

INCLUSION & EXCLUSION

TOWARDS A NUANCED UNDERSTANDING OF
INCLUSION & EXCLUSION

A BOURDIEUSIAN INTERPRETATION OF CHINESE STUDENTS' HIGHER
EDUCATION EXPERIENCE IN CANADA

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TITLE: Towards a nuanced understanding of inclusion and exclusion: A Bourdieusian interpretation of Chinese students' higher education experience in Canada

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Abstract

At the heart of this study is a desire to unravel a puzzle of why I and other self-identified Chinese students share common experience of exclusion in the Canadian academy, despite our differences as individuals and as Chinese. Our experience of exclusion is made invisible by the stereotypical image of Asian students as the paragon of success within the academy. It is again made invisible by policy addressing inclusion in the academy that uses largely outcome measures to paint pictures of success, and keeps the less concrete parts of processes unpainted. There is a lack of attention to and an under-theorization of the less perceptible and less tangible processes of inclusion and exclusion.

The central question of this study is: How do Chinese students' experiences in higher education, as viewed through Bourdieu's framework of culture, inform a nuanced understanding of inclusion and exclusion? I draw on Bourdieu's framework along with its core concepts to analyse the narratives of sixteen self-identified Chinese students from six Ontario post-secondary institutions. Methodologically, I draw on a theme-based approach from Thematic Inquiry and a case-based approach from Narrative Inquiry to form a Bourdieusian methodological framework that stays true to the anti-dualistic epistemological foundation of Bourdieu's theory.

Captured in this study is a complex picture of inclusion and exclusion centred on a boundary that is so intangible and masked that it is largely imperceptible and hence unarticulated. The boundary is imperceptible because:

- 1) inclusion and exclusion is mediated through an unspoken system of meanings and values inscribed in disposition and practices; the boundary takes the form of a normalized way of being (disposition) and doing (practice)
- 2) inclusion and exclusion is unintentionally enacted; the boundary takes the form of unintentional domination and 'voluntary' exit (as if no external force is driving the exclusion)
- 3) inclusion and exclusion is diffused by the conversion of the boundary from an overt form to a neutralized or 'normalized' form such as social network.

While the boundary is obscured, it is at the same time fluid and permeable when capital is strategically positioned and deployed.

This study concludes by suggesting the need to take into consideration intangible and unintentional processes of inclusion and exclusion, and a two-way approach (again staying true to Bourdieu's anti-dualistic framework) to broaden policy and research conversations about inclusion and exclusion. Only when invisible processes of inclusion and exclusion are brought to the fore can we begin to redress them.

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Section I: Framing the Study

Chapter 1: Setting the context & research question(s)

A. How it all started

Have you ever entered a social space and experienced a surreal reality in which your world seems to turn upside down? I have. This is how I felt when I started studying in a small and predominantly white school in one of Canada's major universities. Before long, I began to feel that this was a space where I felt different and invisible. Along with this was an overwhelming sense of isolation. This is unusual for me because I do not recall ever feeling lonely in all my life. Not the least in school. I discovered my love for knowledge since my late teens, and I have loved school ever since. In all my higher education years before I came to study in the small program, I only remember that I went to classes (they were usually big), got inspired, and happily went on my way. It did not bother me that I was not seen or known by people. In fact, I have always cherished being alone. For one who is rarely bothered by being alone, I can tell something is 'not natural' about the kind of loneliness I experienced in the small program. There is no perfect description for it except it feels like an outsider, being alienated and invisible. Every day going to class, it was as if I was walking from a place where I felt 'normal', safe, and where I had more attention than I would like, into an 'uninhabitable' space (that's what it felt like) where I felt different and very vulnerable. It seemed surreal. I admit that I have led a very sheltered life in Canada (since my mid-teens), insulated in what I call the 'Chinese bubble' by family, friends, and a Chinese church community. Still, my

experience in the academy made no sense to my mind which had not yet been tampered by (at least not being conscious of) the lived experience of social difference and its implications for inclusion and exclusion. The experience shook my sense of reality; why such a different reality between school and the world I know?

Similar experiences followed me to my first field placement and my first job in a child welfare agency after graduation with a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW).

Coincidence? The same invisible boundaries would render me isolated. Not that I could articulate or perceive these boundaries, I only became aware of them when I bumped up against them and through their effects on me in a recurring pattern and outcome. Now I know how social structure organizes experience. But for many years, I can only view my experience individualistically, as if it is my own mishap or something is wrong with me; maybe I am an introvert or maybe I am socially inept. Had these boundaries presented themselves more overtly such as racism (i.e. skin colour as the signifier of difference), I might have seen the structural nature of these boundaries much sooner. Indeed, I was learning about racism and other social inequalities in my program. It made me wonder if skin colour constitutes those boundaries. But nothing is that obvious. Everything is nice and polite on the surface, except that I was made to feel different. There seems to be something more than skin colour in operation; something that is less decipherable, tangible or namable. Those boundaries are so masked that it is as if they do not exist. D.W. Sue and colleagues' works on racial microaggressions would say it is the "ambiguous and nebulous" character that defines the Asian experience of racism (Sue, Bucceri, Lin, Nadal, & Torino, 2007; Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007). It is an intangible

form of power that prevents those who are affected by it from naming it, and those who exercise it from owning up to it. It was several years of repeatedly bumping up against similar invisible boundaries in different social contexts before I come to question the nature of these boundaries and the spaces or territories that they separate. Was it really something about me that made me experience my new social space so differently? Or was my experience telling me something important about this new social landscape I had entered? As it happened, I began to know other students of Chinese descent who shared the same sense of invisibility and alienation. Some of these students were quite extrovert and sociable. So why were they still experiencing the same sense of exclusion? How do I make sense of this shared experience? Given that we were all so different as individual, the explanation had to be outside ourselves - as something not intrinsic to us but behind the patterns we bumped up against and within the academy itself. One thing is for sure, despite our differences as individuals, we did share one thing in common - we all look Chinese. So what reduces our difference into common experience as Chinese students in higher education? Not surprisingly, my desire to make sense of the experiences of Chinese students in higher education finds its way into this research.

Lest the term “Chinese” appears a “monolithic given” (Chow, 1998a, p. 24), I ought to clarify what I mean by “Chinese.” It has been pointed out that the idea of China as a unified or homogeneous culture is a product of modernity (Chow, 1998a; Chun, 1996). That is, it is more about promoting a certain political vision of a modern nation-state than about intrinsic substance. Having met diverse Chinese people in Canada myself, the diverse and complex nature of Chineseness is not lost on me. I realize that Chinese

cannot be defined at least in terms of geographic location or language. Chinese are dispersed in every corner of the world; I personally have relatives in South Africa. I knew Chinese people in North America who cannot speak, read or write Chinese, and our only commonality is our ‘Chinese look’. I also knew Chinese students from other South East Asian countries (e.g., Borneo) with whom I had to resort to communicate in our common language of English, because we each speak a different dialect of the Chinese language. A Hong Kong born Chinese myself, I am also very aware that many Chinese in Hong Kong consciously distance their identification with Chinese in mainland China, suggesting a chasm in culture. Just within the group of participants in this study, the diverse and complex nature of Chineseness is still apparent in the subtle ‘little qualifier’ participants attach to their identity in the demographic form they filled out. Instead of taking Chinese as a given, many participants find it necessary to put in such qualifier as Hong Kong people, Han, Taiwanese, Canadian-Taiwanese, Vietnamese-Chinese-Canadian. Even with the term Chinese-Canadian, some participants are very specific about the order whether it is Canadian-Chinese or Chinese-Canadian suggesting the order has specific meaning to them. The ‘little qualifier’ speaks to an ‘insider’ knowledge and consciousness of a ‘culture’ within ‘culture’. So by saying that my study draws on Chinese students’ experience, I know that I run the risk of implicating a form of Chinese essentialism. I have no intention to suggest this. Neither do I intend to unravel the complexity of what constitutes Chineseness. What I intend instead is to unravel the puzzle of why I and a number of other students, despite the diversity and complexity, who also identify themselves as Chinese have shared or contrasting experiences in the academy.

This puzzle is made even more intriguing for me by the fact that my own experience was occurring within a university that has a genuine and firm commitment to inclusion, and a school that has a focus on and commitment to anti-oppression. So what does that mean? It is not surprising that I am drawn to Bourdieu and his theory of culture that explains less tangible and elusive form of power.

B. Discovering Bourdieu & finding my way

When I set out in my PhD journey I began to look for a theoretical tool to make sense of the puzzle I have just explained. Initially I take the obvious path of exploring race-based concepts and literature. They are helpful in strengthening my structural understanding; how race as a construct shapes experiences and life chances. But at the same time, I also realize that race as a marker of difference is rooted in the historical encounter between the black and white, and the experience shaped by that history does not always strike a chord in me. In addition, what I experience seems more subtle than skin colour as a marker of difference. Although I did not know exactly what I was looking for in a conceptual tool, I knew I wanted something not so ‘black and white’.

Then I came across Bourdieu in a course in my first year in PhD. I immediately felt a connection. What I read about Bourdieu’s theory of culture speaks to a dimension of power that is mediated through ‘normalized’ disposition (i.e., being) and practices (i.e., doing), or what Bourdieu defines as culture. Those who are drawn to Bourdieu are drawn to the capacity of his “thinking tool” (Wacquant, 1989, p. 50), which includes field, habitus and capital (to be explained in Chapter 3), to make visible power relations in

seemingly trivial everyday-life ways of conducting life. A way of talking or carrying oneself, mundane practices such as playing golf and drinking whisky (Bourdieu, 1989a; Swartz, 2007), or even playing baseball with a dented baseball bat (Lundberg, 2007) can serve a powerful function in the reproduction of privilege and dominance. Bourdieu's "thinking tools" give me the instrument to grasp and speak about the intangible and often indescribable enactment of power relations. In Bourdieu's anti-dualistic framework, what is embodied (i.e., disposition and practices) is also structural, so that inclusion and exclusion is a simultaneously internal and external or objective and subjective phenomenon (Houston, 2002). In his framework I also find the language, symbolic violence, for a form of power and domination that is not necessarily actively or even consciously exercised, but the exclusionary effect it produces is no less 'violent'. All these ideas strike a strong chord in the way I understand my experience.

Since discovering Bourdieu, his theory has played a crucial role in shaping key components of my research process. It shapes the way I formulate the research objective, research question(s), methodology, sampling strategies, data collection and data analysis. So while the source of this thesis is rooted in experience, the research process is unmistakably theory-driven. Although I have in time integrated whiteness and postcolonial concepts to make Bourdieu's class-based theory adaptable to the racialized context of my study, Bourdieu remains the primary theoretical influence in this thesis. It is a crucial piece in my research puzzle.

C. Why an alternate understanding of inclusion and exclusion

Inclusion and exclusion are inter-related, so hereafter and as a reference, even when one term is used, the other is always implicated.

Even before I decided to do this study, whenever I had a chance to hear a story from an Asian student about alienation, it is the term exclusion, or its variations such as being excluded, that tends to be used more than other similar terms such as racism or (racial) discrimination. This indicates to me that this is the term that they think best fits their experiences. When I decide to do this study, I naturally go with what I understand as their preferred choice of wording. So exclusion becomes a form of an operative word that drives my inquiry.

In the education context, inclusion and exclusion are indeed buzz words in recent years. In Ontario, realizing equity, inclusion and the promise of diversity in education is the acknowledged vision of the Ministry of Education (The Ministry of Education, 2009). The postsecondary education sector also declares to share the same vision (The Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities, 2014). But policies around inclusion, as seen in the Ministry's priorities (The Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities, 2014; Wynne, 2014), reflect a predominant concern for education accessibility and attainment. And accessibility and attainment are usually operationalized in terms of tangible outcome measures as access rate, academic attainment rate, and graduation rate. Certainly the outcome measures paint a concrete picture of inclusion and exclusion, but at the same time it also leaves other less concrete parts of the picture unpainted. For instance, it would gloss over exclusion that occurs as a process and is latent in its effect – this would escape the capture by attainment rate or graduation rate. To give a brief concrete example, in one

of the stories I heard (more about the story will be reflected in the Finding and Analysis chapters), a Chinese student who was doing a Master's degree opted not to pursue a PhD degree because the Western education culture is not habitable to her. The eclipse of education aspiration due to an inhospitable education culture can certainly be seen as a form of exclusion, but this form of exclusion is so intangible and the effect so latent that it would not be reflected in the attainment or graduation rate. If inclusion is represented only in terms of numbers, then Chinese students in North America, who are hailed as the paragon of academic success, would never figure into the picture of exclusion. This is likely why, despite Chinese students' prominent presence in North America higher education campuses (Findlay & Kohler, 2010; N. Shah, 2015), there is little interest in research studies about inclusion and exclusion of Chinese students in higher education. Even among education research in general, similar concrete understanding of inclusion and exclusion persists through the quantitative form of studies that predominate educational research (more on this point in Chapter 4 Literature Context).

This tangible representation of inclusion and exclusion that focuses on visible and immediate outcome measures has little resemblance to the kind of inclusion and exclusion I experienced or what I was hearing informally from others. It is a kind that is less straight forward, and transpired mostly through micro processes or micro-level interactions. The questions for me are: Can the existing definition/understanding of inclusion and exclusion be expanded or broadened? Can there be a more nuanced articulation? Can a broadened and nuanced understanding of inclusion and exclusion add new possibilities to solutions

that can be translated into practice and policy? These questions form the backdrop of my inquiry.

D. Research question(s)

As explained earlier, this study is "all started" by me trying to make sense of my own experience of exclusion in the academy. Developing this understanding became more important when I realized that I was not alone in this experience; other Asian students experienced this too. With the 'discovery' of Bourdieu, I was introduced to his thinking tools that help me to grasp and articulate an imperceptible form of power in culture, a far more subtle manifestation of racial domination. This 'discovery' has, thus, shaped the objective of this study as: *To make visible the invisible working of culture as mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion in higher education through the experiences of Chinese students*. Because Bourdieu's framework of culture is developed on an anti-dualistic epistemological foundation, this objective is expected to implicate a form of inclusion and exclusion that is less tangible and straight forward than the way these terms are usually used in education context. It is a conception that closes the gap between micro and macro, objective and subjective, individual and structural, process and outcome. By using Bourdieu's framework of culture as my overarching conceptual framework, I mean I take higher education as a cultural field, and culture as a hidden dimension of power that organizes experiences in the field. Micro-level interactions, in fact 'little things', make up the critical bulk of material in the analysis, for embedded in these interactions lie the processes of culture-making. Indeed interaction is the nature of social life, and through

them, a lot of social meanings and power relations are transacted and (re)produced, hence the making of culture.

Under the stated objective above, the overarching question that guides this study is:

How do Chinese students' experiences in higher education, as viewed through Bourdieu's framework of culture, inform a more nuanced understanding of inclusion and exclusion?

I further break down the central question into two sub-questions to guide the research and analytic processes:

- 1) How are Chinese students' experience of higher education in Canada to be understood using the Bourdieusian framework of culture?
- 2) What can we draw from a Bourdieusian analysis of Chinese students' experiences in Canadian higher education, to inform a more nuanced understanding of inclusion and exclusion?

E. Outline of thesis

I organize this thesis in four major sections. **SECTION I, Framing the Study**, contains four chapters. In this **Chapter 1 Setting the Context and Research Question(s)**, I provide a synopsis of my 'thinking' journey that leads to this study and its research question(s). In **Chapter 2, Literature Context**, I survey the literature landscape relating to the specific context of Chinese higher education students in Western countries as well as literature pertaining to the broad context of racial relations. I identify the theoretical

gaps in the surveyed literature as a set up for Chapter 3. Chapter 3 and 4 relate to the theoretical context. In **Chapter 3 Opting for a Bourdieu-Informed Notion of Culture**, I lay out the ways I see Bourdieu can answer to the theoretical gaps explored in the literature in chapter 2. In **Chapter 4 Extending Bourdieu to Racialized Context**, I discuss how I extend Bourdieu’s class-based theory to the racialized context of my study. **SECTION II, Methodology, Methods, Locating the Researcher**, contains three chapters. In **Chapter 5, A Bourdieu-Informed Methodological Framework**, I locate my study among research that draws on Bourdieu, and then explain my thinking journey that leads to the current methodological framework that draws on two methodological traditions in order to be consistent with the dialectic epistemological foundation of Bourdieu’s theory. **Chapter 6 Methods**, spells out the mechanics or methods used in accordance to the methodological framework set out in the previous chapter. **Chapter 7, Locating the Researcher**, discusses how I locate myself as a researcher of this study. **SECTION III, Findings and Analysis**, contains four chapters. From **Chapter 8 to Chapter 11**, each chapter discusses the different major themes emerged from the study, and how I engage these themes with Bourdieu. The four chapters are titled as follows:

Chapter 8: Making the logic of the field visible: capital as currency to play the academic game

Chapter 9: Making the logic of the field visible: cultural capital as “unwritten rules” of the game

Chapter 10: Making the logic of the field visible: habitus as embodied capital

Chapter 11: Making the logic of the field visible: social capital as hidden capital

Each of the four chapters makes visible an aspect of how power functions to reproduce inclusion/exclusion in the higher education context. Finally, **SECTION IV, Discussion and Future Research**, consists of two chapters. In **Chapter 12, Towards a Nuanced Understanding of Inclusion and Exclusion**, I draw from the previous four chapters to nuance our understanding of inclusion and exclusion, and discuss how this understanding can broaden the conversation addressing inclusion and exclusion. In **Chapter 13 Thoughts on Future Research**, I share my thoughts about what I could have done differently and ideas to build on this study.

Chapter 2: Literature context

Introduction: The benign usage of culture & the explanatory limitation of race

During the time I was looking into literature around my research topic about inclusion and exclusion and Chinese students' experience in Western countries, I was also developing my understanding of Bourdieu. My developing understanding of Bourdieu's framework of culture made me pay particular attention to the notion of culture – how it is treated in this literature and how it shapes students' and researchers' analysis of Asian students' experience in the academy. The bodies of literature that I surveyed provide me with clarity about the identity of my thesis; they help me see a theoretical gap in literature relating to my research topic. The gap I see surrounds the notion of culture and the explanatory limitation of race in capturing Asian experience. In this chapter, I discuss three bodies of literature as a backdrop for my opting for a Bourdieusian notion of culture in the next chapter, Chapter 3.

In the following three sections of this chapter, I explore one body of literature in each section. The first body of literature I explore relates to cultural diversity and inclusion in higher education. This literature has a strong focus on teaching practices or pedagogies, and contains views that vary according to the analyses that inform practices. What I find in the analyses contained in this literature, culture is widely recognized (implicitly and explicitly) as barrier to inclusion, and while some of this literature exposes power dynamics, many more take a less critical route seeing culture as traits and values. Moreover the arguments in this literature tend to be informed by educators' experiences and perspectives rather than those of the students. I contrast this literature with the focus

of my thesis which takes culture as mediator of power relations and centers on students' perspectives. The second body of literature examines studies relating to Asian students' experiences of Western higher education. I point out how predominantly this literature is underpinned by the apolitical discourse of culture mentioned above, and takes a psycho-social approach to analysis. But unlike the previous body of literature, the apolitical discourse of culture, rather than being manifested in educators' practices, is manifested in students' (mostly international students or first generation immigrants) inward gaze, focusing on their personal responsibility to cope and achieve cultural adaptation. I suggest the benign understanding of culture in these two bodies of literature is an important factor why there is a relative absence of literature links exclusion and Asian students in higher education together. The last and final body of literature examined in this chapter pertains to race relations. I point out how the black and white paradigm that underpins the racial discourse leaves a gap in adequately capturing Asian experiences. I show how my adaptation of Bourdieu's framework of culture can fill this gap, and how race is indeed translated into cultural forms to mask the brazened face of racism.

A. Literature pertaining to cultural diversity and inclusion in higher education

I name this first body of literature as cultural diversity and inclusion in higher education because the literature shares a common focus of responding to the growing cultural diversity within Western higher education. Racialized students (including Chinese students) are implicated in this literature, and therefore researching Chinese students' experiences in higher education consistently leads to this literature. This

literature is given rise by the increasing influx of international and immigrant students from diverse cultural backgrounds to Western countries, of which Chinese students play a predominant part. Since the 1980s, Western countries, particularly the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand, have been actively recruiting students from overseas (Gill, 2007; Williams & Guinier, 2008). Coupled with the already steady influx of immigrants, it has been observed that the face of higher education in Western countries is marked by unprecedented diverse populations (Ituarte & Davies, 2007; Thom, 2010). Whether it is for the purpose of sustaining a lucrative business (N. Campbell & Zeng, 2006; New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2006; The Economist, 2003; Thom, 2010; Waters, 2008; Z. Zhang & Brunton, 2007), or for well-meaning or social justice reasons, the language of inclusive or “internationalizing” higher education is of high currency in recent years.

This literature shares a common language of cross-cultural, inter-cultural, multi-cultural, and more recently the language of “internationalization” of higher education (E. Jones, 2010; Thom, 2010; Trahar, 2011). Indeed, the internationalization of higher education is the current ‘buzz word’ that signals an attention in cultural diversity and inclusion. Examples are “internationalization of campus” (Thom, 2010), “internationalisation of the learning environment” (Jepson, Turner, & Calway, 2002), “internationalization of the curricula and inclusive pedagogical approaches” (Harrison & Peacock, 2010). At McMaster University, the institution I am in, the internationalization of higher education is evident in the university’s Forward With Initiative (FWI) initiative in “building inclusive community” (President's Advisory Committee on Building an

Inclusive Community (PACBIC), 2009). The increase of “internationalization” is being taken as an indicator of FWI progress. The high currency of “internationalization” is also evident in the recent role taken by the president of the university as the chair of the Board of Directors of the Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE) (Balch, 2015).

The literature relating to cultural diversity and inclusion in higher education commonly comes from Western educators or researchers with a strong pedagogical focus. This focus can be captured in such language as critical pedagogy or teaching for inclusion (Harrison & Peacock, 2010; Palfreyman & McBride, 2007; Prenger, 1999; Trahar, 2011), cross-cultural/multicultural or inclusive education (A. Jones & Jenkins, 2007; Trahar, 2011; Weiss, 2005), and “internationalization” of higher education (Harrison & Peacock, 2010; Jepson et al., 2002; E. Jones, 2010; Thom, 2010; Trahar, 2011). This pedagogical focus inarguably has generated conscientious and innovative teaching practices that are influential in reshaping classroom dynamics to redress unequal power relations. But at the same time, the pedagogical focus also tends to lend itself to an individualistic focus rather than the wider teaching/learning culture. Examples of this individualistic focus are such as educators’ personal awareness and reflexive teaching practices (Haigh, 2008; Sanderson, 2007; Trahar, 2010) and “internationalisation of the academic self” (Sanderson, 2007, p. 276).

Within the body of literature relating to cultural diversity and inclusion in higher education, the term culture figures prominently as marker of difference and hurdle to inclusion (Doherty & Singh, 2007; Harrison & Peacock, 2010; A. Jones & Jenkins, 2007; Manathunga, 2007; Palfreyman & McBride, 2007; Thom, 2010). The term also is key in

shaping the different analyses that inform the different pedagogical views/strategies in this literature. That is, the difference in pedagogical views/strategies can always be traced back to how the concept of culture is taken up. In some, culture is taken up as ‘content’, such as traits and styles (e.g., J. F. Jones, 1999; Yan & Berliner, 2009) and “fixed” (Sakamoto, 2007, p. 108). It is manifested in the way cultural difference is seen as a valued resource to be harnessed for mutual benefit in inter-cultural learning and development (Harrison and Peacock, 2010; Thom, 2010). Accordingly pedagogical strategy tends to be articulated in terms of attending to “inter-cultural communication” (Jones, 1999, p. 243) or “cultural transition...culture learning...sociocultural adjustment” (Kashima & Loh, 2006, p. 472). Culture here tends to take on the sense of the essentialization of the ‘other’. To other writers, this view is “fantasy” (Jones and Jenkins, 2007, p. 133) and reflects an uncritical optimism that cultural difference and cultural diversity will naturally translate into the development of transformative cross-cultural understandings and knowledge (e.g., E. Jones, 2010). Those holding this latter view take a more critical or politicized view of culture in that culture is dynamic, unstable, fluid, and constantly in the process of becoming (Bannerji, 2000; bell hooks, 1990; C. E. James, 2003; Pon, 2009; Sakamoto, 2006, 2007; Tsang, 2001; Yon, 2000). They pay attention to social dynamics and power relations (e.g., colonial relation) inside and outside of classroom (e.g., Ferber & Storrs, 1995; Goebel & Hall, 1995; Ituarte & Davies, 2007; Palfreyman & McBride, 2007). For example, a call for “a radical shift in university culture” (Thom, 2010, p.156), to confront power dynamics so as “not to reproduce hierarchical relations in our classroom” (Ferber and Storrs, 1995, p. 45), and to attend to

how social dynamics may re-enact hierarchies due to historic oppressive relations such as cultural imperialism (Goebel and Hall, 1995; Palfreyman and McBride; Jones and Jenkins, 2007). There are even sporadic pieces of analysis within this latter perspective that carry a strong Bourdieusian resonance but without acknowledging an explicit Bourdieusian lens. In those analyses, exclusion is found to have intangible expressions but nonetheless have tangible impact in academic achievement or outcome. For example, Ituarte and Davies (2007), using the concept of social boundaries and identity formation theory, show how “perceptions of inclusivity” (p. 81) impact learning to shape academic achievement. The authors draw attention to micro processes, that is, the interactions between marginalized groups and dominant culture within higher education, and “how individuals' perceptions of themselves and others shape their campus experiences in ways which may influence their educational achievement” (p. 74). Here exclusion does not manifest itself in tangible or blatant form, but rather in more subtle and intangible expression such as “perception of inclusivity”. This resonates with the Bourdieusian idea that inclusion and exclusion is indeed both an internal and external phenomenon (Houston, 2002), and that structure of inclusion and exclusion can be mediated through the structure of perception (cf. habitus) to impact on academic achievement.

Another thing to note in this literature is that it tends to come from educators’ perspectives and experiences rather than those of the students. There is, however, literature that does focus on student perspectives, and of particular relevance to this study are studies of Asian students’ experience in Western higher education.

B. Studies of Asian students' experience of Western higher education

This is a body of literature that consists of studies of Asian students' experience in higher education. Many come in the form of graduate theses done by Asian students themselves who are mostly international or immigrant students, with also a considerable amount coming from education researchers. A common perspective found in this literature reflects a version of the individualistic understanding of culture as traits and fixed (discussed above in Section A). This perspective is particularly prominent among the graduate theses done by Asian students themselves, reflecting a strong tendency for 'inward gaze' than 'outward gaze'. Culture in this literature is more likely to be used in terms of cultural attributes of Asian societies such as reticence and passivity (e.g., Holmes, 2005; J. F. Jones, 1999; S. Kim, 2006; Liberman, 1994; Xu, 2003; Yan, 2008; Yan & Berliner, 2009) or in terms of language issues (e.g., Wang, 2002; C. Yeh & Inose, 2002; Y. Yeh, 2000). This understanding of culture drives the analysis toward individual responsibility, cultural adaptation and coping strategies. This literature is helpful but troubling at the same time. Helpful because it opens a window to see students' experiences, often from students' perspectives. It reveals the students' resilience in the face of challenges and adversities studying in the predominantly Western culture. Troubling because it reveals a tendency among Asian students to individualize experience instead of critically engaging experience with the education context in which experience takes place. For example, the theme of alienation that permeates through these studies may be indicative of exclusion, but the predominant interpretation is the need for students to adapt, cope, and overcome with personal strength. This predominant perspective or

analysis keeps context hidden and unnamed, giving little insights into the way students interact with the Western education culture and how that may contribute to students' experience of exclusion.

There are indeed writings within this literature that trouble the structural context that contributes to students' experience (e.g., J. Campbell & Li, 2008; Diangelo, 2006; Goldstein & Pon, 2003; Hsieh, 2007; Pon, Goldstein, & Schecter, 2003; Wagner & Shahjahan, 2015; Zhou, Knoke, & Sakamoto, 2005). They show a relational perspective that focuses less on cultural characteristics than on the context with which those characteristics interact. Studies with a relational perspective locate problems in the power (or norm) that defines the difference instead of on the defined difference itself. They show that Asian students' problem is only problem when they are bumping up against the Western context. For example, Pon, Goldstein & Schecter (2003) discusses the "silence" of the Cantonese-speaking immigrant students from Hong Kong in the classrooms of a high school in Toronto in terms of the construction of silence by the Western vocal and interactional learning culture. Zhou, Knoke & Sakamoto (2005), when talking about Asian students' reticence in Western classrooms, argue that only focusing on Asian students' [cultural] characteristics "without considering aspects of the educational context with which those characteristics interact may over-simplify and distort the mechanism underlying their silence in the classroom" (p. 287). And Wagner and Shahjahan (2015) note, in one of their scenarios about "embodied teaching" (p. 244), that students from "minoritized groups and/or international students...found their voices unheard" in a learning context that privileges "verbal interaction" (p. 249). The authors discuss how a

nonverbal communication activity was used (as part of the principle of “embodied teaching”) to reflect with students that their learning context is “predicated on particular cultural worldviews that privilege particular norms and values over others” (p. 249).

These writings make visible the relational context students are in that impact on experience. However, these writings are the exception rather than the norm.

The tendency of understanding Asian students’ experience in terms of cultural adaptation and coping strategy is to me one of the main reasons for the relative absence of literature about the marginalization or exclusion of Asian students in higher education. It is not that there is not enough interest to study Asian students in higher education. Rather, there is a lack of attention or recognition in linking Asian students’ experience with inequality or exclusion.

Studies about the exclusion of Asian students does not figure prominently in educational discourses. Unlike literature relating to anti-racism education based on black students’ experience (Dei, 1996, 1999, 2000a; Dei & Calliste, 2002; bell hooks, 1994; Karumanchery, 2005) and literature relating to colonialism and education based on Native students’ experiences (Allan, 2006; Dei, 2000b; Diversi & Morreira, 2009; Gair, Miles, & Thomson, 2005; Kovach & al., 2015; McNally, 2004; Weaver, 2000), which trouble the social conditions that structure experience, literature relating to Asian students’ experience largely turns an inward gaze, and focuses on personal ethics and responsibilities. Most do not ask questions about racism or exclusion. Instead, most ask questions more related to cross-cultural stress, coping, adjustment, and identity formation. These studies document micro-level-interactions and processes that implicate exclusion,

yet fall short of explicitly naming it or explicating the relationship between subjective experience and objective social structures. For instance, Yan and Berliner (2009) documents Chinese students being alienated and regarded less favourably by both professors and peers alike because they display behaviour that have negative meaning in the Western education culture; behaviour that is labelled “indirect communication” and “verbal passivity” (p. 949). Instead of critically engaging the alienation with the context that imposes the negative meaning, it turns an inward gaze and focuses on what services can be provided to help students better adapt. Similar individualistic approach is also reflected in works that analyse students’ experience in terms of inter-cultural adaptation relating to psycho-social issue (Chan, 2007; Gill, 2007; Mickle, 1985; Shi, 2007; Shu, 2009; Thorstenson, 2001; Xu, 2003; Yan, 2008; Yan & Berliner, 2009; C. Yeh & Inose, 2002; Y. Yeh, 2000), identity issue (e.g. Chen, 1998; Doherty & Singh, 2007; Hsieh, 2006; Kashima & Loh, 2006; Qin, 2000), and language issues (Holmes, 2005; S. Kim, 2006; Noels, Pon, & Clement, 1996; Wang, 2002; C. Yeh & Inose, 2002; L. Zhang, 2006). As a result, the implications of these studies also largely reside in the individual rather than structural, such as to improve support services to help students to adapt and to improve cross-cultural experience (Kashima & Loh, 2006; Shu, 2009; Yan, 2008; Yan & Berliner, 2009), to better prepare student for the cross-cultural challenges before coming to host countries (S. Kim, 2006; Liberman, 1994; Thorstenson, 2001; Wang, 2002), and counseling (C. Yeh & Inose, 2002). There is an obvious disconnect between the subjective and the ‘objective’, the individual and structural, or the internal and the external among this literature.

Besides the largely individualistic analysis of Asian students' experience, there are two other reasons that account for the understated marginalization and exclusion of Asian students in the academe. First, Asian students are often hailed as an example of academic success for racial minority groups. The relatively recent "Too Asian" (Findlay & Kohler, 2010) incident by the Maclean's magazine in late 2010 is predicated on this representation. In the article "Too Asian: Some frosh don't want to study at an Asian university" published by Maclean's, the authors suggest that white students opt not to attend universities populated by too many Asian students (hence the title "Too Asian") to avoid competition with 'over-achievers'. The viewpoint expressed in the article capitalizes on the stereotypical representation of Asian students as over-achievers, perpetuates the myth of model minority (Archer & Francis, 2006; Chou, 2008; Nakanishi, 1995; Pon, 2000; Wing, 2003), paints a one dimensional picture of Asian's education experience, and renders invisible other ways that Asian students experience marginalization. For example, Wing (2003) did a sub-study of Asian American students in his research that looks into racial disparity in student achievement at an urban high school in Berkley. The sub-study goes beyond looking at test scores and grades (i.e., tangible measures). The author notes that Asian students demonstrate a high academic profile on average, but face difficulties and failures in ways rendered invisible by widespread acceptance of the model minority myth. While there are studies, scarce as they are, that document exclusionary experiences of Asian students (e.g., Diangelo, 2006; Goldstein & Pon, 2003; Hsieh, 2007; J. F. Jones, 1999; H. S. Kim & Markus, 2005; Pon

et al., 2003; Wing, 2003; Yan & Berliner, 2009; Zhou et al., 2005), this picture is significantly paled by the ‘success’ painted about Asian students.

Second, the invisibility of Asian students’ experience of exclusion is also due to the subtle and intangible forms of exclusion they experience (cf. Diangelo, 2006; Goebel & Hall, 1995; Sue, Bucceri, et al., 2007; Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007; Thorstenson, 2001). D.W. Sue and colleagues study a kind of racism they call “racial microaggressions”. It is a kind of racism in everyday life that is not only too ambiguous and nebulous in character for those impacted by it to name it, but is also too “outside the level of awareness” (Sue, Bucceri, et al, 2007, p. 74) of the perpetrators for them to own up to it. The authors suggest that this ambiguous and unintentional character best defines Asian American’s experiences of racism (Sue, 2005; Sue, Bucceri, et al., 2007). I would also contend that the ambiguous and unintentional character of power is another reason, apart from Asian students’ strong personal ethics, behind why many of the studies (particularly the graduate thesis research conducted by Asian students themselves) discussed at the beginning of this Section B failed to name power relations. How can you name something when you cannot decipher what it is at the first place? As we shall see later in the Findings and Analysis chapters, this same nebulous and ambiguous character also defines the experience of some participants’ experience of exclusion.

If the benign usage of culture, as I pointed out in both this Section B and the previous Section A, does not do justice in explaining Asian students’ higher education experience, in the next Section C, I also suggest the same for the concept of race.

C. Literature pertaining to race relations

In this body of literature, I refer to the very broad category that addresses the marginalization of racialized groups in the Western world. This includes a wide range of literature that addresses anti-racism, anti-oppression, anti-colonialism, postcolonialism, and decolonization. It is not within the scope of this thesis to render a thorough review of this vast body of literature. I only intend to draw attention to what I consider a theoretical gap in this literature in order to situate my adaptation of Bourdieu's framework of culture. I point out the predominant black and white paradigm that underpins the race concept has limitation in explaining Asian experience, and that culture is more central in organizing Asian students' experiences of inclusion and exclusion.

In Section B above, I point out the relative void of literature that addresses exclusionary experience of Asian students. This absence is particularly stark given Asian student is one of the largest, if not the largest, racial minority groups of students in many of the university campuses in Western countries (Institute of International Students, 2015). Besides the reasons I already gave in Section B, this absence is also part and parcel of the black and white paradigm of racial relations that dominates literature pertaining to racial relations (Lawrence & Dua, 2005; S. Lee, 1996; Omi & Takagi, 1996; Pon, 2000, 2005; Reynolds, Rivzi, & Dolby, 2009; Sue, Bucceri, et al., 2007; Young, 1990).

The concept of race as known in the vast body of literature mentioned above is rooted in the history of the encounter between white European and the black people, and therefore carries specificity of racism that is unique to this history. As Dominelli (2008) explains, historically "race and racism are constructed during interactions between black

and white people, and therefore carry specificity of racism” (p.10). Along similar vein, some scholars point out that racial discourse is historically and contextually situated, and therefore different racial encounters would elicit different racial dynamics and mediate different experience and outcome of racism (Dominelli, 2008; Omi & Takagi, 1996; Reynolds et al., 2009). For example, Reynold and colleagues (2009) point out, “there is not a uniform pattern of exclusion, marginalization and oppression...racism is experienced differently by different groups in places with different historical and political trajectories” (p. 364).

Historically, Chinese’s racial relation with North American societies is positioned in what some may call the “in-between” space that is neither black nor white (J. Lee & Lutz, 2005; Omi & Takagi, 1996; Pon, 2005). This non-black-and-white “in-between” space should complicate the understanding of the racial dynamics Chinese experiences in Western societies if viewing only through a race lens. For one thing, the North American societies have to contend with the contradictory stereotypes of Chinese: the olden days China town ghetto residents; the 1980s’ rise of influential entrepreneurs and affluent Chinese communities along with the ascendancy of Asian Pacific Rim capital (Pon, 2005); and the contemporary image of Asian as “model minority” (Archer & Francis, 2006; Chou, 2008; Nakanishi, 1995; Pon, 2000; Wing, 2003). This different history needs necessarily complicate racial dynamics that cannot be adequately accounted for by a direct transposition of the race concept that is based on a black and white paradigm of racial relations. Omi and Takagi (1996) suggest that a direct transposition of the “bipolar model of race” obscures experiences and patterns of other racial encounters (p. 155).

Along similar vein, Sue, Bucci, Lin, Nadal and Torino (2007) also observe, “as a result [of black and white paradigm], the psychological needs of Asian Americans arising from racism are often overshadowed by the experiences of Whites and Blacks, and research findings for these racial groups are often assumed to speak to the experiences of Asian Americans as well” (p. 72).

Ideas do not come from a social and historical vacuum. The ideas of race and racism are no exception; they are historically and contextually situated. An automatic transposition of the race concept to all racialized groups is to fit everyone into the race box. No doubt there are similarities in encounters with racism and exclusion among racialized groups; however, the ideologies which racialized them and shaped their experiences are not identical in content. The limitation of race to explain Asian experience calls for additional thinking tools.

Concluding thought:

Culture is a ubiquitous term in the first two bodies of literatures reviewed in this chapter, but it is rarely taken up as a site of critical analysis to elucidate power relations that contribute to student’s experience. Mullaly (2010) calls culture as the “poor cousin of race” (p. 63). A number of scholars also recognize that not enough attention has been given to the cultural dimension of oppression (Agger, 1992; Sakamoto, 2007; Thompson, 1997, 2002; Young, 1990). Thompson (1997; 2002), for instance, in his PCS (personal/individual, cultural, structural/institutional) model of analysis acknowledges culture as the intermediate level of oppression, mediating the personal and the structural,

but is also the intermediate link that often gets overlooked. I round up the chapter with the third body of literature to further suggest the limitation of the concept of race which is taken almost as a given in explaining any racial relation, and set the stage for my opting for an alternate thinking tool I find in Bourdieu's framework of culture in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Opting for a Bourdieu-informed notion of culture

A. Culture: An under-explored dimension of power

In Chapter 2, I suggested from the three bodies of literature that culture is perpetually not being recognized and used as a dimension of power to understand Asian students' experience, while race acts as the default concept in literature relating to white and non-white relations. The under-recognition and under-utilization of the concept of culture could be ascribed to some apparent slippages and trepidation surrounding its usage. First, terms attached with culture tend to invite heavy critiques, and the critiques often relate to the way it is taken up as a static notion (discussed earlier in Chapter 2) that lends itself to essentializing culture and opens up to various problems. For example, Leonard (1997) points out that the static (or modern) notion of culture is problematized by the postmodern emphasis of difference for its "essentialist ideas" (Leonard, 1997, p. 61), and essentializing culture has strong implication to inequality in social welfare policy, such as distinguishing universal need and specific need often predicates on an essentialized notion of culture. An essentialized notion of culture has also been used to justify racial domination and segregation as in the idea of "cultural racism" or "new racism"; instead of justifying subordination on the basis of skin colour, "cultural racism" justifies on the basis of "cultural characteristics" or "certain form of existing" (Durrheim & Dixon, 2000, p. 93-97). Culture in both examples carries oppressive connotation and is used to reinforce oppressive relations. Another notion associated with culture that invites heavy critiques is cultural competence. Culture competence is considered by some as benchmark for cultural sensitive/anti-oppressive social work practice, while for others, its

essentializing usage serves to perpetuate oppressive relations (Dumbrill & Maiter, 1997; Lo & Stacey, 2008; Pon, 2009; Sakamoto, 2007; Tsang, 2001; Wong et al., 2003; Yee & Dumbrill, 2003). For example, Wong and colleagues (2003) point out that cultural competency is predicated on the construction of the homogenous ‘other’, which is a “colonial move” (Chandra Mohanty as cited in Wong et al., 2003, p. 152) to maintain the supremacy while also hide the implicit colonial power of the Western culture. Along similar vein, Tsang (2001) also points out that culture is not a neutral descriptor, and by “assuming uniformity that may not exist” (p. 238), social work practitioners put clients in disadvantaged position and re-inscribe dominance and subordination. As critiques of culture or terms using culture abound, an adoption of culture as a conceptual tool could easily implicate oneself in perpetuating unjust social relations.

There is yet another trepidation about using culture. It is its lack of precise meaning. Culture is an everyday term that one would use often with no need of explanation (as if the meaning is self-evident or too ‘common-knowledge’ to need defining). This is by and large the case in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. But at the same time one would have difficulty explaining the term when asked, even among scholars. The term evokes such diverse and sometimes conflicting meanings that one simultaneously seems to know and not to know what it means. It is regarded as one of the most complicated words in the English language (Raymond Williams as cited in Pon, 2009, p. 65), “exceptionally complex” and “elusive” (Yon, 2000, p. 7), notoriously ambiguous (Sardar & Van Loon, 2004), and a “slippery concept” (Allin & Selwood, 2004, p. 3). At times, culture is used in an anthropological sense or what some call the attribute

perspective of culture (e.g., Pon, 2009; Yon, 2000). As already discussed, this understanding takes “culture as a set of stable and knowable attribute such as beliefs, morals, customs, capabilities, and habits” (Yon, 2000, p. 7). This usage perhaps is the most common one found in everyday conversations. To those who hold a critical perspective of culture (i.e., culture is power laden and not static), this anthropological usage runs the risk of essentializing/stereotyping a group of people. Other common usages similarly depict culture as fixed and stable entity. For example, culture as used in the archeological sense as those associated with ancient artifacts, museums, and galleries, or as used in the context of social class as in high culture. The focus on culture as fixed content (i.e., the defined) obscures the power that defines the content.

There are alternate perspectives that recognize that culture and power are inextricably connected. These perspectives recognize that culture is a dynamic process that is constantly “becoming” (Pon, 2009) and “always in process” (C. E. James, 2003, p. 25). They recognize that culture making is a social process, and therefore inherently political (Apple, 1997; Pon, 2009; Sakamoto, 2007; Yon, 2000). Along the same vein, Arber (1999) said, culture is a product of history, “negotiated and renegotiated within processes of cultural syncretism” (p. 321). This process of negotiation and renegotiation is power saturated, and therefore culture as a product of history is inevitably also a product of power struggle. Cultural Studies is among the critical perspectives that centres and examines the power embeddedness of culture (Agger, 1992; Mullaly, 2010; hooks, 1990; Sardar and Van Loon, 2004). Considered progressive (Sardar and Van Loon, 2004; Mullaly, 2010), exciting (Agger, 1992; Sardar and Van Loon, 2004; hooks, 1990), and

“compelling” (hooks, 1990, p. 125) scholarship, Cultural Studies’ distinctive intellectual edge is to recognize culture as a site of oppression and to expose cultural power in all its ubiquitous forms (Sardar and Van Loon, 2004).

But even among critical scholarship as the above, culture is variously understood and has no unified meaning. There are such diverse expressions as a “lived phenomenon” (Mullaly, 2010, p. 93), the “lifeworlds of people” (Agger, 1992, p. 178), a way of being and living (Twine, 1997), practices (Sardar and Van Loon, 2004; hooks, 1990), action (Leonard, 1997; hook, 1990), “systems of meaning” (Clifford and Marcus as cited in hooks, 1990, p. 126), norms (Jenkins, 2014; B. Shah, Dwyer, & Modood, 2010) and so on. This posts confusion for one who seeks guidance in adapting culture as a conceptual tool. Given these seemingly endless and diverse meanings, little wonder that culture remains relatively under-explored and under-utilized in critical research studies, despite perpetual call to explore it as a source of oppression (Agger, 1992; Mullaly, 2010; Sakamoto, 2007; Thompson, 1997, 2002; Young, 1990).

B. A Bourdieu-informed usage of culture

Because there is no unified definition for the term culture, where it is used, particularly as a theoretical concept, it needs to be clearly defined; it can never assume a self-evident meaning. In this thesis I adopt Bourdieu’s conception of culture. Bourdieu’s conception of culture perhaps is best understood as a framework rather than just a (stand-alone) concept or notion. It is a framework because culture would have no meaning apart from all the other elements (e.g., capital, habitus and field) that make up the core of

Bourdieu's theory. That is, culture can only be understood in the context of the interconnection and interdependence of all core concepts that forms the Bourdieusian framework. I adopt Bourdieu first and foremost for the capacity of his 'thinking tools' that helps me to grasp and articulate invisible forms of power that structure inclusion and exclusion. But I also adapt Bourdieu in such a way as to underscore two of his defining characters (to be explained later) to circumvent the trepidations discussed above about using culture.

Opting for a Bourdieusian culture by no means implies a complete departure from the diverse meanings that make up the ambiguity of culture explored earlier. In fact, the Bourdieusian culture consists of meanings in well-known definitions of culture that include "a signifying system" (Raymond William as cited in Leonard, 1997, p. 61), "learned behavior" (Margaret Mead as cited in Sardar & Van Loon, 2004, p. 5), and high culture. But these meanings do not define Bourdieu's conception of culture. In what follows, I outline what I see as the two defining characters of Bourdieu's cultural framework that inform my study. The first character is culture as a defining power. This focus of culture diverts the danger from representing or essentializing a culture to scrutinizing the power that defines the 'other. The second character is culture as a two-way phenomenon underscoring the relational and dialectic character of culture making. This focus shifts culture as static to culture as a process and product of power and resistance that is "always in a state of flux" and "continuously being invented" (Leonard, 1997, p. 65).

CULTURE AS A DEFINING POWER: In the most basic form of the Bourdieusian culture, culture is a signifying system of meanings and values that provide the very grounds for communication and interaction. Culture as such structures actions and behaviours, and that is why many definitions of culture are often associated with traits and behaviours. But the Bourdieusian culture also goes beyond traits and behaviours or the ‘defined content’ to the processes that define the ‘content’. In the Bourdieusian framework, culture is both a process and product of struggle, or what he calls “symbolic struggle”, a struggle to get to name or define the “legitimate view”, or “legitimate vision”, or “legitimate mode of perception” of the social world (Bourdieu, 1985, p. 730-731), and this power to name and define is symbolic power. Wacquant (1993b) states that the central thrust of Bourdieu’s work is to “‘bring back’ the symbolic dimension of domination...his [Bourdieu’s] entire oeuvre may be read as a quest to explicate the specificity and potency of symbolic power” (p.1). Bourdieu considers symbolic power the ultimate power because the power to name or define is also the power to construct reality (Bourdieu, 1987). As a symbolic struggle, culture is a site of power struggle and resistance, and therefore is inherently political and a dynamic process (as opposed to the “content” view that culture is fixed and static). As some observe, rather than devoid of political content, culture is an expression of it (Houston, 2002; Lareau & Weininger, 2003; Swartz, 1997); and rather than static, culture is a process of constant becoming (C. E. James, 2003; Pon, 2009). In focusing on culture as both process as well as product (of symbolic struggle) rather than ‘content’, we shall see that cultural capital is among the central concepts (along with habitus and field) in the analysis of this study. Cultural

capital encapsulates the process of power struggle and legitimation that converts culture into capital (Stampnitzky, 2006), and that is why sometimes cultural capital is expressed in the term “legitimate culture” (Silva, Warde, & Wright, 2009).

To further elucidate, culture as adapted from Bourdieu in this thesis is not only a symbolic system of meanings (encoded in actions/behaviours e.g., hand-shake) as understood in some well-known definitions of culture. His focus is on culture as a dimension of power. His conception of culture focuses on the inherent hierarchy of values in any system of meaning (Bourdieu, 1977; LiPuma, 1993; Sardar & Van Loon, 2004) or what (Cronin, 1996) calls the “cultural schemes of classification” (p. 65). As process and product of symbolic struggle, culture is embedded with power relations that strive to define a hierarchy of values to sustain that system of meaning. As Bourdieu (1985) explains, the work of symbolic struggle is “the work of producing and imposing meaning”, hence the legitimate vision of the social world (p. 731-732). The relations of power that define a hierarchy of values that structure a social field is understood as the “logic of the field” (Grenfell, 2009, p. 20; Cronin, 1996, p. 65). Culture as such enables me to think beyond the defined to the power that defines (or the “logic of the field”). We shall see later that culture in the higher education context of this study is manifested in such ‘defined contents’ as language (e.g., accent), cultural disposition (e.g., quietness), or learning norm (e.g., assertiveness), but these ‘defined contents’ are only means to raise questions about the mechanism/processes that define and legitimize the value of these ‘defined contents’. So situating Chinese students’ experiences in the cultural field of Canadian higher education with its inherent relations of power, the Bourdieusian

framework of culture enables me to ‘ask the data’ about the relations of power that define particular features of culture as proper, legitimate, and normal. I have been prompted to consider the meaning systems that define certain qualities, behaviours, ways of interacting in higher education as legitimate and others as not – and thus to identify how experiences of inclusion and exclusion are structured. Bourdieu’s extensive education research aims to make visible the underpinning French hierarchy of class values in shaping the educational culture, which in turn shapes access and achievement. And although Bourdieu does not use the language of ‘power that defines’ as this thesis does, his explanation in terms of symbolic power (or symbolic capital or symbolic violence), in effect is a recognition and acknowledgment of a power that defines (or logic of the field) stemming from the dominant class. In Chapter 4 later, I will suggest that at least two governing logics of the field are in operation that structures students’ experiences - colonial relations and whiteness.

If we take culture as a system of meanings with an inherent hierarchy of values, and focus on the power that defines the hierarchy, it is not hard for us to see how such framework of culture can be adapted to conceptualize inclusion and exclusion. Any system of hierarchisation (or stratification system) serves inclusive and exclusive functions. It is bound to confer recognition to some and not others, at times it may even denigrate others. Lareau and Weininger (2003) acknowledge Bourdieu’s contribution to culture as a conceptual tool of social stratification this way, “thanks in large part to the legacy of Bourdieu, the premise that culture cannot be ignored in studies of stratification is now broadly accepted throughout much of sociology” (p. 598). Most of Bourdieu’s

prolific work is related to exposing education in the French society as the principle agent of the reproduction of class stratification (Moi, 1991; Swartz, 1997; Wacquant, 1993b), which is a form of exclusion along the social class line. There are scholarly works such as Garrett (2007a, 2007b), Houston (2002), Lamont and Lareau (1988), and Hillier and Rooksby (2002) that have drawn on Bourdieu to talk about the “culturally excluded”, “cultural oppression”, or “cultural and social exclusion”. There is a prominent body of literature that explicitly links cultural capital to exclusion in research (Allin & Selwood, 2004; Bennett & Savage, 2004; Grenfell, 2008b; Houston, 2002; Lamont & Lareau, 1988; Lareau & Weininger, 2003; Longden, 2004; Silva & Edwards, 2004; Silva et al., 2009; Stampnitzky, 2006). For example, among U.S. writers, Lamont and Lareau (1988) suggest that Bourdieu’s original focus in his early works is a form of “indirect exclusion” mediated through cultural capital, and they argue that cultural capital (which was developed in the French context) can be adapted to the American society so long as its distinctive “exclusivist functions” are preserved (p. 156, 161). In the U.K., Allin and Selwood (2004) explore the potential role of cultural capital in social inclusion policy to see if the concept might “provide a framework for the contribution of culture to the elimination of social exclusion” (p. 3). There are also numerous studies using select Bourdieusian concepts (or their combination) on subjects that implicate inclusion and exclusion, that is, subjects relating to the activation/reproduction or even disruption of social boundaries/hierarchies, such as: social positioning (Lan, 2011; Pluss, 2013; Samaluk, 2014; Weiss, 2005), norms (Jenkins, 2014; McKeever & Miller, 2004; B. Shah et al., 2010), choices (Barnes, 2009; Brooks, 2008; Glaesser & Cooper, 2014; Lehmann,

2007; Nora, 2004; Reay & Lucey, 2003), and reproduction of privilege/disadvantage based on differential access to resource (Nast & Blokland, 2014; Zimdars, Sullivan, & Heath, 2009). To mention some specific examples, Brooks (2008) uses habitus, cultural capital and social capital to show how access to and choice about higher education continue to be influenced by social class. Jenkins (2014) uses habitus, field and capital to show how hospital clothing norms are indeed informal signal of positioning and professional boundaries of authority. Samaluk (2014) uses Bourdieu's central concepts to explore "shades of whiteness", "hierarchy of acceptability", positioning and privilege/disadvantage for Central and Eastern Europe migrant works in a UK workplace. And finally, Nast and Blokland's (2014) study in a "social mix" school highlights class-crossing based on "setting-specific" characteristics, and shows how parents can cross class boundaries (sometimes intersection with racial/ethnic boundaries) and gain access to resources otherwise not available to them.

In this study, I take up the Bourdieusian conception of culture in such a way to underscore its defining power and exclusionary function inherent in that power. This focus engages with an increasing recognition in Bourdieu scholarship to explicitly link Bourdieu's framework to exclusion in research studies. The Bourdieusian culture in this study helps to set students' narratives of higher education against a symbolic system of meanings and values, and uncovers boundary mechanisms/signifiers that constitute their experiences of inclusion and exclusion.

CULTURE AS A TWO-WAY PHENOMENON: Bourdieu’s framework of culture is built on the anti-dualistic foundation of his theory (Wacquant, 2006). Reading Bourdieu gives one the feeling that one comes to understand oneself more, because human action (or habitus) is understood or elucidated within the objective structure (or field). It is also a reason that first draws me to his theory. It illuminates simultaneously social structure and cognitive structure (including those that are intersubjective, habitual, and unconscious), and the two structures stand in a dialectical (or inter-dependent) relationship – different yet mutually constitutive of each other (Bourdieu, 1981, 1989a; Wacquant, 1987; Wacquant, 1993b). There is no line between micro and macro, objective and subjective, structural and individual, or symbolic and material. Bourdieu calls such dichotomies the fallacy of “sterile oppositions” (Bourdieu, 1981, p. 305; see also Bourdieu, 1987, p. 1 and Wacquant, 1989, p. 26). His “anti-dualistic framework” (Wacquant, 2006) is a conscious attempt to disrupt this binary. He argues instead for a two-fold (anti-dualistic) reality based on habitus and field, which are two of the key concepts used in the analysis presented in this thesis. Bourdieu states, “social reality exists, so to speak, twice, in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside of agents” (Bourdieu in interview with Wacquant, 1987, p. 43). To think only in either dimension is what he calls a “substance” mode of thinking rather than a “process” or relational mode of thinking. This relational mode of thinking about culture is inextricably related to the character of culture as a defining power discussed above. The power struggle (or symbolic struggle) to define the system of meanings and values (or

culture) of a field is predicated on a dialectical relationship between habitus and field that is in a constant state of flux with power struggle and resistance.

An implication of understanding culture in the context of a two-fold reality is that we do not dichotomize ‘us’ and social structure. The self is always implicated in the reproduction of social structure and vice versa. Making social change is not only a matter of a transformation of social structure but also of the self, because the two are mutually constitutive. To Bourdieu, the self is resolutely also social (Bourdieu, 1989a; see also Bourdieu, 1985). Social relations of power make and are made by the individual (cf. Bourdieu, 1987), just as habitus is at once a structuring structure and a structured structure (Bourdieu, 1987; Houston, 2002; Postone, LiPuma, & Calboun, 1993). Therefore, we cannot separate culture as social structure and culture as embodied structure. As Agger (1992) observes, “culture is not separated from us. It is us” (p. 6); we are, in fact, culture. So in analysing a social phenomenon, Bourdieu’s framework leads not only to an analysis of external structure (or field) but also internal structure (i.e., habitus). For example, how people (i.e., the embodiment of culture) may react to the ‘other’ on the basis of cultural markers of difference to reinforce boundary of inclusion and exclusion. In the same way, the anti-dualistic framework of culture enables an analysis in this thesis that connects external and internal (or structural and cognitive or micro and macro) processes/mechanisms, as well as symbolic mechanism and material effect, based on the habitus-field dialectic. For example, it enables a connection between students’ perception of belonging/not fitting in (i.e., internal process based on habitus)

and the hierarchy of meanings and values that structures their education context (i.e., field), and how that may inform mechanisms of inclusion/exclusion.

Equally important, the habitus-field dialectic in connecting external and internal processes also at the same time foregrounds the non-active, unconscious, habitual participation (cf. habitus) of relations of power in reproducing the existing structure of the field, since habitus operates in a habitual and ‘semi-conscious’ mode (to be further explored in Chapter 4). In addition, the non-active/unconscious manifestation of power is often seen go hand in hand with the intangible manifestation of power embedded in a symbolic system of valuation (which confers recognition/status to some and denigrates others). For example, in this study, the intangible manifestation of the habitus-field dialectic foreground the political nature of habitual acceptance and imposition of learning norms (or learning culture), such as being vocal and assertive, which are embedded with signification that corresponds to the hierarchy of values (or relations of power) of the education field. And as such people can unwittingly reproduce social division simply by going about their everyday ‘being’ and ‘doing’. Many participants in this study, in fact, often qualify apologetically what bothers them as “little things” or too “psychological” as if too trivial to be mentioned, when indeed these “little things” are powerful mediators of social relations of power under the scrutiny an anti-dualistic conception of culture. This capacity “to reveal the secrets of social magic which hides in the most ordinary operations of the quotidian existence” is where the seduction of Bourdieu’s framework of culture lies (Bourdieu as cited and translated by Silva, 2006, p. 2). Those who are drawn to the Bourdieusian culture (or cultural capital) are often drawn to its capacity to make visible

structural relations of power mediated in everyday seemingly benign “little things”. In Lundberg (2007), the author is able to see a parallel between the “little” incident of her son’s dented bat in Little League baseball and the hurdles (or boundaries) that trip up first generation higher education students (the author’s research area). Like the first generation college/university students in her research, Lundberg (2007) sees her “account” of capital as “quite small” as a ‘first generation’ Little League baseball parent (p. 8). When her son’s dented bat is “deemed unworthy to be used in the game”, she finds her son felt “disqualified” himself (p. 10). She realizes that the support (including the crucial moral support) she needs to give her son (and herself as parent) does not exist in the rule book given to parents. Viewing her son’s experience through Bourdieu’s cultural capital as intangible form of resource, the author explicates the significant role of informal or unspoken rules of the baseball culture or game (i.e., rules outside the formal rule book but existing in seasoned players and their parents) in navigating a system (or field) that resembles a complex maze “replete with unwritten rules and punishment” (p. 10). These same ideas of ‘little things’, intangible power, and their connection to the reproduction of privilege are crucial to the understanding of this study.

In summary, for a study attuned to issues of power that examines Chinese students’ experience, it might seem logical to conduct a critical race analysis. But I find in Bourdieu’s framework of culture a more suitable set of ‘thinking tools’ to explain Chinese students’ experiences in this study. Bourdieu’s framework of culture widens the signification of difference beyond skin colour. In this thesis, I focus on the power that defines in Bourdieu’s notion of culture; the marker of difference is less about skin colour

than the power of a given field to define the ‘other’ (according to the “logic of the field”). This focus means that the marker of difference can be anything that fortifies the “interests” of a given field (Bourdieu, 1981; Grenfell, 2008a; Wacquant, 1989), so that there could be more signifiers of difference because signifiers of difference are interest-specific or field-specific. Bourdieu sees every field as ‘interested’; there could be as many interests as there are fields. Interest, “logic of the field”, and the power that defines are inextricably linked in Bourdieu’s framework. More importantly, the marker of difference is expanded beyond race into the more intangible everyday taken-for-granted practices and expressions or what is commonly understood as culture. Indeed, racial domination can be translated into cultural domination. Put differently, the domination based on the constructed hierarchy of skin colours is translated into the domination based on the constructed hierarchy of values assigned to everyday practices and expressions. This form of domination is far more subtle than that based on skin colour, because culture, like the air we breathe, is so much a part of us that it ceases to exist in our consciousness. This links to the final reason I adopt the Bourdieusian concept of culture. Bourdieu’s framework of culture provides the missing political and theoretical links about culture in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Bourdieusian culture is political, relational, and anti-dualistic, and as such it makes visible the unassailable link between the macro (external) and micro (internal), as well as symbolic (intangible) and material effects (tangible).

Chapter 4: Extending Bourdieu to racialized context

To utilize Bourdieu in this study requires some adaptation of his theory. The way Bourdieu uses his theory in education context, which accounts for majority of his work, is overlaid with class language and structure because his preoccupation in education research is to expose the French school system as one of the principle agents that reproduces class hierarchy (Wacquant, 1993b, p. 2). I need to extract the basic structure of Bourdieu's framework from its class-based usage/language in order to extend the framework to a race-based usage. Extracting the basic structure of Bourdieu's framework is to extract its basic structure of power since his framework is primarily a framework of culture and power. This basic structure of power is particularly relevant to this thesis, since my focus of the Bourdieusian culture is, first and foremost, the defining power. In what follows, I begin by first discussing the need to extend Bourdieu's framework to address a racialized context. Then it is followed by two sections, Section A and B, in which I discuss the way I extend Bourdieu. In Section A "The scaffold of Bourdieu's power construction", I discuss Bourdieu's basic scaffold of power in terms of its core concepts of capital, field, habitus, and symbolic power. In section B, I discuss how I infuse whiteness and postcolonial concepts to extend Bourdieu's scaffold of power to a racialized context.

Bourdieu's predominantly class-based theory is predicated on a "Francocentric" class culture (Bourdieu, 1989b, p. ix). Its class-centred power is critiqued for its failure to engage theoretically with issues relating to other social relations such as race and gender (Garrett, 2007a; Gewirtz & Cribb, 2003; Horvat, 2003; Moi, 1991; Rollock, 2014; Silva

& Edwards, 2004; Winkle-Wagner, 2010). Giroux, for instance, critiques Bourdieu's work as reducing classes to homogenous groups, providing "no theoretical opportunity to unravel how cultural domination and resistance are mediated through the complex interface of race, gender, and class" (as cited in Gewirtz & Cribb, 2003, p. 245). This is particularly true in Bourdieu's usage of cultural capital, which is also one of the key concepts used in this thesis. In Bourdieu's work relating to cultural capital, be it empirical study or the theorizing of power, what constitutes the power of cultural capital is largely based on a class culture. Take "Distinction", one of his major works, as an example. "Distinction" talks about how societal taste and esthetic values (cf. cultural capital) are shaped and determined by those from "high society", "bourgeois culture", or the "aristocracy of culture" (Bourdieu, 1984). The same is true in his voluminous educational writings in which cultural capital is largely understood as "cultured disposition" (Swartz, 1997, p. 199), such as ways of being, gesture/posture, verbal facility, general cultural awareness, and aesthetic preferences, which are characteristic of the dominant class (Houston, 2002; Swartz, 1997; Wacquant, 1993a). In fact, cultural capital is said to have first presented itself to Bourdieu as a theoretical hypothesis to explain the unequal scholastic achievement among children of different class fractions (Bourdieu, 1986). This class-centred focus reflects Bourdieu's preoccupation to expose the insidiousness of the reproduction of the French class hierarchy through the education system. Social theories do tend to respond to the specific social milieu of the time, and this preoccupation of Bourdieu inevitably leaves other salient factors of social division, such as race, relatively untouched.

Bourdieu's class focus continues to leave an enduring influence on subsequent research adapting his framework, which also shows a strong class focus. This is most obvious in research studies using cultural capital - the most used concept in research relating to education. The highbrow culture that defines Bourdieu's usage of culture or cultural capital is still notable in current research studies (e.g., Gricich, 2008; Moss, 2005; Noble & Davies, 2009; Zimdars et al., 2009), despite questions about the relevance of highbrow culture in recent years. There are those who show ambivalence about using cultural capital only as class-based capital (Bennett & Savage, 2004; Farkas, Grobe, Sheehan, & Shuan, 1990; Silva & Edwards, 2004; Silva et al., 2009). Still others call for a broadened conception of cultural capital in empirical research (Allin & Selwood, 2004; Lamont & Lareau, 1988; Lareau & Weininger, 2003; Prieur & Savage, 2011; Reay, 2004a). For example, Lareau and Weininger (2003) assert that "the 'highbrow' interpretation" of cultural capital unnecessarily narrows the terrain upon which cultural capital research operates" (p. 568-569), and along the same vein, Silva and Edwards (2004) question, "how does the notion of cultural capital operate when the bases of stratification are broadened from social class to include gender and ethnicity" (p. 6).

Despite this prevalent class-based usage of cultural capital by both Bourdieu and subsequent research studies using cultural capital, there are under-explored potentials in the adaptation of Bourdieu's framework beyond class context. There are clearly those who acknowledge such potentials (e.g., Edgerton & Roberts, 2014; Horvat, 2003; Lamont & Lareau, 1988; Lareau & Weininger, 2003; Samaluk, 2014; Smaje, 1997; Winkle-Wagner, 2010). For example, according to Samaluk (2014), Bourdieu has "been

effectively used by scholars exploring racism and whiteness” (p. 371). There are indeed considerable works drawing on Bourdieu relating to racialized context (Horvat, 2003; Lan, 2011; Parker, 2000; Pluss, 2010; Rollock, 2014; Samaluk, 2014; B. Shah et al., 2010). For instance, Rollock (2014) discusses how skin colour as a form of embodied capital (i.e., cultural capital) and the disposition (i.e., habitus) of white people function to protect the boundaries of white middle classes and “keep the black middle-classes on the fringes of middle-classness” (p. 449). Samaluk (2014) discusses how “shades of whiteness” shapes experiences of migrant workers from post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe in the UK in terms of Bourdieu’s three core concepts field, habitus and capital. There are also those in gender-related context (e.g., Edgerton, Roberts, & Peter, 2013; Farkas et al., 1990; McKeever & Miller, 2004). But among this body of work, the adaptability of Bourdieu to their different contexts is by and large ‘assumed’ as given, and rarely explained. For instance, in works using cultural capital, often the class-based resources are simply replaced by race-based resources (e.g., “ethnic capital” in Shah, Dwyer & Modood, 2010 and “imperial capital” in Parker, 2000). Indeed taking cultural capital as a resource is a common approach in Bourdieusian studies, and effective in raising questions about equality. This approach also makes for an easier adaptation of Bourdieu’s class-based usage to other contexts by simply replacing class-based resource with race-based or gender-based resources. By comparison, taking up culture or cultural capital explicitly as a form of power in research studies like my study is an anomaly. Although the line between resource and power cannot be made too sharply, there is clearly a trend in research in taking up cultural capital as a resource while culture as a power plays only a

subsidiary and implicit role. At the same time, it has been observed that Bourdieu's original focus of cultural capital is power, specifically, a less visible and more deceptive form of exclusionary power (Lamont & Lareau, 1988; Reay, 2004b). For example, Lamont and Lareau (1988) observe that the original focus in Bourdieu's early works of cultural capital is to expose insidious forms of exclusion (particularly in education), and exclusion according to Bourdieu is "one of the most pervasive forms of power". To me it is this distinct focus of Bourdieu's cultural capital that enables its transferability or extrapolation from class-based contexts to other contexts. Lamont & Lareau (1988) argue that cultural capital (which is developed in the French context) is adaptable to the American context so long as its distinctive "exclusivist functions" is preserved (p. 156, 161). Yet it is this distinctive focus of Bourdieu's framework that is by and large not elucidated in works adapting Bourdieu.

Indeed, the best potential of cultural capital (i.e., power in culture) as a conceptual tool does not reside in its objectified form or in the form of valued resources (e.g., educational credential). It resides in its distinct capacity to make visible a subtle form of exclusionary power encapsulated in Bourdieu's notion of symbolic domination (Fowler, 2009; Schubert, 2008; Wacquant, 1987), its explication is said to be a "central thrust" in Bourdieu's entire oeuvre according to Wacquant (Wacquant, 1993b, p. 1).

Domination as a subtle form of power is elucidated in Steven Lukes' work (including his seminal work in 1974 and revision in 2005), and is what Lukes sees as his chief contribution to the conception of power (Swartz, 2007). Lukes calls domination the third dimension of power. It neither presents itself in the form of coercive influence in

decision-making nor in the form of control over political agenda - the first two dimensions of power stated in Lukes' seminal work. Rather, according to Lukes, power through domination is less visible, more subtle, and the most fundamental, since the first two dimensions presuppose the third dimension, which embodies a power that defines and shapes the two former dimensions (Swartz, 2007). Symbolic domination is very similar to Luke's conception of domination, except that symbolic domination exercises its power through symbolic imposition (Lamont & Lareau, 1988, p. 159). Symbolic domination is the wielding of symbolic power (Wacquant, 1987: 66; see also Bourdieu, 1977), which is the ultimate power to name and define. So symbolic domination is the exercise of power by the imposition of a defined system of values and meanings that is 'interested' but made to appear 'self-evident' or natural. Symbolic domination is a subtle form of power based on naturalization or neutralization. Like Lukes, Bourdieu sees domination the most effective form of power, since it produces its exclusionary effects, including alienation and resignation, without making visible its sources of exclusion or modes of operation. Power is more effective the less visible it is to human consciousness. In symbolic domination, Bourdieu sees that any effective form of domination must mediate symbolically to mask (or neutralize) its arbitrary/unjust foundation. Wacquant (1993a) notes, "no power can be exercised in its brutality in an arbitrary manner, that it must dissimulate itself, cloak itself, justify itself for being what it is – it must make itself to be recognized as legitimate" (p. 25). Yet, research studies using cultural capital (the most popular form of power adapted in current research) rarely explicate this distinct conceptual potential of Bourdieu's framework, that is, as power and more specifically as

an imperceptible form of exclusionary power through symbolic domination, and the structure of power that supplies that potential. To me, it is this focus on the power that defines (in the form of domination), rather than on the defined (in the form of fixed entity) that enables the transferability or extrapolation of Bourdieu beyond class context.

While it is relatively straight forward to transpose Bourdieu to other contexts (beyond class context) when culture is taken up as a resource, it is less straight forward when it is taken up as a power. In the two sections below, I discuss how I extend Bourdieu to racialized context with culture taken up as a power. In Section A, I first explicate the scaffold or bare-bone of Bourdieu's structure of power that supports his construction of culture (or cultural capital) as exclusionary power. I do that by explicating the very basic elements or core concepts that make up that structure of power – stripped from their usual class appearances. To me it is the very basic, or bare-bone, form of these core elements/concepts that makes Bourdieu malleable or adaptable to wider contexts. Then in Section B, I discuss how I infuse into this basic structure of power of Bourdieu with whiteness and postcolonialism concepts to make Bourdieu's framework adaptable to the racialized context of this study.

A. The scaffold of Bourdieu's power construction

Bourdieu's structure of power consists of his signature set of thinking tools, namely capital, field, habitus, and symbolic power. And these thinking tools are constructed on the anti-dualistic foundation of Bourdieu's framework. In the following, I

am going to provide a brief description for each concept and discuss how each relates to power.

CAPITAL: Bourdieu conceptualizes power in terms of capital. The basic forms of capital are economic, cultural, social, and symbolic (Bourdieu, 1989a), and symbolic capital can be assumed by any form of capital (Bourdieu, 1986; see also Bourdieu, 1989a, 1987). As it happens, cultural capital (the embodied form of cultural capital) is most salient in this thesis, followed by symbolic capital and social capital.

What marks Bourdieu's power, first and foremost, is that it is an integrative concept rather than a stand-alone concept. As characteristic of Bourdieu's anti-dualistic worldview, all elements of his framework are inter-connected or inter-dependent of each other. As such, capital (or power) owes its character to the way it relates to the other integral parts that make up Bourdieu's framework (e.g., field and habitus).

Power is fluid given the inter-connectedness among the different forms of capital. Power is not confined in one form (e.g., economic, cultural, social, symbolic, etc.), as it fluidly converts from one form to another (e.g., from economic capital to cultural capital to social capital and vice versa). This is known in Bourdieu's literature as the transubstantiation or inter-convertibility of capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Moore, 2004, 2008). So although cultural capital is the form of power focused in this thesis, it simultaneously makes visible other forms of capital. In the case of this thesis, cultural capital also makes visible the salience of symbolic capital and social capital in shaping experiences of inclusion and exclusion. The concept of transubstantiation of capital is significant in this thesis – not only does it give the fluid character to power, more importantly it makes

visible the subtle ways privilege is preserved as power fluidly converts from one form into another.

The fluidity of Bourdieu's construction of power is also manifested in the way capital relates to field. The inter-connection between capital and field is such that power is not confined to specific person or specific institution, but varies in space and time (Arber, 1999). What confers value (or currency) to capital depends on individual field. Winkle-Wagner (2010) explains capital this way, "it is only within a particular field that...capital holds value, produces an effect, or even exists" (p. 7). The assignment of values is based on the "interest" (Bourdieu, 1981; Grenfell, 2008; Wacquant, 1989) or the "logic" (Grenfell, 2009, p. 20; Cronin, 1996, p.65) of a given field. Power as such is context-bound or context-specific and varies according to the specific "interest" or "logic" of each field (Grenfell, 2009; Grenfell & James, 2004; Winkle-Wagner, 2010). This context-specific character of capital (or power) shows not only the fluidity of power, but more importantly for this study, shows the permeability of the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. As we shall see in the Findings and Analysis section later, having field-specific capital can enable some students cross boundaries (of acceptance or recognition) that could have otherwise excluded them if they were in another field.

The distinctiveness of capital in each field, however, can be over-stated. The assignment of value to capital is also constrained by larger and more global fields.

FIELD: A field is only semi-autonomous. It has certain autonomy in shaping its capital but at the same time it is also shaped by larger fields (e.g., economic field, political field, colonial relations, etc.). Therefore while we may see certain value (capital)

varies from field to field, we may also see certain value holds true across many fields. The field of higher education is a good example of the semi-autonomous nature of field. As “decentralized institutions” (Dean, 2013), higher education institutions have certain autonomy to shape their vision/direction/agenda based on their own ‘interests’ or value perspectives, but at the same time there is definite limit to this autonomy due to the constraint from larger fields (e.g., neoliberalism).

The relationship and inter-connection between capital and field is that capital structures the hierarchy of power in a field. A field is any social space, and often referred to as the overall space of positions of power (Bourdieu, 1980, 1989a; Wacquant, 1993b). And the social world is made up of many semi-autonomous social fields. Capital is what determines those value positions, and the assignment of values to those positions depends on the “logic of the field” or the objective relations, according to Bourdieu.

The concept of field as structure of hierarchical positions of power is useful in the analysis of this thesis in at least two ways. First, it directs the thinking to the field and students’ positioning in the field rather than to the students themselves. That is, it directs the attention to students’ value (capital) positions in a field and the “logic of the field” that assigns the value positions that in turn shapes students’ experiences. Where one is positioned in a field significantly influences one’s experience and life chances. Bourdieu (1986) explains this way, “The structure of the distribution of the different types and subtypes of capital at a given moment in time” represents “the set of constraints, inscribed in the very reality of that world” and determines “the chances of success for practices” (p. 242). This perspective helps to question the idea of meritocracy - how much one’s

success is achieved or positioned. Second, field provides the perspective that micro-interaction is indeed political, as human agents along with their mode of thinking/perception and practices are the embodiment of positions of power (to be elucidated in the field-habitus interconnection below). It underscores a most under-stated yet significant role of agent to agent (as opposed to agent to structure or agent to institution) interaction in mediating power relations. The field-habitus dialectic, as Reay (2004b) writes “is a means of viewing structure as occurring within small-scale interactions and activity within large-scale settings” (p. 439). And this kind of interaction of power relations is most unconscious and nebulous, as a field is often referred as the invisible structure (Wacquant, 1993b), a space of invisible relations (Bourdieu, 1987, 1989a), or an invisible space of positions (Bourdieu, 1980, 1989a). The idea of field as invisible structure presents itself in this study as assigned hierarchy of acceptance, recognition, and opportunities. Although ‘invisible’, the field structure is capable of producing material effects associated with inclusion and exclusion.

The idea of human agent as embodiment of invisible structure is to be further understood in the relationship between social structure (field) and human action and agency (habitus) in the segment below.

HABITUS: Habitus is most challenging to explain among Bourdieu’s core concepts due to its complex and multi-layered nature. Habitus underscores Bourdieu’s philosophical view about self and society, or rather the inseparableness of the two. Habitus and field are a unified concept (Bourdieu, 1981) and exists in a dialectical relationship. While habitus is the embodiment or internalization of a field, a field is also

shaped by the habitus that embodies it. Habitus is central in this study since power or capital as manifested in this study is in the embodied form (as opposed to the objectified or institutional forms) as disposition and internalized cognitive structure. Disposition directs the focus of power relations to the body while cognitive structure to the mind. Habitus as both disposition and cognitive structure helps to make visible the social and political nature of everyday micro-interaction as well as a form of non-active/unconscious participation of power relations.

To understand how habitus functions/operates in this study is to understand the relationship between social structure and human action/agency (cf. the dialectic between self and society). Habitus makes more visible the role of agency to Bourdieu's conception of culture (Swartz, 1997). As discussed in "Culture as a two-way phenomenon", culture is in a constant state of becoming because it is the product of the dialectic interaction between field and habitus. It is in the same context of the interplay between habitus and field that we understand agency and the micro-interactions in the narratives of this study as exchange of power relations. However, this role of agency as conceptualized in the field-habitus dialectic has invited critiques about its pessimistic implication. Bourdieu sees human action as largely flowing from habits or "practical sense" (Bourdieu in interview with Wacquant, 1987, p. 42; see also Hillier & Rooksby, 2002) inculcated through socialization (following the dictate of the "logic of the field"), and therefore operating not entirely in conscious or rational mode. Commenting on "practical sense", Bourdieu and Eagleton (1994) state, "The social world doesn't work in terms of consciousness, it works in terms of practices, mechanism, and so forth...we have to move

away from the Cartesian logic of a conscious agent and focus on practice and body or the manipulation of body” (p. 268-269; see also Bourdieu, 2002, p. 28). Using an analogy of a game, Bourdieu compares the way human action operates to “sense of a game” (Bourdieu in interview with Wacquant, 1987, p. 42; see also Hillier & Rooksby, 2002). We (or habitus) act as guided by our practical knowledge of the rules of the game (or field along with its logic) about what is ‘proper’, what gets recognition, and what improves winning chance, which inescapably has to draw on the “logic of the field”. Human agency as understood in this mode of operation of habitus has the propensity to replicate established social values and social structure (cf. “logic of the field”), often beyond consciousness. And this yields a common critique about the fatalistic implication of the habitus-field dialectic, as habitus and field seem to be locked in a vicious cycle of (re)production of power relations, and leaves little room for agency of change (Evens, 1999; King, 2000; Lau, 2004; Reay, 2004b). Bourdieu in defense calls the critiques as “product of commentators” (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 30), over-simplifying and one-sided (Bourdieu, 1980). Bourdieu (2002) argues that habitus is “long-lasting”, tends to “perpetuate” and “reproduce” itself, “but they are not eternal” (p. 29), so that habitus does change constantly but within the limits inherent in its field position and the “logic of the field”. Although Bourdieu is never clear about the extent of agency, one can safely infer from the nature of the field-habitus dialectic that while human agency plays a crucial role in the construction of culture, there is also a ‘boundedness’ to agency as influenced by the “logic of the field”. It is also within this ‘boundedness’ of human agency that we are to

understand how habitus functions as cognitive structure (mind) and disposition (body) in this study.

To understand some of the narratives in this study, one has to understand two functions of habitus. First, habitus functions as inculcated mental structure in the inter-subjective mediation of social relations of power. As Bourdieu (1985) states, “power relations are also present in people’s minds” (p. 729) in the form of what Grenfell (2008) calls the “categories of judgment” (p. 98) or what Cronin (1996) calls the “principles of evaluation” (p. 70). Power in this form is most invisible as it is mediated inter-subjectively via the way one sees the world, the self, and others or as Bourdieu put it, the sense of one’s place and the place of others (Bourdieu, 1985, 1989a; Houston, 2002; Wacquant, 1993b). We shall see how this form of power played out, in the Findings and Analysis chapters, in the way it influences participants’ perception of their prospect of academic career (or academic aspiration), whether participants being recognized or perceived as liability (cf. negative symbolic capital), evaluation, and access to the learning process (e.g., group work) and social network which is shown to be crucial to the learning process and beyond. Habitus as cognitive structure underscores the often understated aspect of power mediation - social interaction is indeed political in nature, and everyday mundane micro-interaction political is powerful mediator of social relations of power.

Second, habitus functions as disposition. As disposition, habitus underscores a non-active and unconscious form of power mediated through usually well-meaning habitual actions and practices without conscious ill will. In Bourdieu’s work, habitus

largely appears as class habitus or “cultured disposition” (Swartz, 1997, p.199). But when take away the class content, habitus contributes to Bourdieu’s construction of power in the idea that power relations incarnates in the body – in dispositions and practices. Lamont and Lareau (1988) speaking of habitus note, “...most signals are sent unconsciously because they are learned through family socialization, and incorporated as dispositions, or habitus, or are the unintended classificatory results of cultural codes” (p. 158). Lukes in his revised work of power, having been influenced by Bourdieu, expands an understanding of power from active to dispositional (Swartz, 2007). Swartz (2007) understands Lukes this way, “one needs to think of power as a capacity or ability that may or may not be explicitly activated in given situations” (p. 104). Power from this perspective is about “potentiality”, not “actuality” (Swartz, 2007, p. 104). The idea of power as a dispositional concept resonates with Bourdieu’s notion of habitus in that one’s disposition is ‘capacitated’ with power by virtue of one’s positioning in a field, and that power exists as ‘potential’ ready to be activated or deployed. We see this dispositional and non-active form of power implicit in many of the narratives but it is most salient in those narratives surrounding the way some participants experience the relationship between self-presentation and (academic) recognition (Chapter 11), and the way students experience invisibility or recognition in classroom (Chapter 10). In these narratives, power is not actively and consciously exercised. Rather, because the habitus is the encoded implicit values of the field, the actions it generates have a social meaning, but at the same time the enactment of that social meaning often transcends the consciousness or intention of the agent. Viewing narratives in the light of habitus adds nuance to our

understanding of the nature of boundary of inclusion and exclusion. But at the same time, habitus is too nebulous a concept to utilize in research studies (Edgerton and Roberts, 2014), since power through habitus is captured in such language as invisible structure, inter-subjective (or dialectic) between structure and agency, and power as non-active participation/disposition/capacity.

SYMBOLIC POWER: Usually it would suffice to just include Bourdieu's three core concepts of capital, field and habitus in a discussion of Bourdieu's basic framework. But I feel the concept of symbolic power is so inextricably linked to how the other three central concepts function in participants' narratives in this study, and so central to understand a form of invisible and intangible boundary that that I feel I need to give the concept some space.

From the section about "culture as defining power" in Chapter 3, it should be clear that the symbolic dimension of power (i.e., the power to name and define) is a central and defining element in Bourdieu's framework. Then earlier in this chapter, I discussed that power presents itself in this study takes the form of symbolic domination, and symbolic domination is the wielding of symbolic power. In what follows, I am going to briefly highlight two characters of symbolic power that would help us to further understand the concept of culture and the nature of power in this thesis.

First, symbolic power underscores a symbolic dimension of power that has not been drawing serious attention because of its abstract nature. But the symbolic dimension of power is central to Bourdieu's work (Wacquant, 1993b). In Bourdieu's work, symbolic power largely signifies social class values and culture. But when take away from the class

framework, symbolic power is a power that defines the meaning of actions and practices of a culture, and it could involve any social factors (race, class, gender, etc.) depending on the relational context. Symbolic power is inherent in any culture since culture as a system of meanings and values is necessarily a system of hierarchisation – what action signifies proper or not proper, superior or inferior, recognition or denigration, insider or outsider, and so on. For example, in North America, opening gift right away in front of the gift-giver is a sign of proper etiquette; it signifies appreciation and politeness, whereas in Hong Kong where I grew up, doing the same is a sign of improper etiquette; it signifies uncultured manners and rudeness. In this light, culture can be understood as the shared knowledge of a signification system of meanings or rules that govern interaction. It is an implicit and unspoken understanding among those who share this understanding. Sardar and Van Loon (2004) explain, “A symbolic system is a system of signs or an implicit set of meanings “organized as codes” governed by “implicit rules agreed upon by members of a culture or social group” (p. 12). Other terms for this unspoken and implicitly shared knowledge of signification are “immanent laws of the game” (Moi, 1991, p. 1022) and “cultural codes” (Longden, 2004). We shall see in Chapter 11 how the exclusionary function of culture (or cultural capital) plays out as mediated through the symbolic power embedded in the implicit rules of the dominant culture.

Second, the symbolic dimension of power underscores a misrecognized form of power that is as potent as it is intangible. Human nature easily accepts what is visible or tangible exists as real. By extension, what is invisible or intangible does not exist or is not real. This is what gives potency to the symbolic form of power. Bourdieu (1977) notes,

“symbolic systems owe their particular force to the fact that the power relations which they express are only manifested in the misrecognizable form of relations of meaning” (p. 117). In Bourdieu’s education research, symbolic power is commonly manifested through an intangible system of preferences (such as style and taste) that signifies class hierarchies, but this form of mediation of class division is too intangible that it often eludes conscious attention.

The misrecognition of symbolic power in turn makes visible a misrecognized form of injustice or “violence” which Bourdieu calls symbolic violence. Symbolic violence does not present itself as an active form of violence. It produces ‘violence’ by imposing an arbitrarily defined system of meanings or values as legitimate without being recognized as arbitrary or an imposition (cf. symbolic power), and through that imposition one’s life chance is altered or cut short. Put more simply, symbolic violence occurs when one’s life chance is cut short by an imposition of an arbitrary system of meanings that is rendered legitimate. A comparable example to Bourdieu’s work is: working-class children who drop out of school are deemed academically inept when they are in fact failed by the imposition of middle-class culture that structures learning norms and defines ‘success’ and ‘promise’. It is a form of violence because the working-class children are violated by the imposition of middle-class meanings and values that cuts short their life chances. But instead of being recognized as ‘violence’, their violation is recognized as legitimate. Such is the potency of symbolic violence, “arising out of gentle violence, make gentle violence possible” (Bourdieu in interview with Wacquant, 1993a, p. 34). Bourdieu sees that symbolic violence is no less “brutal” just because the violence is

not blatant or intentional (Bourdieu and Eagleton, 1994, p. 270). The concepts of symbolic power and symbolic violence enable us to understand an invisible form of power at play in some narratives in this study. This power takes the form of an imposition of Western system of meanings, ways of thinking, and forms of expression mediated through a “structure of perception” (Bourdieu, 1989a, p. 20) and “principles of evaluation” (Cronin, 1996, p. 70) but without being recognized as an imposition. MacMullan (2009) in his “Habits of whiteness” states that “the truly egregious acts of inhumanity are the ones that the perpetrator does not even see as cruel or unjust” (p.85).

B. Infusing Whiteness and postcolonial concepts

Into this scaffold of power, I infuse whiteness and postcolonial concepts to extend Bourdieu’s structure of power to the racialized context of this study.

I draw from the whiteness literature a central idea of invisible domination – the power to name and not be named. It is the idea of the presumed normalcy and superiority of the white ways of being and practice (Frankenberg, 1993; bell hooks, 1997; Yee & Dumbrill, 2003). Whiteness helps to underscore a racialized form of power (vs. class-based power) at work in constructing students’ experiences in this study. Whiteness has over time evolved beyond white ways of being and practices to integrate other dimensions of dominance such as gender, able body and age. But whiteness as manifested in this study is in a narrower sense of white ways of being and practice, or as one participant in this study calls it the “white archetype”. Indeed in this study, the unnamed white race is mutated into unnamed white practices and expressions, or as one participant

calls ‘acting white’. Canadian higher education is historically shaped by the white Western European traditions and norms. In the relational context of Chinese students and the Western higher education of this study, whiteness informs an understanding of how the value (capital) structure of the field of higher education is defined from the invisible standpoint of whiteness. And the unnamed whiteness finds expression in this study in the unnamed Western meaning system and ways of practice, expression, and evaluation. Equally important, whiteness is part of the “logic of the field” that constitutes the invisible structure of the field of western higher education. Integrating whiteness into Bourdieu’s framework makes visible the invisible domination of white habitus.

Similarly, I infuse postcolonial concepts to inform a racialized form of power dynamics that befits the context of Chinese students and the West in this study. I draw on postcolonial ideas to underscore a colonial structure (which is a racialized structure) that informs the logic and the capital structure of the field. I draw from postcolonial literature the legacy of the momentous event of the Western colonization project in shaping the world into two unequal powers – the East and the West. This legacy has positioned, and continued to position, the West as the subject or ‘superior other’ while those in the East as object or ‘inferior other’. History attests that civilizations, be it Asian, Native, or Black, as viewed from the Western gaze are defined as the ‘inferior other’ (Chow, 1998b; Comack, 2015; Hobson, 2004; Lawrence & Dua, 2005; Said, 2006). I adopt the language of East and West common in postcolonial literature not to suggest that there is an actual geographic division or distinct identity that marks the East and the West. Rather I adopt it as the imaginary divide underpinned with the assumptions of the colonization project,

which is, as Hobson (2004) puts it, “the West as imagined as the superior to the East” (p. 7). That it is an imaginary divide suggests that it does not matter that places in the imaged East have really been colonized. What matters more is the idea that the West has the power to name (or imagine) that such a divide exists, and is able to affect material reality according to that imagination.

There are Bourdieusian studies that reflect, though not explicitly articulate, this colonial relations (e.g., Lan, 2011; Pluss, 2013; Sin, 2013). Sin (2013) discusses that UK academic credentials acquired outside of UK carry more value (or cultural capital) over many locally acquired academic credentials in Malaysia, but carry lesser value than those acquired within the UK, suggesting that there is a hierarchisation of whiteness. For example, UK credential acquired offshore from the University of Nottingham in Malaysia has less value than that acquired from a university in the UK because it is not ‘white’ enough. Another study Lan (2011) notes that expatriates in Taiwan tend to gain value or cultural capital (depending on contexts) whereas the value or cultural capital of Taiwan people in Western countries tend to deflate. In studies like these, the imagined divide and its power to name (imagine) the East works beyond geographical and national boundaries, such as in Lan (2011), expatriates have ‘currency’ even in a foreign field such as Taiwan, whereas Taiwan people would have depleted ‘currency’ in Western countries. The same imprint of colonialization is evident in my study, adding another layer to the “logic of the field” that informs the analysis of students’ experiences (particularly those who cross the geographic and cultural boundaries of the ‘East’ to the ‘West’).

There is considerable congruity between the postcolonial concepts I draw on and the Bourdieusian framework. Said's idea of the West in defining the East as its contrasting image (Said, 2006, p. 25) resonates with Bourdieu's idea of symbolic power. I suggested earlier that symbolic power is at work in imposing/defining the Western higher education culture (i.e., meaning system, ways of practice, expression and evaluation, etc.) as legitimate. This symbolic power is experienced (by many students in this study) as the contrasting image of the West – if the West is superior, the East must be inferior. Furthermore, Rey Chow's (1998) analysis of the postcolonial Hong Kong echoes the idea that culture indeed is the invisible alternative of more blatant forms of power such as racism. In her analysis, British colonialism set up a "hierarchisation of cultures" to mask its racism, so that "to study Chinese was never against the law but was simply constructed as a socially inferior phenomenon" (1998, p. 163). The more blatant hierarchisation of racial order finds less visible expressions in the "hierarchisation of culture". This echoes with my earlier suggestion that culture is the unnamed whiteness in the form of unnamed disposition and practices.

In this section I discuss how I draw from whiteness and postcolonial concepts to infuse racialized forms of power into Bourdieu's framework, and make Bourdieu's basically class-based structure of power adaptable to the racialized context of this study. Whiteness and postcolonial perspectives can work synergistically together since both perspectives centre their arguments in returning the gaze to the dominant power. Whiteness argues for critical scrutiny of the "unmarked" norm of whiteness (Yee & Dumbrill, 2005; Frankenberg, 1993; hooks, 1997) while postcolonialists such as Said

argue that orientalism “has less to do with the Orient than it does with ‘our’ world” (Said, 2006, p. 27). In transposing Bourdieu’s class-based framework into racialized and colonial contexts, I retain Bourdieu’s basic elements that make up his construction of power (i.e., field, capital, habitus, and symbolic power), but shift the hierarchisation that is informed by economic class system into one that is informed by racialized and colonial class system.

Concluding thought:

In this chapter, I discussed how I adapt Bourdieu’s basically class-based framework of culture to the racialized and colonial contexts of this study. I first argued that the distinct capacity and best potential of using Bourdieu’s framework is in its construction of culture as power (vs. valued resource or objectified form), and this power takes the form of imperceptible exclusionary power – power as domination. I then discussed the basic elements that make up Bourdieu’s construction (or scaffold) of power (as domination) on which his class-based work is built. And then I explicated how I integrate whiteness and postcolonial concepts to this scaffold and make Bourdieu’s structure of power adaptable to the relational context between Chinese students and the West. This adaptation of Bourdieu enables this study to make visible an intangible dimension of whiteness, that is, the unnamed system of meanings and values expressed in disposition and practices.

Section II Methodology, Methods, Locating the Researcher

Chapter 5: A Bourdieu-informed methodological framework

Introduction:

A methodology is a rationale for an approach to inquiry given the research question, and to justify methods used but not the methods themselves (Carter & Little, 2007). Given my central research question is:

How do Chinese students' experiences in higher education, as viewed through Bourdieu's framework of culture, inform a more nuanced understanding of inclusion and exclusion?

What then should be the methodology that best addresses this research question? This chapter addresses this question and discusses how I rationalize an approach drawing on two methodological approaches that is consistent with the anti-dualistic epistemological/ontological foundation that informs Bourdieu's theory. There is no other way for me to describe the methodological framework laid out in this chapter except that, in view of little solid guidance about how to adapt Bourdieu methodologically in literature, it is a Bourdieu-informed methodological framework – a framework informed by my understanding of the epistemological/ontological foundation of Bourdieu's theory and how that intersects with my research question. In the Section B of this chapter, I explain my thinking journey that leads to this Bourdieu-informed framework, which draws on two methodological traditions in order to be consistent with the dialectic epistemological foundation of Bourdieu's theory. But before that in Section A, I first

discuss where I situate among prevailing research approaches that draw on Bourdieu, my critiques of these, and how I depart from them.

A. Locating my study among research that draws on Bourdieu

Bourdieuian studies are found both in quantitative and qualitative research designs. But there tends to be more Bourdieuian quantitative studies than qualitative studies among education research which is consistent with the general trend of education research that is predominated by quantitative studies (Lamont & Lareau, 1988; Silva et al., 2009). Studies drawing on cultural capital (as opposed to habitus or field) tend to be found among Bourdieuian quantitative education research (e.g., survey studies) in areas such as academic achievement, disparity and retention, although there are more qualitative studies using cultural capital in the recent decade in diverse subjects such as privilege and disadvantage, social mobility, class identity, norm, positioning, social boundary crossing, and even social class classification (Savage et al., 2013). Cultural capital¹ is the most common concept utilized in both Bourdieuian quantitative and qualitative studies, followed by habitus and field. Habitus is typically found in qualitative studies (occasionally mixed methods with a qualitative component) to understand subjects such as identity (e.g., Reay, Crozier, & Clayton, 2010), choice/decision-making (e.g., Barnes, 2009; Glaesser & Cooper, 2014) or to serve as a window to understand a field (e.g., Bufton, 2003; Reay, 2015) or the logic of a field (e.g., McKeever & Miller, 2004).

¹ Many of the references used in this chapter are based on cultural capital because it is the most popular among Bourdieuian concepts adapted in research studies, but the discussion applies to Bourdieu's framework as a whole.

But habitus is by comparison less well-known in research studies as cultural capital, since habitus as cultural capital in embodied form (vs. objectified or institutional form) can be too complex and nebulous a concept to utilize in research studies (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014; Reay, 2004b) - it can neither be as easily operationalized nor quantified as cultural capital in tangible forms such as participation in arts and music or education qualification. Field is the least utilized concept in both quantitative and qualitative studies, even when used, it is often seen as a ‘tag on’ to habitus or/and cultural capital.

Quantitative mode of studies has the strength to paint a broad picture with large samples. But when used as a common mode of study for cultural capital, it can restrict the conceptual possibilities of cultural capital considerably. In quantitative studies, cultural capital usually is operationalized in pre-defined variables, and this pre-structured variable approach shapes cultural capital as a fixed entity, able to be measured or quantified. An example of this approach is Zimdars, Sullivan & Heath (2009), who examine the extent to which cultural capital helps to explain the link between social class background and admission to Oxford University. Cultural capital in this study is operationalized as cultural participation (visits to museums, art galleries, classical concerts and ballets) and cultural knowledge (reading habits, the number of books in the home, etc.). Although regarding themselves using “a broad operationalization of cultural capital”, the authors nevertheless acknowledge such operationalization does not do justice to the concept, “of course, our measures of cultural capital are limited, and cannot possibly capture every possible facet of this concept. In one sense, this is a limitation of this study” (Zimdars, Sullivan & Heath, 2009, p. 652). At the same time, defending their choice, the authors

continue to say that pre-structured variables in quantitative studies do provide a degree of clarity and concreteness on an aspect of cultural capital, lest Bourdieu's concepts are too "amenable to becoming catch-alls, which are too flexible and all-encompassing to rule anything out or to tell anything interesting" (Zimdars, Sullivan & Heath, 2009, p. 652). Nevertheless, the pre-defined approach to operationalize cultural capital reminds us of the comment by Reay (2004a), most conceptualizations of cultural capital within research studies that focus on cultural knowledge or cultural participation "neglect the full range of dimensions that Bourdieu himself attributed to cultural capital" (p. 74). The increasing call for more qualitative studies to use cultural capital (Silva et al., 2009) is also an indication of the restriction of the quantitative mode of study on the conceptual possibility of the Bourdieusian framework. Some researchers also opt for mixed methods (e.g., Reay et al., 2010; Silva, 2006; Silva & Edwards, 2004; Silva et al., 2009; Silva & Wright, 2008), which apparently also was Bourdieu's favoured research approach (Silva, 2006; Silva & Edwards, 2004; Wacquant, 1987), for instance, "multi-methods" or "mixed methods" approach is employed in his major work *Distinction*.

However, although not pre-defined or pre-structured, cultural capital in qualitative studies or mixed methods studies also tends to be conceptualized as discrete and tangible entity or 'a thing'. This is related to the trend I observed earlier in Chapter 4 that cultural capital is by and large taken up as a valued resource rather than a power; a resource usually implies a tangible entity while power can be very abstract and intangible. Some examples of cultural capital as tangible entity in research studies are: linguistic capital (Botas & Huisman, 2013; Chang, 2010; Lan, 2011), academic credential (Sin, 2013;

Botas & Huisman, 2013), ethnic capital (B. Shah et al., 2010), and cultural participation and cultural knowledge (Silva & Wright, 2008). These studies are valuable in their own right, and provide important insights into the forms of cultural capital under study. The issue is not so much on these studies per se as on the relative absence of the less tangible dimension of cultural capital (and Bourdieu's framework in general) explored in research studies. And as I contended in the last chapter, the best potential of cultural capital is its capacity to uncover complex and less tangible operation of power. It is this potential that bears the promise to uncover complex and masked ways of how inequalities are reproduced and how inclusion and exclusion boundaries are drawn. Studies, scarce as they are, that take up a less tangible notion cultural capital tend to paint a more nuanced picture of inequality, such as, Reay and Lucey (2003) nuance the notion of 'choice' as a "marker of economic privilege" (p. 121) in their study about school choice for children in inner city in the UK; Liddle and Michielsens (2007) nuance political representation for public office with such intangible ideas as "doxic entitlement", "sense of one's place", and "self-imposed limitation". Another example is Bathmaker, Ingram, and Waller (2013). In the longitudinal study, the authors examine how working-class and middle-class students acquire and mobilize their capital to enhance future social positioning (Bathmaker, Ingram & Waller, p.723). The study capitalizes on the flexibility of qualitative mode of study to let cultural capital emerge from the specific context of the student and the higher education institution (rather than pre-defining it), as Prieur and Savage (2011) observe, cultural capital is fluid and relative, and needs to take into account the field-specific character of capital in research studies. The study uses an

intangible concept of Bourdieu “the feel for the game” (p. 730) as the overarching form of cultural capital – how this “feel for the game” may guide working-class and middle-class students differentially in their acquisition and mobilization of cultural capital to “put themselves in the best position to win the game” (p. 731). The way this “feel for the game” helps to generate other forms of cultural capital is further categorized as “active” (conscious and deliberate effort to acquire valued capital in order to improve chances to win the game) and “internalized” (stemming from part of the taken-for-granted way of upbringing). The capital under “active” or “internalized” are emerged from the specific context of the student and the higher education institution. Cultural capital generated this way is not only more broad but also more nuanced, for example, a student’s “feel of the game” is related to her active and deliberate effort to participate in extra-curricular activities to improve her CV, and these extra-curricular activities in turn lead to “the right circle of people” (Priour and Savage, 2011, p. 732), that is, conversion to social capital. Although the tangible aspect of cultural capital is still prevalent in the study (those that are generated under “active” and “internalized” categories such as extra-curricular activities, CV and internship), by allowing the intangible “feel for the game” as the overarching cultural capital to guide the study, the authors are able to tap into Bourdieu’s conceptual capacity to link internal process (“feel for the game”) and external process (reproduction of structural inequality).

Lareau & Weininger (2003) argue that cultural capital can be “highly abstract” (p. 588). Reay (2004a), while recognizing the more “straightforward” aspects of cultural capital, also suggest a “less straightforward” aspect of cultural capital that can be

intangible in nature, such as the subjective “levels of confidence and entitlement” of parents as a form of cultural capital in her study of parental involvement in schooling (p. 75). Along the same vein, Lamont & Lareau (1988) argue for a new definition of cultural capital that diverges from its usual usage as valued resource to tap into the less tangible and perceptible form of exclusionary power in cultural capital (p. 159).

There is yet another noticeable under-utilization of Bourdieu’s conceptual capacity in prevailing research studies. Bourdieu’s concepts are often adapted as stand-alone concepts rather than as part of an integral whole within Bourdieu’s larger framework (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014; D. James, 2015; Winkle-Wagner, 2010). That is, studies tend to use a Bourdieusian concept (capital or field or habitus, etc.) in isolation from other concepts and Bourdieu’s framework as a whole. This is true not only in quantitative studies but also in qualitative studies such as those using cultural capital in its objectified state (e.g., education credential). James (2015) calls this isolated usage of Bourdieusian concepts in research studies the “light usage” (p. 97) to mean that a usage only scratches the surface of Bourdieu’s conceptual capacity. Edgerton & Roberts (2014) make similar observation about studies invoking cultural capital and habitus that these studies “have focused only on one or the other, often conflating the two, to the detriment of both” (p. 193). The authors see better explanatory potential in using cultural capital and habitus together as interrelated unit rather than in isolation to each other. Winkle-Wagner (2010) argues that the common folly of using cultural capital apart from Bourdieu’s larger framework is akin to “enjoy a cake by eating eggs, sugar, and flour separately; these ingredients simply are not representative of a cake until they are mixed and baked

together” (p. 88). Winkle-Wagner (2010) noted in her work “a call for placing cultural capital in the larger theory of social reproduction and, more specifically, for using cultural capital in tandem with social capital” (p. 49).

There are indeed studies that utilize Bourdieu’s concepts in tandem, showing a recognition of the interdependency of the Bourdieusian concepts. These studies also tend to analyze data in terms of the functions and processes enabled by the interdependence of Bourdieu’s concepts, and render a more nuanced discussion of their research topics. Two examples are Nast and Blokland (2014) and Pluss (2013). Nast & Blokland (2014) discuss how parents in a mixed class neighbourhood school are generally segregated according to social class (sometimes intersected with race), but some parents are able to cross social class boundaries based on the fluidity of power through the field-specific nature and inter-conversion process of capital. The analysis underscores the signifying (of social class position) and boundary functions of cultural capital in the segregation of parents. It also underscores the fluidity of power when some working class parents with children in a gifted class gain “setting-specific” cultural capital because being part of the ‘gifted class community’ confers on them a higher social positioning that seems to transcend their original working class positioning. This “setting-specific” capital further converts into social capital by enabling working class parents to cross social boundaries to form social networks with middle-class parents, and through that social network gain further cultural capital in the form of knowledge and resource less accessible to work-class parents (or more accessible to middle-class parents). In Pluss (2013), the author discusses how Chinese high-skilled, middle-class transnational migrants, who live in New

York and had lived in other countries and have links to Singapore, perceive their inequality in the complex process of negotiating access to valued resources as viewed from their “transnational positions” (p. 13). The discussion underscores even more than Nast & Blokland (2014) the significance of the field-specific nature and the interdependence of capital in their analysis, since participants had lived in multiple countries, and their recounts (from their “transnational positions”) reflect how their positionings vary in different contexts, how this enables or hinders their access to desired resources, and how they negotiate this process through capital conversion. It is through this integrated application of Bourdieu’s framework that this study is able to nuance the complexities of resource access in transnational contexts. If these studies provide us a glimpse of what using Bourdieu’s concepts in tandem can do, then what promise is there in “incorporating research studies in Bourdieu’s larger theoretical framework “ (p. ix), as Winkle-Wagner (2010) advises?

I locate this study among those that aim to explicitly link Bourdieu with inclusion and exclusion. I employ a qualitative mode of study for its strength to provide contextualized meaning and process to the Bourdieusian concepts used in this study. Instead of ‘pre-defining’ meaning for concepts, I allow themes to emerge from the specific context of the ‘data’, and then reflect with Bourdieu’s theoretical framework. But more importantly, I locate this study among those that call to capitalize on Bourdieu’s conceptual strength to make visible an intangible form of power in regulating inclusion and exclusion. Not only is culture a valued resource, I take as central Bourdieu’s distinct insight of culture as an invisible/intangible, exclusionary power (in the form of

domination). I call this exclusionary form of power a power that defines by drawing on Bourdieu's concept of symbolic power. A defining power is inherently an exclusionary power by virtue of its differentiation function of a hierarchy of values. The focus on the power that defines (rather than the defined) is to me key to optimize the conceptual potential of Bourdieu's framework, and capture the more "abstract" and "less straightforward" understanding of cultural capital as suggested by some of the aforementioned scholars and researchers. Centering on the power that defines instead of the 'defined' (fixed entities such as cultural knowledge and cultural participation) circumvents the complicity in the injustice of a deficiency approach (i.e., exclusion due to one's deficiency in capitals). Equally important, centering on the power that defines circumvents the conundrum of defining the defined, that is, the uncertainties of what cultural capital actually is supposed to be or how is it to be defined and operationalized (Bennett & Savage, 2004; Silva & Edwards, 2004; Silva et al., 2009). By focusing on the power that defines, I mean to underscore a power that is not 'intrinsic' but always for the interest and logic of the field. I also mean to underscore the functions and processes that give rise to that defining power. These functions and processes include those of signification (Bourdieu, 1984; Grenfell, 2009; Sardar & Van Loon, 2004), boundary/differentiation (Rollock, 2014; Nast & Blokland, 2014; Jenkins, 2014; Winkle-Wagner, 2010) and legitimation (Chang, 2010; Goldstein, 2003; Lamont & Lareau, 1988; Lareau & Weininger, 2003; Stampnitzky, 2006). Finally, I locate this study among those that call to incorporate Bourdieu's conceptual framework instead of using individual Bourdieusian concept in isolation. That is, I capitalize on the interdependence of

Bourdieu's core concepts as well as the interconvertibility of capital, all within Bourdieu's anti-dualistic framework that connects micro to macro, internal to external, and symbolic to material.

B. Resolving a methodological tension

Two things are immediately noticeable in my research question: It is a Bourdieusian study and it assumes some level of shared experience among Chinese students. So what does that mean and how does that translate into methodology?

If there is literature suggesting how Bourdieu is to be used conceptually in research studies (as in Section A above), there is little solid guidance for adapting Bourdieu methodologically. At the initial stage of my research, I had planned to use Grounded Theory (GT) as my methodology; my research question presupposes shared experience that can be captured by theming procedure across transcripts, and GT lends itself to this form of analysis. But when I began to adopt Bourdieu as my theoretical frame, I became troubled by the idea that Grounded Theory is a data-driven analysis (or grounded on data) designed to derive an explanation (or theory), whereas I use Bourdieu to understand a phenomenon, to make sense of 'data', and I do not use 'data' to develop an explanation. I explicitly acknowledge this study as a Bourdieusian study. There are indeed different possible stories or analysis that can be made out of a same set of 'data', and by saying that my study is a Bourdieusian study, I acknowledge that my analysis is one of the possible versions, and this version is interpreted through the lens of Bourdieu. Being explicitly theory-driven, my study deviates from the data-driven approach of GT.

Although GT does allow the involvement of theory at the initial stage in the form of sensitizing concept, the way I use Bourdieu is beyond the prescribed function of sensitizing concept as background idea to provide beginning point for developing analysis and to serve as points of departure from which to study the data (Charmaz, 2006). So the question for me at the time was: Does it still make sense to use Grounded Theory when my study is theory-driven?

Over time as I learn more about Bourdieu's theory, I begin to be troubled by yet another issue. As explained earlier, Bourdieu's theory is grounded on the dialectic of a two-fold reality by rupturing the duality that separates objectivism and subjectivism or structural and individual. When translated into research methodology, he espouses a "methodology of structuralist constructivism" (Reay, 2004b, p. 432), a "bifurcate focus" of methodology (Bourdieu, 1989a; Wacquant, 1987) that explicates simultaneously "the primary experience of the world" and "the social conditions which make this very experience possible in the first place" (Wacquant, 1987, p. 75). On the other hand, GT generally espouses an objectivist vision of reality as expressed in the assumption of a neutral researcher and developing theory free of preconceived ideas like a blank slate (Glaser, 1978, 1992), although other prominent versions of GT acknowledge perception, different realities, and accurate representation of participants' views/voices suggesting a recognition of some form of subjectivist reality (e.g., Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). So the question I grappled with at the time becomes less about whether or not GT makes sense for my study, but more about can I use either an objectivist or a subjectivist

methodology for a study that is informed by a theory grounded in both objectivist and subjectivist epistemological/ontological foundation?

Research methodology is about a rationale of how knowledge is produced. Therefore the question of what counts as ‘data’ (i.e., ontological/epistemological views) is foundational to this rationale, and the question is what Bochner (2000) calls “incommensurable ways of seeing” (p. 266) which are not to be settled but to live with. So, methodological choice is ultimately a philosophical choice (whether one is conscious of it or not). Further, Carter and Little (2007) argue that there should be an internally consistency among the epistemology, methodology and methods of a study. Using Bourdieu in this study means that there should be consistency between the thinking tools I use (based on a dialectical two-fold reality) to make sense of ‘data’ and the methodological procedures involved that produce the ‘data’, because epistemology guides or modifies methodology and justifies the knowledge produced (Carter & Little, 2007, p. 1316-1317). Given my (Bourdieu) theory driven study, I realize that the question confronting the rationale for my methodology is essentially an epistemological/ontological question: How can the epistemological/ontological foundation of Bourdieu’s theory that informs my study not have a bearing on my chosen methodology? How can my chosen methodology be internally consistent with the ontological/epistemological assumptions of Bourdieu’s theory?

Some researchers conducting Bourdieusian studies using mixed methods approach apparently are conscious of Bourdieu’s anti-dualistic view of reality and his preferred “multi-methods” or “mixed-methods” approach to research methodology (Wacquant 2006,

p. 6,7), which typically includes qualitative approaches (e.g., ethnographic observation, unstructured interviews), quantitative surveys, supplemented with secondary analysis of existing statistical data and of texts/documents (Silva, 2006; Silva & Edwards, 2004). The consciousness of Bourdieu's bi-focal approach to research is evident, for example, in Silva's publications after her Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion study in the UK (Silva, 2006; Silva & Edwards, 2004; Silva et al., 2009; Silva & Wright, 2008). The authors talk about how they engage their mixed methods (wide-scale survey, qualitative interviews, supplemented with other textual materials) with that of Bourdieu. Silva (2006) mentions a "coherence" between data from the survey and the qualitative interviews and its relationship to Bourdieu's notion of "objectivating the subjective" (Silva, 2006, p. 18). This suggests that the author is mindful of both subjective and objective representations of 'data' in Bourdieu's methodological approach. If there is some methodological guidance for Bourdieusian studies using mixed methods, there is little for qualitative studies.

Qualitative studies adapting Bourdieu mostly do not provide justification of how Bourdieu is adaptable to the qualitative mode of studies. In fact these studies show no indication of the epistemological/ontological tension that so troubles me. The most common mode in terms of methodological adaptation is first defining the concept(s) used (typically cultural capital, habitus, field or combination) and then applying the concept(s) to explain 'data'. For example, in Pluss (2013), which declares an explicit GT approach, the author uses Bourdieu to identify "substantive codes relevant to the ideas of capital and capital conversions" in the transcripts (p. 16-17). Similarly Longden (2004) explains that

he uses Bourdieu as “sense-making tool” and “theoretical model against which data can be mapped” (p. 126). In many of these studies, there is no specific methodology being named; they use the generic term “qualitative study” or “interpretivism” as description of their methodology (e.g., Samaluk, 2014; Sin, 2013). In studies that have specific methodologies, there are ethnographic studies (usually field observation, focus group and/or interviews, e.g., Jenkins, 2014; Nast & Blokland, 2014; Barnes, 2009; Goldstein, 2003), case-based study or vignette (e.g., Lundberg, 2007, Longden, 2004), and secondary analysis (e.g., McKeever & Miller, 2004). There is also a rather prominent cluster that uses GT methodology, either explicitly or implicitly; for the latter, GT is implicit in the way they reference their procedures, for instance axial coding or theoretical sample, with the works of Glaser or Strauss & Corbin. Among these studies that acknowledge methodology, their descriptions of methodology often show implicit assumptions of objectivism or subjectivism or a combination of both that are not explicated to engage with Bourdieu’s bi-focal reality framework that informs their studies. As such, the qualitative studies I have reviewed that adopt a Bourdieusian frame provide little solid guidance for a methodological rationale that harmonizes theory and method.

The current two-prong methodological approach is my way of resolving the tension I have in adapting Bourdieu’s bi-focal reality in qualitative research. While Bourdieu’s multi-methods approach has at his disposal tools from both quantitative and qualitative modes of studies for his representation of the two-fold reality, a qualitative study has only what is available for the qualitative mode of studies. I choose Narrative Inquiry (NI) from case-based methodologies and Thematic Inquiry from theme-based

methodologies to represent, respectively, the “subjectivist moment” and “objectivist moment” that Bourdieu suggests a methodology should have to show the dialectical relationship between subjectivism and objectivism (Bourdieu, 1989; Wacquant, 1987). In this study, I use the “subjectivist moment” to represent primary experience – participants’ description of their experience - and the “objectivist moment” to represent the objective relations that structure or organize participants’ experience. I rationalize my choice of Thematic Inquiry and NI in that the two approaches allow the dialectical interaction between the two representations of reality Bourdieu envisions in a research methodology. I can see that there could be other alternatives in resolving the tensions. For instance, the Constructivist Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006) could be one of these alternatives. On one hand, Constructivist Grounded Theory explicitly acknowledges a constructivist (a form of subjectivist view) stance; it takes experience as the reconstruction of what happens rather than what actually happens (Charmaz, 2006). On the other hand, Constructivist Grounded Theory is also implicitly objectivist by virtue of its theming process since shared themes is predicated on the assumption of shared reality (which suggest implicitly an objective reality). So in Constructivist Grounded Theory the two representations of reality can be satisfied, though the objectivist element is only implicit. In my current/final form of methodology, I elect to make both the objectivist and subjectivist representations more visible by way of an explicitly two-prong approach. In the two sections that follow, section (i) and section (ii), I provide the thinking behind my methodological rationale, how I bring to bear the principle of internal consistency and the epistemological/ontological foundation of Bourdieu’s theory that informs my study in the

two-prong framework. In the next chapter, Chapter 6 Methods, I will discuss how this integrated framework is translated into research actions (or research methods) that include strategic sampling, data sources, data generation, data analysis, and representation of data or data analysis. Issues of ethics and “trustworthiness” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) will be noted as they arise.

(i) *Objectivist moment: Thematic Inquiry*

I choose from among the theme-based approaches to inform the “objectivist moment” of my two-prong methodological framework. I contend that the theming procedure when applied across different transcripts (as opposed to within individual transcript) presupposes certain regularities and patterns represented by shared themes, and a pattern is indicative of objective social structure by which phenomena are organized (Bourdieu, 1981). At the same time, implicit in my research question (Chinese students’ higher education experience in Canada) is also an assumption that there is enough shared experience or shared reality among the Chinese student participants in this study to form a consistent and continuous storyline called Chinese students’ experience. And this shared reality can be captured in the theme(s) or pattern(s) developed by a theme-based analysis.

One candidate for the theme-based approach, according to the classification of Butler-Kisber (2010), is “Thematic Inquiry” or “constant comparison inquiry” (p. 26). Although not explicitly declaring an objectivist ontology, Thematic Inquiry is implicit about an objective reality by its presupposition of a shared reality that can be captured in the form of common patterns or themes across a number of transcripts (Butler-Kisber,

2010; Riessman, 2007b). Constant comparison captures the idea that codings are constantly compared to distill a distinct theme (Butler-Kisber, 2010). Another candidate is my old friend GT. Although Thematic Inquiry is often overshadowed by its more prominent prototype GT, I have at least three reservations in choosing GT over Thematic Inquiry.

First, GT is vigilant in guarding against the imposition of existent theories in research studies in favour of the development of other conceptual possibilities grounded on data alone, hence the name Grounded Theory (LaRossa, 2005). In Glaser and Holton (2004), the authors fiercely differentiate the data-driven GT from qualitative data analysis (QDA) research (which is thematic analysis in character). According to them, classic GT generates conceptual theory based on “scientific” methods, while the “worrisome” QDA “imposes.... received concepts” on data, thus eroding and corrupting “accuracy” and “objectivity”. The avowed objective of GT is at odd with my deep involvement of Bourdieu in the research process – how I sample, how I gather data (e.g., what prompts I chose to follow up on), as well as how I interpret them collectively.

The second reservation relates to the distillation of ‘data’ into “core conceptual categories” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 47) or core variables (Glaser, 1978, 1999) or core process (Glaser, 2002). A core variable is often taken as the “underlying pattern” central to theory building (Glaser, 1999, p. 840). It is the ultimate aim of GT analysis. While my study is not disinterested in underlying pattern, it is more concerned with how the salient themes can be explained by the Bourdieusian frame. The refining procedures of GT to derive core categories, which involves an examination of every links, contingencies, causes, and

consequences between major concepts (Glaser, 1978) or theoretical coding (Glaser, 1978, 2002; Patton, 2002), would not be applicable for my particular purpose.

My final reservation is that I do not follow the line by line coding. To me the line by line coding reflects, perhaps, GT's overly vigilant attempt to be completely free of pre-conceived ideas, and to ensure we cipher every possible meaning from each line. This procedure raises an important question for me about whether one can understand things outside of contexts. Outside of context, the same line can be read many different ways, and can take a coder into many different directions. I take a more hermeneutic view that recognizes the big picture as a pivotal element in interpretation (Patton, 2002). I favour a coding practice that takes context into consideration.

Given my reservation with GT, I considered the more generic approach of Thematic Inquiry. Thematic Inquiry supports key elements of the GT analytic process (e.g., coding, constant comparison, memo-writing, etc.) without having to worry about using too much theory, or feel compelled to use line-by-line coding or develop core category. In fact, Riessman (2007) shows that thematic analysis has been adapted by researchers who explicitly acknowledge the influence of theoretical perspectives (Riessman, 2007b), personal values, ideologies, and research objectives (Riessman, 2007a). This makes Thematic Inquiry more aligned with my methodological considerations discussed at the beginning of the chapter.

(ii) *Subjectivist moment: Narrative Inquiry (NI)*

I opt for NI from among case-based methodological approaches to inform the “subjectivist moment” of my methodological framework. I decided to incorporate NI into my methodological rationale only at a later stage of my research process. Even though I did not consciously apply ideas of NI until I reached the analysis process, as it happens, there is certain consistency between my data collection process and that of NI (e.g., open-ended questions that tend to invite stories and the idea of co-construction of knowledge), which frees my concern for adopting NI at a later stage. There are three aspects that I see NI can add to Thematic Inquiry, and answer my quest for a theoretically consistent methodology. First and foremost, NI appeals to my epistemological understanding of what constitutes ‘data’ - the constructed nature of the articulation of experience, and how things are remembered and told in an interview. Second, being a constructivist paradigm, NI espouses a subjectivist reality but at the same time acknowledges the structural basis of subjective experience. This provides the ground for the dialectical interaction with the objective relations developed from Thematic Inquiry discussed above. Third, the emphasis of NI on context provides the checks and balances to Thematic Inquiry, which sometimes is critiqued for its tendency to decontextualize and fracture data in the theming process (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Riessman, 2007a). I am going to explain these three aspects in more details in the following.

First, by incorporating NI, I mean I read participants’ interview transcripts narratively. Clandinin and Huber (in press) writes, “narrative inquirers think narratively about experience throughout inquiry” (p. 1). When I am thinking narratively about experience, I am taking what participants say not as direct description of an ‘objective’

reality. Rather, I take the articulation of experience as people's way of remembering, recounting, and making sense of events that have happened to them. As Riessman (2007b) says, narrative is "constructed story of experience" (p. 65; see also Butler-Kisber, 2010, p. 65). NI speaks to the profound human need to make sense (or construct meaning) of things happened to them through a process of constructing stories or narratives about the happenings (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Chase, 1995; Riessman, 2007a). It is in this sense that I take up NI as a methodology, and not in its more conventional sense such as life history (Butler-Kisber, 2010), or a "consistent story of all relevant events" (Hermanns as cited in Flick, 2009, p. 177). People need not to be conscious that they are telling a story to make what they say a narrative (Riessman, 2007a). The way people recall, recount, and construct meaning of what happened to them is in itself a process of narrative-making. The following sums up the way I take up NI:

People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. Narrative inquiry, the study of experience as story, then is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience. Narrative inquiry as a methodology entails a view of the phenomenon. To use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt a particular view of experience as phenomenon under study (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006 as cited in Clandinin and Huber, in press, p. 2-3).

Thinking experience narratively also highlights the idea that what is being recounted is of significance to the person who does the recounting. Despite not consciously applying any narrative conventions of interviewing (e.g., Riessman (2007a) “sequential linking of events or ideas” (p. 5)), all 16 interview transcripts in different extents evidently contain stories of events that are of significant impact to the participants. While several were explicit about the impact of the events on them, others were more reserved and implicit about the impact (which nonetheless became apparent to me during the course of or after the interview that their participation in the study was compelled by experiences that have impacted on them). So, although not a narrative interview by intent, the fact that I used broad open-ended questions apparently helped to invite stories.

Additionally and equally important, by reading narratively, I also mean I take any recounting of events as context- and time-bound – it is told from certain perspectives and standpoints (hence value-laden), at a certain time and context, and for a certain purpose or intent. As such, I acknowledge the blurry line between ‘fact’ and fiction, justifying an ‘interpretivist’ reading of data.

Second, NI satisfies the “subjectivist moment” in Bourdieu’s anti-dualistic approach to research methodology. Echoing Bourdieu’s habitus and field (see chapter 3), NI predicates on the idea of an embodied social (Chase, 1995; Riessman, 2007b). Just as habitus is the internalized social structure, NI regards individuals’ experiences as manifestations of some deeper social structures. To write individual experience is to write social experience (Ellis, 1997; Holt, 2003; S. H. Jones, 2005; Mykhalovskiy, 1996; Sparkes, 2000). Riessman (2007b) also echoes, “personal stories can embody theoretical

abstractions - sociological concepts can be enacted as individuals talk and write” (p. 63). In fact, Bourdieu brought to bear this “embodied social” or the dialectical relationship between self (i.e., habitus) and social (i.e., field) in his “Pierre Bourdieu: sketch for self-socioanalysis” (cf. Bourdieu, 2008). It is this acknowledgement of the self-social inter-relationship in NI that allows the interaction with Thematic Inquiry in the form of, as Bourdieu puts it, “the internalisation of externality and the externalisation of internality” (Wacquant, 1987, p. 75) that Bourdieu envisions in a research methodology.

Incorporating NI means that I take experience as mediated rather than as a mirror reflection of reality. Taking experience narratively thus is to treat what participants say as their interpretation of reality, mediating or filtering through values, ideologies, theoretical perspectives, interests, personal characteristics among other things (Brah, 1992; Riessman, 2007b), and I in turn interpret their narratives through the Bourdieusian lens. Riessman (2007a) writes, “interview participants tell stories, investigators construct stories from their data” (p. 4).

The final aspect NI adds to the two-prong framework is that NI provides checks and balances to Thematic Inquiry, and thus enhancing the quality of the analysis. In some ways, NI is the diametric counterpart of Thematic Inquiry. Whereas Thematic Inquiry operates on the assumption of commonality (or shared reality), NI operates on the assumption of singularity (i.e., respect for difference). If Thematic Inquiry supplies a ‘horizontal’ (theme-based) analysis, NI a ‘vertical’ (case-based) analysis. While Thematic Inquiry might have a tendency to decontextualize and fracture data with the theming process, the context-sensitive, case-centred, NI insists on understanding the parts within

the internal logic of the whole. NI allows me to cross-check the themes I derive from the theming process for consistency or contradictions with its emphasis on the context, connection, and integrity of data. This is also another reason why I look to NI instead of Constructivist GT (Charmaz, 2005, 2006) to supply the “subjectivist moment”, even though either one would suffice epistemologically. Finally, Thematic Inquiry acknowledges a shared reality across experiences that make social change meaningful, whereas NI can have relativistic implication that renders social change meaningless. One has to believe in enough shared reality of injustice to believe transformative change as worth pursuing. Embracing both objective and subjective possibilities acknowledges that social change is worth pursuing without reducing everyone to a same category. Riessman (2007a) also appears to see complementarity rather than incompatibility in combining the two different ways of knowing, “I believe...that category-centred models of research (such as inductive thematic coding, grounded theory, ethnography, and other qualitative strategies) can be combined with close analysis of individual cases. Each approach provides a different way of knowing a phenomenon, and each leads to unique insights” (p. 12).

Concluding thought:

There is no other way for me to describe the methodological framework explicated in this chapter except it is a one that is informed by my understanding of Bourdieu’s theory and how that intersects with my research question. Combining an objectivist version and subjectivist version of methodology into a single methodological framework

acknowledges two different ways of knowing that aligns with Bourdieu's anti-dualistic view that what is subjective is also 'objectified'. The interweaving of two different ways of knowing is expected to result not in a neat and tidy analysis. Rather it is expected to result in certain representation of reality alongside certain contradictions and unresolved puzzles, all emblematic of the messiness and complexity of qualitative research.

Chapter 6: Methods

If methodology is the rationale (i.e., thinking) for research actions and practices, then research methods are the translation of the rationale into actions and practices (i.e., doing). Carter and Little (2007) say methods make visible methodology. This methods section makes visible how the above combined methodology is translated into actual research actions.

A. Sampling

Sampling to me is about defining the parameters of ‘data’ to be studied. It relates to what counts as evidence or what this study considers as “meaningful constituents of the social world” (Mason, 2002, p. 106). As stated in previous sections, this study regards individual experience/story as a way of knowing the social world. As such, the source of data is drawn from one-on-one interview with Chinese student participants. My sampling strategy, in one sense, can be called purposeful sampling, since according to Carter and Litter (2007), “samples are selected to serve an investigative purpose as opposed to be statistically representative of a population” (p. 1318). In another sense, my sampling strategy can also be called theoretical sampling as literature, Bourdieu’s theory, and personal knowledge/experience inform many of the sampling decisions.

The first question to consider is: Who are Chinese students? As discussed in Chapter 1, Chinese is not a monolithic and unambiguous term, and that Chinese as a unified culture is only a political construction. So how do I define Chinese students in this study? Are they students from China and Hong Kong or does it also include countries

from the Southeast Asia or even those who are born and/or raised in Canada? While not all Chinese students are the same or experience higher education in the same way, my study is nevertheless premised on the assumption that there is at least some level of shared experience among what I call the Chinese students that can inform our understanding of inclusion and exclusion. So how is ‘Chinese students’ to be defined so that it recognizes shared reality without essentializing the category ‘Chinese’?

Another key question is: from where do I draw my sample? Do I draw from the pool of Chinese international students, Chinese immigrants who return to school, or Canadian-born/raised Chinese students? These groups make up the majority of Chinese students on Canadian post-secondary education campuses. Personal knowledge, literature, and theoretical presupposition tell me that the experiences of these groups of Chinese students could be vastly different. From studies I examined (see Chapter 2), the international and immigrant students are more likely to experience disadvantage, most common disadvantage is in linguistic capital (fluency and accent). My assumption is that they are more likely to have experiences and insights about exclusion than the Canadian-born Chinese students. So the question is: Should I limit my sample to the first two groups based on this assumption? Taking this path would likely give me more predictable and controlled findings. But then I question if I am not limiting the scope of experience too prematurely? Should I keep the sample open? In other words, do I want a more controlled but nonetheless restricted set of ‘data’ or do I want a less controlled yet more open set of data that despite possible complication and contradictions could add different layers of meaning and nuance to the study?

Another question is: Do I open my study to all faculties/departments in the academy? Again, personal and theoretical assumptions (although no support from literature) predisposed me to think that Chinese students from a science faculty and those from a social science faculty can have very different experiences in their respective fields. Chinese students largely populate in science and business faculties, and they are generally known to do well in those fields. From a theoretical perspective, the science field has a more universal knowledge base that involves at least as much emphasis on numbers as language, and therefore recognizes more the cultural capital of non-Canadian born/raised Chinese students who are ESL (English as second language) speakers. By comparison, the language-intensive (both spoken and written) fields such as Social Sciences and Humanities would recognize less of the cultural capital of non-Canadian born/raised Chinese students. I also further assume that students from Social Sciences and Humanities faculties are more likely to have more critical awareness about issues of oppression and exclusion due to the fact that many disciplines in these faculties involve more critical analyses of social issues. However, what I know from existing studies about Chinese students in Western countries does not suggest one way or another on this score; descriptions of exclusion are found in a range of faculties covering Science, Applied Science, Business and Social Sciences. So again the question is whether I want a more controlled or more open data set.

In resolving the above questions, I opted to let the iterative and emerging nature of qualitative research be a guide. I would be more exploratory in the initial stage and keep my sampling frame open and broad. I then would allow the emerging data and analysis to

further refine my sampling frame. To circumvent the issues raised for the first two questions (i.e., who are Chinese students and what groups to include), I defined Chinese students as those who ‘self-identify’ as Chinese in my recruitment documents (see Appendix A Recruitment Poster and Appendix B Letter of Information and Consent). Instead of me defining what constitutes Chinese, or presuming which group of Chinese students is best suited for my study, I decided to go with a kind of self-selection process. Self-selection not only lifted the onus of defining off of me, it also prevented me from essentializing identity by pre-defining it. Although this does not fully address all the above questions, I avoided limiting potential self-identified Chinese students who may feel they have things to share on the topic of Chinese students’ experience in Canadian higher education from coming forward. I also decided not to specify geographic parameters. Although I anticipated the majority of participants would be from China (including Hong Kong), Taiwan, and other Southeast Asian countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, etc., I felt that specifying geographic locations could possibly discourage certain populations to participate. For example, Canadian-born Chinese or Chinese students who are native Japanese or Korean might feel excluded from the study. Instead, I set the parameter in terms of language by stating “interview can be in Cantonese, Mandarin, or English”. For the final question about faculties/disciplines, I also applied the same principle of broad sampling frame at initial stage to include all academic disciplines.

In terms of recruitment, I used my personal contacts at McMaster University to pass on recruitment information to their contacts both in McMaster University and other

universities. I posted recruitment posters on McMaster campus. I passed on the recruitment information to the Chinese Canadian National Council (CCNC) in Toronto. I made contact with and passed on recruitment flyers to over 20 on-campus Chinese clubs and associations during the welcome week ‘ClubFest’ at the beginning of the school year. I then did an email follow-up. I also distributed flyers in a Chinese New Year event held in Mohawk College. At the end of this series of recruitment strategies, I find the most effective recruitment still comes from referral by someone (or snowball sampling). In retrospect, with indirect and impersonal channels of recruitment, I had less chance to explain and clarify the purpose and thinking behind the study. This I find is important in recruiting Chinese international students or recent immigrants as research participants. To some of the prospective international students and recent immigrant participants I had contact with, participating in a research study is a novel phenomenon. Having someone they know to first introduce to them about the idea of the study often provide the assurance they need. In at least two occasions, I nearly lost good potential participants because they have internalized their experience as their deficiency, and shied away from coming forward even as they later disclosed that they were grateful for the opportunity to share their stories. Indirect channels do not lend themselves easily to this kind of clarification and assurance. At the end, almost all sixteen participants were recruited through either someone I know or further referral by a participant (i.e., snowball), with me following up in direct contact with the prospective participant.

Snowball sampling is a more direct and personal channel of recruitment. But it is sometimes thought to have more ethical issues than the more indirect channels.

Because in snowball sampling, recruitment is done through people one knows, and that could include relatives and friends. Such connection may be problematic since people may feel compelled to participate due to the connection. To mitigate this, after I clarify the study with the prospective participant, I would avoid asking them to decide on the spot. Instead I would ask them to email me their decision (unless they already decided and indicated no need to think further). This is to allow distance and space for participants to make decision without the influence of my presence.

My sample did evolve over the course of data collection. Although in principle I decided to go for a broad base sample, I was partial to international students and immigrants (i.e., non-Canadian born/raised Chinese students) because I assume their experience would inform more about exclusion and better serve the purpose of the study. I had my first four interviews with either international students or recent immigrants, and I intended to continue to focus on recruiting from this population. Even when a Canadian-born student first became available, I delayed the interview but eventually went ahead with it. That interview partially changed my bias against having Canadian-born Chinese students as participants. As expected this interview was decidedly more positive and optimistic than the previous four. But it did begin to shift my assumption about the difference between the two populations. My understanding of their differences becomes more nuanced and less dichotomous. Equally important, it gave me even greater theoretical clarity. Initially I was worried that the inconsistency of experience among the different population of Chinese students would complicate my analysis. But in fact the different and often contrasting experiences form a consistent theoretical storyline that

gives me greater theoretical clarity about the core concepts of habitus, capital and field. For example, I gained much clarity about the usefulness and the field-specific character of cultural capital which was only fuzzy to me; we cannot totalize one form of capital value (or power) (e.g., Science and Math skills) across all contexts. So from the 5th interview onward, I become more open to recruiting Canadian-born/raised students as participants.

The last point I want to make about sampling is the sample size. I had estimated a sample of fifteen in my proposal. My final sample size is sixteen, mostly a result of the emerging analysis. As just mentioned, my fifth interview with a Canadian-born Chinese student marked the beginning of an interesting contrast with the previous four international or immigrant students and the distinctive pattern continued with subsequent interviews. At the end my final sample consists of an even eight Canadian-born/Canadian raised Chinese and eight from international students and immigrants.

In short, my sampling strategy is shaped by my emic perspective, existing studies, and emerging data. The sampling process was quite ‘organic’; decisions were made and changed as suggested by the emerging data and guided by what worked and did not work at the time. My interview guide and demographic form were continuously revised to reflect these changes of decisions.

I include a table that provides a composite summary of participants’ demographic information as follows:

Participant Demographic Table

N = 16

# of Ontario post-secondary institutions participants from	N=6
Gender	F = 12 M = 4
Age	Range = age 19 to 41 Between age 19 to 30 = 11 Mean = age 30
Marital status	Married/common-law = 8 Single = 8
Self-identification	Chinese = 4 Han = 1 Hong Kong people = 1 Taiwanese = 1 Chinese Canadian = 6 Canadian Taiwanese = 1 Vietnamese-Chinese Canadian = 1 Canadian Chinese = 1
Native language	Mandarin = 7 Cantonese = 2 English & Cantonese = 4 English & Mandarin = 1 English & Chaozhou = 1 English & Cantonese/Vietnamese = 1
Citizenship/immigration specification	International student* = 4 First-generation immigrant* = 4 Canadian born = 5 Immigrated to Canada with family as a child = 3 * Many already have professional or post-secondary credential from home country, including a PhD and a medical doctor
Country/Place of origin	China = 6 Hong Kong = 2 Taiwan = 1 Canadian born/raised (family from Taiwan) = 1 Canadian born/raised (family from Hong Kong) = 3 Canadian born/raised (family from China) = 1 Canadian born/raised (family from Vietnam) = 2
Level of study	Graduate = 8 Undergraduate = 6 College diploma = 2
Program of study	Social work = 3

	Physiotherapy/Occupational Therapy (and related) = 3 Health Sciences = 2 Business (and related) = 2 Psychology = 2 Medical related = 2 Research specific = 1 Engineering = 1
Years in Canada	All their lives = 5 Since a child = 2 The rest = 9 At the time of interview: Range = ½ to 13 years Mean = 6 years At the time undertaking post-secondary education: Range = 0 to 5 years Mean = 2 years
Family Socio-economic background	Middle-class = 14 Working-class = 2

B. Data generation

In this section, I discuss the different sources of data I use and the data generation process. The section will reflect my methodological rationale discussed earlier. I will also highlight the methodological implication on the generation process where applied.

Interview data

This data source acknowledges Chinese students as the knower. I conducted a total of 16 individual interviews. Duration of interviews ranges from one to two and a half hours. Fifteen of the interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. The other one was originally arranged to be conducted through skype. But with repeated technology glitches, we eventually opted for a phone interview. Therefore there was no audio-recording for

that one interview, only notes taken during the interview, and the notes were sent to the participant for verification. These 16 interviews constitute my central data on which thematic and narrative analysis are performed.

The data generated during the interviews is shaped as much by my Bourdieusian frame (i.e., theoretically-driven) as by participants' unfolding stories (i.e., data-driven). The Bourdieusian frame shaped the kind of questions I asked (see Appendix C Interview Guide) and the prompts I chose to follow up on during the interview. The interview process is also iterative as guided by the unfolding story, hence data-driven. The iterative nature of the interview process also acknowledges my role in shaping the process through the constructivist influence in at least two ways. First, the constructivist influence shapes the process from 'formal' interview to 'casual' conversation. Constructivism sees knowledge as co-created in social interaction (Dingwall, 1997; Fontana & Frey, 2008; Kvale, 1996). Knowledge in this context is seen as a relational and contextual construction (Charmaz, 2006; Riessman, 2007b; Butler-Kisber, 2010). I used a semi-structured questionnaire only as a guide and conducted the interview iteratively. I subsequently revised my interview guide 3 times, each time incorporating ideas from previously conducted interviews. The constructivist influence also shapes the fact that in many occasions I shared with the participant how I understood their story/experience from my theoretical frame. By so doing I implicitly invited them to a kind of shared interpretation. I did not plan for it when I first decided to do it, but the moment lent itself to this level of conversation. To me it adds an element of transparency that is akin to member-check.

The second way that the constructivist influence shapes the conduct of my interview is that I attend as much to meanings as to ‘facts’ during the interview. Given the constructivist focus on meanings, I am mindful to ask both descriptive questions (e.g., what happened) and interpretive questions (e.g., what does that mean to the participant) (Kvale, 1996). In a way, the interview process (or data-generation process) is a co-creation of meaning, or as one of my participants (CS6) say it in non-academic language, “the interview has helped me to connect the dots, like beads”.

Field notes

I consider field notes an important data source because they provide nuance and context to the interview that may have important bearing on the interpretation. I made field notes shortly after I completed each interview. The purpose of field notes is to capture or reconstruct the “interactional moment” (Fontana & Frey, 2008, p. 135) or “contextual information” (McLellan, MacQueen, & Neidig, 2003, p. 66) such as gestures and non-verbal communication or reaction that cannot be captured by the audio-recording but could have significant impacts on meanings. In addition, I used field notes to recapture feelings and thoughts I had during the interview which can be easily lost over time. For example, my thoughts or reactions when a participant was saying a certain thing. The difference between field notes and memos (below) is that whereas field notes are the documentation during or immediately after the interview, memos are the documentation over time. Furthermore, the interaction transpired outside of the ‘formal’ interview (i.e., before, after, or in between recording) could also have important bearing on how data

should be interpreted. For example, in two of my interviews, there were exchanges before the interview and during a break that turned out to be an important added piece of information that help contextualizing the data. I will include these exchanges and how they shape interpretation in the findings and analysis chapters.

To me, field notes is an important source of data. They enhance the trustworthiness to the study as they add an element of reflexivity that is important to qualitative research (Carter, Jordens, McGrath, & Little, 2008; Fontana & Frey, 2008; Patton, 2002).

Memos

As mentioned, memos document my thought development about the data over time. Usually that consists of the theoretical linkages I made from the emerging data as I reflected on them with Bourdieu's theory. That is, I used memos to track analytical insights in bite size which later become an integral part of my analysis (Charmaz, 2006; McLellan et al., 2003; Patton, 2002). I see memos as the hub of the analytic and reflexive material that helps me to make connections between emerging data and theory. I echo with Charmaz (2006) that,

Writing successive memos throughout the research process keeps you involved in the analysis and helps you to increase the level of abstraction of your ideas...memos catch your thoughts, capture the comparison and connections you make....throughout conversing with yourself...construct analytic notes to...fill out categories (p. 72).

I organize memos both by themes and by dates. To me, memos is the documentation of the genesis of knowledge.

C. Data analysis (or data treatment)

This section is about the process I perform to translate raw data into the final analytic product. As much as I try to show the process in a tangible way such as using field notes and memos, I want to acknowledge that much of this process is subjective and interpretive in nature which cannot always be tangibly captured. Moreover, I do not consider data analysis as a discrete phase of the research process. Most parts of the research process involve some kind of analysis or interpretation such as in the sampling and data generation phases. In the sampling phase, deciding what constitutes Chinese students is an interpretive act, and has a bearing on the nature of the data and the subsequent analysis. In the data generation phase, what prompts I choose to follow up on during interviews is an interpretive act, and so is creating memos in which I connect emerging data and with theory. So by calling this section data analysis, I mean that it pertains to the procedures I perform on the 16 interviews, their corresponding field notes and memos to arrive to my final analytic product.

To each of the 16 interviews, I read both vertically (i.e., narrative analysis) and horizontally (i.e., thematic analysis). The vertical reading helped me to derive themes within the context of the interview while horizontal reading allows me to compare themes across transcripts. When reading vertically, I think in two levels simultaneously: contextual and theoretical. When coding contextually, I ask the question: how do I

understand this within the context of the whole interview? When coding theoretically, I ask the question: how do I understand this within the Bourdieusian frame? After the vertical reading, I do a horizontal reading to compare themes across transcripts for similarities and differences. In the case of similar themes, I ask the questions: Is this participant saying the same thing as the other participants in this theme? Does this theme add new thing to emerging/existing common theme? If yes, I incorporate the theme to the existing theme and expand the meaning of the emerging/existing common theme. If no, I set the different theme aside, and ask questions of this different theme in the context of the transcript and the Bourdieusian frame. In the same manner I treat any different theme from the comparison of transcripts. The process, a type of theme-refining process until the distinctiveness of each theme is ensured, embodies a built-in validity to data analysis because it is a procedure that requires “much fitting of words” (Glaser, 2002, p. 24) until the best label is found to represent a common pattern. It is through this process that I established the collective voices of the participants, isolated outlier data (or inconsistent pattern), and considered the relationship between the two.

In the following I discuss further what I do when coding contextually and coding theoretically.

Coding contextually:

For each transcript, I code in chunks of text (rather than line by line) to take into consideration the context of a code. In this stage, my aim is to stay true to participants’ original meanings. I pay attention to the context of the disclosed story as a whole (i.e.,

participant-specific context) and non-verbal communication as recorded in field notes (i.e., interview-specific context). Participant-specific context includes, in addition to what the participant says, also biographical details, personal character, value system, etc., that would help me to better understand the standpoint behind what the participant shared in the interview. I consider: Who is the narrator (e.g., personality and value system)? What enables or motivates their narratives? Is there contradiction given the context and what does the contradiction mean? Interview-specific context refers to material in the field notes, which may nuance what the participant shared. NI calls this historicizing an account (cf. Riessman, 2007b). This approach is also akin to the hermeneutic approach (within constructivism) to interpreting texts. Hermeneutics operates on the principle that “the understanding of a text takes place through a process in which the meaning of the separate parts is determined by the global meaning of the text” (Kvale, 1996, p.47), and “out of these interpretations the parts are again related to the totality” (Kvale, 1996, p. 48) and the hermeneutical circle goes on. Simply put, a segment of a text is to be understood in relation to the larger meaning of the whole (i.e. context). En vivo coding is used at this stage. Some salient examples from the contextual codes derived from across the 16 transcripts are: struggle to fit in, belonging, (implicit/explicit) acceptance, “outlier”, recognition, misrecognition, recognised disposition, misrecognised disposition, self-presentation, group work, inward gaze, and reference to culture.

Coding theoretically:

In coding theoretically I bring to bear Bourdieu's theory (i.e., cultural capital, field, habitus, etc.) in the coding (or data treatment) process. I asked questions to participants' construction of narratives and meanings (i.e., themes) in the light of the Bourdieusian frame: How to explain/understand this with Bourdieu and what concept(s) does this relate to? This process involves moving back and forth between participants' narratives and the broader theoretical frame (cf. Riessman, 2007b). I also asked similar questions as contextual coding but with an added theoretical layer. For example, the question about who is the narrator, I added the question what cultural capital does he/she have or not have in this field? For the question about what enables this narrative in this participant, I added the layer "what cultural capital enables this narrative in this particular participant?" and so on. I performed this process with the help of memos. Some salient examples from the theoretical codes are: capital, negative symbolic capital, field-valued capital, culture as different rules of the game, culture as implicit rules of the game, recognized habitus/"white archetype", misrecognized habitus, social capital, and cultural capital-social capital.

Concluding thought:

I have laid out in this chapter the procedures that I followed to bring about the analysis to be discussed in the Findings and Analysis chapters later. It should be noted that, however, the procedures in practice were not always as linear and logical as they appear to be in the chapter. Interpretive analysis is subjective and complex by nature. What appears to be discrete steps are in effect quite interweaved at times, such as the line

between contextually coding and theoretical coding is not always so clear cut. For instance, the contextual code of recognized or misrecognized disposition is informed conceptually by Fraser and habitus. In the four chapters under Findings and Analysis, I will discuss the four salient and inter-related narratives (or ‘storylines’) developed as I bring together the contextual codes and theoretical codes and reflect under the Bourdieusian, whiteness and postcolonialism perspectives.

Chapter 7: Locating the researcher

All research analyses are partial and perspectival (Angrosino, 2008; Carspecken, 1996; Foley & Valenzuela, 2005; Lincoln, 1995). Where I am located in relation to this study has relevance and implication in the persuasiveness and credibility of my interpretation. It is to be checked against my choice of research population, research focus, theoretical perspective, and interpretation for “trustworthiness” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Manning, 1997).

Like at least half of the participants in this study, I too come from A Chinese-populated region, shared common heritage and cultural background, was raised in a Chinese home, and received education (at least up until my teen years) in my home city. But also like the other half of the participants in this study, I received many years of education in Canada. This particular trajectory has implication to the complex make-up of my habitus that not only shapes my higher education experience in the Canadian context, but has also prepared me to understand the participants in my study in ways that would not have been otherwise available to those who live and were educated in either an Asian country or in Canada all their lives. It has allowed me to pick up the nuances and markers of difference that constitute participants’ cultural (symbolic) capital so crucial in this study.

Culturally I seem to straddle between the two worlds the participants in my study are in; although familiar with both, I belong in neither. I remember only several years after I came to study in Canada and went back home for the summer, my parents observed to me how I was unlike and behaved and thought differently from my peers and

even my siblings at home. They said I have been 'Westernized', like a Canadian born Chinese. But I know I am no Canadian born Chinese, although I did feel different when I was among my peers and siblings back home. I am situated more in a liminal (or in-between) space in which my habitus is a complex mix of Hong Kong and Western cultures. To my Chinese peers in Hong Kong, the 'Western' part of my habitus would stand out to them that I am perceived as 'Westernized'. But when I am among Chinese who are born and/or raised in Canada, I never feel more 'Chinese'.

At the same time, I like to think of this liminal space as an advantageous standpoint from which I am able to understand the nuances in participants' narratives, be it about the feeling of invisibility for some, or about the negotiation of a hybrid identity for others. It is in this liminal space that I become sensitized to the intangible marker of difference embedded in subtle ways of being (e.g., habit, behaviour, how one talks and carries oneself), and the idea that certain dispositions and presentations of self accrue more value/currency than others. Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and cultural capital are nebulous and intangible. They are difficult to be measured, observed (as a third person) or even explained, but they can be apprehended interpretively.

Bourdieu in his "Sketch for a self-analysis" (2008) says the self is the starting point of his theorizing of the social world (which is not surprising given his perspective on the dialectic relationship between habitus and field). Similarly, the way I experience Canadian higher education (as related in Chapter 1) from my particular liminal space serves as the starting point of this research. If research can be looked at as a journey of search – a search for explanation - then this research started long before I started to

collect ‘formal data’. My experience becomes the raw material that feeds my interest to this research topic, draws me to Bourdieu, and shapes the research process, analysis, and eventually the knowledge I produce in this thesis. It is ironically in this liminal space where I do not firmly belong in either side that I gain greater clarity of both. Perhaps it is jumping in between two waters that a fish can gain an ‘aerial’ view of the waters.

Implicating myself in my own study strengthens, rather than compromises, research rigour (Charmaz & Mitchell, 1997; Ellis & Bochner, 1999; Ellis & Flaherty, 1992; Lincoln, 1995; Sparkes, 2000, 2002). I intend for the previous two chapters to lay bare the epistemological basis of my methodology, since what justifies knowledge for interpretive studies can only be argued on epistemological grounds. Therefore the two previous chapters represent the epistemological argument for the credibility of my study. And locating myself in the study would make visible the subjectivity from which the epistemological argument springs. Carter and Little (2007) suggest good research is making subjectivity transparent to enable readers to make judgments (p. 1319). Along the same vein, Lincoln (1995) talks about “coming clean about one’s own stance and position” (p. 280) or “situatedness” (p. 280). She observes that criteria to judge quality of interpretive social science research would eventually collapse the distinction of validity and ethics. What addresses validity concerns also addresses ethical concerns; many standards for quality (or validity) in interpretive social science research are also standards for ethics (Lincoln, 1995, p. 286-287). Ethical research demands transparency. Making subjectivity transparent serves to display my “contextual grounds for argumentation” or

“grounds for knowing” (Lincoln, 1995, p. 280). By giving readers greater transparency to make judgment about the rigour of the research, the research rigour in turn is enhanced.

Section III Findings and Analysis

Introduction: A relational understanding of findings: Making the field visible

Narratives gathered from the sixteen participants paint micro pictures that help reveal a macro picture of power operating in the context of higher education within Bourdieu's anti-dualistic frame. Bourdieu's anti-dualistic (or dialectical) frame casts our gaze not just on the individual but on the interaction between the individual and the field. Outside of this dialectical frame, things would be easily read as personal issues; something happens as a result of the person's doing, which often involves scrutinizing the individual and ends up either dignifying or pathologizing that person. Bourdieu's dialectical frame shifts our gaze from the individual to the context or the field the individual interacts with. The issue is then no longer an individual issue; it is a *relational* issue.

Each of the four chapters below captures an aspect of students' engagement or interaction with higher education as a cultural field, and each makes visible an aspect of the logic in operation in the field. Bourdieu's analogy of a field as a game of rules is useful here by having us visualize participants as players in an academic game, whose experiences and trajectories are shaped by their currency or capital (which structures the positions of power in a field). Capital, as discussed in previous chapters, informs the operation of power, and as such, can be looked at as an organizing concept to understand the processes/mechanisms that structure participants' experiences of inclusion and exclusion according to the logic of the field.

The patterns developed from this study lend themselves to make visible four aspects of the working of capital (power) that speak to the logic in operation in the higher education field. I organize this Findings and Analysis section accordingly into four chapters:

Chapter 8: Making the logic of the field visible: capital as currency to play the academic game

Chapter 9: Making the logic of the field visible: cultural capital as “unwritten rules” of the game

Chapter 10: Making the logic of the field visible: habitus as embodied capital

Chapter 11: Making the logic of the field visible: social capital as hidden capital

Each chapter highlights a distinct cluster of narratives that speaks to a distinct pattern (or storyline). More importantly, each chapter speaks to an aspect of the logic in operation that organizes the micro processes within the academy (or academic field). Chapter 8 centres around group work, and speaks to the logic of capital in structuring and reinforcing boundaries by regulating access and acceptance. The chapter has implication on equity of participation in the education process. Chapter 9 centres around the education culture, and speaks to the logic of a specific form of cultural capital, the “unwritten rules” of culture, in operation to regulate recognition. The chapter has implication on equity of recognition, and recognition is found to be a hidden integral to equity of participation. Chapter 10 centres around the self-presentation aspect of the education culture, and speaks to the logic of habitus as a dispositional form of power in operation to regulate academic evaluation. The chapter has implication on equity of

evaluation. The final chapter, Chapter 11, centres around social connection which is found to be the hidden social fabric of the education culture. The chapter has implication on equity of opportunity as social capital is the invisible conversion of cultural capital and that serves to mask the unequal distribution of opportunities. Each chapter, though distinct, is inter-related to each other not only through the inter-dependency of Bourdieu's concepts, but also through the macro logic of whiteness and postcolonialism that underpins the operation of the micro logic in each chapter.

Chapter 8: Making the logic of the field visible: capital as currency to play the academic game

“It’s like I’m a merchandise”

Group work is a common aspect in the Western education context. It is in this micro context that I find a prominent cluster of narratives that speaks to Bourdieu’s idea of capital as currency to play a game. The working of capital is encapsulated in the above quote by a participant, “It’s like I’m a merchandise”. The quote captures the sense that the symbolic value in one’s perceived capital (whether negative capital or field-valued capital) serves as exchange value for access and acceptance to group work. This chapter is divided into two sections to show the two opposite functions of capital.

Section A is titled “Negative symbolic capital as liability”. In this section, participants’ narratives speak to the effect that at the juncture of group formation, they become aware of a value assigned to them, and this assigned value (i.e., negative symbolic capital) acts as exchange currency that affects their access to groups (group work). This cluster of narratives shares a common pattern of feeling ‘undesirable’ as a group member, and is drawn from participants who are either international students or recent immigrants. The purpose of this section is to show that the principle of capital is in operation in regulating recognition and access – it functions as exchange value and as a boundary mechanism that guards against access to groups for these participants.

Section B is titled “Field-valued capital as protection”. The cluster of narratives in this section shares a common positive experience with group work that is marked by

acceptance, belonging, growth, and social network. Except for one participant, the acceptance and belonging is often a presumed given. The protective work of field-value capital is to be contextualized with two different scenarios. The first scenario shows field-valued capital protects by conferring recognition/legitimacy, facilitating belong, fostering social capital, and enabling choice. The second scenario relates to a smaller cluster of narratives that suggest that field-valued capital enables boundary-crossing.

Both Section A and Section B together show the two opposite functions of capital to suggest the operation of a logic in shaping access and acceptance to group work. This logic will become more explicit in the next chapter, Chapter 9, in which cultural capital reflects the logic of whiteness and colonialism.

A. Negative symbolic capital as liability

“no one in the world will group with you”

This cluster of narratives speaks to an existence of a capital-structured boundary. Participants in this cluster largely share the same theme of struggle to fit in. Their narratives are ‘eventful’, by that I mean their narratives contain incidents/stories that are memorable and significant to them. In fact many participants joined the study because they thought they had special stories to tell, indicative of the impact of their experiences on them. Their stories show obvious emotional impact. For example, CS1 describes her experience as “traumatic”. CS14 speaks of being “kind of...hurt”. CS6’s experience so unsettled her that she had to seek counselling (against her usual character), and even after 9 years at the time of interview, she still shows vivid memory and descriptions of what

happened. CS2 displays signs of dormant emotional impact that she said she did not even know existed during the course of the interview - I noted the following in my field note:

...Before the break, CS2 was talking about different incidents of her struggle to fit in...but in a sanguine and upbeat kind of manners, not unlike the usual her that I come to know. During the break and as the recorder was turned off, CS2 began to say, “I don’t know why I am telling you this. If it were not for this interview, I didn’t even know I still remember these incidents”. Then she began to tear up. This is unexpected given her humorous and light-hearted tone during the interview before the break. It has been several years (maybe six) since her experience, but clearly the emotional impact still runs deep.

Characteristic expressions about group works within this cluster of narratives are:

“Oh I hated it [group work]” (CS2), “the whole world would not group with you” (CS10), “nobody wants to work with a Chinese student” (CS14), and “It was just a bad experience, bad group. Bad experience” (CS6). Participants’ narratives speak to an existence of a boundary that relegates them to people of their ‘like kind’ outside of the dominant culture. An excerpt from CS6 below relates what she observes as a “typical” scene in her experience with group work in Canada:

CS6: like in Canada you need a lot of group work and group projects. So I was, like my group was kind of like **international group**, so in my group there was [an Asian], and there was a black and there was me, and there were a couple of like, white girls, and there was another [Eastern European] lady [elsewhere in the transcript tells she was a doctor back home]... there was a...like kind of you know, the Muslim group too, so I was in this totally an international group. It was such a **typical**, like...you know why? Because all of us had the same ‘oh, like I’m, I’m excluded so why not, like group together”.

A similar phenomenon is also observed by another participant, CS13, a Canadian-born Chinese who has had generally positive experience with group work herself. CS13 is studying a Master’s degree in a professional program. She rates her university experience as 2 in a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the best experience and 5 the worst experience. Her

rating stops short of 1 only because of some “disappointment” with “the content of the education”. She makes the following observation:

CS13: Groups that are not chosen that, I find sometimes, like, yeah, like, the immigrant Chinese students or whatever, yeah, as more an outsider.

CS13’s observation echoes CS6’s experience that there seemingly is an invisible line that separates the insiders from the outsiders. I find CS13’s statement particularly validating since she speaks from the standpoint of someone who belongs to the ‘in’ group looking ‘out’.

CS2 has the most animated descriptions and stories about her struggle with access into groups that speak to the presence of capital-structured boundaries. She speaks of her university experience as “unique” and is “very excited” to be able to tell her stories:

CS2: ...I was very **excited**, because, um, it’s like, all of a sudden someone was willing **to hear my story**, and, um, I feel my experience is very **unique** compared to the, well, the so called Canadian, or the mainstream students, Because we are facing different kind of challenges, and we may not necessary have, you know, the social network as strong as theirs. So I find my, the whole **education experience** are probably be different from many other students. And, um, I was just very glad that someone is willing to **hear my side of the story**.

She describes her first year as a struggle, “the first year I, yeah, I would say I was, like, it was very . . . I struggled the whole time”. She finds herself “alone” being the only Chinese student from her home country in the program. She describes a hate-love relationship with group work. On one hand, group work is where she felt most rejected like “an outlier”. But on the other hand, once she gained access into a group, group work is where her fellow classmates eventually “get to know me better, not a girl who doesn’t know anything...and then you’re being looked at as someone who can contribute in a

small group...so some friendship actually start from doing group project”. She describes her initial group experience as follows:

CS2: Cause when I first started, like, the program, when I was, like, so new, people think I’m the, **I don’t really fit in**, into any group, before I met those friends, I think. It’s, it’s not assigned, it’s, you know, you have to choose your own group members. Oh I **hated** it...Cause you just felt, OK, so, I, I will feel **no one wants to be in the same group with me**. Because they probably think, OK, this girl, **English is not her first language**. She probably **didn’t know what she’s doing**. And they probably think they have to **carry my weight**...It’s like I’m a **merchandise**. I have to let people see I’m actually capable of doing things academically. So I’m a **valuable** member of your group if you choose me.

CS2’s words suggest an awareness of an exchange or a trade (“it’s like I’m a merchandise”) taken place at the juncture of group formation. The trade in this case is her perceived value (or competence) in exchange for access and acceptance into groups. She is made aware that as an ESL speaker, her language ability comes to signify her perceived incompetence (or liability), and that affects her exchange value of acceptance. The issue with **language** here is not about a communication barrier, but about what it signifies. Capital is symbolic (Bourdieu, 1984) and by its differentiating function confers superior status to one and inferior status to others according to “the logic of the field” as Grenfell (2009) states,

Capital is symbolic and derives its power from the attribution of recognition, it defines limits, what is and is not do-able, and thinkable, in terms of what is (and is not) recognized and rewarded. Its logic of practice is therefore to differentiate in an arbitrary way according to the logic of the field (p.20).

Language is never just “pure linguistics” but always an instrument or a medium of power relations (Wacquant, 1989, p. 45). In a verbal exchange, it is not just words and grammars

that are exchanged, but as Wacquant (1989) puts it, the entire histories of domination and subjugation between the parties, are also exchanged. Wacquant, (1989) explains,

The act of ‘linguistic exchanges’ or ‘linguistic relations’ are always relations of power...consequently, cannot be elucidated within the compass of linguistic analysis alone. Even the simplest linguistic exchange brings into play a complex and ramifying web of historical power relations between the speakers...(p. 44)

And there is certainly an unequal power relation that underpins CS’s English language ability as a negative signifier (or symbolic capital).

CS2’s narrative about her experience with the West always suggests an imminent colonial relation. Part of the colonial power is about the power of the West to define the East (Said, 2006). Capital of the East is subjugated to the definition (or assignment of value) of the West. In the following excerpt, CS2 talks about “a huge change” and alludes to a sense of devaluation or being redefined in lower value after she comes to study in Canada (i.e., the West):

CS2: And I told you, like, I always be in the **top of the class**. And I’m usually the **popular kid** in the class. And so I’m not used to that...not being understood. Like, understood by my peers. And, or not being **valued** by my peers. Especially you’ve been, you always, you know, you have always been **the popular one. The person that everyone turns to**. And all of a sudden, **everything changed**...it’s [studying here] a huge change for me

W: Changed to what?

CS2: Changed to, well, I become, what? An **outlier**, and I’m not at the center any more.

The excerpt suggests an activation of the colonial paradigm. It shows CS2’s keen awareness of her deflated value once she crosses over to the Western field. She no longer

commands the same recognition from her peers as she did back home. Her social positioning shifts from the centre (as in “the person that everyone turns to”) to “outlier”. Capital signifies the positions of power in a field, it shifts CS2’s position from being “always...in the top of the class and...the popular kid” back home to “an outlier” in the West. It is no coincidence that CS2 speaks in the language of “merchandise” and “valuable” in her negotiation of access to group work. This is reflective of being in a social space that operates like a system or hierarchy of capitals with differentiated values separated by capital-structured boundaries. It is an irony that CS2’s presence in a Canadian higher education institution symbolizes a permeable boundary between the East and West, and yet the East West divide apparently exists in a much subtler and more micro-level encounter.

All the ideas of capital - trade, exchange value, currency, signifier of power relations – fully play out in CS2’s narrative of her experience with a boundary of acceptance into group that is mediated through her English language ability as a form of negative currency.

Similar scenario is also evident in the narrative of another participant, CS14, who is in Canada for just about 6 months at the time of interview. Having earned her PhD from her home country, CS14 is now studying a diploma program in a community college in Canada. The first time I met CS14 (along with several other Chinese students), she just started her study in the community college. Our first conversation left me the impression that she was enjoying school and enjoying her life in Canada. She feels her academic institution supportive to international students. It is a ‘rosy picture’ and everything is

going well for her. Then when I chanced to see her again several months later, the tone already changed, and the ‘rosy picture’ was giving way to a more “struggling” picture. She offered to join my study remembering it from our first meeting. During the course of our interview, I kept thinking how 6 months can make such a difference in her language and tone about her education experience in Canada. She already talked about “feeling excluded”. The same indication of the operation of capital in CS2’s narrative is also evident in CS14’s narrative. Here is how CS14 describes her group work experience:

CS14: Another thing is in class, we have a lot of group work. Um, **nobody wants to maybe work together with a Chinese student**, or other country, or student from other countries.

W: Yeah?

CS14: I think so. I think. . . unless you just ask positively, or actively.

W: What do you mean when you say nobody wants to work with, er, Chinese students?

CS14: Actually, I think it’s a common sense. Because, er, the **language**, communication skill, and your, er, English ability...um, I mean, you’re **limited**. So they don’t want to, um, **give themselves trouble**. May be it, it **will take more, longer to start, to study or work together with us**. Our English is not so strong as them, Um, I need them, I need their help, but they don’t want to **waste their time**.

In her recent group experience, being the only Chinese student in her small program,

CS14 did ask “actively” to work with this classmate, a young white “native speaker”:

CS14: I asked her to be my . . . I, yeah, I’m the only Chinese student in my program. So, yeah, I have to, I have to ask somebody else to work with me...But she, er, yeah, she’s **kind of impatient to, to work with, er, a foreigner like me**. Um, yeah. She, she just feel she doesn’t want to **spend so much time** to, on the, on team project. So, er, we never discuss before presentation. Um, we just email each other for the content and the powerpoint. Actually, just, er, 2 or 3 emails for a project.

In CS14's program, English is field-valued capital since it relies quite heavily on both spoken and written English skills (as opposed to a science program that relies more on numbers and calculation, for instance). Evidently exclusionary boundaries are drawn around this field-valued capital. Like CS2, CS14's English ability comes to signify negative value or liability (as in "trouble", "more...work", and "waste their time"). This signification forms a boundary that CS14 experiences as "no one wants to...work together with a Chinese student".

Capital, being symbolic, can mediate social relations of power invisibly. In the case of CS2 and CS14, it does not present itself visibly or concretely to both of them. The following excerpt shows that CS2 comes to know of this boundary mostly through feeling.

CS2: Um, again, I could be, you know, again over-analyzing the situation myself, but just, **it's the feeling, instant feeling** when I hear that, when I hear that we have to choose, or people have to choose, people have to form the group themselves. It just hit me. I just, I, ...you know, people turn around, try to find people. And I just feel like, are people trying to avoid eye-contact with me [both laugh]. I mean, **eventually**, I will be in some group, but I just feel, I'm always not people's first choice.

Likewise, CS14 express ambiguity around what she experiences – she can name the impact but she cannot name the happening, "Um, I cannot explain in detail, just a, yeah, it's just a kind of feeling". "Yeah. It's, er, kind of, er, hurt". Both CS2 and CS14 are 'informed' of the boundary by feelings. In Bourdieu's dialectical frame, feelings and perceptions are not purely subjective but are socially (or objectively) grounded. The inexplicableness of something that has strong impact is a familiar scenario I kept hearing both informally and in this research from some participants. In Chapter 5, I explored capital (particularly cultural capital) as the subtle power of domination (through

neutralization as a normal way of life). The unsureness or opaqueness of boundaries conveyed by CS2 and CS14 demonstrates this form of power - it leaves individuals feeling only the impact but unable to name or articulate the mechanism at work. The unsureness of boundaries is not an indication of its reality/existence, but rather an indication of the elusiveness of boundaries as captured through the concept of capital.

A final scenario is from CS10 in which similar pattern can be traced in her narrative. CS10 describes university as “an environment that is so isolated...nobody wants to play with you”, and in regards to group work, it is “very difficult to get in a group...the whole world would not group with you.” CS10 echoes CS2 in expressing very similar “unhappy” feeling at the juncture of group formation:

CS10:... you would be **very unhappy**...when there are announcements about who is in what group, and you would be the only one, no group, you would feel a kind of losing face, or the awkwardness and embarrassment, that kind of . . . and you would feel, and , I, I myself would feel **isolated**, that kind of feeling. It is the kind that is not so good psychologically, and you, you would feel, like, oh, if somebody would take the initiative to talk to you and be your group partner, you would be so happy. You would feel that this person is a HUGE [spoken emphatically] good person, that kind of feeling.

CS10 immigrated to Canada 9 years ago and returned to school for a graduate program 5 years prior to the interview. She liked her program and thought it provided her the tool for a career she is having in her field. She is articulate in Chinese and speaks English quite fluently, as she had worked several years for a Asian-based Western company in which English is the working language before coming to Canada. I have seen her as a translator (Chinese to English and vice versa) in community settings, her translation is fast and accurate. This means that CS10 has above average command of English. But in a capital-

structured field, English is not so much about communication as about what it signifies. A capital-structured boundary functions to differentiate what is ‘superior’ and what is ‘inferior’, sort out who has greater exchange value or currency, and regulate access. This is captured in the following excerpt:

CS10: In this aspect [group work], actually most of us [Chinese students] have problem in this aspect. That is to say, firstly, um, as far as we are concerned, even if our **English** is very good, we are not as good as they...it is spoken with **accent**, and ultimately, if we have to discuss the topics or the projects, it is very hard [for us] to move ahead like them in the direction...So therefore when they are doing group work, the local Canadian are in a way are very innovative. So many times they will feel that we are **dragging them behind**. So therefore, when later we were free to form our own groups, we would face this problem of finding group. Especially the area of my study. In my second year, I was doing [specialized area of study]. I was the only Chinese... And people in [my specialized area of study] are even smarter. Many times their undergrad studies are related to Health Care. Sometimes they are in Biochemistry, or some may have been in Medical School, and they do not want to continue there and instead go for the [CS10’s program] route. So it became, like, does not matter how you look at it, I came up short compared to them. So when I have to find group members, people would have a feeling like **I was a burden**. Maybe it was just in my head. I would feel that I am very much **inferior** to them... So, therefore at those times, we would find we **hate** them when we have to divide into teams. That is we would hate them, because we feel, ahh, why can’t they be more open-handed, and, like, accept us...So during group work, it is, like, we did not want to **drag them down**...like, very often, towards the end, like the several of us, students of the same ethnicity. It is that, by and by, you find that even if you deliberately try to mingle with each other, with a local Canadian, they **would not mingle with you**. And, the other thing is, even if you are friendly with them, **you cannot become their best friend**.

CS10’s narrative is a familiar echo of those of CS6, CS2, and CS14 in the sense of ‘not wanted’, being a “burden”, and being ‘ghettoized’ with the ‘like kind’ in group work. But CS10’s scenario suggests more strongly the operation of capital as a signifier of social relations of power. Despite her strong English communication skills, CS10’s narrative suggests that it is what her “accent” symbolizes that is the overriding factor of the

boundary she experiences. That is, the boundary that bars CS10's access into group is not so much about communication skills as about the perceived 'exchange value' or currency her 'accented' English language signifies. What is considered accent is measured against a norm, and norm suggests power relations. Whether one comes to be perceived as the 'like kind' or outsider, or 'superior' or 'inferior' is about the relative or relational social positioning with respect to the cultural norm. That CS10 perceives her accent as a signal of negative symbolic capital (i.e., "inferior to them") and liability (i.e., "I was a burden" and "dragging them behind") suggests a 'legitimated' norm she is measured against. Whiteness is the invisible "reference point" from which 'difference' is measured (Yee & Dumbrill, 2003).

It is no coincidence that participants who share similar negative experience with group work are found among international students and recent immigrants. In the Bourdieusian language, these participants, who went across cultural fields from the East to the West, share similar patterns of struggle in group work also share a similar pattern of capital. They likely embody different habituses that disrupt their abilities to decode the symbolic system of Western cultural field. Bourdieu sees this condition as vulnerable to being problematized. He calls this condition "hysteresis" in which the person's habitus is "thrown into complete disarray. Customs, social graces, deportment and basic meaning will all be problematized" (Houston, 2002, p.161). This vulnerability is likely to be further exacerbated, if the difference is marked by an unequal power relation due to colonization, as the power that defines resides with the (Western) dominant power. Their narratives are strewn with descriptions that reflect a keen awareness of their different

habitués as carrying cultural capital that is deemed the ‘wrong’ currency by the Western gaze. For example, they are ESL (English as Secondary Language) speakers, and they are generally perceived as quiet and reserved (in contrast with the emphasis of being expressive and vocal in the Western culture). Their difficulty in negotiating acceptance into groups as someone with the ‘wrong’ currency speaks to the operation of Bourdieu’s concept of capital in the form of a capital-structured boundary.

Capital in essence is a value conferred based on the “logic of the field”, and any assigned value has an inherent differentiation function that distinguishes at the same time denigrates. In his theoretical construction of capital, Bourdieu draws on economic metaphors. As a currency for trade, capital captures the sense of valuation, exchange value, and calculation. But Bourdieu’s capital is also more than an “economic metaphor”. Capital is what defines the hierarchy of power in a field by its “socially differentiating function” (Grenfell, 2009, p. 22). In Grenfell’s (2009) explanation, capital is the power that defines:

...what is included and excluded from it; it is the means by which field products and processes are valued and not valued; and defines how those present in the field need to accrue status and/or power in order to exert control over it. It is the basis of distinction on which human practice is predicated (Grenfell, 2009, p. 19).

As a system of valuation, capital sets hierarchies and defines boundaries, and that inevitably shapes the nature and tone of social relations in the field.

In this section, I show from a cluster of narratives that, given a united refrain of subjective experience about encountering a boundary in group work and the objective

relational positioning between the East and the West, there is a boundary mechanism that operates with all the lucidity of capital as Bourdieu suggests – trade, currency or exchange value, signifier of social relations of power. Also the colonial paradigm and the invisible norm of whiteness are the immanent “logic of the field” that inform the boundary mechanism.

The capital-structured boundary will become even starker in another prominent cluster of narratives in the next section in which participants are found to be on the other side of the boundary, and who unlike participants in this section, epitomize the embodiment of field-valued capital.

B. Field-valued capital as protection

*“the best of both worlds”
“I have better understanding...they know...you can help”*

Capital excludes but at the same time protects. In contrast with previous section A, group work elicits a different kind of narratives for participants in another cluster of narratives in this study. With participants in previous section, group work stands out as an unpleasant part of their higher education experience. They find themselves always the ‘outsiders’ negotiating access and acceptance. But with participants in this section, group work is a ‘non-issue’. Their narratives suggest the protective, rather than boundary, function of capital. Both functions reflect the logic in operation in the education culture. I

will discuss this cluster of narratives by further subdividing it into two groups of narratives since each highlights a different aspect of the protective function of capital.

In this first group of narratives, the protective function of capital is seen in the way it confers recognition/legitimacy, facilitates belonging/acceptance, fosters social networks, and enables choices. It is a different experience interviewing participants in this group. With the participants in previous section, the typical response to group work is marked by immediate reaction, ready stories, and memories they would rather forget. In fact, many joined the study because they felt they have special experiences to tell (as if only happened to them), indicative of the impact of the experience on them. Their narratives are ‘eventful’ with stories of struggle to fit in. But with this current group of participants, the narratives are decidedly less ‘eventful’ in the sense that there is an absence of the kind of emotions and the sense of having “unique” story to tell that is so marked in the previous section. An obstacle only becomes visible to those who bump up against it. Obstacles that are common to participants in Section A are absent in this cluster of narratives because participants have not bumped up against those obstacles. Instead, their narratives are consistently coloured by a sense of possibilities and optimism.

Answers to question about challenges they encounter in higher education typically yield such expressions as “nothing sticks out” (CS16), “I can’t think of. . . really any instances in which specifically being Chinese would disadvantage me” (CS13) “all my groups have gotten along well” (CS13), “I don’t really have a problem” (CS12), “So, through the year and a half, I actually really enjoyed the education here” (CS11), “as a university student, I loved it” (CS9). Just so their positive experience is not overstated, these participants did

talk about “challenges” and “stress” of university life, but they are typically related to the heavy academic workload.

When asked about problems in group work experience, I usually have to probe and they usually have to pause and think, as if nothing stands out in their memories. Most express very favourable experience, apart from the usual challenge and irritation one comes to expect from team works such as having irresponsible group members who do not do their share of work. To most of them, group works contribute to their personal growth and friendships/social networks. Moreover, for them acceptance to group work is always implicitly assumed, as if it is a given. Whereas with narratives in the previous section, acceptance is not a given nor is it immediate or unconditional, but is conditional upon participants’ demonstration of capital (or competence in this case). CS2’s words in previous section capture the essence of this ‘demonstrative capital’:

CS2: It’s like I’m a **merchandise**. I have to let people see I’m actually capable of doing things academically. So I’m a **valuable** member of your group if you choose me.

The same sentiment is also echoed by two other participants:

CS14: I think, um, you have to, I have to show my hard-working characteristics to **convince** them [group members] I can do some **contribution** to our team. And I have to be the . . . I have to work more, I mean, I have to work harder than others...

CS15: It annoys me that I have to have the thing done for someone to take my word for it you know what I mean.

Why the contrasting patterns of experience, given they are all self-identified Chinese students? If we look at the most obvious demographics of these participants, the link between their common demographics and their decidedly ‘less eventful’ and more

positive narratives of experience can hardly escape notice. All participants in this scenario grew up and have education in North America most of their lives. These participants all speak of their identities as a form of cultural hybridity, ‘in between’ their Chinese influence from home and Western influence from the larger society (school in particular). This bi-cultural embodiment finds vivid expressions in their narratives as “hybrid” (CS5, p2,7), “竹昇 (‘bamboo joint’ meaning a blocked conduit, CS5, p10)”, “in-between” (CS8, p12), “white-washed Chinese-Canadian” (CS9, p8), and “half and half, right down the middle...I definitely don’t belong to either in ex . . . so called extreme sense” (CS13, p2,29). This common demographics marked by a Chinese-Western hybridity and their common positive education experience has strong implication of a habitus inculcated with field-valued capital. Habitus is the constitution or inculcation of the capital structure of the field, and the closer the field the more similar the habitus is (Bourdieu, 1987, 1998). Having grown up most of their lives in North American societies, their habituses are constituted of the life-long socialization of the North American cultural norms (including the implicit knowledge of the Western education culture). It is no coincidence that they share common pattern of experience and also share similar field-valued capital (i.e., capital legitimated in the North American culture). Even the experience of interviewing this group of participants indicates to me of a ‘privileged’ habitus (i.e., a habitus with field-valued capital). As I had just mentioned, it was a different experience interviewing this group of participants than the immigrant and international students in the previous section; I noted in particular their tendency to pause and think hard about the question of

challenge in group work, and the sense that access and acceptance to group work is a presumed given. Privilege is invisible to those who embody it. The apparent unawareness (at least there is no acknowledgement) of ‘easy passage’ and “effortless belonging” in higher education bears a striking resemblance to Bourdieu’s notion of doxa (Bourdieu & Eagleton, 1994). Doxa is the condition in which people who embody capital so seamlessly integrative of the field (i.e., field-valued capital), like fish in its water, that they take for granted their condition as ‘natural’ and just the way things are.

Although the common demographics is marked by a Chinese-Western cultural hybridity, and although many express appreciation for the Chinese part of their identity, as CS13 expresses her bi-cultural embodiment as “the best of both worlds”, their narratives suggest that it is the Western part, not the Chinese part, that is directly linked to their positive education experience. This suggests that what gives them the field-valued capital is what complies to the logic of the Western norms. The Chinese part of their cultural hybridity has little direct link to their ‘easy passage’, in fact, if anything, the Chinese part of their hybridity is a liability as we shall see in the narrative of CS8 in Chapter 10 later. In the following excerpts from CS5, CS9 and CS12, there is a common theme of the English language as linked to their positive experiences in universities. I show that their English accrues value as field-valued capital not because it is a communication tool (as CS9 suggests), but because it signals the legitimated culture predicated on the colonial logic of the “pristine West” (Hobson, 2004, p. 9). So what facilitates their positive experience in effect is the Western part of their hybridity. There are conceivably many forms of field-valued capital in this group of participants, but what

is salient in their narratives is the English language. Their narratives make visible the work of field-valued capital in insulating one in privileged position – by conferring recognition/legitimacy, facilitating belonging/acceptance, fostering social networks, and enabling choice/possibility.

CS5 grew up in Canada all his life. He is doing a Master’s degree in a professional program. He rated his experience 2 out of a scale of 5 (1 being the highest and 5 the lowest). He said if it were not because of parental expectation and pressure, he would have rated his university experience as 1. As we shall see, his narrative is filled with positive expressions about his university experience:

CS5: so, overall it’s been a **great**, um, experience in university. I, I think it’s, people’s been very **open, understanding**...I, I would say that 99 percent of time I feel quite **comfortable** and **people feel quite comfortable** around me...**no problem in mixing with other mainstream students**... Um, so, overall it’s been a **great, um, experience** in university....University has been a **funny, funny experience**.

He speaks of feeling “comfortable” in the university that suggests belonging with the education context. He experiences people as “open, understanding”. He also shows an ease of “mixing” with peers. This ease of “mixing” with peers includes both “mainstream students” and “Chinese friends”:

CS5: ...overall, it’s [university is] **very good experience**. I have no regrets about it...when I was an undergrad, I had quite a few other **Chinese friends** around with me. And as well as non-Chinese, Canadian, friends. So, I felt, like, you know, we all got along ’cause we all **spoke the same language**, we **all spoke English**. And so it’s not much of a problem. I felt it was a **very good experience** because we all communicate with each other in the **same language**. Um, we also were able to, um, **share common interests** between myself and, and, er, non-Chinese Canadian as well. And they were willing, **willing to accept me for who I was**, um, it was, it was very good.

He speaks of peers “willing to accept me for who I was”. The English language is seen to have a strong link to his ease of “mixing” and acceptance, as suggested in those lines “‘cause we all **spoke the same language, we all spoke English**. And so it’s not much of a problem. I felt it was a **very good experience** because we all communicate with each other in the **same language**”. In fact CS5 is seen to have quite extensive social networks. Besides “mainstream students” and “Chinese friends” he just mentioned, he also talks about having many mentors both from peers and from professors:

CS5: I think a lot of mentorship helps a lot. Mentorship from, um, other individuals who’ve gone through the same path as well. Um, they have a lot of experience...they’re in the program or they’re already finished the program...the mentorship really helped. Many mentorships I’ve had are other professors who are in the area, or the students who are in the area, helped a lot.

His experience can be characterized by these descriptions: belonging, acceptance, social networks, “very good experience”, “overall...great...experience”, “a funny, funny experience”, and top it all off is an emphatic optimism:

CS5: ...I think the experience has been very optimistic... Definitely been **very optimistic about how, er, I’ve been educated**...So, I, yeah, **overall very optimistic**...definitely. I, I, definitely I would say that.

It should be noted that what characterizes his experience is a striking contrast with that from participants in the previous Section A – struggle to fit in, isolation from peers, and unacceptance to group work. This contrast will help us to put into perspective later that CS5’s positive experience is a function of the positive symbolic capital of his native English because it signals legitimacy, whereas the negative experience of the participants

in the previous section is a function of the negative symbolic capital of their ‘accented’ English because it signals liability.

CS9 was born and raised in Canada. He was in his second year in a selective program (program with very high selection or admission criteria). He had rated his experience as 2 (in a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the best) thinking that the question about education experience also covers primary and secondary school experiences. Having clarified, he said he would have rated 1 if it were just about university, to which he indicates he has a strong sense of belonging. He attributes this high rating to what he experiences as “more acceptance and diversity” in university,

CS9: as a university student, I loved it- if the question in the questionnaire was um, rate your university experience, it would have been a 1, **fulfilling**. I like it because there’s so much more- for me personally, there was more **acceptance and diversity...**

In regards to group work experience, while CS9 acknowledges that group experience “varies from group to group”, he has enjoyed his group experience so far in university:

CS9: Um, in university I started to enjoy it [group work] better just because like, because it is a more academic environment, everyone is surprisingly **committed** towards the project...I had **pleasant** experiences with group work because everyone was **smart...** because you have those students who are basically at the **top of their class**. This year...like **a few of my closer friends** were like my group members...

CS9 ascribes his “pleasant experience with group work” to the “committed” and “smart” students in his program. Given that CS9 is selected to this program, his “pleasant” experience is partly related to the common “committed” and “smart” habitus between him and his peers. But there is a more subtle relating factor not being acknowledged. CS9’s

attribution of his peers as “committed” and ‘smart” is a form of recognition. In the context of his highly selective program, it can also be safely assumed that there is a mutual recognition among peers in his program that facilitates the positive group experience. It should be noted that not only is English CS9’s native tongue, it is also his strength - he was the recipient of the English award in high school. Field-valued capital confers recognition. And it stands in contrast with participants in the previous section (e.g., CS2 and CS10) in which their competence is misrecognized because it is objectified by the colonial logic mediated through their non-native English accent.

The description that characterizes CS9’s experience is not dissimilar to those of CS5’s: belonging, “acceptance”, “close friends”, “loved it [university]”. When asked what CS9 thinks as the reason that facilitates his positive experience in university, he answers:

CS9: I would say primarily just **communication**...like from the get-go, like there **wasn’t any issues with English** so then there was- there wasn’t really like the language or **communication** barrier so I found it **easier to fit** in university...

Echoing CS5, CS9’s narrative suggests a strong link between the English language and “easier to fit in university”. But given the perspective we have from the immigrant and international students in section A, we know that the value of the English language here is less about a “communication” tool (as CS9 suggests) than about the legitimacy it signals.

What we understand from section A above is that one can speak fluent English and still be assigned negative symbolic capital. We recall CS10 is articulate and fluent in English as she had worked several years for a Asian-based Western company in which

English is the working language before coming to Canada. So she does possess cultural capital if English just serves as a communication tool. But what we found instead is that, her English language, competent as it is as a communication skill, is a negative symbolic capital and linked to her being perceived as “a burden” to group works. What confers on her English a negative symbolic capital is her accent that signals the colonial paradigm of the ‘superior West’ and the ‘inferior other’ (cf. Chapter 3). As Canadian born/raised Chinese, CS5 and CS9 possess English as a native language. The English language that CS5 and CS9 observe as facilitating their positive experience is less because it facilitates communication than it is because it functions as a field-valued capital that signals legitimacy. Wacquant (1993a) observes that a habitus that carries field-valued capital “embodies legitimacy” in their “ways of being” (p. 31-32); in this case it is the ‘ways of speaking’. It is this symbolic legitimacy attached to their ‘ways of speaking’ that is linked to their positive experiences. Fraser (2007) establishes the idea that what confers recognition (or misrecognition) are socially and institutionally embedded, but habitus adds another layer to it that social recognition is also embedded in the body. And contrary to Lan’s (2011) observation that English “has to be attached to white skin” (p. 1670) to be recognized as ‘valuable’, English that signals legitimacy can have substantial power in positively shaping experience, as suggested in the contrasting experience between CS10 and that of CS5 and CS9.

If the link between English as a signifier of legitimacy and positive experience appears less obvious in the narratives of CS5 and CS9, it is lucid in this final scenario of CS12. CS12’s narrative shows an acute awareness of the symbolic value of English,

because her parents deliberately and strategically transported her between her (Chinese) home country and North America every year since young just for the purpose of acquiring the English “accent” and (Western) “culture”. This awareness is reflected in the value instilled in her at young age:

CS12: ...they [parents] want me to keep up my English and to have an [native English] **accent** instead of that Chinese accent. Like, yeah, Chinese people have that accent, that really - yeah, strong- and then people tell you ‘oh you’re from China or you’re from Hong Kong and whatever’ and it’s like ‘nope’...I think it just like fooled them... like ‘cause Eng- well when I was young my mom always told me English is a really useful language, everywhere uses it so it’s better that you get your hands in right now or it’s going to be really bad when you grow older

And this surfaces as internalized value throughout her narrative.

At the point of interview, CS12 is in her first year in a selective program. CS12 was born in her home country, spent a few years in Canada as a child when her parents became immigrants, returned to home country with parents, and then came back to study in Canada three years ago. Since she returned to home country with parents at age 5, her parents have sent her to a summer camp in North America every year for two to three months to “pick up the culture...and English accent”. She is often mistaken as a Canadian-born Chinese while studying here. The “accent” and “culture” she accumulated over the years in camps speak to a habitus congruent with the Western culture, as she said she has been “immersed in the culture” (i.e., North American culture). Because of her (Western) “English accent”, her primary school teachers back in home country used to look at her as “good student”:

CS12: Yeah, in a good sense, in a good student sense. They're like 'oh, your English is so good', because some of the English teacher, they study English like in the book, not really conversation, yeah.

The excerpt reflects the positive symbolic capital of the (Western) “English accent” (i.e., signalling “good student”), and although not explicit in the excerpt and may not even be conscious to CS12, this symbolic value is predicated on the colonial logic. And it is this positive symbolic capital of the English language (as opposed to the value as a communication tool) that CS12’s family went such length to get her to acquire the “English accent”.

In the following excerpts, we see the “advantage” field-valued capital allows CS12 to access:

W: do you see being Chinese as you are makes your experience in university any different? Like do you see it as an advantage or do you see it as a disadvantage?

CS12: No, no it's an advantage

W: Okay, tell me more about it.

CS12: Um, the reason people send their kids overseas is because they want them to have more experience of any sort, with communicating with different people, learning how to **adapt** to the environment and stuff like that... Yeah, **language**, um different race, understand people's culture...because you're more **flexible**, I'd say flexible... In terms of **adapting** to different environment... like you're really shape-able, yeah.

CS12 speaks of being a Chinese in Canada is an advantage. For those Chinese immigrant and international students in section A, being Chinese in Canada clearly is not an advantage. That CS12 experiences being a Chinese in Canada as advantage reflect a perspective that is clearly spoken from the position of someone who embodies legitimated field-valued capital (such as CS5 and CS9). And her field-valued capital (e.g., “accent”

and “culture” she has acquired over the years) evidently facilitates her current flexibility/adaptability to university. Furthermore, in her brief description of group work experience below, it suggests field-valued capital puts her in a privileged position to choose.

CS12: I actually work pretty well for group projects. I had two group projects last term... It actually went pretty well- I don't know if I just got a good group or what, yeah...

W: Yeah? So you had no problem in terms of getting into a group?

CS12: No, it's always my choice of do I want to or not.

The position to choose and have options always suggests privilege. This sense of choice and option is also salient among other participants who share similar cultural hybridity. For example, CS9 and CS11 both express that they experience university as a place of possibilities. Capital is what structures the positions of power in a field, for participants in section A, instead of the options to choose, their negative symbolic capitals situate them in the position of the chosen (or rather the ‘unchosen’).

Capital constitutes the positioning of power in a field, and power insulates. In this first group of narratives, I draw from the narratives of CS5, CS9 and CS12 to show field-valued capital (the “English accent” in this case) signals legitimacy (i.e., Western supremacy), and insulates these participants from the otherwise potential indignities as experienced by other Chinese students in the previous section. Whereas negative symbolic capital serves a boundary function that performs its work in signalling “inferiority”, obstructing access to group work, and situating one in the position of the ‘unchosen’, field-valued capital serves a protective function that performs its work in

signalling legitimacy/recognition, facilitating acceptance and social networks, and situating one in the position of choosing.

The second group of narratives below shows the protective function of field-valued capital in enabling boundary-crossing.

Capital has value only as the field recognizes it (Winkle-Wagner, 2010). Power as such is not tied to a person or an institution, but is specific to the context (or field) that assigns its values. This makes capital-structured boundaries porous and fluid, so that one's position of power shifts from context to context. We find in a cluster of narratives that speak to the capacity of field-valued capital in enabling boundary-crossing owing to the fluid and field-specific character of capital. However, it should be noted that there is limit to this fluidity. There are larger fields of force that have far-reaching influence/power, so that the same value can hold true in many fields (e.g., being white).

There is a small but crucial cluster of narratives that speaks to the operation of capital as a fluid form of power through its field-specific character. Among this cluster is one participant's narrative of her group work experience, which serves as a poignant example of the fluid operation of capital-structured power. This participant shares similar vulnerability and perceived liability (or negative symbolic capital) as participants in section A, and yet her possession of a salient form of field-specific capital appears to shift her position of power, and enables her a different narrative from those narratives in section A.

CS7 is a recent immigrant. She has been in Canada for about 3 years at the time of interview. She went back to school after a year in Canada, and she is in her second year of

a four year program. Before coming to Canada, CS7 was a medical professional in a highly specialized field in her home country for many years. Because of “lots of sad stories” she heard about getting professional licence in her field in Canada, she opted for returning to school and taking a technician program in her related field. Although she is one of the newest in the country among my participants who are international students and immigrants, her narrative is a deviation from their pattern of experience I have now grown accustomed to hear. CS7 gave a rating of 2 in a scale of 5 (with 1 being the best) about her university experience. Speaking of her overall university experience, she says,

CS7: I think in the whole it’s good...yeah, I think it’s good...so far so good...I can’t think anything bad. I think on the whole it’s good” (p8).

The reason she gives is that:

CS7: it helped me to improve my language skills... I like to be around with people, yeah, I like to interact with my classmates and professors, yeah, I like it- and also I like studying... Yeah, I enjoy studying...and also I get good marks, yeah... And that, that’s really encouraging, right? Umm, what else... Hmm, I think that’s it. I can’t think of anything else...that important [laughter]”.

Though brief, the excerpts above sum up her university experience thus far – “good”, “enjoy studying”, and enjoy interacting with classmates and professors. The last phrase “I can’t think of anything else” which appears in different ways throughout the interview (for questions such as racism and anything that stands out in her mind) is reminiscent of the expression I tend to hear from participants who were born/raised in Canada.

When asked about her group work experience, she says her classmates were “friendly” to her. She is in a specialized stream with some forty students, and she says she feels being part of her student group. She is a member of an informal “study group” that

meets “regularly” to “just get together...and help each other”. The following excerpt reflects a reciprocal relationship she experiences in the study group.

CS7: ...and then we have like study group

W: Do you find it helpful?

CS7: Yes it’s really helpful.

W: They are very helpful to you.

CS7: I’m very helpful to them too!

A usually soft spoken and modest person, CS7 speaks with calm confidence when she corrects me in assuming her to be the ‘helped’ instead of the helper in the group. I have at one point wondered aloud with her why her group experience seemed so different from that of others I had interviewed, noting her language barrier which she herself had mentioned earlier. As a recent immigrant, CS7 speaks with obvious accent and sometimes broken English. The same negative symbolic capital that bars the access and acceptance for other participants in group works seems to have no effect on her. What she says in the following suggests that her possession of field-specific knowledge plays an important role in mitigating what effect her negative symbolic capital may have on her.

W: I’m trying to think, I might be wrong though- like I mean, since your experience is more positive than many of the ones I’ve interviewed so far, so I’m trying to think what kind of background you have from, you know, [home country] that may have helped you...like fit in so well with the students here, despite your language barrier?

CS7: Yes, I agree with you ‘cause sometimes even I have like uh language problems but I think **I have better understanding**...Even you don’t have like excellent language ability, but you can- you want- you’re willing to help but you have that understanding, you understand the question...So that **they should be like patient to listen** to what you are going to explain...Yeah, they know you

understand, like better understanding... yeah, They know you're kind, you really want to help them, **and you can help**.

It is not as if CS7 is bragging about her ability. Rather she says it in a matter-of-fact manner that her knowledge and background put her in a position to help. Knowledge in general is a valued capital in academic fields. But field-specific knowledge is even more valued. As noted earlier, field-valued capital confers legitimacy and recognition, and situates a person in more privileged position of power in a given field. This is particularly true in CS7's case, since the narrower (or more specialized) a field, the more valued the specialized knowledge becomes. CS7's possession of specialized knowledge from home country situates her in such position that it apparently affects her exchange value of recognition and acceptance, as evident in her reciprocal relationship she describes with her group.

CS7's narrative reminds me of the following observation by CS10:

CS10:...**Very difficult to get in a group**. Especially my program. But on the contrary, if you were in [one of the specialized areas in her program] or [another of the specialized areas in her program], the, the Canadians, even when they were very good, they detest tedious calculations, and they would very much rather team up with you. That is **not because they are willing**...but because they feel that you know how to do this very well, so it's a kind of **specific trade**, like I would do that other thing for you. So it is **purely very calculating**, and you would easily overlook that disadvantage, because you have the kind of thing that complements each other.

Winkle-Wagner (2010) states, "It is only within a particular field that...capital holds value, produces an effect, or even exists" (p. 7). CS10's observation attests to this idea that capital accrues different values in different fields, and that one's value (hence field position) can change from field to field. As in CS10's observation, her fellow Chinese

students' math skill is a recognized field-specific capital in two of the specialized areas in her program, and their math skill places them in a different position of power than if they were in CS10's specialized area. Their elevated position of power circumvents their "disadvantage", and facilitates their access and acceptance into groups, albeit it "is not because they [fellow classmates] are willing". This is not to suggest that CS7's classmates also not willing, but CS10's words do suggest how certain level of objectification of social acceptance manifested itself in education context, as seen in the language of "a kind of specific trade" and "it is purely very calculating".

CS10's observation also finds support in the following excerpts by CS5 and CS12. They further reinforce the idea of the objectification of social interaction and acceptance in higher education context. CS5 (whose scenario discussed earlier) makes the following observation:

CS5: I think in university...it's not based on how someone looks, or their ethnicity, or their culture that really influences their leaning experience. I think a student, regardless of our, of our ethnicity, we do have, like, you know, knowledge which we share, regardless of skin colour, or ethnicity, um... What I mean by that is, like, um, in academic, we, we go to lectures together, we go to classes, um, you know, it's, it, it's important that, you know, we, we understand the same lecture material as other people...When I came to university, um, I found that we have **shared knowledge**...like, academic knowledge...Um, that's when I start, I start to realize, you know, if it's **beneficial** for myself hanging around only Chinese people, is it beneficial for me hanging around white people.

W: When you say beneficial, um...what do you mean by beneficial?

CS5: I think beneficial is being of a more academic term, or even social friendship term. Um, I find, like, you know, certain people might have. . . purely just for academic purpose, I mean, we like to share all our lecture notes together. Discuss about, you know, fields we don't understand with each other. Um, with that, um, mentoring as well. Um, that's how I see as beneficial in academic purpose.

What CS5 says does not explicitly suggest the kind of calculation or trade we see in CS10's excerpt. But it does reflect a student perspective of what matters or what accrues value (or currency) in forming "social friendship" in higher education context. His words speak to the weight and value of "shared knowledge...purely just for academic purpose" in shaping the way he considers who to hang around. Similarly, CS12 in the following excerpt echoes that social connection in education context does resemble a "trade", and that it evolves around shared knowledge for "purely academic" reason.

CS12: Like maybe oh, you're good at your Asian six-pack [3 maths and 3 sciences], maybe people asked you for homework but they don't really - they won't really get used to you- they won't really know you. They only ask for answers, they came for a reason, not because they want to know you but because they want the answer for the work. Kind of a **trade**...like it's only **purely academic**, not like oh maybe they'll ask you 'oh where are you from?', like that's it, like they don't really want to know you in person or anything.

Cynical that may be, both CS5 and CS12 echo CS10's in providing a glimpse that some level of objectification is involved in the kind of "social friendship" (as CS5 calls it) within academic fields; it is "a kind of specific trade" and "purely very calculating" (CS10). This objectification clearly finds expression in CS2's "it's like I'm a merchandise" that serves as the underlying theme of this chapter.

This second group of narratives speak to the fluid and field-specific character of field-valued capital, and how it enables boundary-crossing, although its work is predicated on a form of objectification.

Concluding thought

In the two sections, A and B, in this chapter, I explored several clusters of narratives taken place in seemingly innocuous micro-interactions within the academic (particularly group work) context. I show that these micro-interactions provide a glimpse into a “logic” in regulating recognition, access and acceptance that resonates with Bourdieu’s concept of capital as the currency to play the game. I also show the working of capital in the way it serves a boundary function at the same also a protection/insulation function.

**Chapter 9: Making the logic of the field visible: cultural capital as “unwritten rules”
of the game**

“It’s a different culture of learning”

In Chapter 8, I showed the apparent operation of Bourdieu’s concept of capital in group work context as a way to understand a less known picture of how social boundaries are reproduced. In this chapter, I use a different cluster of narratives to provide another glimpse into other mechanisms of how social boundaries are drawn to maintain privilege and domination. This cluster of narratives highlights the working of an intangible/invisible manifestation of power embedded in the implicit learning or education culture (or cultural capital), and this manifestation of power resonates with what Bourdieu calls the implicit rules of the game. In Chapter 3 I discussed how culture is inherently political, and a less acknowledged dimension of power, hence the concept of cultural capital. Culture in this cluster of narratives makes visible the defining power (of the field) embedded in the unspoken ways of being and acting that are normative to the learning or education process. These unspoken ways of being and acting are referred to as the implicit rules of the game or immanent laws of the game or the “silent curriculum” (Moi, 1991, p. 1022). Culture as such is to some an unacknowledged resource that facilitates engagement with learning but to others an invisible barrier that disengages learning. This makes culture a site to understand how social boundaries are drawn and reproduced. Since many from this cluster of narratives come from international students and immigrants who share a common theme of ‘struggle to fit in’, we come to see the

differentiating (or boundary) function of culture primarily through participants' experiences of being defined with negative symbolic capital and made "invisible" and an outsider to the western learning culture. We see that what comprises of 'fit' is not 'intrinsic' but defined in such a way to sustain the normativity of an arbitrary way of being and doing. A small part of the cluster of narratives also shows the other side of the differentiating function of culture in signifying that 'you are our equal'. This cluster of narratives as a whole shows that embedded in the most mundane aspects of life are powerful signifiers that can evoke power relations to reproduce existing social hierarchies or boundaries.

It is during the interview with CS1 that the term and the idea of a different "culture of learning" (p. 13) first emerged. Other participants expressed similar ideas but used terms such as learning "format" (CS3) or "learning or teaching method" (CS6). Participants who talk about a different learning culture share a struggle to fit in their higher education environment. For example CS6 talks about "the learning method" as:

CS6: ...[more] interactive...you have to express yourself more...that's one of the factors that I **don't feel fit in**...

And she used the word "different" numerous times such as "the way we were taught back home was totally different" and "how I feel so different". What these participants refer to is the rules of engaging learning in class that are presumed and taken as 'normal' (which also implies 'superior'). It is an area several participants find themselves bumping up against. Among these participants, CS1 is most passionate in speaking about this aspect of her learning experience.

CS1 returned to school for graduate study not long after she immigrated to Canada. She described her first term as particularly trying in terms of fitting in. She used “invisible” and “huge sense of non-existing” to describe her experience. She struggles so much that she said she would have dropped out of the program, had it not for some intervening incidents that happened and people she subsequently met that helped her to put things into perspective:

CS1: ...because I still felt I'm **invisible**, I still felt that I didn't exist. And I struggled, right? I **struggled a lot**. I still feel I cannot connect with people. And there wasn't anybody for me to talk to, you know? I'd be coming home crying. I, I, I cry easily, because I think there was a lot of things I was, I was adjusting to. I think at that point in time, may be it was, I don't know whether it was October, may be the end of November, or beginning of November, something around that time, I desperately feel that I need a, I have a need to talk to someone. If I don't talk to someone, I won't be able to make, like, I won't be able to continue studying in the school. I probably would have **dropped out**. Or, I would have to struggle even harder. Like, I really, seriously don't know if I can make it if, if I couldn't connect with these people.. it[the emotional impact] remains the same, and even when you forget about it, after a few months, right? Or a few years, and when the same thing happens, those emotions come back up. It connects. It's very, it's actually very **traumatic**. Like, the emotion itself is quite traumatic.

Part of CS1's struggle and feeling of invisibility relates to what she refers to as the “difference in the culture of learning”. In the following series of excerpts, CS1's descriptions suggests an implicit or unspoken set of expectations or rules that defines participation, and how she having learned or embodied a different habit of participation in learning from home country impacts her learning experience here in a negative way. Some of the following excerpts may appear lengthy. I chose them not only to provide more context to her description, but also for the Bourdieusian resonance the series of descriptions create. Her descriptions are demonstrative of the connection between culture

(or the power that defines culture) and the vulnerability of being problematized for those who are transplanted from a different culture.

There are several places in the interview where CS1 talks about the different learning culture and her struggle with the new ‘rules’ about participation in this different learning culture:

CS1: Umm, I think there is a slight different in the **culture of learning** too, right? In [home country], we may not challenge you as much...But here, you’re supposed to be a little bit more **active**, and especially when the class is smaller; you have to **participate**, right?...**I’m struggling with that**, right?

In this next excerpt, CS1 alludes to two definition of participation, and talks about the “pressure to participate” with respect to the new definition. The conversation continues after I asked her whether she feels there is an expectation to talk:

CS1: Oh, there is. There is. Because if you don’t talk the professor will ask you. Will, will indirectly say “Oh there are some people that are very **quiet**. What do they think?” Well, then you **have to talk**, because he is talking about you [laughters]...It is a **pressure to participate**...Therefore I would have said something before they called on me. So there is that pressure of participating. I mean I tried to **speak up** when I can. Because...it’s not that I’m not thinking about anything. I’m, I am thinking. **I am actively participating for sure. I’m there listening.**

In the following, CS1 alludes that the pressure to “talk” or “speak up” relates to norm:

W: One of the things I hear is that you experienced a sense of pressure in participating in the class in here, which you don’t feel the same kind of pressure in [home country], or expectation.

CS1: No, I don’t feel as much pressure. However, the classes are a little bit bigger in [home country]. But also it’s the **norm** to be a bit quieter.

The series of narratives above provide a glimpse into how CS1 experiences the new learning culture she finds herself in. She talks about it in terms of “expectation” and

“norm”, which are implicit elements of culture. She also observes “expectation” or “norm” as implicit or “unwritten”:

W: So you mentioned about the norm and the expectation is different in [home country], whereas the norm and expectation in here is about participation, initiative, and so on. So...

CS1: But that’s also **unwritten**, though, right? It’s not something that’s written. It’s... That’s also unwritten. It’s, it’s, and it’s very **taken for granted** too. Because that’s **just the way it is**. You know?

What CS1 observes about the “unwritten” “norm” and “expectation” resonates with Bourdieu’s idea of culture as implicit rules of the game. This idea of culture (or cultural capital) is central to the understanding of habitus (Moi, 1991) and hysteresis (mentioned in Chapter 8), but not nearly as frequently taken up as other ideas in studies using cultural capital (e.g., cultural capital as knowledge of art and music, or as educational credential). This idea has strong implications for the reproduction of dominance and privilege, as it relates to the ‘readings’ of the field, such as what certain action means, how consequential, how to sidestep potholes, who to connect with, where to find information, and so on. Echoing Bourdieu but not a Bourdieusian study, J. Campbell and Li (2008) observe that academic success is intimately related to “academic literacy”, that is, the literacy of “cultural norms and unarticulated rules” which the authors refer to as “cultural subtleties” (p. 390). This literacy is crucial since games are played according to the “rarely explicit...rules, conventions, and strategies” (p. 390), and yet it is this literacy of “cultural subtleties” that enable one to navigate and strategize, and come out ahead in the game. Studies using this idea show its complex and multi-faceted role in the reproduction of

social hierarchies. For example, Lundberg (2007) takes up the idea of the implicit knowledge of culture as a crucial resource in navigating the complex maze of the education game - how first generation students' disadvantage in unspoken rules can discourage them to the point of quitting. Similarly, Longden's (2004) retention study in a higher education institution talks about "cultural codes", how students' early departure is due to being "unable to negotiate the formal and informal structure" or "their way round the system" (p. 130-131), and Smith (2004) argues that access to the "hidden curriculum", which is "the unwritten and unspoken norms, values, and expectations of the institution", is crucial to helping students improve their ability and performance in the formal curriculum. The idea of implicit education culture (or "unwritten" rule) as a "hidden" but crucial resource in the participation of the education game is also found in this study, most evident in the narratives of CS5 and CS11 who are among the 'fit in's' in this study.

The accumulated cultural knowledge, which is mostly implicit, that confers power and status is a form of cultural capital. We recall from Chapter 8 that those participants who embody a cultural hybridity appear to be insulated by their cultural capital; they enjoy an easier sense of belonging (or fitting in) in the education culture, easier acceptance (and recognition) by peers, and are situated in a likely position to choose than to be chosen. If we read in between those lines about their cultural hybridity from the angle of culture as implicit rules of the game, we can easily see the embodiment of two sets of implicit cultural knowledge. The following excerpt from CS5 captures his embodiment of two sets of cultural awareness and knowledge, and how that translates into "balancing the dynamics with the teacher and classmates around me".

CS5: I think that, er, being **Chinese Canadian**, how I am part of, **kind of two cultures**. Um. Being, being . . . er, I came from a Chinese household. So, a lot of them, well, my parents and my family taught me a lot of **very traditional Chinese ways of thinking towards education**. Some examples are being very, er, being very, er, respectful to the teacher; being very punctual; responsible with school work; and, and then when also in, **in contrast**, when I go into, to the public school system, and the **Canadian system**, I mean, it's a very multicultural society. It's not just, er, what my, my parents taught me, and some . . . it's **not just one way of thinking**. I have to be very diverse in how I approach people. Er, I can't always assume, like, if, um, if I show respect to the teacher, I should, I should expect the same in return. The public education system. Er, I find that **I have to accommodate for both, both worlds**. And, um, just really, er, be very **flexible in how I think**, and be very open to ideas. Um, I, I, I think, like, um, the fact . . . **contrast**, like, because it's **my influence as well as on the outside**, be open to ideas, willing to listen, and seeing how we can kind of meet, um, **compromise in how I learn, um, how I learn, how I perceive ideas**. Um, . . . yeah, it's, it's, er, it's like I am like a **hybrid**, almost, it's both, both, **both, both sides**, like, **Canadian as well as Chinese**. That's how I explain my experience. Um, mainly **balancing the dynamics** with the teacher and classmates around me.

The excerpt speaks to CS5's embodiment of a cultural hybridity, as he talks about "both worlds", "both sides", "Canadian as well as Chinese", and "like a hybrid". What constitutes in part of his cultural hybridity is the awareness of two different or contrasting systems of meaning and value growing up in "a Chinese household" and the "[Canadian] public school system". This awareness is evident in the way he talks about "not just one way of thinking". He talks about the "contrast" between his family's "very traditional Chinese ways of thinking towards education" and "the Canadian "[education] system", that is, the contrast in the implicit meaning and value between the former system and the latter system. In his example, respect to teachers has a positive meaning and is valued in the traditional Chinese meaning/value system, whereas in "the Canadian system", respect does not necessarily carry the same positive value or meaning, as he said, "I can't always assume, like, if, um, if I show respect to the teacher, I should, I should expect the same in

return.” Depending how the respect is shown, the gesture of respect can be taken as submissiveness and that could be attached with a negative signal in the Western system that values confidence and assertiveness. The implicit meaning system (or implicit rules of the game) is only brought to the consciousness when one experiences an alternate meaning system, and would likely remain invisible for those who live in the same meaning system all their lives. CS5’s experience with the meaning of “respect” shows such awareness being a cultural “hybrid”.

A more obvious example is found in the narrative of CS11. CS11’s particular positioning apparently enables in her an insight of the significant connection between mastering the implicit rules of culture and life chances. Although not born in Canada like most of those who embody the cultural hybridity, CS11 came to Canada as a young child with her immigrant parents. Also like her Canadian born/raised counterparts, CS11’s narrative of higher education experience reflects that of the ‘insiders’ - a similar ease of belonging, fitting in, and acceptance. But at the same time her childhood experience as new immigrant with her family has apparently also added to her an ‘outsider’ perspective. This combination of ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ perspectives seems to have enabled in her a significantly different and more nuanced narrative that is not evident in the narratives of her Canadian born/raised counterparts in this study. Her narrative reflects an insight that belies her years (she is among the youngest in this study) – an insight about the material consequences associated with the knowledge and embodiment of the implicit rules of culture.

CS11 immigrated to Canada with parents when she was six years old. She remembers not knowing English, the experience of “learning the alphabets...connecting with people that I thought didn’t look like me”, and having to “overcome certain obstacles”. She remembers what it is like that “my appearance is different...My behaviour is different”. She remembers her mother had to face “a lot of racism” at work. This background apparently matures her beyond her years. Her narrative reflects an added layer of ‘cautious optimism’. For example, in speaking about her future prospect, CS11 indicates that she is optimistic but also realistic, “I do see a quite positive picture for me in the future. But I definitely. . . for me, I definitely don’t think there is, like, no obstacles.” But despite her cautious outlook, CS11’s description of university experience is decidedly a positive one. She rates her university experience as 1 (in a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the best).

CS11: So when I first came here [university], um, I actually didn’t really need a, a time, I **didn’t really have a time where I felt, like, isolated**. I was, like, everyone was nice to me. And I had a chance of, like, a lot of my good friends now in a really small class. Like, it was a class of fifteen, and I had a chance to meet some of my **really good friends** right now. So, through the year and a half, I actually really enjoyed the education here. It was really, really, um, **enriching**. Not only in the knowledge wise, but also in the **group works**, because we also have a lot of group works as well. It’s, like, it’s group after group, and it’s like seven, eight people. So that was definitely a new thing for me, but it was, it was **fun**. It was nice to know other people in the program...I definitely have **support from my peers**...Um, that’s, like, **all of the pros**.

Her university experience is coloured by expressions of “fun...group works”, “really good friends”, “have support from my peers”, and “enriching” (echoing the narratives of CS5 and CS9 earlier whose experiences are characterized by fun, acceptance, peer networks, and personal growth). At one point, CS11 connects her current ‘felicitous’ state

of fitting in in higher education to a distinct “transition” (as she calls it) during her mid-teens from which she says she has emerged emotionally stronger and more independent. The transition is driven by her growing awareness of her precarious family situation (mostly financial) in which she says if she falls, there will be no one to take care of her family and herself, so she needs to “step up” in order to ensure a “stable” future:

CS11: I can mess up on every step, but I can't give up. That's what I know. So, even, like, for higher education, I still know that. I have to keep rolling, um, there's things that I need to do to insure that my future is, um, stable.

Part of this transition reflects an acute awareness of the consequential connection between informal cultural rules (i.e., something as mundane as how to dress and her tone of voice) and “let others look at me as equal”:

CS11: I decided to be stronger. I decided to be more, er, sociable, to, to not just...I think, like, of course, if I see Asians, it's easier for me to socialize with them because I feel like there's more, I, I don't even know why. It's, like, more **topics** in common. But I force myself to go out to, to join, like, clubs and stuff, so I can learn to socialize with Cauca . . . like, the so called Caucasian people...And then, um, I, I, and then...It's just I started looking at, because, like, er, traditional **Chinese clothing, attire**, are a little bit different from here. It is. Yeah..So I started, er, **looking into how people dress here**. Not necessarily, like, the people who, like, don't wear a lot of clothing on, but like, like, the more normal, like, what I would suspect as normal clothing amongst the population. The **mainstream peers**. So, I, um, turn focus . . . like, I, I **did work on all those aspects**, so that I can prepare myself and to, to **let others look at me as equal**... Er, because I felt, like, um, like, I needed, uh, uh, I needed to prepare myself **so that, um, others will look at me as their equal, if not better**. Like, I, I **don't want to be looked down upon...if I dressed differently, if I talked differently, if I, like, even, even, like, my tone of voice, like, accent, and knowledge**, like, a lot, like, everything that you can think of that, that other people can see. Like all of that. Like, **all those aspects definitely influence how other people look at me**. And then, at that time, I, **I think I wanted to be, like, equal, or better**.

CS11's words reflect a keen awareness that the informal rules of culture have significant bearing on one's access to recognition as “equal”. The statement that “I needed to prepare

myself so that others will look at me as their equal, if not better” presupposes that if she did not work on all those aspects (i.e., how to dress, tone of voice), she will not be looked upon as an equal.

CS11’s narrative about the connection between informal rules of culture and recognition as “equal”, and her perception of the crucial bearing of this connection on a “stable future”, strikes a strong chord in Nancy Fraser’s conceptualization of recognition justice. Apparently echoing Bourdieu’s idea of cultural capital which signifies recognition and legitimacy, Fraser (2007) talks about recognition justice as a cultural dimension of justice in her tri-partite model of justice (i.e., economic, cultural, and political dimensions of justice, with recognition justice being the cultural dimension). Fraser contends that recognition injustice is when people are being “prevented from interacting on terms of parity by institutionalized hierarchies of cultural value that deny them the requisite standing; in that case they suffer from status inequality or misrecognition” (Fraser, 2007, p. 20). Status is a symbolic entity; it is a symbolic representation of the hierarchy of social values. In many ways, cultural capital serves the status function, being a signifier of the hierarchy of cultural values defined by a field. But whereas Fraser focuses on the status recognition mediated by the legal or institutional (hence the acknowledged) hierarchies of values, cultural capital also makes the connection to the unacknowledged or the unspoken hierarchies of cultural values that are embodied. CS11’s keen awareness of how she dresses and talks has significant bearing on whether she will be recognized as “equal” speaks to this informal or “unwritten” rules of embodied culture as a crucial yet hidden resource. Equally important, that CS11 feels that she has to abide by these informal or

“unwritten” rules of culture in order to be “interacting on terms of parity” with her “mainstream peers” speaks to the hidden power and domination of these “unwritten” rules. Putting what CS11 says in the context of Fraser’s recognition justice makes the justice/injustice nature of the implicit rules of culture more visible.

In studies about cultural capital, cultural capital is usually taken as a resource (cf. Chapter 3), including cultural capital in the form of implicit rules of the game (e.g., Lundberg, 2007). A resource has a tangible connotation, and can have implication on power and inequity but not always explicit. What stands out more in the cluster of narratives in this chapter is the intangible facet of the “unwritten” rules as a power that defines.

In a previous excerpt, CS1 alludes to two understanding or definitions of participating – whereas the Western learning norm expects “talk” and “speak[ing] up”, CS1 considers her “thinking” as an “actively participating”. But it is clear from the following excerpt that it is the latter gets negatively defined or labeled:

CS1: ...and, I mean, I do have English speaking profs from [home country], and there are visiting lecturers from the States to [home country], or from Britain to [home country] to teach. So they always made the same comment, Chinese students are more **passive learners**... So they, they actually, they reflect back to me. They’re saying that Chinese students are more **passive, and they don’t ask questions** that much, and blah, blah, blah, blah...and that may be a stereotype, and that may be a bias or assumption, but I do have the idea of, you know, ur, western students are more **active**, they’re more **assertive**, they’re more able to um, they’re more able to **raise their opinions** in classes than Chinese students.

Language carries social meanings and values. Implicit in the language used in the above excerpt is a hegemonic standard/definition of participation, or what Rollock (2014) calls

the “unspoken acts of cultural distinction” (p. 449) – “active”, “assertive”, “raise their opinions”. And this standard is as CS1 says earlier - “unwritten”, “taken for granted”, and “just the way it is”. Measuring against this default standard, Chinese students are assigned the contrasting image of “passive learners”. In fact, the duo theme or duo pattern - being in a different field defined by different (implicit) rules and being problematized (or negatively valued) - consistently surfaces in this cluster of narratives. This duo theme suggests that the focus in reading participants’ experience with the new learning culture is not about which educational culture is better (as the excerpt above may be read in such a way), but indicative of a power that defines embedded in the hegemonic Western learning culture. This defining power clearly is relational and not geographically confined. As in CS1’s narrative, it is relational between her (the ‘imagined East’) and the ‘imaged West’. And it is not because CS1 is in Western soil where she is a minoritized individual. The “English speaking profs” in CS1’s home country where Chinese is the majority apparently still have that powerful effect in defining or influencing Chinese students’ perception and belief that Western students are “active” learners whereas Chinese students are “passive learners”. This power is best to be understood in the light of the legacy of colonization and the subsequent relational dynamics between the East and West. The unequal power due to colonization situates the West in a position to define the East as its contrasting image (Said, 2006). Chinese students are constructed negatively only because the West wants to construct themselves as their (i.e., Chinese students) superior opposite. Hobson (2004) explains it this way, the East is constructed “as the West’s passive opposite” to perpetuate the “myth of the pristine West” (Hobson, 2004, p. 9). It

does not matter that part of CS1's 'lack of participation' stems from a different meaning system she internalized from home country:

CS1: Um, Chinese culture, we're **taught to be not be assertive**. If you're **assertive you are rude**, right?...my quiet, my silence doesn't necessarily mean that I'm not participating. My quietness just means that my understanding of raising my opinion may be rude or it may be...it takes me a longer time to, to raise my opinion.

To CS1's internalized meaning system, being "assertive" is "rude", and that "listening" and "thinking" are "actively participating". But that meaning system matters little. What matters is who gets to impose an implicit (or "unwritten") system of meaning and value that people "take for granted" as legitimate or "just the way it is". This suggests the imminent working of a power that defines, since the lethality of a power that defines lies in its capacity of making what is arbitrary to appear intrinsic (or legitimate) and to be "taken for granted" as "just the way it is". By arbitrary, I mean that the value of a given rule is not intrinsic to the rule but rather it is assigned (arbitrarily) to serve a certain purpose or interest of the field. Fowler (2009) sees that "the more legitimate the practice (one that 'goes without saying'), the greater the symbolic domination" (p. 150).

Bourdieu suggests the capacity to define or impose meaning/value is an ultimate power, since it is the power that affects material reality, or as Bourdieu calls it, "the power to make things with words" (Bourdieu, 1989a, p. 23), or the symbolic power. We can see suggestion of the working of symbolic power in CS1's narrative in the way it affects the reality she experiences as a higher education student. Symbolic power can operate as a power that defines "the legitimate mode of perception" (Bourdieu, 1985, p.

730) of the social world, and its operation is suggested in CS1's narrative in the way she is perceived (or treated) by the dominant 'other' and the way she perceives herself.

One of the characteristic words CS1 uses to describe her early experience as a higher education student in Canada is feeling "invisible". We recall from a segment of an earlier excerpt in which CS1 expresses, "...because I still felt I'm invisible, I still felt that I didn't exist. And I struggled, right? I struggled a lot." We also recall from the last chapter that one's perceived capital reflects one's positioning in the field, and affects how one gets recognized, or rather 'misrecognized' as in the case for most of the international and immigrant students. For those students who are perceived with negative symbolic capital, their 'misrecognition' is translated into great difficulty in negotiating access and acceptance into group work. For CS1, it evidently is translated into rendering her invisible (or being perceived as invisible). In addition to feeling invisible, the following excerpt also suggests that CS1 is rendered voiceless as well:

CS1: But like I said, I'm a very outgoing person, so in classes in [home country], I probably will be the one **that talked quite a bit**. Urr, but here, it is not that I don't **talk**, I think because I'm still testing the water, so I don't take initiative to talk a lot. That's one reason...And when I **do take the courage to say** it, and then it is **not being appreciated** somehow, or it's just being "Oh, OK, she said that. Let's move on." Then I feel that, "Well, why am I saying anything anyway. Because **whether I say or not say it, doesn't make a difference**. I don't feel like I am contributing. I don't feel like that I am appreciated. And my point seems to be **irrelevant**. That discourage me from continuing to join the discussion and stuff...I think the key is, the reason I don't say what I say is because **I don't feel that what I say makes a difference**. I don't feel what I say is **relevant**. I feel what I say is considered to be **stupid**, therefore I don't want to talk.

What stands out in the narrative is the 'under-acknowledgement' or 'misrecognition' of someone who does not embody that culture. CS1 describes herself as someone who

“talked quite a bit” in class back in her home country. And elsewhere in the interview she also says she is the ‘chatty’ and friendly type by nature. But under the defining power of the “unwritten” learning norm, she evidently is rendered quiet by the subjection of ‘misrecognition’ and the negative effects it creates (e.g., “not appreciated”, “doesn’t make a difference”, “irrelevant”, “considered to be stupid”). In fact CS1 is not alone in her experience. Her narrative echoes closely to Hsieh (2007), a narrative study about the experience of a Chinese international student studying in a university in the U.S. In the study, the Chinese female student’s quiet and non-vocal learning style was perceived as “stupid”, “incompetent” and “inferior” to her more assertive and vocal American counterparts (Hsieh, 2007, p. 389). The study points to the unequal power relationships between international students and American students that renders her “voiceless and invisible” (p. 379). While Hsieh (2007) links the female student’s experience to “power and exclusion” (p. 388), the nature of that power is not explicated. In the following excerpt, CS1 further alludes to how the defining power of the “unwritten” norm (of her new learning culture) operates to construct perception and affect the way she gets treated:

CS1: Somehow I feel that people [classmates] feel that they are more **superior** than I am...I think, for me, in this **culture**...you have to toot your own horns [talk, assertive]. In Chinese culture, that’s *rude* to do that. You don’t praise or brag about yourself. That’s a no, no. But in North American culture, if you don’t toot your own horn, people won’t hire you. Therefore you need to toot your own horn. And because that’s the culture. Therefore my cohorts, they toot their own horns. They think that they’re really **intelligent**...and that’s how I felt, and, and, and so I feel that they somehow seem to be more **superior** than me. And, ur, when I was doing the TA shift, I do feel that the professor **treated** this student much better than she treated me. She had more interaction with him. She **acknowledges** more about what he says. And I don’t know whether because he is a male student, and I’m a female student, or because he is a white male student, and I’m a Chinese female student. So I don’t know whether race plays out or whether gender plays

out. I have no idea. So, for the first semester, I do not feel that this prof treated me well at all... So, that was the first semester, you know. **Very miserable, unhappy, not fitting in...**

The excerpt suggests the operation of the defining power in constructing CS1 as the inferior opposite of the “superior” and “intelligent” West, and how that affects her not being treated as well as her white male counterpart by “the professor”, for example, she mentions that she is not “acknowledged” (or perceived as “relevant” or ‘worthy’) as much as her white male counterpart.

The evidence of the operation of this defining power (or symbolic power) in narratives like those of CS1 and Hsieh (2007) is as intangible (or lack of concrete tangible evidence) as it is complex. It is not an active form of power and it mediates inter-subjectively (i.e., interaction between internal and external processes); it takes the form of symbolic domination (see Chapter 4). In her ethnographic observation of a graduate classroom in which white students (who are the minority in the class) dominate the discussion/attention over Asian students (who are the majority in the class), Diangelo (2006) suggests that, the “unspoken, unmarked classroom norms” is a quiet domination that “bolster the advantageous social position of White students at the expense of students of colour” (p. 1985). Narratives like those of CS1 and Hsieh (2007) contain all the lucidity of what Bourdieu calls symbolic violence – the effect or product of the exercise of symbolic power (or symbolic domination).

The operation of symbolic power embedded the “unwritten” rules of the Western learning culture also finds expression in the narrative of another participant CS3. Echoing

CS1's "learning culture", CS3 used the term "format" to express the different (implicit) rules she experienced in her earning context. The duo theme is present in her stories about "discussion format" and "critical thinking". CS3 started her graduate study after two years in Canada. She describes her experience in the Master's programs as "unhappy"; there were incidents that made her feel "frustrated" and "discouraged". But the sense of struggle finds more tangible expression when she described how her "unhappy" experience in the Master's program curtailed her academic aspiration to go on with PhD study:

CS3: So, actually in my program, the program I was taking, um, you could have continued to PhD program, as long as you applied. But I didn't. I don't want to go. . . I don't want to continue the PhD program. Cause I, I don't like it. And I feel, um, I'm **not happy** when I was taking the program...I'm . . . I was not very happy. And, er, um, why do I need to **torture** myself again, so, yeah, I didn't apply. Actually, if I'm . . . apply, I probably can continue to PhD program...Cause our program, the program I, er, I'm taking, start with the Master's program. And, er, but they actually. . . once they accept you, they consider that you will continue your education into the Phd program. They are combined together. So I just need to submit a form and then I can just continue the PhD program. But I don't want to do this.

W: Had your experience been different when you were doing your Master's program, would you have gone on with PhD?

CS3: Probably.

From a relational perspective, CS3's academic aspiration is less a reflection of her personal choice than the relational dynamics between her and the structure of the field. To Bourdieu, the subjective always has an objective stamp on it, and social relations of power can shape the imagination of possibility, as the "objective limits become a sense of limits" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 471). This study does not aim to measure "objective limits",

but there is apparent indication in CS3's narrative relating to her experience with the new "format" (or implicit rule of the field) that suggests her "unhappy" experience and eventual "self-imposed limitation" (Liddle & Michielsens, 2007, p. 140) is at least in part effect of the imposition of a dominant culture (or symbolic domination). While symbolic power takes the form of the power that defines the "legitimate mode of perception" of the social world, with CS3 it is manifested as "the capacity to secure compliance to domination through the shaping of beliefs and desires, by imposing internal constraints under historically changing circumstances" (Swartz, 2007, p. 105).

Like CS1, CS3 also discovered there are different (implicit) rules to her new learning culture. One of them she describes as the "discussion format". CS3 notes that spoken communication "is valued in this country". She had to "force" herself to speak and express her ideas. Comparing with her familiar "lecture format" from home country, CS3 said that she finds the "discussion format" "challenging", because it is not her "habit" of learning nurtured back home.

In a different field played by different rules, CS3 talks about how she receives negative evaluation by the new rule of participation:

(note: red ink indicates English translation from the original language CS3 used during interview)

CS3: **One course is in lecture format, that is statistics. Statistics is in lecture format. And then the others are basically in discussion format...** You're asked to read some papers and then, er, just to discuss the papers. So, um, I am more familiar with the, er, the format using lectures than the format using discussion... So, um **I felt I do not like discussion very much. Discussion is actually very challenging... Because you not only have to read a lot of papers, and then you have to be able to understand what others are saying. Because during the**

process of discussion, first of all, the other people spoke relatively faster. And then, secondly, um, some of the people, when they are speaking, they are not very organized in their flow of thought, and they began to speak. So, because of these two reasons, I felt that the discussion is relatively challenging. Compared to lecture. And also, you have to force yourself to speak as well. That is, you yourself have to involve in this discussion. But, when you cannot understand what you have heard, and you have to get involved, this is a very hard thing.

W: Do you feel you're getting any support at all from classmates, from your instructors?

CS3: Um, I didn't get any support from the instructors for sure....I treat communication very important, and it's also, um, **evaluate**, like, er, **valued** in this country. You need to express your ideas. You need to express yourself to other people.

The excerpt suggests that CS3's challenge with the "discussion format" relates to what is "valued in this country", that is, "communication", "express your ideas", and "express yourself". CS3's challenge with the "discussion format", in fact, is not new. One can easily come across the same theme in studies about Chinese international students or recent immigrants returning to school in Western countries. But this theme is usually treated as part of the cultural adjustment, that is, what Chinese students need to do to adjust to the Western education culture. The relational context and the deeper power relations are usually left unexamined. What is "valued in this country" is what structures the implicit meaning and value system of the Canadian education culture. And like CS1, CS3's struggle with this implicit meaning and value system has to be understood in relation to the alternate meaning and value system she came from. The connection to field structure can be further made in the light of the duo theme (i.e., different learning culture followed by negative evaluation). If we recall from CS1's scenario, the duo theme is an indication of the operation a power that defines embedded in a legitimated culture on

someone who is transposed from a different cultural field. In CS1’s story, the symbolic power presents itself in the form of “legitimate mode of perception” of the social world. A similar operation is evident in CS3’s story only that the power that defines takes the form of “principles of evaluation” or “schemes of interpretation and evaluation” (Cronin, 1996, p. 70) which gives recognition to one form of learning “format” and devalues the others. CS3 speaks about evaluation as follows:

CS3: ... But they didn’t think that, er, I participate in the discussion well. I think they thought, er, my **participation was not good enough**...we always have, er, evaluation at end of the year. And, er, yeah, I think they put down some words, remarks saying that **I did not participate**...So, if I didn't participate enough, my mark was not as good as other students...I mean, from my perspective I think, they **didn’t give me very fair evaluation**. So, I was disappointed. Er, also, um, I feel really hard to, um, actually, to um, study as, er, excellent student from their perspective. So I was also **frustrated**. Yeah, discouraged and er, frustrated.

Noteworthy is that the evaluation is less about academic ‘content’ than about academic ‘form’ (or the “unwritten rule”). Echoing CS1’s experience, CS3 struggles in a learning culture that values spoken “communication” as a sign of participation, and she is rendered “participation...not good enough” in her academic evaluation (hence the duo theme). CS3’s narrative also echoes a study by Farkas et al. (1990) that examines the “informal academic standards by which teachers reward more general skills, habits, and styles” (p. 127), and findings account for evaluation differentials observed for ethnicity (along with gender and economic class).

The duo theme is again evident in her narrative about another new ‘rule’ she struggles with - critical thinking. She describes the experience as “really tough”:

W: Can you describe a bit, like um, when you say there is a difference in studying [CS3’s academic discipline] between [CS3’s home country] and here?

CS3: for example, people here emphasize that you have to, er, have certain skills in critical thinking. However, in [home country], we don't practice, er, criticize people's ideas. We don't have discussion. If we have a paper, we always say, "Oh, what's the, what's [indistinct] of this paper?" We don't say, even when we mention bad things, but not very criticize the author of the paper. So, here, people require that you have to think critically. And you always need to challenge other people. So this part I feel so hard. And they **don't understand** me well, and, er, **they think that's because I cannot think.**

The narrative about her encounter with the new 'rule' of critical thinking continues in the following excerpt in which she describes her experience being the TA for a critical thinking course:

CS3: In [university], usually they ask you to do TA...to lead seminars. So it's very, very difficult for me to lead seminar. In the, in the beginning. Cause, er, first, er, my language [chuckles], cause I don't speak good English. So students would have, er, um, difficulty to understand me. We were assigned, er, to the courses. . . . In the first year, we were not allowed to choose, er, which course you, you want to TA. But, you know, I didn't graduate here. So, the first course I was taking [assigned] was critical thinking. I TA for this course, and I didn't take any course related to this before...so I didn't have anything, like, I already had in the past to share with students. So it's really hard for me. First I didn't have the knowledge. Second, I, my English is my second language. So every time I went to class, I was very nervous...So, so hard. Oh my god. I, I, I just don't want to go to the [TA]seminars. But I have to, um, yeah. So, my evaluation, my TA evaluation was very bad for first term. And, er, but I, I, I just tried. So, I was so very discouraged. Cause, er, if, for example, I have one hundred, er, percent of time, I spent at least sixty percent of my time preparing seminars and forty for my own studies. So, um, I don't think that to be a seminar leader is a, a good starting for us international students.

W: What was your experience, like, with the students then?

CS3: I don't think they like me at all. Um. Like, the first, er, first, er, year. . . first term is really, um, **tough. It was really tough. Was really tough.** Cause, er, um, I even heard, in the class, some students said some **bad words** to me. Like, it's not in the class. Like, after class, when they left. I think they said "Oh, **I didn't know anything.**"...so I feel really, um, **discouraged.**

Noteworthy in the above two excerpts is her description “and they don’t understand me well, and, er, they think that’s because I cannot think”, and “I didn’t know anything”. Being misconstrued and negatively evaluated is a telltale sign of the imposition/operation of symbolic power (or power that defines) on someone transposed to a different cultural field in Bourdieu’s concept of hysteresis (a concept discussed in Chapter 8). Understanding CS3’s negative evaluation (or misconstruction) in the light of “hysteresis” makes her experience less neutralized and more connected to field structure. Hysteresis connects field and habitus, and underscores the field structure in affecting the individual in a social space. Bourdieu explains hysteresis this way,

As a result of the hysteresis effect necessarily implicated in the logic of the constitution of habitus, practices are always liable to incur negative sanction when the environment with which they are actually confronted is too distant from that in which they are objectively fitted (Bourdieu as cited in Hardy, 2008, p. 134).

In the light of this explanation, CS3’s narrative is the effect of “the disruption of the relationship between habitus and field to which they no longer correspond” (Hardy, p. 134). And her negative evaluation under this light can be understood as the effect of that disruption in which “practices are always liable to incur negative sanction” (Hardy, p. 134). It is important to note that the imposition of a power that defines is implicit in the “negative sanction”, since what is negative or positive is defined through the particular structure of a field. Understanding CS3’s narrative (and duo theme) through hysteresis helps to shift focus from the individual to the interaction between the individual and the field structure. That is, the focus is no longer so much about CS3 as about the field

structured by cultural capital in the form of ‘implicit rules of the game’. Shifting the focus to field structure helps us to see the operation of power in and the political nature of everyday experiences, as a field is never neutral but interested, and is structured catering to that interest (Grenfell, 2008).

I have explored, so far, two facets of the multi-faceted manifestation or operation of the power that defines in the narratives of CS1 and CS3 about their experiences with the “unwritten” rules of the Western culture. In CS1, I show the power that defines operated as “the legitimate mode of perception” of the social world and in CS3 operated as the legitimated “principles of evaluation”. There is yet another way the power that defines is imminent in their narratives. It is imminent in the way it imposes a different identity or definition of self on participants. What defines the “legitimate vision” of the social world (Bourdieu, 1985, p. 732) also imposes or constructs a reality based on that “legitimate vision”.

Studies of Asian students in Western countries are characterized by the theme of silence and reticence (Goldstein & Pon, 2003; Holmes, 2005; Hsieh, 2007; J. F. Jones, 1999; H. S. Kim & Markus, 2005; S. Kim, 2006; Liberman, 1994; Xu, 2003; Yan & Berliner, 2009). This theme is also salient in the narratives of CS1 and CS3 as well as another participant CS2 in this study. With CS1, her ascribed image as a “quiet” and “passive learner” in her Canadian classroom is very different from her understanding of herself. She says she would be the one who “talked quite a bit” in class in home country. Elsewhere she said she considers herself an “extrovert”, an “outgoing person”, who “have

tons of friends back home”. She prides herself for her socializing skills and her ability to make friends back home:

CS1: Um, you know, in the past, wherever I go, like, most of my life, wherever I go...I make friends very easily, you know, back home...

Similar sentiment is heard from CS3 who gets evaluated down for “participation...not good enough”. CS3 expresses that she does not see herself as a quiet person back in her home country:

CS3: Um, if I speak Chinese, actually, um, I’m very talkative... Um, I’m not, I’m not a person who is very quiet. If there is, er, er, something I would like to speak, I always say something.

Another participant CS2 also shares similar sentiment. We recall CS2 from previous chapter that she feels like “a merchandise” whenever she has to negotiate acceptance and access into group work. She is perceived as “the quiet one” (at least during her first year of university). And “because I never really speak in a large group, and I didn’t participate in the, you know, like student body...so I’m being a nobody, I guess, in that context... I don’t know how people perceived me because they probably didn’t even recognize me or acknowledge my existence”. But again this is not who she is. CS2 says that she is “the loud one” back home:

CS2: ...I feel it’s not really personality. I’m the loud, I’m used to be the loud one...the loud, the noisy one, yeah, who always have something to say about something [chuckles]

The narratives of these three participants suggest that their ascribed image as a student in Canada is not intrinsic to who they really are, but rather is externally imposed.

The capacity to define and impose meaning (or symbolic power) is an ultimate power according to Bourdieu because what gets to define and impose meaning also gets to impose reality. Indeed there is indication that the externally imposed definition is impinging upon some participants' (internal) self-definition or identity. Their narratives suggest the effect of the operation of symbolic power as a capacity that constructs or imposes a reality as legitimate (Bourdieu, 1985). We recall that CS1 describes herself as an “extrovert”, an “outgoing person”, having “tons of friends back home”, and having good socializing skills to make friends back home. But she appears to question her sense of self, as she begins to feel that she does not fit in, is being perceived as “quiet”, and “cannot connect with people”:

CS1: Um, you know, in the past, wherever I go, like, most of my life, wherever I go, I make friends very easily, you know, back home...So I was saying that I started feeling that I don't fit in. So I blamed it on myself, right? That it's my problem. There must be something terribly wrong with me after I came to Canada. Er, that I don't know how to communicate with people...

The disruption of identity or sense of self is even more obvious with CS2. We recall that CS2 “hated” group work because she is made to feel valueless as she feels “no one wants to be in the same group with me” and she feels like “a merchandise” whenever she has to negotiate access into group work. This different reality obviously has shaken her sense of self as “always at top of my class” and “popular kid” whom “everyone turns to”. In the following CS2 talks about experiencing a “huge shift” and “a struggle” to find her “true identity”:

CS: And I told you, like, I always be in the **top of the class**. And I'm usually the **popular kid** in the class. And so I'm not used to...not being **valued** by my peers.

Especially you've been, you always, you know, you have always been **the popular one. The person that everyone turns to.** And all of a sudden, **everything changed**...it's [studying here] a **huge change** for me...I become...an outlier, and I am not at the centre any more... I think it is a **struggle** for me to find my **true identity**. And it is a **struggle** for me to, um, because when you grow up, you perceive yourself a certain way. And I grew up in [home country]. And the first nine years of my education, I've been always **at top of my class**. I'm always the **popular kid in class**. So, it's a **huge shift** for me. So I guess it's a **struggle** in terms of me **finding myself**. My... finding my identity to see, so which one is the real me? Is the old one, or is the new one?

The narratives of CS1 and CS2 above are a haunting echo of what Bourdieu calls the ultimate power. The questioning of identity by CS1 and CS2 presupposes an acceptance of the new reality as 'normal' or legitimate. What more powerful than a capacity to influence one to accept an externally imposed reality as legitimate or "just the way it is"? This acceptance of an imposed reality is also evident in another way in other participants' narratives.

Many of those who struggle with fitting in and with the "unwritten" rules of their new learning culture show an implicit acceptance of their new reality by the way they internalize it as their personal issue and responsibility. We already see indication of this in CS1's narrative above in which she "blamed it on myself, right? That it's my problem". For CS2, she resists to blame others before giving 100 percent of her effort:

CS2: Well, because I guess I heard this from some of the more extreme, like the [home country] students that I know of. . . , they will be saying to me that, you know, uh, they feel being discriminated against. And I'm like 'oh, I never really feel that.' I mean, I- **I realize I have trouble fitting in**, and, but I never feel like, like I think 'discrimination' is a very strong word and I never feel that way. I was very surprised why they feel that. But, so I start kind of observe, I'm like 'well you kind of close yourself up. You don't let people to have opportunity to help you.' So I don't think you can blame other people. It . . . you have to **show your own effort**.

For CS3 (who opts to not pursue PhD because she does not want to “torture” herself again), the acceptance of the imposed reality is indicated in her typical phrase “it’s my personality, not their problem” (CS3) throughout the interview. For CS14 (who received a PhD from home country), the acceptance is reflected in the way she incorporates it into a life philosophy of “blame less and do more”:

CS14: I, I don’t know, I don’t know it’s, er, kind of blame...Ur, I, I don’t want to blame them...if I want to, er, more reasons, I would say, **myself**. Yeah. I think I, I have work, to work hard on language; on the culture, and, er, um, you know, I cannot control others, right? But I can control myself...I think for your specific topic, that’s pretty much I can tell. Yeah. I think, er . . . **do more, do more effort, do more effort** and then, [chuckles]. . . just... never...I mean, **blame less and do more** [chuckles]

Same acceptance is also found in CS6 whose story we will hear more in the Chapter 11. We will hear that she struggled with fitting in so much that she had to seek counselling at one point in her education institution. But her narrative is basically wrapped with a rationale or philosophy of life experience and personal growth – yes it was a time of ‘struggle’ but nonetheless overcome with lessons learned.

Symbolic violence captures the idea of the exercise of symbolic power in such misrecognized form that it is accepted as natural or legitimate. The danger of symbolic power manifested in this series of narratives is that it is able to impose a reality in such a way that people implicitly accept it. This implicit acceptance is evident in the way identity is questioned, and in the way the adverse reality is taken as personal problem or lessons for growth in life. While many of these participants show their cultural strength in channeling adverse condition into positive energy such as putting in more efforts and

positive life lesson, but they also unwittingly help to mask the condition of their domination and perpetuate the “misrecognized domination” (Horvat, 2003) or “processes of misrecognition” (Postone, LiPuma, and Calhoun, 1993, p. 6). Only when things named can they be resisted. Symbolic violence accomplishes its act when the dominated do not recognize their domination but rather regard the domination as their own ‘problem’ or ‘responsibility’. As Grenfell (2008) explains in the following the relationship between implicit education culture and symbolic violence:

Pedagogical action as it normally claims at equal opportunity within the education system, are grounded in particular culture (class culture, white culture etc.) – what is valued is arbitrarily determined through which the culture of the dominant acts in order to exclude the dominated. That this occurs in an implicit way is necessary to prevent the opposition of those excluded by the education system for not being ‘one of us’. In other words, education, by imposing meanings, ways of thinking, and particular forms of expression, acts as a carrier for the culture of the dominant classes; it therefore operates to perpetuate specific power relations as they unfold and are expressed in the dynamic of social evolution. Pedagogic action – and the cultural arbitrary that underpins it – therefore becomes a form of symbolic violence (p.159)

In this chapter, I show a cluster of narratives around participants’ experiences with the “unwritten” rules of culture (or the “unwritten” rules as cultural capital). I show how it functions as hidden source that can serve to replicate pattern of privilege and

dominance, as some studies already show. But what I show more is the power that defines operating through the “unwritten” rules of culture. I show how it operates in the multiple layers or manifestations of symbolic power that Bourdieu articulates in his writings: in the form of a power that defines “the legitimate mode of perception”, as a capacity that imposes “principles of evaluation”, and as a capacity to impose a reality as legitimate. These multiple manifestations of power of culture show the more dangerous aspect of cultural capital – not in its objectified (or tangible) forms such as knowledge of art and music or educational credential, but in its intangible form, which is not given its due attention.

Chapter 10: Making the logic of the field visible: habitus as embodied capital

“You have to be good at presenting yourself”

Within the Bourdieusian frame of cultural power, all concepts are to be treated as part of a unified whole. Even though each of the four chapters in this Findings and Analysis section has a discrete focus, there are bound to be overlaps in the four chapters. So far with Chapter 8 and Chapter 9, Chapter 8 focuses on how the logic of capital as exchange currency shapes experience, and Chapter 9 focuses on culture as capital in the form of “unwritten” rules of the game. But as it happens, the salient form of capital emerged from this study is the embodied form (as opposed to an object or any mundane aspect that has an assigned meaning or value, for example, a dented baseball bat in Lundberg, 2007), which makes habitus ubiquitous in this study despite the distinct focus in each chapter. So even though the focus of Chapter 8 and Chapter 9 is on capital and cultural capital respectively, habitus is always implicitly present. In this chapter, Chapter 10, the focus is explicitly on habitus. The narratives chosen for this chapter, which may at times speak also to Chapters 8 and/or 9, centre particularly on the body and disposition as mediator of social relations of power, and how that shapes access to recognition and academic evaluation.

The following cluster of narratives surrounds the idea of self-presentation as a valued capital in the Canadian learning culture. It is epitomized in the following expression of CS6 when she talks about her early involvement in class presentation:

CS6: ...maybe our content was so much better than them [fellow classmates], but our presentation was so boring, so boring...So I think the way we were taught back home was totally different and um, we **have to be good at presenting ourselves** here.

The sentiment that one has “to be good at presenting” oneself echoes something CS1 had said earlier in the last chapter. We recall CS1 talks about how she feels that her fellow classmates “are more superior than I am”, how “in this culture you have to toot your own horn”, and how her professor treats her with less favour as compared to her fellow TA.

She gives the following example during this speech:

CS1: ...for example, there’s this one particular student that have a lot of interaction with, because he’s a TA in the same class as me, and he **talks** a lot. He blows [his horn], you know? Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Whatever he says may not be true, and may not be the most intelligent thing. But **because he talks and he presented in a very intelligent way, so becomes intelligent...**

CS1’s words suggest that the perception of intelligence is not necessarily an intrinsic quality but more a product of what the person’s disposition signals, as CS1 says, “because he talks and he presented in a very intelligent way, so becomes intelligent”. This shared observation by CS6 and CS1 marks the central idea of this chapter - the centrality of the body and disposition in signaling the hierarchy of values of the field. Culture is no longer understood as just something ‘out there’, but rather it is also something lodged in the body. That culture has “agency” is part of what sets Bourdieu’s notion of culture apart from others (Swartz, 1997, p. 115). Participants’ narratives in this chapter show the various facets of the operation of power through habitus: as embodied privilege,

embodied liability, as boundary of recognition or acceptable action, and as non-active form of domination. These various mechanisms also implicate the logic of the field.

There is a brief observation CS3 makes that is very to the point about one facet of habitus – habit or habitual action as a lens to see the mediation or reproduction of power relations of the field. We recall that CS3 struggled being the TA of a critical thinking course, and received hurtful remarks from students. To that, CS3 responds that her struggle with critical thinking is not a matter of intelligence but a matter of habit:

CS3: So this part [critical thinking] I feel so hard. And they [fellow classmates] don't understand me well, and, er, they think that's because I cannot think... I mean, cause that's my **habit**...It's really hard to like change your habit, and, er... Yeah. This part I think they [western counterparts] misunderstood me, or the other Chinese student, or people from Asian countries.

Habit is a relatively benign and neutral word. It is individualistic and there could be good habit and bad habit. But MacMullan (2009) suggests in his notion of “white habit” that habitual action can be embodiment and expression of societal values and attitudes. Adapting John Dewey’s notion of habit, which is “an acquired predisposition to ways or modes of response” (Dewey as cited in MacMullan, 2009, p. 76), MacMullan (2009) foregrounds whiteness as “a set of pervasive habits” (p72) or “habitual action” (p76). By making the connection of whiteness and habit, MacMullan (2009) is saying that the domination of whiteness does not have to be intentional; it can be unconscious and incorporated as “systemic, habituated patterns of racial thinking and acting” (p.84). So a relatively benign concept of habit is in fact social and political in character. Placing CS3’s articulation of habit in the context of MacMullan’s “white habit” helps to see the social and political character of her experience, since habit implicates social or field structure.

And it is also in this sense that habit takes on the meaning of habitus. Winkle-Wagner (2010) states, “one’s seemingly benign dispositions are actually integral to the reinforcement and creation of the social stratification and one’s location in it” (p. 9). Thus, CS3’s struggle and subjection to the indignity from students is not a function of intrinsic deficiency in character or intelligence, but rather a function of what I call a ‘dislocated habitus’. A ‘dislocated habitus’ is someone who is not equipped with “the internalized set of tacit rules governing strategies and practices in the field” (Moi, 1991, p. 1022). The “tacit rules” in CS3’s case is the implicit rule of critical thinking that constitutes part of the Western learning culture. In the relational context of East and West like that of CS3, the ‘dislocated habitus’ is also a subjugated habitus. In CS3’s narrative, the power in operation that dominates the subjugated habitus is not an active power, but a non-active power that is dispositionally mediated.

Similar to CS3, CS14 also shares a ‘dislocated habitus’. Her narrative elucidates the meaning of habitus as embodied privilege and embodied disadvantage. We recall that CS14 has just earned her PhD from home country, and is studying a diploma program related to her field in a community college in Canada. CS14 observes in the following excerpt that what she had to work painstakingly hard on is a taken-for-granted skill for her group work partner whom she describes as “good presenter”:

CS14: So, so before the presentation...I just drew down my script of my presentation. I need to practice. I need to recite it, and correct myself. But she [group work partner] just laughed at me...laughed at me, before the presentation, when she saw my script. She looked at me and said, Oh, my god, you prepared the script, come on, something like that. She cannot believe I have to work so hard to prepare presentation.

The excerpt reflects a contrast between the taken-for-granted embodied privilege of a local student and the embodied disadvantage of an international student. Although CS14 has a PhD degree from her home country, the presentation format is foreign to her as it is not part of her education culture back home. A dominant habitus like CS14's group work partner is socialized with the practical "sense of the game" (Bourdieu in interview with Wacquant, 1987, p. 42; see also Hillier and Rooksby, 2002), and enabled to adapt and preform the "tacit rules governing strategies and practices in the field" (Moi, 1991, p. 1022), whereas a subjugated habitus like CS14 is disenabled to adapt and perform the "tacit rules". A dominant habitus also tends to take for granted their ease of adaptability or embodied privilege, and project deficiency onto the 'other', which is evident in CS14's narrative. CS14's narrative locates the boundary mechanism that maintains privilege and disadvantage in the acquired predisposition to adapt and perform the "tacit rules" (or implicit rules) of the game (c.f. habitus). Horvat (2003) calls such boundary the "boundaries of acceptable action".

CS2's narrative underscores the signifying function of habitus in maintaining the boundary of embodied privilege and disadvantage. CS2, who is characterized by her phrase "it's like I'm a merchandise", talks about how working behind the scenes does not garner as much recognition as presenting in the front:

CS2: Sometimes when you do a group project, um, you know, sometimes it's not about writing a paper. It's, it's, someone has to do a final presentation. Say you have a group of five people. Then, um, one or two will probably be the one presenting at the end. Not everyone. Because we probably only have ten minutes to present or something. And, I'm not, maybe that's the thing about me not a hundred percent liking the group project, cause I feel like I'm the one who's doing all the work behind the scene. **But other people just because they can articulate**

better, so they are the presenters. And I feel those people are the ones taking the credit... Whatever he's saying, I wrote that. [laughs]...I mean, probably we all get the same mark, but it's not about the mark. It's just about, like, how people perceive.

CS2's narrative speaks to an academic culture that assigns high value on the ability to articulate and present oneself, so that the one "doing all the work behind the scene" does not get as much recognition as "the presenters" who "can articulate better". The sense of recognition is implied in what CS2 says "how people perceive". The unfairness that CS2 observes is not in the tangible reward of marks, but in the intangible reward of recognition. If we recall from the discussion of CS11's narrative in the last chapter, recognition matters, and has strong implication in material justice/injustice, despite being intangible (cf. Fraser, 2007). Similar to CS14, CS2's narrative also locates the boundary mechanism (that separates the recognized and misrecognized) in the intangible form of acquired predisposition. As recognition is symbolic, CS2's narrative also underscores the signifying function of acquired predisposition (or habitus) – some predispositions signal higher value or field positions while others lower. Garrett (2007b) writes that habitus is a subtle yet immensely important "instrument of cultural capital" (p. 359), the body signals what is valued and what is not as deemed by the learning culture (or logic of the field). Along the same vein, Grenfell (2008) also writes, "habitus positions individuals in the field in terms of the capital configuration they possess and how this resonates, or not, with the ruling principles or logic of the field" (Grenfell, 2008, p. 223).

A final scenario, CS8 tells of an experience relating to 'self-presentation' that echoes salient ideas from the narratives of CS14, CS3, and CS2 above that include

subjugated habitus, domination as non-active and dispositional power, and boundaries of acceptable action based on the logic of the field. But what is also salient in CS8's narrative that is not as apparent in the others is the articulation of the dominant habitus as white habitus or what he calls the "white archetype", and the co-existence of embodied privilege and subjugated habitus.

CS8 locates his cultural identity as "somewhere in between". CS8 is born and raised in Canada. He says, "I see myself Canadian-Chinese. Not Chinese-Canadian but Canadian-Chinese, so I think I'm not Chinese but I'm not purely Canadian. I'm somewhere in between". His qualifying statement for "Canadian-Chinese" suggests that he identifies more with the Canadian culture than with Chinese culture. Like his Canadian born/raised counterparts in this study, he is advantageously positioned in the field structure by virtue of this bi-cultural embodiment.

However, despite that, CS8's narrative shares interestingly similar struggle with the "unwritten" rules of the learning culture and with negative evaluation as the immigrant and international students (e.g., CS1 and CS3 in last chapter), who are more disadvantageously positioned than him. And this similarity is linked to similarity in part of his disposition or habitus.

CS8 gives a rating of 3.5 in a scale of 5 (with 1 being the best and 5 the worst) for his university experience. He said had it been just for academic content alone, he would have given a higher rating. He describes himself a lone-wolf as a young Chinese male student in a program he says typically "post-degree, female and white":

CS8: I feel like I'm kind of lone-wolfing the program, which I don't mind. I do like what I'm learning, just I'm doing it alone... For like all of - most of second year, even the classes were tightly knit. I felt myself like just going to class, not really talking to anyone, just sitting there, taking notes. I'd go home and all my friends are at home, so it's kind of like go in for class just to go to class, that's it. So pop in, pop out, go home. That's it.

Besides being out of place because of life stage/age, gender, and race, CS8 also identifies a part of his disposition that makes him feel out of place. He describes himself as not “outspoken”; he says that there was time in school when “I was extremely quiet and people were kind of like ‘hey [CS8], why don't you say something?’”. He sees a possible link of this part of his disposition to the Chinese part of his cultural hybridity:

CS8: I don't know if it's all Chinese people but for me um, I'm not a very outspoken person...I...recognize that me being quiet might be a **cultural thing**. Before that, I assumed it was just my personality, so that kind of, I don't know, awakened my senses like kind of ‘oh it really might be a cultural thing’ and I think it is. **Not just a personality thing**. Might be both. But **culture is definitely part of it**.

What CS8 refers to as “culture” implies the Chinese culture of his family. The following excerpt suggests CS8's family culture plays an important role in shaping his habitus. In the excerpt he talks about how his “upbringing” carries over to his work and internship – he listens more than he talks. Because of this disposition, he is perceived as not enough “take charge”. He feels that there is a “[white] archetype” mode of practice that is imposed on him to talk more and “take charge”:

CS8: from what I've seen in my [internship] and at work, um, [colleagues] who fit that **archetype**, who are white, who very much in my opinion fit that role, they demonstrated to me that while they're therapeutic and they're good at their job, they're very to the point, like, let's get this done...they're very problem-focused, solution-focused, just get things done. Very professional – I don't know, it just doesn't seem very personal to me, and when I do [practice] it's very different...I

don't talk much, I kind of let them do their thing... **I listen more than I talk**. I feel like it's more **effective** and I feel like it's something I got from my **upbringing**, like I **listen** to my relatives, **listening** to grandparents. You **don't need to talk much**, you just kind of respond, be respectful. I think that's carried over to how I practice. It's very different... I want the client to kind of shape what they want to tell me, I want them to kind of take charge... I feel like it's most effective.

In his narrative, CS8 talks about how the Chinese culture of his family shapes the way he “listen[s] more than...talk[s]” in his professional practice. And he observes that this part of his habitus is compared against an “archetype”, which he describes as “white, who very much...fit that role”. Despite his confidence on the effectiveness of his style and seeing result (“I have really, really great relationships with clients who are willing to tell me things because they know I will listen”), he keeps receiving low evaluation (or little recognition) from supervisor, and even is at risk of failing his internship, all because his way is defined as “too passive” and “doesn't get the job done quick”:

CS8: It's always been that it doesn't seem like I'm taking **enough initiative to lead or to take charge**, which in my opinion falls right into the **archetype** of that **outspoken, white**.

at the end in order to pass placement, C8 had to “force myself to do what they want me to do because I have to pass placement”. He describes it as “put on a show...an act”, and this is the way he manages to navigate without “losing” himself totally:

CS8: It takes a bit of navigation to be able to **fit** the criteria of passing while not losing yourself totally...So I guess it could be a **struggle** 'cause you've got to **put on a show...an act**...sometimes to pass. Yeah, to pass, while not losing yourself...I wouldn't be an **Asian [practitioner]** anymore. I'd be an **Asian [practitioner] who's been made white**...So I guess it's more difficult than for some people but in terms- it's just an obstacle that I have to get over.

CS8's description of white archetype resonates the idea of whiteness as the unspoken cultural norm. Translating into Bourdieusian language, white archetype can rightly be called 'white capital' because white archetype is what confers values and status in a field. But as habitus is the embodiment of cultural capital, it centres whiteness (in the form of white archetype) on disposition and practice as carrier (or mediator) of the cultural norm, as seen in the white archetype that CS8 is measured against is defined in dispositional terms – "initiative to lead or to take charge" and "outspoken". Legitimacy is embedded in disposition and practice, which function as signifier of the whiteness logic of the field. The form of power operating through disposition may be intangible (i.e., signal of value via 'normalized' style or behaviour), but it clearly has material effect on CS8's evaluation and whether or not he can pass internship. Although CS8 believes that he manages to navigate a way out without losing himself, his solution still suggests that he has to 'act white' to gain recognition. His narrative aligns with Hsieh (2007) which was also drawn on in previous chapters. The Chinese female student in the narrative study decided to "make modification in her self-presentation" according to "the American norms and expectations by being more assertive and expressive", "because she did not want to be isolated and misunderstood as a stupid person" (387).

Jeyasingham (2012)'s idea of the "performativity of whiteness" captures the reproduction of dominance through the "self-presentation" of race (P. 681). Drawing on Judith Butler's notion of performativity and Ariela Gross's application of Butler's notion of whiteness, the "performativity of whiteness" brings to light the idea that the dominance of whiteness comes into being through self-presentation and behavior. The

“performativity of whiteness” underscores the power of domination as operating through disposition or “self-presentation and behavior”. Chow (1997) observes that for a non-Westerner to succeed in the West, he/she “should first of all identify himself/herself as a Westerner at the expense of one’s own national and cultural identity” (Wang Ning as cited in Chow, 1997). This is proven true in the case of CS8. Despite that CS8 desires to create for himself the identity of an “Asian [practitioner]”, ultimately he is compelled to ‘act white’ or as he puts it, an “Asian [practitioner] who’s been made white” because that is what ‘gets him to play the game’. His narrative has an eerie consistency with the analysis of the narratives of his Canadian born/raised counterparts (CS5, CS9 and CS12) in Chapter 8, in which it was the Western part of their Chinese-Western cultural hybridity that is found to provide them with the protection because their English accent signals the colonial logic of the ‘superior West’ legitimated by the field. CS8, on the other hand, illustrates the liability of the Chinese part of his hybrid identity which signals ‘difference’ from the whiteness norm (embedded in disposition and practice) and is assigned negative symbolic capital. It does not matter that CS8 being a Canadian-born Chinese conceivably embodies other legitimated field-valued capitals such as native English (as CS5 and CS9 in Chapter 8), the disposition that does not signal legitimacy or the whiteness logic still significantly counters his privileged position. This speaks to how the power of domination exerted through habitus or disposition is active, though its operation is non-active. C8 expressed that Canada is not a “mosaic” but a “melting pot” that does not allow different values to equally exist. This clearly includes the embodied or corporeal manifestation of those values (or habitus).

Like his embodiment of cultural hybridity, CS8's narrative also has an interesting 'hybrid' quality to it. While his narrative shows the embodied liability part of habitus, there is also an embodied privilege part to his habitus in the narrative. To CS8, making a switch to a 'white habitus' is an option. There is an ease of adaptability relating to his 'hybrid habitus' being "in-between...Canadian-Chinese". This adaptability clearly is a cultural capital as it enables CS8 to play the game. He can strategically deploy a field-valued capital (i.e., 'white habitus') so that he can gain recognition and pass his course. The resource is at his disposal should he choose to use it, and he did choose to use it because he realizes that this is the rule of the game he needs to play in order to succeed. But the same option is evidently not available to participants who are international students or immigrants (e.g., CS1, CS2, and CS3). Luke, building on the concept of habitus, contends that domination can manifest its power, not necessarily in the form of actuality, but in in the form of capacity or potentiality (Swartz, 2007). Access to this power is by virtue of the position one occupies in the field, and this power can be activated wittingly or unwittingly. CS8, advantageously positioned by virtue of his cultural hybridity, is enabled to deploy with ease the Western part (i.e., the field-valued capital part) of his cultural hybridity to improve his field position.

In this chapter, participants' stories relating to 'self-presentation' in the Canadian academic culture make visible intangible yet potent forms of power embedded in disposition or habitus. Through the lens of habitus, benign habits are in fact sites entrenched with power relations (as in "white archetype"), and this power is also misrecognized because of its 'mundaneness' and intangibility. Wacquant (1993a) also

observes, what determines academic success is not so much about the content as about “predisposed habitus” (p. 32), which is the embodiment of the adaptability to the cultural context (cf. cultural capital). Wacquant (1993a) explains,

It is true that there are technical bodies of knowledge that one must acquire to occupy positions of power. But acquisition of this technical proficiency is never separable from acquisition of the social dispositions that will govern the utilization of technique....it is precisely the indiscernibility of the technical dimension and of the social dimension which is at the root of the power of educational consecration” (p. 32-33).

The social competence presupposes a social condition that pre-selects those who have the right habitus, and thus excludes those who do not have the signifier that bespeaks the values defined by the field. If “technical competence” is about what (i.e., content), then “social competence” is about how (i.e., process). While content may be the same for everyone, but how content is taught, learned, engaged, and evaluated, all are culture-bound and steeped in social relations. These all come from certain perspective and favour certain disposition and style (cf. cultural capital). At the same time these are mostly invisible. Whereas exclusion based on “technical competence” is obvious, “social competence” is the “least visible” (Wacquant, 1993a, p. 33). This, too, is a manifestation of symbolic violence, as “the mechanisms for symbolic violence are manifested in the ‘modalities of practices, the ways of looking, sitting, standing, keeping silent or even of speaking’” (Bourdieu as cited in Horvat, 2003).

Chapter 11: Making the logic of the field visible: social capital as hidden capital

“What impacted me most is the social aspect”

Power in Bourdieu’s framework of culture is not only imperceptible, it is also mutable. The inter-convertibility of capital is one of the distinct characters of Bourdieu’s conception of power. This chapter shows the cunning of power – how it can be disguised in social capital through the interchangeableness between cultural capital and social capital. Social capital is well-recognized as a resource in social inclusion policy research (Li, Savage, & Warde, 2008; Policy Research Initiative (PRI), 2005), but is understated as a form of power that contributes to the reproduction of privilege and dominance, and shapes life chances. This chapter consists of three clusters of narrative, and they form three interconnected sections. The three sections show respectively the social organization of education, the cultural organization of social networks, and the web of power or “web of advantage” (Li et al., 2008, p. 406) formed by the social-cultural capital inter-conversion, with the final section being the culmination of the first two sections. Together the three sections form some of the under-explored materials in literature about Chinese students in Western education culture. To me, they also form some of the most interesting narratives I find in this study.

Section A “The academic-social connection” consists of narratives joined together by the common experience of bumping up against what two students (CS2 and CS15) say the “social aspect” of education that contributes to their struggle to fit in. Students talk about “social” in the context of social interaction and social networks. They suggest that

higher education is not just about academic content; there is an interdependent “social aspect” to it that shapes academic experience. As one participant CS15 says, “the social spills over to the academic”. Their struggle is less about the challenges posed by the academic content as about the ‘form’ that underpins the learning of the content. And this ‘form’ is articulated by the two participants in terms of “social aspect”. This cluster of narratives is a vivid reminder of that about the implicit rules of education culture. The “social aspect” stands as an invisible boundary to their full participation in the ‘academic game’.

Section B “The cultural-social connection” treats another cluster of narratives that speaks to the cultural mediation of the “social aspect”, how the cultural and social mutually affects each other. If the previous section makes the connection between academic and social, this section is about the cultural mediation of the social that underpins the academic. Culture here functions as a sign that bespeaks shared experience, which often implies ‘you are one of us’ or ‘you are the like kind’. Participants’ disadvantage in cultural capital (i.e., the sign that bespeaks ‘you are one of us’) is found to be a deterrent to their acquisition of social capital (hence their sense of isolation and invisibility explored in Chapters 8 and 9). This cultural-social link speaks to the cultural organization of social connection.

As a culmination of Section A and B, Section C “The hidden power of social capital” connects the cultural-social link to its material implications. This final cluster of narratives shows the fluid inter-conversion, or “transubstantiation” (Moore, 2008, p. 101) of cultural capital and social capital, and how that facilitates or limits education

experiences and material effects/life chances. It relates to how informal social connection (or social capital) formed (or not formed) outside of the classroom has significant bearing on what is inside of classroom, and vice versa. It is seen to help side-stepping dangerous potholes, securing an internship, landing a job, and obtaining other material resources with ease – all have significant material implications. Power is as cunning as it is fluid, diffused, and mutable – that is what the transubstantiation of capital shows in this section.

Together these three sections make visible social capital as an unacknowledged or hidden power that helps to reproduce privilege. Just as Newman (2004) quips, “power connects and absolute power connects absolutely” (p. 141).

A. The academic-social connection: the social mediation of the academic

“The social spills over to the academic”

The “social aspect” is a salient theme in this cluster of narratives surrounding those participants who struggle to fit in their academic context. The way they talk about the “social” is in the context of social connection or social networking. The following excerpts show how they experience the “social aspect” of the academic:

CS1: ...because I still felt I’m invisible, I still felt that I didn’t exist. I still feel I **cannot connect** with people. And I struggled, right? I struggled a lot...probably would have dropped out...seriously don’t know if I can make it if, if I couldn’t **connect** with these people.

CS2: what impacted me the most is those **social aspects**

CS6: [the **mingling** problem] was so bad for me I eventually went to counselling, not for academic reason...it’s just the mingle-wise, like to- to, I **couldn’t fit in**.

CS8: I feel like I’m kind of **lone-wolfing** the program...pop in, pop out, go home.

CS10: Very often I felt it is to be a great regret...that is, after we finished the study, one of our classmates said, “After the studies, I felt like I do not know my classmates”... There is no . . . that is, if you have not participated in their parties, then you will not know about them, about their lives...what we failed and failed is that we have not totally enjoyed the program: the kind of, the kind of **network**, the kind of . . . the kind of opportunities...

CS14: nobody wants to work with a Chinese student.

CS15: I’m here to learn what is taught but I mean, school is not just that, right? So like, um, I don’t, so I feel like it’s a great program and everything and I definitely learned a lot and meeting very nice people, um, but I think I’m lacking in like - people always talk about **networking** and that’s not- it doesn’t seem like it’s happening...in the small [program]...you are supposed to like get together...and the fact that like I’m not in that circle, it’s like oh, that’s the part of school [community, networking] that I’m missing out on...I will act - like it’s almost as if I’m trying to act to fit in because I know I don’t fit in....

Of these participants, CS2 and CS15 are most cognizant and explicit about the interweaving connection between the academic and the social, how the two aspects are interconnected and interdependent.

CS2’s observation in the following excerpt captures an essence of the connection between the academic and the social:

W: Because you did mention struggle. So is that [social aspect she had mentioned earlier] part of the struggle?

CS2: Yeah, Yes. Especially **not** necessarily **academically**. It was in more **social**.

W: If it were me, I could have said, okay, I’m here just for the academic thing, right? So why should I be bothered by the social aspect?

CS2: It bothers me...I mean, academically, I keep, you know, after the first, like, couple months, I pick it up, and then I do well, but, I still not do well socially...academically, I consider myself a faster learner. At first I have no idea what [CS2’s program] is. But after the first year, I started to really enjoy it, it’s like I find myself going home. The topics are really interesting, and I can really relate to those topics. It’s faster for me to pick up, to master those kind of topics in

a way. So, academic wise, I didn't have that many difficulties. [laughs] Um, so that bothers me.

W: It's just mastering that social aspect that you have...you talked about their culture, and not fitting in, all that. And, uh, is there a relationship between the social aspect and the academic aspect of it? Would you say that the social aspect would impact on, may be on you academically, would you say that? Is there a connection?

CS2: I do think there is connection, because it affects me emotionally, right? ...Yeah, I mean, of course, the social aspect will definitely impact, 'cause it impacts your emotional well-being. And if I'm more mentally healthy, I have better energy to handle things academically...To be honest...I always think, you know, the reason I came to Canada first was for education. Education means academics. But yeah, what bothers me the most, or kind of impacted me the most is those social aspects.

We recall that CS2 is characterized by her saying “it's like I'm a merchandise”. We also recall that she talks about being the “outlier”, a “huge change” from back home where she has always been “in the top of the class” and “the popular kid in the class”. Here CS2 talks about struggling with the “social aspect” throughout the four years in her undergraduate program; she says, “It was, it's a four-year program. Um, I mean that kind of, the kind of feeling of not fitting in, kind of . . . It lingers. It's just, it's just a matter of degree.” What the above excerpt suggests is that education cannot simply be understood in terms of academic content. CS2 finds that there is a “social aspect” to education that significantly impacts on her academic experience. Although CS2 is only explicit about the emotional impact, we can also see the implication to material impact if we read in between the lines, “if I'm more mentally healthy, I have better energy to handle things academically”. As we shall see in another cluster of narratives in Section C, the link to material implication will become more salient.

CS15 is the other participant who is cognizant of the inter-connection between the academic and the social. CS15 is born and raised in Canada. She identifies herself as Chinese Canadian but says she identifies more with the pop culture of [her parents' home land] than the Canadian pop culture. Although occupying a more privileged field position by virtue of living in the Canadian culture all her life, CS15 shares similar experience in the “social aspect” of her education as other participants who struggle to fit in (e.g., CS1, CS2, CS6), albeit in a lesser extent. CS15 gives a rating of 3 for her academic experience in a scale of 5 (with 1 being the best and 5 the worst). When asked why, she alludes to the fact that she has missed out on the “social aspect”:

W: For the question ‘how would you rate your overall educational experience?’, I have a scale of 5 and then you put down 3, so I’m just kind of wondering, um, it’s kind of like in between...so what does that mean?

CS15: Um, what it means to me is sort of like, I’m here to learn what is taught but I mean, school is not just that, right? So like, um, I don’t, so I feel like it’s a great program and everything and I definitely learned a lot and meeting very nice people, um, but I think I’m lacking in like - people always talk about **networking** and that’s not- it **doesn’t seem like it’s happening**.

While not considering herself isolated, CS15 acknowledges feeling “out of place at times”:

CS15: like I notice it, because say how I’ll go into class and I’ll sit by myself, right? A lot of times I’ll- especially in the big lecture rooms where obviously we don’t fill up all the space, I notice that I’m generally not sitting beside people. Um, and in that sense I don’t fit in.

She says she gets “the feeling of not belonging” especially in small tutorial during break time when students have no obligation to engage with her,

CS15: I’m like really- um, get the feeling of **not belonging** in the group...So like, the whole **social aspect** of it. Because once tutorial starts it’s like they [fellow

classmates] have an obligation to engage everybody right? You know what I'm saying? But yeah, during- like when it's not- when there is no obligation, you can see it [**isolation**: the conversation right before this is about isolation].

She further qualifies her meaning of isolation with her experience. Although her experience cannot speak for others', it does provide an added perspective to how isolation or fitting in can be understood. CS15 made a comparison with the time when she was studying in a different program before coming to her current program:

CS15: It's like everybody for themselves. We don't get many group projects. Lectures, you don't talk during lectures so you don't really get to communicate with the people around you...so in that sense it's isolation, but at the same time it's sort of like everybody's doing that so it's fine, right? Like that's the quote-unquote unity.

While she could feel relative detached from her 'isolation' then because of the "unity", the isolation feels more personal in her current small program,

CS15: you are supposed to like get together...and the fact that like I'm not in that circle, it's like oh, that's the part of school [community, networking] that I'm missing out on.

This interesting comparison suggests that isolation is not necessarily an emotional phenomenon in the sense of a want of company. Isolation can be a 'rational' phenomenon stemming from the awareness of one's deviation from the norm. For CS15, her sense of isolation and not fitting in stems from her perception that "I kind of stick out", being the only Chinese student among her cohort in her program. She gives the following incident in the past as an analogy:

CS15: what comes back every time I see that [isolation] is when I- I worked in a summer camp and they were, uh, most of- actually, all of the kids at the summer camp as well as the camp counsellors, they're all basically like uh, African-Canadian, right? And I remember- and kids are so funny because I went into the classroom and I was hired not as part of the camp but from this government

subsidized thing, so I was the only Chi- actually I was the only non-African-Canadian there. And the kid was like “what are you doing here?” And like, I was like “what do you mean?” right? At that time, I was like maybe 16, 17, like I didn’t- I didn’t see a problem and then the kid was like “**what are you doing here?**” and I was like oh wait a minute, I’m very **different**, right? So every time I notice that **I’m the ‘other’**, that comes to mind, right? Well “what are you doing here?” right?

Although CS15 acknowledged having enough ease and comfort in her current institution that she would consider it again if she decides to pursue a Master’s degree, she also finds that “there are so many times I just- I just need to get this program over with...eventually I want to go back to [home town in Canada]. Cause it feels like I- it’s more like I can- it’s more fitting for me.”

It is useful to highlight that, like CS8 (whose narrative is characterized by “white archetype”), CS15 also suggests a link between her perceived “quiet” disposition (or habitus) and the way she experiences the “social aspect” of education. She says that she is taught to be quiet and not to make a noise since she was little. Even before entering junior kindergarten, her parents sent her to Chinese school where she understood being quiet in class is a good thing. Like CS3 (to an extent also CS1 and CS8), her disposition makes her feel “out of place” amidst the “talking” education culture:

CS15: Uh, yeah I didn’t like the sound of the seminar when I found out about it. Like again, it really shows the importance of talking- talking in front of a group

In the following excerpt, CS15 seems to suggest a connection between “don’t speak enough” and certain ‘invisibility’ she has been experiencing:

CS15: I don’t know if that’s because of my race or because I’m just maybe **not as loud as** some of the other people, or I don’t know, or I just don’t **speak enough** and when I do, it’s like **no one really pays attention**...some of the times I feel

like **I'm not heard** and I can't, I haven't come to a conclusion as to why that is but yeah, people- I've had cases where people will literally speak over me. Right like I'm talking and someone else will just speak louder and everyone just turns their attention to her...So yeah. Things like that. **Not overt stuff, not in your face stuff**, but then you notice it and you're like, why is this happening?

Her narrative about the “social aspect” reinforces a salient pattern or connection I have been making thus far: similar embodied liability (e.g., quiet, not assertive – in CS15's case, not “speak enough”), similar social risk (e.g., invisibility, isolation, no recognition – in CS15's case, “no one really pays attention”, “I'm not heard”), and similar unsure feeling about reason of not fitting in (e.g., “not overt stuff, not in your face stuff”).

CS15 gives two examples how she sees the connection between the “social” and the academic. The first example relates to group work in which she talks about access to group work has much to do with social connection:

CS15: ...if you get to choose groups, you know, I'm not going to be the first pick, right? Because everybody wants to do work with their friends, right? Everything kind of ties in with this whole [social] aspect, right?

Since group work is a key element in the participation of the education process, it can be inferred from CS15's words that social connection is the implicit or hidden requirement for the full participation in education. In the second example, CS15 talks about how not being part of any social group in class disadvantages her academically:

CS15: Like I see maybe in the beginning of the program it's not as bad because nobody knows each other. And then, you know, as you go through or as I go through the year, I see different groups forming and that's when I start to notice it, it's like I'm **not part of any of these groups**, right? **And it always spills over to academics**, right? Like um, when you don't have- like when I'm not part of these groups, I remember for [a course], everybody was getting together and everybody was doing something that was for a chapter each so that we don't have to read the whole textbook, right? But I wasn't part of that because I never knew about it, essentially, right? And uh, obviously, to spend- for me to read the whole textbook

myself rather than like read summary notes from people, there's a huge like, it's time, right? Um, so stuff like that, I feel like it's affected.

These anecdotal incidents may appear what CS15 calls “little things”. But culture is about “little things”, or rather is about how privilege and dominance are transacted in daily mundane “little things” in which people reproduce the legitimated system of meanings and values. This is what is distinct about Bourdieu’s framework of culture – “little things” are microcosms of how power and dominance are transacted.

What the cluster of narratives in this section underscores is that form dictates content. If education is the ‘content’, then social interaction is the ‘form’ to acquire the ‘content’. One cannot fully benefit from the educational ‘content’ without first having the familiarity with the ‘form’ in order to acquire the ‘content. And the ‘form’ in this case is the “social aspect” referred by the participants in this section. Their narratives echo the “unwritten” rules of the learning culture in Chapter 9 and the “social dimension” (Wacquant, 1993a, p. 32-33) or hidden curriculum of education in Chapter 10. The academic-social connection established in this section suggests that education experience cannot be understood solely in terms of ‘content’; it is the ‘form’ that crucially shapes experience. And that participants’ disadvantage in the ‘form’ (or “social aspect”) suggests the structural basis to their experiences. The next section, Section B, takes this idea further to show that the “social aspect” is culturally organized, and therefore participants’ experiences are structurally shaped.

B. The cultural-social connection: The cultural organization of social connection

“It’s not about English, it is about culture”

Lest the structural basis of social connection/networking (or “social aspect” in Section A) is still not clear from Section A, the cluster of narratives in this section speaks to the idea that social connection is culturally organized and therefore involves social relations of power. Culture is an inherent boundary. Culture unites and culture also divides. It is a symbolic differentiation system that forges and at the same time undoes social engagement or connection. The cluster of narratives in this section surrounds language, culture, and social interaction/connection. The important role of language in the way people connect with each other is reflected in the following of CS5’s words. CS5 is first introduced in Chapter 8, and is the one who calls himself a “hybrid”. He singles out language as the most important factor that diverse populations “will come together” or “holds people back” in “modern day Canada”:

CS5: I find that, in modern day Canada, it’s not about, you know, one’s skin colour versus another **skin colour**. It’s whether you speak the language or you don’t speak the **language**. That’s how I see Canada. It’s, like, all English speaking Canadians will come together, all non-English speaking Canadians will come together. That’s how I see it. Same thing for Chinese, um, recent Chinese immigrants coming to Canada, um, who are students. That’s how I experience it. I think it’s def . . . I think it’s **a hundred percent language**.

CS5 had shared prior to this excerpt that he was often enlisted by teachers during high school years to help Asian students who were recent immigrants. So his perspective is to be understood as stemming from his experience of working with Asian student populations. And it is understandable that to him the boundary of networks is not drawn along “skin colour” but “language”. In fact, his observation finds support in a study by

Pon, Goldstein and Schechter (2003) about a twelfth grade class in an urban secondary school in Toronto in which Chinese immigrant students constitute the majority population. Students are found to form homogeneous networks around language – Cantonese-speaking students tend to be in one group and English-speaking students (including those Chinese-English bilingual students who prefer to speak English) in another. From an earlier discussion in Chapter 8, I contended that a language boundary is never just “pure linguistics”, it is a medium of culture, hence power relations. In the Bourdieusian frame of culture, cultural issue is a structural and power issue. The cluster of narratives in this section centers around language as a carrier of culture. First I show the crucial, if implicit, role of culture in organizing social connection/social network. Culture in these narratives manifests itself through language and is shown to shape social engagement/disengagement. Then I show that, because culture is inherently political, the cultural organization of social connection also means that the process of social connection is steeped in social meanings and values (hence logic of the field).

CS1 makes it clear in the following excerpts that social engagement is not so much about language as about the “subtle culture” embedded in language. CS1 recalls that when she first immigrated to Canada, she finds herself unable to interact with people, despite she can speak fluent English:

CS1: I think I spoke very good English even before I came...I've travelled in many English-speaking countries, so I can speak in English, no problem. But then though, you, you know the language, but you don't know how to interact with people...the **subtle culture** of interacting with people, you don't know... I don't know, you know, **how** to say things, you know. And I don't know, you know, **what** is the right way of saying things, and what is not the right way of saying things...I didn't have a good sense of how to **navigate within this culture**. I can

speak the language, but the **topic**, the kind of things that they talk about are not the kind of things I can join in the conversation with.

CS1's narrative suggests a distinction between language as linguistics and language as the carrier of culture. She expresses that her knowledge of the former fails to facilitate her social interaction in her newly adopted country, whereas the latter (i.e., "subtle culture") does. The "subtle culture" suggested in the excerpt includes "how to say things" and "what is the right way of saying things". CS1's observation below further reinforces "subtle culture" as crucial mediator of social connection. She says that over the years she has improved in forming social connection but not because she has improved on her language (or linguistic skills). But rather it is because she has learned "how to navigate in this culture":

CS1: My language skill has not improved ever since I came to Canada. It might have improved a little bit because of practice. But now I have no problem, of course, because I've learned how to deal with people, right? I know what to say to people. How to say it to people...I have improved because I know how to navigate within the culture now. But in terms of my language skill, it has not changed...My English has not improved because I came to Canada for two years.

Once again CS1 makes it clear that her improved situation with social connection is not a result of an improvement in "language skills" but a result of her improvement in "how to navigate in this culture". What she says suggests the crucial role of culture in mediating social connection. In Nast & Blokland (2014), a study about a school in a socially-mixed neighbourhood intended to shorten class distance, the authors observe that "...for the emergence of social capital, certain cultural capital is necessary for parents to communicate and interact comfortably" (p. 487). Some Bourdieusian scholars also

observe that culture provides the very ground for human interaction (Houston, 2002; Swartz, 1997).

CS1's narrative further provides clues to unpack her notion of "subtle culture", that is, the mechanism or process of culture in regulating social connection. CS1 talks about "subtle culture" in terms of what is "proper" and what is "not proper":

CS1: I can tell you an example. When I have conversations with my family and friends in [home country], we called, like "Hello, how are you. OK, I need to call because I need to do this, this, this, this. Can you do this for me?" That's how our culture, I don't know, like, that's how I communicate with my friends and my families in [home country]. You go directly to what you have to say, that's it! Well, that's the reason why you make a phone call, come 'on. Well, if I have to communicate with [spouse]'s family, "Oh hi, how are you?" He will say "Oh, good. How are you doing?" Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. We have to communicate ten minutes about nothing. And then we talk about the purpose of why you call. So this is considered to be **proper manners**. If you just make a phone call, and say I need you to do this, this, this, this, this, **that's not proper**. That's my sense at least. That's my sense, right? So I am observing these things. Right?

CS1's observation suggests that there are informal rules of what is considered "proper" and "not proper" that sustain or disengage social interaction and social connection. This is the "subtle culture" CS1 said she has learned over the years that has enabled her to form social connections (whereas she could not despite having the linguistic tool). What is "proper" and "not proper" presupposes a norm to measure from, and the norm in this case is not explicit, it is "subtle" or implicit because it is a presumed shared knowledge. In this sense, the "subtle culture" here echoes the "unwritten" rules in Chapter 9. Just as the "unwritten" rules function as a boundary of recognition and acceptance for the participants in Chapter 9, the "subtle culture" here functions as boundary of social connection for CS1. The "subtle culture" serves as a signifier of shared knowledge of

what is “proper” and “not proper” that sustains or disengages social connections. Thus, human interaction resembles a symbolic interaction that is based on the presumed shared understanding of the implicit (or unspoken) symbolic rules of culture. What is involved in an encounter is in fact a decoding and interpretive process, whether we are aware of it or not. People perform or respond to others according to what they understand as the meaning of the action (or what the action signals to them). Dingwall (1997) talks about a “dance of expectation” in human interaction, a notion that echoes the centrality of culture as implicit rules in human interaction. Dingwall (1997) writes,

Social order is constituted through interaction by a dance of expectations. I produce my actions in the expectation that you will understand them in a particular way. Your understanding reflects your expectations of what would be a proper action for me in these particular circumstances which, in turn, becomes the basis of your response which, itself, reflects your expectations of how I will respond. And so on. At any point, there may be a disjuncture between actions, responses and expectations which requires that the parties engage in some sort of repair work. (p. 56)

CS1’s experience of early trouble in forming social connection can be seen as a result of disruption of this “dance of expectation” or what she calls the “subtle culture”. Garrett (2007b) notes that those who are not inculcated with the understanding of the implicit rules of the game (or the ‘right’ habitus) to be adaptable to the field risk exclusion and alienation.

CS6's narrative reflects similar understanding of the crucial role of culture in mediating social connection. She tells a similar story of social ineptness (not fitting in) from which she comes to a similar observation that her problem with social connection is not about language ability but also culture. CS6 describes that "the major problem I had during the two-year of program was the mingling...like, I felt so excluded...". Though it has been nine years since, CS6 still has indelible memory of her 2 years going back to study shortly after she immigrated to Canada. She said that her "mingling" problem was so bad that it felt like a "shock":

CS6: It[mingling problem] was so bad for me I eventually went to counselling, not for academic reason, for like, for stress. Not stress- not academic stress, it's just the mingle-wise, like to- to, **I couldn't fit in**. Like, yeah, so my total problem issue in the program is, is **mingling**. It's not academic at all, not at all, **not language at all**... during those **struggles**, as I said, it was so bad I even went to see the counsellor. I've never ever had those kind of experience...not even in my life I have that.

This brief narrative captures the degree of impact of the "mingling" problem on CS6.

Equally important, CS6 echoes CS1 that her "mingling" problem is "not language at all".

She further explains on this point,

CS6: language-wise I don't think I had too many problems, so- because I had a very strong- I mean language foundation back home...For us, we- for me, I should say, I just couldn't really participate a lot of the conversation. You know, now I'm totally, totally like mingled with my coworkers, it's like talking with you, right? So, but back then I was 'what should I talk, what should I talk?' like, 'how can I participate in their conversation?' I was- I felt so nervous. Yeah, **not language-wise**, not because I couldn't speak English... You know in **different cultures** we have different **topics**...So uh, when I came here I um, like I, like I could like understand the language but I might not understand the **topic** of the movie it's a, It's the **culture background**, it's the **culture background**.

What is similar between CS1 and CS6 is that they both exhibit the sign of a ‘*dislocated habitus*’ in that they show a disorientation of the implicit rules of culture or “subtle culture” - the “how” and “what” of social interaction/engagement. Like CS1, CS6 clearly distinguishes that her “mingling” problem is not a language issue but a cultural issue. Also like CS1, CS6 links culture to common conversation “topics”. In fact, the word “topic” is a salient word found in the narratives of many participants in relation to culture and social connection. Some of the vivid descriptions (including brief recapitulations from CS1 and CS6) are as follows:

CS1: I can speak the language, but the **topic**, the kind of things that they talk about are not the kind of things I can join in the conversation with.”

CS2: Well like... in terms of culture, I know more about, I watch more television, I, so I have more **topic**, that, you know, for everyday conversation with other people, so I can fit in more easily.

CS3: it’s hard to make friends with them [fellow classmates]... um, cause, er, we have different cultural background, so which means we have very few common **topics**.

CS6: ...they [fellow classmates] talk about **topics** that are different. So you find that you cannot mingle with the group...it’s the **culture background**, it’s the culture background.

CS10: When I was involved in the [program] student association, the chair and other people tried to think up different ways [to bring students together] but the ways they came up with did not always go down well with Chinese students. They said, “if we want them [Chinese students and their fellow classmates] together more, why don’t we go play ball or fundraising together...let’s say we go play beach ball next week, and you call your friends to come.” But when we got there, it’s still the Chinese friends are one side, and you are on the other side, it’s actually quite embarrassing going there. When people sit together and talk, the **topics** they talk about are not the kind of topics we can join, they talk about movies, hockey or what not. We have to pay great effort to follow the conversation.

CS11: I think, like, of course, if I see Asians, it's easier for me to socialize with them because I feel like there's more, I don't even know why. It's, like, more **topics** in common...at times, with Caucasian people, I will still feel, um, I will not be able to, like, connect with them as well, for, like, . . . had the **same topics of discussion** that I would have with, like, Asian people, if, even if it's, like, the first time I see both of them.

CS15: And like it's not- it might not necessarily be that they're excluding me, but say they're like 'did you watch last night's episode of something?' Well like what am I supposed to say to that...**topic**?

The simple word "topic" used so consistently by participants in the same context of social engagement/connection that it is as if it is the 'laymen' term for culture, and from it the abstractness of culture finds concrete expression. This recurring and salient word serves as culture incarnate in participants' stories that concretizes the more abstract idea of the cultural organization of social connection.

CS2's following story further concretizes the crucial role of culture (or cultural capital) in social connection by the length she went to acquire 'culture' or what she calls the "talk topics". CS2 is a keen observer of her disadvantage in social network (i.e., social capital) being an international student (as well as the only Chinese student from her home country in her program). This keen awareness is evident right from the start of our interview:

CS2:... I feel my experience is very unique compared to the, well, the so called Canadian, or the mainstream students, Because we are facing different kind of challenges, and we may not necessary have, you know, the **social network** as strong as theirs.

It is again evident in the observation she made about her early days in the program:

CS2: for some reason, um, a lot of my classmates, they have, um, you know, their parents are professors. Or, you know, someone that has . . . I mean they have **connections**. So, the summer before the university starts, they already kind of

participate in some kind of [academic activity], they have...they **know someone**, they have the, you know, relevant experience, um, with [CS'2 academic discipline]. But I have no idea what's go . . . I even have to search, er, I mean I even have to look up the dictionary to see what [CS2's academic discipline] means.

But CS2 is active and strategic in using her agency to remedy her disadvantage. She says, “If I don't have the connection, I'm going to build my own connection.” She took the initiative to email to her professors in the faculty and offered to do volunteer work for them. From that she works to build her connections. She also made an active effort to make connection with “mainstream students”. She realizes that her disadvantage in networking with “mainstream” peers “it's not about English, it's about culture... And at first I saw language as a huge issue but then I realized language is just part of that culture thing”. Culture in her narrative takes the form of “talk topics”. She went in length to make up for this lag. She finds herself ‘trapped’ in between levels of English proficiency; she is above the levels offered by the ESL classes on campus but not on par with native speakers. To improve herself, she volunteered to work in a community centre where she said the “major task” is “human interaction”, which is just the right space for her to pick up the everyday idiomatic ways of speaking. At home, she watches television programs to pick up the “slangs” in popular culture:

CS2: I watch those sitcoms, you know, like Friends, and then I tried to pick up the **slangs** that people use.

And she reflects with satisfaction how over the years she has “accumulated topics here and there...in my pocket” to talk about:

CS2: Well, like, in terms of **culture**, not just academics, you know. **Socially**, I know more about, I watch more television, I, so I have more **topics**, that, you

know, for everyday conversation with other people, so I can **fit in** more easily...And, throughout my years in Canada, I accumulated **topics** here and there. I learn from other people's conversation. So, I'm, OK, maybe, for this kind of contact, it's better not to mention anything about school. Maybe we should just talk about entertainment news. And I have those, kind of in my pocket, to talk about, now.

Indeed, CS2 reminds us of CS1 that her improved situation in social network is not a result of improved English, but rather a result that she has learned "how to navigate in this culture". At the same time, however, CS2 also expresses that it felt like "work" in social events.

CS2: Yeah, it's like, um. . . You know, social event is supposed to be relaxing. But, sometimes I feel like it's work.

Despite that it feels like work, CS2 acknowledges that she is driven by "the need to fit in".

What the above narratives make visible is the cultural embeddedness of social connection. Language in participants' narratives provides a window to see the crucial role culture plays in mediating social connection. What we normally understand in cross-cultural situation as language barrier is not simply a linguistic issue; it is above all a cultural issue. More importantly, a cultural issue is a power issue. Culture inherently functions as boundary of inclusion and exclusion necessitated by being signifier of a defined hierarchy of values. And value is never neutral but defined for certain "logic". What defines the 'insiders' by necessity also defines the 'outsiders'. So the cultural mediation of social connection also underscores the power relations involved in social connection. From this perspective, we can see social connection not necessarily so much as an individual preference or choice as an objectification of a given hierarchy of values

(usually the dominant values). This objectification indeed finds expression in two excerpts from participants' narratives.

In the following narrative by CS12, we see that language, as carrier of culture, functions as a signifier that sorts out who has value or worth. We recall from Chapter 8 that CS12 was sent to a summer camp in North America every year for two to three months for the purpose “to pick up the English accent and the culture”. Her narratives around “English accent” reflect an internalization of the symbolic value of English instilled in her by family in a young age and reinforced by her primary school teachers. Internalizing the symbolic value of the “English accent” is also to internalize the underpinning racial and colonial assumptions of the ‘superior West’ and the ‘inferior other’. In the following excerpt, we see indication of the objectification of this racial order in her hierarchy of preference for friends:

CS12: Yeah, because I don't- I don't really stick to people from ESL because they- yeah, I tend to not...Um, well the thing is, if you stick to them it means you're not picking up English, you're picking up their language because they don't speak English well enough and they tend not to speak English when they can...I don't mix with them...

CS12's words speak to the idea that it is the value English signifies that has a bearing on her choice of who to and not to “stick to”. Her words speak to the idea that the choice of social connection is not necessarily so much a personal preference or choice as it is a political choice, since her choice is not value-neutral but is steeped in the colonial logic and implicated in the perpetuation of Western domination. In a study by Lan (2011) about Westerners (or expats) in Taiwan, it shows that social connection can be seen as a reflection of Western domination. Whereas Asian international or immigrant students,

such as CS1, CS2 and CS6 in this section, experience isolation in a Western country, Westerners in Taiwan, as shown in Lan (2011), are overwhelmed with requests for connection due to their native English. The author writes, “most Westerners in Taiwan have the experience of being stopped by strangers on the street who simply want to chat and practice their English. Some even offer phone numbers for future contacts and invite them for festival activities or social gatherings” (p. 1684), so much so that some find these initiations “annoying” and “frighteningly friendly” (p. 1689). In this light, the cultural mediation of social connection is strongly implicated in the perpetuation or reproduction of the colonial logic and Western domination.

The objectification of social values in CS12’s choice of social connection also finds resonance in the brief words by another participant CS16. CS16 is born and raised in Canada to an immigrant family, and is currently studying in a graduate program. She says that most of her friends are Caucasian, including her common-law partner. Her bi-cultural perspective seems to enable in her a keen awareness of the symbolic value of the English language. She singles out language as a “huge part of culture”. In the following excerpt, language, as carrier of culture, functions as a signifier that sorts out whether one is ‘like us’ or ‘our kind’:

CS16: people would treat you or react to you based on what you look like to them...their perception of your language ability. If you look like them, or **speak like them**...you are in huge advantage if you speak like them. If you speak with no accent, people would like you more because **you speak the way I do**...you are **closer to my culture**. If you **sound like them**, they’ll slowly warm up to you.

CS16’s words echo the way CS12 chooses not to “stick to” ESL students “because they don’t speak English well enough”. More importantly, the excerpt suggests that the

cultural signal embedded in language shapes social connection in the way it signifies insider/outsider, as in “you speak the way I do...you are closer to my culture”.

In this section, I used a cluster of narratives to show that social networking is not so much a personal issue as a power issue. I show how social networking is culturally organized; participants’ narratives speak to the way culture shapes and organizes social connection through language as carrier of culture. Through that I suggest the structural basis of what may appear as an individual choice in social connection. Just as culture is steeped in social relations of power, so is the process of social networking. I suggest from participants’ narratives that culture shapes social connection through its signifying function to sort out ‘who is like us’ and ‘what is of value’. Since culture is implicated in the “logic of the field”, I also suggest that participants’ narratives about social connection reflect a form of perpetuation of Western domination (cf. whiteness and postcolonial logics). Indeed, in this section about the cultural organization of social connection, I underscore the interdependence of capital as understood in Bourdieu’s framework; in this particular case it is the interdependence between cultural and social capitals. The next section, Section C, takes the cultural capital-social capital link further to show the interconvertibility of cultural and social capitals and through that to suggest social capital as an unacknowledged power and how it forms part of the extensive but hidden web of power.

C. The hidden power of social capital: The interconversion between social and cultural capitals

In Section B the cultural organization of social capital makes visible the cultural capital-social capital interdependency. In this section this cultural-social capital interdependency continues to be salient in another cluster of narratives but the narratives speak even further on two aspects of this interdependency. First, it speaks further to the fluid inter-conversion between cultural and social capital. The inter-convertibility of all forms of capital sometimes is referred to in Bourdieu's framework as the transubstantiation of capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Moore, 2004, 2008). The interconversion of cultural and social capitals in the narratives makes visible the way power can be diffused and masked in the more benign appearance of social network (or social capital). The second aspect the narratives speak further to is the hidden power of social capital. The narratives underscores social capital as an under-acknowledged power - not only is social capital a site through which privilege and dominance are preserved but also has strong material implication. The highlight of these two aspects makes the impact of the cultural-social capital interdependency more consequential to students who are disadvantaged in either/both cultural capital or/and social capital.

The inter-convertibility of capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Moore, 2004; 2008) is what sets Bourdieu's usage of capital apart from other usages of capital. Instead of using as a stand-alone concept, capital here is used in terms of Bourdieu's overall framework that all forms of capital are inter-connected and inter-convertible. Winkle-Wagner (2010) and Grenfell (2009) have critiqued studies using cultural capital and social capital

respectively as stand-alone concept that they make structural issue personal. For example, Grenfell (2009) writes in regards to the “stand-alone deployment” of social capital, “.....many of them [writers] simply refer to his [Bourdieu’s] work before bypassing it, and giving a largely personal and positive account of ‘social capital’ and what I can do” (p. 30). The transubstantiation concept is particularly relevant in the cluster of narratives by CS10, CS5, CS3 and CS4 in this section. Not only does it accentuate the structural underpinning of social connection, it also makes visible the fluid, far-reaching and hidden operation of power through the interconversion between cultural capital and social capital.

We recall from Chapter 8 that CS10 returned to graduate school after immigrating to Canada. She had above average command of English from having worked in an Asian-based Western company several years prior to coming to Canada. She talked about isolation in group work as she felt Chinese students were being perceived as “a burden” and “dragging them [local Canadian students] behind”. She talked about “great regret” in not able to form social connection with her “local Canadian” peers. She talked about having tried organizing mutual activities (e.g., beach ball party) for Chinese and the “local Canadian students” with dubious result. And then in the previous chapter, I discussed the relationship between cultural capital and challenge in social networking. In the following excerpt, CS10 further describes how her disadvantage in social networks materially affects her in securing a co-op placement during school terms and employment after graduation. The excerpt may be long but it is too rich with information and CS10’s candid expressions to have it just summarized. The lengthy excerpt captures the invisible

work of social capital through the interweaving connection between cultural capital, social capital, and material consequences.

CS10: You may have work, or whatever you do, but if you want to have your voice in society, you still have to have your own **network** here. Many times when we are looking for work, when we were in **co-op**, I discovered that, why my classmates did not . . . after the first co-op, they did not have to spend much effort in finding placement. Because they have **already linked up with the alumni** beforehand. And once they got in there [placement], they would also refer their **best friend** to go there as well. **But we were not their best friends. They will never refer us to work there, ‘we will only introduce our own people’.** Therefore, that is to say, **though you may want to connect with them, it does not matter how you try to build up the friendship, it will not be great enough to get them to introduce you to the company.** Because they . . . just like, **even though we feel that our English is very good, we cannot attain to their level.** Or, like, **the things you do, they may not be appreciating them from the same perspective as you,** and so there is a difference. . . later, some who were originally in co-op program, when they could not find placement, they plainly switched out of co-op program. . . that is, even though people posted jobs, but you, seem like you never got your turn, or it is either there is no opportunity for interview, or people would not pick you after the interview. . . And that remains the same even to graduation. Very often people . . . in co-op program, it is usually that when people are about to graduate, most people would already have landed jobs, but it was very difficult for me when I first came out. Because when I graduated, my alumni did not really know me. They were all Canadians, because students in [CS10’s specialized area of study] are mostly Canadians. So at that time people who were better friends to each other, they would already get a job. Then I would . . . even though we may have worked together in group work, worked in projects, or what not, but still **I was not their best friend.** So therefore, when later I went to look for work, when I applied for the job, I was competing with my own classmates. Because our field is very narrow. Because there is only that much [specialized area of study], like, related to [CS10’s program]. The students with the same area of study will be thinking of the same thing. **So, so beforehand, if they already have friends in there, or, if they already knew them, their alumni, and were good friends with them already, then they will gradually be accepted.** To give an example, like [organization], our **professor**, a director in their [Department]. There were four of us in our class, one by one they got in there, and they were all introduced into that department by him, referred into there by him. Of course they went through interviews. And I was interviewed, he interviewed me once. At that time, when I went in there, I saw another there for interview. **Actually, the several of them were very good friends. So, even though my interview went well, under the same situation, he still would consider them and not consider**

me. So, that is to say, it depends on whether you have that . . . while you were in the program . . . actually it is very much the reality. . . I just felt that, that's reality. That is, while you were looking for work, you were in frustration, you may feel that, ah, it is such. . . such . . . such. But then if you think about it, if you were there. . . if you were the local, and other people whom you do not know came looking, maybe, maybe we. . . not everybody is so generous that they will refer a job to people they do not know... they have to have a very big heart before they can do that, I mean the local Canadians.

W: So, from what I am hearing, when there is connection, the people will have the advantage, whereas you, because you do not have this connection, you are in disadvantage. Do you feel?

CS10: **Most definitely a disadvantage.** Like, especially when you are in [CS10's program], you are looking to enter into a company, it is very difficult to get a first job here. So, would you say those people are not able to do this job? That is to say, those people, during the interview, think that this job looks to be very difficult. But actually, once you are in the company, you know that anybody can do the job. That is, as long as you have the Master's, you can do it, as far as the job is concerned. But it is just that the **barrier to enter the door is so great.** Therefore, at the end, our program, the co-op core program, most people have stayed. But if people are in full time co-op but without co-op placement, most of them have returned to [home country]. That is, they will not stay here. My husband's class has especially many Chinese, fifty to sixty are Chinese. Only five stayed. All others have returned. Only a few stayed. That is, if you can find a job here, then it is very good. But you have to spend a lot . . . need a lot of patience. **Many suffering,** and then you can get one. I looked for **eleven months**...But for them ["local Canadian" cohort], enduring for **three months** already seemed like extreme hardship. They said that they never expected to have to wait for three months. But for me, three months is expected. But mostly it would be six months for us. If six months, for us, if we still cannot get it in six months . . . I waited for eleven months... Many times we would be taken aback. If it were not for the support of family members, or that there are other sources of income in the family, then you have to think, you may as well just take up a labour job. . . that kind of feeling.

In this lengthy excerpt, CS10 captures poignantly the translation (or conversion) of cultural capital into social capital, and materially shapes life chances. The narrative suggests the connection between CS10's misrecognized cultural capital (e.g., "even though we feel that our English is very good, we cannot attain to their level. Or, like, the

things you do, they may not be appreciating them from the same perspective as you”) and her disadvantage in social capital (e.g., “I’m not their best friend”) and her disadvantage in securing co-op placement and employment (e.g., many suffering and then you can get one [job]). In this series of interconnection we can see social capital a site to preserve privilege, and social capital in this case is strongly mediated through cultural capital. CS10 in the narrative talks about “it does not matter how you try to build up the friendship”, she still would not be “their best friends”. Even though what CS10 says seems to only allude to a language issue, we understand from previous chapters that language issue is cultural issue and therefore is also power issue. Cultural difference is often taken as benign difference in terms of cultural traits. But when seen in the light of its propensity to sort out ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ in social networking, and how social network is instrumental to material advantage, we see more clearly the magnitude of the impact of this connection. We will be more convinced when we see how the cultural capital-social capital-material consequence link in CS10’s narrative stands in stark contrast to that in CS5’s narrative (in Chapter 8 Section B) in which he also talks about his social capital (in the form of mentorship). Like CS10, CS5’s narrative also speaks to the cultural capital-social capital-material consequence link, only that CS5’s is the mirror opposite to that of CS10’s:

CS5: What has helped a lot? Er, I think a lot of mentorship helps a lot. Mentorship from, um, other **individuals who’ve gone through the same path** as well. Um, they have a lot of experience. They, **they’ve actually gone through it before**, so they’re actually either . . . they’re in the program or they’re already finished the program. And, it, it seems that they, they really show, like what are the challenges, um . . . to provide solutions or meet these challenges. Er, for example, um, you know, what courses to take; and, now, also, what are my

interests as well in the field, you know, what are my intentions of being there. Um, the mentorship really helped. Many mentorships I've had are **other professors who are in the area**, or the students who are in the area, helped a lot.

Whereas CS10's narrative speaks of her misrecognized cultural capital, CS5's speaks of his field-valued cultural capital (e.g., from Chapter 8 "common language"). Whereas CS10's speaks of negative social capital (e.g., no helpful "alumni" friends and "professor" willing to recommend her), CS5's speaks of positive social capital (i.e., mentors who "gone through the same path" and "professors who are in the area" to help pave the way to his current highly selective professional program). Whereas CS10's speaks of "barrier is so great to enter the door" in looking for co-op placement and employment, CS5's speaks of being "optimistic" about his education career. One has to wonder why the opposite pattern of cultural and social capital also links to opposite material reality. The contrast adds considerable weight to the argument of the significant material implication of the interdependence and interconnection between cultural capital and social capital, and that social capital is an unseen power in the reproduction of privilege.

The next scenario below describes a parallel but contrasting journey between CS3 and CS4. CS3 and CS4 are a couple who came to Canada for graduate studies in the same academic field but different post-secondary institutions. It can be safely assumed that CS3 and CS4 share more similarities than differences in their cultural capital since they share similar background. What evidently shapes their contrasting experience in higher education is their difference in social capital. Their contrasting experience speaks to the

significant capacity of social capital in shaping experience – more significant than it is recognized for.

We recall from Chapters 9 and 10 that CS3 had an “unhappy” experience in her Master’s studies. She opted for not pursuing PhD because she said to herself “why do I need to torture myself again”. We also recall that one of her unhappy experiences is during her first year when her supervisor assigned her to TA a critical thinking course. The experience ended in serious frustration and discouragement. She observes that to TA a critical thinking seminar is not “a good start for us international students”. She suggests that had she had a more experienced supervisor, her experience would have been different. She said if she could change one thing to make her experience more positive and happier,

CS3: I would choose another supervisor [chuckles]... I really hate to say that, but, er, yeah cause she’s a nice, nice woman. But, just, er, um...the supervisor is really important.

In fact, CS3 was very intentional and deliberate in bringing up the supervisor topic; she brought up the topic even before I did. A supervisor, being “the most important person in your [graduate] program” as CS3 observes, is a significant form of social capital. For CS3, social capital evidently plays a significant role in shaping her education experience, and likely also her education trajectory (i.e., whether or not to pursue PhD).

On the other hand, her spouse CS4’s experience is almost a mirror opposite of hers. CS4 has an undeniably stronger connection with his supervisor. CS4 describes his relationship with his supervisor as both “supervisor and student” and “friends”:

CS4: in one side we are supervisor and student. But when we’re not talking about experiments, we’re not talking about research, it’s, er, friends, yeah, I can say.

Echoing CS4, CS3 describes CS4's supervisor and their relationship as follows (I interviewed CS3 and CS4 separately):

CS3: ...my husband was, is very, very lucky. Cause, er, he has **very, very good supervisor**. Either in personal level or in academic level... very good friends with, er, his supervisor. She just, she takes care, er, she **takes care of us like her own child**. She doesn't have a child. So **we had a very good relationship** with, with her, and her husband. Cause we travelled together in [CS3's home country] twice. Yeah. She just, like, treated us, treated us **like their own child**. Yeah. Er, I think the . . . umm . . . the major support I got, and I think is really important for me is from my su. . . husband's supervisor. And we are very close. And she's just like our . . . she and her husband, just like, um, **like our Canadian parents**, parents in Canada. Yeah, so um, she is, er, intelligent. She has lots of experience in academics. And so she could either offer me, um, er, suggestions; **advise in academic and also in personal life**. She basically can **answer all of my questions**. No matter it's, er, academically related or personal related.

It is evident from the two excerpts that CS4 has social capital in the form of a close relationship with his academic supervisor. The nature of this close relationship is beyond academic to "friends" and "like our Canadian parents". The significance of this social capital is accentuated by CS3's description of CS4's supervisor as someone who "has lots of experience in academics". This description suggests the supervisor's positioning as someone who has played the 'academic game' long enough and the supervisor's cultural capital as someone who knows how to play the game well (cf. cultural capital). In the following excerpt, we see how CS4's supervisor's position in and knowledge of the game are translated into the way CS4 experiences his TAship dramatically different from that of CS3. CS3 describes as follows:

CS3:...she's [supervisor] so...she's great. So she totally understand that, er, to stud . . . er, to study as TA, is very hard. Actually we don't have TAship in [home country]. When I first came here I don't know what is that, what seminar is? I don't know. And they ask me to lead seminars. So my husband's supervisor find

him a very simple TAship. So he just need to go to the lectures, and also to mark examinations by the end of the, er, term. And the examination is, like, half of them are multiple choice questions, and half of them are short answer questions. But since you have, er, been to all of these lectures, also you have the answer keys. So it's very simple job. And, er, he didn't spend, er, like any time in the TA course except by the end of the term...the second term he was TA for the statistics. So, like, math . . . mathematics of statics always easy for Chinese students. Yeah. So, he, he just went along with this program quite well.

Echoing CS3, CS4 further adds to what CS3 says as follows

CS4: I think for the TA experience, department is very, um, considerate. Because, um, **my supervisor understands** my language problem when I first came here. So, em, she suggested I should do something for example stats, which, um, most of the time, for example, it deals with formulas rather than explaining, um **complex concepts...or lead discussion**, or, or **marking other people's essays** and such things... so it, it will...makes me easier for, um, yeah, at **adapting**. And then **the department just took her suggestion**, so assigned me to TA those courses...And then in later years when I was more confident with my language then I choose to TA other courses that involves more, er, more interaction or, something like marking papers.

The two narratives suggest that CS4's supervisor used her academic position to advocate for CS4's interest in an academic game with rules that do not play up to his interest. She strategically steered CS4 away from being TA for courses that involved language heavily (whereas, in Chapter 9, CS3's experience with being a TA in a critical thinking seminar "is not a good start for us international students"). Instead, CS4's supervisor put him in a course with much reduced demand on speaking and writing. Clearly CS4's supervisor understands the TA culture and what is required for a TA in a course that involves language heavily (e.g., "explaining complex concepts", "lead discussion", and "marking other people's essays"). This is crucial 'implicit knowledge of the game' and she clearly is using this knowledge to help CS4 navigate away from the same obstacle that has

tripped up CS3. Informal knowledge of the field is an unacknowledged form of cultural capital that is crucial to play a game well. It is often accessed through social connections. In Lundberg (2007), the author, speaking as a parent of a first-generation Little League baseball player son, talks about how often the more significant information that contributes to playing the game well is not those that are printed in the rule books distributed to the parents. Rather, it is the information transmitted through those who played the game longer and understood the game better. Then speaking as a researcher of first-generation post-secondary education students, the author states that students who are most vulnerable are those who lack the social capital to “help them make sense of the higher education system, replete with unwritten rules and punishments” (p. 10). Whereas CS3 is ‘punished’ for walking head on against the “unwritten rules”, CS4 is enabled to “make sense of the higher education system”, circumvents the “unwritten rules”, and incrementally adapt to the system with relative ease. CS4’s experience is as CS3 observes, “he just went along with this program quite well”.

The significant impact of social capital on education experience is also evident in the intricate conversions between social capital and cultural capital in shaping CS4’s education experience as what he calls “smooth” (in contrast to that of CS3 who describes it as “torture”). Other than the language issue, CS4 does not see any problem (said repeatedly in interview) in his education journey in Canada thus far (and it has been five years since). In fact, CS4’s interview does convey an ‘uneventful’ picture (a striking contrast with CS3’s ‘eventful’ picture) that is so reminiscent of that of many of the Canadian born/raised students in this study who occupy more advantageous field

positioning. He gave a ranking of 1 in a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being the best) for the satisfaction of education experience. There are at least four aspects in CS4's narrative from which we can see a series of inter-conversion between cultural capital, social capital, and symbolic capital that can be linked to his "smooth" academic journey.

First, social capital is seen to convert into cultural capital that facilitates CS4's adjustment to studying in Canada. CS4 says that when he and CS3 first came to Canada, they have zero social connection in Canada, except CS4's supervisor. When given a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the highest) for the significance of his supervisor in contributing to his adjustment to studying in Canada, CS4 gave the highest rating of 5. In the following excerpt, CS4 says something that suggests that his supervisor is mindful of the impact of culture in CS4's education, and intentionally incorporates cultural development as part of CS4's education goal. CS4 said,

CS4: I think when I was making the plan along with my supervisor, we actually expect, oh, in the first year you may spend some time to adapt to the language environment or the general culture...so, the expectation we set was probably lower than the following year. So it was fine as long as we can accomplish the goal you made, it's progress."

At least two aspects stand out in CS3's and CS4's narratives that suggest that CS4's cultural adjustment (cf. cultural capital) is transmitted through social capital. CS4's narrative suggests that he and CS3 have frequent contact with his supervisor beyond academic. CS4 said that his supervisor frequently ("once every two weeks") invites him and CS3 to have dinner at her home. From an earlier discussion we understand that the implicit rules of culture (or unwritten rules of the game) are largely transmitted through those who played the game longer and knew the game better. We recall an earlier excerpt

from CS3 that gives indication to the transmission of cultural knowledge through CS4's supervisor. A segment of that excerpt is as follows:

CS3: ...And we are very close. And she's just like our . . . she and her husband, just like, um, **like our Canadian parents**, parents in Canada. Yeah, so um, she is, er, intelligent. She has lots of experience in academics. And so she could either offer me, um, er, suggestions; **advise in academic and also in personal life**. She basically can **answer all of my questions**. No matter it's, er, **academically related or personal related**.

Moreover, and CS4 says that these dinner gatherings are also joined by her circle of friends. It is not hard to imagine how much informal knowledge about the Canadian culture is fostered during those many dinner gatherings. CS4 observes:

CS4: Um . . . I think because of them [supervisor and her partner], um, for example, they invite us for dinner, er, with other people, their friends. So we got chance to talk with other people, er, we wouldn't meet in the, in university. So we got exposed to, yeah, other people in the society...for example musicians, or, um, just er, [chuckles] people outside of university.

In addition, social capital contributes to CS4's cultural development in the ways his supervisor corrects his English in informal conversations as well as in formal written works. CS4 says, "my supervisor, um, train me in writing. So, we (CS3 and CS4) can write the summary about a paper and then send it to her, and she point out, um, so those grammar or, or mistakes. And, er, um, based on that I just correct them and learn those things." From frequent informal dinners, frequent informal interactions, and formal academic works, CS4's social capital is seen to translate into strengthening his cultural capital.

Next, social capital is seen to help CS4 to gain access into further social capital.

CS4 says:

CS4: my supervisor is very experienced in supervising Phd students...she has, um, **a good sense of, er, what can you learn from those other faculty members**, and then make suggestion about, um, what kind of project you could possibly do with, er, people from department. So, um, it's all about a very good plan for your program.

Suggested in the above excerpt, CS4 benefits from his supervisor's informal knowledge about their academic field as well as her formal networks. Social capital in this case is seen to be translated into the informal knowledge of who to connect for a better fit of collaborative work. The conversion of social capital into further social capital is also strongly implied. The narrative reminds me of Newman's (2004) quip, "absolute power connects absolutely" (p. 141).

Third, there is indication in CS4's narrative about the conversion of social capital into symbolic capital that has positively shaped his academic experience. Rather than a separate form of capital, symbolic capital is the form "various species of capital assume when they are perceived and recognized as legitimate" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 247; see also Bourdieu, 1987, 1989a). So either social capital or cultural capital can have symbolic capital when it is recognized and legitimated by the field. For example, in the case of social capital, a restaurant attended by a celebrity is said to have acquired symbolic capital; the patronage of a prominent figure of status legitimizes (or gives recognition to) the restaurant. CS4 described his supervisor as "a famous researcher" in his field. In fact, CS4 first came to be aware of his supervisor through her publications back in his home

country. As a recognized scholar, CS4's supervisor is said to have symbolic capital legitimated by the academic field. By virtue of CS4's close association with his supervisor, it can be suggested that CS4 has also accrued symbolic capital. This is not to suggest that CS4 consciously seek the symbolic capital; it only means that symbolic capital is conferred on him, whether he desires it or not, by virtue of this close connection. And we understand from Chapter 8 that field-valued capital serves a protective function. One has to wonder how symbolic capital may have played a role in mitigating the otherwise negative symbolic capital that can possibly be assigned to him like most of his counterpart who are international and immigrant students in this study. Positive symbolic capital confers status and recognition, legitimates one's place, and mediates one's social acceptance. There is indication in CS4's narrative that suggests the possible working of symbolic capital in mediating his "smooth" integration in his department. In contrast to most of his counterparts who struggle with alienation and acceptance, CS4 describes that "the general environment in my department is very friendly". He apparently is well integrated in the department; he said he is "comfortable in taking part in social activities" organized or participated by his department, which has included team sports and overnight camping trips. This apparent ease of integration and acceptance stands in a stark contrast to the expression of "isolation" and "struggle" so marked in the narratives of many of his counterparts, particularly CS10, who embody a 'dislocated habitus'. We recall from her narrative earlier in this section that she has tried in vain to connect Chinese students and "local Canadian students" with organized activities through her position on a committee of her faculty's student association. She expressed that no matter

how hard she tried, she still cannot be their “best friends. The salient difference in CS4’s narrative points back to the symbolic capital conferred on him through his close relationship with his supervisor. One could possibly argue that different institutions and different departments may have different cultures. Granted that, it is still helpful to ponder the possible power of social and symbolic capitals embodied in the form of CS4’s supervisor, given the salience of their relationship in CS4’s narrative. We understand from Chapter 8 and earlier in this chapter that peer acceptance (or peer connection) reflects a form of the objectification of cultural capital. In other words, it is mediated through a form of recognition/misrecognition of one’s cultural capital. In the light of the contrasting experience between CS4 and CS10, and the salience of social capital and its associated symbolic capital in CS4’s narrative, one cannot help but wonder how symbolic capital may have functioned to legitimate (or to confer recognition to) CS4’s place in the department, and mitigate the disadvantages that have negatively impacted so many of his international/immigrant student counterparts.

Finally, social capital is seen to shape not only tangible impact (e.g., side-stepping a ‘pot-hole’ or improved social network and collaborative work), but also less tangible impact such as self-confidence. Whereas CS4 gains confidence through gradually adapting to the education culture, CS3 experiences a loss of confidence “not only academic” but also “normal living”. CS3 speaks to this effect as follows:

W: ...you have been describing some of the experiences, not all the time positive, like... your discouragement, and sometimes frustration, in what way does it affect you?

CS3: Less confident. Not only academic. Also, ur, just regularly. Like, just normal living. Yeah. Yeah, I think so. Cause it's all related, I guess. I just feel less confident, cause, er, er, I don't know which way. Even academics, I don't know, cause, er, um, if I'm still going to take a course, or er, write a paper, if I know what I'm going to do, I can do it. I believe I can do it. But I do feel less confident. So, the cognitive level, er. . . so emotional level, I think I feel less confident, er compared to before.

On the other hand, CS4 indicates in the following excerpt how he has grown in confidence in being TA:

CS4: ...being a teaching assistance, um, first time you're, ur, instructing the class, um. . . before that you don't have any experience, but if you did it once, you get experience. Next time you can improve based on that. So, yeah, I think, um, exposure and experience, those two things, have helped in confidence.

We also learned from the previous excerpt that his confidence is allowed to grow because he was given space to first adapt to the learning culture:

CS4: And then in later years when I was more confident with my language then I choose to TA other courses that involves more, er, more interaction or, something like marking papers...

Social capital is strongly implicated in shaping this difference: whereas CS4's confidence is given room to nurture through the intervention of social capital, CS3 has neither the same social capital nor the same intervention.

Although I call self-confidence an intangible effect, I do not mean to dichotomize the tangible and the intangible. Neither do I suggest a lesser significance to the intangible. In fact the line between tangible and intangible effect as shown in participants' narratives is often blurry. While the reduced access to co-op place and employment in CS10's narrative is undeniably a material or tangible impact, at the same time, how can we deny

that a rough academic journey or reduced confidence not materially shape a different academic decision or trajectory?

Concluding thought

The challenge for Asian higher education students, particularly international and immigrant students, in forming social connection with Western counterparts is not new in literature. For example, Campbell & Li (2008), a study about Asian students' learning experiences in New Zealand, reported that Asian students have "difficulties in making friends with domestic students and lack of sense of belonging" (p. 375). Harrison and Peacock (2010) provide a UK perspective in that "we continue to hear in the press that international students feel isolated and alienated on our campuses" (p. 126), and that his study finds "limited classroom interaction between home and international students, coupled with a degree of indifference or avoidance" (p. 127). The discussion of literature in Chapter 2 also alluded to international and immigrant students' isolation from their Western counterparts. Neither is the phenomenon new in media. In 2012, National Communication Association (NCA) reported from a survey that many international students have few close American friends. In 2015, it is reported that "fifty-six per cent of international students in Canada said that they have no Canadian friends" and "40 per cent of international students in the US and 80 per cent in Australia wished they had more local friends" (Marcus, 2015). Although not new knowledge, this knowledge is persistently coloured by an individualistic character of a mix of cultural adaptation, personality, and individual preference of friends. More importantly, it is more often than

not given an emotional focus than material focus. That is, the impact is more often than not understood in terms of emotional impact rather than material impact. Additionally, the significance of social network is little known as a site of the preservation and reproduction of privilege, although it is recognized as a significance resource in social policy research (Policy Research Initiative (PRI), 2005; Li, Savage, Warde, 2008) and the works of Robert Putnam and James Coleman. From the Bourdieusian perspective of the interdependence and interconversion of capital, social capital is deeply implicated in power relations just as cultural capital is. Studies adapting a Bourdieusian social capital and its conversions are likely to implicate the preservation and reproduction of social inequality and social privilege (e.g., E. Kim, 2009; Lan, 2011; Nast & Blokland, 2014; Pluss, 2010, 2013). In the collective narratives in this section, the transubstantiation of capital magnifies social capital and its significant implication in shaping material reality and in reproducing social privilege. Equally important, the interconversion between cultural capital and social capital underscores that something as intangible as cultural signal can exchange for tangible resources. It also underscores that privilege and domination are preserved not by a single straight forward but a hidden web or interconnection of power that protects those who have more to have more. The intricate interconnection acts like a web of power that hides the blatancy of social capital as a source of the reproduction of power relations. In the light of this interconnection, the “social’ aspect” in participants’ narratives in essence speaks to a system of social relations of power that resembles capitalism - one that rewards those who already have

(e.g., “white archetype” habitus) to have more and those who have not (e.g., dislocated habitus) continue to have less.

Section IV Discussion and Future Research

Chapter 12: Towards a nuanced understanding of inclusion and exclusion

Introduction:

At the beginning of this thesis I asked the following two questions (under the central question: How do Chinese students' experiences in higher education, as viewed through Bourdieu's framework of culture, inform a more nuanced understanding of inclusion and exclusion?):

- a) How are Chinese students' experience of higher education in Canada to be understood using the Bourdieusian framework of culture?
- b) What can we draw from a Bourdieusian analysis of Chinese students' experiences in Canadian higher education, to inform a more nuanced understanding of inclusion and exclusion?

These two questions took me on a research journey to explore literature, immerse myself in Bourdieu, wrestle with methodology, and listen to the stories of sixteen self-identified Chinese students in Canada about their higher education experience. This process led to the Findings and Analysis that I laid out in the previous four chapters. Now this journey has come full circle back to these two questions I asked at the beginning. Although the previous four chapters already spoke largely in relation to the first question and had implicit implications for the second question, this chapter aims to pull together my understanding of the previous four chapters to address specifically to these two questions. In Section A below, "Student experience as the objectification of an unnamed system of

meanings and values”, I address the first research question above (about student experience as viewed from a Bourdieusian frame) by drawing out a central aspect of my understanding from the four chapters. I suggest that there is an imposition of an unnamed and unarticulated (or “unwritten”) system of meanings and values embedded in disposition and practice that shapes students’ experience. The four chapters represent the four different ways this unnamed system of meanings and values presents itself at different junctures of students’ engagement with the learning culture. In Section B, “Re-imagining inclusion and exclusion as intangible and unintentional boundary”, I address specifically the second research question by suggesting that a central imagery of boundary emerged from the four chapters is helpful for us to reflect on when considering inclusion and exclusion. I then explore the intangible and unintentional nature of boundary (as imposed by the system of meaning and values embedded in disposition and practice) to nuance our understanding of inclusion and exclusion. Then in the final section, Section C “Addressing intangible and unintentional forms of inclusion and exclusion”, I take the second question further to discuss how this more nuanced articulation can broaden the conversation about addressing inclusion and exclusion in education context.

A. Student experience as the objectification of an unnamed system of meanings and values

When I reflect on the four salient narratives explicated in the previous four chapters, I come to realize the profound implication of Bourdieu’s insight about the dialectic relationship between structure and agent, self and society, subjective and

objective, and habitus and field in his framework of culture. This dialectical understanding of culture illuminates not only culture as structural relations of the field (i.e., culture as structure) but also culture as people who embody and act within the field (i.e., culture as people). It is with this dialectical understanding of what is subjective is ‘objectified’ and what is external is internalized (Bourdieu, 1985; 1989a; Wacquant, 1987) that I think of how the sixteen self-identified Chinese students, coming from relatively diverse Chinese backgrounds, geographic locations, with diverse self-identity, and yet there is enough consistency and continuity among their narratives that their narratives can be distilled into four inter-related narratives (or storylines) that speak to certain logics (structural relations) in structuring those salient patterns of experience. Lest I overemphasize the consistency and continuity, and am at risk of homogenizing experience, there are indeed moments of puncture to the consistency and continuity which I will address later. But at the same time, there are unmistakably patterns and continuity to participants’ narratives that is hard to miss. The continuity means that a participant’s narrative may not share a pattern of experience or may even have contrasting experience, but, rather than disrupting, the narrative strengthens the continuity and interconnectedness of the four salient narratives (or storylines) I explored in the previous four chapters (I will clarify this point further later). This relative consistency and continuity of narratives suggest on one hand a broad shared reality, and on the other hand the reductive effect of structural relations in shaping this shared reality. Culture as I take up from Bourdieu in this study is not the culture of the ‘other’ but the power that defines the ‘other’. So difference and diversity shape students’ experience with the power of [dominant] culture

in defining, and indeed also reducing, difference and diversity in such a way according to its logic and for its benefits.

There is always a danger of extracting a central idea from a broad picture as it risks reducing complexity into simplicity. But if a central idea, albeit an incomplete one, can productively help us to reflect on what shapes students' experiences (question a) and how that in turn helps us to understand inclusion and exclusion (question b), then I would suggest that the four chapters speak to the imposition of an unnamed and unarticulated system of meanings and values. Put simply, it is the imposition of legitimated culture, the notion that guides this study in the first place. But this study makes visible a specific aspect of legitimated culture in the form of an unwritten mode of being and doing, or an unwritten mode of disposition and practice. This unwritten mode of disposition and practice is either implicitly present or explicitly articulated throughout the four chapters. For example, it is implicit in the "unwritten" rules of the learning culture in Chapter 9 and explicit in the "white archetype" in Chapters 10. This imposition of legitimated culture is consistently captured in the narratives as a form of the objectification by a power that defines inherent in any legitimated system of meanings and values (cf. Chapter 4). It is this objectification of social relations that structure the relative consistency and continuity of patterns of experience and narratives, for example, how certain groups of students in the study consistently experience belonging while others consistently experience isolation and invisibility. May's (2011) conception of belonging elucidates the idea of what is subjective is also objectified in the subjective experience of belonging. May (2011) argues that belonging is structurally organized based on the mutual constitution between

self and society, a perspective that she draws from Bourdieu's habitus and field. The structural constitution of what is subjectively experienced speaks to an objectification of structural relations that organizes the subjective experience of belonging (or its antonym "struggle to fit in") in this study. In similar vein, Hsieh (2007), already alluded to in Chapter 9, speaks to the experience of invisibility as an objectification of "the dominant norms" (p. 379). Not a Bourdieusian study, Hsieh's (2007) narrative study of a Chinese female student's experience in a U.S. university certainly has a Bourdieusian ring to it. The author asks "what is invisibility" (p. 379) and why a Chinese female international student feels invisible and keeps silent in her American classes. The author affirms Garth's argument that "invisibility does not mean something is not existent; instead invisibility is often caused by social structures that makes individuals voiceless and invisible" (Garth as cited in p. 379). Invisibility, the study suggests, is a result of "silence" being attached to an assigned value which reduces the female student in the narrative study into an object.

If I were to summarize each of the four salient narratives in the four chapters as a function of the objectification of a legitimated mode of disposition and practice, I would summarize them as this. Chapter 8 is the objectification of students according to their perceived exchange value that grants access to some but conditional access or even no access to others in group work. Chapter 9 is the objectification of students by the "unwritten" rules of learning culture that grants recognition to some (e.g., you are competent, 'you are our equal') and relegate others to invisibility. Chapter 10 is the objectification of students against the "white archetype" that regulates academic

evaluation. The final chapter, Chapter 11, is a series of inter-connected themes that speaks to the objectification of students by a cultural marker that bespeaks shared experience, and regulates access to social networks which in turns shape access to other valued resources and opportunities. There are places in the four chapters in which the allusion to objectification is more explicit:

- CS2: it's like I'm a **merchandise**
- CS5: I start to realize, you know, if it's **beneficial** for myself hanging around only Chinese people, is it **beneficial** for me hanging around white people
- CS10: That is not because they are willing [to work with you]...but because they feel that you know how to do this very well, so it's a kind of specific **trade**, like I would do that other thing for you. So it is purely very **calculating**.
- CS12: Like maybe oh, you're good at your Asian six-pack [3 maths and 3 sciences], maybe people asked you for homework but they don't really - they won't really get used to you- they won't really know you. They only ask for answers, they came for a reason, not because they want to know you but because they want the answer for the work. Kind of a **trade**...like it's only **purely academic**, not like oh maybe they'll ask you 'oh where are you from?', like that's it, like they don't really want to know you in person or anything

True to Bourdieu's anti-dualistic framework, the objectification manifested in the four chapters is via both culture as structure (e.g., learning culture) and culture as people (mainly fellow students but also instructors as in the case of CS3 and CS8). Narratives like the above speak to the powerful operation of legitimated culture in reducing difference and diversity into certain structural value (as defined by the system of meanings and values), or in other words an object or a thing. And it is this objectification process that shapes certain consistency of experience. It is also in this understanding of the imposition of legitimated culture and the objectification of a power that defines

(inherent in legitimated culture) that I make sense of my experience of the two different realities that started this research at the first place.

The imposition of legitimated culture embedded in disposition and practice serves as a point of departure if I were to analyse this study through a race lens. One could argue that one way of understanding racism is the imposition of a hierarchy (of meanings and values) based on skin colour. A poignant example is a study by Fries-Britt, Mwangi, and Peralta (2014) about “foreign-born students of colour” and their experience of race in higher education in the U.S. context. Race is experienced as an imposition by the racialized context of the U.S. The overwhelming majority of participants in the study are black “students of colour”, and most express certain level of incomprehensiveness about the heightened sensitivity of race in the U.S. because race is “far less salient” (p. 5) in their homelands. Most are not conscious of race until it is imposed on them by and negatively impacts on the way they experience reality in the racialized context the U.S. In the same way, participants in this study do not realize their mode of disposition and practice (or habitus) is ‘problematic’ until a culture that legitimates a hierarchy of meanings and values attached to disposition and practice is imposed on them and impacts on their experiences. There are studies about Asian students in Western countries that allude to, though not always explicitly suggest, the imposition of Western cultural norms in the construction of Asian students’ identity and shaping their experiences in education context (Hsieh, 2007; Diangelo, 2006; Pon, Goldstein & Schechter, 2003; Goldstein & Pon, 2003; Campbell & Li, 2008; Zhou, Knoke & Sakamoto, 2005). For example, in Hsieh (2007) mentioned above, a Chinese female student’s silence in an American university

classroom and group work is constructed as “incompetence” (p. 378) and “weird and stupid” (p. 385), and the author suggests that this identity is “imposed by her American classmates’ attitudes toward her” (p. 383-384) “because American society generally values assertiveness and considers keeping silent an indication of incompetence or ignorance” (p. 379). Both Pon, Goldsten & Schecter (2003) and Goldstein & Pon (2003) relate to the same study about the immigrant students from Hong Kong in a high school in Toronto. Goldstein & Pon (2003) argue that the construction of silence, by the Western societies, of the Cantonese-speaking Hong Kong students is the imposition of “colonialist and racist discourses that pathologized the quiet “Oriental” students” (p. 64). Campbell & Li (2008) discuss how Asian students’ learning experiences at a New Zealand University challenges the authors’ assumptions about their “taken-for-granted education traditions, norms, and practices” (p. 375). Though not a Bourdieusian study, Campbell & Li (2008) allude to the imposition of cultural norms on Asian students with a Bourdieusian imagery of culture as a game with rules, “Asian students were playing a game without being engaged intensively in disciplinary enculturation and without adequate training to know these rules and conventions” (p390). In all the examples above, there is this salient theme about the imposition of a dominant (Western) system of meanings and values in shaping Asian students’ experience. Whereas race underscores the imposition of a power that defines a hierarchy (of meanings and values) based on skin colour, this study makes visible the imposition of a power that defines a hierarchy (of meanings and values) based on disposition and practice operating in the Canadian higher education culture.

To say that the imposition of legitimated culture in this study is the point of departure from race-based analysis does not mean that race does not play a role in organizing students' experience in this study. I can safely assume that race is in operation in students' experience in this study, given the prolific anti-racism and related literature (e.g., whiteness) about the construct of race in shaping experience. But I would suggest that race is 'diversified', in fact merged, into the more subtle dimension of culture. That is, this study makes visible the less recognized and less acknowledged appearance of race in the intangible form of disposition and practice. I believe this is one of the areas where Bourdieu can extend race-based analysis. Just as whiteness underscores a subtle and invisible dimension of race that is unnamed and unarticulated, this study underscores the unnamed and unarticulated mode of existence in the form of disposition and practice. It is indeed difficult, in fact dangerous, to draw the line between race and culture too sharply because the two are so closely related, such as the way some use the term "cultural racism" (Cook, 1997; Durrheim & Dixon, 2000). It is hard to tell when race takes on cultural form and when culture takes on racial form. But if I risk drawing too sharp a line between race and culture, there is justification to it since there are prolific literature exploring the imposition of a hierarchy according to skin colour (e.g., anti-racism literature), the imposition of a hierarchy according to culture is by far under-stated and under-theorized (Thompson, 1997; 2002), as expressed in Mullaly's (2010) comment that culture is the "poor cousin of race" (p. 63). If the imposition of race has such established expressions as racism and racial discrimination, the students in this study struggle to

name what has happened to them. The overwhelming expression by participants in this study is the inexplicableness and ambiguity of a power that is still yet to be named.

To further emphasize the significance of making visible this unnamed and unarticulated power of legitimated culture, I would put it in the context of Bourdieu's symbolic violence. An imposition of a legitimated system of meanings and values that robs of one's identity or dignity, and alters or cuts short one's life chances, for those who benefit from that legitimated system is indeed a violence (in the sense of injustice). That the imposition occurs in symbolic level and beneath people's consciousness makes this 'violence' even more 'violent' because one cannot 'prove' the 'violence' exists. Bourdieu and Eagleton (1994) call this "unperceived form of everyday violence" (p. 266) "more brutal" (p. 270) for this reason. Naming and bringing to light what is inexplicable and inarticulable becomes all the more important for something as insidious as symbolic violence. The more we are able to name it, the more we are able to grasp the phenomenon and bring it to the consciousness. In the next section, Section B, I discuss how understanding (in a way naming) students' experience as shaped by the imposition and objectification of a legitimated system of values and meanings helps to nuance and re-imagine inclusion and exclusion (cf. question b).

B. Re-imagining inclusion and exclusion as intangible and unintentional boundary

The concept of exclusion is not fixed; it is in a constant state of (re)definition even since day one when social exclusion first gained popularity in the 1970s and 1980s, replacing the concept of poverty in social policy in Europe (Rawal, 2008). The idea of

“exclusion” as a concept to replace “poverty” is based on its strength “that it takes into account more dimensions of people’s lives than the poverty concept” (Aasland and Flotten as cited in Rawal, 2008, p. 164). But its broadness and elasticity also become a source of ambiguity; the concept of exclusion can be variously defined according to context, ideological perspective, and political agenda. That is, the category of the ‘socially excluded’ can be expanded and collapsed depending on prevailing ideology. It can be argued that the focus of tangible outcome measures in current education policy addressing inclusion (as discussed in Chapter 1 Section C) and in much of the inclusive education research is a reflection of the Neoliberal demand for accountability (cf. Curcic, Gabel, Zeitlin, Cribaro-DiFatta, & Glarner, 2011). Under such demand, what best serves as indicator of success than the tangible proof of numbers? But at the same time, understanding exclusion only in tangible and concrete terms restricts our imagination of how exclusion operations and undermines the capacity to address inclusion. If the true interests of inclusion are to be served, the conceptualization of exclusion needs to be continually renewed with emerging knowledge, as Outhred (2011) observes from the current arguments around inclusion in higher education, “in order to move inclusive education forward we need to build a more robust understanding of exclusion, construct a new conception of inclusion...” (p. 1). In this section, I am going to engage this call for renewed conception with what I understand as shaping students’ experience in this study as discussed in Section A above.

In what way does the imposition of a system of meanings and values (embedded in disposition and practice) speak to inclusion and exclusion? Any system of meanings

and values is inherently a hierarchy and therefore has the inherent boundary function of inclusion and exclusion. It is true that only a fraction of the participants in this study speak of their experiences in terms of inclusion and exclusion. All of those who speak positively about their experiences do not speak of themselves as the ‘included’, although many who have negative experience do speak to the effect of ‘being excluded’. But even when speaking of exclusion, most speak in an interpersonal or individualistic sense rather than a structural sense. As if the experience is only “unique” to them by some mishap and not expected others to share the same. That aside, their collective narrative in Chapters 8-11 clearly conjure up an imagery of boundary. It is a boundary that positions some to play well in the academic game and others to play not as well or to play fully. It is a boundary that sorts out those whose experience is punctured by struggle to fit in, isolation from peers, and academic detour (i.e., contemplate dropping out, change out of co-op program, not pursuing higher degree) and those whose experience punctured by a presumed ease of belonging, ease of navigating the academic culture, ease of access to peer network, and an academic imagination characterized by optimism and possibility. Indeed boundary is inherent in the concept of inclusion and exclusion; inclusion and exclusion presupposes a boundary that sorts out what/who is ‘in’ and what/who is ‘out’, and how inclusion and exclusion is conceptualized relates to where the boundary is drawn and how far or how wide the boundary extends. Boundary also engages with Winkle-Wagner’s (2010) observation about Lamont’s critique of Bourdieu for focusing “more on high-status cultural signal than the creation of symbolic boundaries (that is, cultural boundaries)” (p. 72).

Addressing the boundary of inclusion and exclusion will be comparatively easier if one knows where the boundary is. But what if the boundary is much less clearly defined or even masked? This is the kind of boundary imposed by a system of values and meanings embedded in disposition and practice (as discussed in Section A). Captured in the narratives in the previous four chapters is a boundary that is largely incognizant and imperceptible, so much so that it is challenging to even identify, let alone redressing it. In those four chapters, if we take away the over-laying of Bourdieusian interpretation, one can easily say that most of the narratives are ‘little things’ and seemingly benign episodes that belies any exclusionary nature (this to me is an important reason why many studies done by Asian students about education experience in Western countries turn an inward gaze - see Chapter 2 Section B). But when overlaid with the Bourdieusian framework, we are enabled to see a boundary of inclusion and exclusion that is otherwise just too invisible and intangible to grasp. CS8’s narrative about the “white archetype” epitomizes the imposition of this type of boundary; he has to comply to this imposed mode of disposition and practice (cf. habitus) in order to be recognized and rewarded with a passing grade for his internship. At first glance, not many would think it is race-related because it does not fit with how we usually understand racism. If anything, it is more likely to be perceived as CS8’s deficiency in ability or skills. This is the deceptiveness of power in legitimated culture. Although not a Bourdieusian study, Diangelo’s (2006) study speaks to the idea of the legitimated mode of disposition and practice in mediating a quiet form of power relations. In her ethnographic study of a graduate classroom in which white student is the minority in the class and Asian student is the majority in the class,

Diangelo (2006) observes that it is the white students (despite being the minority), whose vocal and assertive habituses fit the “unspoken, unmarked classroom norms” (p. 1985), that are rewarded with attention and dominate the discussion over Asian students. The author calls this a quiet domination. As in CS8’s scenario, the legitimated system of meanings and values embedded in disposition and practice does not exert its power and domination actively or visibly, but more in the form of subjugating certain disposition and practice (or habitus) by conferring on it negative symbolic capital. Although the term “white archetype” may seem to carry a racial reference, in the context of CS8’s narrative, what marks this analogy clearly suggests an established mode of disposition and practices (i.e., habitus) than about race (in terms of skin color), and most of all it is about the power that defines that mode of being – all that pertains to a Bourdieusian culture. If the stories of how habitus marker negatively affects international and immigrant students are within my expectation, the story of how it negatively affects CS8 is not. In fact, this is one of the two main surprises I find in this study. All the participants who are born/raised in Canada like CS8 consistently have more positive experience than most of the international and immigrant students. But CS8’s story punctures this consistent pattern. This puncture speaks even more strongly to the centrality of the legitimated mode of disposition and practice (“white archetype”) in shaping experience. The centrality of the legitimated mode of disposition and practice is also evident in CS11’s narrative about how the way of clothing and speaking affects her being treated as “equal” (see Chapter 10). Though intangible, the boundary entails material consequences. This to me is what is profound in

this picture of inclusion and exclusion - intangible boundary mediates tangible consequences.

For a system of meanings and values that is embedded in disposition and practice, the challenge in identifying the boundary is immense. Moreover, a boundary too tenuous to name severely impedes the way the boundary is perceived as imposed. This is why many of the stories in this study are in the nature that would yield dubious reception due to its lack of ‘hard evidence’. Many experiences would be rendered as being ‘over-sensitive’. In the following excerpt, CS1 bemoans, when talking about her “invisibility” and exclusion, that if things are more blatant, she could make sense of it and move on. But nothing is concrete to her, and all she has to go on with is a nebulous feeling. She calls this inability to name and see the source of her exclusion “crazy-making”:

CS1: When you can name something, point your finger at something. Um, when it’s a very blatant, nasty behaviour. It’s, it’s much easier to, to locate it, to name it, and to understand it. And to move on and make sense of it than something that’s so subtle, that you don’t have a name for, that you don’t know what’s going on, and it’s just crazy-making...you can’t really see, because, because everything is so taken for granted. And everything is so subtle. So it becomes very difficult for me to make sense of it, or even to name it, because you can’t see it. And even, and all these things I’m sharing with you is based on my feelings. I can’t show my feelings to people. I mean, I can tell them how I feel, but there’s no proof...

Similarly with other participants, there is not much to go on with besides feeling. Their expressions that implicate boundary lie most in the intangible and subjective realms of feeling and perception, such as feeling “invisible”, “excluded”, “not fitting in”, “not wanted”, and “outlier”. One can easily say that most of these descriptions amount to no concrete “proof” or ‘hard evidence’. It is not that, like one participant says, people “say no...or make a circle so we can’t go in”, and yet participants’ narratives clearly let on a

boundary is there, as captured in the expression of one participant, “the barrier to enter the door is so great”.

The intangibility of the boundary is also because it is not exerted actively or intentionally. In one way the unintentional boundary takes the form of people strategizing (Garrett, 2007a; Houston, 2002) or position-taking (Fowler, 2009). That is, people enact a boundary (or hierarchical relationship in this case) simply by virtue of living out their privileged position, or as CS1 says, “they are just living their lives as is”. As in Diangelo (2006), the Asian students are made “invisible” in the classroom not so much as a result of an intentional act as it is a result of unintentional domination by students simply strategizing or position-taking to maximize their capital. This form of enactment of exclusion does not need to accompany with ill-will. But for those on the receiving end, it is the inconsistency of experiencing exclusion without the accompanying deliberate ill-intention that is part of the “crazy-making” CS1 refers to earlier.

The unintentional boundary also takes the form of ‘voluntary’ exit or withdraw, as if no external force drives the exclusion, people choose it on their own ‘free will’. One example is from CS15 who speaks to an “atmosphere” that makes her exit voluntarily. CS15 recalls the “atmosphere” of a student group’s meeting she had tried attending:

CS15: ...on the one side were basically white students and the other side was a mixture but you could see that most of the non-white students were on this side, and it was always that other side of the table that who talked... it just didn’t feel very welcoming, um, so I never - like I walked out of there and I was like ‘I’m not coming back’.

There is the intangible “atmosphere”, and there is the ‘voluntary’ exit by CS15. Just as in the narrative of CS1, there is the intangible “feeling invisible” and there is the almost

‘voluntary’ dropping out. Also in the narrative of CS3, there is the perception of an uninhabitable environment, and there is the ‘voluntary’ decision of opting out of pursuing PhD. Eisenkraft (2010) talking about racism in the academy relates this exact intangible boundary of inclusion and exclusion. The author discusses why “universities are considered to be among the most liberal institutions in society, yet many non-Caucasian scholars say they still feel excluded or denied opportunities” (p. 13). She talks about how racialized academic candidates, once hired, “often encounter a ‘chilly climate’ that may send them exiting through a revolving door” (p. 15). Again there is this intangible “‘chilly climate’” and there is the ‘voluntary’ exit. The challenge of the intangibility of boundaries is that those on the ‘outside’ often not able to see or name it, and those on the ‘inside’ can rightly say that they do not exert it. What masks the existence of boundary is its subjective and intersubjective nature (cf. Chapter 4) – as “categories of judgment” (Grenfell, 2008, p. 98), as “principles of evaluation” (Cronin, 1996, p. 70), or as sense of one’s place and the place of others (Houston, 2002; Wacquant, 1993b). Bourdieu (1985) states that “power relations are also present in people’s minds” (p. 729). A boundary like this cannot be adequately accounted for unless we see inclusion and exclusion as both internal and external phenomenon, as Houston (2002) suggests. It simply does not present itself just either objectively or subjectively, but rather it is at once objective and subjective. Not only is this kind of complex boundary involved in unintentional exclusionary process too intangible to grasp, it also rarely commands research or policy attention. Young (1990) observes that the sense of justice that informs “liberal-minded people...usually do not bring unintended social sources of oppression under judgment” (P.

11), since only acts committed intentionally count, as conventional wisdom would have it. Likewise, Sue, Capodilupo, et al. (2007) also observes a lack of recognition for oppression enacted under the condition of good intention, and that research about unintentional oppression remains scarce.

Re-imagining inclusion and exclusion as intangible and unintentional boundary is caught in the tension between two understandings. On one hand, it aligns with an apparent recognition among some researchers of the complex nature of power associated with inclusion and exclusion that suggests a need to broaden the understanding of inclusion and exclusion. Winkle-Wagner (2010) calls for future research to explore more the intangible aspect of cultural capital. Lamont and Lareau (1988) acknowledge a need to use cultural capital to understand more about “indirect exclusion”, a form of exclusion in which there is no visible or tangible evidence one can directly link to exclusion. Reay (2004a) alludes to the need of researching more the intangible aspect, as a way to counter the more popular “straightforward” aspect, of the exclusionary power of cultural capital (p. 75). Sue and colleagues note the masked, intangible, and unnamed nature of racial microaggressions (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007) and suggest the subtle and indirect kind of oppression is a better venue in understanding “the manifestation and impact of racism upon Asian Americans” (Sue, Bucceri, et al., 2007, p. 73). And Peter Li and Malinda Smith suggest similar need as they see that the obscure and intangible form of exclusion is more characteristic of the experiences of racialized individuals in today’s academy (Eisenkraft, 2010). However, on the other hand, there is an apparent interest for the ‘provable’ and tangible in education research and policy. It is reflected in the apparent

preference for quantitative studies in education research (Silva, Warde, and Wright, 2009; Lamont and Lareau, 1988). There is a consistent picture between the Neoliberal demand for accountability and the apparent concern for tangible outcome measures in education policies around inclusion as seen in the Ministry's priorities; most prominent outcome measures being access rate and attainment rate (cf. The Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities, 2014; Wynne, 2014). It is true that access rate and attainment have long been important means to address educational inequalities. But if the findings in this study and those researchers above who observe the need for more attention in subtle forms of exclusion are any indication, widening the gate of admission is only one way, albeit an important way, of addressing inclusion and exclusion, inside the gate are many more complex gate-keeping processes that demand but are not given equal attention. As indicated in this study, the boundaries students experienced are neither drawn at the point of admission, nor can their effect be captured by attainment rate. They are found to occur at various junctures of the education process. Their exclusionary effects, though profound (e.g., contemplate dropping out, eclipsed academic imagination/aspiration, switch off of co-op program) and life chances (e.g., co-op and employment opportunity), are mostly not 'capturable' by admission and attainment rates. It is a kind of exclusion that allows people to be included but to exist in the margins. And this existence in the margins is kept hidden by the demand of the absolutes such as enrollment and attainment rates.

Challenging as it is to translate what is intangible into tangible, in the next section, I suggest two ideas, drawing from this study, to add to and broaden research and policy conversations around inclusion and exclusion in education.

C. Addressing intangible and unintentional form of inclusion and exclusion

If the true interests of inclusion are to be served, policy and practice need to be driven, not by political interests, but by how inclusion and exclusion are experienced and operate, as those informed by research studies. The complex intangible boundary process of inclusion and exclusion uncovered in this study is mediated neither through structure nor human agent but the interplay between the two. The intangible and unintentional nature of the boundary (as discussed in Section B above) can only be understood, as I have been suggesting throughout the thesis, by embracing what Bourdieu suggests the interaction (or dialectic) between objective and subjective, structural and individual, internal and external. A binary view of inclusion and exclusion simply does not lend itself to understand or accept processes such as ‘voluntary’ exit as a form of exclusion. Since the Bourdieusian culture has informed my understanding of the intangible boundary process in this study, I also look to the Bourdieusian culture to reflect on implication that can broaden the conversation about inclusion and exclusion. As a two-way phenomenon (cf. Chapter 3), culture is structure and people simultaneously. This bi-focal understanding of culture, boundary, and inclusion and exclusion provides at least two clues in the consideration of addressing intangible and unintentional form of exclusion.

The first clue relates to the structural aspect of culture. According to Graham and Harwood (2011), “deep change to school cultures” is a central focus of the inclusive education movement, along with change in “structures, practices and logic” (p. 136-137). But institutional culture clearly is not the focus of change in education policy such as that

articulated by the Ontario Ministry, nor in research about inclusion in higher education, such as the plethora of research generated under Building Inclusive Community or the Forward With Integrity (FWI) initiative in my institution. There is far more attention given to curriculum and pedagogy, including a study under the FWI initiative I was involved in (Marquis et al., 2014). Granted that culture underpins curriculum and pedagogy, so addressing curriculum or pedagogy could eventually lead to the attention of culture. But that goes to show that culture always plays second fiddle to ‘more important priorities’. More importantly, because there tends to be a lack of theoretical clarity around the usage of culture (cf. Chapter 3), even when culture is brought to attention, it is more often than not about the culture of the ‘other’ (cf. Chapter 2).

What is foregrounded in this study is the culture that has the power to define the ‘other’. Bourdieu (1987) argues that to change the world, one has to change the ways of world-making, that is, the meanings and values that define the ways of the world (p. 23). This is the kind of power that is inherent in any system of meanings and values (or culture). Changing culture has strong implication in examining the dominant system of meanings and values that underpins education norms and practices. In this study, culture is the presumed, “unwritten”, and legitimized (white European) system of meaning and values embedded in disposition and practice. It structures the norms, practices, evaluation, and social connection inside and outside of classrooms (which constitutes the social fabric of education). It is the most salient aspect of the study through which we understand participants’ experiences as a function of the objectification of this system. In Graham & Hardwood (2001) mentioned earlier, although there is no conceptual clarity around what

the authors mean by “deep change in school cultures”, it is clear from their writing that disrupting prevailing meanings and perceptions, or what the authors call “a shift away from a labelling paradigm of inclusion” (p. 137), is within the authors’ vision of “deep change in school cultures”. For example, for students with disability, instead of labeling “wheelchair users” as disabled people, they reframe that “wheelchair users are incapacitated by kerbs but perfectly capable of crossing the street when dips are provided” (p. 138). The shift from prevailing meanings and perception is again imminent in a case example the authors draw on about students with serious behaviour issues. Instead of the traditional approach of suspension, isolation, and punishment, which implicitly labelling students as ‘problematic’, in the case example, the learning environment for these students is transformed into a “transitional playground” (p. 142), which is a safe haven for these students to learn and practice how to act appropriately with peers (e.g., how to take turns) through playing games or what is called “game skills” (p. 142). This “transitional playground” concept not only creates a positive culture by putting students with serious behaviour issues in the context of ‘play’ and game, it also shifts students’ perception about themselves. Graham & Hardwood (2011) suggest that changing school cultures is to allow ‘difference’ to drive the development of new norms and practices instead of punishing ‘difference’. Reframing it in the Bourdieusian sense, it is to allow ‘difference’ to disrupt, undo and reshape the taken-for-granted and legitimized system of meanings and values, or what Bourdieu (1987) calls the ways of world-making. There are also literature that suggest change of education culture, albeit far less than those that suggest students’ adaptation to Western culture (cf. Chapter 2), but they often only

refer to culture as norms and practices with little explication about a power that defines meanings and values inherent in norms and practices.

If there is another salient aspect of culture in this study, apart from the power that defines inherent in the system of meanings and values, it is the affective aspect of belonging. Culture was what enabled an “effortless belonging” (Leonard, 1997, p. 66-67) in some student but rendered the same space inhospitable to others. I find May’s (2011) conception of belonging, abstract as it is, helpful to reflect on what it means to change culture from the affective angle. Her conception connects the subjective and the affective to social change. May (2011) suggests that “belonging is an appropriate concept for studying the relationship between social change and the self” (p. 369), since self and society are mutually constituted (having drawn on habitus and field). And this also applies to not belonging, the antonym of belonging, which account for the experience of at least half of the participants in this study. May (2011) describes belonging as “an everyday mode of being that is largely unconscious or not the focus of conscious thought” (p. 370). But conversely, “sense of not belonging” is the result of “a disruption in our everyday environment” from which “we become consciously aware of our habitual ways of being and doing” and a “lack of fit” (p. 370). This speaks to those in my study who express “not fitting in” and who were made to feel different by their “habitual ways of being and doing”. So experience of belong and not belong can indeed be used to gauge the inclusivity of culture. It helps to reflect on change by questioning how a sense of belonging can be achieved and by whom. Just as Graham & Hardwood (2011) suggest

letting difference drive change in culture, May (2011) can be understood as suggesting that experiences of belonging (and not belonging) should drive social change.

The second clue relates to the people aspect of culture. Under the two-way phenomenon of culture, human agents are the embodiment, hence carrier of social relations, of culture. This study has provided a renewed appreciation for the role of human agency (in this study mostly students but sometimes instructors also implicated) in mediating exclusionary relations in micro-processes. In most of the important junctures of the education process in which exclusion processes are transacted, human agency is seen to play a prominent role. Human agents are found to mediate access to group work, social network, co-op placement and employment opportunity, and the normative scheme of evaluation. As discussed in Chapter 4, the field-habitus dialectic underscores the political nature of inter-personal interaction. It makes visible the significant but under-stated role of agent to agent (as opposed to agent to structure or agent to institution) interaction in mediating power relations. As Reay (2004b) states, the field-habitus dialect “is a means of viewing structure as occurring within small-scale interactions and activity within large-scale settings” (p. 439).

There might be inclusion policies that remove structural barriers to widen admission. There might be offices set up to address inclusion and exclusion within the institution such as human rights and diversity offices. But while one can legislate policies, one cannot legislate hearts. This study draws attention to the profound effect of micro-interactions and the role students play in reproducing/mediating social relations, often inadvertently. The boundaries are found to be drawn often intersubjectively through the

objectification of the system of meanings and values mediated by agents. And with at least two of the participants in this study, their experiences occurred even in a space with the best of intention and commitment for equity and social justice. Just as Allan (2006) struggles to understand why he, “born of mixed race (Anishnaabe and white)” (p. 257), would feel “invisible” in his social work classroom, a discipline that “rests upon the values of anti-oppression, social justice and diversity” (p. 257). Policies may widen the gate of inclusion, but we are ignoring that much of the gate-keeping process is enacted and reproduced beyond the gate through agent to agent interactions. In Hsieh’ (2007) narrative study about a female Chinese student in a U.S. university, the female student “did not really think about it’s hard to be in American society” (p. 383) until a year after her stay in the U.S. when she enrolled in a university where she daily interacts with American students. In the university, she found “her American classmates always ignored her” (p. 383), “imposed” on her the identity of “incompetence” and “stupid” (p. 383-384), and “made me did not want to go to class” (p. 383) or join an association important for her qualifying internship because she “did not want to experience isolation and being ignored anymore” (p. 383). Her narrative reminds us of the ‘voluntary’ exit scenario, and it is mediated through micro-context interaction. Harrison & Peacock’s (2010) study about home students (as opposed to international students) speak to the people aspect of culture when the authors suggest that on post-secondary education, “significant culture change is demanded” (p.125). The study speaks to how boundary mechanisms play out in the micro context of group work where home students and international students interact. It also perfectly contextualizes the narratives surrounding group work in this study.

Harrison & Peacock (2010) note their different experience in interviewing “home students” and “international students” to underscore the insensitivity of “home students” to their privilege and to international students. Harrison & Peacock (2020) observe that international students “as outsiders possessing a degree of objectivity” (p. 129), their “commentary is often perceptive, detailed and contextualised”. On the other hand, home students “as members of the majority culture” (p. 129), “much of the data collected from home undergraduates was quite general and unreflective” (p. 129). The authors further note that “blindness to the existence of ‘other’” is not uncommon among home students (p. 129). Among home students’ description of their experience with international students, although there are positive statements, there are many more negative statements “with vast majority of interactions between home and international students terminating at the end of the formal exercise [group work]” (p. 131). The negative statements range from ‘neutrally’ negative such as “lack of commitment or contribution to the workgroup” (p.133) to the extreme end such as, “irritated with all the international students” (p. 132) and “felt that their classroom interactions with international students had been damaging to them” (p.132). The study notes that home students “perceived a high level of risk” associated with working with international students due to “a significant amount of effort required to understand, be understood and not offend” international students (p. 137). The home students’ statements perfectly contextualize the narratives surrounding group work in this study (Chapter 8), in which immigrant and international students being “a burden” or liability to the group is a prominent theme. The authors suggest that proximity alone does not foster “rewarding cross-cultural outcomes” (p. 139), and suggest “significant

culture change” is needed (p. 125). Ortega and Busch-Armendariz (2013) suggest that “the process of inclusion...requires recognizing the socially acceptable patterns of microaggression and inhospitality” (p. 6). Along similar vein, Farkas et al. (1990) argues that future research should deepen the “understanding of the micro-processes underlying stratification outcomes by providing data on the way that gatekeeping judgments are constructed from a myriad of day-to-day interactions” (p. 128). However, studies that note the people aspect of culture tend not to focus on the larger student population as agent of change. For example, Harrison & Peacock (2010), while acknowledging “the promotion of egalitarian attitudes [among home students]” (p. 139), the priority is given to instructors as “key agents of transformation within the internationalisation agenda” (p. 139), such as “proactive management of the group work” (p.140).

In current efforts addressing inclusion in many Canadian post-secondary institutions, students are not seen as top priority in terms of receiving training in critical awareness about diversity and inclusion. Top priority tends to be given to faculty and senior staff with students in lower priority. For example, University of Waterloo this year offers “inclusivity series” as staff workshops (University of Waterloo, n.d.), and there is diversity training as a professional development certificate program offered in Mount Royal University in Alberta (Mount Royal University, 2015). True that faculty and senior staff hold more power than students at an institutional level, but students have the most contact on daily basis with each other and it is in these interactions we see the boundary of inclusion/exclusion being enacted in this study. For instance, social capital is found to play a huge role in regulating access to group work, co-op opportunity and employment

opportunity. But social connection is not something that policy can legislate. One participant in this study talks about an apparently quite developed program for international students in her institution that includes a mentoring program. But even programs like this with the apparent attempt to alleviate the disadvantage of social network in international students did little to facilitate her access to social network and work groups in school. In addition, the focus of this kind of program is on those denied the access instead of those who are positioned to regulate access on micro-interaction level (mostly unintentionally). Raising the critical awareness of the latter about difference and their presumed norms and practices is a logical approach to address this form of exclusion. The apparently low priority assigned to wide scale student training shows a lack of recognition of the profound effect of the everyday gate-keeping processes mediated by students who are the embodiment of culture. The low priority might also reflect the lower value assigned to individual change (as opposed to structural change). That again goes back to the need to embrace a non-binary view of inclusion and exclusion; making individual change is indeed making structural change.

At this point, there are no known initiatives in Ontario postsecondary institutions for wide-scale student training as a strategy to address inclusion/exclusion. But in the U.S., there is a report that the Harvard Kennedy School of Government (HKS) is planning to implement mandatory training about power and privilege for incoming students (Gupta, 2014). Although an administrator had denied such a plan, the latest update in the report still maintains that “ a coalition of students is working with the Harvard Kennedy School (HKS) administration to incorporate into student orientation a training that prepares

students to understand the broad impact of identity on their decision-making as future policy makers” (Gupta, 2014). The update also emphasizes that the training is not only a one-time orientation event but “with follow-ups through the year”. However, even in such case, the scale is limited to only a school or faculty. A mandatory wide-scale diversity and inclusion training for students at entry level is worth considered as a way forward. Entry level students are not only receptive to new ideas, but also align with some data in this study that students have more exclusionary encounters in their first and second years where students are younger. Insensitivity that tends to accompany young age may have aggravated the problem.

Concluding with hope

In this thesis, I have been discussing inclusion and exclusion in terms of boundary, even challenging and hard-to-see boundaries. If there is enough challenge to get concrete boundaries addressed (e.g., alignment with political interest and political will), imagine how much more challenging to get intangible boundaries addressed. But for an unabashed enthusiast of Bourdieu like me, I have reason to be hopeful. Bourdieu has been constantly critiqued for the pessimism suggested by the vicious cycle of the reproduction of field and habitus, although with equally constant rebuttal from Bourdieu (cf. Chapter 5). But what I find from the collective narratives in this study suggests more hope than Bourdieu’s critics may have given him credit for. Capital is not fixed; what accrues value in capital varies depending on the nature of the field (cf. Chapter 3). This makes boundary permeable. There are certainly moments in this study that people seem to be locked in

inescapable position of domination and subordination. But there are also moments that I see puncture in this seemingly stubborn pattern because of the fluidity of capital and the permeability of boundary, such as the narratives of CS7 (Chapter 8), CS8 (Chapter 10), and CS 10's comment about other Chinese students (Chapter 11) in which field-specific capitals assists in boundary-crossing. In fact, these boundary-crossing moments is the second 'surprise' I find in this study. For sure these boundary-crossing moments speak more to the agency of students in capitalizing their field-specific capital than to the structural change of boundary, but those moments of puncture speak to the possibility of change. They can even be harnessed to drive change by raising such questions as: What constitutes a space of possibilities that allows punctures (or boundary-crossing)? Or how to incorporate capital of 'difference' to make the structure of boundary even more permeable? May (2011) apparently shares similar optimism about the potential of small punctures in creating social change, "social change not simply as a top-down process generated by 'extraordinary' events but as something that also result from our mundane 'ordinary' activities and from the tactics (De Certeau, 1984) that people use to negotiate their way through or around social structures" (May, 2011, p. 367).

Even as I am writing this concluding chapter, I realize that this Bourdieusian picture of inclusion and exclusion is just a small piece of the inclusion and exclusion puzzle. But I like to think of it as a significant piece. Significant because it is a piece that is less known and revealed. It punctures, albeit in small way, the predominant picture of inclusion and exclusion represented by numbers that serves to mask the complexity of inclusion and exclusion people experience in everyday basis. In the midst of competing

interests for inclusion, a small piece, and an intangible piece too, like mine ultimately is a tiny grain in the sand. But if I dare to hope with a Bourdieusian hope, field and habitus are not eternal, and change could happen with enough tiny moments of puncture in the field or/and habitus.

Chapter 13: Thoughts on future research

Hindsight is always more nuanced and perceptive. I suppose this is true for all research projects, and this one is no exception. As this study comes to an end, I have come to valuable knowledge of what I may have missed out and what new possibilities can be built on this study. It is from this hindsight that I suggest the following as what can be done differently, and what possibilities future research can build on:

- About moments of puncture as possibility of change – As mentioned in the last chapter, there are a few boundary-crossing scenario emerged from the study, the clearest examples are CS7, CS4 and CS8, but CS10 also has an example from her fellow Chinese students. I suggested in the last chapter that these moments of puncture are useful to inform possibility of change such as what enables the boundary-crossing or what constitutes the permeability of boundary. In focusing on process of inclusion and exclusion, that is, what process locks people in position of inclusion or exclusion, I may have missed opportunities to explore further and deeper with participants those boundary-crossing moments. Future study could probe and look for prompts more purposefully around boundary-crossing moments to enhance understanding of what makes boundary permeable. There could even be a study devoted solely on moments of puncture to focus on possibility of change. Also along the same line, there are narratives that indicate agency to attempt boundary-crossing, though not actually crossing the boundary. For example, CS2 watched popular TV series and volunteered in community centre to ‘pick up cultural capital’ and CS10 helped organize gathering to mix immigrant and international students with “local

Canadian” students. These narratives indicate agency based on knowledge of the logic and rules of the game. There could be more purposeful exploration and probing about these scenarios of agency in order to further inform change with questions such as: what drives this agency (so that people can be empowered to create their own change) and what is the nature of this agency (do people subscribe to the logic or just play the rules of the game).

- About habitus and the objectification of “white archetype” – In this study I explain the relatively consistent patterns of experience of diverse Chinese students (i.e., diverse habituses) as a function of the objectification by a system of meanings and values embedded in disposition and practice. In focusing on experience of objectification (e.g., how participants are made into the pathologized ‘quiet’ and ‘non-assertive’ image), I could have missed out on opportunity to follow up on prompts and to explore further just how diverse their habituses are. It is also possible that my own habitus might not allow me to fully grasp the nuance of their habituses. There are already some information volunteered by participants about their habituses (back home) such as those from CS1, CS2 and CS3 who said they were actually “extrovert”, “the loud one”, and “not a person who is very quiet” respectively. Future research could be more purposeful in exploring participants’ habituses (as developed from their home countries), or choosing a sample of wider range of habitus, in order to help further nuance the analysis of objectification, for example, does a wider range of habituses still result in similar pattern of objectification. Future research can also more purposefully explore these questions: What is the extent of objectification?

Would people with different habitus experience objectification differently? If so, to what extent? Would immigrant or international students with similar habitus as the “white archetype” experience similar objectification?

- About the interconnection between cultural capital and social capital – the significant implication of social capital (in Chapter 11) in shaping students’ experience and on material consequence is an important finding in this study, and is also one that I had not envisioned in the beginning. Social capital emerged as I explored the impact of cultural capital on students’ experience, and I found the close connection between cultural capital and social capital. Future research can further explore social capital in connection to cultural capital, and the implication on equity or inclusion and exclusion. This is an important area to explore especially because of the deceptiveness of social network as a mediating agent of inequity -making friends is part of a social being and just a personal choice. Also, apart from explore ‘mainstream’ social capital, future research can also explore in what way ‘non-mainstream’ social capital helps to attain ‘mainstream’ resources.
- About social class – for this study, I collected demographic information that includes family socio-economic background. But this information is not contextualized beyond a check in the box. And even the simple information did not get used in more meaningful way. Majority of the students indicate they are from middle-class, and some from affluent and professional family backgrounds. If there is a class habitus that shapes students’ experience, as Bourdieu’s work argues, then in what way does it intersect or not intersect with the racialized habitus in this study? And why? More

contextualized information about participants' social class to engage with these questions may help to further nuance the analysis of this study, for example, affirming the centrality of whiteness and colonization in legitimated culture.

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Appendix A – Recruitment Poster

Chinese students, want to share your education experience?

You are needed for a research study relating to inclusive educational environment

Do you feel belong? Is your experience positive in terms of learning, development, and fulfilment?

融合教育環
參與
或留學生
或移民
加拿大出生
華裔學生
邀請

Chinese student in this research refers to any self-identified Chinese who is either Canadian-born, visa student, or immigrated with family at a young age. Former, current, undergraduate or graduate students from all disciplines are welcome.

A participant will take part in a 45-90 minute audio taped interview about his/her education experience, and to fill out some background information. All information will be kept confidential. Interview can be in Cantonese, Mandarin or English.

Your participation may help to foster a more inclusive educational environment for minoritized students

Please contact Winnie Lo, PhD student at 289-887-0597 or laws@mcmaster.ca
(KTH-319, School of Social Work, McMaster University)

Appendix B – Letter of Information / Informed Consent

Letter of Information / Informed Consent

Research Project:

Towards a nuanced understanding of inclusion: Using Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital to understand Chinese students' experiences in higher education

Investigator: Winnie Lo, PhD student, School of Social Work, McMaster University.

Purpose of Research

The research study aims to understand Chinese students' experiences in higher education, particularly in relation to experience of inclusion and exclusion. It is hoped that this research study will lead to a more inclusive educational environment through understanding Chinese students' experience and the reasons that contribute to those experiences.

Description of Research Procedure(s) and Duration

The study aims to have approximately 15 to 20 self-identified Chinese students (undergraduate or graduate) to take part as research participants. Students can be from any university in Ontario. Participation is open to all disciplines, and both current and former students are welcome.

For the purpose of this research, Chinese student refers to self-identified Chinese who can be Canadian-born, visa students, or those immigrated with family at a young age. This group of students is expected (but not limited) to be originated from mainland China, Hong Kong (China), Taiwan, Vietnam, Singapore, and Malaysia. They can be former or current, undergraduate or graduate, students from any academic discipline.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to take part in an interview about your experience studying in university. The interview will last between 45 to 90 minutes. It will take place in any location you feel comfortable with. To enhance the analysis of the study, you will also be asked to fill out a simple questionnaire of personal information such as faculty of study, year in Canada, gender etc. You are free to choose not to answer any of the questions, though your information will greatly assist our analysis. The interview will be audio recorded with your permission.

Potential Harms

It is not likely that there will be any harms or discomfort associated with being in this study. However, sometimes when people share their experiences and/or their stress, they may find that they would like to talk to someone for support. If this situation arises, I can connect you with student counselling on campus. Also you do not need to answer questions that make you uncomfortable or that you do not want to answer.

While every effort will be given to protect the identity and confidentiality of participants, some may still worry their identity and confidentiality will be compromised.

Potential Benefits

There may not be direct benefit to you for being in this research study. However, the information you give to the study may help to better understand what it means to be an inclusive educational environment for minority students. Also some may appreciate the opportunity to talk about their experience.

Confidentiality

Every effort will be given to protect your identity and confidentiality. Your audio-recorded interview file will be transferred and stored in a password protected or encrypted drive, and the drive will in turn be locked in a file cabinet (along with the completed social demographics form). Only my thesis supervisor and I will have access to the locked cabinet. The data on computer files will have names and other identifiers removed (names might be replaced by code names such as A1, A2 etc). Anything that could identify you will not be published or told to anyone else without your permission.

We respect your privacy. No information about you will be given to anyone without your permission, unless the law requires it, as for example if there is immediate harm to you or someone else.

Audio files of interview will be erased once they are transcribed. Following completion of the research study the transcripts of interview will be kept for 10 years and then be destroyed.

Reimbursement

There is no material benefit to you in participating in this study. However, you will receive a small gift as a token of appreciation.

Participation

Your participation is voluntary. You can also agree to participate now, and then change your mind at any time during the study. If you choose not to join the study or to withdraw, no reason will need to be given. The information you have shared up to the point of your withdrawal can either stay with the research study or be erased according to your wish.

You will be given a copy of this consent form for your record.

Contact

For further information, you may contact:

Winnie Lo (Investigator): 289-887-0597, School of Social Work, McMaster University
Dr. Gary Dumbrill (supervisor): 905-525-9140 x23791, School of Social Work, McMaster University

*This project has been reviewed and received ethics clearance from the McMaster Research Ethics Board.
Please contact them with any concerns at ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca or 905-525-9140, extension 23142.*

Consent

By signing this form:

1. I agree that you have explained the study to me. You have answered all my questions.
2. I agree that you have explained the possible harms and benefits of this study.
3. I understand that, even after signing the consent, I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without reason being asked.
4. I agree that the interview be taped. Yes No
5. I agree that the interview transcript be kept to be used for Winnie Lo's Ph.D. research. Yes No
6. I agree that I have been told that my records will remain private. You will not give my information to anyone, unless the law requires you to.
7. I agree that I have read and understood pages 1 to 3 of this consent form. I agree, or consent, to take part in this study.

Research participant's Name

Research participant's Signature

Phone No.

Date

Name of Person Obtaining Consent

Signature

Phone No.

Date

Appendix C – Interview Guide

Semi-structured interview guide

1. Tell me briefly your family background. (probe: cultural capital)
2. For international students: what led you to study in Canada?
3. How did you come to choose this program? Are there factors limiting your choice of program? (probe: the nature of choices)
4. Explain why you rated your education experience in the background information form as such?
5. Describe your experience studying in this program, both positive and negative? (probe: micro-level interactions, day-to-day processes, and differences between dominant system and own knowledge system) How do you understand this experience? How do you feel about these experiences? What advantages, if any, do you see you have as a 'hybrid' in your experience as a student in the context of higher education? (prompt: consider the attainment of goal and the navigation of education process)
6. If you are an international student, what has prepared you to study abroad? (probe: cultural capital)
7. How would you describe yourself within the education environment? (probe: habitus)
8. Describe what it is like for you during class processes (e.g. class instruction, group discussion)? (probe: the working of capital)
9. What is your experience in group work? What made things harder or easier? (probe: the working of cultural capital)
10. What is your experience with peers? What made things harder or easier? (probe: the working of cultural capital)
11. What is your experience with instructors/faculty members? (probe: the working of cultural capital)

12. What do you appreciate the most in your education experience? And what do you think the reasons are?
13. What do you consider most difficult in your education experience (e.g. challenges and barriers)? And what do you think the reasons are? (probe: the working of cultural capital) (Probe also for cognitive and inter-subjective processes)
14. What has helped in dealing with these challenges/barriers? (probe: other forms of capital)
15. Do you feel you fit in? What do you think are the reasons that you feel or do not feel you fit in?
16. What has helped you to fit in?
17. Do you find fulfillment for your educational aspiration? Why and why not? What are those determining factors?
18. How do you understand the way you experienced higher education? E.g. why is it positive for you while it is negative for others? why do you find success and others not?
19. For those who came to Canada in a young age, how is your education experience different? What is adjustment like for you?
20. What kind of family or social support you have in Canada? (probe: social capital)
21. How do you understand racism? Have you experienced racism? (probe: level of consciousness about social justice)