary Participation**

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your future academic status or employment.

## **10. Confidentiality**

Your responses, as well as your participation or non-participation will be kept confidential. All data collected will remain accessible only to the investigators of this study. There is no way for any agencies, groups and persons to access to your personal information and responses. All data collected from this interview will only to be used or published for the academic purpose. If the results are published, your name and program will not be used. If you choose to withdraw from this study, your data will be removed and destroyed from our database. Representatives of The University of Western Ontario Non-Medical Research Ethics Board may require access to your study-related records to monitor the conduct of the research.

## **11. Contacts for Further Information**

If you require any further information regarding this research project or your participation in the study you may contact:

Kang Chen, [REDACTED]

Dr. Paul Tarc [REDACTED]

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or the conduct of this study, you may contact The Office of Research Ethics [REDACTED], email:

[REDACTED].

## **12. Publication**

If the results of the study are published, your name will not be used. If you would like to receive a copy of any potential study results, please contact:

Dr. Paul Tarc, [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]  
Kang Chen at [REDACTED]

**13. Consent**

Written Consent Form is included with this letter. If you agree to participate in this study, please sign it.

*This letter is yours to keep for future reference.*

## Consent Form

**Project Title:** International Student Mobility in Higher Education China: Tensions between Policies and Practices

**Principal Investigator:** Paul Tarc, PhD, Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario

**Student investigator:** Kang Chen, Master candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate in the interview. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Participant's Name (please print):

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Participant's Signature:

---

Date:

---

Person Obtaining Informed Consent (please print):

---

Signature:

---

Date:

---

## Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. Could you give me some personal information, such as the program you study in, your origin country, and urban or rural area you come from, graduate or undergraduate student?
2. Why did you choose to study abroad rather than study in your home country? Would you speak about the factors that motivate you to make this decision?
3. Why did you choose China as your destination country? Would you talk about factors that influenced this choice?
4. Why did you choose this university to study in? Would you discuss factors that influenced this choice?
5. What is the process of application for a Chinese Visa? What did you prepare for this application? How long did it take? How did you feel about this process?
6. How did you prepare for applying to this university? How did you feel about this process? Did you think it is difficult or easy to apply for it, and why?
7. What were your initial expectations for studying in China? In what ways have these expectations been met and not met?
8. Would you please describe your experiences of studying in China, especially your daily school life? What is studying in China like? Can you tell me about the things that have been most significant? How do these experiences relate to your initial choices and expectation of studying in China?
9. How do you cover your expenses? Do you acquire any support from your home country's or Chinese organizations when you study in China?

10. Do you know the policies and rules about international students adopted by Chinese government and your university? What do you think about them? Why do you think China attracts an increasing number of international students?
11. What are your future aspirations after finishing your school work in China? Will you continue to stay in China or go back to your home country or somewhere else? Why do you make this decision? If you intend to stay in China, what will you do? Do you have family or friends in China or elsewhere that can help you with these aspirations?

## Appendix C: Ethics Approval Notice



Western  
Research

Research Ethics

### Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board NMREB Delegated Initial Approval Notice

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Paul Tarc

**Department & Institution:** Education\Faculty of Education, Western University

**NMREB File Number:** 107389

**Study Title:** International Student Mobility in China: Tensions between Policies and Practices

**Sponsor:**

**NMREB Initial Approval Date:** December 10, 2015

**NMREB Expiry Date:** December 10, 2016

**Documents Approved and/or Received for Information:**

Document Name	Comments	Version Date
Instruments		2015/11/19
Letter of Information & Consent		2015/11/19
Western University Protocol		2015/11/19

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the above named study, as of the NMREB Initial Approval Date noted above.

NMREB approval for this study remains valid until the NMREB Expiry Date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of NMREB Continuing Ethics Review.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario.

Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB.

The NMREB is registered with the U. S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

  
Ethics Officer, on behalf of Riley Hinson, NMREB Chair or delegated board member

Ethics Officer to Contact for Further Information: Erika Bastie \_\_\_ Nicole Kariki \_\_\_ Grace Kelly \_\_\_  Mina Mikhail \_\_\_ Vikki Tran \_\_\_

*This is an official document. Please retain the original in your files*



## Curriculum Vitae

**Name:** Kang Chen

**Post-secondary Education and Degrees:** Peking University  
Beijing, China  
2009-2013 B.A.

The University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario, Canada  
2014-2016 M.A.

**Honours and Awards:** Outstanding Student Cadre of the Student Union  
2010-2011

Scholarship for Outstanding Students  
2011-2012

Entrance Scholarship  
2014-2015

**Related Work Experience**

Office Assistant  
Graduate office of Department of Sociology, Peking University,  
Beijing, China  
2010-2011

Intern  
General Office of Lhasa's Government,  
Lhasa, China  
2011.07-2011.09

Research Assistant  
China Household Finance Survey Institute,  
Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, Chengdu,  
China,  
2013-2014