Internationalization of Higher Education in China:

A Case Study of International Branch Campuses

by

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Abstract

Over the past few decades, internationalization of higher education has become a key focus for universities in measuring excellence and innovation. As such, one of the most visible dimensions of internationalization is expanding partnerships with universities around the world. As the outcome of an increasingly globalized economy, the internationalization of higher education has been manifested at various levels including the emergence of international for-profit providers, and the changing position of emerging economies like China. This study investigated how China chose to embrace the internationalization of higher education by developing international branch campuses as partnerships with foreign institutions. The purpose of this study was to explore the rationales and approaches in China's efforts to strategically internationalize its higher education sector through collaboration, with a specific focus on the international branch campuses in China. International branch campuses reveal the intersection of a state's social and economic priorities, with higher education institutions as the focal point.

In this study I used a qualitative research methodology by applying a case study approach that focuses on four international branch campuses: University of Nottingham Ningbo China (UNNC), Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU), New York University Shanghai (NYU Shanghai, and Duke Kunshan University (DKU). Participants included senior university administrators, government officials, faculty members, and researchers in the topic area.

The analysis of the findings involved developing an initial conceptual framework drawing on key political and economic ideas of neoliberal globalization, Socialist Market Economy, and the Post-Confucian Model of higher education. Six key themes emerged from the data analysis: understanding of academic freedom, issue of educational sovereignty, concept of nation building, demand for quality assurance, discussion on knowledge exchange, and interpretation of internationalization. Based on these key findings, I revised the conceptual

framework to better account for how internationalization, as manifested in Chinese higher education, is the driver to reconcile some of the tensions between best practices found in foreign higher education and Chinese higher education.

International branch campuses in China are an emerging model of hybridization and the manifestation of China's effort to reconcile such tensions. I also developed a policy framework for international collaboration, which is comprised of three components that represent a reciprocal approach to internationalization. This study is a timely investigation of international higher education policies and practices in China. The findings not only reveal China's changing stance on the world higher education stage, but also have significant theoretical and policy implications for foreign institutions considering similar joint education ventures.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Jing Xiao. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project name "Internationalization of higher education in China: A case study of international branch campuses", No. Pro00042880, December 12, 2013.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

It has been over 100 years since China began to send its students and scholars to study abroad, but the past two decades has seen a substantial growth in Chinese students studying internationally. China has become one of the most important sources of international flow of students (Yang, 2011b). An important motivation leading to the international mobility of students from China to other countries is China's economic development over the past several decades, which has resulted in the growth of wealthy middle-class families who are willing to send their children abroad for education (Brooks & Walters, 2011). With the influence of the Confucian tradition of believing that "knowledge changes one's destiny", Chinese families invest heavily in the education of their children. Many Chinese families are willing to spend all family savings in sending their children to study in North American and European universities. More importantly, for the past several decades the Chinese government has increasingly supported central and local educational investments in international education and intercultural exchange as a way of increasing the qualification of the workforce, and ultimately as an important approach to support the economic growth and strengthening national competitiveness (Marginson, Kaur, & Sawir, 2011).

The development of international branch campuses in China has been a recent phenomenon since the early 2000s. Although different forms of Chinese-foreign higher education collaborative programs appeared in China as early as the 1990s, the first full-scale international branch campus as a collaboration between the University of Nottingham and Zhejiang Wanli Education Group only started in China in 2004. International branch campuses provide an alternative for Chinese students who are seeking international learning experiences with much less cost. Most of these branch campuses grant credentials recognized by their home campuses, which could increase opportunities for Chinese students intending to pursue further

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graduate studies in North American or European countries. The benefits of studying at international branch campuses have attracted many top-performing Chinese high school graduates.

With four full-scale international branch campuses currently in operation and several other campuses under construction, the development of international higher education collaboration between Chinese and foreign universities has been a phenomenon discussed by researchers and practitioners both in China and internationally. This study examined issues related to the development of international branch campuses in China by investigating perspectives of different educational stakeholders involved in the administration of these four campuses. In this chapter, I will first discuss the background of the phenomenon and the study. I will then introduce the purpose of the study and the research questions. The significance of the study and the researcher's positionality will also be discussed in this chapter, followed by an introduction to the structure of the thesis and definition of some key terms.

Background of the Phenomenon

Over the past two decades, internationalization has become one of the central factors shaping higher education across the world. As the outcome of an increasingly globalized economy, internationalization of higher education has been manifested at various levels, such as increasing competition for international students and academics, the growth of cross-border delivery of programs, the emergence of international for-profit providers, and changing position of countries like India and China in the world economy and the higher education arena (Altbach, 2009; de Wit, 2011).

China has increasingly become an attractive emerging market for foreign higher education providers. Chinese-foreign higher education collaboration has been developed with different approaches and models (Blass, 2009; Bodycott & Lai, 2012; Marginson, Kaur, & Sawir, 2011). Among the various models of international higher education collaboration, three popular forms are stand-alone institutions, joint-ownership overseas campuses, and joint-degree programs (Fazackerley & Worthlington, 2007). With the growing number of higher education partnership programs being established between Chinese and foreign institutions, international branch campuses in China have undergone a rapid expansion in terms of both quantity and scope. According to a 2012 report by the Observatory of Borderless Higher Education (Lawton & Katsomitros, 2012), by the latter half of 2011 there were over 200 degree-awarding international branch campuses in operation worldwide (see figure 1 below). China has become the fastest-growing destination for international branch campuses (see figure 2 below).
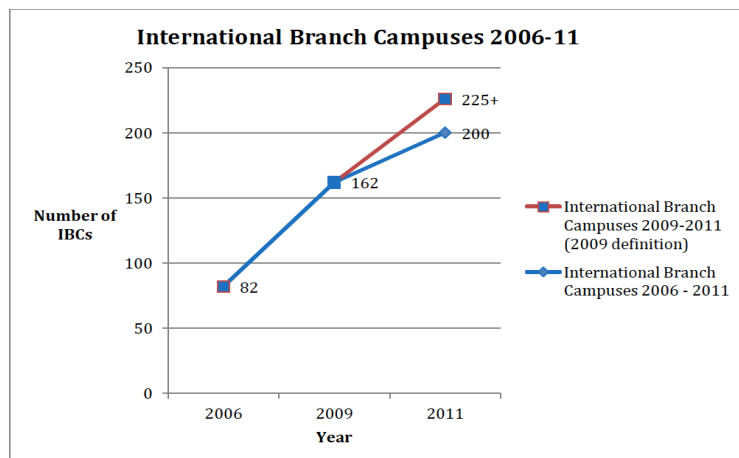
Figure 1. Growth of International Branch Campuses (IBCs)
Source: The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education Report (Lawton & Katsomitros, 2012)

Figure 2 shows the increase in the number of international branch campuses in different host countries. Among the top 5 host countries, international branch campuses in China had an increase of 70 percent from 10 to 17 between 2009 and 2011, and the number has been rapidly growing since 2011 (Lawton & Katsomitros, 2012).
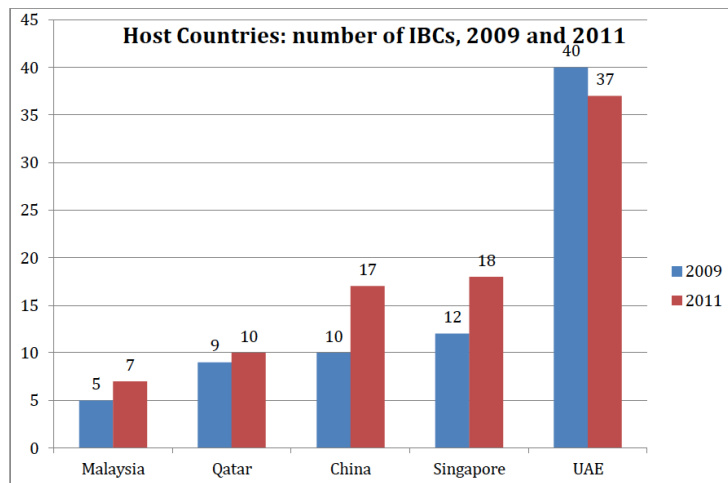
Figure 2. Increase of International Branch Campuses (IBCs)
Source: The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education Report (Lawton & Katsomitros, 2012)

The phenomenon of the expansion of international branch campuses has been closely related to China's process of internationalizing its higher education system (Ennew & Yang, 2009). Since announcing a series of economic and political reforms in the 1990s, the Chinese government has regarded the internationalization of higher education as a strategy to strengthen national economic competitiveness (Mok & Lo, 2007; Liu, 2011). As a result, the economic and political significance of China and the rapid growth of investment in the higher education sector have attracted the interest of universities across the world.

In many countries, governments have started to align the provision of education by foreign universities with its national economic strategies (Lawton & Katsomitros, 2012, p. 8). Among these countries, China has been trying to internationalize its higher education for the purpose of economic development. In addition, according to some researchers (Homayounpour,

2012; Sharma, 2012, 2013), China also has the ambition of becoming an international higher education hub and fitting internationalization of higher education into its agenda of becoming a leading power on the world higher education stage.

The growth of international branch campuses in China also reflects the socio-economic and political changes in East Asia over the past 30 years. According to Brooks and Waters (2011), the international mobility of students from East Asia to European and North American countries over the last several decades has been closely tied to the political and economic changes in this region. For example, China's economic development and the rapid growth of a new middle class is one of the important factors contributing to a large number of Chinese students pursuing overseas studies. Brooks and Waters (2011) believe that the dramatic economic growth over the past two decades in China has resulted in a new middle class of rich individuals with the desire and resources to send their children abroad for education.

Xiang and Shen (2009) identify the link between international education and the social-class inequalities in China. They comment that the wish of Chinese students to attend particular, prestigious Western universities has become the mainstream in the international flow of Chinese student to overseas studies. However, only the wealthiest families and individuals in China can achieve this. This strong desire to study in prestige Western universities has made international branch campuses in China, which as the collaboration between the top Chinese and Western Universities often combines best resources from both sides, a particularly attractive option for the new middle-class Chinese families.

In China's higher education collaboration with international universities four international branch campuses have been the pioneers, and each of them has some unique characteristics. The University of Nottingham Ningbo China (UNNC) is the first full-scale

international branch campus in China and the first Chinese-foreign collaborative university to receive approval from the Chinese Ministry of Education (the MoE). Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU) is the first independent Sino-foreign joint university in China. It is also the first international branch campus jointly founded by a top Chinese university and a British university. There are also two notable American institutions, New York University (NYU) Shanghai and Duke Kunshan University. With the growing involvement of these leading institutions in China and increasing number of other joint venture partnership programs, the Chinese government has been investing heavily in international higher education collaborative institutions (Sharma, 2012).

While supporting the development of international branch campuses in China at both policy and practice levels, China has also been evaluating foreign university presence and providing guidelines for international higher education collaboration. Ultimately the Chinese government is aligning new foreign provision more closely with China's national interests as the nation moves towards a knowledge economy under its 2010-20 "innovation society" plan (Cheng, Cheung & Yeun, 2011). Clearer guidelines have been provided by the MoE about what kind of higher education collaboration China is willing to support. China has made it very clear that the model of joint ownership and operation in collaboration with a Chinese university will be the preferred model for branch campuses in the future (Homayounpour, 2012).

Statement of the Research Problem

Due to the centralized educational system in China and the tight control of governmental function, the MoE requires that foreign institutions must partner with a local Chinese university (MoE, 2003). In most Chinese policy documents these institutions are not defined as international branch campuses, but as Chinese-foreign cooperative universities.

Although there are over 20 international branch campuses running in China by 2016 (MoE, 2016), only 8 of them are full-scale universities with the capacity of offering multi-disciplinary programs at both undergraduate and graduate levels. The majority of other smaller scale institutions are not recognized as "institutions with independent legal person position" (MoE, 2003). These institutions only offer one or two specialized programs such as business and information technology, and they usually are colleges or institutes operating under the organizational structure of an independent Chinese university.

With the establishment of these different scales of collaborative institutions, issues and challenges for home institutions, host institutions, and students also start to emerge. For example, Altbach (2013) raised the concern that international branch campuses do not have the same infrastructure as home campuses, and it is difficult to ensure the quality of the branch campuses with a lack of strong, stable academic professoriate team. In the case of the development of international branch campuses in China, questions and concerns around the development of international branch campuses seem to fall in the following areas:

First, there are certainly gaps in understanding of the nature of international branch campuses in China. For the aforementioned reasons, Chinese policies treat international branch campuses as new "cooperative" universities within the administrative control of both Chinese and foreign home universities. In Chinese government policies, international branch campuses in China are referred to as "Sino-foreign cooperative universities", which means in order to establish a joint campus, a foreign university has to partner with a Chinese institution and the head of the offspring institution must be a Chinese citizen. This difference in understanding poses challenges for the organizational and administrative operation of international branch

campuses due to major ideological and cultural differences between Chinese and foreign universities.

There are also gaps and confusion in the expectations of Chinese central government, local government, and those from the home institutions. What do foreign institutions expect to get from such collaboration? In order to achieve the goals, how do they understand and meet Chinese central government's expectations, local Chinese governments' expectations, and the expectations of the Chinese universities they are collaborating with?

Some international branch campuses in China also encounter quality assurance issues. Which quality control system are they supposed to follow, the home country or the host country? Why does the Chinese central government try to control the number of international branch campuses? How does the Chinese government ensure the quality and benefit of Chinese students and stakeholders?

Although the development of international branch campuses in China seems to suggest a strong immediate future for international collaboration in China, there are concerns about the long-term uncertainty due to the challenges mentioned above. These issues may come from policy restrictions, cultural differences, or the lack of communication. More importantly, there is a gap in research examining the issues and can lead to a better understanding of the challenges to bridge the perspectives of educational stakeholders from both sides. Bearing this gap in mind, this study was conducted with the following purpose and corresponding research questions.

Research Purpose and Research Questions

To address the issues and gaps outlined above, this study investigated the development of four international branch campuses in China. The focus of the study was to explore the rationales and approaches in China's strategies to internationalize its higher education at both the national

policy and institutional practice levels, with the specific focus on the phenomenon of fast growing international branch campuses. Accordingly, this study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do educational stakeholders in China understand the process of internationalization in influencing Chinese higher education?

2. How is internationalization of higher education in China manifested in policies and practices that support international branch campuses?

3. How have educational stakeholders perceived the benefits and challenges regarding the development of international branch campuses in China?

Significance of the Study

China's higher education system is influenced by many factors including political, economic, and cultural changes. These factors are also the basis for the increasing Sino-foreign higher education partnership programs and institutions. Looking at different factors that shape China's higher education system will contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenon of expanding international higher education programs. Furthermore, examining the development of international branch campuses in China is of critical importance to understand the driving forces of internationalization and China's strategies to develop its higher education policies.

This study is a timely and relevant exploration of the development of international branch campuses by focusing on China. As different countries move toward increasing internationalization of higher education, the emergence of international branch campuses will continue to grow. This study contributes in different ways to theories, and educational policy and practice. On the theoretical level, this study contributes to the body of knowledge on internationalization of higher education by developing an original and unique insight into why

China has supported international branch campuses. On the policy level, this study informs higher education policies in China as well as in other countries. In terms of practice, this study contributes to an understanding of China's changing position on the higher education stage and reveals implications for foreign institutions considering similar joint programs.

Researcher's Positionality

This section discusses my positionality, as both a researcher and a graduate of China's higher education system. I will briefly introduce my background, my interest, views, and assumptions in research and in this study. My research interest and views on the internationalization of China's higher education are mainly shaped by my experience. I graduated from Xiamen University, which is a research university located in southeast China. After completing my Master's degree, I worked as a faculty member in the same university for over 7 years. In 2008 I decided to come to Canada to pursue doctoral studies at the University of Alberta.

Even before I came to Canada, my home university had been deeply affected by internationalization. International programs were arranged, collaboration agreements were signed with international universities, and curricula were redesigned for the purpose of Chinese-English bilingual instruction. Furthermore, research funds and other academic resources were linked to the evaluation of a faculty members' English language proficiency. Some of my colleagues and students benefited from the process of internationalization by accessing increasing opportunities for international knowledge exchange, but many others were not as fortunate. These changes became a barrier in many people's career advancement. Since Chinese universities tend to apply rigid qualification standards, those who could not meet the language or financial requirements lost opportunities in academic development.

Although I came to Canada with an academic background, my experience of studying here has also been challenging. The challenges are mainly from the traditional Chinese way of passive learning deeply rooted in my mind conflicting with the North American system requiring more active engagement in learning. It is not just about a significant cultural difference, but more about the Chinese approach versus the North American approach to knowledge acquisition. These challenges help me reflect on whether moving and planting one university model to a totally different cultural context is possible. The growing instances of international branch campuses might be a good option for students who are intending to pursue university studies in an international setting, but there is the question of whether this will work out in the Chinese context.

Based on my experience and assumption, my long-term research interest in the international dimension of higher education starts to align with my academic curiosity about the emerging phenomenon of growing international collaboration and branch campuses in China. I am very eager to find out what are some of the hidden realities behind this phenomenon. Where does it fit into China's broader vision of becoming a leading power in higher education? How does it fit into the context of social transformation and economic development that has been happening in China?

As a researcher, I see myself as a product of the higher education systems in both China and Canada. My research cannot be separated from who I am and where I come from. Inevitably there will be personal assumptions in this research. My assumptions come from my identity, which has been shaped by Chinese culture. For a long period of time, China has been the exporting country of international student mobility and suffered from brain drain. Chinese higher education has long been the "off-center" or the "periphery" of the world higher education stage (Altbach, 2007). Chinese scholars and students are the "others" in the western academic system. I hope my study could inform Chinese policy-makers to get involved in international knowledge exchange

with fair rules. But at the same time, I remind myself that my study is also intended to benefit governments and institutions outside of China. My study of the cases of collaboration between Chinese universities and Western universities will, hopefully, raise awareness of the issues of quality assurance, educational sovereignty, and universities' role in society. At the same time, it is my hope that the observation from this study will benefit similar partnerships in the future.

I believe my experience has enabled me to better understand and address these issues in my research. My unique position made it possible for me to access data and information from both English and Chinese sources, and my connections in China helped me gain access to different educational stakeholders in the study. Meanwhile, I understand that internationalization could be both beneficial and challenging. With my study, I hope to enhance the understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity in the administration of higher education. My research is part of a growing body of knowledge about the impact of internationalization on higher education. I want to see collaboration programs to be approached by both sides of the partnership with a long-term perspective instead of just being treated as the "golden goose". Most importantly I want to find out some answers to what, why, and how internationalization works in the context of a globalized world.

Organization of the Thesis

Including this introductory chapter, there are eight chapters in this thesis. The first chapter introduces the background of the phenomenon being studied, presents the purpose of this study and research questions, briefly outlines the significance of this study while explains the researcher's positionality. Some key terms are also defined in this introductory chapter.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of relevant literature in global and international higher education. This chapter starts by comparing the definition and discussion of globalization and

internationalization, then introduces different waves and forms of internationalization by examining the literature on definition, rationales, competitive terms. The ideas of transnational higher education and international higher education collaboration programs are also reviewed in this chapter. The chapter then explores the implications and challenges of internationalization for higher education, the development of international branch campuses, and consequently its impact on international and inter-cultural education.

Chapter 3 introduces literature on the context of China's higher education system, which explores the historical context, reforms and recent developments in China's higher education system. The chapter also looks at the strategies that have been implemented in China's internationalization of its higher education system. This chapter clarifies the difference between the definition of international branch campuses versus the "Chinese-foreign cooperative/collaborative universities", and accordingly the policy development of internationalization and international branch campuses in China.

Chapter 4 maps theories and ideas that form the conceptual framework to analyze presence and impact of international branch campuses. This chapter explores political ideologies and economic theories that have shaped this study while presenting a concept map that analyzes the relationship between those ideologies and theories. Drawing on Harvey (2005), Mok (2005, 2008), and Marginson (2002, 2006, 2011), this analytical framework illustrates the interconnection of neoliberal globalization, Socialist Market Economy, and the Post-Confucian model in the development of China's higher education system.

Chapter 5 outlines and explains the elements that form the research design of this study. The ontological and epistemological standing of this thesis study and the research approach are introduced in this chapter. This chapter describes data collecting methods, participant

recruitment process, ethical considerations, and data analysis procedures. Limitations, delimitations, and trustworthiness issues are also explained in this chapter.

Chapter 6 describes findings from this study. This chapter reviews data collected from interviews, documents, and observation. By describing the process of relating codes, categories and themes found in the data collection, connections are made across themes. This chapter also relates themes to literature and shows the possibility of interpretation.

Chapter 7 interprets findings of the study. This chapter revisits research questions and relates data analysis to research questions. Drawing upon the conceptual framework, this chapter compares theories and findings, exemplifies how the key findings are related to the research questions. Based on the correlation between the findings and the theories, I propose an updated conceptual framework and a policy framework for international higher education collaboration.

The final chapter explores the implications of this study linked to a wider theoretical and policy context and suggests some possible directions for future research in this area. The chapter concludes by reflecting on completing the thesis and my role as a researcher during and after this study.

Definition of Terms

This study is informed by a number of important concepts and ideas. I will briefly introduce the definition of these terms in this section. These concepts and ideas will be addressed in more detail in the later chapters. Three terms appear most frequently in this thesis: higher education, internationalization, and international branch campuses.

Higher education: Higher education refers to the "educational level that follows the completion of a school providing a secondary education, such as a high school or secondary school" (Altbach, 2007. p. 23). In China, the term higher education originated from the concept

of "higher learning" in the Confucian tradition (Hayhoe & Zha, 2007). It is used more frequently than the term post-secondary education in the Chinese context. China has the largest higher education system in the world with over 2,000 universities and colleges, and a 6.85 million enrollments in 2012 (MoE, 2013). Within a centralized education system, the Ministry of Education (MoE) controls all higher education institutions through policy-making, legislation, planning, funding, and evaluation (Hayhoe, 2011). In Chapter 2, I will discuss more details about the higher education system in China and the recent reforms and development in Chinese higher education.

Internationalization of higher education: According to Knight (2004, 2008a), the definition of internationalization has been evolving over the past two decades. The most recent definition is: "Internationalization at the national/sector/institutional level is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, function or delivery of post-secondary education" (Knight, 2012, p. 11). This term will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 3. Some other terms related to internationalization such as globalization, transnational education, borderless education, cross-border education, multinationalization, and regionalization will also be discussed in Chapter 3.

International branch campuses: The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education has conducted a series of studies and produced some reports on the international branch campuses over the past 10 years (2006, 2009, 2011, 2012). In the 2012 report, international branch campus was defined as "a higher education institution that is located in another country from the institution which either originated it or operates it, with some physical presence in the host country, and which awards at least one degree in the host country that is accredited in the country of the originating institution" (Lawton & Katsomitros, 2012, p. 7).

Chapter 2 – Global and International Higher Education

In his book *The World Is Flat*, Friedman (2005) explains the pervasive influence of globalization on most aspects of our society, and what it means to governments, companies, communities, and individuals. With no exception, globalization has heavily shaped higher education systems and institutions around the world. Traditionally, universities have been knowledge-producing institutions that bear social, cultural, economic, and political responsibilities to society (Beerkens, 2003). Over the past few decades, universities have become global institutions affected by international contexts beyond campuses and across national borders. For many universities internationalization has been adopted as a key strategy for responding to the influence of globalization (Altbach, 2007).

While universities are shaped in many ways by history and legislative systems in their individual national space and context, universities in many countries have integrated an international and intercultural dimension into their missions of teaching, research, and service function as higher education institutions (Maringe & Foskett, 2010). In line with this increasing focus on international and intercultural dimensions of higher education, there is a growing academic literature that provides interpretation of internationalization at both policy and practice levels. For instance, Scott (1998) describes four important aspects of internationalization: student mobility, international flow of academic staff, international collaboration between institutions, and international flow of ideas, knowledge, and scholarship. These four aspects demonstrate the changing landscape of international higher education as a consequence of globalization.

Besides an increasing understanding of the complexity associated with the international and intercultural dimensions of higher education, there also has been the emergence of a new group of terms often used by research literature. These terms are related to the international delivery of education as a response to the impact of globalization of higher education, which

include: transnational higher education, cross-border education, borderless education, global education, offshore education, and international trade in education services (de Wit, 2011).

At the core of new interpretations and new terms explaining the global and international dimensions of higher education, the development of international branch campuses has been a unique phenomenon. The emergence of international branch campuses reflects Scott's (1998) discussion of the international flow of students and academic staff, the collaboration between institutions across borders, and the flow of knowledge and ideas from different cultures. The development of international branch campuses also blurs boundaries of transnational education, cross-border education, and offshore education. To understand the phenomenon of fast growing international branch campuses, it is necessary to trace back to some of the definitions, forms, and debates about global and international higher education.

The review of literature in this chapter introduces the context of global and international higher education with respect to the development of international branch campuses. The chapter has four sections. The first section explores and compares the definition of globalization and internationalization. In the second section discusses different trends, forms, and rationales of internationalization in more depth. The third section reviews literature associated with transnational and cross-border higher education. Section four examines literature related to international branch campuses.

Globalization and Internationalization

This section discusses the definitions and debates around globalization and internationalization. Since the concept of globalization has been and will be used in many places in the thesis, it is necessary to examine the distinction between globalization and internationalization. This section also serves as a delimitation of the scope of the study, as the

analysis of data in a later chapter is more relevant to the context of internationalization. Although some literature considers globalization and internationalization as interchangeable ideas (Denman, 2002), this section argues that it is important to keep these two terms analytically distinct.

A common theme within the academic literature on higher education is the discussion on the relationship between globalization and internationalization. When considering the interconnectedness between these two terms, Knight (2008a) comments that "internationalization is changing the world of higher education, and globalization is changing the world of internationalization" (p. 1). Some researchers share the belief that although not all universities are international, they are all subject to the pressure of globalization in various forms (Scott, 1998; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). Others such as Pietsch (2013) and Teekens (2007) believe that internationalization is the key strategy adopted by universities as a response to the challenges raised by globalization. Then, what is globalization, and what is internationalization? There are ongoing debates (for example, Teichler, 2004; Ennew & Greenaway, 2012) about whether internationalization and globalization are just two different terms that describe a similar process, or whether they are actually two entirely different processes.

Globalization. Teichler (2004) argues that terms ending with "-zation" often indicate a process, a problem in the past and an opportunity for improvement. As a process and a social phenomenon, globalization has a long history, but its impact on higher education institutions has been very significant over the last three decades (Maringe & Forskett, 2010). Scholars from different disciplines in the social sciences have argued that globalization is a highly contested idea that primarily describes economic, political, and cultural activities. However, there have

been many different definitions and interpretations that consider globalization as a conceptual tool to make sense of contemporary society.

Knight and de Wit (1997) define globalization as "the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values, and idea… across borders. Globalization affects each country in a different way due to a nation's individual history, tradition, culture and priorities" (p. 6). In addition to this generic definition, other scholars focus more specifically on the scope of globalization and its impact on higher education. The definition of globalization has been broadened to indicate the economic, technological, and scientific trends that directly affect higher education and resulting in a more interconnected and interdependent contemporary world (Bloom, 2005).

Scott (1998) contends that globalization cannot be reduced to just focusing on the impact of global financial markets, information technology, or integrated world markets. Instead, globalization should be given a much broader meaning by emphasizing global environment changes, political and social conflicts, and the growth of exchange between world cultures. Scott (1998) also believes that globalization is far from being just Westernization, and the role of universities within globalization has taken on new and unexpected significance.

Rizvi and Lingard (2010) suggest that globalization can be interpreted along three dimensions in terms of its influence on education policy: globalization as an empirical fact; globalization as an ideology; and globalization as a social imaginary. As an empirical fact, globalization is marked by profound cultural and political shifts. It has challenged the traditional authority of the nation state. The shifts in education policy are, as argued by Rizvi and Lingard (2010), "located within this changing architecture of the state and cultural practices, responding

to the demands of global capitalism, promoting a particular ideology consistent with its political interests" (p. 31).

As an ideology, globalization has become a highly contested discourse. Broadly speaking, it represents a range of new forms of political and economic interests. Marginson (2011), for example, suggests that globalization refers to a range of loosely connected ideas to describe new forms of political-economic governance, which is based on an extension of market relationship globally.

The social imaginary interpretation of globalization, on the other hand challenges people's sense of their identity and forges a shared understanding of the world around them. In other words, globalization is translated from an ideology into people's understanding and practices. A social imaginary is based on the "common understanding that makes everyday practice possible" (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 34). The social imaginary can be found in "images, myths, parables, stories, legends and other narratives and most significantly, in the contemporary era, the mass media, as well as popular culture" (p. 34). While there are different, competing social imaginaries, Rizvi and Lingard (2010) argue that some imaginaries become privileged over others as a result of the globalizing process.

The different forms of globalization outlined above can explain the various ways in which globalization has been understood in the academic literature. They also provide explanations as to why education policies and practices have been profoundly changed by globalizing pressures, as globalization has been shaping almost every aspect of our society (Teichler, 2004). Internationalization, however, is a term often more closely related to the process of knowledge dissemination and the delivery of higher education, as shown in the following section.

Internationalization. In comparison with the multiple interpretations of globalization, the most quoted definition of internationalization is developed by Jane Knight (2008a). Knight (2008a) maintains that internationalization is "the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education" (p. 2). de Wit (2011) suggests that as a consequence of globalization, the changing landscape of internationalization has been manifested in four areas of higher education: increasing competition for international students and academics; a growing tendency of cross-border delivery of programs; the emergence of for-profit providers in international higher education; and the changing positions of some countries on the higher education stage.

Some researchers (de Wit, 2011; Hudzik, 2011) remind us that internationalization is not an end in itself. It is a mechanism through which higher education institutions can better achieve their objectives to generate, integrate, and disseminate knowledge. As a process, while globalization has intensified over the past few decades, higher education institutions have turned to internationalization as "both a response and a proactive way of meeting the demands of greater globalization, both in immediate and as preparation for envisaged futures" (Maringe & Foskett, 2010, p. 24).

In their discussion on internationalization as universities' response to globalizing pressures, Knight and de Wit (1997) identify the underlying motivations at both national and institutional levels for international activities within higher education. They identify social/cultural, political, academic, and economic as the four main aspects of motivations for internationalization of higher education. Knight and de Wit's categorization of motivations for internationalization is expanded to include the importance of more national considerations, for example, human resource development, nation building, and additional institutional demands

such as student and staff development, income generation, and institutional reputation (Maringe, Foskett, & Woodfield, 2013). The motivations, together with different trends, forms, and challenges of internationalization are explored in more depth in the next section.

  Globalization versus internationalization. Maringe and Foskett (2010) suggest that although these two terms share many common characteristics, they cannot be treated as synonymous. Scott (2000) observes that the distinction between internationalization and globalization as "although suggestive, cannot be regarded as categorical. They overlap, and are intertwined, in all kinds of ways" (p. 14). He believes that both internationalization and globalization are complex phenomena with many strands, and they could overlap in many ways.

  In terms of the distinctions between globalization and internationalization Van Vught (2002) suggests that internationalization is closer to the tradition of international cooperation and mobility, while globalization refers more to the competition and challenges of pushing the concept of higher education as a tradable commodity. Brandenburg and de Wit (2010), however, assert that with this distinction of internationalization is often too easily regarded as "good" and globalization as "bad".

  Ennew and Greenaway (2012) believe that globalization has been widely used to describe the broader social and economic processes that are generating a higher degree of "interconnectedness and interdependency between and beyond nation states" (p. 2). Some key features of globalization are the "blurring of national boundaries, the remaking of identities and the cross-national integration of economic, social and cultural activities" (p. 2). In comparison, internationalization is often presented with a strong emphasis on the bilateral collaboration that takes place in the context of priority of national cultures and the nation states (Marginson & Van de Wende, 2009).

In the context of higher education, Fok (2007) argues that globalization and internationalization are used in two similar ways. First, both terms claim that there is a trend directing higher education towards growing role of long-distance dissemination of knowledge and a more complex setting of multi-level providers. Second, both terms might refer to the changing context that poses challenges for higher education.

Globalization tends to blur the borders and boundaries between national education systems, or those even may disappear as a result of global pressures (Teichler, 2004). Moreover, globalization is often used to identify competition, market steering, and commercial knowledge transfer (Scott, 1998). Are globalization and internationalization two sides of one coin? Even though these two terms are often associated with each other across literature in international higher education and education policy, they focus on very different aspects of higher education. Therefore, I believe it is important to keep them analytically distinct.

Internationalization: Trends, Forms, Rationales, Challenges

This section reviews the relevant literature about internationalization of higher education. It covers the development of the definition, different forms of internationalization, some of the rationales and challenges. It is important to examine the formation of the concept of internationalization and how it has evolved over the past 20 years. By looking at the evolution of this phenomenon, we can find out how certain aspects of higher education are influenced by internationalization, and why they have emerged at a specific time.

Internationalization is defined as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, function or delivery of post-secondary education" (Knight, 2004, p. 11). Specifically, the term "process" is used to convey that internationalization is a continuing effort and there is a developmental or evolutionary quality to

this concept (Knight, 2008b). "Integration" is used to mark the process of embedding

international dimension to programs and policies by institutions and systems. "International,

intercultural, and global" are used as a triad to reflect the scope of internationalization (Knight,

2008b). "Purpose, function, and delivery" refer to the overall role, primary elements or tasks, and

the offering of education courses and programs in internationalization (Knight, 2008b, p. 22).

Knight's definition of internationalization is widely used across research literature. One of the

reasons could be that it is generic enough to apply to many different countries, cultures, and

education systems.

With the definition of internationalization, there are two related terms used in different

literature: internationalization at home and internationalization abroad. Internationalization at

home refers to activities that help students develop an international awareness of different culture

and develop intercultural skills (Knight, 2008a). Further, it is much more curriculum-oriented.

On the other hand, internationalization abroad includes all forms of education across borders;

that is, "mobility of students and faculty, mobility of projects, programs, and providers" (de Wit,

2011, p. 244). The components of these two approaches of conceptualizing internationalization

are interrelated within policies and programs at different levels.

After summarizing literature on the development of the definition of internationalization,

I want to also examine literature exploring different rationales for internationalization. Previous

studies providing rationales for internationalization have revealed different patterns of

categorizing the rationales, which I summarize as "horizontal" and "vertical" models. The

horizontal model goes across national borders and looks at parallel societal aspects. The vertical

model focuses on aspects within a national boundary and looks at internationalization of higher

education from the top-down perspective.

Some researchers categorize the fundamental drivers for internationalization in four groups: social/cultural, political, academic, and economic (Knight & de Wit, 1997; Altbach, 2004; Van Vught, 2002), which I refer to as the horizontal model. In the social/cultural group, there are rationales including national cultural identity, intercultural understanding, citizenship development, and social and community development. In the political group, the rationales include foreign policy, national security, national identity, and regional identity. In the economic group, the rationales include economic growth and competitiveness, labor market, and financial incentives. Finally, the academic group of rationales includes institution building, profile and status, and international dimensions of research and teaching. (Knight & de Wit, 1997; Knight, 2007, 2008a, 2008b).

However, some researchers believe that there has been more blurring and integration of the rationales across the four categories that have led to a different dimension of internationalization (Scott, 2000; Knight, 2004; Altbach, 2007), which I refer to as a vertical model. The vertical model signifies the identification of cross-cutting rationales at the national and institutional levels. At the national level, rationales for internationalization consist of human resource development (brain power), strategic alliance, income generation/commercial trade, nation building/institution building, and social/cultural development and mutual understanding. At the institutional level, the rationales involve international branding and profile, quality enhancement/international standards, alternative income generation, student and staff development, networks and strategic alliances, and knowledge production (Knight, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2012).

In an attempt to apply these two models of categorizing rationales for internationalization to the realities in China, I find both models are useful ways to analyze the strategies in China's

internationalizing its higher education system. It is even more convincing to use both models when examining the recent development of higher education in China. However, I find some of the rationales are over-generalized and not applicable to the Chinese context. For example, Knight (2007) uses "sector" as a level in between national and institutional strategies for internationalization, but she does not explain what is meant by "sector". This is a confusing term because this term sometimes refers to an education system, while other times it refers to public and private providers of education. When sector refers to the system of higher education, sector policies can sometimes be equivalent to national policies and vice versa, therefore the categorizing of national versus sector could be ambiguous and redundant in this context. I find the reference to a "national, sector, and institutional" model is not suitable to be applied in the case of China since there is a centralized approach to managing and delivering of higher education.

There have been many implications and challenges discussed by various literature on internationalization. In the Bologna Declaration of 1999 and the Lisbon Strategy of 2000, two integral dimensions of internationalization are brought together: cooperation and competition (de Wit, 2011). The implications of internationalization for cooperation and competition have been discussed in many previous studies (Brandenburg & de Wit, 2010; Teichler, 2004; Knight, 2004, 2007; Van Der Wende, 2011), which conclude that there are many emergent trends due to the process of internationalization in higher education. Some of the examples include the movement to a knowledge-based society and economy, increasing competition for international students and academics, and the growth of cross-border delivery of programs.

The process of cooperation and competition in internationalization introduces a number of challenges that are central to understanding the impact of the increasing tendency of

internationalization of higher education. For instance, increased commercialization of higher education, and the impact of internationalization on cultural differences are among the impact of internationalization (Douglass & Edlestein, 2009). Furthermore, there have been increasing concerns with respect to quality assurance, credibility, and qualification of international higher education programs (Pietsch, 2013).

With many unanticipated outcomes stemming from the challenges, it is not difficult to understand how internationalization has heavily shaped the development of higher education around the world. In relation to China's higher education system, there are some obvious gaps that have not been addressed by the discussion of internationalization within a Western context. Some questions are also brought to the fore by reviewing the above literature. For example, as higher education moves across borders, what are the implications for the national educational and economic policies, and institutional practices? In different models and groups of rationales for internationalization, which ones are shaping China's current educational policies and regulations concerning international partnership? Is there a shift from one group of rationales to another at different stages in China's social and economic development? What are the roles of for-profit providers in international higher education collaboration?

Transnational and Cross-border Higher Education

With the emerging significance of international higher education, a set of competing or related processes have appeared along with the term internationalization. Some examples are transnational education, borderless education, cross-border education, transnationalization, multinationalization, and regionalization. This section introduces literature on transnational and cross-border higher education. A survey of relevant literature helps clarify the important connection between international, regional, and local higher education.

Transnational education is a term that indicates all types of higher education study outside of a person's home country. In other words, transnational education describes the process when the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based (UNESCO & Council of Europe, 2001). The term borderless education refers to the blurring of conceptual, disciplinary and geographic borders traditionally inherent to higher education (Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principles, 2000). Borderless education is a significant phenomenon as it emphasizes the quality of change in higher education under the influence of internationalization.

In comparison to borderless education, cross-border education actually emphasizes the existence of borders. It refers to "the movement of people, knowledge, programs, providers, curriculum, etc. across national or regional jurisdictional borders" (Knight, 2008a, p. 6). According to Blackmur (2007), with growth in distance and e-learning education, geographic borders seem to be more blurring. However, when considering regulatory responsibility, especially in terms of quality assurance, funding, and accreditation, the notion of a border still maintains a high level of importance.

Some literature focuses on the role of nations and regions in internationalization. For example, according to Altbach (2007), multinationalization refers to "academic programs or institutions located in one country offering degrees, courses, certificates, or other qualifications in other countries" (p. 123). Regionalization, on the other hand, is a term often used in the context of regionalization versus internationalization. Some examples of such regional-based organizations as important actors in higher education are the European Union (EU) and Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). These organizations play important roles in driving global policy in relation to international education. For example, Brooks and Walters

(2011) argue that EU's policies to promote educational mobility have been the most successful part of its entire social policy program to date.

An important issue associated with transnational higher education is the debate on quality assurance. When it comes to cooperation and competition between institutions across borders, what guidelines and standards should these institutions follow? Coleman (2003), Blackmur (2007), and Woodhouse (2006) question the idea of "one-size-fits-all" guidelines for the quality provision of transnational higher education. Blackmur (2007) criticizes elements of the UNESCO guidelines and principles in transnational education, arguing that the guidelines have been developed without considering the individual context in different countries, which may lead to a potential negative impact on implementation. Coleman (2003), however, investigates the quality assurance of delivery of academic content in the transnational academic program across two branch campuses. His study shows that there is no consensus regarding the quality assurance guidelines between the home institution and the branch campus.

Woodhouse (2006) describes the quality assurance for Australian transnational education from a provider's view. He suggests that the challenges in transnational higher education quality assurance include host country perception of overseas audits as "quality assurance colonization" (p. 29). He also argues that lack of interaction with the host country's agencies could result in challenges in transnational higher education.

Another important issue in transnational higher education is the barrier to teaching and learning. Dunn and Wallace (2006) present a wide range of perspectives on the challenges for teaching and learning in transnational education programs. They discuss the power differentials between exporting and importing countries, and how these differentials relate to the delivery,

content, and quality of transnational education. They also address the tensions between Western-style education and its challenge of adapting teaching practices to the local context.

When examining the literature relevant to transnational higher education, it is obvious that there are regional differences in transnational practices. The regional differences pose challenges for transnational higher education and risks that institutions face when engaging in transnational activities.

International Branch Campuses

This section reviews the literature on international branch campuses (IBCs), which serves as background to this study. This section starts by reviewing research about the changing dynamic of IBCs in the world, followed by a focus on the development of IBCs in China. The review of literature shows that there is a lack of systematic study of IBCs in some emerging host countries like China.

In a report for the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education (OBHE), Lawton and Katsomitros (2012) define the international branch campus as a higher education institution that is originated from an institution in a home country and is located in a host country. The branch campus awards degrees that are accredited by the home institution. The report reviews the current status of the development of IBCs. For instance, there are over 200 degree-awarding IBCs operating worldwide, and 37 more campuses will open over the next two years. This report also indicates that China is not only the fast-growing destination for branch-campus operations but also it is one of the most important sources of host countries.

While Lawton and Katsomitros (2012) and the other OBHE reports (2006, 2009) show an increase in the development of IBCs, they also suggest that the landscape of the IBCs is changing. While western countries continue to be the main home countries, the new landscape

illustrates the continuing growth of "south to south" international branch campuses in which both the home and the host countries are in the developing world, for example, Asian or the Middle East countries.

The OBHE report also reveals that a significant driver of the international branch campus phenomenon in Asia is by governments promoting themselves as an educational hub in their jurisdictions (Lawton & Katsomitros, 2012). These governments see the provision of education by foreign universities as a core element of national economic strategies. Therefore, the expansion of IBCs worldwide is clearly an integral form of higher education internationalization.

Helms (2008) argues that China has become an increasingly popular market for transnational education ventures. Along with domestic private institutions and distance education, foreign institutions have joined the Chinese higher education provision to facilitate expansion and meet the demands that are not being met by the public university system (Helms, 2008). Among these foreign providers, international branch campus is a unique approach, which has allowed Chinese students to acquire foreign higher education at a reduced cost.

Different researchers consider the impact of internationalization of Chinese higher education from the perspective of international cooperation and regional dynamics (Chen & Lo, 2013). For example, Huang (2007a, 2007b) analyzes the challenges and opportunities brought by educational policy changes in China and other Asian countries. Li and Yuan (2003) apply a macro perspective to explore the impact of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) on China's policy to internationalize higher education, with a focus on China's entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The development of international branch campuses in China has attracted considerable interest worldwide and from within China. There are several studies that focus specifically on the

development of international branch campuses in China (Feng, 2013; Ennew & Yang, 2009; Shen & Yu, 2011). Ennew and Yang (2009) give a detailed description of the operation of the University of Nottingham Ningbo, which provides some insights into the nature and challenges of delivering foreign education in the Chinese context. Feng (2013) compares the University of Nottingham Ningbo and Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University from their respective governance, management, and mission strategy models.

Some literature suggests that the picture for foreign education providers in China may not always result in positive outcomes. Among the voices expressing skepticism is the report published by Agora Group (Fazackerley & Worthington, 2007), a British independent think tank. The Agora report suggests that regulatory, cultural, and logistical challenges are some of the barriers found in operating international branch campuses in China. These barriers may come from a lack of understanding of national, provincial, and local policies and regulations. Other reasons may include the problems of finding appropriate locations and equipment, establishing effective partnerships, and building networks.

Willis (2001b) tries to address the issues of strategic alliances between Chinese and foreign universities from a more micro-level viewpoint. Willis (2001b) discusses the growing cases of unsuccessful cooperation due to the complicated cultural and ideological differences with the increasing higher education exchange between Chinese and foreign universities. On a similar note, Gow (2009) believes that foreign institutions are rushing to partner with China but the risks are considerably high. He argues that unless emerging Chinese-foreign strategic alliances are better thought through, foreign institutions could have reputational and financial risks by rushing into collaborating with China.

This chapter reviewed literature in defining globalization, internationalization, transnational and cross-border higher education, and international branch campuses. This chapter serves as a context for the discussion of the cases of international branch campuses investigated in this study. Considering the literature on the international dimension of higher education presented above, I will discuss the complexity of China's process of internationalizing its higher education system in the following chapter. It is debatable whether the development of international branch campuses in China represents the collaboration between universities of center and peripheries, or such development represents shifts from past economic and academic centers (the U.S. and U.K.) to new centers (Chinese and other Asian economies). These themes and relevant literature are explored in Chapter 3, which examines the historical context of China's higher education, the development of a Chinese university model, and the Chinese policies and practices associated with the development of international branch campuses in China.

Chapter 3 – Higher Education in China

In 2014, Peking University, one of the top-tier universities in China announced the Yenching Academy program. It is a one-year master's degree program in Chinese studies open to students from both China and overseas. This interdisciplinary program aims to "prepare an elite class of future global citizen and leaders" (Jacobs, 2014, para. 4) and to "equip young scholars with a broad, interdisciplinary knowledge of China that reflects both Chinese and international perspectives" (Peking University, 2014, para. 2). The announcing of this academy provoked controversy both within and outside of the university. Not only is the program criticized for using a historical site in the university to serve as an exclusive residence for students in the program, but it has also been considered to promote an "elitist" education that contributes to growing educational inequality in China. More importantly, many Chinese scholars question the program's approach of using "China studies" as a selling point in the university's strategy of internationalization, thereby sacrificing the university's identity as a top Chinese institution. The controversy around the Yenching Academy is just one of the examples when a Chinese university's agenda for internationalization conflicts with the desire to maintain a strong Chinese cultural identity.

In many cases of Chinese-foreign higher education collaboration, the intent of internationalization is seen as having many benefits for the country, and the challenges are minimized. However, many scholars have questioned whether the impact of internationalization on Chinese national and cultural identities is a steep price to pay for increased "Westernization". In order to understand these concerns, we need to look at the core values underlying Chinese higher education system as the context for internationalization. In this chapter, I will review literature associated with Chinese higher education as a background to understand the development of internationalization of higher education system in China. This chapter has three

sections: the historical context of higher education in China; the development of a Chinese university model, which focuses on Chinese government's effort to explore a new university model; and a discussion on the policies and practices related to internationalization and development of international branch campuses in China.

Historical Context of Higher Education in China

As the world's third largest country, China has a total area of 9.6 million square kilometers. The approximate population of China is 1.3 billion people (The World Bank, 1997). The current political governance in China was founded by the Chinese Communist Party in 1949. The administration of the Chinese political system is under multiple layers of governance. The State Council is the chief administrative body of the country, and there are 31 provincial-level governments under the direct administration of the State Council (The World Bank, 1997).

The history of Chinese higher education is marked by numerous milestones that illustrate the formulation of the country's contemporary higher education system. This section provides a survey of the background and context to the historical, social, and political influences that shape contemporary Chinese higher education system. A review of this long history demonstrates how various influences, forces, and circumstances have combined to shape a system that while having many features in common with the higher education system in other countries, has characteristics that are uniquely Chinese. Reviewing this long history and context of Chinese higher education system permits a better understanding of the reforms happening in Chinese higher education in recent years, the challenges it faces, and the rationales for continuing efforts toward increased internationalization.

In most research literature (Hayhoe, 1989, 1996; Du, 1992; Ryan, 2011) related to the discussion of history of higher education in China, the development is often divided into four

historical periods: Ancient and imperial times, which was from 1100BC to 1840, when Confucianism was the dominant philosophy shaping Chinese culture, politics, and education; Modern period from 1840 to1949, which began with the First Opium War and ended over a century later with the communist revolution and the founding of the People's Republic of China; the Post-revolution period from 1949 to 1978, marked by the dismantling of the national higher education system and reformation of the system that drew heavily from the Soviet model; and the post-Mao period from 1978 to the present, when the economic and political reforms opened China to the outside world. This section follows this chronological order and summarizes the relevant literature on the context of Chinese higher education system.

Ancient and imperial times (1100BC-1840). China's traditional higher education system dates back to over 3000 years and develops continuously over the nation's long imperial history. Researchers (Du, 1992; Hayhoe, 1996; Zha, 2011) believe that there is a cultural core informing the development of Chinese higher education system, which is derived from China's extraordinary higher education tradition. There are four key elements in this ancient Chinese tradition, which are: Confucianism, or Ruxue (儒学), the Imperial Central institutions, or Guozijian (国子监); private independent academies, or Shuyuan (书院); and the imperial civil examination system, or Keju (科举). The following section gives a brief description of each of these four elements.

In ancient China, many prominent scholars and philosophers, for example, Lao Tsu (author of *Tao Te Ching*) and Sun Tsu (author of the *Art of War*), established private schools and developed comprehensive theories on politics, philosophy, ethics, and education. Among them, the most notable scholar was Confucius (551-479 BC, Kongzi, 孔子). As the leading thinker and educator of the time, Confucius played a key role in advancing ancient Chinese higher education.

Confucius believed that the goal of education was to cultivate and develop human nature so that virtue, wisdom, and ultimately moral perfection would be obtained (from *The Analects*, 2008).

Accordingly, Confucian philosophy valued moral education to learning processes and believed that the fundamental function of education is to help people towards moral integrity and enhance people's sense of benevolence (Yu, Stith, Liu & Chen, 2012). Based on this philosophy, Confucius and his disciples strongly believed that education should be made available to everyone regardless of social class. Anyone who worked through their own diligence and effort, and competed successfully in examinations should be made government officials. These key ideas and practices of Confucius laid the foundation for traditional merit-based Chinese culture and educational system for over 2000 years. Upon completion of their studies, the students were supposed to serve as civil servants and teachers. With the development of Confucian philosophy, some higher education institutions also started to emerge around the same period of time in China.

As the earliest higher education institutions in China, the Imperial Central Institutions (Guozijian, 国子监) were originally designed as the Schools of the sons of the Empire (Zha, 2011). By the time of the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD), the imperial central institutions became the prevalent state-run institutions for education. In general, they served the purpose of educating the children of royal families and senior officials. These institutions were mainly located in capital cities and adopted a curriculum of teaching major classical texts of the Confucian school.

In addition to the official system of imperial institutions, there were also private academies (Shuyuan, 书院) that started to flourish as an alternative to state institutions in the Tang Dynasty. These academies were originally established as private libraries, but gradually acquired their scholarly significance and eventually became a dominant type of private

universities in the Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD) (Yu et al., 2012). These private institutions were operated by prominent scholars and represented a knowledge tradition that supported free discussion and debates. Topics about the functioning of government and administration of society were among the discussion topics in these private institutions' curriculum. Therefore, China's scholarly tradition reflected a "dualism between the highly centralized, control-oriented imperial higher education system and the diffuse and somewhat independent private system of local academies" (Zha, 2011, p. 453).

The Confucian idea of equality of educational opportunity provided the rationale for the imperial examination system (Keju, 科举), which was administered by the central government and aimed at selecting and recruiting government officials on the basis of individual merit (Hayhoe, 1989). Originally the examination assessed students' understanding of the Confucian classics. The curriculum of Confucian classics was recorded into the Four Books (四书) and Five Classics (五经). These classics formed a knowledge system that contained principles in the administration of government and society as well as maxims of personal conduct. The Confucian classics gradually became the sole knowledge system that had to be learned by all students in order to become officials or scholars in the imperial civil service. Both Imperial Central Institutions and private academies used these classics as their curricular content. Publicly regulated examinations in classical knowledge areas became the main device for the selection of government officials and civil servants. The meritocratic selection of these individuals to take on key societal roles eventually turned into the imperial examination system, which still has a strong influence on China's current higher education system.

Individuals could only reach the ultimate Confucian ideal of "unity of knowledge and practice" (*The Analects*, 2008) through passing the examinations. The examination system

consisted of different levels from local, provincial, capital, and finally, the palace exam held directly by the Emperor. The examination based meritocratic system accompanied Chinese higher education system and its scholarly tradition until the last feudal dynasty, the Qing Dynasty (960-1911 AD). To some extent, this merit-based system is still manifested in China's National College Entrance Examination in present days, which I will discuss in a later section of this chapter.

Modern period (1840 to 1949). The modern period of Chinese higher education started from the First Opium War (1839-1842) and ended over a century later with the communist revolution and the founding of the People's Republic of China. Before 1840, over two thousand years of imperial control in China had developed a unique civilization as well as self-imposed cultural isolation (Yang, 2002). The success of the self-sufficient agricultural society in China led to a sense of self-contentment and a belief in a China-centered world order. While science and technology were going through rapid development via the Industrial Revolution in the Western world, the Chinese imperial government still believed the nation to be the most advanced country and the center of the world. This fallacy was shattered by the Opium war, which happened between UK and China due to their conflicting viewpoints on trades and diplomatic relations (Fairbank & Reschauer, 1978). China's total defeat in the Opium War and the following Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) had a significant impact on the feudalist system and Chinese classical traditions. Chinese intellectuals believed that the defeats showed the failure of a Chinese higher education system that valued moral education above education in science and technology (Yu et al., 2012). Therefore, reforms of higher education happened in late 19th century with the goal to develop a new higher education system, which grew under the influence of Western educational philosophies (Hayhoe, 1996).

The Opium War Social reforms in the late 19th century and early 20th century strove for strengthening the country through education and protecting China from the aggression of foreign powers (Chen, 2004). At that time, European, American, and Japanese influences on Chinese higher education were found in the establishment of institutions in China and the management of education by returning Chinese scholars who had studied in those countries. Even though the modernization of Chinese higher education began largely as a forced response to foreign invasions, the borrowing and integration of foreign elements of higher education had a liberating influence on Chinese higher education (Hayhoe & Zha, 2007). By 1947, China had established 207 universities, which include 107 governmental, 79 private, and 21 missionary universities (Morgan & Wu, 2011).

As an alternative to Chinese higher education in early 20th century China, missionary universities established by Western religious groups were often funded and administered from abroad and ran parallel to existing Chinese institutions of higher education (Hayhoe, 1989). These foreign institutions were strongly based in social sciences and liberal arts. They also pioneered access to higher education for women and established modern medical education. It is not surprising when the first British international branch campus, University of Nottingham Ningbo opened in China in 1994, some Chinese media compared it to the missionary universities that thrived in China back in the 1920s (Xinhua News, 2015).

Some scholars characterize that the modern period was in many ways a time when Chinese higher education went through a process of adaptation and indigenization that could be compared to the development of American universities in the 19th century (Hayhoe, 1989, 1996; Yang, 2002). Chinese universities at this modern period developed into a balance between its Chinese identity and connection with a world community of universities (Yang, 2002).

Post-revolution period (1949-1978). The communist revolution and the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 was a critical turning point for the nation and its higher education system. In order to realize the ideal of Socialism, Chinese government under the leadership of Mao Zedong began to nationalize all educational institutions including public, private, and missionary universities and colleges (Mok & Ngok, 2008). Western countries' policy to isolate the newborn communist nation pushed Chinese government towards the Soviet Union's approach to higher education (Yang, 2011b). In late 1949, the central government of China formally decided that the higher education system should draw upon the Soviet's model and experience (Zhou, 2006). The first national higher education conference held in 1950 made the decision that Chinese higher education system should learn from the Soviet model (Wang, 2010). In the 1950s higher education institutions were restructured to better simulate the Soviet model. Switching to a Soviet model involved adopting patterns of the structure of administration, curriculum, and instructional methods. The essential elements of China's higher education system at that time were the predominance of public ownership, the centrally planned development, a steep hierarchy, and the politicization of management (Yu et al., 2012).

Existing education institutions were systematically restructured into comprehensive universities or research universities, and specialized universities for engineering, teacher education, agricultural, and medical institutions. Higher education institutions were required to strictly follow the state's centralized plan (Hayhoe, 1996). Every process of university management, from admission to student job allocation, from curriculum to instruction, was uniform and centralized. Chinese higher education institutions strictly followed the departmentalized and segmented division under the central government ministries. It was not

until 1978, with the launch of China's open door policy and economic reforms that Chinese

higher education took on a more neoliberal route.

Post-Mao period (1978 to present days). As outlined above, the 30-year period from

1949 to 1978 significantly changed the course of Chinese higher education system. In 1966, Mao

Zedong, the Communist Party leader initiated the Cultural Revolution, a social-political

movement that aimed at preserving communist ideology and re-imposing Maoist thought in

Chinese society (Mok, 1997). The Cultural Revolution lasted for over 10 years and heavily

disrupted the social, political, and economic orders in China. During the post-Mao era following

the end of this political movement in 1978, the new leadership of the Chinese Communist Party

(CCP) embraced the Reform and "Opening-up" economic policy, which means greater trade

with the West, to accomplish social, economic, and educational development (Wang, 2010). In

1978 the Chinese leadership under Deng Xiaoping, then leader of the CCP, announced a reform

of Four Modernizations: Modernization of Agriculture, Industry, National Defense, and Science

and Technology (CCP, 1978). Higher education was given top priority to facilitate the need for

talent to shape the nation's economic reforms. Chinese central government announced education,

science, and technology to be the strategic drivers for economic growth (the Central Committee

of Chinese Communist Party, 1993). Chinese political leaders and policy makers considered

higher education as the significant instrument to achieve national economic development

(Hayhoe, 1996).

From 1985 to 1992, the CCP commenced a series of educational reforms in order to

delegate more autonomy to higher education institutions and increase their efficiency (Morgan &

Wu, 2011). One of the strategic goals of Chinese higher education was defined as contributing to

the development of science and technology and serving the demand for socialist modernization (the Central Committee of Chinese Communist Party, 1985).

From 1992 to the present, Chinese higher education system has expanded at an unprecedented pace. The most significant expansion of Chinese higher education happened since the 1990s. Since government policies authorized universities to make decisions regarding admissions in the early 1990s, universities started to admit self-funded students to generate extra funding through private sources rather than solely relying on government funding. As a result, student enrollment in universities increased from under 3 million in 1994 to 7 million by 2000, and 15.61 million in 2005 (the Ministry of Education, 2005). This rapid expansion of student enrollment in the late 1990s reflected China's transition to a market economy and a demand for human capital to facilitate its economic development (Li &Yuan, 2003). In the meantime, with the expansion of a large number of universities and colleges, the discussion on developing a new model of Chinese university system was in Chinese government's education policy agenda.

Development of A Chinese University Model

This section examines the impact of Chinese cultural traditions by introducing some of the key elements in the development of a Chinese university model. Following the previous discussion on the historical context of Chinese higher education, these key elements demonstrate the rationale for Chinese government's internationalizing agenda and provide the background to China's educational policies of supporting international branch campuses. Three elements will be introduced in this section: national college entrance examination, China's efforts to develop new university model, and maintaining national and cultural identity.

In *The Ways of Thinking of Eastern People*, Hajime Nakamura (1964) contends that "while every individual is affected by the quickening flow of world events, he is still strongly

influenced by the way of living and thinking in his own nation and culture" (p. 3). Nakamura argues that some of the cultural commonalities by people in Eastern countries (such as China, Japan, and India) share non-rationalistic tendencies that include a belief in a closed social nexus, and a strong emphasis on sectarianism, familism, and nationalism (Nakamura, 1964). A review of relevant literature on the historical context of Chinese higher education reveals a clear pattern of how Chinese higher education system has been influenced by various university models under different historical backgrounds (Li, 2012; Yang, 2002; Zha, 2011). However, culture has always played a key role in the evolution of Chinese higher education. The strong impact of Chinese cultural traditions and the emphasis on national identity have been manifested in China's process of exploring a new university model (Hayhoe, Li, Lin & Zha, 2011).

The National College Entrance Examination. The National College Entrance Examination (the NCEE, or Gaokao, 高考) is a Chinese national standardized testing system designed to select the proper higher education pathway for high school graduates (Feng, 1999). This examination is required for all Chinese students seeking admission to higher education institutions, including colleges and universities. The only exception is the recruitment process of international branch campuses in recent years, which also makes the international branch campuses in China a unique experiment in higher education practices of recruitment and admission.

As a standardized testing system, the NCEE was established by the Ministry of Education in 1952 (Gu, 1981). As described in the previous section, central Chinese government restructured all institutions of higher education nationwide in the early 1950s following the educational practices in the Soviet Union. However, the Soviet pattern of recruiting college

students by giving institutions autonomy to test and select students was not followed. Instead, the NCEE system followed the structure and organization of the Imperial Examination.

The NCEE happens once a year at the end of the school year when exams of six different subjects are taken by students in three consecutive days. Universities and colleges use the results of these exams as their main selection requirements. Students' scores in these exams are the only measurement that matters when it comes to determining whether they can enter higher education institutions, and which institutions they are eligible to attend. Therefore, the NCEE has been considered critical for China's political, economic, and educational development both by the government and the people (Ryan, 2011).

The main purpose of the NCEE is to select students for higher education who are academically well-prepared to be trained for socialist construction and the modernization of China (Ryan, 2011). NCEE evaluates applicants' academic preparation through tests in six different subject areas including Chinese language, English language, mathematics, and political education. The examination questions in political education are designed to measure students' understanding of Marxism, Mao Zedong Thought, and Deng Xiaoping Theory (Feng, 1999).

The NCEE is very similar to the Imperial Examination system in ancient and Confucius times. The current NCEE system has a three-level structure. At the national level, the Ministry of Education decides the size of the annual recruitment for the nation and the admission quota for each province. At the provincial level, an admission bureau supervises the administration of the examinations and make admission decisions. At the municipal level, there is an admission office that manages the distribution of exam papers and organizes tests.

The NCEE system to a large extent is the continuity of the Confucius merit-based thinking. For example, a quota policy attempts to provide equal opportunities for students across

different social class. The distribution of the quota is decided annually by the Ministry of Education based on the number of high school graduates in each province. The quota policy, however, has also created inequality and regional discrimination. For example, economic and political centers like Beijing and Shanghai are always given priority compared to other provinces in China. Students from remote provinces often need to get much higher scores in the NCEE than students from central provinces in order to be admitted to the same university. Moreover, there is also the regulation that students are required to take the exams at their home province where their House Registries is located. With the development of Chinese economy, many families migrate to work and live in a different province. These policies have become barriers for migrant workers and their families to access equal opportunities of higher education.

For over 60 years NCEE has served the essential needs of both the central government and the common people. The system exemplifies the influence of political centralism and meritocracy in Chinese higher education stemmed from the Imperial Examination. In many ways, the NCEE is the continuity of the merit-based tradition in Chinese higher education. Examining the history, purpose, and impact of the NCEE reveals the political centralism and meritocracy that have always been the underpinning philosophies in Chinese higher education system (Li, 2012). However, in recent years the central Chinese government has responded to the criticism of the NCEE for its lack of transparency and regional inequality. The government started to allow some higher education institutions more autonomy in recruiting process instead of solely relying on the NCEE test results (the Ministry of Education, 2005). The policies developed along the international branch campuses in china represent the attempts by the Chinese government to reform this meritocratic system and explore different new models.

Efforts to explore a new university model. Since the late 1990s, raising the quality of higher education while developing world-class universities has been one of the goals of Chinese higher education reforms (Liu, 2010). While most other Asian nations went through higher education expansion before they launched initiatives to develop world-class universities, Chinese higher education took both efforts at the same time as of 1999 (Hayhoe, Lin, & Zha, 2011). As discussed in the previous section, China's universities were influenced by a range of educational models since the 19th century. At the modern period, Chinese universities followed the path that incorporated aspects of the European and North American models. After 1949 Chinese higher education system was restructured and heavily relied on a Soviet model. After the Cultural Revolution, Chinese leaders realized that China's higher education had fallen behind. From the early 1980s, Chinese higher education policies reflected a clear need to catch up with world-class universities (Cheng, 1996).

In 1993, the central Chinese government initiated its first initiative with the commitment to build 100 world-class universities (The State Council, 1993). The three goals proposed by this policy document are: building quality higher education; a commitment to science research; and developing excellence in university administration. In 1995 the government launched "Project 211" with the intent of enhancing the basic infrastructure of higher education and to improve the quality of teaching and research at major Chinese universities in order to catch up with the Western universities (Wang, 2010). "Project 211" stands for building 100 excellent universities in the 21st century (The State Council, 1993). This initiative motivated universities to make changes in strategic planning in order to be included in the Project 211, which meant receiving more funding and resources from central government.

In 1999, the Ministry of Education announced a new initiative aiming at building a number of universities that would become China's first group of world-class universities (Ministry of Education, 1999). This initiative was known as "Project 985", with the name originating from then-Chinese leader Jiang Zemin's speech about building world-class university delivered in May 1998. From 1999 to 2002, the Chinese government allocated 3 billion US dollars to strengthen research and infrastructure at universities included in the Project 211 and Project 985. These two projects were implemented nationally in order to build world-class universities and increase China's global competitiveness and economic growth (Li, Whalley, Zhang & Zhao, 2011).

The Chinese definition of the world-class universities has many aspects in common with the Western idea of being world-class universities. However, the differences are rooted in the core values of Chinese traditional scholarship (Zha, 2011). It is obvious that through the effort of developing world-class universities, China is trying to explore a distinctive model of Chinese university system, in contrast to the historical university model in the Western sense (Li, 2012). Internationalization and developing Chinese-foreign collaboration are also some of the approaches to understanding the modern Chinese model of university education (Li, 2012). In this process, maintaining the distinctive national and cultural identities has always been a significant component in China's agenda of developing its higher education system.

Maintaining national and cultural identities. When discussing the role of higher education in nation building and maintaining national identity, Marginson (2013) maintains that "national tradition plays a role in determining the extent to which higher education is expected to contribute to the cultural formation of society—and the extent to which it is meant to work for the nonmarket objectives of civil society— and to the ethical and moral formation of students"

(p. 74). While some researchers believe that almost all Asian universities follow institutional

patterns derived from Western models that are based on European traditions (Altbach, 2004),

scholars of Chinese education demonstrate how the Chinese model of universities reflect the

persisting characteristics of China's cultural and scholarly traditions (Hayhoe et al., 2011).

In developing a new university model, China has shown the willingness to learn from the

dominant Western university models, but the intention to maintain scholarship and cultural

identity remains very strong (Hayhoe & Zha, 2007). The central Chinese government has been

open to various approaches to reforming its higher education system, and internationalization is

one of the areas that have been explored in Chinese higher education reforms. However,

maintaining a strong national identity has always been on the government's agenda (Mok, 2007).

China's growing economic and political status has shown that a strong nation state with a

strategic development agenda often involves universities in enhancing its national position in the

global arena (Li, 2012).

Scholars and researchers observe that a classical, fundamental Chinese principle of

"harmony but not sameness" or "unity with diversity" (和而不同) is constantly reflected in

China's efforts to create a new model of university system (Li, 2012; Yang 2002, 2011; Zha,

2011). After a decade of expansion and state support to create top universities, the Chinese

higher education system is considered to be open and diverse, maintaining its unique identity and

continuing to learn from other models, rather than the homogenization around the model of

dominant Anglo-American system of global research universities (Hayhoe et al., 2011). On the

other hand, the Chinese government encourages collaboration between Chinese universities and

international universities in order to face the challenges and opportunities brought by a

globalizing world. The development of international branch campus has been an important step

in China's reforms to internationalize its higher education. The following section will demonstrate the connection between China's approaches to the new university model and its efforts to support international branch campuses.

Internationalization of Chinese Higher Education System

A report published by the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education (Garrett, 2003) argues that China perhaps is the world's most "overhyped, under-analyzed, and complex" (p. 3) market for transnational higher education. Foreign educational providers are becoming increasingly interested in the Chinese market, while numerous international higher education institutions are exploring the possibilities of collaborating with Chinese universities. For these international providers and institutions seeking market entry to China's higher education system, it is expected that they want to have a better understanding of the structure of Chinese higher education and its historical and political contexts, including regulations of foreign educational activities. After discussing some of the key elements in the changing model of Chinese higher education system, it is important to consider Chinese higher education policies with respect to internationalization and international branch campuses. This section outlines the structure of current Chinese higher education system and the development of internationalization in China.

The structure of Chinese higher education system. China's current education system involves several levels of governments. The higher education system is regulated by the central government through the Ministry of Education (the MoE). The State Council and the MoE are the agencies in charge of overall governance and administration of the provincial governments and relevant central ministries. The State Council establishes the national principles of education and related policies. The MoE sets policies and regulations for the higher education system. At the same time, the MoE and some central ministries also give directions and have administrative

control over the top Chinese universities, which are referred to as central higher education institutions (HEIs).

The remaining HEIs are managed by provincial governments and are referred to as provincial HEIs. Each provincial government has an education department that administers and funds the provincial HEIs. The provincial education department is also in charge of managing the National College Entrance Exam at the provincial level. Figure 3 shows the relationship between the State Council, the MoE, provincial governments, central ministries and HEIs. The solid lines indicate direct state control, and the dash lines indicate indirect control. The MoE carries out strategic planning, policy and regulation making, supervision of policies directly related to the administration of higher education and practices of teaching and research, staff and student affairs (the MoE, 2014). The MoE is in charge of making national higher education policies; therefore, it has power to directly or indirectly regulates all HEIs in the country.
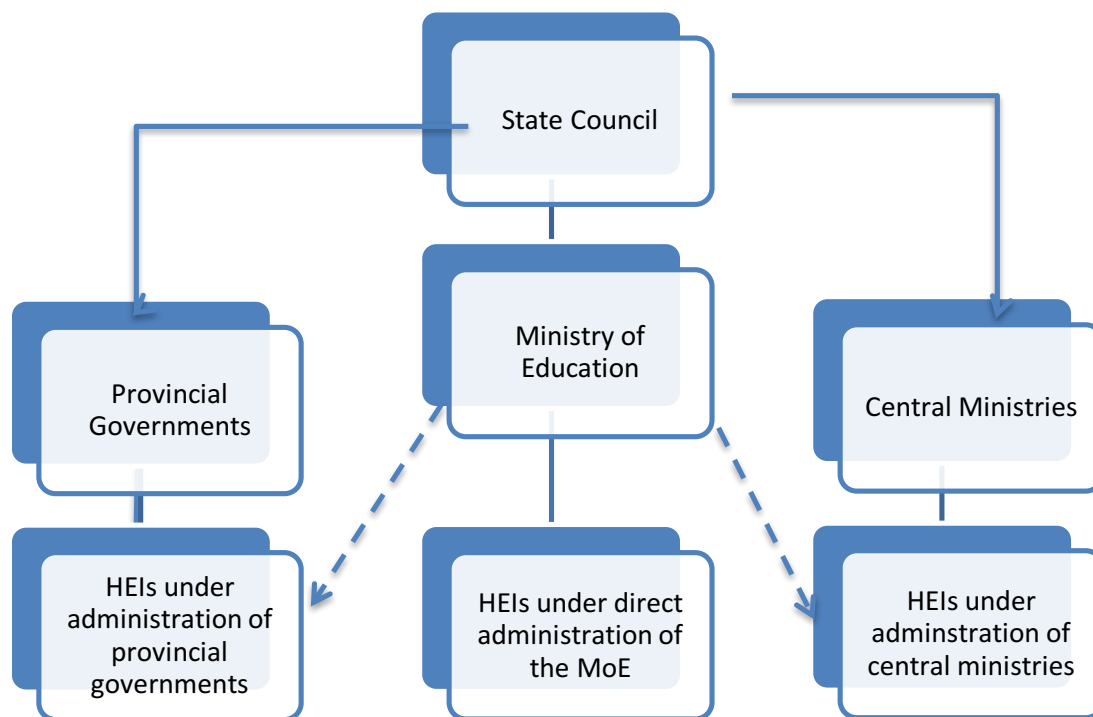
Figure 3. Structure of Chinese Higher Education System
(adapted from Yu, Stith, Liu & Chen, 2012)

International branch campuses in China follow policies and regulations under the administration of the MoE. Also because of this complicated and sometimes overlapping administrative structure, international partners with Chinese universities often find that they need to work with both central and provincial government administrations and policies at the same time, as their collaborative Chinese universities could possibly belong to the administrative control of both government levels.

In China, the provision of private sector involvement in higher education appeared in the late 1980s (Mok, 1997). A rapid expansion of mass higher education in 1999 led to increased demand for non-public provision of higher education. As of 2002, there were over 1,300 private institutions in operation (the MoE, 2003). However, private higher educational institutions in China suffered from legal ambiguity for many years (Garrett, 2003). For a long period of time, colleges were the only type of private higher education institutions allowed by Chinese policy. No private or independent universities were approved by the MoE, and private providers were not allowed to offer post-graduate education in China. Increasing expansion of higher education has also raised demand for international involvement in China's higher education. In December 2002, China initiated the first national legislation on private higher education, which clarified some legal issues such as matters of status (for-profit, non-profit) and allowing for a reasonable profit return for private institutions (the State Council, 2002). The following section explores how internationalization of higher education has become a significant component of China's strategy to deal with issues brought by globalization and the rapid transition to a market economy.

Internationalization of higher education in China. In order to make the best of the opportunities and challenges brought by the globalizing economy, the central Chinese

government implemented a series of educational reforms since the mid-1970s. In 1983 Deng Xiaoping, then leader of Chinese Communist Party proposed the goal of internationalizing Chinese education to "orient education towards modernization, globalization and future construction" (Harvey, 2005, p. 123), which was implemented as the guideline by the Chinese government in reforming educational policies.

From 1978 to 1992, government policies and regulations mainly dealt with issues such as dispatching students and faculties abroad for advanced studies, invitation of foreign scholars and experts to China, and the practice of teaching and learning foreign languages, especially the English language (the Central Committee of Chinese Communist Party & State Council, 1993). After 1993, with an increasing outflow of Chinese students and scholars, more attention was focused on issues such as how to encourage graduates and scholars to return to China, and how to undertake transnational education and internationalization of university curricula (Chen, 2002; Hayhoe & Zha, 2007). A document issued by the Ministry of Education in 1995 clearly stated that collaboration with foreign higher education should become an important part of China's educational program (the MoE, 1995).

In 2002, the Minister of Education issued a policy document aimed at stimulating the progress of transnational education in China (the MoE, 2002). The document stressed that it was important to open China's education system to the world more widely and more actively, and to pioneer access to the international market by such measures as attracting more foreign students to come to China and exerting Chinese traditional cultural influence abroad after China became a member country of the World Trade Organization (Huang, 2007a). Since 2002 the Department of International Cooperation and Exchange within the MoE has been the main governmental

administration department issuing policies and documents in the internationalization of Chinese higher education.

During this process of internationalizing higher education, the central Chinese government initiated various approaches to implementing internationalization strategies in higher education. According to some studies (Yang, 2011a; Zhang & Adamson, 2011; Zheng, 2010), three groups of strategies have been implemented to internationalize China's higher education system: international student mobility; internationalization of curricula; and institutional cooperation.

Since Chinese policies permitting students to study abroad at their own expense in 1981, the number of Chinese students studying abroad has rapidly grown (Hayhoe & Zha, 2004). According to the statistics of the MoE (2010), there were around 200,000 Chinese students in 2008 enrolling in universities across the world, compared to the total number of 160,000 from 1978 to 1999, and an average of 130,000 every year since 2002. Corresponding to the policies of internationalizing higher education, implementation processes are focused on government financing provided to scholars and students, opening the market for the privately financed students, and efforts made to attract overseas scholars and students to return to China (Huang, 2007a, 2007b).

The second group of strategies is internationalization of university curricula and textbooks (Zhang & Adamson, 2011). The focus of these strategies was on teaching in English or through bilingual instruction in university teaching and research activities (Yang, 2002). In 2001, a document issued by the MoE indicates that 5% to 10% of all the curricula in the leading universities must be taught in English by 2004 (Huang, 2006). In fact, such practices have not

only been applied in leading universities or limited graduate level education, but they are also implemented in some provincial universities at the undergraduate level (the MoE, 2011).

In terms of the third group of strategies of internationalization, which is institutional cooperation, there are over 1,055 universities in China and the majority of them have signed various forms and levels of alliance agreements with foreign universities for a range of activities (Shen & Yu, 2011). Willis (2001a) identifies four levels of cooperation between Chinese universities and foreign universities: basic level agreements of "exchanging staff and students"; second level of "cooperated degree programs"; third level of "Sino-foreign research centers or institutes"; and fourth level of "Sino-foreign independent or semi-private campuses in China" (Wills, 2001a, p. 79). It is the implementation of the fourth level of practice that has accelerated the development of international branch campuses in China.

With the increasing internationalization of higher education in China, the exchanges between Chinese and foreign universities are changing direction. For example, as a result of China's heavy investment in internationalizing its top universities, there as has been a significant rise of Chinese elite universities in the world university ranking (Chiose, 2016). Consequently, Chinese universities have attracted many foreign faculty and students to work and study in China. China's ambitious plans to turn its elite universities into world-class universities have resulted in a large increase in the number of international students studying in China (ICEF Monitor, 2015). China is becoming a compelling destination for international students and faculty not only from those traditionally outbound countries in Africa and Southeast Asia, it has also become the destination of student mobility from the Western universities. According to recent statistics (ICEF Monitor, 2015), China hosted around 330,000 international students in 2012, and the number is expected to reach 500,000 by 2020. This changing direction is closely related to

China's strategy to actively use international exchange and collaboration as an approach to enhancing and exercising its soft power (Yang, 2014b).

Policies and Practices Related to International Branch Campuses

This section reviews policies and practices supporting the development of international branch campuses in China. In Chinese legislation, international branch campus is defined as "Chinese-Foreign Cooperative Universities (中外合作大学)" (MoE, 2003). Unlike other countries that allow foreign universities to set up and run independent educational enterprises, the Chinese Ministry of Education has a set of rules and regulations on the presence and operation of foreign higher educational institutions in China (Ennew & Yang, 2009). To establish a joint campus, a foreign university is required to partner with a Chinese institution and the head of the branch institution must be a Chinese citizen.

Prior to 1995, the few Sino-foreign educational cooperation agreements that existed in China were outside of any Chinese legislative framework. Based on the country's Education Act of 1995 that encouraged cooperative provision with foreign partners, the MoE produced the first official guidance on foreign education activity. The legislation was called "Contemporary Regulation on Operation of Higher Education Institutions in Co-operation with Foreign Partners" (MoE, 1995). Some of the key elements of this legislation are: transnational education provision cannot be provided absolute and solely by a foreign institution; all activities must be in partnership with recognized Chinese higher education institutions; not less than half the members of the governing body of the institution must be Chinese citizens and the president or equivalent position must be held by a Chinese citizen; partnership seeking approval must submit detailed documentation outlining provision and objectives, and shall not seek profit as the objective.

In 2003 the most important piece of legislation on the transnational provision of higher education was released by Ministry of Education, which is the "Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Chinese Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools". This legislation for the first time defined previously ambiguous areas in the foreign provision such as degree granting, qualification of foreign teaching and managerial staff, required curricula such as moral studies and Chinese constitution, intellectual property issues in the partnership, and academic freedom.

In summary, Chinese governments at both central and provincial levels are supposed to have absolute control over the approval, governance structure, and strategic planning of Chinese-foreign collaboration. However, some international scholars point out that legislation, practice, and compliance in the case of collaborating with Chinese higher education institutions do not always go hand-in-hand (Gow, 2007). The shifts toward a market economy have given more official discretion and special privileges to Chinese-international collaboration in higher education.

Chapter 4 – Conceptual Framework

In the previous chapter, I discussed the historical context of the Chinese higher education system. While Chinese higher education has undergone many changes because of internationalization, Confucian traditions continue to permeate through Chinese society and culture for over two thousand years. With the increasing globalization pressures that China is currently facing, it is necessary to understand new development in Chinese higher education system from a political economic perspective. In this chapter outlines a conceptual framework that I use to analyze the phenomenon of growing international branch campuses in China by integrating relevant political and economic theories underlying current Chinese higher education system. Prior to the discussion of the specific theories, I would like to explain my understanding of the purpose of a conceptual framework.

A conceptual framework often refers to a series of interconnected theories or concepts that provide a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon (Jabareen, 2009). Miles and Huberman (1994) state that a conceptual framework applies key ideas, concepts, or variables in a research project, and lays out the complex relations among them. In addition, Mertens (2005) notes that in qualitative research the researcher often starts with an inductive position, then seeks to build on theories with the conceptual framework emerging in the process of data collection and analysis.

Based on a methodological stance of a constructivist-interpretive paradigm, which I will explain in Chapter 5, I believe that my perception and understanding of the phenomenon being studied are constructed and developed along the research process. Therefore, my understanding of the purpose of a conceptual framework in my study is to focus the inquiry and give it boundaries rather than to serve as a priori assumption for data collection and analysis. Bearing this understanding in mind, this chapter will give an overview of the main political and economic

theories underlying the policies and practices in the development of international branch campuses in China. There are three areas of theories and relevant ideas that I will discuss in this chapter: neoliberal globalization, Socialist Market Economy, and the Post-Confucian Model of higher education.

Neoliberal Globalization

In Chapter 2, I discussed the definition of globalization, the differences between globalization and internationalization, and how globalization can be interpreted in three dimensions, as an empirical fact, as an ideology, and as a social imaginary (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). This section presents some theoretical considerations related to neoliberalism and globalization, and how neoliberal globalization serves as the social and economic background for China's changing higher education system.

Neoliberal influences on the Chinese economy. In his book *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties* (2000), American sociologist Daniel Bell defines ideology as an action-oriented system of beliefs. According to this definition, ideology has two dimensions. The first dimension is a goal or a vision defining the ideal social organization or the ideal way that the society should function or be arranged. The second dimension includes the methods or ways of achieving this ideal arrangement. In other words, ideology shapes how people understand certain things.

Over the past half century, neoliberalism has become the dominant ideological influence in the United States and almost across the world (Harvey, 2005). Neoliberalism is an ideology based on individual economic rationality and a laissez-faire approach to the economy. Harvey (2005) defines neoliberalism as "a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and

skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free

markets, and free trade" (p. 2). Neoliberal ideology has a market-based approach that believes a

weak state is better than a strong state, and a private economy is better than a public one (Apple,

2000). Neoliberalism promotes marketization, privatization, and liberalization, which were much

needed after Chinese society suffered over ten years of economic stagnation during the Cultural

Revolution from 1967 to 1977 (Harvey, 2005). Therefore, it is not surprising that neoliberalism

has been an influencing ideology shaping China's political and economic reforms since the late

1970s.

While reforming its political and economic systems with the Reform and Opening-up

policy since 1978, the central Chinese government decided to open its higher education system

to the international market around the same time. Officially, this decision was acknowledged as a

response to a growing demand for a highly qualified workforce, which in the context of

economic globalization has become a decisive factor affecting China's capacity to compete with

developed countries. Some researchers, therefore, referred to neoliberalism as an important

ideological explanation for the reform and internationalization in China's higher education

system (Mok 1997, 2005, 2008).

According to Mok and Lo (2007), many Chinese policies and strategies in higher

education were shaped by neoliberal influences. "It is clear that with the adoption of the

neoliberal approach in running higher education, the sector has significantly transformed along

privatizing and marketizing trends, thus changing the nature of higher education from public

good to private commodity in the post-Mao era" (Mok & Lo, p. 48). From the research on the

topic of higher education expansion and Chinese higher education law, it is not hard to find that

the dominant arguments of higher education policies at that time include the elements of

privatization and marketization of higher education, ensuring equal access regardless of racial and economic status, and internationalization of higher education as an important means of economic stimulus (Mok, 2005, 2008; Morgan & Wu, 2011; Ngok, 2008).

Embracing the market economy has significantly challenged the way socialism is practiced in China (Mok & Lo, 2007). In *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, David Harvey (2005) explores the complexity associated with the formation of neoliberal politics. In the chapter named "Neoliberalism with Chinese characteristics", Harvey defines the compatibility between the socialist political system and the neoliberal economy in China. He comments that China has been going through "the construction of a particular kind of market economy that increasingly incorporates neoliberal elements interdigitated with authoritarian centralized control" (Harvey, 2005, p. 120). Most importantly, the growing influence of neoliberalism has not only led to political and economic reforms in China but also has been adopted in Chinese higher education policies (Mok, 2008).

Globalization and Chinese higher education. As previously discussed in Chapter 2, there have been a variety of different discourses on the definitions of globalization. The impact of globalization on Chinese higher education has also been discussed in a wide range of academic literature.

For many Chinese institutions, globalization means that innovation and knowledge production are not limited within the national border anymore. Zhang (2008) argues that globalization means more international competition for higher educational institutions. As a strategy to face the growing challenges and demands from a globalized higher education market, Chinese universities have been expanding and strengthening international academic collaboration with foreign universities (Zhang, 2008). At the national policy level, some laws

and regulations were issued to moderate and supervise the opening of Chinese higher education to an international market. The Ministry of Education implemented several projects to prepare Chinese universities to compete for the status of world-class universities (See the description of Project 211 and Project 985 in Chapter 3). At the institutional level, many Chinese universities started to set up more joint and dual degree programs with leading international universities. Other institutional strategies include increasing international partnerships in teaching and research, expanding bilingual (Chinese and English) and English-only programs, building joint research centers with international universities and research institutes, and recruiting faculty members from foreign universities (Zhang, 2008).

Neoliberal globalization also presents challenges for Chinese higher education as a political ideology. According to Tan and Ryes (2016), a fundamental assumption of neoliberalism is the weakness of the "public" and the superiority of the "private". This neoliberal ideology has a profound impact on education in China since it is a move away from the generally accepted set of values embraced by traditional Chinese culture, which is known as education for the public good. In Chapter 3, I discussed how traditional Confucian philosophy emphasizes a collectivist culture and a centrally controlled higher education system. Therefore, the premise of neoliberalism that translates into education as the celebration of the private and market-driven educational system (Tan & Ryes, 2016) is a challenge for the higher education system in China. For example, the implementation of neoliberal education policy in China often reveals the gaps between policy and practice. While higher education policy reforms often attempt to change toward accommodating various types of provision including international higher education institutions, the central Chinese government and some key educational stakeholders still value a

centralized control of the approval and quality assurance of international branch campuses in China.

In order to face the challenges brought by neoliberal globalization, Chinese higher education has experienced reforms by marketization and massification. These reforms toward further marketization have been manifested in the changing accountability of universities, remodeling teaching and learning, enhancing international partnerships, and practices of embracing a new global model of universities (Yang, 2002; Vidovich, Yang, & Currie, 2007; Mohrman, 2008). Mohrman, Ma, and Baker (2008) propose an emerging model for research universities in a globalized world. The characteristics that distinguish the emerging global model consist of a global mission, increasing intensity of knowledge production, changing academic profession, diversified funding, shifting relationship between university and government, worldwide recruitment, increasing complexity of university administration, and expanding global collaboration (Mohrman et al, 2008).

Mohrman (2008) suggests that the central Chinese government and top university administrators have embraced this emerging global model of research universities. While the reforming of Chinese higher education system is adopting these eight characteristics in the emerging global model, three of the characteristics are particularly useful in analyzing China's strategies of supporting the development of international branch campuses, which includes evidence of a global mission, changing relationship between universities and the state, and increasingly expanding global collaboration.

Neoliberal globalization and international branch campuses. When examining the role that neoliberal globalization has played in China's higher education reforms, Maringe and Foskett (2010) suggest that essentially all universities are no longer just places that generate

knowledge for its own sake or for the public good. Universities are increasingly participating in international, business, or economic relations to create knowledge that has economic value. Universities have also become corporate organizations seeking to generate profit using minimum resources. The development of international branch campuses in China has been an example of this type of corporate organizations under the influence of neoliberal globalization.

Altbach (2013) contends that the 21st century is the age of globalization for higher education. He raises the point that it is important to consider the impact of neoliberal globalization on international branch campuses from both national and international perspectives. At the national level, international branch campuses in China represent the changing relationship between the Chinese government and higher education institutions. As Chinese society moves toward a greater market economy, the government of China is experimenting on loosening the tight central control model of the past to allow more private and international providers for its higher education (Altbach, 2013). International branch campuses also represent the changes in financial diversification and shifting model of university administration (Ennew & Yang, 2009).

At the international level, with the pressures brought by neoliberal globalization Chinese universities started to look internationally for collaboration and standards (Marginson, 2006). This demand for increasing internationalization, therefore, was manifested in the implementation and expansion of international branch campuses in China. This process shows how the Chinese government and higher education institutions have adapted to the demands of neoliberal globalization. Some literature even defines China's response and adaptation as an "emerging global model with Chinese characteristics" (Mohrman, 2008, p. 29). Meanwhile, the changes happening in China's higher education system are very consistent with the ideology that China

has embraced in both political and economic realms since the late 1970s. The Chinese government has named this ideological framework a Socialist Market Economy.

Socialist Market Economy

Socialist Market Economy, also known as Socialism with Chinese Characteristics, is an ideology and economic model employed by China. It is an economic model based on the state-owned enterprises and an open-market economy (Huang, 2007b). By analyzing the underpinning ideologies in China's policy and practice of social, political, and economic reforms one can explore several key questions. Why did the Chinese Communist Party decide to reform China's political and economic system? How did the new ideology of Socialist Market Economy emerge? What purpose does it serve in shaping China's educational reforms and international dimensions in its higher education? It is my hope that answers to these questions could possibly lead to an understanding of China's incentives and motivations for its internationalizing agenda.

Based on the model of a Socialist Market Economy, the bottom line in China's higher education policies is to support a socialist ideology, which is clearly stated in China's higher education law, "The state adheres to the development of the cause of socialist higher education with Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought and Deng Xiaoping's Theory as guidance following the basic principles defined by the Constitution" (State Council of China, 2010). However, different from the original principles of socialism, the Socialist Market Economy promotes an open-market model. The Chinese government claims that it has not abandoned the basic theories of Marxism, but has developed Marxism and socialism according to the needs of Chinese social and economic development (Central Committee of Chinese Communist Party, 2002). Therefore, "by taking its own peculiar path toward socialism with Chinese characteristics

or, as some now prefer to call it, privatization with Chinese characteristics, it managed to construct a form of state-manipulated market economy" (Harvey, 2005, p. 122).

Although socialism is still a key part of the guidelines for higher education reforms and policies, the socialist practices in China could be interpreted as the combination of political socialism and economic neoliberalism. It seems that the central Chinese government wants to maintain the social stability and its ruling status by claiming that the political system in China still follows Marxist and socialist beliefs, but at the same time the educational policies have shifted from state control to a gradually privatized, marketized, and internationalized model. This model is deeply influenced by capitalism and neoliberalism (Mok & Lo, 2007).

The adoption of market principles and practices of Socialist Market Economy has affected not only the economic system in China but also the educational sphere. Mok (2008) maintains that the Socialist Market Economy has changed the old way of "centralized governance" (p. 602) in Chinese higher education. Two of the main changes in higher education reforms in China were increasing privatization and marketization in the educational sector. Between 1990 and 2002, Chinese state financial support for higher education has dropped from 93.5% to 50% (Mok, 2008). In the early 1990s, the Chinese government introduced the fee-paying principle in financing its higher education system (Cheng, 1996). In addition to the fee-paying model being introduced into higher education in China, the Chinese government also started to reform its higher education system toward a more diversified, and multiple channels of educational funding. Government policies were modified in order to allow privately funded or "people-run" (Minban, 民办) higher education institutions (Mok & Ngok, 2008, p. 179).

Another impact of the Socialist Market Economy on China's higher education was reflected in the growing importance of the private sector in education (Mok, Wong, & Zhang,

2009). With a growing economy and the massification of Chinese higher education, there were increasing demands for more diversified providers for higher education in China. A significant feature of China's transition to a Socialist Market Economy was the growing number of private institutions in higher education. Among all the privately funded or Minban institutions, the Wanli Model (Mok & Ngok, 2008) was a good example of Chinese government's attempt to exploring alternatives to publicly funded universities. Zhejiang Wanli University was the first higher education institution in China that adopted a "State owned and people-run" model (guo you min ban, 国有民办) (Mok & Ngok, 2008, p. 179). During this transitioning from all public to partially private process, Zhejiang Wanli Education Group, as a private enterprise invested in Zhejiang Wanli University. The private enterprise was responsible for managing the university while the state government maintained the ownership of the university. It is worth noting that Zhejiang Wanli Education Group was also the first private enterprise collaborating with the University of Nottingham in 2004, which resulted in the founding of University of Nottingham Ningbo as the first full-scale international branch campus in China.

Post-Confucian Model of Higher Education

In the political and economic spheres, Socialist Market Economy is the ideological underpinning for the social transformation that has been taking place in China since the late 1970s. In the social and cultural realms, however, a strong Confucian tradition has always been the prominent feature in the Chinese higher education. Marginson (2011, 2013) and other researchers (Onsman, 2012; Starr, 2012) suggest that there is a rise of a Post-Confucian model permeating China's higher education system.

Marginson (2011, 2013) defines Post-Confucian nations as countries in East and South East Asian regions with a strong Confucian heritage. The Post-Confucian nations include China,

Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau, Vietnam, and Singapore. Collectively, these nations form a Post-Confucian model, sharing a higher education structure that is deeply influenced by Confucian thought (Onsman, 2012). According to Marginson (2011), the Post-Confucian model differs from the higher education in European and North American in four interdependent characteristics. First, the Post-Confucian model features a strong nation-state control in higher education. Second, Post-Confucian systems have a rapid growth in middle-class households' participation and investment in higher education tuition cost. Third, in the Post-Confucian nations there is a one chance national examination system, which mediates social competition and household commitment to higher education. Fourth, countries with a Post-Confucian higher education system have a tendency of growing public investment in research and world-class universities.

Mok (2008) contends that Post-Confucian states often use a neo-liberal approach of modernization and their higher education systems are structured as a quasi-market, where central control by government is maintained. In the case of China, as described in Chapter 3 the central Chinese government maintains a strong control of its higher education system and institutions. Presidents and senior administrators of most Chinese universities are directly appointed by the government rather than selected by the governing bodies within the universities. The strong state control has been manifested as a priority in both structure and funding of Chinese higher education institutions (Onsman, 2012).

Another strong feature of the Post-Confucian model of higher education is the willingness of middle-class families to invest in secondary and higher education in order to position their children for a better social status (Marginson, 2013). As I have described in the previous chapters, Chinese families are willing to invest heavily in their children's education.

According to Yang (2008), 35% percent of university funding in China was paid by households in 2005. The growing economy in China has seen a fast growth of middle-class families. While influenced by a strong merited-based Confucian tradition and the one-child policy, many Chinese families are willing to spend their family savings on tuition cost. This tendency of self-funded university participation has also contributed to the fact that China has increasingly become an attractive source of international students for many universities outside of China.

I have discussed the significant role of the National College Entrance Exam (NCEE) in Chinese higher education system in Chapter 3. Some of the characteristics of the NCEE represent the Confucian merit-based heritage. The one-chance national examination system in the Post-Confucian model serves the function of a mechanism that mediates social competition, maintains the prestigious status of universities, and focuses family commitment to higher education (Marginson, 2011).

The last feature of the Post-Confucian model stresses the intensive public funding in universities research to achieve world-class ranking. Both Project 211 and Project 985 described in Chapter 3 demonstrate the commitment and efforts made by the Chinese government to build excellent universities through heavy public investment. Efforts of developing Chinese-foreign higher education collaboration have also regarded as part of China's national strategy to build quality higher education and commitment to funding research-intensive universities.

In summary, the Post-Confucian model has been manifested in the planning and practices in Chinese higher education. Onsman (2012) comments that the Confucian heritage in Chinese higher education makes China's process of internationalization a unique model of "international higher education with Chinese characteristics" (p. 179). This description of China's internationalization process brings us back to the characteristics of a Socialist Market Economy,

and apparently, China's higher education policies have been consistently aligned with its political and economic agenda.

Mapping a Conceptual Framework

The stated purpose of this study was to investigate the development of four international branch campuses in China. The focus of the study was to explore the rationales and approaches in China's strategies to internationalize its higher education at both the national policy and institutional practice levels, with the specific focus on the phenomenon of fast growing international branch campuses.

One of my assumptions for this study was internationalization and its implications for Chinese higher education were culturally and historically constructed within the Chinese context. Therefore, it is important to take into consideration the different factors that influence the internationalization of China's higher education system. In this section I describe the concept map (see figure 4 below) that explains the correlations between the theories and concepts outlined in the previous sections. This concept map served as a conceptual framework and the boundaries for me to focus the study in my data collecting process.

Internationalization
• Cross-border HE collaboration

International Branch Campuses in China

Chinese Higher Education
• Socialist Market Economy
• Post-Confucian Model
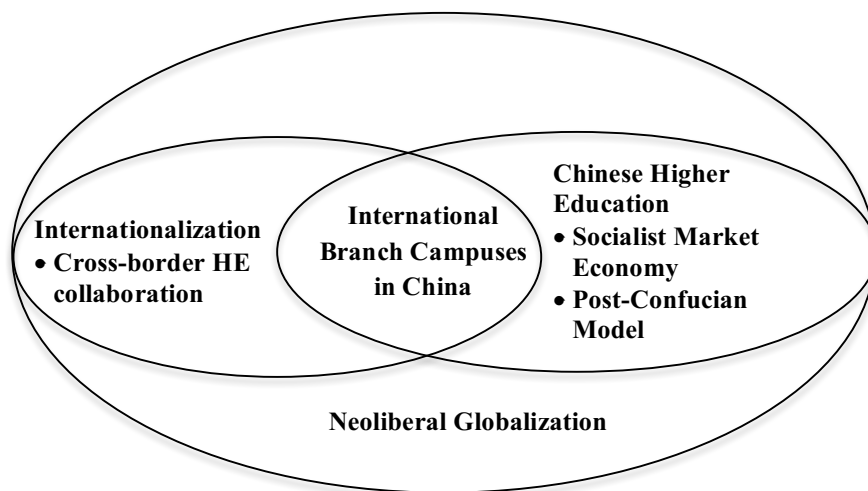
Neoliberal Globalization

Figure 4. A Conceptual Framework

As illustrated in figure 4, neoliberal globalization has been the social and economic context for both internationalization and China's higher education transformation. Outlined in both Chapter 2 and this chapter, neoliberal globalization has been a driving force for higher education reforms in China. In the context of neoliberalism and globalization, universities around the world share the values and missions of teaching, research, and service. This explains why universities in recent years have a growing tendency to respond to increasing market forces. Neoliberal globalization as the social and economic context for the development and changes in Chinese higher education explains China's strategy of growing focus on higher education internationalization.

Within the overarching context of neoliberal globalization, internationalization of higher education has been the background for increasing cross-border higher educational collaboration. When the tension between international and national goals of universities has been taken into consideration, it is important to explore the different models of international collaboration. International branch campuses in China represent many aspects of international and intercultural educational collaboration, for example, student and faculty mobility, partnership at the national and institutional levels, and the flow of knowledge and educational resources across borders.

The Chinese higher education system is shaped by many factors including political, economic, and cultural changes. These factors are also the basis for the increasing Chinese-foreign higher education collaboration. Socialist Market Economy has been serving as the political and economic underpinning for China's social reforms for the past several decades. The strong Confucian heritage which has been characterized as a Post-Confucian model not only influences higher education in China but also places international branch campuses in a broader regional higher educational context within Asia.

The development of international branch campuses is located within the above three dimensions that have been influencing higher education policies and practices in China. By looking at different theories and contexts shaping internationalization and China's higher education system, this framework demonstrates the complex and multifaceted environment that international branch campuses in China are facing. Furthermore, examining the phenomenon of fast expanding international branch campuses in China is significant in understanding the driving force of internationalization and China's strategies to develop its higher education policies.

The development of higher education in the past few decades has become more complex, diverse, and pluralistic (Scott, 1998; de Wit, 2011). As Scott (1998) suggests, these complexities and diversities should be seen as the starting point for considering international and intercultural dimensions of higher education. Rather than claiming there is only a singular form of globalization and internationalization, it is important to consider the possibility of plural forms of internationalization. These multiple forms of internationalization have been developing in countries like China, India, and other countries in the global south. The development of international branch campuses in China is a phenomenon representing such the complexity and plurality.

This chapter discussed the main political and economic theories underlying the policies and practices in the development of international branch campuses in China. Since the purpose of this study was to investigate the development of international branch campuses in China and to explore the rationales and approaches in China's strategy to internationalize its higher education system, three areas of theories were closely relevant to the research purpose and research questions: neoliberal globalization, Socialist Market Economy, and the Post-Confucian model of higher education. With the conceptual framework of this study being outlined, the next chapter will describe the research design that I used in conducting the study.

Chapter 5 – Research Design

A research design is a plan for how the study will be conducted. It is a way of thinking about, imagining, and visualizing how the study will be undertaken (McTavish & Loether, 2002). Janesick (1994) suggests that research design can be seen as the "choreography" that establishes a research dance. The designing process of research requires the researcher to make some important decisions about the research ideas, for example, the type of information that will be gathered, and the forms of data-collection techniques. Further, the researcher needs to consider where the research will be located, and the group of people that will inform the research (Berg, 2009). In this study, I use research design as an opportunity for me to reflect on my personal beliefs about the nature of research, the constructing of knowledge, and the perception of reality. This chapter sketches the "choreography" for my research dance following the path of methodology, research approach, data collecting techniques and process, and data analysis procedures.

Methodology

Denzin and Lincoln (2008) state that there are five generic phases defining the qualitative research process: the researcher as a multicultural subject; theoretical paradigms and perspectives; research strategies; methods of collection and analysis; and the art of interpretation. In a sense, all qualitative researchers are philosophers guided by highly abstract principles that combine beliefs about ontology (for example, what is the nature of being, or existence?), epistemology (for example, what is the relationship between the inquirer and the known?), and methodology (for example, how do we know the world, or gain knowledge of it?) (Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 2008). Guba (1990) further defines the process of qualitative research as a net comprised of a researcher's epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises that

reveal his or her "paradigm", or interpretive framework that reflects the "basic set of beliefs that guides action" (p. 17).

As a researcher, my position is in line with a constructivist-interpretive paradigm, which assumes a relativist ontology, a subjectivist epistemology, and a hermeneutic and dialectic methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). According to constructivist ontological assumptions, there are multiple realities, and these realities are "constructed intersubjectively through the meanings and understandings developed socially and experientially" (Guba & Lincoln, 2008, p. 271). Guba and Lincoln (2008) also suggest that constructivist research is philosophically relativist as opposed to objectivist epistemology and positivism.

A relativist ontological stance implies that the researcher believes that there is no objective truth and emphasizes the diverse approaches of interpretation of world (Crotty, 1998; Creswell, 2007). As a researcher, I believe that individuals seeking meanings and understandings of the world in which they live. There are multiple meanings developed by individuals based on their experiences. These meanings are varied and leading the researcher to look for a complex construction of views rather than one single narrow way of interpretation. Creswell (2007) states that the goal of a constructivist-interpretive research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views in the study.

Subjectivist epistemology positions the world as unknowable and the role of the researcher is to make sense and construct an impression of the world as they observe it (Crotty, 1998). The researcher's intent is to make sense or interpret the meanings participants have about the world. Crotty (1998) identifies several assumptions associated with subjectivist worldview and constructivism. He says that qualitative researchers based on constructivist-interpretive view tend to use broad and open-ended questions so that participants have the space to share their

experiences. He also believes that as researchers we make sense of the world based on our historical, cultural, and social perspectives. Therefore, qualitative researchers seek to understand the context or setting of the study and interpret the findings based their own experiences and background.

The ontological assumption underlying my study is the belief in multiple realities, and these realities are socially constructed. I believe that the study of the internationalization of higher education is a topic open for interpretations from both Chinese and Western perspectives. My research reflects multiple understandings of internationalization within the Chinese context. The internationalization of China's higher education system is a process that has been shaped by ongoing social, cultural, economic, and political changes in China. I believe that the construction of knowledge about this topic is subject to different interpretations. Meanwhile, it is necessary and useful to consider the perceptions, performance, and attitudes of individuals and groups, so this study can draw a sketch of how China is attempting to interact with different factors in its process of internationalization.

With respect to epistemology, constructivists assume that we cannot separate ourselves from what we know (Creswell, 2007). Constructivists see the way of knowing as "the inquirer and the inquired-into are interlocked in an interactive process, each influences the other" (Mertens, 2005, p. 14). I believe that in my study the researcher and the subjects are interactive. The role of the researcher is not to observe the research as an outsider, but to interact with the research and construct knowledge from it. I see myself as a participant of the international cultural and academic exchange. My research is based on the understanding that we construct knowledge through our lived experiences and through our interaction with other members of

society. I also believe it is important to understand human and social reality within a specific cultural and historical context.

The constructivist-interpretive perspective has important implications for cross-cultural inquiries such as the study of internationalization. Yeganeh, Su, and Chrysostome (2004) argue that culture should be considered as a construction of factors underlying the perceptions and issues in dealing with cultural differences. They believe that the constructivist-interpretive perspective allows us to view cross-cultural inquiries as mental constructions that can be managed and explored by the researcher. On the other hand, the use of a constructivist-interpretive paradigmatic stance could also bring potential challenges in studying the internationalization of higher education in China. When discussing the strengths and weaknesses of using Western methodological perspectives on Chinese higher education, Liu (1996) contends that constructivism could be an inadequate perspective when applied in a cross-cultural inquiry. Since constructivism in cross-cultural inquiry believes that writing about a foreign society are socially, culturally, and textually constructed, there is a tendency that cross-cultural writings are heavily shaped by the author's beliefs, concerns, and methods. Therefore, there is a possibility that the author could distort, rather than represent accurately the realities of the non-Western societies he or she writes about (Liu, 1996).

The most challenging aspect posed by the application of a constructivist-interpretive methodology to study internationalization of higher education system in China is the clashes between the constructivist and the materialist epistemology. Since the establishment of the communist Chinese government in 1949, Marxist philosophy has been the dominant ideological influence in China. Two of the grounding theories of Marxist philosophy, dialectical materialism and historical materialism have been the guiding philosophical theories underpinning Chinese

educational policies. Since the basic assumption of materialism emphasizes the objective and realistic perception of human societies and their development over time (Fromm, 1961), it could pose significant challenges for a constructivist interpretation of the history and development of higher education in China. The constructivist-interpretive perspective could easily be categorized as "idealism" and contrary to the philosophical grounding of educational policies in China. However, it is also important to understand that apart from traditional materialism, the Marxist interpretation of dialectical and historical materialism believes that human society and cultures are the subject matter of history and of the understanding of its laws. As Fromm (1961) explains, a Marxist understanding of history is based on the fact that "men are the authors and actors of their history" (p. 12). In addition, the approach to Marxism in China was heavily influenced by Chinese traditional culture and values. Based on the factors described above, I consider constructivist-interpretive perspective to be an appropriate methodology for this study.

Consistent with my constructivist-interpretive paradigmatic stance, I assume the meaning of internationalization and its implications for Chinese society are socially, culturally and historically constructed within the Chinese context. It could possibly be very different from that in the Western context. Therefore, the conceptual framework that I have developed engages theoretical and historical understandings from both Chinese and Western cultures. It is my intention to integrate Western theories and perspectives with Chinese traditional knowledge and ideas towards constructing an analytical framework for this study. What makes sense to understand the issue of internationalization of higher education in a Chinese context will be co-constructed by researcher's beliefs and the Chinese community or participants during the research process. The following section explains my rationales for choosing the case study approach and my justification of choosing specific case study research sites. I describe the type

of case study I use in this study, as well as the strengths and criticisms of using the case study approach.

Research Approach

The term "case study" has different meanings for different researchers and is often utilized as a research strategy in many different disciplines. The case study approach can be applied in both qualitative and quantitative research. Stake (2005) maintains that case study is "not a methodological choice, but a choice of what is to be studied" (p. 443). In other words, what makes a case study a qualitative approach is the researcher's positionality and his or her ways of interpreting the case. Therefore, my intention to investigate the phenomenon from a constructivist-interpretive stance makes qualitative case study approach a suitable approach for this study.

Meredith (1998) describes two strengths echoing the definition of a case study approach: first, the phenomenon could be studied in its natural setting; and second, the meaningful and relevant theory generated from the understanding gained through actual practice. Yin (2009) on the other hand gives a more specific definition of the case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 18). In line with the constructive-interpretive paradigm, I find Yin's definition allows for a broader parameter for the researcher to look at the phenomenon within its context.

In terms of the relationship between the investigator and the case being investigated, it is important to consider how Stake (1995) envisions that in a case study approach the researcher enters the scene with a sincere interest in learning how different actors function in their natural context, and at the same time the researcher enters the learning process with a willingness to put

aside many presumptions. Therefore, Stake (1995) believes that a case study is suitable for answering questions that start with how, who, and why.

Yin (2009) explains that case study is optimal in the following situations: when, how or why questions are being asked; when the researcher has little control over events; and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon. These three situations fit well into my study since I investigate the phenomenon of fast growing branch campuses in China's process of internationalizing its higher education sector. It is a contemporary phenomenon that has been evolving over the past two decades. This study investigates the phenomenon in its natural milieu without intervening over the activities and events happening at the research sites. Most importantly, a case study approach will allow me to achieve the purpose of this study by understanding the underlying rationale of China's efforts to internationalize higher education.

Creswell (2007) argues that it is critical in case study research for the researcher to be very clear about the focus of the research. Agreeing with Creswell, I believe that a clear focus should be applied to each step of a research project. He describes a case as "a bounded system" for one case or "multiple bounded systems" for more than one case (Creswell, 2007, p. 73). Stake (1995) also distinguishes between different types of case studies in the following ways: an intrinsic case consists of a situation where you need to learn about a particular case; an instrumental case where the researcher could use a case to learn about something else; and a collective case where the research wants to find out about a particular phenomenon from a number of different cases.

I see my study as a collective case study since it studies a phenomenon through several individual yet correlated cases. The strengths of the collective case study approach allow me to achieve the objectives of my research. The aim of my case study is to dig deep into the issues of

the internationalization of China's higher education system by looking for explanations and having an understanding of the phenomenon through multiple data sources. It is through this understanding that my study will be able to interpret the hidden realities about internationalization in China. Along with the strengths of a case study approach, inevitably there are criticisms of the case study research strategy, which I describe below.

A major criticism of case study research is that it lacks objectivity and rigor (Remenyi, 1998). This perspective contends that the case study researcher is often immersed in the case so it is difficult for the researcher to be objective about the data collected from the case. Another criticism describes case study research as lacking generalizability because of the small scale of sample size (Bryman & Bell, 2003). This viewpoint finds that the lack of large sample size of case study research may limit the generalizability or contribution of the case study.

While objectivity is often used by positivist paradigmatic beliefs referring to the reality as singular and independent of the research, my understanding of the position of a case study researcher is that the researcher needs to be immersed in the case so the research can be described as subjective or constructing understandings, which is congruous with my constructive-interpretive stance.

Furthermore, I believe it is crucial to keep in mind that the aim of a case study is not supposed to generalize the findings to a large population, but to interpret the how and why of a phenomenon within a specific context. Therefore, I find the case study approach to be a good fit for my study since my intention is to construct a research story that reflects its natural setting and cultural context.

Study Sites

In this study, I conducted data collection at four study sites. In these four study sites, there are two Chinese-British international branch campuses, University of Nottingham Ningbo China (UNNC), Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU); and two Chinese-American international branch campuses, New York University Shanghai (NYU Shanghai), Duke Kunshan University (DKU).

These international campuses, also known as Chinese-foreign collaborative universities (Ministry of Education, 2003), were often established as the collaboration between a Chinese top university and a British or American university. They offer comprehensive degrees at both undergraduate and graduate levels, in comparison with some small-scale partnership programs between Chinese and foreign institutions. Located in Ningbo, Suzhou, Shanghai, and Kunshan, these four campuses are all geographically close to Shanghai, which has been the economic and cultural center of China. Located in the cities as the front line of economic development in China, these four campuses have their individual development strategies, partnership frameworks, and each has unique financial structures. They also have very different rationales for choosing their locations, which are supposed to be consistent with their academic visions.

I chose these four international branch campuses as my study sites because they each have a unique position in representing the development of international branch campuses in China. As comprehensive and full-scale campuses, they require a high degree of support from the local Chinese government, demand coordination of governance and management between the foreign and Chinese institutions, and entail long-term investment and strategic planning. I will provide a more detailed description of each research site in Chapter 6 as it is closely relevant to the findings of this study.

Participant Selection and Recruitment

This section offers an overview of the sampling approach and the criteria for participant selection. The issues of access and recruitment are also addressed in this section. My considerations for participation selection and recruitment were based on the assumption that the purpose of a qualitative research was not intended to generalization to a large population, but to investigate some information-rich cases (Stake, 2005) within specific individuals or groups for the in-depth understandings of a phenomenon.

Sampling approach. Patton (2002) suggests that the different logics underlying sampling approaches capture the main difference between quantitative and qualitative research methods. In contrast to a larger sample size randomly selected by quantitative methods, qualitative inquiry typically focuses on relatively small samples aimed at achieving an in-depth understanding of a particular social phenomenon. In this study, I used a purposeful sampling approach to select participants from the four international branch campuses. The logic and power of purposeful sampling are based on the selection of information-rich cases (Stake, 2005) for in-depth study, which are cases that one can learn a great deal about issues of importance related to the purpose of the study.

I considered the cases of these four campuses to be information-rich cases because I could gather in-depth information about matters of importance related to my research objectives. When deciding on a sampling strategy, I kept in mind that not only the sampling need to fit the purpose of the study, but also I need to consider the following: available resources; the questions being asked; and the constraints being faced. Therefore, I purposefully chose participants from senior university administrators, faculty members and researchers from the four study sites. Both UNNC and XJTLU had launched research centers for research in Chinese-international

collaborative higher education. I interviewed researchers from these two research centers with the hope of finding out whether these research centers have been playing important roles in their university decision-making process, and to what extent they were connected with Chinese government education policy makers.

I also chose officials in the education sector at both provincial and municipal governments where the research sites were located. The purposeful selection of participants in my study allowed me to understand the institutional strategies, rationales, and approaches towards internationalization from the university leaders' perspectives, and to investigate the policy making process from the government administrators' perspectives.

A second sampling strategy that I utilized was the snowball technique. As Creswell (2008) suggests, snowball sampling is a sampling strategy that usually takes place after a study begins, in which the researcher asks participants if they could recommend other individuals to participate in the study. Snowball sampling can be defined as a technique for finding research participants, where one participant provides the research name of another potential participant, who in turn provides the name of the third participant, and so on (Patton, 2002). The snowball sampling strategy could happen during or after the interview. The researcher may raise it as a question during the interview, or it could also happen through informal conversations with individuals at the research site. By doing so, the conversation or questions during the interview could possibly lead to a purposeful sampling of potential participants that had not been expected at the preparation stage of the study (Creswell, 2008).

In my study, snowball sampling strategy worked very well in recruiting participants at my research sites. I asked some of my participants if they could recommend other individuals that had been working across both their home campus and the branch campus. One participant

recommended to me a participant who had substantial experience of participating in the development of one of the international campus. Another participant actually had working experience at both UNNC and XJTLU. He suggested a few individuals that had similar experiences of working across different international branch campuses, which was very interesting as I could find out how they compared their experience across multiple campuses.

Participant selection. According to Johnson and Christensen (2012), when considering which participants to include in a qualitative study the researcher typically defines a set of criteria to distinguish the people of potential interest from those people who should be excluded from consideration. This process is also referred to as criterion-based selection because the researcher develops inclusion criteria to be used in selecting participants (LeCompte, Preissle & Tesch, 1993). When choosing the criteria used in selecting participants for my study, I took into consideration the purpose of my study, accessibility of the potential participants, costs of locating the people, and the fit for my timeline. Given the above considerations, participant selection from the aforementioned groups involved the following:

1. For senior administrators at the universities, participants were expected to have been actively involved in the institution's strategic planning and decision-making.

2. For faculty members and researchers, the selection was based on the consideration that they had actively engaged in academic and research activities in international branch campuses in China or those who had experiences of working at both home and branch campuses.

3. For government officials, they had been engaged in the policy making process concerning the establishment of these international campuses or other Chinese-foreign educational collaboration programs.

Most participants were confirmed to be available to meet for interviews during my information collecting time period, which was from December 2013 to February 2014. I confirmed the interview dates with my potential participants in November 2013 and recruited several participants during the data collection process. Eventually, I interviewed 12 participants in this study. The following section will discuss and justify my sample size.

Sample size. Patton (2002) suggests that there are no rules for selecting sample size in the qualitative inquiry. It all depends on what the researcher wants to know, the purpose of the specific inquiry, what is useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done within the available time and resources of the research. At the proposal stage, I limited my study to a sample size of up to 15 so that I could have an in-depth investigation at each study site. This sample size allowed me to cover personnel that had been involved in the policy making and implementation of international higher education collaborative programs at both university and government levels. Since the selection of faculty members and researchers was based on the criteria that they were actively engaged in the teaching and researching in the setting of Chinese-international higher education collaboration, the sample size also provided different perspectives from participants who had insights in the development of international branch campuses in China.

Among my 12 interview participants, there were 4 senior administrators, 1 administrator from each international branch campus. From the 2 government officials being interviewed, one participant was from Ningbo municipal government, and the other participant was from the central Chinese government. There were 4 faculty members being interviewed, 2 of them were from UNNC and the other 2 were from XJTLU. They were interviewed to discuss their experiences working in both their home campuses and branch campuses. The other 2 participants

were researchers from the research institutes of Chinese-foreign cooperative universities located within UNNC and XJTLU.

        Access and recruitment. According to Berg (2009), all field investigations begin with the challenge of getting in, and the issue of access should be addressed during the design stage of the research. Burgess (1991) suggests that access is based on the relationship between the researcher and the participants established in the project. Vallance (2001) with a slightly different approach recommends that access should be sought through introduction and referrals. In this study, I gained access through some introduction and referrals to reach the "gatekeepers". As defined by Creswell (2008), a gatekeeper is an individual "who has an official or unofficial role at the site, provides entrance to a site, helps researchers locate people, and assists in the identification of places to study" (p. 219).

        I made initial contact with researchers in the area of internationalization higher education in China, and they assisted me in getting in touch with policy makers and government officials in China. My former colleagues who worked in the research institute of higher education at Xiamen University helped me get in touch with potential participants at UNNC and XJTLU. A faculty member working at a university in Ningbo assisted me in contacting municipal government officials in Ningbo and Suzhou. Former colleagues and friends in Beijing helped me reach relevant research institutes (National Institute of Education Sciences, Beijing University Institute of Higher Education, etc.) and research libraries in Beijing for the purpose of collecting policy documents.

        Two approaches were used in the participant recruiting process. After getting access to senior administrators through the gatekeepers, I asked my potential participants if they could recommend any other eligible individuals to participate in this study. Before I arrived at the research sites, I recruited individuals who might be interested in participating in this study by

directly sending emails to potential individuals. The invitation for participation was written in English and translated into Chinese (see appendix A). The invitation letter described the purpose of this study, information about the interviews, and my contact information. I kept track of the respondents to my invitation and followed up with further contact once I decided some individuals could be the potential participants based on my participant selection criterion.

Data Collection Methods

According to Crotty (1998), research methods are the particular "techniques or procedures used to gather and analyze data" (p. 3). Before presenting the methods used in my data collection process, I want to briefly discuss my assumptions about the term "data collection" and the researcher's role in this process by describing the consideration of maintaining a reflexive stance during the data collection phase of this study.

As an analytical tool often used by qualitative researchers, reflexivity is a strategy that reinforces the intersection between who the researcher is and how he or she represents the data (Olson, 2011). Reflexivity is an important part of the data gathering and analyzing process since it helps the researcher consider critical questions such as "Who am I in relation to this study?" "To whom do the data belong?" and "What right do I have to study this research question?" (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Given the importance of reflexivity, researchers are supposed to choose words and terms reflecting their ontological and epistemological assumptions.

Data collection is a label that seems to reflect more of an objectivist epistemological perspective as it assumes that data is "collected" or "gathered". It treats data as facts and would expect individuals who were all part of some similar experience to tell the similar stories, or a universal truth (Olson, 2011). As discussed in an earlier section, the constructivist perspective

believes information is "created" or "interpreted" rather than "collected". Therefore, I understand collecting of information as a representation of multiple facts and realities.

There is a possibility that the stories told by individuals are different even though they share similar experiences since each person's representation would be different and shaped by his or her experience and perspective. That being said, it is not uncommon that qualitative researchers applying a constructivist perspective use the term "data collection" in their study. Therefore, I follow the conventional practice in order to avoid any confusion. Based on the above assumptions, I used three methods to gather data in this study: semi-structured interviews, observation, and document analysis.

Semi-structured Interviews. Interviewing is a method in which direct interaction between the researcher and participant involves oral questions from the interviewer and oral responses by the participant (Martella, Nelson, Morgan, & Marchand-Martella, 2013). According to Patton (2002), the purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in someone else's mind, and the special quality of the interview is that it is designed for a specific purpose. There are three types of interviews: the structured interview, which uses a formally structured schedule of interview questions; the unstructured interview, in which the interviewers only introduce very broad topics for discussion within the context of a general conversation; and the semi-structured interview, where researchers use information they have acquired to construct questions that are more focused (Olson, 2011).

A semi-structured interview occurs when the researcher asks the participants general, open-ended questions and records their answers (Creswell, 2008). The semi-structured interview is located somewhere in between the extremes of the completely standardized and the completely unstandardized interviewing structures. In this study, I considered semi-structured interviews to be the most appropriate approach in meeting my research purpose.

Berg (2009) suggests that this type of interview involves a number of predetermined questions focused on specific topics. These questions are typically asked of each participant in a systematic and consistent order, but the interviewers are allowed to probe further beyond the answer to their prepared structured questions. He also argues that questions in a semi-structured interview can reflect the awareness that individuals understand the world in varying ways, and researchers approach the world from the subject's perspective (Berg, 2009). The purpose of using the semi-structured interview in my study was to find out different individual's understanding of the phenomenon of international branch campuses and its impact on higher education in China. Therefore, I asked my participants some open-ended questions, most of them were "why" and "how" questions in the interviews.

According to Patton (2002), there are six different types of interviewing questions: experience/behavior, opinion/values, feeling, knowledge, sensory, and background/demographic questions. In this study, I asked my participants questions related to experience, knowledge, and opinions. I used different protocols when interviewing different groups of participants (see appendix B). The questions for senior university administrators were designed around participants' knowledge and experience of initiating and developing the international campus, some sample questions are:

1. Can you tell me about the history and development of your university?

2. Why did your home institution want to have this collaborative campus with the partner institution?

3. How do you see the relationship between the international campus and the home campus?

4. What were some challenges in the founding and operating of this campus?

The questions for government officials were focused on their knowledge and opinion about internationalization and government strategies to support the international branch campuses, for example:

1. Can you tell me about your experience of working with the international branch campuses?

2. Why do you think Chinese government supports the development of international branch campuses?

3. Can you tell me about the policy making process in your level of government concerning international branch campuses?

4. How would the experience influence your future interaction with Chinese-international education collaboration?

Interview questions for faculty members were focused on their experiences of working in the international education settings, for example, working at both home and branch campuses, and working with students in China. Some of the sample questions are:

1. Can you tell me about your experience working here?

2. Why did you want to work in an international branch campus?

3. Are you using the same curriculum or textbooks as you used when teaching in your home campus?

4. Are there any restrictions in terms of what you can or cannot teach here?

Interview questions for researchers were about the role of the research center in the decision-making process of the administration of international branch campuses and their connection with other research institutions. Some examples are:

1. What is the purpose of this research center within the branch campus?

2. How do you understand the Chinese government's policies of supporting the development of international branch campuses?

3. How do you understand internationalization of higher education?

4. Do you see the development international branch campuses as part of internationalization in China?

Keats (2000) states that one of the most interesting and demanding aspects of interviewing is the relationship between the interviewer and the participant. He suggests that there are three different phases in all interviews: the opening, the development of the main themes, and the closing or conclusion. During my interviews, I was aware that I had to be well prepared in interacting with the participants. At the opening phase of the interview, it was important to find the "ice-breaker" and develop a good rapport with the interviewee. For example, I would start by asking participants questions about how they got to that position, or their previous jobs or experiences leading to the position.

Since some of the participants were fluent in both English and Chinese Mandarin, I gave them the options of conducting the interview in either language to ensure that they felt comfortable during the interview. At the development phase, I used open-ended questions so that participants could talk freely about their experience. I also used probes from time to time to obtain additional information according to the main themes of my questions. It was also important to pay attention to when the interviews started to wind down to give the participants a sense of conclusion.

Observation. An observation study is a process of gathering information by observing people and places at a research site (Creswell, 2008). Observation is the process enabling

researchers to learn about the activities of the people under study in the natural setting through observing without interrupting those activities (Kawulich, 2005). One purpose of observing without being involved with participant's activities is to have no effect on participants. However, according to Johnson and Christensen (2012), a qualitative researcher assumes that behavior is purposeful and expressive of deeper beliefs and values. Therefore, observation allows the researcher to become personally acquainted and interact with the participants in an attempt to find out whether participants say what they believe and believe what they say (Potter, 1996).

In my study, the observation technique allowed me to observe the participants and their activities in their natural setting, check for nonverbal expressions, and determine how the participant actually views the topic. Information gathered through observation also helped me get a sense of how things were organized and prioritized, how people were interrelated, and what were the cultural parameters in the study sites.

Kawulich (2005) suggests that the most important factor in determining what a researcher should observe is the researcher's purpose for conducting the study. In my study, I first identified who or what to observe according to the purpose of finding out how internationalization is interpreted at the research sites in terms of practices and activities. During my visit to the study sites, I observed activities such as university operation, campus events, and management meetings, just to name a few. Also, I considered campus setting and campus architecture style as part of the university culture, which was a very important part of my observation. Before each interview, I would spend time observing the campus setting. For example, I noticed that UNNC replicated some landmark buildings from its home campus, the University of Nottingham, UK. I will explore the implication of such examples of campus setting with an analysis in Chapter 6.

In my process of visiting these four study sites, I observed the campus setting, student activities, campus events, and management activities followed the steps indicated by Creswell (2008):

- Select a site that helps the researcher best understand the central phenomenon;

- Ease into the site;

- Identify who or what to observe at the site;

- Determine the researcher's role as an observer;

- Conduct multiple observation over time to obtain the best understanding of the site and the individuals;

- Consider what information needs to be recorded;

- Record descriptive and reflective notes;

- Keep the researcher known but unobtrusive to the research site; and

- And after observing, slowly withdraw from the site.

Making field notes was an important tool for me to record information during the observation. Potter (1996) suggests that there are two levels of notes usually taken in observation: the facts or direct description of what is seen and heard, and the thoughts of the observers about the events and interviews. By observing the activities at the four study sites I recorded information such as the count of attendees, the physical map of the setting and description of the surroundings, where participants were positioned over time, description of the activities being observed. I also recorded my reflection on these activities.

Document analysis. Patton (2002) suggests that records, documents, artifacts, and archives can be a valuable source of information in qualitative research. According to Berg (2009), documents consist of public and private records that the researcher obtains about a site or

participants in a study. Berg (2009) further defines that there are archival records in the

following categories: public archives, private archives, official documentary records, commercial

media accounts, actuarial records, and other types of documentary sources of data including

audiovisual material. Creswell (2008) proposes a procedure for collecting documents in

qualitative research:

- Identifying the documents related to the study's research questions;

- Considering both public and private documents;

- Seeking permission to use documents from appropriate individuals and groups;

- Examining documents for accuracy, completeness, and usefulness; and

- And recording information from the documents in relating to the research questions in the
  study.

In order to analyze the development of international branch campuses in China, I

considered the connections between the policy texts as well as the social relations and structures

that generated the phenomenon. During the data collection process, I retrieved government

policy documents, institutional documents, program agreements, memorandums, and public

media documents. Documents were selected from both the national level and institutional level. I

accessed and obtained the documents through the University of Alberta library, National Library

of China, the Chinese Ministry of Education, libraries in Chinese educational research

institutions, and resources from individual study sites. I also collected media articles and

publications from other sources related to this topic area.

Approaching the end of my data collection process, in February 2014 I spent 2 to 3 weeks

in Beijing to retrieve archives and documents from National Library of China. I focused my

document collection on the extensive collection of the National Library's archives. I spent 5 to 6

hours each day in the National Library to search, download, print, and categorize documents

from various sources in the library collection. During my stay in Beijing, some of my colleagues

and friends also helped me approach their universities' libraries. A colleague working at Peking

University assisted me in retrieving documents belonging to the collection of Research Institute

of Higher Education, where I obtained some very valuable documents about the history of

Chinese higher education system.

Berg (2009) reminds us that researchers should be cautious when using the archival

material as data. He suggests that although documents could be an important source for some

research questions, some archives may be the wrong source of data for some other questions. It is

important to use multiple procedures when using archival documents in order to reduce possible

source of error. In order to avoid the possible bias brought by archives and material from a sole

source, I retrieved documents from multiple sources in both English and Chinese languages. For

example, in addition to collecting the institutional documents about their collaboration process

and official description of the relationships between both parties in the partnership, I also

gathered social media articles, student publications, campus pamphlets, and local newspaper

articles in the topic area. For most policy documents I tried to gather both the Chinese version

and English version of the documents.

Data Analysis Procedures

This section briefly outlines the data analysis procedures for the study, which will be

discussed in more detail in Chapter 6 where I present findings from this study. According to

Berg (2009), data analysis is a "careful, detailed, systematic examination and interpretation of a

particular body of material in an effort to identify patterns, themes, biases, and meanings" (p.

338). In a metaphorical way, qualitative researchers act like detectives when they carefully

examine and ask questions of their data and sometimes re-enter the research site to gather more data to help them answer their questions until the process or topic of research is understood (Johnson & Christensen, 2012).

Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that during qualitative research, data analysis is not a linear process. Qualitative researchers alternate between data collection and data analysis. They use the term "interim analysis" to define this recursive process of collecting data, analyzing the data, collecting data in addition to the original data, analyzing those data, and so on throughout the study. Qualitative researchers use interim analysis to develop a deeper understanding of their research topic and to guide each round of data collection (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Finding a strategy. When discussing the strategies for analyzing case study data, Yin (2009) reminds us that the analysis of evidence collected from a case study is one of the most difficult and least developed areas in case study research. I find Yin's assertion especially true when dealing with data analysis from a collective case study, which studies a phenomenon through a number of individual yet correlated cases. After immersing myself in the data and giving much thought about how to relate evidence collected through three methods, I decided to follow the procedure of data analysis suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) as well as other researchers (Berg, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 2008; Patton, 2002):

1. Data immersion: organize and prepare the data for analysis, reading data for content to notify quality of the data and identify patterns;

2. Transcription: transcribing data into texts (for example, field notes, transcripts);

3. Coding: developing codes analytically or identifying code inductively through a set of notes or transcript pages;

4. Categorization: transforming codes into categorical labels or themes;

5. Abstraction and comparison: sorting data by these categories, identifying similar phrases, patterns, relationships, commonalities or disparities, capturing the variation or richness of each theme;

6. Integration: examining for isolated meaningful patterns and processes, distinguish primary/main and secondary/sub-themes; and

7. Interpretation: identifying the core meaning of the data, verifying with participants, considering data in light of previous research and theories.

Transcription is a critical step in qualitative research. However, there is very little research literature providing guidelines for transcribing and reporting qualitative data across cultures and languages. Davidson (2009) believes that since data can be transcribed in many different ways, researchers need to think about transcription carefully before beginning the process. I conducted my data analysis in both Chinese and English. Some of my interviews were in Mandarin, and some of them were in English. Most policy documents I collected were in Chinese, but some institutional documents were in English. This to some extent added to the complexity of my data analysis process.

Trustworthiness

This study builds on Lincoln and Guba's (2008) premise that there is no single interpretation of truth, but rather multiple constructed realities. Therefore, the traditional positivist criteria of validity are replaced with such terms as trustworthiness and credibility. The term "validity" has traditionally been attached to quantitative research. It is not surprising that qualitative researchers have mixed feelings regarding whether or not this concept should be applied to qualitative research (Creswell, 2008). However, some researchers argue that some qualitative studies are better than others, and they use the term trustworthiness to refer to this

quality difference. When speaking of research trustworthiness, qualitative researchers usually expect research to be credible, plausible, and defensible.

According to Johnson and Christensen (2012), there are four types of validity in qualitative research: descriptive validity refers to the accuracy of researcher's description; interpretive validity refers to the accurate interpretation of participants' accounts; theoretical validity refers to using the theoretical explanation that fits the data; and internal validity refers to how much the researcher could justify that an observed relationship is casual. According to the different types of validity, in this study I used the following strategies to ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of my research.

First, I sought participant feedback and member checking in the study. By sharing both the transcript and the interpretation of the participants' viewpoint with the participants themselves, this study ensured that potential areas of miscommunication and misinterpretations were addressed. Second, I used the strategy of theory triangulation. The study examines how the topic of research could be explained by different theories and perspectives. Third, I applied methods of triangulation by using the three different data collecting methods in this study: interviewing, observing, and documents. Finally, I used multiple data sources in the study. For example, I retrieved documents and archives from libraries, research institutions, and public media sources.

Limitations

This study contains several limitations. One of the limitations of this study relates to the research methods. Interviews require time to develop trust and rapport with participants. Due to the timeline and limited resources, it was not possible for me to conduct the study over a prolonged span of time or go back to the sites on multiple occasions to collect additional data.

However, I used participant feedback and member checking during the data analysis stage to address this limitation.

Another limitation of this study is associated with the nature of the four campuses being studied. All four campuses are the collaboration between a Chinese institution and British or American institution. The practices and experiences of these cases may not represent all Chinese-foreign branch campuses or other types of collaboration. Therefore, one has to be careful to draw generalization of the mechanism of international branch campuses operation from this study.

Furthermore, there are limitations relates to the participant selection process. The participants in this study only offered one set of views on the policies and practices relevant to international branch campuses in China. As I explained in the participant selection section, in order to understand the institutional mechanism of these universities I purposefully chose senior university administrators as my main study participants. Due to the timeline, I was only able to interview one central Chinese government official and one municipal government official. It is important to recognize that there might be other perspectives that differ from my participants' views. For example, experiences of administrative staff in these universities were not taken into consideration. Meanwhile, students' voices in these collaborative institutions were also not collected in this study.

A final limitation is due to the scope of this study. I was not able to reach personnel from the home institutions of these international campuses and acquire their perspectives about running the international campuses in China. Although I had the intention of contacting and looking for some potential participants from the home intuitions in the UK or US, it was practically not plausible to include and recruit those participants in this study due to the limit of time and resources.

Delimitations

The boundaries of this study are delimitated to focus on the primary research purpose, the specific context of the study, and the purposeful criteria of participant selection. The purpose of this study was to explore the rationales and approaches in China's strategies to internationalize its higher education at both the national policy and institutional practice levels, with the specific focus on the phenomenon of fast growing international branch campuses. Although internationalization of higher education was a broad context and process happening in China, this study did not seek to explore how strategies and policies of internationalization are implemented at the institutional level of Chinese higher education institutions other than international branch campuses.

This research is also delimitated to studying the phenomenon of international campuses within the specific context of higher education in China. Although internationalization has been one of the pervasive forces shaping higher education around the world, strategies of international campus development discussed in this study were closely related to the economic, political, and educational changes occurring in Chinese society in the past two decades.

Finally, choices have been made to only include senior administrators, faculty members, researchers, and government officials who had been involved in the development of the international branch campuses as my research participants. This selection of participants allowed me to understand the phenomenon being studied at both the institutional strategy level and the government policy level.

Ethical Considerations

A primary consideration in any research involving human participants is to conduct the research in an ethical manner that causes no harm. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) describes qualitative researchers as guests in the private spaces of the world, therefore the manners of

researchers should be good and their code of ethics should be strict. Johnson and Christensen (2012) suggests that the following should be taken into consideration when conducting research and treating participant ethically: credibility, informed consent, protecting of anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy, care of records, and the truth in representing the content and purpose of the interviews.

In order to protect the participants' rights, I employed the following steps to ensure that my study complied with expected and accepted ethical practices. First, my study received ethics approval by University of Alberta Research Ethics Board (see appendix C for the letter of ethics approval). Second, I sent out my invitation letter at the very early stage of the study (see appendix A). The invitation letter informed the participants of some key information about this study. I also included in the invitation letter what minimum risks this research might have. Third, once the participants agreed to participate in the interview, a consent form was sent to the participants in advance (see appendix D). The research proceeded after getting their permission in the form of signed consent. Before each interview, the interview procedure and participants' rights were communicated verbally and in writing to the participants, both in Chinese Mandarin and English. Fourth, the information and consent form explained the information about voluntary participation, which clearly indicated that at any time during the site visit and interviews the research participants could withdraw from the study. Fifth, to ensure confidentiality all participants remained anonymous during data transcription, data analysis, and writing up stage of the data. Finally, after the data was transcribed, the transcripts of the interviews were made available to the participants for review. Guba (1990) defines this approach as the member check, where the participants are given the opportunity to review, revise or clarify their statements made during the interview. The participants were informed that they would not be able to withdraw their participation once they approved the final transcript.

Chapter 6 – Findings

According to Johnson and Christensen (2012), the purpose of the findings chapter is to summarize the collected data, tell the reader how the data are analyzed, and report on the results of this analysis. Accordingly, in this chapter I present the findings emerged from data collection at four international branch campuses in China. This chapter has four sections. The first section starts with an overview of the characteristics of each research site. The overview of research sites serves as the context for the discussion of the themes that emerged from the data. In the second section, I provide some description and reflection on the data collection process. The third section outlines the data analysis process that led to the generation of the various themes. In the fourth section, I report on six themes that emerged from the data. These six themes are: understanding of academic freedom; issue of educational sovereignty; concept of nation building; demand for quality assurance; discussion on knowledge exchange and brain drain; and interpretation of internationalization in Chinese higher education.

Description of the Four International Branch Campuses

In Chapter 5, I briefly outlined the rationale for choosing the four study sites. This section provides a more detailed description of the characteristics of each site. This information will serve as a background for the themes and provide an understanding of the complexity of international branch campuses as a cross-cultural intermediary for teaching and learning. The four sites discussed here are University of Nottingham Ningbo China (UNNC), Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU), New York University Shanghai (NYU Shanghai), and Duke Kunshan University (DKU).

The University of Nottingham Ningbo China. The University of Nottingham Ningbo China (UNNC) was founded in 2004 and was the first international branch campus receiving approval from the Ministry of Education (MoE) of China. This pioneering branch campus has

been the focus of considerable attention around the world. By 2012, the campus had over 5,800 students, including both undergraduate and graduate students (Feng, 2013). According to UNNC's website (2014), this Chinese campus offers degree programs from the University of Nottingham. These programs are taught in English and subject to the same quality standard and process as UNNC's UK campus. Other than the campus in Ningbo, China, the University of Nottingham also has a branch campus in Malaysia.

In contrast to other foreign branch campuses in China that jointly develop with some top Chinese universities, UNNC is the outcome of a partnership between the University of Nottingham and a Chinese private education enterprise, Zhejiang Wanli Education Group. According to the information from UNNC, Zhejiang Wanli Education Group is a key player in the education sector in China (UNNC, 2014). As mentioned in Chapter 4, Zhejiang Wanli Education Group was the private enterprise that invested in a quasi-private university in China.

In terms of the responsibilities and administration of this Chinese campus, the University of Nottingham is responsible for the academic curriculum and the issuing of degrees and quality assurance, while Zhejiang Wanli Education Group takes responsibility for financing the development of the campus infrastructure (Feng, 2013). In addition to the unique joint development and financing model, another important characteristic of UNNC is the governance and management structure. While the governance structure of UNNC resembles a typical UK post-secondary institution, there is a special position of Party Secretary of UNNC in the university's senior administration team. The person who currently holds the Party Secretary position at UNNC used to be the Director of the Ningbo Municipal Education Bureau. Incorporating this position into the governance structure demonstrates the presence of the Chinese Communist Party in the UNNC.

The original academic focus of UNNC was to offer a program grounded in the liberal arts in order to maximize the support base from within its UK institution. However, after entering China the university has turned to more science subjects based curricula (Fazackerley, 2007). While the curriculum of UNNC is based on Western education, some courses are offered with Chinese market demands in mind such as communication studies, business, engineering, and computer science.

Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University. The second international branch campus in this study is Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU). XJTLU is established in 2006 in Suzhou, a city within close distance to Shanghai. It is a joint venture between Xi'an Jiaotong University, one of the top Chinese universities of engineering and science, and the University of Liverpool in the UK. While the UNNC only grants degrees from its home campus, the University of Nottingham, XJTLU has its own degree-granting powers. The purpose of this joint project is to boost Liverpool's global brand and to drive student recruitment from China (Fazackerley, 2007). With around 7000 students by the end of 2012, the core strategy of XJTLU is to develop a unique program that reflects the strength of both parent universities (XJTLU, 2013).

In contrast to the management and financing model of UNNC, Xi'an Jiaotong University is the partner responsible for the management of financing and campus development. In addition, the local municipal Chinese government also subsidizes a large part of campus infrastructure costs in order to support the development of this campus (Feng, 2013). In terms of governance, administrators from the Chinese partner, Xi'an Jiaotong University, hold positions on the university board of XJTLU. In comparison to the managing structure between the University of Nottingham and its partner, Zhejiang Wanli Group, XJTLU combines the strengths of both Xi'an Jiaotong University and the University of Liverpool as top academic institutions.

New York University Shanghai. The third research site included in this study is New York University Shanghai (NYU Shanghai). NYU Shanghai is established as a joint venture between New York University and East China Normal University. NYU Shanghai is the second degree-granting international branch campus established by New York University, following its campus in Abu Dhabi. It is also the first Chinese-US joint venture university approved by the Chinese Ministry of Education with the independent registration status.

The NYU branch campus in Shanghai is a significant component of its "Global Network University" model. According to the NYU website (2014), the "Global Network University" model is a project that challenges the idea that a university can only deliver its programs at a single local campus. This model is supposed to serve as an extension of NYU's research and teaching agenda by allowing students and faculty to flow in any of its three degree-granting campuses in New York City, Abu Dhabi, or Shanghai. In this "Global Network University" model, students can choose to spend a year taking courses at any of its international campuses. With this model NYU is aiming to "broaden the scope of vision and knowledge through international learning" for its faculty and students (NYU, 2014).

Unlike the focus on science and technology curriculum in UNNC and XJTLU, NYU Shanghai adopts a liberal arts curriculum, with English as the language of instruction. As a joint venture institution, East China Normal University holds 51% share in NYU Shanghai and is the controlling party, and NYU has 49% share. A former vice president of East China Normal University currently leads the team that oversees the construction and administration of NYU Shanghai (NYU, 2014).

Since NYU Shanghai admitted its first inaugural class in August 2013 it has also been facing controversy in China due to its high tuition fees. NYU Shanghai students are paying close

to 17,000 US dollars a year, almost 10 times of the average Chinese university tuition fees. Since its opening in 2013, NYU Shanghai has attracted attention from both Chinese and international media about its elitist vision showed in its location in the central business district of Shanghai, and mission of striving to prepare its students for leadership with global competitiveness.

Duke Kunshan University. The fourth research site, Duke Kunshan University (DKU), is founded as a partnership between a private American university (Duke University), a top Chinese university (Wuhan University), and a Chinese municipal government (Kunshan City government). DKU is located in Kunshan city, which is on the periphery of Shanghai. DKU is the first international branch campus that is a collaboration of two universities and a Chinese municipal government. Both the central and local Chinese governments believe that the development of DKU is a "bold project to drive innovation in Chinese international higher education" (MoE, 2014). DKU's leadership hopes that this Chinese campus "represents a real chance to explore new models of higher education in China, and sets an example for other Sino-international collaborative programs" (DKU, 2014).

Unlike the other three aforementioned international branch campuses that position themselves as comprehensive universities and mainly granting undergraduate degrees, DKU only plans to offer master's degree programs in the next few years. The positioning of DKU as a graduate institution reflects its aims of being a health policy and management research hub, combining the strength of both Duke University and Wuhan University. DKU officially opened in 2014 with three graduate programs in medical physics, management studies, and global health. The consideration for only offering graduate programs is based on the belief that "we want programs that not only represent Duke's interests but also make sense in China" (Interview, December 19. 2013).

As an alternative to the undergraduate degree program, DKU is currently experimenting with recruiting students for an undergraduate global learning semester program. This program is designed for undergraduate students who are currently enrolled in other accredited institutions around the world and want to study for one semester at DKU. According to one of the administrators being interviewed, DKU is offering the undergraduate semester program as an approach to learning how to implement a liberal arts curriculum in China and to help faculty members get familiarized with teaching an international student body in a Chinese cultural context. After introducing the four research sites as a context for the discussion of emerging themes, in the following section I will describe the data collection process with some reflection on this process.

Reflection on the Data Collection Process

The process to undertake qualitative research can be uncertain and exciting. While I was clear of the purpose of my research, I was less clear about how I would collect information from the four research sites. As explained in Chapter 5, the research design chapter, I was confident that I would be able to work with my former colleagues to reach the potential participants, but finding a starting point was challenging. However, I realized that qualitative research design sometimes was driven by the unexpected, and I kept reminding myself that I should take this as an opportunity to explore different possibilities in my study, and to push the boundaries of how I understood the research process.

Upon arriving in China in November 2013, I received a message from a former colleague inviting me to attend a research conference at Xiamen University, the university that I worked as a faculty member before I came to Canada. This conference was hosted by the Center of Research on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools. This research center specialized in academic research in Chinese-international educational collaboration. I was told me that the

research conference would involve government officials from both central and local Chinese governments, and university administrators and researchers working in higher education collaborative institutions. I found out that most of my potential participants would be attending this conference. I realized that attending the research conference would be a great opportunity for me to meet my potential participants in person, so I decided that I should go to Xiamen University.

During the research conference, I met the senior administrators from each of the international branch campus I had planned to visit. I explained to them the purpose of my study and my research plan. Most of them kindly agreed to schedule meetings for a campus visit and to be interviewed sometime after the conference. In the next few weeks following the conference, I started planning for my trips to different research sites and scheduling meetings with participants. Since all of the study sites were located around Shanghai, I chose Shanghai as my "home base" and scheduled my travel plans accordingly.

After about a week of staying in Shanghai and scheduling meetings with my participants, I first visited NYU Shanghai in December 2013. The campus of NYU Shanghai was temporarily located in a building in East China Normal University, which was NYU's Chinese partner in the collaboration. After the completion of its new campus in September 2014, NYU Shanghai moved into the central business district in Shanghai. As the senior administrator representing the Chinese university in this joint venture campus, the participant I interviewed at NYU Shanghai was very passionate about the vision and development of NYU Shanghai. He mentioned several times in the interview that the important mission of NYU Shanghai was being part of NYU's "Global Network University" system.

In the 90-minute interview, my participant talked about his understanding of internationalization, the mission of NYU Shanghai, the relationship between NYU Shanghai and its home campus, and some of the challenges for management and governance in developing this new campus in Shanghai. He also stated that "The curriculum of NYU Shanghai will emphasize the crucial role of China plays in a global community" (Interview, December 2013).

Two days after I finished my interview at NYU Shanghai, I went to Kunshan to interview the senior administrator of Duke Kunshan University (DKU). When I visited DKU, most of its campus buildings were still under construction. The campus of DKU located within the Kunshan Science and Technology Education Park, a special industrial zone developed by Kunshan municipal government specifically for hosting science, technology, and education institutions. The campus was next to a Canadian International School and several other educational institutions that were under construction.

When I entered the administrative office, my participant was having a meeting with his staff discussing some issues in dealing with the local Chinese government. He later explained to me that due to the new model of the joint venture campus, the university administration had to negotiate some new approaches with different levels of governments in China on a daily basis. My participant described to me how sometimes the negotiation could possibly take days if not months of communication with the local Chinese government.

After the interview at DKU, I went to Suzhou and spent over a week at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU). I had 4 interviews conducted there, 1 with a senior university administrator, 1 with a researcher, and 2 with faculty members teaching at XJTLU. Since the experiences of working in an international campus would be largely different for administrators and faculty members, my questions for the administrators focused on the development and

management of the campus. With faculty members as my participants, questions were asked about their experiences and understanding of teaching in the international campus, as well as their broad understanding of internationalization of higher education.

After over a week at XJTLU, I moved to my next research site, the University of Nottingham Ningbo China (UNNC). In Ningbo, I first conducted an interview with a local municipal government official. Then I had 2 interviews with faculty members working at UNNC, 1 interview with a senior university administrator, and 1 interview with a researcher at the Centre for Research on Sino-Foreign Universities. This research center was located within UNNC, and their research focus was on Chinese-international collaborative higher education.

After my data collection at the four international branch campuses was completed, I returned to Shanghai and stayed there for about a week to organize my research data. After taking a few days of break, I went to Beijing and collected policy documents and archival materials from the National Library of China and some other libraries. While I was in Beijing, I interviewed a government official who worked at the central Chinese government level.

As I described in Chapter 5, I interviewed 12 participants in total. Among my participants, there were 4 senior university administrators, 2 government officials, 4 faculty members, and 2 researchers. Of the 12 participants, 7 were Chinese citizens, 1 participant was from the US, 1 participant was from Germany, and 3 participants were from the UK.

Of all the participants I interviewed, I found that participants with different backgrounds tended to understand their experiences in international branch campuses very differently. For example, the senior administrator I interviewed at one of the campuses was an American citizen. He answered some of the questions about the development and management of the campus and his understanding of internationalization very differently from the perspectives of those Chinese

participants. While Chinese administrators talked about the development of international branch campuses as a significant way for China to participate in the international community of higher education, the participant from the US raised more concerns about the challenges for a foreign partner to remain control over the quality of the international collaboration.

Another example of such differences was the case of a Chinese participant at a UK university branch campus. This participant was a Chinese government official prior to his position at this joint venture campus. When answering some of the interview questions, he was very strategic in formulating his answers. For example, when he was asked about challenges and difficulties in managing the campus, he tried to give more ambiguous answers to certain questions that he considered to be of sensitive nature.

There was another factor that also influenced participants' perspectives. Both NYU and DKU were newly opened institutions that were still under development when I collected data for this study. Participants from these two institutions had very difference experiences compared to the UK institutions, UNNC and XJTLU. Both UNNC and XJTLU had been fully developed and operating in China for over 10 years by the time when I collected data.

While at the research sites, I also observed that these institutions invest heavily in programs of business, science and technology, health science rather than social sciences or liberal arts programs. I was not sure whether this was because of limits by Chinese policies or a consideration from the home institution.

Analyzing and Organizing the Data

This section discusses the process of data analysis. As discussed in Chapter 5, data analysis in qualitative research is not supposed to be a linear process. Sometimes qualitative researchers find that they need to alternate between data collection and data analysis. Miles and

Huberman (1994) use the term interim analysis to define this cyclical or recursive process of collecting data, analyzing the data, collecting additional data, analyzing those data, and so on through the study. Yin (2009) suggests that the process of data analysis is one of the most difficult aspects of conducting case study research. Unlike quantitative or statistical analysis, case study researchers analyzing qualitative information cannot use fixed formulas or recipes. Instead, the analysis of data from a case study depends on the investigator's own style of thinking with a careful consideration of evidence and alternative interpretations, and a thorough understanding of the context of where the information is collected (Yin, 2009).

As a novice researcher, I found that my process of analyzing the data was not linear, and the absence of any formulas to follow meant that I needed to develop an appreciation of the information in its totality rather than bits and pieces. This was particularly important since my research design was a collective case study, which studied a phenomenon through a number of individual yet correlated cases. Since I used three methods to collect data—interviews, observation, and documents—I had to consider how to synthesize evidence collected across different methods. It was hard to separate precisely where the data collection ended and where the data analysis was supposed to begin as I was immersed in the stories and perspectives provided by the 12 participants. As a result, I found that my data analysis process often happened alongside the data collection phase of my study. As a starting point, I organized my field notes and summarized some of the key points right after I finished each interview. Some of the possible thematic ideas emerged during this process of taking notes and summarizing. For example, at the early stage of data collection some of the key ideas about academic freedom and quality assurance emerged from both interviews with participants and in various documents.

After I finished my data collection trip in China in February 2014, I came back to Edmonton and continued to think about how to systematically analyze data that I had collected. Following the data analysis procedure suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), Creswell (2008), and other researchers (for example, Berg, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 2008; Patton, 2002), I started to explore my style of thinking about the data and the best approach to analyze the data.

After spending some time reading and reflecting on the data, I followed the steps of organizing the data, transcribing the interviews, analyzing the transcripts manually (as opposed to using computer software), exploring the general sense and coding, developing themes, summary findings, conveying personal reflection, comparing to literature, formulating preliminary data analysis, and building preliminary findings into a narrative. During the process of transcribing and analyzing my interviews, some colleagues suggested that I could use computerized data analysis software such as NVivo. However, I found that most computerized data analysis programs were very difficult to work with. Also, most of the programs were not able to analyze data in Chinese language, so I decided to analyze and code my data manually.

I started listening to the interview recording as soon as I finished each interview. I listened and re-listened to the recordings after I came back to Canada from the data collection trip. This process helped me capture the important patterns as they appeared in the interviews. When I started transcribing, I found that it was difficult to transcribe both English and Chinese interviews simultaneously. Therefore, I decided not to follow the chronological order of interview recordings, but instead to transcribe all the Chinese interviews before I moved on to all the English interviews. I noticed some of the challenges in working and switching between two different languages. I was a little concerned that there could be some important perspectives lost

in translation. Therefore, I kept going back to the original recording while I was analyzing the transcript in order to make sure I captured the meaning and context of the participants' answers.

When I was transcribing and analyzing the data, I kept several things in mind in order to best situate the information within the overall purpose of this research. As suggested by Yin (2009), one of the important strategies for case study data analysis is to follow the theoretical propositions that lead to the study. Therefore, I kept my research questions in the notebook for my field notes and referred to them from time to time. I found this strategy to be very helpful in keeping the data analysis focused without getting overwhelmed by a large amount of information. In the meantime, I often referred to the conceptual framework I formulated when some themes emerged from the data. As I described in Chapter 4, I understand the purpose of a conceptual framework to be a map to focus the study and set boundaries rather than to serve as a priori assumption for data collection and analysis. In the data analysis process, this understanding helped me keep focused on the important themes. I also compared the information from data with existing literature and past studies. This approach became very important at the preliminary data analysis stage (see Appendix F for preliminary data analysis). Finally, I considered alternative interpretation strategies as Yin (2009) suggested wherever it was applicable. For example, in additional to the cross-case synthesis of evidence, I also took into consideration the cross-language comparison and interpretation of certain codes that led to different themes.

To summarize, data analysis was a time-consuming and sometimes overwhelming process. However, it was also a very good learning process for me to develop useful research skills. More importantly, I was able to learn how to make decisions that contributed to a better understanding of my data. I felt the best strategy for the case study analysis was the one reflected

the researcher's style of logic thinking and ways of interpreting knowledge. In the following section, I will discuss the details of the coding and thematic generation process.

Coding and Thematic Generation

The reflection on data analysis process described above were intended to demonstrate the steps that I undertook to generate the themes. According to Johnson and Christensen (2012), in data analysis, researchers often search for significant statements that have particular relevance to the phenomenon being studied. These statements could be a few words or a phrase, a sentence, or sentences. My understanding of these significant statements became the basis for identifying the codes that emerged from the data and formed the themes of my findings.

Saldana (2009) states that a code in qualitative research can be a word or phrase that symbolically summarizes and captures the essence of language or visual-based data. He also believes that there are usually two cycles in the data coding process. In the first cycle the codes could be in a range from a single word to a full sentence or entire page. In the second cycle the codes are refined to the exact same unit, a long passage, or a "reconfiguration" (Saldana, 2009, p. 3) of the codes that have been developed. In this study, I followed Saldana's approach to code the data and develop the themes through reconfiguration of codes and categories. After reading and rereading interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents, I marked and recorded significant statements and points as my codes. Then I started to make a list by interpreting and describing the meanings of the codes.

I recorded the ideas emerged from multiple sources of data. When I first started to summarize recurring statements from the data, 14 to 15 significant groups of codes emerged (see Appendix E for preliminary codes and themes). To name a few examples of codes, I found the following points were mentioned across participants' statements in different interviews, as well

as in policy documents and my observation notes: international branch campuses as a new model

for Chinese higher education, Chinese-foreign cooperative universities, academic freedom versus

restrictions, abiding by Chinese law and regulation, accreditation (degree versus non-degree

program), intellectual property input, combining the advantage of international and local

educational resources, high quality higher education resources, quality standard and evaluating

system, the role of Chinese Communist Party committee in international branch campuses

changing from leadership to student service, the significance of teaching traditional Chinese

culture and values in branch campuses.

In a qualitative study, instead of using individual codes, the researcher often searches for

themes based on codes (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Themes are a group of meanings

aggregated from codes. In other words, themes are a set of points or statements that are

significant for certain individuals and groups. In order to identify the themes, I started to put

codes in similar categories into a preliminary data analysis. In the preliminary data analysis

document, I listed the information on what the theme was, how I understood the theme, how the

theme was defined in existing literature, what policy documents were related to the theme, what

the specific codes appeared in interview transcript, documents, and observation notes, then I

listed the quotes from interviews that were relevant to the individual theme. These preliminary

data analysis sheets helped me organize findings and codes across different sources. In order to

illustrate how I used preliminary data analysis to form the themes, I attach the preliminary data

analysis in Appendix F.

Discovered Themes

While organizing themes in the preliminary data analysis, I constantly referred to my

research questions and conceptual framework to look for relevance between emerging ideas and

my questions. I then analyzed and compared the codes for relations between them. By comparing and folding similar codes together some recurring meanings were merged into six overarching themes: understanding of academic freedom; issue of educational sovereignty; concept of nation building; demand for quality assurance; discussion on knowledge exchange and brain drain; and interpretation of internationalization. In this section I will examine these themes individually and describe which data source they come from, and why they are relevant to understanding the development of international branch campuses in China.

Understanding of academic freedom. The participants' or stakeholders' understanding of academic freedom was the first theme that emerged from the data analysis process. With the merit-based Confucian tradition and strong central government control underlying the development of higher education in China, academic freedom was not an idea often emphasized or promoted in Chinese universities. In my past experience of teaching and learning in a Chinese research university, some of my colleagues had expressed their concerns and frustration about the government's restriction on what one can teach and publish. It was not surprising that the understanding of academic freedom was one of the challenges in managing international branch campuses in China.

American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the Association of American Colleges in the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure describes three elements that contribute to a definition of academic freedom: (1) freedom to conduct research and publish the results; (2) freedom in the classroom to teach one's subject; and (3) freedom to speak and write as other citizens do (AAUP, 2014). However, some researchers (Kerry & Kerry, 2012) argue that academics are employees paid directly by the university and indirectly by the government, or taxpayers. Therefore, there is "no logical reason why academic freedom should

operate beyond and outside the boundaries of the management constraints of the institution and the employment requirements of the country" (Kerry & Kerry, 2012, p. 66). To some extent, the reality of academic freedom in Chinese higher education is similar to what is described here by Kerry and Kerry (2012), acknowledging that there should be academic freedom, but within the constraints of requirements of the institution and the government.

In the process of analyzing the data, some of the codes that emerged from the interviews included: academic freedom, academic committees, faculty governance, freedom with conditions, freedom of speech, internal supervision, modern university governance model, university charter, independent decision-making mechanism. In the government and institutional documents that I had analyzed, there were terms and phrases such as academic freedom, independent thinking, foster a free academic environment, free from restraints and encourages invention and innovation, foster policy environment that promotes academic freedom, academic responsibilities, reduce administrative intervention in academic affairs.

According to the participants, it was not possible to define academic freedom without considering political and cultural differences between Chinese and foreign universities. From my observation field notes, most Chinese participants considered questions about academic freedom to be questions of "sensitive nature." Some of the administrators felt uneasy to describe the challenging disagreements and conflicts between Chinese and international partners in branch campuses regarding issues and standards of academic freedom. Some participants, however, commented on the positive changes made by the Chinese government in terms of accommodating the need for academic freedom.

When I asked a participant whether he felt the international branch campus had the same kind of academic freedom as its home campus, the participant said,

Our university has enjoyed full academic freedom in China so far, but China is a country undergoing constant changes. We need to work with various levels of governments, and we hear different voices all the time. (Interview, December 19, 2013)

Some of the participants commented on the positive changes made by the Chinese government in terms of accommodating the institutional demand for academic freedom, and how on the other hand, the international branch campuses also tried to adapt to Chinese political and policy environment.

I have seen positive changes in Chinese government policies in terms of accommodating the development of collaboration with foreign universities. We [the international branch campuses] have an impact on how China looks at academic freedom as China has on our point of view. The collaboration is supposed to be beneficial to both sides. (Interview, December 22, 2013)

As mentioned in the AAUP definition and other relevant literature, academic freedom could be an idea open to different interpretations. The definition of academic freedom unusually was not directly indicated in most Chinese educational policy documents. However, I found that some Chinese policy documents, for example, *National Outline for Medium and Long Term Educational Reform and Development* (2010), mentioned de-bureaucratization and separating government administrative control from academic excellence within higher education institutions. As discussed in Chapter 3, most Chinese public universities are directly or indirectly affiliated with central government ministries or provincial governments. Most senior university administrators are directly appointed by the central government. In Chinese universities, the separation of government administrative control from academic activities suggests that Chinese central government is making efforts to opening space for more academic freedom.

With the increasing collaboration between Chinese and Western universities, academic freedom in such collaborative programs or institutions were reflected in policy documents. Some Chinese policy documents started to include directives that focused on independent thinking, fostering a free academic environment, academic freedom from restraints and encouraging invention and innovation, fostering a policy environment that promotes academic freedom, and promoting academic freedom while emphasizing academic responsibility.

One of the policy documents, *Regulation of University and College Charters* (2011) defined the responsibility of higher education institutions as to respect and protect faculty and students' freedom to teach, research, and study. In addition, *The Regulation of Higher Education Institution Academic Committees* (2013) required Chinese universities and colleges to establish academic committees as independent and supreme academic institutions on campus. The purpose of having such committees was to evaluate, discuss, supervise and make suggestions and decisions on academic affairs. Similarly, in some of the interviews the participants also mentioned how international branch campuses had established committees similar to the structure of their home universities.

When I compared the policy documents with the interview transcripts, I found some alignment to the categories that helped identify academic freedom. For example, the notion of academic committees, faculty governance, freedom of speech, internal supervision, modern university system/model, university charters, independent decision-making in the university were all discussed in different interviews. However, the difference between the Western tradition of academic freedom and the understanding of academic freedom in the Chinese context were also mentioned by various participants. Concerns over academic freedom being compromised in developing an international campus in China led one of the U.S. universities to experience

criticism from its home university. A senior administrator at this university talked about the challenges of developing the international campus. He described,

> I understand that there are concerns from our US home campus around the issue of academic freedom. Because our university is ranked as a top university in the world, this branch campus in China has the responsibility to hold up to that standard. Some faculty members are concerned that the tradition of academic freedom will be compromised in this branch campus. (Interview, December 19, 2013)

When talking about restrictions on teaching and research in the international branch campus, a participant from another university also mentioned concerns raised by his American colleagues. He explained his understanding of academic freedom in Chinese universities:

> My Americans colleagues told me how their public media were criticizing them for collaborating with a Chinese university, how their professors were concerned about the issue of academic freedom. I told them that there is academic freedom in China, but it is freedom with certain restrictions, and academic freedom does not equal to freedom to conduct political activities. (Interview, December 17, 2013)

He continued to elaborate on his understanding of academic freedom in the Chinese context:

> In China, freedom always comes with conditions. Absolute freedom will bring lots of problems and troubles. Therefore, you can't say there is no academic freedom in China. (Interview, December 17, 2013)

It was clear from these quotes by administrators in two different institutions that academic freedom in practice was as ambiguous as it was in Chinese policy.

At another international branch campus, the administrator being interviewed expressed his understanding of academic freedom and freedom of speech in China in comparison to academic freedom in the US universities.

Actually the Chinese central government is also emphasizing the importance of academic freedom in universities. Faculty members and students have the freedom in teaching and research activities, but no government would allow university faculty members to go against its law, to promote values that are trying to overthrow its governance. Even the American government would not allow such kind of freedom of speech. (Interview, December 22, 2013)

In terms of how the international branch campuses could maintain the standard of academic freedom from its home campus while at the same time adapting to the Chinese policy context, one of the administrators said:

What can we do to ensure the autonomy of our universities? We need to return to the ultimate purpose of the university, which is to cultivate ideas and talent. We must separate academic power from administrative power, and let academic committees function as the independent decision-making mechanism in the university governance. (Interview, December 20, 2013)

In an interview with one of the government officials, the participant commented on the importance of promoting academic freedom while maintaining the political and cultural characteristics:

Internationalization of education should not just follow the Western model. The process of internationalization is supposed to allow different countries to maintain its own

political and cultural identities. For example, strengthening internal supervision and ensuring that students, professors, and researchers have a bigger say in academic affairs are part of the practices of maintaining academic freedom in Chinese universities. Sometimes compromises have to be made in order to maintain Chinese political and cultural spirit. (Interview, December 27, 2013)

These findings revealed that the understanding of academic freedom was different in Chinese and Western perspectives. There were certainly restrictions in Chinese policies and practices about academic freedom. How to deal with these restrictions and maintain the standard of academic freedom could be an important factor for foreign institutions to consider when collaborating with Chinese universities.

Issue of educational sovereignty. Sovereignty in political theory refers to the ultimate authority of a nation or state in the process of the decision-making process and in the maintenance of order. Or proposed by Philpott (2016) in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, a brief yet most inclusive definition that captures the characteristics of sovereignty is the "supreme authority within a territory". Educational sovereignty is "the highest executive power possessed by a sovereign nation that enables it to tackle domestic issues concerning education and maintain independence and freedom during the discussion of education issues in the international community" (Pan, 2009, p. 93). Lane and Kinser (2011) maintain that a nation can set its own policies and establish its own governing structure regarding educational issues. Lane and Kinser also believe that even though there is an increasing tendency of higher education institutions transcending national boundaries, nations still have the authority to determine the rules and regulations within their own national boundaries**.**

In the data analysis process, some of the codes that emerged from the interviews related to the issue of educational sovereignty include: sovereignty, independence, national boundaries, Chinese (Sino) – foreign cooperative universities, providing services mainly to Chinese citizens, intellectual property input, and restrictions on religious and political education. In the government and institutional documents analyzed, I found terms and phrases such as national sovereignty, abiding by Chinese laws and regulations, complying with public interests and security, and meeting the needs of the development of China's educational causes.

During the interviews, several participants talked about how they understood that in Chinese government policies international campuses in China were defined as "Chinese-foreign collaborative universities". The difference in defining and naming the international branch campuses showed Chinese government's policy boundaries for Chinese-foreign joint venture higher education institutions. For example, I observed that the official Chinese name of NYU Shanghai is "Shanghai New York University" instead of "NYU Shanghai Campus", and the official Chinese name for Nottingham branch campus in China is "Ningbo Nottingham University". This subtle difference in naming the branch campuses demonstrated that China's policies were intended to reinforce its educational sovereignty while supporting the development of international branch campuses. The Chinese central government was trying to control the extent of foreign provision and involvement in the international higher education within the nation.

Another example of the Chinese government's emphasis on educational sovereignty in international higher education collaboration was demonstrated by the policy explanation of the purpose of Chinese-foreign collaboration as "providing education service mainly to Chinese citizens" (Ministry of Education, 2003). Instead of attracting international students, Chinese

educational policies required the international branch campuses to recruit mainly Chinese

students. During my data collection at one of the international branch campuses, I found out that

in order to meet the requirements of the Chinese policy and at the same time maintaining the

university's admission standards, there were 151 Chinese students and 149 non-Chinese students

in their first recruitment of 300 students admitted in 2013. This seemingly unimportant

difference in terms of the ratio of Chinese versus foreign students was very symbolic of how

international branch campuses in China responded and adapted to Chinese policies. From my

observation note, NYU Shanghai appeared to have more non-Chinese students than Chinese

students, while both University of Nottingham Ningbo China and Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool

University mainly had Chinese students on their campuses.

There were also other regulations within Chinese educational policies intended to

maintain educational sovereignty. For example, it was required by Chinese government policy

that the president of the international branch campuses must be Chinese citizens. In addition, it

was also defined in policy documents that any contribution of intellectual property provided by

the foreign partner in a branch campus should not exceed one-third of the total input. It was

clearly stated in Chinese policies that foreign universities and their faculty members were not

allowed to offer religious education and conduct religious activities.

The main policy document relevant to international education collaboration in China was

the *Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running*

Schools (2003). This document stated that "Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools shall

abide by the laws of China, implement China's educational policies, comply with Chinese public

ethics and shall not jeopardize China's sovereignty, security and public interests". This policy

document stressed the significance of educational sovereignty and stated that the development of

Chinese-international educational collaboration should meet the needs of the development of China's higher education. The operation of international branch campuses was required to comply with public interests and security in China. This policy document also specified that international institutions should not offer special educational programs in military, police and political education services.

Some of the participants talked about the importance of educational sovereignty. They said it was important for a nation to have the autonomy to regulate international education activities within its national boundaries. For example, when asked about the definition of an international branch campus, one of the university administrators explained that there were differences in understanding by the different side of the partnership.

> I understood that our U.S. partner considered and operated this institution as their branch campus. There was an understanding between our partner and us that we can seek common ground while reserving differences. (Interview, January 12, 2014)

Furthermore, a participant explained the expectation from their foreign partners. Apparently, during this process of reaching an agreement and development of the international branch campus, some compromises and adaptations were made in order to meet the requirement of Chinese policies.

> Our partner was trying to set up a branch campus in China, but according to the requirement of Chinese education sovereignty, no independent foreign branch campus was allowed in China. The only way (this would work) was to collaborate with a Chinese university. (Interview, December 22, 2013)

Accordingly, since the term collaboration aligned with policy, international branch campuses cannot be seen as sovereign or autonomous. In the interview with a researcher, the

participant commented on how she considered educational sovereignty as an asset that needed to be protected in international education collaboration. She talked about the significance of including the foreign provision in Chinese higher education while maintaining educational sovereignty.

> While the Chinese-foreign collaborative university is an excellent form of introducing foreign higher education provision and high-quality resources to China, educational sovereignty is the essential asset. I think every nation should protect their sovereignty in educational exchange and partnership. (Interview, January 4, 2014)

> Finally, one of the participants mentioned that even though Chinese government and universities considered educational sovereignty as an important factor when collaborating with foreign universities, sometimes they were willing to adjust their practices in order to make the partnership work.

> The Chinese government takes the issue of educational sovereignty into consideration, but in practice, the central government is open to different options and willing to adapt to changes. (Interview, January 13, 2014)

In summary, educational sovereignty was an important element in Chinese-foreign higher education collaboration. Although Chinese central or local governments had strict regulations around educational sovereignty, in practice, they often were willing to accommodate the needs of establishing a successful partnership.

Concept of nation building. Higher education has played a significant role in nation building. This process has been described and illustrated by many researchers (Ahmat, 1980; Marginson, 2008, 2009; Bulejava & Hogan-Brun, 2014). Bulejava and Hogan-Brun (2014) contend that internationalization of higher education has contributed to nation building by

strengthening national language and cultures. Ahmat (1980) further states that the goal of nation building usually is achieved through three means: developing a strong national economy that works as a strong stimulus; solving internal conflicts and promoting domestic stability; and most importantly, consolidation of cultural competencies while enhancing the quality of people's lives. Among these three means, higher education has been contributing to the third and most important level, strengthening cultural competencies.

Marginson (2013) believes that higher education plays an important role in nation building by supporting the cultural formation of society and moral formation of the people. He considers the role of higher education in developing a nation by realizing the "nonmarket" aspects of a civil society.

> National tradition plays a role in determining the extent to which higher education is expected to contribute to the cultural formation of society—and the extent to which it is meant to work for the nonmarket objectives of civil society— and to the ethical and moral formation of students. (Marginson, 2013, p. 74)

While some researchers (Luo, 2013; Enders, 2004) argue that the process of globalization and internationalization has considerably weakened national government influence on higher education, there is also evidence demonstrating that the Chinese government considers education as an important tool for nation building by enhancing national and cultural identities. Mok (2005, 2008) maintains that China has been achieving the market objectives of a changing society by developing a strong national economy and promoting domestic stability. The next level for China's nation building naturally turns to the consolidation of cultural competencies through enhancing its higher education system. While facing the challenges of globalization and internationalization, China strategically moves towards collaborating with international higher

education providers as an approach to broadening influence outside of its borders while maintaining the control over its national and cultural traditions.

During the data analysis, some of the codes that emerged from the interviews related to the issue of educational sovereignty include: nation state, economic growth, education as soft power, meeting the needs of local economic growth, retaining Chinese cultural traditions, cultural identity, and training talent for national building. In the government and institutional documents analyzed, there were terms and phrases such as nation building, educational reforms for building a stronger nation, exploration in different university models in China, education for socialist construction, education for strengthening the nation, and building world-class universities.

The objectives of nation building in relation to educational reform plans of Chinese higher education were expressed in various long-term and short-term national development goals. For example, *National Outline for Medium and Long Term Educational Reform and Development (2010-2020)* (State Council of China, 2010) emphasized that "giving high priority to education development is a paramount, long-term principle advocated and upheld by the Party and the state" (State Council of China, 2010, Chapter 1). The *Outline* also stated that reform and innovation were considered as a main driving force for education development. Chapter 11 of this policy document stated that China should strengthen the cooperation with other nations in order to cultivate talent and professionals for the building of the socialist nation:

> We will strengthen the collaboration between higher education institutions… between teaching, research, and practice… between China and other nations in cultivating talent and professionals… so that an open talent-cultivation system with… diverse choices could be introduced into the higher education system and provided for students. (State

Council of China, 2010, Chapter 11, section 32)

Other policy documents, such as *Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools* (MoE, 2003) also emphasized that Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools should "meet the needs of the development of China's educational cause, ensure teaching quality and make efforts to train all kinds of talent for China's socialist construction" (MoE, 2003). Other policy documents, for example, *Plan for Educational Reform and Development* (MoE, 2005), also mentioned educational reform as a way of reinstating national identity and developing higher education in order to strengthen the nation.

From my observation notes, I noted that during the interviews, many individuals talked about nation building as one of the concepts that often appeared in the development of international branch campuses. Some of the key ideas were around the notion of the nation state, education as soft power, meeting the needs of local economic growth, retaining Chinese cultural tradition and cultural identity. Some participants talked about the role of internationalization in China's nation building. They made connections between the policy changes and Chinese central government's attempt to use education as a vehicle to enhance economic development and strengthen the nation.

At one of the international campuses I visited, I noticed that it was stated in one of their recruitment pamphlets that the university was a "game changer" in the field of higher education in China, and the university had been at the forefront of China's educational reform toward building a stronger nation. Some of the participants mentioned that while their universities were following the western university model, and their students were keen on learning western ideas, it was important to understand the significance of retaining the unique Chinese cultural traditions. For example, a senior administrator suggested that:

From a long-term perspective, the collaboration of Chinese and Western university

models would contribute to the construction and reforms of the political system, law

system, and educational system in China. (Interview, December 17, 2013)

In terms of the development of an international branch campus and the role of such

collaboration in enhancing educational reforms in China, some participants believed that the

development of international branch campuses introduced top Western universities to China and

could possibly push forward China's educational reforms and societal changes. For example, one

of the interviewees suggested that,

All the efforts we made… were aiming at introducing a world-class western university

into China, and through this process we could contribute to further educational reform

and social development in China. (Interview, January 4, 2014)

More importantly, some researchers and government officials believed that supporting

the development of Chinese-international collaborative programs was one of the strategies for

China to respond to the challenge of globalization and internationalization while maintaining

control over its national and cultural identity. For example, a participant commented that,

The Chinese government believes that the development of Chinese-international

collaboration in higher education will not only benefit the reform in the education sector,

but also will contribute to finding out a way to maintain Chinese cultural identity in a

globalized world. (Interview, January 13, 2014)

One of the participants illustrated the relationship between the development of

international higher education in China and its economic development. He believed that

internationalization of higher education contributes to the development of Chinese economy:

The economic development in China has been a generator for the world economy. The internationalization of higher education has been part of the factors leading to fast growing economic development in China. (Interview, December 19, 2013)

Another researcher talked about her understanding of why Chinese government was willing to open higher education system to international provision. She considered the collaboration between Chinese and international universities as an approach by the central Chinese government to attract quality educational resources internationally:

Since 2005 and 2006, the Ministry of Education started the experiment on opening higher education sector to international universities with the purpose of introducing high-quality educational resources. The central Chinese government believed that high-quality educational resources could enhance the development and reform of higher education system in China and strengthen the building of a socialist nation. (Interview, January 11, 2014)

Meanwhile, one of the participants also considered the development of the international branch campus as part of the agenda for municipal Chinese governments to develop their local economy. This participant commented that,

The development of the international branch campus in this city has contributed to the local economy in many ways. Some local and national enterprises have started to build infrastructures around the university campus. While the Chinese economy is transitioning from an agricultural model to an industrial one, international branch campus would certainly support our local economy to transition into a knowledge-oriented economy. (Interview, January 14, 2014)

As the findings suggested, nation building was in China's agenda of internationalizing its higher education system. Introducing international branch campuses to China was part of the strategies taken by the central Chinese government in facing the globalizing pressure while maintaining China national and cultural identities.

Demand for quality assurance. During my data collection process, I found that both the Chinese government and the universities in the collaboration considered quality assurance as a top priority in building the branch campuses. They wanted to maintain standards for the practice or performance of the international branch campus to meet its mission and purpose. In order to understand the development of quality assurance measures in Chinese-foreign higher education collaboration, it is important to define quality in education. According to Harvey and Knight (1993), there are five aspects of quality in education: quality as exceptional, quality as perfection or consistency, quality as fitness for purpose (mission), quality as value for money, and quality as transformation.

Cao and Li (2014) adopt a three-dimensional model to illustrate the issue of quality assurance in Chinese private higher education, which include: academic quality, administrative quality, and relationship quality. Nicolson (2011) defines quality assurance as "the policies, attitudes, actions and procedures necessary to ensure that quality is being maintained and enhanced, and is intended to ensure accountability and/or to bring about improvement" (p.6). Ozturgut (2011) contends that the Chinese government not only is attempting to increase the number of higher education institutions in order to close the gap between Chinese universities and top international universities, it is also trying to give more responsibility, effectiveness, and accountability to these Chinese institutions.

Some of the codes I highlighted from the interviews were quality higher education resources, quality evaluating system, internal quality control mechanism, government control or intervention, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA, a UK organization), quality of teaching and learning. Examples of codes relevant to demand for quality assurance appeared in policy documents include high quality foreign educational resources, strengthening quality assurance, government supervision, intermediary evaluating organizations, university accountability, and quality control in teaching and learning at international branch campuses.

In the policy documents, *National Outline for Medium and Long Term Educational Reform and Development* (2010-2020) (State Council of China, 2010) and the *Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools* (MoE, 2003) specified that the collaboration between Chinese universities and top international universities was built in China to China as an approach to introduce "high-quality foreign educational resources" into Chinese higher education. The policy documents also explained that provincial governments were supposed to strengthen their supervision over such institutions and authorize intermediary organizations to evaluate the management and quality of the collaborative institutions.

Other Chinese policy documents stressed the significance of strengthening quality assurance and government supervision in Chinese-foreign higher education collaboration. In the *Regulation on Quality Evaluation of Chinese-foreign Collaboration in Educational Programs* (Ministry of Education, 2009), a systematic quality assurance mechanism was defined to evaluate the quality of teaching and research, responsibility and accountability, and credentialing management in Chinese-foreign educational collaboration.

During the interviews, some participants mentioned that the Chinese government started to create an evaluation system intended to monitor the international branch campuses and other forms of Chinese-foreign higher education collaboration. Some researchers and government officials discussed the possibility of introducing an intermediary evaluating organization to monitor the quality of Chinese-foreign collaborative programs. While talking about maintaining high quality as one of the purposes of the international branch campus, a senior administrator believed that quality assurance was a key consideration by the Chinese government to support collaboration:

> Building a high-quality university is one of the missions of our university. That is also
> one of the reasons why the Chinese government is willing to support NYU Shanghai.
> (Interview, December 19, 2013)

An administrator from another international branch campus mentioned the significance of maintaining the quality by using an internal quality control system:

> Our university strives to be a small scale, high-quality elite university in China. The most
> import measure taken in quality assurance is the internal quality control mechanism.
> (Interview, January 13, 2014)

The same participant also pointed out some of the issues in the current quality assurance system in Chinese-foreign higher education collaboration. He believed that an internal quality assurance system aligned with the mission and positioning of the university could be more effective than the external system relying on administrative power:

> The problem with current quality assurance system in Chinese higher education is that it
> relies too much on administrative power. A suitable positioning of the university with a

clear goal of student quality is the key to quality assurance and legitimacy building.

(Interview, January 13, 2014)

When talking about the purpose of quality assurance in the Chinese-foreign collaboration, a government official stressed the importance of introducing high-quality educational resources and developing a proper evaluating system to maintain quality assurance:

> Developing Chinese-foreign collaboration should not just serve the purpose of Chinese students obtaining foreign credentials and merely preparing Chinese graduates for overseas studies. Quality assurance is what matters in developing international branch campuses in China. We need to develop an effective system to evaluate the quality of teaching and research in these institutions. (Interview, January 26, 2014)

Another senior administrator at an international branch campus talked about developing quality assurance system as one of the areas Chinese government trying to explore in both policy and practice levels.

> The experiment with quality assurance system and exit mechanism [for unsuccessful programs] in higher education is one of the important motivations for the Chinese government to support the development of international branch campuses. (Interview, January 4, 2014)

Other participants, especially researchers and faculty members working in the international branch campuses, also mentioned that it could be difficult in practice for the international branch campuses to follow quality assurance systems from both the home countries and host countries. For example, some campuses were required to follow the regulations by the Quality Assurance

Agency (QAA) and the Chinese government regulations for quality control. A participant commented on how following both standards could be difficult in practice,

> Our quality assurance is trying to combine the thoroughness of the British system, the flexibility of the American system, and the traditional characteristics of the Chinese system. However, this combination of quality assurance systems might cause confusion in daily practices. (Interview, January 6, 2014)

Another participant explained the process and confusion of "caught in between two quality systems". As a faculty member working in one of the campuses, he found that

> It is difficult for us to follow the QAA quality standard while our teaching and research are conducted in China. For example, after grading students' exam papers, we need to send them to the UK to be evaluated by somebody in the home campus. The outcome of our teaching is evaluated by the UK system while our practice and student quality are monitored by the Chinese system. I often feel my teaching and research are caught in between both quality assurance systems. (Interview, January 13, 2014)

From the findings related to quality assurance in Chinese-international higher education collaboration, it was obvious that many efforts were made by the central China government in an attempt to establish an effective standard to control the quality of international branch campuses. However, developing a quality standard that could be recognized by both sides of the partnership could be an issue requiring efforts and long-term thinking.

Discussion on knowledge exchange and brain drain. Brooks and Walters (2011) define brain drain as the movement of talent from developing countries to developed countries. The term brain drain refers to the migration of intellectuals and skilled talent from less developed countries to industrialized countries in order to seek better learning and employment

opportunities. However, Brooks and Walters (2011) also note that the opposite trend has started to emerge over recent years. Terms such as brain gain and brain drain have been used to indicate the fact that many students who study overseas are now more likely to return to their home country after completing their degrees. Yang (2011) proposes the idea of "brain power stored oversea" as a concept to examine the movement of Chinese talent's mobility within the context of the global circulation of knowledge currents.

Key concepts mentioned in various Chinese policy documents referring to knowledge exchange include: knowledge-based economy, global competitiveness, highly educated and mobile talent, and brainpower for national economic competency. As stated in one of the most important Chinese policy guideline for the reform and development of higher education, *National Outline for Medium and Long Term Education Reform and Development, 2010-2020* (State Council of China, 2010) the goal of the 10-year educational development in China was to retain talent, which as a result should strengthen China's competitiveness in the global economy.

In both Regulations of the *People's Republic of China on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools* (MoE, 2003) and *The Implementation Measures for Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools* (MoE, 2003), the purpose of developing international collaborative institutions in China was defined as strengthening international exchange of knowledge and culture. *Opinions of Ministry of Education on Some Issues of Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools* (MoE, 2006) also stressed that developing diverse ways of educational exchange and cooperation was one of the crucial components of China's "Opening and Reform" policy, and participating in international knowledge exchange was an important means for China to increase its global competitiveness.

In the data collection process, I observed that most international campuses emphasized the mobility of their graduates as international talent. One of the institutions stressed in their mission statement that the institution was striving to cultivate global citizens. At some international campuses, I also saw event posters and program pamphlets promoting overseas education after finishing degrees at the international branch campuses.

As mentioned in the previous section, NYU Shanghai was one of the universities that strongly encouraged the flow of faculty of students in their "global network university" model. The university's website stated that the university was aiming to promote knowledge and cultural exchange, and the university was preparing the most talented students within a global network university system. As a result, NYU Shanghai allowed its students to choose to study in different programs in its three campuses located across the world.

In my interviews, I asked if the participants considered the development of international branch campuses as China's approach to retaining talent. Surprisingly, many of the participants talked about how the majority of the students chose to study overseas after they completed their studies at these branch campuses. One of the participants said that more than 85 percent of their graduates chose to pursue graduate studies at North American or European universities. The result might not be what the Chinese government was expecting to see. Some participants also mentioned that many of their graduates ended up returning to China after finishing their overseas studies. The international mobility of knowledge and talent apparently had been a process of more than just simply brain drain or brain gain.

One of the interviewees commented on the benefits of developing international branch campuses as an approach to cultivating and retaining talent in China. He believed that such collaboration introduced quality higher education resources of top world universities to China.

The development of international branch campuses has brought new vision and meaning to the cultivation of Chinese talent. It also has helped retain the top talent by bringing top world universities to China. (Interview, December 19, 2013)

A government official being interviewed suggested that Chinese-foreign collaboration in higher education was an effective way of increasing knowledge exchange opportunities:

The collaboration between Chinese and international universities is an exploration of knowledge and talent exchange within the context of a global knowledge economy. (Interview, January 24, 2014)

Another interviewee commented on the connection between China's economic development and the flow of global talent. He believed that employability was one of the reasons why collaborative institutions attracted both Chinese and international students:

The economic development in China has a high demand for talent. In the meantime, the development of Chinese economy also attracts the flow of global talent. China is the new market and generator of the world economy. The market attracts the most talented students to study here for potential employability. (Interview, December 23, 2013)

Some participants did not agree that the development of international branch campuses was contributing to brain drain or exporting of Chinese students. Rather they believed that collaborative higher education institutions actually contributed to knowledge and cultural exchange. A participant said,

The development of Chinese-foreign higher education collaboration is not supposed to be simply exporting of Chinese talent. It has made a significant contribution to knowledge and cultural exchange. (Interview, January 4, 2014)

One of the participants commented that some of the Chinese students actually completed their studies in foreign institutions and returned to China because of both economic reasons and social responsibility:

> Although 85 percent of our graduates pursued further study in the UK, most of them came back to work in China. In additional to the fast development of the economy and social changes in China, many of our students felt that they had a social responsibility toward their home country. (Interview, January 14, 2014)

Meanwhile, a participant expressed his concerns about the challenge of IBCs operating in two different knowledge and cultural systems. He commented on the key solutions to deal with these challenges:

> During our process of cooperation, there have been many challenges. This branch campus is the collaboration between two different cultures, two educational systems, and in a sense, two fundamentally different political systems. The key to success is that we should focus on effective communication and mutual understanding. (Interview, December 22, 2013)

The above findings showed that knowledge exchange was one of the important factors considered by the Chinese government and universities as the benefit of internationalization. Developing international branch campuses in China could possibly be an effective way of attracting both Chinese and international students.

Interpretation of internationalization. As discussed in Chapter 2, internationalization of higher education is defined as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, function or delivery of post-secondary education" (Knight, 2004, p. 11). de Wit (2011) suggests that as a consequence of globalization, the changing

landscape of internationalization has been manifested in four areas of higher education: increasing competition for international students and academics; a growing tendency of cross-border delivery of programs; the emergence of for-profit providers in international higher education; and the changing positions of some countries in the higher education stage. Some researchers (Altbach, 2007, 2009; de Wit, 2011) believe that internationalization is not an end in itself, and it is open for multiple interpretations in different educational contexts.

Some key terms appeared in interviews and policy documents convinced me that an understanding of internationalization could potentially influence the direction for future Chinese-foreign higher education collaboration. Some examples of these key terms emerged from the interviews and policy documents included: international exchange, international cooperation in education, facing the challenges of globalization, global vision, international learning, enhancing international competitiveness, combining the advantage of international and local educational resources.

The *Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools* (MoE, 2003), the purpose of the regulations was defined as "apply to the activities of the cooperation between foreign educational institutions and Chinese educational institutions, …to strengthen international exchange and cooperation in the field of education" (MoE, 2003, Chapter 1). In Article 1 of Chapter 1, the policy document stated that the Chinese government encouraged Chinese-foreign cooperation in the field of higher education and vocational education.

National Outline for Medium and Long Term Educational Reform and Development (2010-2020) (State Council of China, 2010) stated that "it is essential to reform and develop education by opening it to the outside world, carrying out education exchange and collaboration

at multiple levels and in a broad scope, and raising education's internationalization level" (p. 34). It was also stated in this policy document that internationalization of education should facilitate education reform and development in China, and enhance the global competitiveness. In order to meet the requirement of the developing Chinese economy, China should cultivate talent with global vision and capable of "participating in international affairs and competition" (State Council of China, 2010, p. 34).

In terms of the practices of internationalization at the institutional level, the *Outline* (State Council of China, 2010) maintained that China should facilitate mutual recognition of credentials and degrees between the higher educational institutions from different countries and regions. Also "high-quality Chinese educational institutions shall be encouraged to run branches overseas, undertake international exchange, cooperation and education service extensively" (State Council of China, 2010, p. 35). In terms of recruiting international students, the *Outline* (State Council of China, 2010) demanded that the Chinese government should provide more government scholarship and financial assistance in order to attract more international students to study in China. According to the policy document, Chinese universities and colleges were supposed to offer more courses in English and other foreign languages.

Other policy documents promoted internationalization through recognizing the significance of seeking a partnership between Chinese universities and renowned higher education institutions, research institutes and companies outside of China. For example, *Opinions of Ministry of Education on Some Issues of Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools* (MoE, 2006) pointed out that universities and colleges at all levels should engage in diverse forms of international exchange and cooperation. The Chinese universities should use multiple approaches to seek joint projects in cooperation with foreign partners. Chinese

universities should also make efforts to attract more world-class scholars and experts to teach and research in China.

Most importantly, the *National Outline for Medium and Long Term Educational Reform and Development (2010-2020)* (State Council of China, 2010) stressed the significance of developing international branch campuses in China. This policy document stated that the central and local Chinese government should provide assistance in setting up a group of "exemplary Sino-foreign cooperative education institutions, build joint laboratories and research center in colleges by international cooperation" (State Council of China, 2010, p. 46). This policy document also noted that the Sino-foreign cooperative universities were pilot programs in the reforms of Chinese higher education system.

From the findings of this study, I observed how different educational stakeholders' understanding of internationalization could be essential to how it was interpreted at both policy and practice levels. University administrators' interpretation of internationalization could shape the strategy and development of international branch campuses. Government officials' understanding of internationalization could potentially have a significant impact on the forming of educational policy and practice in relation to international collaboration. Faculty members' perception of internationalization would directly influence their academic activities.

For university senior administrators, elements of internationalization were primarily related to the strategic development of an institution and how it could benefit both sides of the collaboration. A mutual understanding of the mission and vision of developing a branch campus in China was the key aspect of the collaboration. As shown below, the participant commented on how the partnership between the Chinese and foreign universities started and what approaches were taken by the foreign university.

Internationalization is one of the main strategies in the development of our university. Our university came to China in 2006 and visited many Chinese universities, looking for a partnership with a Chinese university to develop a "Study Away Site". When the administrators from our partner university reached us, we said we wanted to achieve further internationalization of our university through collaborating with a top Chinese university. We agreed on the vision of developing a collaborative university as part of our global network. (Interview, December 17, 2013)

This administrator further explained how the proposed partnership was aligned with the development strategy of the Chinese university which prioritized internationalization in its institutional strategies.

When talking about collaboration Americans always first take into consideration what could benefit them. For our university, it would be very valuable if we could partner with a Chinese university that already had a good reputation and a close relationship with local government, which could make the process [of communicating with Chinese government] much easier. Then what we could benefit from this partnership? We would be able to enhance the internationalization of our university. When the goals of both sides of a partnership matched each other, it was a win-win situation. (Interview, December 17, 2013)

My interview with another administrator went a little further to demonstrate an understanding of what the development of international branch campuses meant for higher education internationalization. The participant explained the connection between international branch campuses and internationalization at two levels,

The model of developing international branch campuses in China was an exploration at

two different levels. At the first level, it was an exploration of how to educate and prepare

students for internationalization and global vision. At the second level, it was an

exploration of how to development the collaboration between two cultures, two

educational systems in order to face the challenges of a globalized era. (Interview,

December 19, 2013)

Another participant described his understanding of internationalization and explained that the

role of international partnerships was to bring Chinese universities onto an international platform.

Any world-class university must be an internationalized university. The globalization of

world economy makes internationalization inevitable for high education. The strategic

partnership with a top world university helps the administrators, faculty, and students of

the [Chinese] university integrate into to an international platform. This international

platform also helps the [Chinese] university to further develop its institutional strategy for

internationalization. (Interview, December 22, 2013)

Researchers revealed a very different understanding of internationalization. One

researcher talked about how she understood internationalization in China as more than just

adopting the Western model, but instead, it was a combination of both the Western and Chinese

visions. When talking about what was the impact of international branch campuses on the

process of internationalization of higher education in China, this researcher said,

The model of developing international branch campuses in China is very different from

branch campuses in any other countries. Instead of copying a Western model of the

university, branch campuses in China are the combination of Western and Eastern

university models. This development and exploration of a new model itself is a creative

approach for internationalization, which means, internationalization does necessarily mean following the Western model of higher education. It is important to find a suitable model that benefits both the international and the local. (Interview, January 6, 2014)

Government officials interpreted the internationalization of higher education as the policy and practice that involved more than just academic institutions. Local governments also played an important role in the process of developing international partnerships. One of the participants said,

> Internationalization is not only happening in the higher education sector; it is also important for the local economy. The development of this branch campus is the result of contribution from not just two academic institutions, but also the efforts of various levels of Chinese governments. Internationalization will benefit local economy in the long run by attracting educational resources, international talent, and global vision for local government and enterprises. (Interview, December 27, 2014)

Another participant explained how investing in international branch campuses could benefit the Chinese economy,

> Some Chinese economic regions have gone through the process of urbanization and industrialization. With the internationalization of local institutions and partnership with international universities, local governments are willing to invest in higher education as the "intellectual capital" that will lead to long-term benefits for economic development. (Interview, January 14, 2014)

Faculty members apparently had a very different understanding of internationalization and what it meant for working in the international branch campuses. A faculty member being

interviewed expressed his concerns about internationalization and how it could affect those who were teaching in the international campuses.

> This is a very internationalized university. There are faculty members from many different countries, speaking various languages. However, many of my colleagues are planning to work at this international campus for no more than 3 or 5 years. It is very difficult for us to feel in touch with local Chinese culture. (Interview, January 6, 2014)

These findings revealed that the perception of internationalization varied from different groups of education stakeholders. However, most administrators and government officials considered internationalization to be an inevitable and beneficial process for the development of Chinese higher education system. However, faculty members' experiences were also very important in the process of internationalization, which often were not typically given a high priority in the development of international branch campuses.

These six themes described above demonstrated some of the key elements from the data collected from interviews, observation, and documents at four international branch campuses in China. I believe these findings are very important in understanding the development and impact of international branch campuses in China. In the next chapter, I will build on these themes as the basis for interpretation and developing a policy framework for international collaboration.

Chapter 7 – Interpretation of Findings

The previous chapter presented findings from the study and six key themes emerged from the findings. These themes helped me begin to understand the development and impact of international branch campuses as China's strategic response to globalizing challenges in higher education. Following the evidence demonstrated in the previous chapters, this chapter is an interpretation and analysis of the findings from this study. The purpose of this chapter is to understand and interpret the meaning, as well as the implications of the themes that emerged from the data. This process of interpreting and sense-making will enable me to understand the broader context of China's strategy in reforming and supporting internationalization process and the development of international branch campuses.

In this chapter, I will interpret the themes that emerged from findings applying ideas and concepts from the conceptual framework proposed in Chapter 4. Based on the interpretation and synthesis of the six themes described in Chapter 6, I will propose and discuss a revised conceptual framework. I will outline three dimensions underlying the development of international branch campuses in China. In this revised framework, I will demonstrate that the development of international branch campuses in China is an emerging model of internationalization of higher education in China. This emerging model reconciles some of the tensions caused by the political, cultural, and institutional differences between Chinese and international universities. I will conclude this chapter with a proposed policy framework for international collaboration in higher education.

Revisiting My Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

- How do educational stakeholders in China understand the process of internationalization in influencing Chinese higher education?

- How is internationalization of higher education in China manifested in policies and practices that support international branch campuses?

- How have educational stakeholders perceived the benefits and challenges regarding the development of international branch campuses in China?

When I revisited the research questions at the end of my data analysis process, I found that the data collected from the three researched methods addressed different aspects of the questions. For example, data from the document analysis addressed the questions about national policy and strategies in internationalization. The interviews tended to answer the questions of educational stakeholders' perception about internationalization and international branch campuses. The observations I made and tracked throughout the data collection process played an important role in bridging policy and practice and making sense of what the participants talked about in their interviews.

Data collected from this study provided a clearer understanding of the term "education stakeholders" used in the first research question. The stakeholders I interviewed in this study included senior administrators, central and local government officials, university researchers, and expatriate faculty members. Moreover, many of my participants were policy makers and practitioners in this process, and their experiences were very valuable in interpreting China's strategy in responding to a globalizing world. Although each individual participant had different perspectives on the international branch campus development, they all shared one commonality, which was the fact that they all lived in China when the interviews happened. This fact was helpful to delimit the scope of this study and clarify the boundary for the research questions, which specifically considered the understanding of the process of internationalization of Chinese higher education by the education stakeholders in China.

Revisiting the research questions also helped me compare my original conceptual framework and the themes emerged from data. In Chapter 4, I examined social and economic theories in global and international higher education and proposed a conceptual framework for this study. This framework highlighted three elements: neoliberal globalization; Socialist Market Economy; and Post-Confucian Model. As outlined in Chapter 4, neoliberal globalization has been the social and economic context for both internationalization and China's higher education transformation. Within the overall context of neoliberal globalization, internationalization of higher education has been the background for increasing cross-border higher educational collaboration. Socialist Market Economy has been the underpinning political and economic rationale for China's social reforms over the past several decades. The strong Confucian heritage which has been categorized as a Post-Confucian model not only has been influencing higher education in China but also has placed international branch campuses in a broader regional context within Asia.

Based on a consideration of the theories presented in the literature review chapters, when revisiting my research questions and the original conceptual framework, I have developed a revised conceptual framework to interpret the six themes emerged from my data analysis. This revised framework consists of three dimensions, which are the outcome of analyzing and comparing the six themes to the theories from the original conceptual framework. These three dimensions are:

- The Culturally Constructed Nature of Academic Freedom in China

- The Evolving Relationship Between the State and the Universities in China

- International Branch Campuses as an Emerging Model of Internationalization

In the following sections, I will describe each dimension and explain how they work as an interconnected framework.

The Culturally Constructed Nature of Academic Freedom in China

How is academic freedom in China, or specifically in international branch campuses interpreted differently from the understanding of academic freedom in most Western universities? As described in Chapter 6, academic freedom is broadly understood as the freedom for academic faculty to teach, conduct research, and publish results (AAUP, 2014). Findings from this study demonstrate that academic freedom is a culturally constructed and variant concept, and the principle of academic freedom in international branch campuses in China reflects the nature of academic freedom being culturally and nationally constructed. International branch campuses are part of an experiment for a "Middle Way" approach to the internationalization of higher education. As the world increasingly moves toward a globalized society, the idea of academic freedom should be open to interpretation of different cultural traditions and social values. This dimension is based on the following theme summarized in Chapter 6: understanding of academic freedom.

With respect to the evolving role of the state in the internationalization of higher education system in China, the evidence from the findings shows that the Chinese state government has gradually moved from a centralized system to a more adaptive system responding to various international models of university governance. However, this does not mean that the Chinese government has loosened its control over educational sovereignty and its strategies of internationalization for nation building. Instead, Chinese higher education policies are shifting toward higher demands for quality and strive to build world-class universities.

While the collaboration between Chinese and foreign universities continues to grow, there are increasing demands for academic freedom in the collaborative higher education institutions. For instance, Jeffrey Lehman, the vice chancellor of NYU Shanghai, testified to the US House of Representatives in 2015 and addressed the concerns of academic freedom being compromised at international branch campuses in China. Lehman (2015) stated that NYU Shanghai had been vigilant in assuring the principles of academic freedom on its campus. He described the current situation of maintaining academic freedom at NYU Shanghai as "so far, so good" (p. 6). However, Lehman (2015) also said that Chinese policies were constantly changing, and if circumstances were to change and the principles of academic freedom were threatened, NYU Shanghai would have to be shut down. Lehman believed that like NYU Shanghai, international branch campuses in China were part of the "effort inside China to carry out small experiments with approaches to higher education that are different from the approaches generally used at Chinese universities" (p.2).

As outlined in Chapter 4, neoliberal globalization is not only an economic term that has an impact on how countries do business or acquire capital or labor. Neoliberal globalization has also changed the purpose and function of academic work. Some researchers (Tierney & Lanford, 2014; Tierney & Zha, 2014) argue that in the age of globalization, there are multiple ways to understand academic freedom. As shown in the findings of this study, there were certain restrictions on academic freedom at international branch campuses in China. For example, one of the participants shared his concerns about academic freedom being compromised at international branch campuses in China. He mentioned that some people alleged that Chinese government practices and policy restrictions could make it impossible to offer a genuine liberal education in the international branch campuses. Some of the participants used the term "freedom with

conditions" or "academic freedom with restrictions" to describe the current situation in international branch campuses. For example, one participant said that,

> There is academic freedom in China, but it is freedom with certain restrictions, and academic freedom does not equal to freedom to conduct political activities…. In China, freedom always comes with conditions. Absolute freedom will bring lots of problems and troubles." (Interview, December 17, 2013).

Marginson (2014) contends that academic freedom should not be understood as an abstract universal principle, but instead should be interpreted as concrete universities practices allowing space for cultural and context-specific elements. Marginson (2014) notes that all contemporary research universities are influenced by the modern European/North American ("Western") model, which evolves from the Humboldtian model in Germany. However, Hayhoe (2011) believes that Chinese higher education has a "strong tradition of intellectual freedom" supported by a strong Confucian tradition influencing its higher education system.

As part of the Post-Confucian systems, higher education in China highlights the importance of education cultures that value moral education and self-cultivation. There are several key ideas of the tradition of intellectual freedom in Chinese higher education that parallel with the European-American tradition of academic freedom. First of all, Confucian philosophy originated from the ancient and imperial period (between year 700-221BC) in China that encouraged different schools of thoughts. In ancient China, the private academies (Shuyuan, 书院) started to flourish as an alternative to state institutions (See Chapter 3). These private institutions were operated by prominent scholars and represented a knowledge tradition that supported free discussion and debates. Therefore, China's scholarly tradition represented a

"dualism between the highly centralized, control-oriented imperial higher education system and the diffuse and somewhat independent private system of local academies" (Zha, 2011, p. 453).

In the 20th Century, the National Associated South Western University (from 1938 to 1948) as the product of contemporary Chinese higher education encouraged the independence of mind and intellectual freedom. Two Chinese scholars notably contributed to the tradition of intellectual freedom in Chinese higher education. Mei Yiqi (梅贻琦), president of Tsinghua University from 1931 to 1948 promoted academic freedom with inclusiveness (学术自由，兼容并蓄) (Mei, 2012). Mei (2012) believed that intellectual freedom was the key spirit for universities, and academic freedom in Chinese universities should be inclusive and allow for absorbing different ideas and thoughts from both the East and the West. Yu Ying-Shih (余英时), a Chinese American historian and sociologist, proposed the idea of "imperfect academic freedom" (Yu, 2006, p. 125). Yu (2006) maintained that freedom was always associated with choice and responsibilities. He believed that there are always conditions attached to freedom, and academic freedom in Chinese scholarly tradition had always been associated with responsibilities and the ultimate goal of serving the public good.

In addition to the Confucian tradition of intellectual freedom in China, Isaiah Berlin's (1969) notion of two concepts of liberty also sheds some light on the differences between the manifestation of academic freedom in China and in the West. Berlin defines the freedom from constraint as the "negative freedom", while the freedom to act and to do good things as the "positive freedom" (p. 2). These two different types of freedoms suggest distinctions in different epistemologies. Negative freedom reflects an individualistic approach to freedom as the absence of constraints enables people to act in a manner that they see fit. Positive freedom, on the other hand, manifests collectivism as it focuses more on the self-cultivation and enhancement of

personal growth in order to achieve public good. Under the influence of Confucian tradition, Chinese society has been a collective society for over two thousand years. The key philosophy in the Confucian culture valuing moral integrity and the unity of knowledge and practice also demonstrates the "positive freedom" approach in the intellectual tradition underlying the Chinese higher education system.

The distinct approaches to academic freedom in Chinese and Western traditions result in different norms and values of higher education systems in China and in the West. These differences are reflected in the challenges facing governance and operation of international branch campuses. However, as noted by Lehman in his 2015 testimony and supported by interviews from this study, international branch campuses have also been exploring the boundaries and differences between the political, cultural, and academic systems. In one of the interviews, the participant shared that:

> Internationalization of education should not just follow the Western model. The process of internationalization is supposed to allow different countries to maintain its own political and cultural identities. For example, strengthening internal supervision and ensuring that students, professors, and researchers have a bigger say in academic affairs are part of the practices of maintaining academic freedom in Chinese universities. Sometimes compromises have to be made in order to maintain Chinese political and cultural spirit. (Interview, December 27, 2013)

As also shown in the analysis of policy documents, the priority of China's internationalization of higher education is to combine Chinese and Western quality education at different levels. Supporting international branch campuses is part of the approaches to strengthening Chinese identity while collaborating with foreign universities.

In China, and many non-Western societies, there are limits to academic freedom that are intended to maintain a type of social order. It is not possible to define academic freedom without considering the political and cultural differences. While the Western perspective of academic freedom represents a market-based stance that enshrines a laissez-faire approach to the expression of ideas, the Chinese perspective emphasizes a strong state stance in the economy and education. When considering the Chinese cultural traditions of academic freedom outlined above and the findings from the study, I propose that one cannot dichotomize how Chinese universities approach academic freedom, and Chinese educational policies regarding international branch campuses are adopting a "Middle Way" approach of internationalization of higher education. International branch campuses in China are an emerging model of hybridization. This hybridization model represents both a universal component of academic freedom and a culturally and nationally constructed component of the Chinese approach to academic freedom.

The Evolving Relationship Between the State and the Universities in China

As described in Chapter 4, neoliberalism is an ideology based on individual economic rationality and a laissez-faire approach to the economy. It reflects a market-based stance that believes a weak state is better than a strong state, and a private economy is better than a public one (Apple, 2000). Neoliberalism promotes marketization, privatization, and liberalization, which are much needed after Chinese society suffered over 10 years of economic stagnation during Cultural Revolution from 1967 to 1977 (Harvey, 2005). As a result of the severe shortage of educated labor after the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese government introduced marketization and privatization in social policies and social services (Mok, 2012). This dimension of evolving relationship between the state and the universities in China is based on the

following themes described in Chapter 6: issue of educational sovereignty and concept of nation building.

In her work *Neoliberalism as exception: Mutations in citizenship and sovereignty*, Aihwa Ong (2006) explores how neoliberal globalization has brought about profound changes to the state of sovereignty in the process of pursuing free markets. She uses China as an example of strong involvement and support in East Asian regionalization to pursuit greater cross-border trade. Ong (2006) argues that current Chinese government policies demonstrate a view of sovereignty not as a uniformed set of state rules, but as the outcomes of various well-planned strategies. This point of view is proved to be particularly true in the case of policies regarding international branch campuses in China. As shown in Chapter 6, China's policies in internationalizing its higher education system have been constantly reformed and reshaped to adapt to its changing economic and political environments. The pragmatic approach in protecting its educational sovereignty while opening its higher education sector to an international free market reveal China's of sovereignty as part of its agenda to support economic growth.

Higher education, as one of China's major field of social policy reforms, has been heavily shaped by the growing neoliberal influences in marketization and privatization of the educational sector. However, instead of fully adopting principles of neoliberalism, China has constructed a form of the market economy with a strong state control, which is referred to as Socialist Market Economy. Since the implementation of a series decentralization and marketization strategies to open China's education market, China's policies in internationalizing its higher education system have been constantly changing, swinging between a strong state control in higher education and increasing autonomy for universities. The opportunities and challenges facing international

branch campuses in China, to a large extent represent this evolving relationship between the state and the universities in China.

The Chinese central government's adoption of the *National Outline for Medium and Long Term Educational Reform and Development* (State Council of China, 2010) offers evidence of its intention to increase the state's role in public services while allowing more alternatives for higher education provision. The *Outline* (State Council of China, 2010) stresses that higher education administration and financing are the Chinese government's targeted areas of reforming. This policy document indicates that the Chinese government is intending to reduce its direct participation and control over higher education institutions. The policy document also pledges that the government should promote autonomy and self-management in Chinese universities by granting more flexibility in areas of teaching and learning, research activities, science and technology exploration, and human resources management. Furthermore, the *Outline* also calls for higher education to continue to open to the world, emphasizing the need for bringing in more high-quality international resources by encouraging foreign higher education institutions to provide educational services in China (Chapter 16). These pragmatic strategies in opening the higher education sector demonstrate that in order to improve its quality of higher education services the Chinese central government is willing to bring in more international stakeholders as long as these stakeholders are contributing to Chinese higher education without attempting to challenge its authority.

During my interviews, some participants also shared their perspectives on the Chinese government's policies regarding bringing in higher education stakeholders internationally while protecting its educational sovereignty and maintaining its control. "Adapting to changes" is the term I often heard when the participants talked about Chinese policies intended to maintaining

the state control while opening the market of higher education to foreign institutions. For example, one of the administrators mentioned that even though the Chinese government considered educational sovereignty as an important factor when collaborating with foreign institutions, in practice the government was willing to adapt to changes and open to different options.

China's pragmatic approach to balance between state control and institutional autonomy while bringing more high-quality international provision in education could also be traced to the elements of a Post-Confucian influence. The Post-Confucian Model of higher education features a strong state role in the shaping of structures and priorities of higher education. This model also highlights a tendency to universal higher education participation, partially funded by the state, and growing levels of household funding as the family investment in education (Marginson, 2010). In the case of the development of international branch campuses in China, the central Chinese government considers higher education as an important tool for nation building by enhancing national and cultural identities while internationalizing its higher education system (Mok, 2005, 2008).

In the *Outline of China's National Plan for Medium and Long-Term Education Reform* (State Council of China, 2010) and *Development* and *Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools* (MoE, 2003), international collaboration with prestige international higher education institutions is prioritized as a driving force for education development in China. In these policy documents, internationalization and opening China's higher education sector to international stakeholders are part of China's national strategies to use higher education as a driver for enhancing economic development and strengthening the nation.

In this study, some participants believed that while the international branch campuses were largely adopting the British or American university models, it was important to understand the role of the Chinese central and local governments playing in the development of such collaborative institutions. As a participant suggested, international branch campuses represented the experiments of the Chinese government's approaches to diversify its higher education provision,

> From a long-term perspective, the collaboration of Chinese and Western university
>
> models would contribute to the construction and reforms of the political system, law
>
> system, and educational system in China. (Interview, December 17, 2013)

On the other hand, with the Post-Confucian feature of growing levels of household investment in higher education, there has been increasing demand for diversification and internationalization.

According to Marginson (2010), the higher education gross enrolment rate in China raised from 4% to 23% between 1990 and 2007. Meanwhile, Project 211 and Project 985 have supported a group of research-intensive Chinese universities. The government share of funding universities in China fell from 96% to 45% in 2005 while the share of household funding raised to 35%. The heavy household investment in higher education is grounded in the traditional Confucian values. At the same time, the emerging Socialist Market Economy in China has increased the income of many Chinese families, who seek higher quality higher education for their children. These demands have manifested in the increasing diversification of the higher education system in China.

International branch campuses, as an emerging model of integrating the best educational resources from the Chinese and Western universities, have attracted many Chinese students and their families. The financing model for the international branch campuses has been part of the

experiments that the central Chinese government has been trying to explore. According to one of the participants of the study, the development of Chinese-foreign higher education collaboration not only benefited the reform in the educational sector but also contributed to maintaining Chinese cultural identity in an increasingly globalized world.

Hayhoe and Zha (2007) contend that internationalization and nationalization are the two main forces driving current Chinese higher education reforms. They maintain that in current Chinese higher education system, there are increasing demands for market-related notions: the tendency of decentralization and diversification, and the introduction of cost-sharing between state funding and household funding. The combined influences of the strong Chinese cultural traditions and the internationalization policies have allowed China to "offer a unique model of successful East-West academic integration" (Hayhoe & Zha, 2007, p. 685).

Representing the integration of the Chinese and the Western model of academic resources, international branch campuses in China have been reconciling some of the tensions brought by the differences between Chinese and foreign higher education systems. Based on the exploration of such collaboration, China aims at learning from the experiences of governance and administration of the international branch campuses and exploring the possibilities of maintaining national and cultural identity while internationalizing its higher education system.

International Branch Campuses as an Emerging Model of Internationalization

The past decade witnessed the higher education system in China evolving from centralization to decentralization, from elite education to massification, from a public funded system to marketization and privatization, and from a national system to opening to internationalization (Hayhoe & Zha, 2007; Mok, 2008, 2012). Internationalization facilitates changes drawing on international experience to reform and break through some of the internal

barriers and constraints of the Chinese system. The establishment and development of Chinese-foreign joint programs and institutions have largely contributed to a series of reforms propelling the process of internationalization in China's higher education (Zha & Hayhoe, 2014). This dimension of the international branch campuses as an emerging model of internationalization is based on the following themes described in Chapter 6: demand for quality assurance, discussion on knowledge exchange and brain drain, and interpretation of internationalization.

Mohrman (2008) contends that there is an emerging global model of universities with Chinse characteristics. This emerging global model is the blueprint for Chinese universities to become more internationally engaged and respected institutions. Chinese government leaders and university administrators are seeking collaboration with the best European and North American institutions to benefit from their global perspectives and research intensity (Mohrman, 2008; Mohrman, Ma, & Baker, 2008).While Chinese universities are embracing the characteristics of the emerging global model of the research universities, I propose that the development of international branch campuses represents two of the most important elements of an emerging model of Chinese higher education: a new relationship between the state and the universities, as outlined in the previous section; and the embracing and exploration of a new model of internationalization by the central Chinese government and Chinese universities.

As an emerging model of internationalization in China's higher education, international branch campuses in China exemplify exploration by the Chinese government and universities in the following areas: adoption of a global mission, exchange of knowledge and talent by worldwide recruiting strategy, financial diversification, and the drive to create world-class universities through integration of high quality educational resources. In the following sections, I will describe each of the areas.

Adoption of global mission. Data collected from this study demonstrated that all the four branch campuses emphasized the global dimension of their identity. A university's global mission is not only measured by their global teaching and research activities but also includes creating international opportunities for its students to participate in international exchange programs. For example, NYU Shanghai stressed the significance of its "Global Network University" model. This model allowed students and faculty to flow in any of its three degree-granting campuses in New York, Abu Dhabi, or Shanghai. The "Global Network University" aimed to broaden its faculty and students vision of knowledge through international learning. The other three branch campuses, UNNC, XJTLU, and DKU also emphasized the significance of a global dimension in their missions. In order to attract international students, Duke Kunshan University claimed on its website that "China is center-stage in today's global economy, playing a role in nearly every professional path you may take. Your education isn't complete without studying abroad in China, where you will gain an understanding of Chinese culture… and enjoy this Living-Learning Community with Faculty and Students from Around the World" (DKU, 2014).

Exchange of knowledge and talent by worldwide recruiting strategy. In a globalized world higher education is open to both national and international forces. As a result, the universities are facing more challenges than before. The transnational character requires the international branch campuses to hire faculty and staff with experience and sensitivity that can deal with issue exposed to different cultures (Mohrman, 2008). All the four international branch campuses being studied recruited administrators and faculty internationally. According to the administrators I interviewed, when the universities adopted a worldwide recruitment strategy, their new institutions or the branch campuses gained a wider range of ideas for its development.

The worldwide recruitment strategy also fostered an exchange of knowledge and ideas, which largely benefited the international branch campuses.

According to some of the faculty members I interviewed, international branch campuses in China were becoming more and more attractive for international scholars. It was especially appealing for new scholars for several reasons. For example, the international campuses offered relatively high remunerations. Meanwhile, the Chinese central and local governments provided foreign scholars with preferential treatment such as exempting them from income tax and offering special work visa for the academics working at international branch campuses. Most important of all, the experiences of working in China could be valuable for new academics in their career development. As one of the participants described in the interview, the development of international branch campuses brought in a new global vision to Chinese institutions. The exchange of knowledge and talent was also considered to be one of the most important components of internationalization of higher education in China.

Financial diversification. China used to have a system of full state financing for higher education. Today higher education in China is much less publicly funded whereas most Chinese universities derive their operating funds from tuition, research grants, service provision, and university-run businesses (Cao & Levy, 2005). According to Slaughter and Rhoades (2004), Chinese universities have been demonstrating many characteristics of academic capitalism, which include the development of new financing approaches connecting educational institutions with both public and private sectors. The development of international branch campuses in China demonstrates diversified funding models for higher education.

While there were no public data about the specific percentage of financing in the University of Nottingham Ningbo China, according to policy documents and the university

website the financing responsibilities were distributed between the University of Nottingham and Zhejiang Wanli Education Group. Zhejiang Wanli Group built the campus infrastructure and provided funding for the campus facilities. In the case of Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, the branch campus kept all the surpluses generated from the operation of the campus rather than the surpluses being relocated to its home campuses of Xi'an Jiaotong University or Liverpool University. In the meantime, local Chinese governments exempted most of the rent and fees for the land used for the campus building, which was a form of the government support for the international campuses (Feng, 2013). In the case of Duke Kunshan University, it was the first joint venture campus funded by a private American university, a top Chinese university, and a Chinese municipal government.

While funding crisis and budget cutting are common throughout higher education in the world (Mohrman, 2008), the exploration of diversified funding at international branch campuses demonstrates the large shift in Chinese society to a market-based economy. Many Chinese universities have started to shift from the dependence on full government support to diversified approaches to university finance. In this regard, international branch campuses could potentially provide some useful examples for alternatives. For example, one of the researchers I interviewed mentioned that some Chinese universities had started to experiment on fundraising and donations as part of their funding alternatives based on the examples of international branch campuses.

Quality assurance and World class university. According to some recent research (Huang, 2015; Li, 2012; Postiglione, 2015), the strongest drive for internationalization in China is to create world-class universities. Huang (2015) contends that a world-class university has characteristics of global competitiveness, value orientation for humanity, and prioritizing teaching and research. In Chinese policy document (State Council of China, 2010), it was

specified that the collaboration between Chinese universities and prestige world universities

would bring in high quality foreign educational resources into Chinese higher education.

Starting with top Chinese universities like Peking and Tsinghua universities in the 1990s,

China implemented some significant national strategies to prioritize developing China's best

institutions into top international research universities. In order to achieve this goal, there were

clear national and institutional strategic plans. At the national level, the Project 211 and Project

985 (See Chapter 3) were the main national plans to develop world-class universities. At the

institutional level, most top-tier Chinese universities developed strategic plans to become

comprehensive, research-oriented, internationalized higher education by 2020 (Huang, 2015,

Postiglione, 2015). Internationalization was implemented as one of the most important

approaches to building China's world-class research university. According to the *Outline* (State

Council of China, 2010), both government and institutions in China should launch various

programs to attract high-quality higher education resources and renowned overseas universities

to work with Chinese universities.

In a sense, the Chinese government believed that the experience learned from

collaborating with prestige universities from the Europe and North America played a significant

role in making Chinese universities more competitive at an international level. That was also the

major reason why China supported collaboration between selected top universities in China and

in the world. While talking about the purpose of quality assurance in Chinese-foreign

collaboration, one of my participants revealed the connection between China's policies to

develop quality assurance system in international branch campuses and the ultimate goal of

building world-class universities in China. He believed that the development of quality assurance

system for the international branch campuses was among the initiatives that the central Chinese

government was taking to improve its internationalization strategies. Evidence from policy documents also proved that China planned to build a group of world-class research universities as the long-term goal of supporting internationalization. For example, the *Outline of China's Plan for Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development* (State Council of China, 2010) stated that internationalization of higher education was part of the strategies in facilitating education reforms in China and enhancing Chinese universities' global competitiveness.

As Chinese higher education institutions increasing their engagement with international institutions, initiatives and strategies such as developing international branch campuses have been utilized by China as an approach to balance institutional autonomy, state sovereignty, and international competitiveness. Therefore, international branch campuses could be considered as an emerging model of internationalization in China.

Revised Conceptual Framework

The analysis of the key themes and the discussion of the three dimensions based on the themes revealed the significant role of international branch campuses playing in China's process of internationalizing its higher education system. This analysis also shows that there are certain tensions between the Chinese higher education and foreign high education systems due to their differences, which pose challenges for the operation of international branch campuses in China.

The challenges manifested in the understanding of certain culturally and politically constructed terms such as academic freedom and Socialist Market Economy. In the process of reviewing and analyzing the themes, I find that it is necessary to revisit and update the original conceptual framework. In order to better describe the role of internationalization and international branch campuses in the context of China's position in global higher education, I propose an

updated conceptual framework that incorporates the unique position of international branch

campuses as a form of hybridization between Chinese and foreign higher education systems.
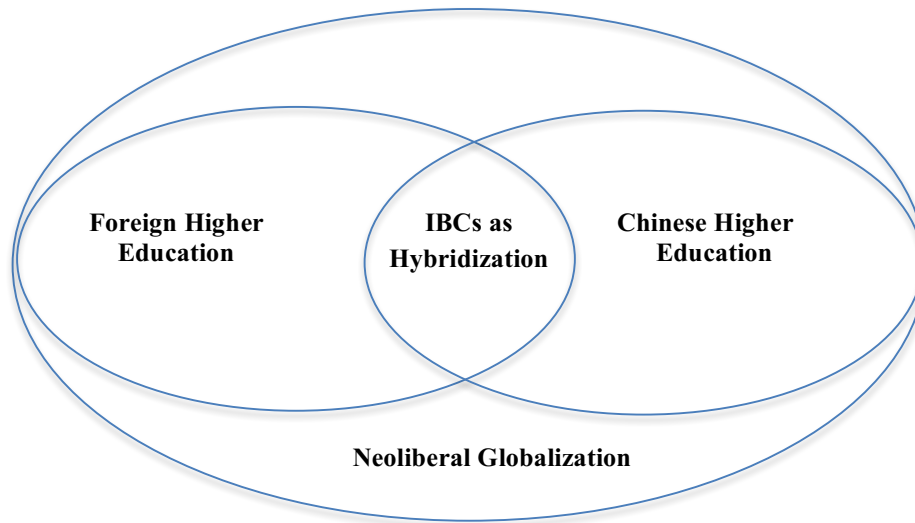

Figure 5. International Branch Campuses (IBCs) as a Form of Hybridization

This updated framework reveals that within the context of neo-liberal globalization, there

has been increasing collaboration between Chinese higher education and foreign higher

education. As a result of the collaboration, the central Chinese government has been strategically

using internationalization as a driver to reconcile some of the tensions and differences between

Chinese higher education and foreign higher education systems.

International branch campuses in China are the manifestation of the reconciliation of such

tensions and differences, which as a new model also represents China's efforts to integrate what

is international and what is indigenous to China. The development of international branch

campuses in China, in a sense, offers a unique model of internationalization. With the

development of this model, internationalization is used by the Chinese central government to

mediate some of the tensions between foreign and Chinese higher education systems. In this

process, international branch campuses have become the manifestation of China's efforts to

reconcile the tensions. I believe this unique model points to a new direction for internationalization in China, which could be categorized as a form of hybridization, or East-West academic integration.

The model of hybridization of transnational higher education in China has been discussed by some researchers in recent years. For example, Yang (2014) believes that at this stage China has not reached an appropriate combination of the international and the local. Therefore, China is exploring the possible approaches to international higher education collaboration as a way to further internationalize its higher education. Marginson (2014) suggests that transnational education has been fostered in China as a cultural hybridization, "not just in higher education but in the Chinese economy and society" (p. 173). Marginson also notes that hybridization is what is needed in order to transcend the binary approach between the foreign and the national in China.

The concept of hybridization could be traced to Homi Bhabha in his book *The Location of Culture* (1994). Bhabha (1994) maintains that there is a space in between "the designations of identity" and that "this interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy" (p. 4). Ball (2010) first applies the idea of the hybrid organization to the analysis of governance in higher education institutions. Ball argues that hybrid organizations combine the public and private interests. He also suggests that as an example of hybrid organization, the University of Nottingham and Liverpool University with their outreaching branch campuses are no longer national public universities. These universities are "transnational, corporate, and profit-oriented, and are positioned on the boundaries between academia and business – they are hybrids" (Ball, 2010, p. 21).

Characterized by crossing the boundaries between academia and business, the international branch campuses are involved in border-crossing relationships with state agencies, private sectors, international brokers, and other educational stakeholders. The development of international branch campuses in China is entering "a new terrain" of governance, complex, and relationships that "different partners engaged in running the rapidly expanding transnational education" (Mok, 2011, p. 75).

Base on the interpretation of the findings from this study, I agree with Mok's (2011) statement that the rise of transnational higher education institutions represented by international branch campuses and other forms of international collaborative programs may push the central Chinese government to become more flexible in higher education governance and policy making. For example, there is also evidence from different sources of data in this study that China is willing to make changes and adapt to the institutional demands of the international branch campuses to achieve the goals of further internationalization.

A Policy Framework for International Collaboration

Since I first proposed this study in 2013, there have been many changes and innovations in the landscape of Chinese-foreign higher education collaboration. The number of branch campuses and international collaborative programs in China has increased significantly over the past three years. There is a total of 33 international branch campuses that China is currently hosting (Cross-Border Education Research Team, 2016). The Chinese Ministry of Education has recently implemented several new government policy directives to enhance the supervision and monitoring of Chinese-foreign educational collaboration. There is also a new website launched as a platform for offering most updated information in regulations and statistics for Chinese-foreign collaboration institutions and programs. This new platform integrates the functions of

approving new program applications, authenticating credentials and certifications, and evaluating such programs.

In 2014, the international branch campuses in China founded the "Sino-foreign Cooperative University Union". This union includs six member universities: Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, Duke Kunshan University, the University of Nottingham Ningbo China, New York University Shanghai, Wenzhou-Kean University, and The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen. This founding of this union exemplifies that international branch campuses in China are taking actions to influence government policies and institutional practices.

Another change that worth noting is the recent development in Chinese universities hosting branch campuses overseas. One of the top Chinese research universities, Xiamen University, just launched its first branch campus in Malaysia in September 2015. In addition to hosting international branch campuses in China, Chinese universities started to explore possibilities of developing international branch campuses outside of China.

These recent changes in the development of Chinese-foreign higher education collaboration prove that findings from this study could be both important and timely. Based on the findings from this study I discovered that the approaches to international higher education collaboration in China at both the national and institutional levels were developed through careful strategic planning. It is with this understanding that I propose a policy framework to be considered for the international collaboration between Chinese universities and foreign institutions. See figure 6 below.
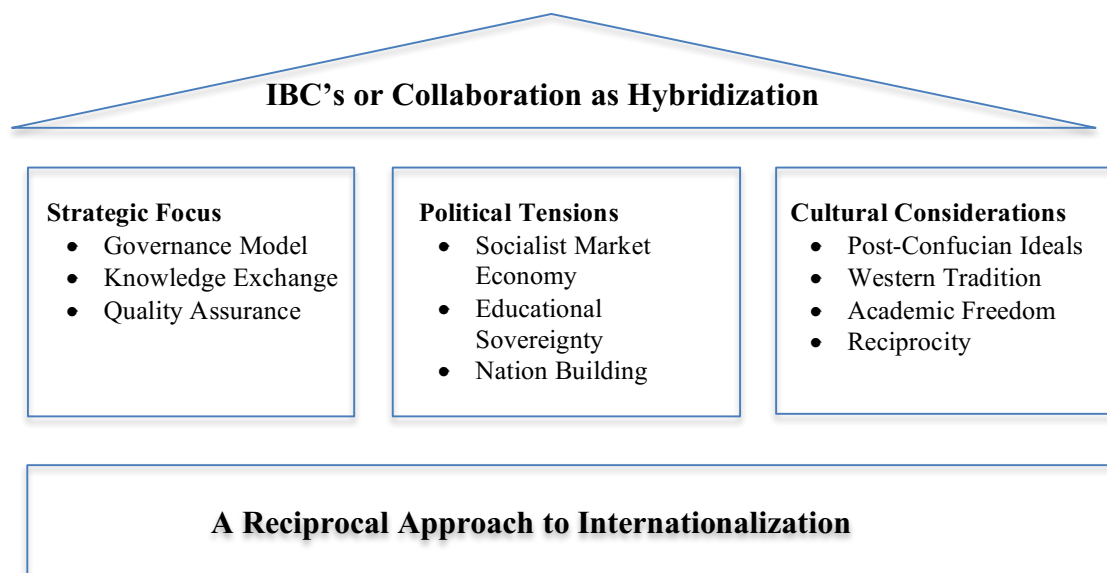
Figure 6. Policy Framework for International Collaboration

The proposed Policy Framework for International Collaboration consists of three pillars that are grounded in a reciprocal approach to responding to globalizing challenges to higher education. There has been a discussion in existing literature (Shams & Huisman, 2012; Wang & Beasley, 2014) about the key decision factors for many of the cross-border campuses. Financial, reputational, and academic goals are among the most widely discussed areas affecting the successful management of international branch campuses. However, based on the interpretation of the findings from this study these factors are only a part of the realities that are facing international branch campuses in China.

When considering the international collaboration agreements between Chinese and foreign institutions, I believe that the educational stakeholders from both sides should prepare and plan for the opportunities and challenges in the following three aspects: Strategic focus, political tensions, and cultural considerations. Instead of using a cookie cutter approach, the partners in the collaboration need to be mindful that Chinese culture, values, traditions, and its unique political system cannot be separate from its model of university governance.

In the area of strategic focus, there are three factors that are worth considering: governance model, knowledge exchange, and quality assurance. First of all, the international collaboration needs to decide on the governance model, both internally and externally. Specifically, in China the state-university relationship could be a significant influence on how to successfully managing the branch campuses. There are two models of the state-university relationship: a state control model and state supervising model (Austin & Jones, 2015). In the case of China, the higher education system is currently shifting from a state control model to a state supervising model. According to Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (2000), there is a triple helix model for hybrid educational institutions. In this model, three overlapping elements of academia, the state, and the industry/business form the hybrid university governance structure. Within this model, stakeholders in international collaboration need to consider their strategic goals and decisions on the governance structure in order to balance the needs of the academia, the state, and the market. The findings of the study revealed a possible approach to managing branch campuses in China by prioritizing knowledge and research exchange (for example, the global network university model), increasing institutional autonomy based on a culturally relative understanding of academic freedom, and enhancing quality assurance mechanism.

In addressing political tensions, educational stakeholders in the collaboration need to consider China's unique Socialist Market Economy ideology, which has the intention of developing a globally competitive economy while maintaining its strong national identity and educational sovereignty. As shown in both policy documents and interviews, China is supporting the development of international collaboration as a laboratory for hybridization, both in higher education and in Chinese economy and society. NYU Shanghai could be an example of how to reconcile the tensions between an American university model and the Chinese educational

agenda of strengthening the Socialist Market Economy. When asked why NYU Shanghai did not

file public statements criticizing Chinese government actions or policies regarding academic

freedom, Lehman (2015) said that university leaders need to have a contextualized, case-specific

analysis. Instead of publicly criticizing Chinese policies, NYU Shanghai joined 11 other

international branch campuses in China and sent comments to the Chinese government regarding

China's recent law intended to set limits for foreign non-governmental organizations operating in

China.

Finally, it is important to understand China's higher education system as an integration of

the Post-Confucian ideas with strong historical and cultural traditions. In the case of international

collaboration between universities, there are many cultural differences among the partnering

countries, which make the knowledge transfer across borders a very complex and challenging

process. Knight (2007) raised the concern that internationalization could be used as an agent of

cultural homogenization. In this proposed policy framework, it is important to consider

international collaboration to be a vehicle for appreciation of cultural diversity. Therefore, when

considering this policy framework, I propose that international collaboration should take a

reciprocal approach. Reciprocity refers to the idea that activity and influence flow in more than

one direction (Marginson, 2002). The political and cultural differences between Chinese and

Western societies bring special challenges and tensions for transnational institutions.

Recognizing the significance of cultural diversity is the key to building reciprocal and

sustainable collaboration between Chinese and international institutions.

This chapter interpreted the 6 key themes emerged from findings. Based on the

interpretation and synthesis of the themes, I proposed a revised conceptual framework that

demonstrated the development of international branch campuses in China as a new model of

hybridization. The international branch campuses reconcile some of the political, cultural, and institutional tensions caused by differences in Chinese and foreign higher education systems. I also proposed a policy framework for international collaboration in higher education to address these tensions. In the following chapter, I will identify the implications of the conceptual and policy frameworks, recommend potential directions for future research, and reflect on my process of completing this thesis and my position as a researcher in this study.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion and Reflection

Over the past few decades, the global phenomenon of internationalization has transformed higher education systems and institutions across the world. China, with the largest higher education system in the world, has been accelerating its efforts to internationalize higher education through collaborating with universities across the world. In these collaborative programs, the growth of international branch campuses has been one of the most striking features in China's efforts to internationalize its higher education system. Despite the growing body of literature discussing transnational higher education, there have been very few researches investigating the specific challenges of managing collaborative institutions and programs in China.

In this study, I investigated how China chose to embrace the internationalization of higher education by supporting the development of international branch campuses. The study examined the challenges and opportunities facing international branch campuses in China by looking at the cases of four branch campuses. With data collected through interviews, documents and observation, I was able to analyze the rationales and approaches in China's efforts to support international branch campuses as a strategy to further internationalize its higher education. A synthesis of my findings and themes revealed three dimensions in the development of international branch campuses in China: cultural relativity, the role of the state, and international branch campuses as a form of hybrid institution. These dimensions became the basis for a revised conceptual framework and a proposed policy framework (see Chapter 7).

This concluding chapter will identify implications of this study at both theoretical and policy levels. This chapter will also address the issues related to the development of international higher education collaboration in China and propose potential directions for future research. This

chapter concludes with some of my reflection on the process of completing this thesis, and my role as a researcher during and after this study.

Implications

As different countries moving towards adopting internationalization foci in their higher education systems, incidents of international collaboration will continue to grow. I believe this study is a timely and relevant exploration of potential opportunities and challenges when the world looks to China as one of the priorities of higher education collaboration. This study will contribute in different ways to theory, and educational policy, and practice.

Theoretical implications. At the theoretical level, this study contributes to the body of knowledge on internationalization of higher education by developing an original conceptual framework informing the collaboration between Chinese higher education institutions and foreign institutions. Specifically, the concept of international branch campuses as a form of higher education hybridization in China challenges the existing perception of a dichotomy between Chinese higher education and Western higher education. The analysis of three dimensions in developing international branch campuses in China captures the cultural, political, and institutional characteristics of joint venture higher education institutions in China. The characteristics of internationalization branch campuses could contribute to the understanding of international higher education collaboration at the global, national, and local levels.

At the global level, the development of international branch campus is a good example of the influence of globalization on higher education. This study proposed the idea of understanding international higher education collaboration in China from its cultural relativity and suggests a reciprocal approach to internationalization. As shown in evidence from the findings, China's cultural traditions and a long history of Confucian influence on higher education directly affect

China's international engagement in higher education. To China and many other non-Western societies, modern universities are an imported concept, which represents a European-American model of higher education. In some occasions, certain approaches of internationalization that work well in Western universities may be novel and imposed concepts for Chinese universities. For example, based on my experience, one of the ideas adopted by Chinese universities after the 1990s (when China opened its higher education to internationalization) was the system of tenure and faculty promotion that are based on the quantification of publications and international research.

Reciprocity is an important factor in considering collaborating with Chinese universities. In order for international institutions to be successful in collaborating with Chinese universities, it is important for stakeholders to keep in mind the differences between the systems. As several researchers (for example, Hayhoe, 2014; Yang, 2014) point out, China is not a passive recipient of internationalization any longer. Rather, China has been reaching out globally and investing heavily in higher education overseas. Internationalization of higher education in China has reached a phase that it calls for more global engagement and shifting from a "one-way import of foreign (Western) knowledge into China to a much-improved balance between introducing the world to China and bringing China to the world" (Yang, 2014, p. 157). Therefore, international higher education collaboration with China must involve a reciprocal or a two-way flow of knowledge and cultural understandings.

At the national level, this study emphasizes the importance of recognizing the significant role of the Chinese government in supporting educational collaboration. Although China has widely adopted Western models of higher education, the national government plays a significant role in the strategic planning of its international collaboration with foreign universities. Based on

the findings of this study, China actively uses international cooperation and exchange in higher education as an exercise of soft power. The Chinese government specifically prioritizes international collaboration with prestigous international higher education institutions as a driving force for educational development in China. The role of international higher education as the key element of soft power is maximized when it promotes the exchange of students, faculty, knowledge, and culture (Cai, 2014). More importantly, there are mutual interest and benefits shared by all partners involved in the process of engaging in international higher education. In this regard, international higher education partnership programs, including international branch campuses, have been facilitating the cross-border exchange of people, ideas, knowledge, cultures, values, as well as science and technology.

Various higher education stakeholders may hold different understandings of China's efforts to internationalize its higher education as reflected in the interviews of this study. However, it is important to understand that China has traditionally centralized the administration of higher education. Therefore, when dealing with Chinese universities it is often necessary to take into consideration the perspectives and function of the central and local governments in the success of any collaboration. On the other hand, as observed in this study, the Chinese central government often takes a very pragmatic approach by trying to find a balance between state control and institutional autonomy. International branch campuses and other collaboration programs represent Chinese government's efforts to vigorously engage with the outside world and diversify its higher education provision.

At the local level, this study reveals how some Chinese municipal governments consider investing in international branch campuses to be a strategic step in economic development. Take Duke Kunshan University as an example. This branch campus demonstrates the possibility of an

educational joint venture between an American university, a Chinese university, and a local Chinese government. As demonstrated in the findings, some local Chinese governments were willing to invest in higher education collaboration as an approach to "intellectual capital", which in turn led to long-term benefits for local economic development.

It is worth noting that all the four campuses investigated in this study are located around the Shanghai area. The most recent list of newly established international collaboration programs also shows that most collaborative institutions are located around central economic regions in China, such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen. There is obviously a regional disparity in the development of international higher education collaboration in China. For Chinese policymakers, some challenges for internationalizing strategically could be how to balance this unequal pattern of development. For many foreign universities that are intending to collaborate with Chinese institutions, instead of only focusing on economic centers like Beijing and Shanghai it is worth looking into some places in China where top Chinese universities are located such as Wuhan, Xi'an, and Nanjing.

Policy implications. At the policy level, this study developed a unique policy framework for international higher education collaboration. This policy framework for international collaboration will inform educational policies at the both the national level and the institutional levels. With the increasing demand for high-quality partnerships, universities in both China and abroad are moving towards more strategic and wide reaching alliances. Therefore, there is a need for policymakers to consider how the collaboration aligns with their national priorities and institutional agenda for internationalization.

Based on the findings, this study shows that the development of international branch campuses in China is a new model of internationalization and an exploration in the areas of

global mission, recruiting strategies, and financing models. In the context of neo-liberal globalization, international branch campuses are the manifestation of the tensions between what is international and what is indigenous to China. The development of international branch campuses in China offers a unique model of hybridization in transnational higher education.

The policy framework for international collaboration proposed in this study explores three pillars for national and institutional policies. As a form of hybridization, stakeholders in international collaboration need to take into consideration opportunities and challenges in strategic focus, political tensions, and cultural considerations. This study also demonstrates the need for long-term and strategic thinking when making policy decisions instead of just focusing on some short-term goals. For example, some universities still consider international collaboration as a strategy for revenue generation, which only prioritize international student recruitment. Findings from this study suggest that there is a need for educational stakeholders to have a long-term strategic plan in terms of internationalization, and have an understanding of how the collaboration could mutually benefit the both sides of the partnership.

As China overtakes other countries such as UAE and Malaysia as the top hosting country of international branch campuses in the world (O'Malley, 2016), there are important implications for different educational stakeholders involved in cross-border higher education collaboration with China. Based on the theoretical and policy implications discussed above, and in responding to my research questions, I propose some recommendations to address challenges for institutions considering collaborating with Chinese universities. Firstly, it is important to understand the historical and policy background of China's strategy in internationalizing its higher education. For example, China's main goal for higher education internationalization is to cultivate talent with global vision and foster world-class universities in China in order to strengthen its soft

power and economic growth. Therefore, Chinese universities see collaboration with foreign universities as a way to improve their academic reputation and increase research capacity that will help them excel in the global knowledge economy. In order for the collaboration to succeed, both sides of the collaboration need to understand the partners' goals and motivations and develop positive relations with key decision makers.

Secondly, it is important to understand the issues with respect to China's policies and practices in developing international branch campuses. The discussion of academic freedom and educational sovereignty at international branch campuses in the previous chapter gives good examples of how political tensions and legal status could pose potential challenges for the Chinese-foreign joint venture institutions. Foreign institutions should expect Chinese government involvement in every step of the establishment of a collaboration, at the central, provincial, and municipal Chinese government levels. Thirdly, the benefits and challenges regarding the development of international branch campuses identified in this study present some useful experiences for future collaboration. It is worth asking some critical questions when foreign institutions plan to collaborate with Chinese universities. For example, what are the benefits of having a collaborative program or institution in China? Is it for branding, economic, academic, or strategic objectives? What could be the challenges of operating in China? Could it be financial, reputational, or quality risks? Following these theoretical and policy implications to address my research questions, the next section suggests some specific directions for future research.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study has developed a conceptual framework to understand the development of international branch campuses and a policy framework for international high education

collaboration. This section explores some of the issues related to the challenges in managing

international collaboration and suggests some possible directions for future research.

A number of key issues arose during the process of the study, and each could form the

basis for an individual research project. For example, all the four campuses being studied had

faced the challenges of faculty retention. Most branch campuses in China hire adjunct faculty

from its home campuses in addition to hiring some new faculty internationally. It is often

difficult to have home campus faculty to teach in an overseas branch for an extended period of

time. It is also not uncommon that the internationally hired new faculty members only stay and

teach in the Chinese branch campuses for a short period of time. For example, the faculty

members I interviewed said they were planning to teach in China for no more than three years. If

the international branch campuses are planning to maintain the quality and stability of their

academic programs, they need to consider the issue of faculty retention.

Very few studies have systematically investigated the student experiences in international

branch campuses. While it is commonly accepted that students in international branch campuses

would not have the same experiences as studying in the home campuses, at least parents and

students expect the student experiences at the branch campuses to be comparable to the home

campuses. Although the international branch campuses in China strive to offer equivalent

programs and student services as their home campuses, the enrollment at the majority of the

campuses is much less than their home campuses. It could be difficult to provide the same level

of service and foster positive experiences commonly available at home campuses.

Another challenge for international branch campuses is the issue of quality assurance. As

shown in the findings, it was difficult to develop a quality standard at the branch campuses when

it was caught in between two different quality assurance systems. Some of the participants in the

study expressed their frustration over the confusion of following both the UK and Chinese quality requirements.

While many universities, including Canadian institutions, are considering increasing their collaboration with Chinese universities, there is a need for more studies on internationalization and international higher education collaboration. In the future I am planning to explore research in the following areas:

- Further study on internationalization of Chinese higher education, with a specific focus on cross-border education;

- Issues and challenges related to administration and governance of cross-border higher educational institutions;

- Further research on international higher education collaboration as a form of hybridization; for example, what could be the implications of hybridization for university governance;

- Institutional internationalization strategies, including examining the existing partnership programs between Chinese and Canadian universities through memorandums of understanding;

- Quality assurance in higher education collaboration, including historical analysis of higher education quality assurance systems in China and other countries;

- Student experiences in cross-border education;

- Faculty mobility in internationalization, for example, what are faculty experiences in working in international campuses and what could be done to improve faculty retention;

- International professional development programs, for example, many Canadian and American universities are offering professional development programs for Chinese

university administrators funded by the Chinese government, I want to find out how these programs are related to China's internationalization strategy.

Reflection

The process of completing this thesis has been a tremendous learning experience and academic journey for me. I came into this research area rather accidentally as my original research area was in English literature and culture studies when I was working in China. However, while I was exploring my research interests I found the topic of internationalization of higher education, especially looking at the cultural aspects of internationalization really made sense to me. In the following section, I want to conclude this chapter by reflecting on how this research topic has become an integral part of my professional career.

Reflection on the dissertation process. This thesis started with a study proposed in late 2013, and now it is close to completion. There were certainly many challenges that I experienced through this process, and I want to just highlight a few key points. My concern for ideas and meaning being lost in translation appeared as soon as I started to prepare for my data collection trip while compiling information letter and consent forms. One question that I had been struggling with during my data collection and analysis processes was how to conduct a study that was across two different languages and cultures without misrepresenting the perspectives shared by the participants. Since I am fluent in both Chinese and English, I was able to prepare documents such as information letters and consent forms in both English and Chinese. Participants were also able to choose from reading and signing documents in either language. However, research ethics were treated very differently in China. During my data collection, asking my participants, especially Chinese participants, to sign consent forms often made them feel uncomfortable and caused suspicion.

It is not a common practice in Chinese research methodology to present the consent form to the participant and explain to them what are the possible risks and benefits, let alone asking them to sign before the researcher could put anything in the recording. Therefore, I needed to explain to my participants the purpose of consent was to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of their participation and to protect them. Even so, some potential participants, particularly government officials, were hesitant or refused to participate in the research, as they were concerned about anything that would require their signature on it.

Furthermore, methods of recruiting participants might work in one culture but could potentially raise concerns in another culture. Chinese administrators were more difficult to approach due to their social status and cautiousness against any research conducted by a researcher from an international institution. However, the senior administrators from Chinese institutions shared more personal insights in answering certain questions in the interviews once they understood the ethics system required by a Canadian university. Allowing them to be interviewed in Chinese definitely helped in the process, as it was easier for them to trust a researcher who spoke their native language.

During my data analysis process, Chinese transcripts and policy documents proved to be very difficult for categorizing with the English methodological approach of coding and categorizing. This was particularly difficult in policy document analysis. Some keywords in policy documents were difficult to find accurate interpretations in the English language.

In this process of working in between two languages and cultures, sometimes I felt I was working on a jigsaw puzzle. When I found a piece in one language, I would need to match that piece to the messages in another language, and in many occasions the closest one. Lost in translation was not just an issue of cross-cultural communication. It was part of the process I had

to experience when adding pieces into an already complicated scenario of knowledge construction. However, this was also part of the reasons why I felt this study was so important, because it promoted international and intercultural understanding.

Reflection on my role as a researcher. My interest in the topic of internationalization of higher education came from my experiences of studying and working in a cross-culture context. This journey started from my experience of working as a faculty member in a Chinese research university, and further developed as I was pursuing PhD studies at the University of Alberta. Now the journey continues as I am working as a new academic at the University of Saskatchewan.

I studied and worked in a Chinese research university in a time when China went through fundamental changes in its higher education system. The transition and reforms in Chinese higher education led to my curiosity and quest for research in international higher education. When I started working as a faculty member in a Chinese research university, international experiences gradually became so important that it was integrated into the faculty evaluation and promotion system as a required component. There had been increasing opportunities for students and faculty members to engage in international academic exchange through various partnership programs organized by the Chinese government and institutions.

By the time I left China and started my doctoral studies in Canada, internationalization became an important benchmark for university ranking and evaluation in China. In order to achieve this goal, many Chinese universities would sign any possible agreements with foreign institutions without even considering the qualification and conditions, which led to many problems in China's internationalization.

Studying in Canada as a PhD student provided me with the new learning experiences and helped me understand the importance of cultural relativity. My courses provided me with knowledge and understanding about globalization and its impact on higher education in Canada. In my experience, cross-cultural learning was not only difficult for international students but also challenging for domestic students and faculty members in Canadian universities.

Since I started my position as a new academic at the University of Saskatchewan, I reviewed some government and institutional policy documents regarding internationalization. I found that there was a lack of long-term thinking regarding internationalization and institutional collaboration. As a researcher who has experiences working in both Chinese and North American contexts, I feel it is important to recognize that there is more than one way of understanding internationalization, and it is my hope that this study could address some of the gaps and dichotomies by proposing a reciprocal approach to internationalization.

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ON INSTITUTIONAL LETTERHEAD

Internationalization of Higher Education in China: A Case Study of International Branch Campuses

Letter of invitation for participation in research study

Dear Sir or Madam,

My name is Jing Xiao, and I am a Doctoral Candidate in the Department of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Alberta. I would like to invite you to take part in a research study that I am conducting. My credentials can be established by contacting my supervisor, Dr. Randolph Wimmer. He can be reached at 780-492-3751 or by email rwimmer@ualberta.ca.

The purpose of my research is to study how education stakeholders understand the process of internationalization in the system of Chinese higher education, and to explore the implications of increasing numbers of international branch campuses for China, and for its international partners. My intention is to document the values and knowledge expressed by individuals who work in the area of Chinese Higher Education. That is why I am contacting you, because of your expertise in this area. The final report will be my dissertation, and my research findings will be shared more broadly through articles and public/conference presentations.

I am inviting you to participate in a semi-structured interview, which should take no more than one hour of your time. I will also make observations and notes during my visit and collect any related materials that you are able to provide (for example, annual report, collaboration agreements, etc.). The interview will be conversational in style and will focus on your opinions, experiences and knowledge about your work related to the international branch campuses.

Your participation in this research will be entirely voluntary. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about this research by email jing.xiao@ualberta.ca or by phone (780) 938-8768, (86)13972972616.

Thank you very much for considering this invitation.

Sincerely,

Jing Xiao

The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.

Appendix B – Interview Guide

Internationalization of Higher Education in China: A Case Study of International Branch Campuses

Interview Guide - English

For the interviews, the questions are intended to focus on addressing two specific areas:

1. How do education stakeholders understand the process of internationalization in the system of Chinese higher education?
2. The implications of increasing numbers of international branch campuses for China as well as for its international partners.

There are five general thematic foci that will inform the information collection procedures, including questions for interviews and for the documents collected:

1. Information about individual historic context
- Where are you from?
- Where did you get your degree?
- If you are from another country, how long have you been working in China?
- What is your educational and professional path in terms of getting to this work?

2. Information about background of the organization
- What is the background of your institution?
- Why did your home institution want to have this collaborative campus with the partner institution?
- How do you feel about the management structure of the branch campus?
- What is the financing model of your institution?
- Where do most students work or study after graduating from your institution?

3. Knowledge and understanding about the higher education system in China
- Can you describe some specific details about your experience in higher education?
- How do you see your involvement in higher education in China?
- How do you feel about the policy development in China's higher education?

4. Perception about internationalization and international branch campuses
- What is your understanding about the process of internationalization in higher education?
- Why do you think Chinese government supports the development of international branch campuses?
- What are some of the challenges in the founding and operation of an international branch campus?
- Who do you think benefit most from the international branch campuses?

5. Follow-up questions
- How do you feel about the differences between working in China and working at your home institution?
- How do you cope with the challenges brought by cultural differences?

访谈提纲

1. 关于您和上海纽约大学的背景
- 您的个人背景，在中国高等教育界的工作经历？
- 上海纽约大学的发展历程？

2. 关于高等教育国际化和中国高等教育
- 您对于高等教育国际化的理解？对中国高等教育的影响？
- 您怎样看高等教育国际化和中外合作办学发展之间的关系？

3. 关于合作办学与中外合作大学
- 对于中外合作大学的看法，关于"海外分校"和"中外合作大学"的界定。
- 建立上海纽约大学，双方的动机？
- 合作双方在权、责、利等方面的关系？
- 合作过程中有哪些困难和问题？
- 办学目标和发展定位是什么？
- 办学模式和教育理念？西方模式？中国模式？
- 保障教育教学质量的措施有哪些？
- 办学成本高，是否可持续发展？

Appendix C – Ethics Approval

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Ethics Application has been Approved

ID: Pro00042880

Title: Internationalization of higher education in China: A case study of international branch campuses

Study Investigator: Jing Xiao

Description: This is to inform you that the above study has been approved.

Click on the link(s) above to navigate to the HERO workspace.

Note: Please be reminded that the REMO system works best with Internet Explorer or Firefox.

Please do not reply to this message. This is a system-generated email that cannot receive replies.

University of Alberta
Edmonton Alberta
Canada T6G 2E1

Internationalization of Higher Education in China: A Case Study of International Branch Campuses

Research Investigator:	**Academic Supervisor:**
Jing Xiao	Dr. Randolph Wimmer
PhD Candidate	Vice Dean, Faculty of Education
7-104 Education North	7-104 Education North
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jing.xiao@ualberta.ca	rwimmer@ualberta.ca
(780) 938-8768	(780) 492-3751

Background

I am inviting you to be a participant in this research project because of your experience or expertise in international branch campuses in China. My intention is to document the values and knowledge expressed by individuals who work in the area of Chinese Higher Education. The final report will be my dissertation, and my research findings may be shared through professional or academic presentations, reports, articles, or book chapters. A copy or a summary of the final dissertation will be available to you. If you would like to receive copies of any resulting publications, please let me know.

Purpose

The purpose of my research is to study how education stakeholders understand the process of internationalization in the system of Chinese higher education, and to explore the implications of increasing numbers of international branch campuses for China as well as for its international partners. The analysis and interpretation of this information should contribute to a deeper understanding of recent development in internationalization of Chinese higher education and the phenomenon of increasing international branch campuses.

Study Procedures

I am collecting data through interviews, observations and the collection of documents related to international branch campus. Your participation will be in the form of a semi-structured interview, which should take no more than one hour of your time. During my visit I will also collect any related materials that you are able to provide (for example, policy documents, annual report, collaboration agreements, etc.). The interview will be conversational in style and will focus on your opinions, experiences and knowledge about your work related to the international branch campuses. I will take hand-written notes and record the interview, if that is acceptable to you. Your identity will be removed from the material in the transcription process. You will be

anonymous within any publication or presentation, identified by a fictitious name. After the interview, the material will be analysed, interpreted and represented as a case study. The case study will be returned to you for your review and verification, towards accurate representation. You will have two weeks from the time that the case study is sent to you for review.

Benefits

This research has been designed to get a better understanding of recent development in the international dimension of Chinese higher education and the phenomenon of increasing international branch campuses. By providing an analysis of existing cases, I am hoping that this study will benefit you and your institution by increasing understanding on the institutional strategies and practices in the delivery of cross-border higher education programs. This research may also benefit a wider research and practice community interested in the development of China's higher education system. It may also inform future public policy. There are no costs or compensation for participating in this study. Your participation is deeply appreciated.

Risks & Voluntary Participation

Considerations have been taken in the research design to ensure that there the only potential risk is that you may feel tired from answering the questions. If at any time you think there is something that will affect your willingness to be in the study, please inform me. You are under no obligation to participate in this study. Participation is completely voluntary. You can, without penalty, opt out of the study at any time up until the end of the case study review period, that is, two weeks after your transcript is sent to you for review. During interviews, you may refuse to answer any questions and can stop the process at any point. You can ask that any collected data be withdrawn and not used. If this happens before the data has been used for analysis and writing as described above, I will delete it from my database.

Confidentiality & Anonymity

Data collected will only be used for my doctoral dissertation and any resulting publications or presentations. All attempts will be made to ensure that the information you provide remains confidential. To protect your identity, your name will not be used in the transcribed documents. You will be assigned a fictitious name, which will be used in all resulting publications and/or presentations. Data in the form of paper materials will be kept in a locked file cabinet in my personal office, and digital materials will be maintained as encrypted files on a password-protected personal computer belonging to the researcher. As the researcher, only my doctoral supervisor and me will have access to these files. All data will be destroyed after five years. Paper materials will be shredded and digital materials will be deleted.

Further Information

If you have any further questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact me by email (jing.xiao@ualberta.ca) or telephone (780-938-8768). The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.

Please sign the attached consent form to indicate your participation in this study:

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

I, (print name)_____AGREE TO PARTICIPATE in the study: ***Internationalization of Higher Education in China: A Case Study of International Branch Campuses***. I also agree to have my interview audio-recorded and transcribed for use in the study.

_____   _____

Participant's Signature   Interviewer

Date: _____

Appendix E – Preliminary Codes and Themes

1. Academic freedom
-   Academic freedom
-   Faculty governance
-   Restriction
-   Conflict
-   Freedom with condition
-   Chinese law and regulation
-   Freedom of speech

2. Educational Sovereignty
-   Chinese (Sino) –foreign cooperation universities vs. IBCs
-   Providing education service to Chinese citizens
-   University president/chancellor has to be Chinese citizen
-   Intellectual property input
-   Restriction on religious education and political education

3. Typology
-   Third party participation, e.g. municipal government, private organization
-   Financing, e.g. fundraising, public vs. private money
-   Accreditation, credentials
-   Non-degree undergraduate program (Duke Kunshan University)

4. Internationalization
-   Globalization
-   Global vision
-   International competiveness
-   Internationalization vs. localization
-   Combining the advantage of international and local resources

5. Quality HE resources
-   World class universities
-   Quality of teaching and learning

6. Western university and knowledge being "better"
-   "China is still a developing country"
-   "Our HE system is still backward"
-   "We need to learn from the west, the better"

7. Quality Assurance
-   QAA (British system)
-   Government interference

- High quality HE resources
- Evaluating system
- Exit mechanism
- Quality vs. accountability

8. Service oriented
- Providing service to students
- Student centered
- Serviced centered

9. Economic growth
- Soft power
- Meeting the needs of local economic growth
- International talent for global economy

10. Need for reform of Chinese HE system
- Increasing demand for HE provision
- Need various forms of HE institutions
- Exploring the function of government and market

11. Student Quality
- Creative talent with global vision
- Contribute to socialist construction
- Cross cultural understanding and communication
- Multi-lingual

12. The role of CCP committee
- From leadership to service
- Political considerations

13. The importance of teaching traditional Chinese culture and values
- Chinese culture education is "invaluable"
- Patriotism
- Important foundation for students' view of life/value/world

14. Brain gain/drain
- Most graduates seek overseas study
- Retaining talent

Theme 1: Academic freedom

How I understand it: freedom for university faculty members to teach (content) and communicate (ideas)

Theme defined in literature: The most common definition of academic freedom today in North America is the one adopted by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the Association of American Colleges in the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure, which defines the three elements of academic freedom as (1) freedom to conduct research and publish the results; (2) freedom in the classroom to teach one's subject; and (3) freedom to speak and write as other citizens do (Keith, 1997). However, some literature also argues that academics are employees paid directly by the university and indirectly by the government, or taxpayers. Therefore, there is "no logic reason why academic freedom should operate beyond and outside the boundaries of the management constraints of the institution and the employment requirements of the country (Kerry & Kerry, 2012. p.66)."

Chinese policy context related to the theme: *National Outline for Medium and Long Term Educational Reform and Development* (2010-2020) urges for de-bureaucratization and separating administrative ranking from academic excellence within higher education institutions. *Regulation of University and College Charters* (2011) defines the responsibility of higher education institutions as to respect and protect faculty and students' freedom to teach, research, and study. *The regulation of Higher Education Institution Academic Committees* (2013) requires Chinese universities and colleges to set up academic committees to function as independent and supreme academic institutions on campus, and the committees will have the right to evaluate, discuss, supervise and make suggestions and decisions on academic affairs.

Codes from interviews: academic freedom, academic committees, faculty governance, restriction, conflict, freedom with condition, law and regulation, freedom of speech, internal supervision, modern university system/model, university charters, Chinese characteristics, independent decision-making mechanism

Codes from documents: academic freedom, independent thinking, foster a free academic environment, free from restraints and encourages invention and innovation, foster policy environment that promotes academic freedom, academic freedom versus academic responsibility, de-bureaucratization, reduce administrative intervention in academic affairs

Observation field notes: Most Chinese administrators being interviewed considered the question about academic freedom to be "sensitive nature". Some of the interviewees felt uneasy to describe the challenging disagreements and conflicts between different sides of the partnership. They felt it is not possible to define academic freedom without alluding to its political and cultural differences. Most of the interviewees commented on the positive changes

made by Chinese government in terms of accommodating the need for academic freedom, and how on the other hand, the IBCs tried to adapt to Chinese political and policy environment.

Sample quotes from interviews: "I understand that there are concerns from our US home campus around the issue of academic freedom. Because our university is ranked as a top university in the world, this branch campus in China has the responsibility to hold up to that standard. Some faculty members are concerned that the tradition of academic freedom will be compromised in this branch campus.'"

"Actually the Chinese central government is also emphasizing the importance of academic freedom in universities. Faculty members and students have the freedom in teaching and research activities, but no government would allow university faculty members to go against its law, to promote values that are trying to overthrow its governance. Even American government would not allow such kind of freedom of speech."

"In China, freedom always comes with conditions. Absolute freedom will bring lots of problems and troubles. Therefore, you can't say there is no academic freedom in China."

"What can we do to ensure the autonomy of our universities? We need to return to the ultimate purpose of the university, which is to cultivate ideas and talent. We must separate academic power from administrative power, and let academic committees function as the independent decision making mechanism in the university governance."

"Internationalization of education should not just follow the Western model. The process of internationalization is supposed to allow different countries to maintain its own political and cultural identities. For example, strengthening internal supervision and ensuring that students, professors, and researchers have a bigger say in academic affairs are part of the practices of maintain academic freedom in Chinese universities. Sometimes compromises have to be made in order to maintain Chinese political and cultural spirit."

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Theme 2: Educational Sovereignty

How I understand it: Education sovereignty means a nation has the highest authority on educational issues and the rights of decision-making in education matters. However, since the concept of sovereignty has been constantly extended and enriched in the process of social development, I believe that the understanding and definition of education sovereignty should be developed and refined with the changes of society rather than stay static.

Theme defined in literature: Pan (2009) defines educational sovereignty as "the highest executive power possessed by a sovereign nation that enables it to tackle domestic issues concerning education and maintain independence and freedom during the discussion of education issues in the international community" (p. 93). Lane & Kinser (2011) argues that a nation can set its own policies and establish its own governing structure regarding educational issues. When relating the issue of educational sovereignty to IBCs, even though there is an increasing tendency of higher education institutions transcending national boundaries, nations still have the authority to determine the rules and regulations within their own boundaries.

Chinese policy context related to the theme: *Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools* (2003) claims that "Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools shall abide by the laws of China, implement China's educational policies, comply with Chinese public ethics and shall not jeopardize China's sovereignty, security and public interests."

Codes from interviews: sovereignty, independence, national boundaries, Chinese (Sino) – foreign cooperation universities, not allowed to be named as IBCs, providing service mainly to Chinese citizens, intellectual property input, restriction on religious and political education

Codes from documents: national sovereignty, abide by laws of China, comply with public interests and security, meet the needs of the development of China's educational cause,

Observation field notes: When talking about educational sovereignty, interviewees stated that they understood that in China all the international campuses were actually not allowed to be defined as "international branch campuses", but to be defined as "Chinese-foreign cooperation universities" instead. For example, the Chinese name of NYU Shanghai actually is "Shanghai New York University", while Nottingham Ningbo in Chinese is "Ningbo Nottingham University". This subtle difference in name order actually shows Chinese's government's policy boundary for the foreign provision and involvement in the international higher education in China.

Another example is the policy definition of "providing education service mainly to Chinese citizens". Instead of aiming for attracting international students, Chinese policy does require these campuses to recruit mainly Chinese students. An interesting example is NYU Shanghai, in order to meet the requirement of this policy and at the same time maintain their own admission

standard, there are 151 Chinese students and 149 foreign students among their 300 students admitted in 2013.

Other examples of Chinese policy for the purpose of maintain educational sovereignty are the president of the university has to be Chinese citizen, contribution of intellectual property provide by the foreign partner cannot exceed one-third of the total input, and they are not allowed to offer religious education and conduct religious activities, etc.

Sample quotes from interviews: "I understood that our U.S. partner considered and operated this institution as their branch campus. There was an understanding between our partner and us that we can seek common ground while reserving differences."

"Our partner was trying to set up a branch campus in China, but according to the requirement of Chinese education sovereignty, no independent foreign branch campus was allowed in China. The only way (this would work) was to collaborate with a Chinese university"

"While Chinese-foreign collaborative university is an excellent form of introducing foreign higher education provision and high quality resources to China, educational sovereignty is the essential asset. I think every nation should protect their sovereignty in educational exchange and partnership."

"Chinese government takes the issue of educational sovereignty into consideration, but in practice the central government is open to different options and willing to adapt to changes."

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Theme 3: Nation building

How I understand it: Although previous research (Marginson, 2011; Luo, 2013) suggests that the role of nation state has been overrated and national government influence has been considerably weakened by the process of globalization and internationalization, drawing on the data collected from the field study I believe that Chinese government still sees education as an important vehicle for nation-building and shaping national identities.

Theme defined literature: When discussing the role of higher education in nation building, Marginson (2013) contends that "National tradition plays a role in determining the extent to which higher education is expected to contribute to the cultural formation of society—and the extent to which it is meant to work for the nonmarket objectives of civil society— and to the ethical and moral formation of students." (p. 74)

Chinese policy context related to the theme: *Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools* (2003) emphasizes that "Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools shall meet the needs of the development of China's educational cause, ensure teaching quality and make efforts to train all kinds of talent for China's socialist construction." *Outline of China's National Plan for Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020)* emphasized that "giving high priority to education development is a paramount, long-term principle advocated and upheld by the Party and the state"

Codes from interviews: Nation state, economic growth, education as soft power, meeting the needs of local economic growth, retaining Chinese cultural traditions, cultural identity, training talent for nation building,

Codes from documents: nation building, educational reform, exploration on different university models, socialist construction, strengthening the nation

Observation and reflection notes: There is an interesting difference between the English and Chinese notion of "nation". In English it is often used in the phrase of "nation-state", while in Chinese language the characters "国家" literally mean "nation-family". The Chinese concept of a "nation family" stems from a Confucian model, which relies on Chinese cultural identity and strong shaping of societal structures.

When my participants talked about the idea of the role of IBCs in Chinese nation building, they made connections between the policy changes and Chinese central government's attempt to use education as a vehicle to enhance economic development and strengthen the nation.

Most participants mentioned while their universities were following the western university model, and their students were keen on learning western ideas, it was important to understand the significance of retaining the unique Chinese cultural traditions.

Sample quotes from interviews: "From a long term perspective, the collaboration of Chinese and Western university models would contribute to the construction and reforms of the political system, law system, and educational system in China.'"

"All the efforts we made… were aiming at introducing a world-class western university into China, and through this process we could contribute to further educational reform and social development in China."

"Chinese government believes that the development of Chinese-international collaboration in higher education will not only benefit the reform in the education sector, but also will contribute to finding out a way to maintain Chinese cultural identity in a globalized world."

"The economic development in China has been a generator for the world economy. The internationalization of higher education has been part of the factors leading to fast growing economic development in China."

"Actually during our process of cooperation, there were many challenges. After all it is collaboration between two different cultures, two educational systems, and in a sense, two totally different political systems. The key to success is communicating and understanding."

"Since 2005 and 2006, the Ministry of Education started the experiment on opening higher education sector to international universities with the purpose of introducing high quality educational resources. The central Chinese government believed that high quality educational resources could enhance the development and reform of higher education system in China and strengthen the building of a socialist nation."

"The development of the international branch campus in this city has contributed to the local economy in many ways. Some local and national enterprises have started to build infrastructures around the university campus. While Chinese economy is transitioning from an agricultural model to an industrial one, international branch campus would certainly support our local economy to transition into a knowledge-oriented economy."

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Theme 4: Quality assurance

How I understand it: In order to understand quality assurance and the development of quality assurance measures in Chinese-foreign higher education collaboration, it is important to define quality. I understand quality as maintaining standard for the practice or performance of the higher education institutions to meet its mission and purpose.

Theme defined in literature: According to Harvey and Knight (1996), there are five aspects of quality in education: quality as exceptional, quality as perfection or consistency, quality as fitness for purpose (mission), quality as value for money, and quality as transformation. Nicolson (2011) defines quality assurance as "the policies, attitudes, actions and procedures necessary to ensure that quality is being maintained and enhanced, and is intended to ensure accountability and/or to bring about improvement" (p.6). Ozturgut (2011) contends that Chinese government is not only in an attempt to increase the number of higher education institutions to close the gap within the system, but also it is trying to give more responsibility, effectiveness, and accountability to these institutions. Cao & Li (2014) adopt a three-dimensional model to illustrate the issue of quality assurance in Chinese private higher education, which include: academic quality, administrative quality, and relationship quality.

Chinese policy development related to the theme: *Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools* (2003) claims that the Chinese government encourages Chinese-foreign cooperation in order to introduce "high-quality foreign educational resources" into Chinese higher education. It also explains that provincial governments are supposed to strengthen their supervision over such institutions, and authorize intermediary organizations to evaluate the management and quality of the collaborative institutions. In *Regulation on Quality Evaluation of Chinese-foreign Collaboration in Educational Programs* (Ministry of Education, 2009), a systematic quality assurance mechanism was defined to evaluate the quality of teaching and research, responsibility and accountability, and credentialing management in Chinese-foreign educational collaboration

Codes from interviews: high quality higher education resources, quality evaluating system, internal quality control mechanism, exit mechanism (for unsuccessful institutions), government control/intervention, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA, a UK organization), world class universities, quality of teaching and learning

Codes from documents: high quality foreign educational resources, strengthening quality assurance, government supervision, intermediary evaluating organizations, quality of teaching and research, responsibility and accountability, legitimacy of IBCs

Observation field notes: During my interviews, many participants mentioned that Chinese government has started to create an evaluating system to monitor the international branch campuses and other forms of Chinese-foreign higher education collaboration. Policies on quality control and exit mechanism have also been discussed by researchers and government officials.

Instead of using the term "accountability", "quality assurance" is used in most occasions concerning the evaluating of such collaboration. As a notion often used in business world, quality assurance is commonly used in this area, I was wondering if it serves a specific purpose, e.g. introducing mechanisms of discipline and control into the academia?

Sample quotes from interviews: "Building a high quality university is one of the missions of our university. That is also the reason why Chinese government is willing to support NYU Shanghai.'"

"Duke Kunshan University strives to be a small scale, high quality elite university in China. The most import means in quality assurance is internal quality control mechanism"

"The problem with current quality assurance system in Chinese higher education is that it relies too much on administrative power. A suitable positioning of the university with a clear goal of student quality is the key to quality assurance and legitimacy building."

"Developing Chinese-foreign collaboration should not just serve the purpose of Chinese students obtaining foreign credentials and merely preparing Chinese graduates for overseas studies. Quality assurance is what matters in developing international branch campuses in China. We need to develop an effective system to evaluate the quality of teaching and research in these institutions."

"The experiment with quality assurance system and exist mechanism [for unsuccessful programs] in higher education is one of the important motivations for Chinese government to support the development of international branch campuses."

"Our quality assurance is trying to combine the scrupulosity of British system, the flexibility of American system, and the traditional characteristics of Chinese system. However, this combination of quality assurance systems might cause confusion in daily practices."

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Theme 5: Knowledge exchange, Brain drain/gain

How I understand it: Historically, the term brain drain refers to the migration of intellectuals and skilled talent from less developed countries to industrialized countries in order to seek better learning and employment opportunities.

Theme defined in literature: Brooks and Walters (2011) define brain drain as the movement of talent from developing countries to developed countries. However, they also note that the concept has been largely changed over the recent years. Some alternative terms such as brain gain and brain circulation have been used to indicate the fact that many students who study overseas are now more likely to return to their home country after completing their degrees. Yang (2011) proposes the idea of "brain power stored oversea" as a concept to examine the movement of Chinese talent's mobility within the context of the global circulation of knowledge currents.

Chinese policy context related to the theme: As one of the most important Chinese policy guideline for the reform and development of higher education, *National Outline for Medium and Long Term Education Reform and Development, 2011-2020* (State Council of China, 2010) outlines that the goal of the ten-year educational development in China is to retain talent, which will contribute to strengthen China's competitiveness in global economy.

Codes from interviews: mobility, global war for talent, best brains, most talented students, potential employability, knowledge exchange, social responsibility towards home country, returnee, expatriate, global citizen

Codes from documents: international talent, global competitiveness, highly educated and mobile talent, brainpower for national economic competency, knowledge-based economy, global vision

Observation and reflection notes: During my interviews, I asked questions about if the participant perceive the development of IBCs as a way of retaining Chinese talent. Surprisingly, many of the participants talked about how the majority of the students chose to study overseas after completing their degrees at these IBCs. One of the participants says that more than 85 percent of their graduates chose to pursue further study at North American or UK universities. This might be quite contrary of Chinese government's intention of developing IBCs as a strategy to retain talent. While some participants do mention that some of their students study overseas return to work in China after their overseas study. The international mobility of knowledge and talent has been a process of more than just brain drain or brain gain. Brain circulation might be a better term to describe it.

Sample quotes from interviews: "The development of international branch campuses has brought new vision and meaning to the cultivation of Chinese talent. It also has helped retain the top talent by bringing top world universities to China"

"The collaboration between China and international universities is an exploration of knowledge and talent circulation within the context of global knowledge economy."

"The economic development in China has a high demand for talent. In the meantime, the development of Chinese economy also attracts the flow of global talent. China is the new market and generator of world economy. The market attracts the most talented students to study here for potential employability."

"China is the new market and generator of world economy. The market attracts the most talented students to study here for potential employability."

"The development of Chinese-foreign higher education collaboration is not supposed to be simply exporting of Chinese talents. It has made significant contribution to knowledge and cultural exchange."

"Although 85 percent of our graduates pursued further study in the UK, most of them came back to work in China. In additional to the fast development of economy and social changes in China, many of our students felt that they had a social responsibility toward their home country."

"Actually during our process of cooperation, there have been many challenges. This branch campus is the collaboration between two different cultures, two educational systems, and in a sense, two fundamentally different political systems. The key to success is that we should focus on effective communication and mutual understanding."

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Theme 6: Internationalization

How I understand it: International flow of knowledge, technology, talent.

Theme defined in literature: Internationalization of higher education is defined as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, function or delivery of post-secondary education" (Knight, 2004, p. 11). de Wit (2011) suggests that as a consequence of globalization, the changing landscape of internationalization has been manifested in four areas of higher education: increasing competition for international students and academics; a growing tendency of cross-border delivery of programs; the emergence of for-profit providers in international higher education; and the changing positions of some countries in the higher education stage.

Chinese policy context related to the theme: The *Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools* (MoE, 2003), the purpose of the regulations was defined as "apply to the activities of the cooperation between foreign educational institutions and Chinese educational institutions, …to strengthen international exchange and cooperation in the field of education" (MoE, 2003, Chapter 1). In Article 1 of Chapter 1, the policy document stated that the Chinese government encouraged Chinese-foreign cooperation in the field of higher education and vocational education.

Codes from interviews: international, internationalization, global

Codes from documents: internationalization, international university, world-class university, international cooperation, international exchange, international students, global vision

Observation and reflection notes: I observed how different educational stakeholders' understanding of internationalization could be essential to how it was interpreted at both policy and practice levels. University administrators' interpretation of internationalization could shape the strategy and development of international branch campuses. Government officials' understanding of internationalization could potentially have a significant impact on the forming of educational policy and practice in relation to international collaboration. Faculty members' perception of internationalization would directly influence their academic activities.

Some faculty members challenged the term "international university". One participant said, "what does it mean to be an international university? Does it mean recruiting as many international students as possible, or has many internal faculty members? Or international academic and research exchange?"

Sample quotes from interviews: "Internationalization is one of the main strategies in the development of our university. Our university came to China in 2006 and visited many Chinese universities, looking for partnership with a Chinese university to develop a "Study Away Site". When the administrators from our partner university reached us, we said we wanted to achieve

further internationalization of our university through collaborating with a top Chinese university. We agreed on the vision of developing a collaborative university as part of our global network"

"When talking about collaboration Americans always first take into consideration what could benefit them. For our university, it would be very valuable if we could partner with a Chinese university that already had good reputation and a close relationship with local government, which could make the process [of communicating with Chinese government] much easier. Then what we could benefit from this partnership? We would be able to enhance internationalization of our university. When the goals of both sides of a partnership matched each other, it was a win-win situation."

"The model of developing international branch campuses in China was an exploration at two different levels. At the first level, it was an exploration of how to educate and prepare students for internationalization and global vision. At the second level, it was an exploration of how to development the collaboration between two cultures, two educational systems in order to face the challenges of a globalized era."

"The model of developing international branch campuses in China is very different from branch campuses in any other countries. Instead of copying the Western model of university, branch campuses in China are the combination of Western and Eastern university models. This development and exploration of a new model itself is a creative approach for internationalization, which means, internationalization does necessarily mean following the Western model of higher education. It is important to find a suitable model that benefits both the international and the local."

"Internationalization is not only happening at the higher education sector; it is also important for local economy. The development of this branch campus is the result of contribution from not just two academic institutions, but also the efforts of various levels of Chinese governments. Internationalization will benefit local economy in the long run by attracting educational resources, international talent, and global vision for local government and enterprises."

"Some Chinese economic regions have gone through the process of urbanization and industrialization. With internationalization of local institutions and partnership with international universities, local governments are willing to invest in higher education as the "intellectual capital" that will lead to long-term benefits for economic development."

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NYU Shanghai, located temporarily in East China Normal University in 2013
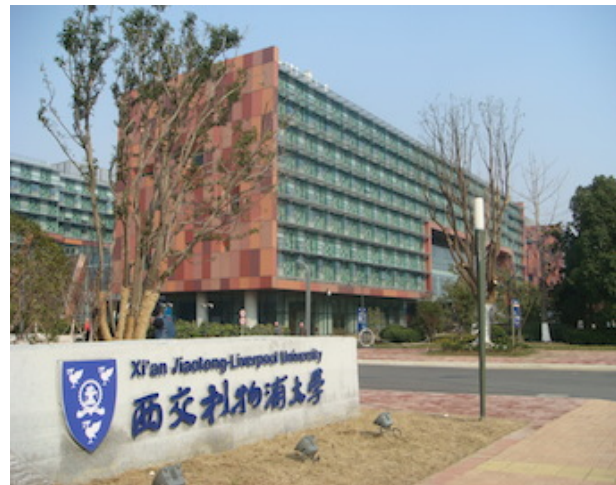
XJTLU campus buildings and new students in military training

UNNC campus has both Chinese and Western architectural buildings