

Chinese immigrants to Finland: A qualitative study of housing, employment, access to health care and child care as sociological dimensions in their settlement process

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| Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract | | | |
| <p>The Master's thesis is qualitative research based on interviews of 15 Chinese immigrants to Finland in order to provide a sociological perspective of the migration experience through the eyes of Chinese immigrants in the Finnish social welfare context. This research is mainly focused upon four crucial aspects of life in the settlement process: housing, employment, access to health care and child care. Inspired by Allardt's theoretical framework 'Having, Loving and Being', social relationships and individual satisfaction are examined in the case of Chinese interviewees dealing with the four life aspects. Finland was not perceived as an attractive migration destination for most Chinese interviewees in the beginning. However, with longer residence in Finland, the Finnish social welfare system gradually became a crucial appealing factor in their permanent settlement in Finland. And meanwhile, social responsibility of attending their old parents in China, strong feelings of being isolated in Finland, and insufficient integration into the Finnish society were influential factors for their decision of returning to China. Social relationships with personal friends, migration brokers, schools, employers and family relatives had great influences in the four life aspects of Chinese immigrants in Finland. The social relationship with the Finnish social welfare sector is supportive to Chinese immigrants, but Chinese immigrants do not heavily rely on Finnish social protection. The housing conditions were greatly improved over time while the upward mobility in the Finnish labour market was not significant among Chinese immigrants. All Chinese immigrants were satisfied with their current housing by the time I interviewed them while most of them had subjective feelings of being alienated in the Finnish labour market, which seriously prevented them from integrating into the Finnish society. In general, Chinese immigrants were satisfied with the low cost of accessing the Finnish public health care services and affordable Finnish child day care services and financial subsidies for children from the Finnish social welfare sector. This research also suggests that employment is the central basis in well-being. Support from the Finnish social welfare sector can improve the satisfaction levels among immigrants, especially when it mitigates the effects of low-paid employment. As well, my empirical study of Chinese immigrants in Finland shows that <i>Having</i> (needs for materials), <i>Loving</i> (needs for social relations) and <i>Being</i> (needs for social integration) are all involved in the four concrete aspects (housing, employment, access to health care and child care).</p> | | | |
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Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| List of tables and graphs..... | iv |
| Acknowledgements..... | v |
| 1. Introduction..... | 1 |
| 1.1. Research aim..... | 2 |
| 1.2. Structure of the thesis..... | 2 |
| 2. Previous research..... | 3 |
| 2.1. Brief Chinese migration history..... | 3 |
| 2.2. Previous research on Chinese migration to Europe..... | 5 |
| 2.3. Previous research on Chinese immigrants' living conditions..... | 6 |
| 3. Theoretical framework..... | 10 |
| 4. Research questions..... | 11 |
| 5. Research Method..... | 12 |
| 5.1. Research materials..... | 13 |
| 5.2. Ethical issues..... | 15 |
| 5.3. Analysis of data..... | 16 |
| 6. Research results..... | 17 |
| 6.1. Population born in China from 1990 to 2010 in Finland..... | 17 |
| 6.2. Why did the 15 Chinese interviewees come to Finland?..... | 18 |
| 6.3. How did the 15 Chinese interviewees come to Finland?..... | 20 |
| 6.4. Housing..... | 22 |
| 6.4.1. Social relations involved in housing..... | 22 |
| 6.4.2. Housing conditions..... | 25 |
| 6.4.3. Satisfaction with housing..... | 27 |
| 6.5. Employment..... | 29 |
| 6.5.1. Social relations involved in employment..... | 29 |
| 6.5.2. Working conditions..... | 32 |
| 6.5.3. Satisfaction with employment..... | 36 |
| 6.6. Access to health care..... | 39 |
| 6.6.1. Social relations involved in access to health care..... | 41 |
| 6.6.2. Satisfaction with access to public health care in Finland..... | 43 |
| 6.7. Access to child care..... | 48 |

| | |
|---|----|
| 6.7.1. Social relations in access to child care | 49 |
| 6.7.2. Satisfaction with access to child care | 53 |
| 6.7.3. Adopted languages in child care..... | 54 |
| 6.8. Leaving or staying in Finland in future?..... | 56 |
| 6. Further discussion..... | 60 |
| 7. Conclusion | 65 |
| References..... | 71 |
| Appendices..... | 77 |
| Semi-structured questions | 77 |
| Consent to a research interview | 78 |
| Consent to a research interview (in Chinese)..... | 79 |

List of tables and graphs

Tables

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 1. Years of residence in Finland (at the end of 2010)..... | 13 |
| Table 2. The family status (at the end of 2010)..... | 14 |
| Table 3. Visa types and social relations in application for first residence in Finland..... | 21 |
| Table 4. Information from the Chinese email list..... | 23 |
| Table 5. First jobs of the 15 interviewees in Finland..... | 32 |
| Table 6. Future plans..... | 57 |

Graphs

| | |
|---|----|
| Graph 1. Population born in China from 1990 to 2010 in Finland..... | 17 |
| Graph 2. Gender difference of population born in China from 1990 to 2010 in Finland..... | 18 |
| Graph 3. A model of social relations in accessing child care..... | 49 |
| Graph 4. An exploratory model of satisfaction and relational distance between employment and housing, health care and child care..... | 63 |

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1. Introduction

The Chinese have been involved in international migration for centuries (Ma, 2003, pp. 2). The globalization and internal political and economic changes in China have stimulated large-scale emigration of the Chinese (Nyiri & Saveliev, 2002). The Chinese have a variety of migration channels and some migrate to European countries such as Finland. Research on Chinese immigrants in the Finnish context is extremely limited partially because of the short migration history and the relatively small population of Chinese immigrants in Finland. Finland, with its own long history of Finns leaving the home country to explore opportunities in other parts of the world, did not receive many Chinese migrants before the early 21st century. The number of Chinese migrants in Finland in 1990 was only 312 while the number increased to 5559 in 2010 (Statistics Finland, 2011). The Chinese ethnic migrant group is becoming one of the largest migrant groups in Finland. The increasing number of Chinese immigrants in Finland sparked my interest to conduct an exploratory study of this particular ethnic migrant group. This thesis is qualitative research based on interviews of 15 Chinese immigrants to Finland in order to provide a sociological perspective of the migration experience through the eyes of Chinese immigrants. For practical reasons, my interviewees were limited to the Greater Helsinki area.

The migration process is complicated, involving various aspects of life (Massey, 1986). My research is mainly focused on four aspects of life: housing, employment, access to health care and child care. From my perspective, these aspects of life are central in well-being from a sociological perspective. In addition to them, the English website of the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela) lists other aspects of life in well-being. However, due to my limited resources, it does not make any sense to include all aspects of life in my research. The four life aspects (housing, employment, access to health care and child care) are deemed to be of great importance especially for newly-arrived immigrants in the settlement process in a new country. When immigrants arrive in a receiving country, the first step is to find accommodation. Employment is an essential source of income for immigrants to support basic needs in a receiving country. It is necessary for surviving and for avoiding misery (Allardt, 1989 & 1993). Without employment, an alternative source of income is needed. Access to health care is equally

important for well-being. As well, access to child care is closely related to well-being of immigrants with children (Törrönen, 2008).

The four aspects construct living conditions of the settlement process among immigrants. As well, they are all included within the Finnish social welfare system. The Finnish social welfare sector shoulders the responsibility of providing necessary help when its citizens have serious problems related to housing, employment, health care and child care. Therefore, the settlement process among Chinese immigrants can be reasonably discussed in the Finnish social welfare context by focusing on housing, employment, access to health care and child care. The starting point of my study is based upon the work of a Finnish sociologist Eric Allardt (1989 & 1993) who emphasizes both objective and subjective conditions of well-being from a sociological perspective.

1.1. Research aim

The general aim of my research is to enrich scholarship in the field of Chinese migration studies in the Finnish context and to provide new knowledge from a Chinese perspective. The research offers an understanding of how Chinese immigrants experience the settlement process in Finland and their living conditions. Little qualitative research has been conducted from the perspective of immigrants themselves towards the social welfare system of receiving countries (Timonen & Doyle, 2008). This thesis focuses upon Chinese immigrants in Finland to explore their situation in the Finnish social welfare context. However, it is crucial to mention that this thesis is not only focused upon the Finnish social welfare system. The welfare context is just part of a larger social context in which I discuss the settlement process of housing, employment, access to health care and child care among Chinese immigrants in Finland. In a word, this research, taken on sociological dimensions of housing, employment, access to health care and child care, attempts to offer better understanding of Chinese immigrants' settlement in Finland.

1.2. Structure of the thesis

The next chapter includes a general description of Chinese studies in the European context. Chinese studies in the Finnish context are especially emphasized. As well, selected literature works on housing, employment, access to health care and child care, closely related to Chinese immigrants, are mentioned. My theoretical framework

provides a brief summary of Allardt's *Having, Loving and Being* theory and clarifies why I adopted his framework. In the section on my research method, how I collected the data, how I practically analyzed the original data and ethical issues are all presented. In the section on research results, four aspects (housing, employment, access to health care and child care) are all discussed by following two trajectories: social relationships and satisfaction. Social relationships are highly relevant for studies of international migration (Boyd, 1989). Therefore, it is interesting to see how different social relationships play roles in Chinese migration to Finland and what kind of social relationships Chinese immigrants are involved in the settlement process across the four aspects (housing, employment, access to health care and child care) in Finland. The discussion about the role of the Finnish social welfare sector among Chinese immigrants is included in social relationships. Personal satisfaction with their immigrant life with regard to the four aspects in Finland is also examined. In the discussion section, research questions are further examined by combining research results of the four aspects (housing, employment, access to health care and child care).

2. Previous research

2.1. Brief Chinese migration history

Historically, before the 1850s, migration destinations for the Chinese were exclusively limited to areas within Southeast Asia such as the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore (Kuhn, 2008). Later, with technological development, increasing global trade and the industrialization of the Western world, the Chinese have expanded migration destinations to other parts of the world, particularly to North America, Australia and New Zealand. The Chinese open policy after 1978 and the relaxation of immigration policies of North America in the 1960s and that of Australia and New Zealand in the 1980s played important roles in increased levels of Chinese migration (Ma, 2003). The expansion of migration destinations was, in addition, involved in episodes of social conflicts when Chinese migrants encountered different cultures and ethnic groups (Kuhn, 2008). Early Chinese immigrants were seriously discriminated in those destinations and their living conditions were harsh (Kuhn, 2008).

Contrary to migration narratives of the Chinese to Southeast Asia and North America, Europe has no core history of Chinese migration and the Chinese in Europe are scattered and diverse in their origins (Leung, 2003, page 242). Before the World War II,

Western Europe did not receive many Chinese immigrants. A very limited number of Chinese immigrants temporarily lived in six main European harbour cities: London, Liverpool, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Hamburg and Antwerp (Pieke, 2004). Since the World War II, Western Europe has gradually become an attractive migration destination. Compared with the countries of North America and Australasia, the European countries remained relatively reluctant to accept Chinese immigrants, fearing unemployment and severe demands on social welfare (Kuhn, 2008). Nevertheless, some Chinese directly migrated from China to Western Europe. Italy, Portugal and Spain served as points of entries for the Chinese to Europe due to their less restrictive immigration policies (Leung, 2003, page 245). After the breakup of Western colonialism in the 1950s, France, Britain and Holland become attractive migration destinations for the Chinese. Before 1992, the Chinese from the People's Republic China did not need a visa to enter Hungary, which also served as an important entry for many Chinese to enter Western Europe (Leung, 2003, page 245). A few Chinese migrants established their businesses in Italy, recruiting new immigrants from China to work in that country. A well-known Chinese community formed in the Tuscany region of Italy (Kuhn, 2008). Since the early 21st century, Belgium, Germany and Scandinavia have also become Chinese immigration destinations (Pieke, 2004). At the same time, Chinese migrants to Europe have become more heterogeneous (Pieke, 2004).

In spite of various barriers, Europe has gradually become an appealing migration destination, with a large number of Chinese migrants legally and illegally residing in Europe. Chinese migrants in Europe are composed of students, businessmen, manual labourers and professionals. As well, Chinese migrants cannot be simply considered as a single ethnic group (Skeldon, 2003). By 1990 the number of Chinese population in Europe was at least 800,000 (Pieke, 2004). In Western European countries, most illegal Chinese migrants were originally from Fujian and Zhejiang via Eastern European countries (Ma, 2003, page 22).

Reflecting on the Finnish migration history, migration from China to Finland was a negligible phenomenon prior to the year 2000. However, the situation is changing. In recent years, the increase of Chinese migrants to Finland has been nothing less than phenomenal. The Chinese migrant group was the fifth biggest group after Russia, Estonia, Sweden, and Somalia in Finland in 2010 (Statistics Finland, 2010). According to the statistics of City of Helsinki Urban Facts, the number of Chinese immigrants in

Helsinki was 1968 at the turn of year 2008/2009. Like elsewhere, Chinese migrants in Finland are a heterogeneous group, including students, professionals, businessmen and manual labourers.

2.2. Previous research on Chinese migration to Europe

Insufficient previous research on Chinese immigrants in Finland has led me to examine the literature related to Chinese immigrants more broadly and generally. A considerable amount of literature has been published on the Chinese Diaspora in Europe. Many existing studies in Europe are particularly focused on ‘Fujianese migrants’, a particular Chinese group from Fujian Province of China. The origins and mechanics of Fujianese migration, the work and life of Fujianese migrants in Europe, and transnational connections of Fujianese migrants in Europe have been studied (Pieke, 1998 & 2004; Benton 1998; Christiansen 1998 & 2003; Nyiri, 2002; Thuno, 2003). Studies of Chinese migration to Russia are presented in the edited book ‘Globalizing Chinese Migration’ by Nyiri and Saveliev (2002). Research by Christiansen (1998 & 2003) illustrates that the identity of the overseas Chinese in Europe has been heterogeneously constructed over time. As well, the Chinese who migrated to Europe did not appear to pay much attention to differences among individual European countries (Christiansen, 1998). Nyiri (2007) provides a comprehensive overview of the Chinese in Eastern Europe and Russia from the 19th century to the present day. In addition, he points out that interactions between Chinese immigrants and Hungarian society are shallow and that the Chinese have not been fully accepted by the locals in Hungary (Nyiri, 2007). Thuno (2003) suggests that Chinese immigrants in Denmark were not attracted by the Danish social welfare system. Rather, the Chinese migrated to Denmark as a consequence of the demands for labour.

Previous studies of Chinese immigrants in the Finnish context are few in number. A recent study conducted by Katila (2010) shows that Chinese immigrants have needed little assistance from the Finnish government. However, Katila (2010) did not analyze in depth the reasons for this. Katila’s exploratory study (2010) on Chinese entrepreneurial families in Finland focuses upon the construction of gendered and ethnicized moral orders. The findings of Valtonen (2001) and Ahmad (2005) suggest that immigrants have greater difficulties in gaining employment in Finland in their attempt to gain access to the Finnish labour market. Wall and Jose (2004) investigated how the Chinese immigrant families dealt with child care and work in the Finnish

context. They pointed out that Chinese professionals in Finland did not face big challenges of taking care of children while Chinese immigrants in the unskilled labour market were vulnerable to difficulties with child care.

2.3. Previous research on Chinese immigrants' living conditions

Although the previous literature mentioned above is not specifically oriented to my research interest, it nonetheless provides a general framework of research into Chinese migration in the European context. The following is directed towards the concrete four aspects of migrant life: housing, employment, access to health care and child care.

The majority of Chinese immigrants in Finland reside in the Greater Helsinki area (Helsinki, Vantaa, Espoo). Helsinki metropolitan area has avoided extreme spatial ethnic segregation as a consequence of the Finnish mixed housing policy for immigrants (Kauppinen, 2002; Dhalmann & Vilkama, 2009). A Chinatown, a common residential pattern in other nations in which many Chinese immigrants densely reside in a particular area, does not exist in Finland. As Katila (2010) mentioned, the Chinese in Helsinki metropolitan area are geographically scattered and a distinct Chinatown does not exist in Greater Helsinki. However, this general picture does not reveal important micro-level variations (Dhalmann & Vilkama, 2009). Chinese immigrants who work in Chinese restaurants are usually provided with dwellings by Chinese restaurant owners (Katila, 2010). In contrast, Chinese professionals in Finland, for example, university researchers, normally do not have any great difficulty in finding comfortable accommodation and they mainly stay in a student-housing area provided by a university (Wall & Jose, 2004).

Chinese migration is mostly driven by seeking for better employment or profitable business opportunities (Ong & Nonimi, 1997; Thuno, 2003). Thousands of Chinese migrants come to seek entrepreneurial opportunities in Europe (Benton et al., 1998; Pieke et al., 2004; Nyiri, 2002 & 2007; Kuhn, 2008). To a large degree, Chinese migrants rely on kin networks to make connections in international migration (Pieke et al., 2004; Kuhn, 2008). The self-aware duty to family motivates Chinese migrants to offer help such as providing work information in order to assist other family relatives (Pieke et al., 2004). In addition, commercial migration brokers facilitate the Chinese Diaspora via providing job opportunities abroad (Pieke et al., 2004; Kuhn, 2008). There

exist migration brokers named 'Snakehead' who recruit cheap Chinese manual labourers from China to overseas (Kuhn, 2008). The Chinese, who do not have family relatives or friends abroad, have to depend on services provided by migration brokers to obtain employment from abroad (Pieke et al., 2004). Travel agencies and migration service companies also provide new ways for the Chinese to emigrate (Pieke et al., 2004). Unskilled migrants are highly mobile workers and they are exploring employment opportunities when they arrive in Europe (Pieke et al., 2004; Pieke, 2004b). However, Chinese migrants, who are irregularly employed in Chinese ethnic businesses, are very likely to be without any legal protection (Pieke, 2004b). Chinese restaurant workers come to Finland through legal channels. Chinese restaurant owners in Finland recruit their employees from China by offering job opportunities, which is the prerequisite for a work visa (Katila, 2010).

The unemployment rate of the Chinese is the lowest among all migrant groups in Finland. From 2001 to 2007, the unemployment rate of the Chinese in Finland fluctuated between 10% and 7% (Statistics Finland: Ministry of Labour, 2007). Compared with other migrant groups, it seems that the Chinese were doing the best in terms of employment in Finland. However, the reason cannot be simply presumed that the Chinese are more welcomed to the Finnish labour market. Instead, it is necessary to notice institutional reasons (Katila, 2010). Since Finnish immigration policies are very restrictive, the Chinese cannot easily enter Finland. In fact, Chinese migration to Finland is mainly limited to labour migration and student migration. Unlike European citizens, the Chinese cannot freely migrate to Finland without a valid visa.

International research illustrates that access to regular health care is difficult for relatively small ethnic migrant groups and new immigrants (Wolter & Stark, 2009). Access to health care in a receiving country is a key issue for migrants' well-being. When it comes to health care services, it is meaningful to capture perspectives of immigrants (Holroyd et al., 1998; Ozolins & Hjelm, 2003). The barrier of language and cultural differences makes immigrants become particularly vulnerable, leading to a greater likelihood of suffering from inadequate diagnosis and improper treatment (Chan & Quine, 1997; Bischoff et al., 1999; Bischoff, 2003; Ozolins & Hjelm, 2003; Green et al., 2006). In addition, it is necessary to keep it in mind that people's expectations of health care services are closely related to their cultural background (Leininger, 2001;

Helman, 2007). Immigrants from different cultural backgrounds may express illnesses in different ways, which might be difficult for health care providers to fully interpret (Helman, 2007). Further, the misunderstandings may result in delayed treatment (Ozolins & Hjelm, 2003).

A qualitative study of Chinese immigrants in Australia suggests that frustrations with health care services among Chinese immigrants resulted from linguistic difficulty and cultural differences (Chan & Quine, 1997). Typically the Chinese prefer to have care directly from doctors and the Chinese see the role that a nurse plays as reporting their health conditions promptly to doctors (Holroyd et al., 1998). The adoption of self-treatment and home remedies (special diets and alternative medicines) is common among Chinese immigrants (Chan & Quine, 1997; Ma, 1999). As a consequence of little knowledge of Western medical terms and the lack of understanding of the health care system, Chinese immigrants do not adequately utilize health care services in the United States (Ma, 1999). In addition, the lack of health care insurance, high cost of health services, cultural differences, different values of health care, and language problems result in unsatisfied feelings among Chinese health care seekers (Ma, 1999). When Chinese immigrants are unsatisfied with Western medical care, they tend to resort to traditional Chinese medical care (Green et al., 2006). The encounter with Western health services is culturally problematic for Chinese migrants.

According to international research, children of immigrants are more likely to lack usual sources of care (Javier et al., 2010). Most immigrant families, especially among the first-generation, have to face more difficulties in access to child care. International research from the United States shows that preschool children in immigrant families, especially those in low-income immigrant families, tend to receive child care from their parents who often lack the financial and human capital resources to child care (Brandon, 2004). Many Chinese migrant families in the United States face difficulties in finding affordable child care facilities (Chow, 1999). One main reason is that immigrant families suffer from the absence of local close kin networks to support child care. Great working pressures, long working hours, lack of information on child care services, and social isolations in a new receiving country can contribute to the serious problems of taking care of their small children (Wall & Jose, 2004).

Transnational grandparenting plays a significant role in assisting child care in Chinese immigrant families (Da, 2003). It is not uncommon for Chinese immigrant families to arrange grandparents from China to take care of grandchildren in a receiving country when grandparents are available and visas are permitted (Da, 2003). The strategy of transnational grandparenting is associated with the commitment to the extended family (Da, 2003). On the one hand, grandparents feel obliged to share the responsibility of child care. On the other hand, parents of children feel obliged to arrange grandparents to visit their grandchildren. Grandparents offer not only practical assistance but also quality and safety for grandchildren as well as emotional comfort (Da, 2003). However, because grandparents' assistance is often constrained by visa conditions, Chinese families have to adopt alternatives for a transition period such as utilizing public child care centers or paid nursing (Da, 2003). In the Finnish context, Chinese professionals with stable jobs normally send their children to child care centers during the day and sometimes they rely on help from their Chinese friends to pick up children if they have to work later than usual (Wall & Jose, 2004). On the contrary, unskilled Chinese immigrants in Finland are in a much more vulnerable position of taking care of their children (Wall & Jose, 2004).

Generally speaking, immigrants are in a vulnerable position in the receiving countries. Previous research shows that the native locals of receiving countries consider immigrants as the least deserving of social protection (Coughlin 1980; Van, 1998; Appelbaum, 2002). Finland is well-known for its good social protection for its citizens. According to the recent study of Van Oorschot (2006), Finns also perceive immigrants at the lower end of support dimensions. Although Finns are unsatisfied with the utilization of social welfare by immigrants, immigrants themselves have relatively limited opportunities to become fully independent of the social protection system when they face crises. Some previous research suggests that immigrants from non-EU and less-industrialized countries are more likely to rely on social protection provided by their receiving countries (Anderson, 2004; Morrissens & Sainsbury, 2005; Hammarstedt, 2009). At the same time, Chinese immigrants often encounter difficulties in accessing social protection from their receiving countries (Pieke et al., 2004).

3. Theoretical framework

Erik Allardt (1989 & 1993), a Finnish sociologist, has developed a theoretical framework for analyzing welfare and quality of life from a sociological perspective of an individual's basic needs via adopting three concepts *Having* (material conditions), *Loving* (need to relate to other people and to form social identities) and *Being* (need for integration to society). The 'Having, Loving, Being' theory of Erik Allardt (1989 & 1993) was originally formulated for Nordic welfare studies. Allardt's theoretical concepts of 'Having, Loving, Being' (1989 & 1993) refer to the crucial conditions of human development and existence in a welfare-state. Allardt (1989 & 1993) employed the concepts of 'Having, Loving, Being' to emphasize the importance of both material and non-material basic human needs. Allardt's approach (1989 & 1993) is generally focused on the well-being of all citizens in a welfare state. From the perspective of Allardt (1989& 1993), every citizen should be guaranteed to have certain basic material and non-material human needs in a welfare state. Although Allardt (1989 & 1993) did not specifically mention the needs of immigrants in a welfare state, from perspective of the present study, the theory of *Having*, *Loving* and *Being* is plausible to be employed in the analysis of the needs of immigrants in a welfare state. Material and non-material needs are imperative for immigrants to settle in a welfare society. Therefore, in my opinion, Allardt's theoretical framework can be safely applied to analyze the needs of Chinese immigrants in Finland.

Allardt's concept of *Having* provides the theoretical justification for my research on the four concrete aspects of housing, employment, access to health care and access to child care. *Having* refers to those material conditions which are necessary for survival and for avoidance of misery (Allardt, 1989 & 1993). Housing, employment and health care are included as concrete aspects of *Having* by Allardt (1989 & 1993). Allardt (1989 & 1993) did not specifically mention the aspect of access to child care in his concept of *Having*. However, since child care is also closely related to the well-being of immigrants who have children, from my point of view, it can be included to the concept *Having*. All in all, my research interest in Chinese immigrants in Finland is mainly focused on the four concrete aspects (housing, employment, access to health care and access to child care) of *Having*, which are fully discussed by analyzing the interview data collected from Chinese immigrants in Greater Helsinki.

As well as the needs for *Having*, it is necessary to keep it in mind that immigrants have the needs for *Loving* and *Being* during the settlement process in a new environment. The needs of *Having*, *Loving* and *Being* are always intertwined. The concept of *Loving* by Allardt (1989 & 1993) refers to the need for social relationships. Social relationships, for example, personal friendships, social connections with different social organizations and family ties, play great roles in the settlement process of looking for accommodation, obtaining jobs, receiving health care and taking care of small children. One of my main focuses is to see the importance of different social relations involved in the four aspects (housing, employment, health care and child care). The concept of *Being* refers to the need for integration into society and to live in harmony with nature (Allardt, 1989 & 1993). Everyday well-being of immigrants is related to satisfaction with immigrant life (Törrönen, 2008). Whether my Chinese interviewees subjectively feel they are integrated into the Finnish society through the settlement process of the four aspects (housing, employment, access to health care and access to child care) is another main focus in this research.

Allardt (1989) provides the dichotomy of objective and subjective indicators when *Having* (material and impersonal needs), *Loving* (need for social relations) and *Being* (need for personal growth) are discussed. My own research is not based on a large-scale quantitative questionnaire study. Therefore, the objective indicators are not employed in my following analyses. However, the subjective feelings provided by the 15 interviewees in my study are intensively examined.

Inspired by Allardt's theoretical concepts of 'Having, Loving, Being' (1989 & 1993), my own analyses of housing, employment, access to health care and child care can be mainly divided into two trajectories. First, social relationships are examined in the case of my Chinese interviewees dealing with housing, employment, access to health care and child care in Finland. Second, individual satisfaction with the four aspects is analyzed to see whether my interviewees subjectively feel they are integrated into the Finnish society with regard to the four aspects (housing, employment, access to health care and access to child care).

4. Research questions

One of my main research focuses is to explore the importance of different social relations involved in four aspects of the settlement--housing, employment, access to

health care and child care. Another main research focus is to see whether Chinese immigrants subjectively feel satisfied with the four aspects in their settlement process in Finland. Research questions are generally listed below.

- Reasons for migration to Finland and how to migrate to Finland?
- How do Chinese immigrants solve problems of the four aspects (housing, employment, access to health care and child care) in Finland?
- What kind of social relationships are involved in housing, employment, access to health care and child care among Chinese immigrants?
- Do Chinese immigrants heavily rely on social protection from the Finnish social welfare sector? If not, what kind of social resources do Chinese immigrants utilize?
- Does the Finnish social welfare system provide support when Chinese immigrants are in vulnerable situations related to housing, employment, health care and child care?
- Do Chinese migrants feel satisfied with their immigrant life in Finland on the four aspects (housing, employment, health care and child care)?
- Leaving or staying in Finland in future?

5. Research Method

My research began with my own curiosity about Chinese immigrants in Finland. A quantitative study of Chinese immigrants in Finland would be difficult to carry out at the present time. A rich source of statistical data related to Chinese immigrants has not been collected in Finland. Due to the difficulty in approaching the newly-arrived Chinese migrants and other limited resources such as financial support and time, it is impossible for a university student to collect large-scale sampling data. When detailed knowledge of a phenomenon is lacking, qualitative research represents a useful starting point for researchers (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). From this perspective, it is worthy of conducting an in-depth interview qualitative study in order to know more about the new migrant group in Finland. First, very little research on Chinese immigrants in the Finnish context has been conducted. An exploratory qualitative study is of importance to offer new perspectives of Chinese immigrants in Finland. Second, it is practical for a university student to conduct in-depth qualitative research when quantitative materials are unavailable. An interview qualitative study is relatively

economical with regard to time and resources (Silverman, 1993). Third, the qualitative method of interviewing is particularly suitable to observe varieties of situations faced by Chinese immigrants in Finland.

5.1. Research materials

In-depth interviews of 15 respondents were conducted in the Greater Helsinki region from September 2010 to December 2010. Each interview lasted about an hour. The semi-structured questions were designed to enable the respondents to talk about four aspects (housing, employment, access to health care and access to child care) in depth with a certain degree of flexibility. It is crucial to approach a range of views on the research topic in a qualitative study (Rapley, 2006). Although the selection of interviewees is relatively random, my Chinese interviewees are, as intended, heterogeneous with a wide range of backgrounds, which provides a range of different perspectives in a qualitative study. The method of finding heterogeneous interviewees was based on snowball sampling. One Chinese friend invited me to attend Christian activities in a church where I met seven respondents. The other 8 respondents were introduced by a few other friends in Finland. The actual practice of recruitment of respondents developed on an ad-hoc basis.

Table 1. Years of residence in Finland (at the end of 2010)

| Number of interviewees | Years of Residence in Finland |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 5 | <5 years |
| 7 | 5-14 years |
| 3 | >14 years |

Two particular types of Chinese immigrants are relatively difficult to approach. One category is young Chinese mothers with very small babies. I sent my contact information to two young Chinese mothers to ask for interviews but they refused because they were busy with taking care of their very small babies. The other category is Chinese restaurant workers. I contacted one Chinese restaurant worker but he did not manage to accept my interview because of little free time. Luckily, I managed to approach one respondent who was self-employed in a small restaurant and two interviewees with work experiences at Chinese restaurants. Nine interviewees have children in Finland. Ten interviewees are male and five interviewees are female. The

varied residence time in Finland of the 15 interviewees by the end of my interviews is shown (see Table 1). The longest residence time in Finland is 22 years while the shortest residence time is only one year. The family status of the 15 interviewees by the end of my interview is presented (see Table 2). The majority of my interviewees (eight interviewees) had nuclear families with children in Finland. All the 15 interviewees had jobs when I interviewed them.

Table 2. The family status (at the end of 2010)

| Number of Interviewees | family status in Finland |
|------------------------|--|
| 1 | Divorced (ex-wife, a Finnish woman), with a child in Finland |
| 1 | Married, without family members in Finland |
| 5 | Single, without family members in Finland |
| 8 | Married with children in Finland |

An in-depth interview is a type of social interaction between an interviewer and an interviewee (Gaskell, 2000). In some cases, interviewees may be a little hesitant and defensive. A comfortable interview atmosphere is necessary to make interviewees more willing to reveal reliable information. An interview is not a simple transfer of pre-existing information. Participants do not have ready information in their heads related to the questions. Instead, interview data are processed during the interaction between a researcher and interviewees. Interview data are sufficiently valid as long as a researcher realizes the influence of his or her presence (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). My ethnic background is Chinese, which enables me to have an emotional intimacy with Chinese immigrants in Finland. The emotional intimacy makes it much easier for me to establish trust among Chinese immigrants in Finland. Furthermore, Chinese immigrants are more willing to release reliable information to me. My role in interviews was to stimulate my interviewees to respond to the semi-structured questions. When questions were asked, my interviewees recalled their life experiences related to housing, employment, access to health care and access to child care as immigrants in Finland. Most of the time, my interviewees were left to have monologues without interruptions. Occasionally, I said ‘that is really interesting’ and I also showed some emotional reactions such as smiles to interact with my interviewees in order to create a comfortable atmosphere.

Thirteen interviews were conducted in Mandarin Chinese. One interviewee was not fluent in Mandarin Chinese but could speak English very well. Therefore, the interview was done in English. Another interviewee required me to conduct an interview with him in English because he wanted to practice his oral English. Twelve face-to-face interviews were recorded while three interviews were taken in notes. One interview was not recorded because of low batteries, which was my own mistake. One interviewee refused to be recorded for the reason that she felt nervous. One interview was not recorded because the interviewee suddenly visited me without informing me beforehand. At that time, I did not carry a voice recorder, so I had to take notes. My skill of taking notes in Chinese is very good. Therefore, the quality of the three unrecorded interviews is guaranteed. The other twelve recorded interview data were later transcribed. The speech tones, sighs, laughs, pauses, interruptions and other emotional signals, which are crucial in a conversational analysis, were not transcribed because they are not my focus point in this research. The main data I rely on were verbal accounts of my interviewees. When I transcribed recordings and notes into Microsoft Word documents, I directly translated them to English, considering that my research report is in English.

5.2. Ethical issues

Although there is no international agreement or regulations of ethical standards in research, there are three main issues frequently raised in the Western ethical research guide: informed consent, confidentiality and trust (Ryen, 2006). All the 15 interviewees were informed of the purpose of my research and they had the right to withdraw at any time. All respondents accepted my interviews with permission. The identity and other personal information of all participants are carefully protected without being released or recognized.

One ethical issue I faced related to religious beliefs. I attended the Christian religious activities at one church where I met a few Chinese interviewees for nearly half a year. I am an atheist. During one interview process, one Chinese interviewee suddenly asked me whether I believed God and tried to persuade me to believe in that ‘God does exist’, which made me a little uncomfortable and nervous. The Chinese interviewee respects me as an atheist, although she really hopes I could become a believer. Another Chinese interviewee politely asked me whether I was interested in receiving baptism. I politely refused. However, generally speaking, I do not think the religious belief seriously affect

my interview data. I believe that the religious respondents respected me as an atheist although they hope I could be moved by God one day.

Another ethical issue is how to deal with the relation between me and my interviewees. It was easy for me to construct the role as a student who was collecting data for the master's thesis. However, I was also perceived as a potential helper by two interviewees. One respondent gave me his business card, hoping that I could bring a few potential clients. Another respondent politely asked me to communicate with her son during the interview because she hoped that I could encourage her son to study harder. The ethical issue does not cause any serious problems in data collection for the research but it stimulates me to rethink of the relationship between a researcher and interviewees. Sometimes the role as a researcher can be combined with other roles. The role as a friend or a helper does not necessarily have a negative effect on the quality of data. Rather, in my research, the extra role as a potential helper or as a friend strengthens mutual trust between me and interviewees, which improves the quality of data to a large degree. For example, I was refused to an interview in the beginning but later when I invited my friends to dine at one interviewee's restaurant, he was willing to be interviewed and informed me of his migration life experiences in Finland.

5.3. Analysis of data

Although a face-to-face interview is inevitably influenced by the participation of an interviewer, the interview data are reflexively situated in a wider context, providing a wealth of useful information (Silverman, 1993). All accounts must be interpreted in terms of the context in which they are produced (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). The wide context my interviewees have is the migration background as the Chinese in Finland. I adopt one major tradition on which the analysis of interviews has centered: interview data as a resource. The perspective of interview data as a resource refers to that the collected interview data are seen as reflecting the interviewees' external reality (e.g. facts, events) or internal experiences (e.g. feelings, meanings) (Silverman, 2005; Rapley, 2006). My interviewees discussed the objective information about housing, employment, access to health care and access to child care in Finland as well as their subjective feelings related to the concrete four aspects.

It is worth to notice external reality and internal experiences are closely intertwined. However, in order to make my analysis clear, I separately coded objective facts and

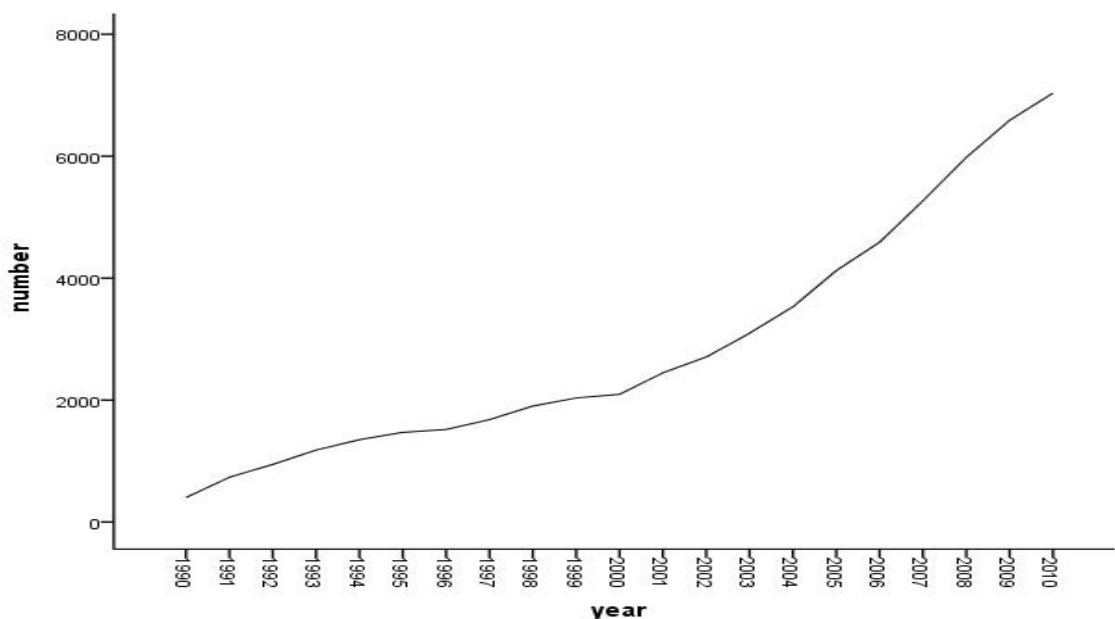
subjective feelings. In coding facts and feelings, I further coded according to the four concrete aspects (housing, employment, access to health care and child care) mentioned above. As well as the factual situations of housing, employment, access to health care and access to child care, social relationships involved in the four aspects were coded as external realities (facts). Furthermore, social relationships were categorized into different types (friends, family relatives, migration broker, schools, the Finnish welfare sector, employers, and workers). In addition, internal experiences (feelings) of the four aspects were further coded as satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Thus, coding of the four aspects can be perceived as factual interpretation from my interviewees, which I consider as solid information. With regard to feelings, these can be considered as personal meaningful interpretation of the facts, upon which I provide a critical reflection in the following analyses.

6. Research results

6.1. Population born in China from 1990 to 2010 in Finland

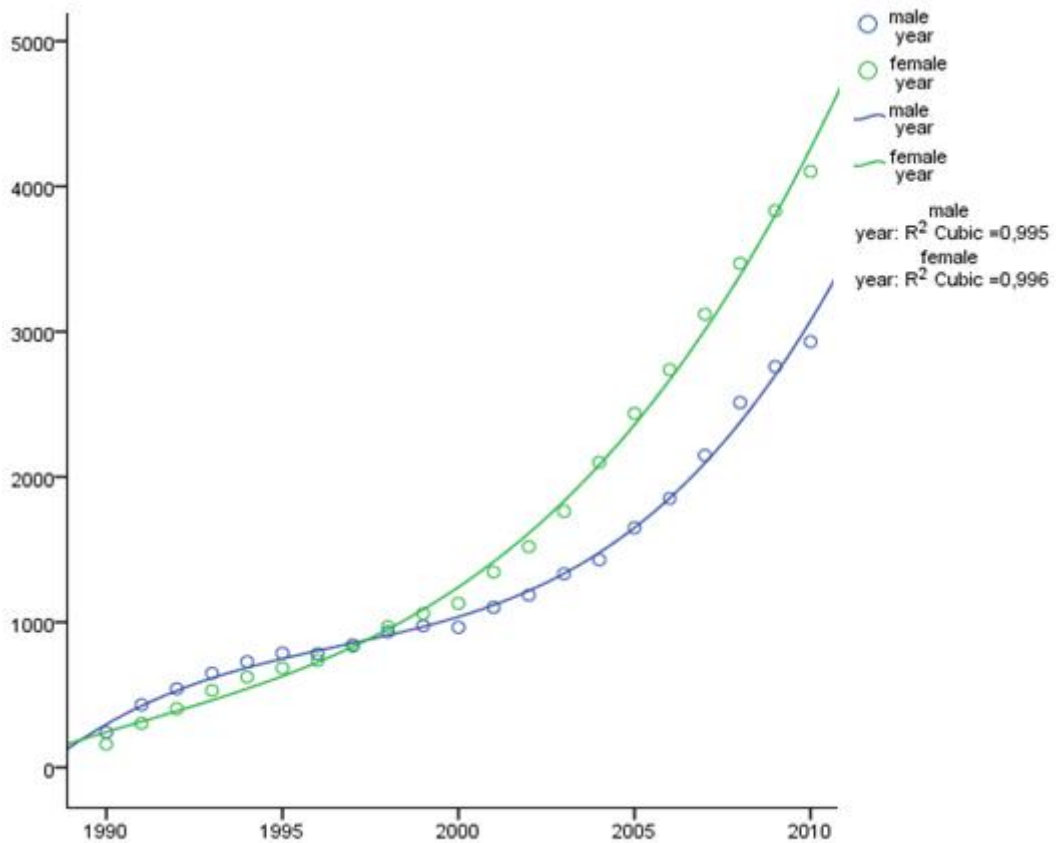
Before I discuss my qualitative research results, a general description of the population born in China from 1990 to 2010 in Finland is provided in this part. According to the data of ‘Country of Birth by Region 1990-2010’ (Statistics Finland, 2011), the number of population born in China was 402 in 1990 in Finland while it increased to 7034 in 2010.

Graph 1. Population born in China from 1990 to 2010 in Finland



I analyzed the subset data ‘Country of Birth by Region 1990-2010’ (Statistics Finland, 2011) by SPSS. Neither the data collectors nor the data distributors are responsible for the analysis or interpretation of results that I have done when using the data. The Finnish data collector is Statistics Finland (Tilastokeskus). Graph 1 vividly shows that the number of population born in China was significantly increasing from 1990 to 2010 in Finland. As can be seen from Graph 2, between 1990 and 1997, the number of male population born in China is more than that of female population. However, the trend has been changed since 1998. From 1998 to 2010, the number of female population born in China is more than that of male population (See Graph 2).

Graph 2. Gender difference of population born in China from 1990 to 2010 in Finland



6.2. Why did the 15 Chinese interviewees come to Finland?

Push-pull theories see international migration as an outcome of poverty and backwardness in the sending areas (Portes & Böröcz, 1989). Representatives of push factors are economic, social and political hardships in the poorest parts of the world while pull factors are comparative advantages in the more advanced nation-states

(Portes & Böröcz, 1989). The desire to leave China to seek better opportunities overseas was significantly strong among the 15 interviewees. Seeking better opportunities is a general conclusion of a variety of specific reasons for leaving China. Curiosity about the outside world and expectations of better education, higher salaries, better living conditions and more democratic political systems in the West world were held by the 15 Chinese immigrants before they migrated abroad. No interviewee was from a very poor family background in China. Most of them were able to live decently in China before they migrated but they preferred to explore opportunities overseas.

For most interviewees, Finland was not their ideal migration country. Pull factors of Finland were weak. Instead, push factors of leaving China were much more significant in their determination to come abroad. Most of them knew little about the small Nordic country until they arrived in Finland. It is understandable that a new destination cannot be very attractive when immigrants have no knowledge about it. The Finnish social welfare system was not an attractive factor in stimulating them to come to Finland in the beginning. 11 interviewees intentionally mentioned they came to Finland because they had no alternative choice if they wanted to leave China to seek for better opportunities abroad. Only four interviewees explicitly mentioned the good social welfare system of Finland was an attractive factor. The four interviewees had certain knowledge about Finland via searching the Internet and inquiring of their friends in Finland before migration. Therefore, for most interviewees, the choice to Finland was not the final decision after rational calculations of economic or social benefits. Instead, they migrated to Finland incidentally with great uncertainties and with expectations of good opportunities abroad.

One interviewee explicitly clarified he was much more interested in migrating to Britain but he did not have the chance.

'I met a blond girl in Hong Kong and I thought she was from Britain. I encouraged myself to have a chat with that girl. Interestingly, I later knew the girl was not from Britain but from Finland. I finally decided to visit Finland with that Finnish girl and later obtained a job at a Chinese restaurant in Finland. Migration to Finland was totally a coincidence to me.'

Another interviewee expressed her disappointment at Finland when she first arrived at Vantaa airport. In the beginning, from her perspective, Finland was not attractive at all.

'I had a good job in China before I came to Finland. Because I was young at that time, I was hoping to see the outside world. So, I decided to come to Finland because one of my family relatives offered a job at a Chinese restaurant. When I got off the airplane, I really wanted to go back to China immediately. 20 years ago, there was no very high building in Helsinki. Finland did not look very modern from the outside. On the contrary, you know, Guangzhou (my hometown) was developing very fast because of the opening policy of China. There were many high buildings in Guangzhou. At start, I felt I came to a less developed city (Helsinki) from a developed city (Guangzhou). But I had already arrived in Finland, so I did not have any other choice, so I had to stay in Finland to work.' (She arrived in Finland in 1990)

In fact, Helsinki is more developed than Guangzhou. However, in the beginning, Finland was not interpreted as a modern country because of few skyscrapers. It is the fact that Helsinki has much fewer high buildings than Guangzhou. In the early stage of the Chinese open policy, high buildings were symbolized as modernism in China. The interviewee was greatly influenced by the Chinese media before migration, taking skyscrapers as a crucial criterion of modernization. She expected to see more high buildings in Finland since Finland was described as much more developed than China in the 1990s. However, when she arrived in Finland, her expectation was not confirmed, leading to her immediate disappointment. The backward image of Finland was later abandoned after the interviewee became familiar with the new country.

6.3. How did the 15 Chinese interviewees come to Finland?

The 15 interviewees legally entered Finland for the first time with four types of visas (student visa, work visa, family reunification visa and tourist visa). Five interviewees entered Finland as students. Eight interviewees received work visas from the Finnish migration office. One interviewee obtained a family reunification visa. One interviewee visited Finland with a tourist visa. Different social relations on which the 15 interviewees mainly relied during their first application for residence in Finland are shown (see Table 3). Four interviewees applied for studying and working in Finland via searching the internet themselves. The internet played a great role in searching information among well-educated interviewees. Four interviewees obtained useful information on employment and study opportunities in Finland from their personal friends in Finland. Four interviewees obtained job and study opportunities from migration brokers. Without any social connection with Finland, they relied on migration

brokers when they wanted to go abroad. Migration brokers charged a certain amount of fees for providing migration services. The migration brokers had close connections with the Finnish labour market and with several Finnish schools. Migration brokers recruited some Chinese people to participate in the lower tier of the receiving labour market such as working as cleaners in Finland. As well, they recruited a number of Chinese students to several small Finnish schools. Two interviewees obtained jobs with the help of their family relatives in Finland. One interviewee came with her husband who was employed in Finland. As time went by, the visa status had been changed. Four interviewees had obtained permanent residency in Finland and one interviewee had become a Finnish citizen by the time I interviewed.

Table 3. Visa types and social relations in application for first residence in Finland

| Visa types | Number of interviewees | Number of interviewees | social relations on which interviewees mainly relied during application |
|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---|
| student visa | 5 | 2 | Self (the Internet) |
| | | 1 | personal friendships |
| | | 2 | migration brokers |
| work visa | 8 | 2 | self (the Internet) |
| | | 2 | personal friendships |
| | | 2 | migration brokers |
| | | 2 | family relatives |
| family reunification | 1 | 1 | nuclear family relationship |
| tourist visa | 1 | 1 | personal friendships |

As is seen from Table 3, social relations (friendships, family ties, migration brokers) are key social bridges of Chinese migration to Finland. Social relationships connect migrants across time and space by providing information and assistance (Boyd, 1989). As well, there exists a sequence of taking advantages of different social relations. Family ties are the first choice of resorting to support. When family ties in Finland are unavailable, existing personal friendships are fully utilized in order to obtain certain help. When personal friendships are deficient to provide sufficient assistance, migration

brokers are further drew on. The internet resources are only useful to those well-educated Chinese immigrants who seek professional jobs overseas.

Social ties are sources of settlement assistance (Boyd, 1989), which is shown in later parts. In the following, the four concrete aspects (housing, employment, access to health care and access to child care) are discussed.

6.4. Housing

Housing is a key concrete aspect in Allardt's concept *Having* (Allardt, 1989 & 1993). The process of finding affordable accommodation for a new immigrant is usually unsmooth as a consequence of insufficient knowledge about dwellings in a new environment. A China town does not exist in Finland because the Finnish housing policy actively prevents ethnic minorities from densely dwelling in the same place. Therefore, unlike America and Canada, it is impossible for Chinese immigrants in Finland to find accommodation in China towns. One interviewee recalled '*It was a bit hard for me to find a place to stay when I first came to Finland*'. How Chinese immigrants sought affordable accommodation in Finland is examined in this part. Social relationships and satisfaction in the settlement process of finding accommodation in Finland are analyzed in the following.

All the 15 Chinese interviewees knew little about how to find affordable dwellings when they first arrived in Finland. Therefore, they had to rely on support via social relations they had created before they came to Finland. As time went by, all the 15 interviewees changed their accommodation. When they became familiar with Finland and when they formed new social relations in Finland, the interviewees gained more knowledge about how to find better affordable accommodation. Further, they decided to change their living places. The first time of changing accommodation is one of the key transition points in my interviewees' immigration life in Finland.

6.4.1. Social relations involved in housing

How to find accommodation when the 15 interviewees first moved to Finland greatly depended on the social relations that they had established before they migrated to Finland. For those who came to Finland as students, schools arranged them to live in student accommodation. Their crucial social relationship when they first came to Finland was the social connection with a school organization. Those who came to Finland as university researchers received housing information from their university

employers and they were informed to apply for housing from HOAS (a Finnish housing organization for university students and researchers). When the application via HOAS failed, an alternative was adopted. The Internet played a great role in searching accommodation. Different from the Finnish way of searching accommodation via Oikotie (<http://www.oikotie.fi/>) and Etuovi (<http://kuluttaja.etuovi.com/>), Chinese immigrants in Finland mainly utilized the Chinese email list. Oikotie and Etuovi are two most popular websites for Finns, providing housing information. However, the two Finnish websites are in Finnish, which cannot be comprehended by Chinese immigrants who have not grasped the Finnish language. The Chinese email list, created by the Chinese Student Union of Aalto University, is an active email list in the Chinese community in Finland. The Chinese email list (chinese-list-request@list.ayy.fi) contains some useful information, which is especially helpful to Chinese immigrants who newly arrive in Finland. I picked up one piece of information from the Chinese email list on Vol 82 in Issue 12 of Chinese-list Digest (See Table 4). Subscribers can send their information to the email list, for example, empty rooms to rent or to seek accommodation. The Chinese email list helps new Chinese immigrants to get some information in Finland.

Table 4.Information from the Chinese email list

| Information type | Specific information |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| accommodation | apartment for rent in Helsinki |
| | family apartment for rent |
| | one female room available in Helsinki |
| | apartment for rent |
| | studio for rent in January |
| Job | Job offer |
| Business | bonus tickets for sale |

Chinese immigrants, who came to Finland with the help from migration labour brokers, obtained their first accommodation from migration labour brokers. Chinese immigrants, who came to work in Chinese restaurants, usually found their first accommodation in Finland from their Chinese restaurant employers. For example, one interviewee stayed in a place provided by her Chinese restaurant owner for two years. Chinese immigrants,

who received job information from their personal friends, relied on help from their personal friends to find accommodation. For instance, one interviewee came to visit Finland with his Finnish girlfriend. He stayed with his Finnish girlfriend in the beginning. Chinese immigrants, who obtained job information from their family relatives or family members, usually stayed with their family relatives or family members when they first arrived in Finland.

In a word, to a great extent, first accommodation in Finland Chinese immigrants could stay depended on the social relationships they had created before they came to Finland. The main social relationships on which my Chinese interviewees relied when they first moved to Finland circumscribe their first accommodation.

As time went by, Chinese immigrants gradually grasped more knowledge about Finland and they formed new social relationships (marriage, new personal friends and social connections with the local Finnish welfare office) that did not exist before they migrated. It is worth to notice that immigrants are not passive but active in seeking better opportunities. With new social relationships, they are very likely to improve housing conditions.

The 15 Chinese interviewees changed their first accommodation when they found better affordable dwellings. It is intriguing to see the transformation of social relationships on which my interviewees relied when they changed their accommodation for the first time in Finland. When those interviewees who came to Finland as students graduated, they had to find new dwellings. A marital partnership is a practical way of finding accommodation. Two female Chinese interviewees had their Finnish boyfriends while studying. After graduation, they directly moved to stay with their Finnish husbands. The dependence on migration brokers disappeared after Chinese immigrants established new social relationships such as personal friendships. The internet resources of housing, family ties and personal friendships are useful to help Chinese immigrants find better accommodation. When Chinese immigrants are unemployed, Finnish social welfare protection is utilized through applying for council housing. When Chinese immigrants have obtained stable jobs and determinate to permanently settle in Finland, they are very likely to purchase their own housing property.

The importance of personal friendships and family relatives does not have any fundamental change in the process of changing accommodation. Personal friends and

family relatives provided practical support to my interviewees. They were crucial to support my interviewees to find better accommodation. However, the role of social relations with employers and migration labour brokers experienced a significant change. Social relationships with employers and migration labour brokers are transformed into being unimportant. In fact, my interviewees gradually broke off the life chain with their employers and migration labour brokers when they formed new personal friendships and acquired more information in Finland. In other words, they did not depend on their employers and migration labour brokers any more while changing accommodation. As well, it is worth to notice the Internet became increasingly important when searching housing information. Finnish newspapers also became useful to a few interviewees who had grasped the Finnish language. In addition, the Finnish social welfare sector played a positive role in assisting Chinese immigrants with council housing when they were unemployed.

Another interesting point is that the 15 interviewees employed different social relationships at the same time while changing accommodation. When the 15 interviewees first arrived in Finland, they mainly relied on the sole social relationship. The way of receiving information on accommodation was a little exclusive in the beginning. In contrast, with longer residence in Finland, Chinese interviewees became capable of concurrently employing several different social relationships in the process of changing their accommodation. They resorted to help in different ways, for example, from friends, the Internet and the Finnish newspaper at the same time. They had more available information and they made comparisons to select the best. The Finnish social welfare sector also plays a positive role in providing affordable accommodation when Chinese immigrants are unemployed. The social relationship with the Finnish social welfare sector is a new type, which does not exist before Chinese immigrants arrive in Finland. As well, the Finnish media such as Finnish newspapers are transformed as useful resources when immigrants have learned the Finnish language.

6.4.2. Housing conditions

The concrete aspect 'Housing' in the concept '*Having*' of Allardt (1993) refers to the quality of housing. The quality of first accommodation in Finland of my 15 interviewees is examined in this part. Generally speaking, it is much easier for those who came to study at a school or to do research at a university to obtain decent accommodation in Finland. Their accommodation arranged by individual schools or

HOAS (a Finnish housing system for students and university researchers) was not crowded and of good quality. As well, the rental fees were inexpensive and reasonable. In fact, they directly enjoyed the good Finnish social welfare system. The Finnish social welfare sector provides housing support to students and university researchers. Chinese students and researchers in Finland can equally enjoy the same social right on the aspect of housing as the local Finns. It is the main reason for the good quality of housing among students and university researchers. Another reason is that university researchers have decent salaries, which enable them to rent comfortable flats.

However, first accommodation provided by migration labour brokers and Chinese restaurant employers was disgraceful. Two Chinese interviewees who came to work in Finland via migration labour brokers lived in very crowded places and they had to pay very expensive rental fees. For example, one interviewee reported:

'It was a 2-room apartment with a sitting room. But 6 Chinese people, who were all recruited by the migration labour broker to do cleaning in Finland, were living together. Each of us had to pay 280 euros per month for a very small place.'

The two Chinese interviewees were not content with their first accommodation provided by their migration labour brokers. However, they had no other choice but to stay there when they first arrived in Finland. Because they knew little about Finland and received little information due to the language barrier, they were unable to get rid of the dependence on their migration labour brokers in the beginning. Very interestingly, although my interviewees were not satisfied with their first accommodation, they expressed their contradictory feelings towards migration labour brokers. On the one hand, Chinese immigrants realized a certain degree of exploitation from migration labour brokers. On the other hand, they appreciated that migration brokers provided accommodation to them. For instance, one interviewee said:

'You know, I knew little about Finland and I did not have any friend in Finland when I first arrived. It would be impossible for me to get an affordable place to stay in the beginning without the migration labour broker. I clearly knew the rental fees were much more expensive and the living place was really crowded. You know, the migration labour broker exploited us. But at least I got a place to stay in the new country. They were not so bad.'

According to one Chinese interviewee, who first came to work in a Chinese restaurant in Finland, Chinese restaurant owners usually provide flats for their employees. Those flats may be rented or purchased by Chinese restaurant owners. It is not uncommon to see about 10 people live together in a 4-room flat. Very similar to manual labourers who are recruited by migration labour brokers, Chinese workers in Chinese restaurants usually stay in flats offered by their employers because they have no alternative when they first arrived in Finland. According to my interviewees, Chinese workers in Chinese restaurants in Finland are generally low-educated. Most of them are unable to search information on the Internet. The information on the Chinese email list I mentioned before is totally in English. For those who are low-educated, they are not able to take advantage of the Chinese email list to get useful information. Compared with other types of interviewees, Chinese workers at Chinese restaurants usually stay in places provided by their restaurant employers for a relatively long time. What's more, their salaries are relatively low, which practically limits the possibility of moving to a better but more expensive dwelling. For example, one interviewee stayed in a crowded place provided by his restaurant owner for about 2 years.

6.4.3. Satisfaction with housing

The concept *Being* of Allardt (1989 & 1993) stands for the need for integration into society. The concrete aspect *Housing* is crucial in the process of integration to the Finland society for immigrants. Satisfaction with housing directly influences feelings of integration among immigrants. In the following, satisfaction with housing is examined in this part.

The interviewees who stayed in accommodation provided by their Chinese restaurant employers or migration brokers were extremely unsatisfied in the beginning. After changing accommodation, they felt comfortable with their new accommodation. Two Chinese interviewees left the crowded living places offered by migration labour brokers and one Chinese interviewee also moved out the crowded living place provided by her Chinese restaurant employer. All the 15 Chinese interviewees improved their housing conditions with long residence in Finland. All of them were satisfied with their current housing conditions. By the end of my interviews, six interviewees had purchased their own flats in Finland. The rate is relatively high. With regard to the improvement of housing conditions and the rate of owning housing property and the degree of

satisfaction, it is safe to conclude that all the 15 Chinese interviewees integrated well in Finland on the aspect of housing by the time I interviewed them.

From the eyes of the six interviewees who purchased their own flats, the ownership of housing property was not only for better living in Finland but also a type of investment. As one interviewee perceived:

‘Chinese people around me often discuss whether to buy a flat or to rent one. You know, if we rent one, money goes to the landlord’s pocket. But if we buy one ourselves as long as we can afford it or through mortgage, even if we go back to China, we can sell it and make a bit more money. You know, normally the property of housing can increase in value.’

Most Chinese immigrants did not have any deep contact with the local Finnish housing community. They mainly shared flats with other Chinese immigrants in Finland. When my Chinese interviewees first moved to Finland, most of them were arranged to share flats with other Chinese people. They did not have opportunities to stay with Finns in the beginning. When they had opportunities to move out of the places provided by migration labour brokers and Chinese restaurant employers, they still shared flats with other Chinese people. In other words, in the process of changing accommodation, although the housing condition was greatly improved, most Chinese immigrants still stayed with only Chinese people. There are two main explanations clarified by my interviewees. One is that they feel more comfortable to stay with people who share the common culture. The other reason is that they have few opportunities to share flats with Finns since Finns usually do not prefer to share flats with foreigners. Another fact is personal friendships among my 15 interviewees are limited within the Chinese community in Finland. Most of them are unable to form personal friendships with the local Finns. Therefore, it is reasonable to claim the attachment to the Finnish local community among my 15 Chinese interviewees is relatively weak.

However, it is important to notice some changes. Perhaps Finland has become more willing to accept foreigners than the past. Taking housing as a concrete aspect, one interviewee, who had stayed in Finland for more than 20 years by the time I interviewed, recalled that Finns were not willing to rent their own flats to foreigners 20 years ago. He said:

'20 years ago, when I first moved to Finland, it was nearly impossible to rent a flat in the Finnish private housing market as an immigrant. Finns only gave flats to Finns. They would not give it to immigrants. I do not know why. They just did like that. If you (a foreigner) went there to ask if they could rent a flat, they would reply you 'No foreigner'.'

The situation may have been changing in a better direction. Another interviewee who rented a flat from an old Finnish lady said:

'I met an old Finnish lady on the street and asked her where I could find a place to stay. That Finnish old lady was very kind and she offered a two-room flat. The rental fees are reasonable.'

Compared with the comment of the Finnish private housing market was not welcome to ethnic immigrants 20 years ago, the recent example shown by one interviewee may be a signal to indicate that Finnish private housing market is becoming more open to ethnic foreigners inch by inch.

6.5. Employment

Employment is another concrete aspect in Allardt's concept of *Having*. The exclusion of the Finnish labour market makes immigrants difficult to be employed in Finland (Valtonen, 2001). As my Chinese interviewees commented, *'It is uneasy to get jobs in Finland.'* However, all the 15 Chinese interviewees were employed when I interviewed them. Social relationships can efficiently provide specific job information with low costs (Zhao, 2003). It is meaningful to examine what kind of social relations on which the 15 Chinese interviewees mainly relied while seeking their first job opportunities in Finland and when they changed their jobs in Finland. As well, whether they are satisfied with their jobs in Finland is another interesting research question.

6.5.1. Social relations involved in employment

Eight interviewees directly came to Finland to work. Well-educated Chinese interviewees applied for doing professional research jobs via the Internet. Two Chinese immigrants obtained cleaning jobs via migration labour brokers. Others received useful job information from family relatives and personal friends. One interviewee came to Finland with a tourist visa. He had a strong desire to migrate to a developed country. Therefore, when he arrived in Finland with a tourist visa, instead of travelling, he directly went to look for job opportunities in Chinese restaurants in Finland. He clearly

knew that he could only obtain a job from Chinese ethnic business sectors where he did not necessarily need to know Finnish. In the 1990s, it was a blooming period for Chinese restaurants in Finland. As the interviewee recalled:

'It was the golden time for running a Chinese restaurant in the early of the 1990s. The Chinese restaurants in Finland were in the lack of manual labourers because of the fast development. In fact, I did not have any restaurant working experience before. I easily got a job from them.'

In the Nordic countries, labour market issues are intertwined with welfare state arrangements in different ways (Kroll et al., 2008). Unemployed Chinese immigrants with a family reunification visa are supported to enter the Finnish job market by the Finnish social welfare sector. The provision of certain relevant education services is orientated at conducting active labour market policies (Kroll et al., 2008). The Finnish language courses and several career-related training courses such as nursing courses and domestic courses are offered to Chinese immigrants with permanent residency or with a family reunification visa in Finland. When Chinese immigrants grasp the Finnish language and successfully finish the nursing training, they are able to obtain nursing jobs in the Finnish labour market. The crucial social relation is the social connection with the Finnish welfare sector. In other words, the Finnish welfare sector provides necessary support to assist immigrants with a family reunification visa or with permanent residency to be employed in the Finnish labour market.

However, most Chinese immigrants were without permanent residency or a family reunification visa. They could not equally enjoy free language or nursing training provided by the Finnish welfare sector. Other social relations (family relatives, personal friendship and migration labour brokers) are crucial stimulants to support Chinese immigrants to obtain their first job opportunities. Personal contacts with friends and family relative are of great importance in employment, providing useful work information and opportunities (Granovetter, 1995). The crucial social relationships on which my Chinese interviewees relied were actually limited within Chinese community. Their family relatives, personal friends and migration labour brokers are all Chinese people. The internet is also a very useful tool. However, the effectiveness of the Internet is only limited to those well-educated interviewees who can search job information in

English or in Finnish. For example, two interviewees had opportunities to work as researchers at a university via applying on the Internet.

Social relations not only exist in the process of seeking job opportunities but also in the process of working. In the following, my focus is particular social relationships with workmates. The relationship with workmates in Chinese restaurants is simplified as the social relationship with other Chinese restaurant workers. Generally speaking, my interviewees had good work relations with other Chinese workers in restaurants. However, there is one exceptional example. In the early 1990s, according to my interviewees, most Chinese restaurants in Finland were operated by Chinese employers from Hong Kong. The social relationship between Chinese people from Hong Kong and those from the People's Republic of China was tense in the early 1990s, especially before Hong Kong was officially returned from Britain to China in 1997. The political issue seriously influenced one Chinese interviewee's working life in Finland. The interviewee from the People's Republic of China recalled that she was discriminated by the Chinese manager from Hong Kong at a Chinese restaurant. She said:

'At that time, Chinese people from Hong Kong looked down upon us from Mainland of China (the People's Republic of China). The manager from Hong Kong always harshly criticized me without any solid reason. I cried nearly every day after work because of this discrimination. It was OK for me to work very hard in a Chinese restaurant but I could not endure the manager's discrimination. Later, I decided to leave to work for another Chinese restaurant in Finland.'

One interviewee who was doing cleaning in Finland complained that his Russian colleagues excluded and discriminated him and other workmates from undeveloped countries such as from Africa. Another interviewee who was taking care of old people also complained that one Russian colleague was not collaborative at work. Both the two interviewees commented they had good work relationship with other workmates.

For those interviewees who had opportunities to work with Finns, most of them gave positive comments on working with Finns and they had good work relations with Finns. There are two exceptional examples. One interviewee had a dispute related to the work contract with his Finnish employer, which finally led to a tense work relationship with his previous Finnish employer. Later he resorted to help from the Finnish labour sector

and he received the full amount of salaries. Another interviewee commented that one Finnish workmate was not willing to collaborate at work. She said:

‘One Finnish colleague was not happy to work with me. She thinks she is a local Finn while I am a foreigner. She is not willing to be my assistant while working.’

All in all, social relationships with workmates are heterogeneous and complicated. Generally speaking, most interviewees had good work relationships with their colleagues while a few Chinese immigrants experienced unpleasant social relationships with their workmates. As well, all interviewees expressed it was difficult to establish personal friendships with their Finnish colleagues after work.

6.5.2. Working conditions

Working conditions are included in the concept *Having* of Allardt (1989 & 1993). To a great degree, working conditions depend on types of employment. Types of first jobs that my interviewees obtained in Finland are listed in Table 5. Ten Chinese interviewees did the low-level jobs (working at Chinese restaurants, a Chinese grocery shop, cleaning, taking care of old people, taking care of horses, and repairing TV sets). Five Chinese interviewees obtained relatively middle-level jobs in Finland. Three Chinese interviewees were university researchers. Their research areas were sciences (biology, neurology and geographic information system).

Table 5. First jobs of the 15 interviewees in Finland

| Number of Interviewees | First job type | The number of Interviewees | Specific working places |
|------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 10 | low-level | 4 | Chinese restaurant |
| | | 1 | Chinese grocery shop |
| | | 2 | cleaning company |
| | | 1 | nursing (taking care of old people) |
| | | 1 | horse ranch (taking care of horses) |
| | | 1 | repairing TV sets (assistant) |
| 5 | middle-level | 1 | Chinese language supporter |
| | | 3 | university researcher |
| | | 1 | IT company |

It is interesting to examine the employment situations of the 5 interviewees who came to Finland as students. After graduation, two interviewees were hired as researchers at a university when they were doing their doctor degrees in Finland. One interviewee was hired at an IT company after graduation. One interviewee worked as a waiter in a Chinese restaurant after he received his Bachelor degree from a Finnish college. One interviewee worked in a Chinese grocery after graduation with a Bachelor degree from a Finnish college. The two interviewees, who did not obtain decent jobs after graduation, majored in business in Finland while the three interviewees, who found decent jobs, majored in sciences at school. It seems that Chinese graduates who study sciences in Finland are more likely to find decent jobs than those Chinese graduates who study business. Doing business in Finland requires Finnish language skills, which largely prevents Chinese graduates from obtaining business-related jobs in Finland.

The working condition of Chinese restaurants is the most unpleasant. Normally my interviewees had to work more than 8 hours per day. However, they did not get double wages when they overworked. To put it simply, they had to work much longer but with relatively low salaries. As one interviewee recalled *'It was very busy at a big Chinese restaurant. I had to work at least 14 hours per day.'* As to salaries, one interviewee recalled:

'I was a bit angry at working in restaurants. They were cheating workers, giving low salaries to us and without paying full taxes to the Finnish government at that time. They knew you were in a weak situation. If you did not want to work there, you would be unemployed.'

And according to my interviewees, it is not unusual to illegally hire some part-time workers in Chinese restaurants. One typical explanation provided by my interviewees is *'It is still lucky to get a long-term illegal job compared with being jobless.'*

However, it is worthy of keeping it in mind that Chinese restaurant employers in Finland are not homogenous. Although the general treatments in Chinese restaurants are perhaps harsh and unpleasant, there are a few exceptions. Not every Chinese restaurant employer is doing business illegally. As well, not all Chinese restaurant employers are mean. One interviewee mentioned her Chinese restaurant employer was legally doing business and she explicitly showed her gratitude to her Chinese restaurant employer.

As is well known among the Chinese themselves, Chinese restaurants are not nice working places. Few interviewees were willing to work there. However, due to the barrier of the Finnish language and education backgrounds, those interviewees were in a much more vulnerable position in the Finnish labour market. They had few opportunities to work in other areas. As my interviewees commented, '*Having an unpleasant job is much better than being jobless in Finland.*' On the contrary, the working condition of being a cleaner, a waiter in a hotel, a nurse, or a horse carer in a farm is better than working in Chinese restaurants. Working at office as a researcher or an IT technician is the most comfortable among the job types I mentioned above.

It is meaningful to trace changes of employment among my 15 interviewees after they lived in Finland for a long time. Immigrants are not passive receivers but they are active seekers for better opportunities. Very interestingly, although my interviewees gained more knowledge about Finland and formed new social relations, the upward mobility in the Finnish labour market is not significant. Newly formed personal friendships with other Chinese immigrants in Finland could not bring more beneficial job information. Strong social ties are less likely to transfer useful information than weak social ties (Granovetter, 1973). On the one hand, compared with Finns, Chinese immigrants in Finland are in vulnerable positions of receiving job information in the Finnish labour market. The close social relationships with other Chinese immigrants cannot greatly increase the likelihood of gaining beneficial information related to possible work opportunities. On the other hand, the lack of weak social ties with the local Finns among Chinese immigrants prevents them from gaining more useful information on employment.

Seven interviewees had not changed their jobs by the time I interviewed them. The key explanation was that they had no chance to find better job positions in Finland. One interviewee changed his job from a Chinese restaurant to a Finnish hotel. It cannot be considered as an upward mobility but as a vertical mobility. One interviewee first came to Finland as a university researcher. After his work contract was terminated, with the help of his Finnish colleagues, he directly operated a small acupuncture clinic in Finland. However, not every interviewee was able to become self-employed. Two Chinese immigrants received the Finnish language and nursing training when they became unemployed. Later they obtained nursing jobs in Finland.

Very interestingly, significant upward mobility is seen among those interviewees who used to work in Chinese restaurants. Chinese immigrants, who were hired as workers in restaurants, clearly knew they did not have any good future if they continued working there. Three interviewees had become self-employed by running their own catering businesses in Finland. Since they do not have any other skills, the three interviewees are limited in doing catering businesses. It took average 6 years for the three interviewees to save money and later to run their own small businesses (restaurants and pubs) in Finland. When their small businesses were operated well, they invested more money to run a relatively larger business. All the three interviewees worked extremely hard to accumulate their financial capital before they became self-employed.

My interview data prove that self-employment can be a stepping-stone for Chinese immigrants to achieve economic success. The Finnish public seems to hold contradictory stereotypes of businesses run by ethnic minorities in Finland (Wahlbeck, 2008). On the one hand, running businesses by ethnic minorities are considered as efficient ways to help immigrants economically integrate into the Finnish society. On the other hand, ethnic entrepreneurs are perceived as potential lawbreakers who do not strictly follow Finnish labour and tax regulations. (Wahlbeck, 2008) In fact, Chinese entrepreneurs realize the Finnish positive and negative stereotypes of their businesses. One Chinese restaurant entrepreneur made comments on the Finnish public stereotypes. From his perspective, thrift and hard work are two main contributing factors in Chinese catering businesses. He said:

‘You know, Chinese people like me normally worked very hard in Chinese restaurants. I worked about 14 hours per day. But I did not spend money but saved it to invest my own small business later. Some Finns may be curious at why we could become rich within a short period. Some Finns may think we do not pay taxes. They falsely think that is why we can become rich so quickly. But, come on, when Finns take rest, we are still working. When they spend money at pubs, we never spend money except for life necessities.’

As I have mentioned before, illegal operations do exist in several Chinese restaurants but it cannot be generalized to all Chinese restaurants. Being illegally employed is widely perceived as much better than being unemployed among Chinese immigrants in Finland. As well, long working hours are justified by Chinese immigrants as the only

way to earn much more money in Finland. In contrast to Finns who spend much money at pubs, Chinese immigrants save their earnings as remittance to China or to accumulate financial capitals to run their own small business in future.

It seems that in the early 1990s the business of Chinese ethnic food created a lot of job opportunities for Chinese immigrants in Finland. However, because of the low salaries and long working hours, workers were not satisfied with their restaurant jobs. Once they accumulated a certain amount of money, they chose to run their own small business or directly went back to China. If they were in good luck of running their small business, they became self-employed successfully.

Generally speaking, most my interviewees did not experience any upward mobility on the aspect of employment with longer residence in Finland. It seems that most of them are unable to climb into the middle-class in Finland. In conclusion, it is the fact that most of my interviewees remained to be in the low-level labour market in Finland.

6.5.3. Satisfaction with employment

The concept *Being* of Allardt (1989 & 1993) refers to the need for integration into society. Employment is widely considered as a useful mechanism for facilitating immigrants to well integrate in the Nordic countries (Kroll et al., 2008). Subjectively speaking, whether the interviewees integrate into the Finnish labour market significantly depends on their individual satisfaction with their current jobs. Opportunities for a meaningful work-life are of importance in producing the feeling of *Being* (the need for integration) (Allardt, 1989 & 1993). Different levels of satisfaction with employment among the 15 interviewees are scrutinized in this part.

Chinese immigrants, who worked as an IT technician, a university researcher or an English teacher at an international kindergarten, felt satisfied with their current jobs by the time I interviewed them. Since they had relatively decent jobs and their working conditions were pleasant, it is not surprising to hear that they were satisfied with their employment situations. However, it is imperative to notice that not many Chinese immigrants could obtain those decent jobs.

Those interviewees, who first worked in Chinese restaurants but later became self-employed, were very satisfied at their current self-employed situations as running their own catering businesses in Finland. Their past work experiences in Chinese restaurants

were unsatisfactory because of long working hours and low salaries. However, contradictorily, Chinese immigrants expressed their appreciation of their past hardship. The life trajectory of an individual is continuous. Without the past sufferings, they would not have had the chance to run their own businesses in Finland. Their first jobs in Chinese restaurants enabled them to have the right to migrate to Finland. Although they felt unsatisfied with their first jobs in Chinese restaurants, they had learnt much of how to operate a small catering business in Finland when they worked there in the past.

Not every worker in Chinese restaurants could become self-employed after working there for a few years. One interviewee, who first worked at a Chinese restaurant, currently worked as a waiter at a Finnish hotel. He was not content with his current working life. As well, Chinese immigrants, who worked in a Chinese grocery shop or cleaning companies, expressed their dissatisfaction with their current jobs. On the one hand, they felt they were very lucky to obtain a job in Finland since the Finnish labour market was not very open to foreigners. And their salaries were sufficient for them to survive in Finland. Compared with salaries they had in China, they earned a little more in Finland. On the other hand, all the three interviewees felt their talents were wasted in Finland. They received tertiary education from China and Finland. They felt they were capable of doing more meaningful jobs if they had opportunities. To put it simply, they only considered their current job as a survival way of earning sufficient money in Finland but without any valuable meaning.

One Chinese professional operated his own acupuncture clinic in Finland after his research work contract was terminated. He expressed contradictory feelings towards his self-employed work life in Finland. On the one hand, he enjoyed his current situation as self-employed and he was able to apply his acupunctural skills in Finland. On the other hand, he felt his talents were neither fully contributed in Finland nor fully recognized by Finns because most Finns did not consider Chinese acupuncture as a serious medical treatment. The interviewee held a doctor degree in the acupuncture area and he had a few years of post-doctor research in Finland. But he noticed his doctor degree and research experiences were largely devaluated in Finland.

As to nursing jobs such as taking care of old people or small children, satisfaction with nursing jobs is various. Three interviewees currently did nursing jobs by the time I interviewed them. Very interestingly, the three interviewees showed three different

levels of satisfaction. One interviewee explicitly expressed that she enjoyed her current nursing job. She provided one practical reason:

'I think nursing is really practical all over the world. It is very easy to get a job if you study nursing and it is really helpful to your own family especially when your family has kids or old people. I have my own kids. It is very beneficial.'

Although the interviewee enjoyed her current nursing job, she was interested in changing her job if possible in the future. A nursing job normally required her to do nightshifts, which was inconvenient for her to take care of her small children. I am going to fully discuss child care later.

One interviewee commented that she neither enjoyed her nursing job nor hated it. The salaries were sufficient for her to make a living in Finland. The working condition of nursing was satisfactory. However, the nursing job did not bring her any cheerful feelings. Another interviewee was not satisfied with his nursing job. He was a Chinese linguist in a college before he moved to Finland. He felt he could not contribute his talents in Finland. From his perspective, doing a nursing job was currently the only way of surviving in Finland.

It is interesting to notice that 13 interviewees out of 15 held at least a Bachelor degree. Three interviewees without a college degree were self-employed in catering businesses when I interviewed them. They came to Finland to work in Chinese restaurants in the early 1990s. Chinese immigrants, who currently were employed as a waiter, a cleaner, a nurse in Finland, all held Bachelor degrees. Before migration, most of them had decent jobs in China. To some degree, their education background and previous work experiences in China were devalued in Finland. However, they were unable to change their vulnerable positions in the Finnish labour market.

No matter how satisfactory jobs are, the practical way of making a living in Finland is to be employed. The strategy of obtaining a job in Finland was reflected by one interviewee.

'First, it is important to forget your decent job in China and to forget your education degree when you arrive in Finland. Second, you have to know the Finnish job market. Nurses and cleaners are extremely needed in Finland. There are other nice jobs but Finns usually do not hire immigrants. Third, you have to learn Finnish very hard. In

fact, you do not need to use the Finnish language after you get cleaning jobs. But if you want to get a cleaning job, you need to know it. Or they will not hire you.'

In conclusion, my interviewees did not need to worry about their basic life needs when they were hired in Finland. However, as Forsander (2008) reflects, it is extremely difficult for an immigrant who works as a cleaner or a waiter in an ethnic restaurant to feel they are well integrated into the Finnish labour market. Most Chinese immigrants were unsatisfied with their current job situations because they felt their talents were significantly devaluated in Finland. As well, most of my Chinese interviewees did not consider their current jobs in Finland could satisfy their needs for future personal development. In fact, Chinese immigrants had subjective feelings of being alienated in the Finnish labour market, which largely prevented them from having individual feelings of integration to the Finnish society.

6.6. Access to health care

Availability of health care is another crucial concrete aspect in Allardt's concept *Having* (Allardt, 1989 & 1993). According to World Health Statistics (2010), the total health expenditure of Finland increased from 7.2% of gross domestic product in 2000 to 8.2% in 2007. The quality of health care in Finland is widely considered as high standard by using the Western criteria. Compared with the majority population, ethnic migrants are in a weaker position in access to high-quality health care services in their receiving countries (Lakhani, 2008; Blais & Maiga, 1999). Access to health care among Chinese immigrants in Finland is scrutinized in this part. It is interesting to examine whether the Chinese interviewees are in a weaker position when they gain in access to high-quality health care in Finland.

The Finnish health care system can be generally divided into two categories: the public health care system and the private health care system. The Finnish public health care system mainly relies on the financial support of the Finnish welfare sector. In practice, the private health care system is seldom utilized by the Chinese immigrants because of expensive fees, although Chinese immigrants consider that private health care services are better than public health care services. In consideration of financial pressures, the 15 interviewees preferred to utilize Finnish public health care services. Practically speaking, the public municipal health care system is the only choice for low-income Chinese immigrants in Finland. Not surprisingly, Chinese immigrants are in a weaker position in

access to the better private health care services in Finland due to their tight financial budget.

In Finland, ethnic minority adults less frequently utilize health care services than Finns (Malin & Gissler, 2009). My own research shows that the 15 Chinese interviewees solved small health problems themselves without utilizing Finnish public health services. They did not visit municipal health care centers until they felt seriously sick. There are three main reasons for the low-frequency of taking advantage of Finnish public health care services among my interviewees. First, the interviewees were not familiar with the Finnish public health system. They knew they did not need to pay for the public health services as long as they were employed or with permanent residency. However, they were in the lack of information about how the Finnish public health system really worked. The unfamiliarity with the Finnish public health system prevented my interviewees from actively utilization. Second, the language barrier makes my interviewees unwilling to visit health care centers. They are not confident in reporting their health conditions neither in Finnish nor in English. A few Chinese interviewees were only able to communicate in Chinese when they first arrived in Finland. The third reason is that all my interviewees brought some over-the-counter (OTC) drugs such as Amoxicillin Capsules when they came to Finland from China. A few of them also took some traditional Chinese medicine. They usually take care of themselves by taking some OTC drugs or Chinese medicine when they have small health problems such as the common flu. They do not visit municipal health care centers until they are unable to solve health problems by taking some basic drugs or Chinese medicine, As one interviewee reported:

'I was not familiar with Finnish health care system. I seldom went to health care centers. You know, we (Chinese people) normally have a habit of storing some basic medicine. I brought some medicine from China to Finland. I took care of myself when I got uncomfortable, for example, when I got flu.'

All the 15 Chinese interviewees reported their health condition was generally good. They did not frequently face serious health problems. The strong correlation between poor health and the social status of ethnic minority migrants does not exist among my 15 Chinese interviewees.

6.6.1. Social relations involved in access to health care

Different social relationships are needed in access to health care. Personal friends and family relatives were crucial when my interviewees visited the municipal health care centers for the first time. The interviewees were accompanied to visit municipal health care centers by a Chinese friend or a family relative who had experiences in encountering Finnish health care centers. First, the friend or the family relative can provide basic information on how Finnish health care system works. Second, Chinese interviewees feel more comfortable and safer if they are accompanied by a friend or a family relative when they feel sick. Third, if necessary, the Chinese friend or the family relative can be a language assistant.

As my interview data show, in certain cases, employers, migration labour brokers, and schools provided necessary information about the Finnish health care system when my interviewees first arrived in Finland. Generally speaking, the social relationships my interviewees had connected before they arrived in Finland have a positive function of providing basic information on access to health care.

The social contact with associations and organizations is an important element in Allardt's concept *Loving (needs for social relations)* (Allardt, 1989 & 1993). A new social relationship is usually formed in access to health care. The new formed social relationships with health care workers (nurses and doctors) are the crucial connections between my interviewees and the Finnish public health care system. Social contacts with individual nurses and doctors are on the micro level but this type of social relationship is closely correlated to the macro level of Finnish public health care services. More specifically, the micro individual social contact with nurses and doctors is the window for Chinese immigrants to see the general picture of Finnish public health care services.

Social contacts with nurses and doctors are heterogeneous among my interviewees. A few interviewees formed very friendly social relations with nurses and doctors while some had unfavorable social contacts. For example, one interviewee commented: '*I got very sick and stayed at hospital for 4 days. I felt the nurses there were very nice and friendly.*' On the contrary, another interviewee had a very unpleasant social contact with nurses at hospital. '*After the operation, I felt very cold and tired. I asked nurses there to*

give me a blanket. They did not help me but chatted with each other so loudly, making a lot of noise.'

It is worthy of noticing that social contacts in access to health care services in Finland are involved with the language barrier and cultural differences. The communication difficulties resulted from the language barrier and cultural differences inevitably decrease the quality of social contacts with nurses and doctors. The language barrier exists in all aspects of my interviewees' lives in Finland. However, the language barrier probably brings more direct negative feelings when people are seriously sick at hospital. Despair frequently happened to my interviewees when they had difficulties in expressing their symptoms or feelings to nurses and doctors. For example, one interviewee reported: *'That doctor who performed the surgery was not able to speak English. I was frightened to death at that time. That was so terrible! I am lucky to be alive now.'*

Most interviewees complained about the treatment of fever and diarrhea in municipal health care centers in Finland. One main reason is the cultural difference. In China, when a patient with high fever or diarrhea goes to have a medical examination, the person usually receives the subscription from their nurses or doctors who usually list some over-the-counter (OTC) drugs or Chinese medicine. However, in Finland, according to my interviewees, nurses usually tell patients to drink more water or to take some Vitamin pills without giving any medicine. It might be the right treatment but Chinese immigrants felt they were seriously ignored by nurses in Finland. For instance, one interviewee complained:

'If I get sick, I have to hold up. They do not give you medicine immediately. Normally if you are in diarrhea or get flu, they do not give you any medicine. It is unlike in China. I feel the treatment to patients in Finland is like treating animals. They just leave you alone to survive if you are not going to die immediately.'

Another main cultural difference is the attitudes towards doctors and nurses. A Confucian principle of deferring to authority suggests the social relationship between nurses and doctors is hierarchical (Holroyd et al., 1998). Most Chinese patients expect more attendance and care directly from doctors and they only see the role of nurses as reporting their health condition promptly to doctors (Holroyd et al., 1998). The perspective is also shown among my Chinese interviewees. Chinese immigrants do not

have enough confidence in nurses and they prefer to receive examinations directly from doctors who are more respected as the authority in medical areas. In Finland, nurses first examine the health condition of patients. If nurses feel it unnecessary for patients to see doctors, they do not defer to doctors. The cultural difference led to some problems among a few Chinese immigrants when they encountered Finnish health care centers. Some Chinese interviewees did not fully trust nurses in Finland, doubting the medical knowledge of nurses. When nurses did not defer to doctors, they felt they were not equally treated and ignored by Finnish health care centers. Furthermore, they subjectively felt their social contacts with nurses were not well formed. In conclusion, it seems that cultural differences in access to health care probably lead to misunderstandings among my Chinese interviewees, which greatly decreases the quality of social contacts in access to health care in Finland.

6.6.2. Satisfaction with access to public health care in Finland

In the following, satisfaction with Finnish public health care services among the 15 Chinese immigrants is discussed. Many ethnic minorities feel alienated and isolated in access to health care (Cortis & Kendrick, 2003). Do my Chinese interviewees subjectively feel alienated and isolated in access to Finnish public health care services? Do they feel satisfied with Finnish public health care services?

There are two general comments made by my interviewees. One positive comment is the cost of utilizing Finnish public health care is very cheap as long as migrants are legally employed or with permanent residency. The affordable Finnish public health care services greatly release financial burdens of Chinese immigrants when they have health problems. In other words, the interviewees did not need to spend much money on visiting nurses and doctors in Finland since the Finnish public health system is nearly free of charge to Finnish citizens and foreigners who are with legal work contracts or permanent residency. A legal work contract includes the public health insurance. All my Chinese interviewees felt greatly satisfied with the low cost of visiting nurses and doctors in access to Finnish public health care services. Generally speaking, private health care services are not affordable for most interviewees. They were unable to utilize the private health care services because of the limited financial budget. All my Chinese interviewees showed their great gratitude to the Finnish government because they were equally granted to access the Finnish public health care system when they were employed or with permanent residency in Finland. In conclusion, the Finnish

public health care system provides great support to improve the health condition of Chinese immigrants, which significantly relieve the financial burdens when immigrants have illnesses in Finland.

The other general comment on access to Finnish public health care services is the long queue. It is understandable to hear complaints on the long waiting in access to public health care. One typical feedback is:

'The Finnish public health care centers had good services but the queue was too long. We had to wait for a long time, although they finally solved the problem.'

The problem of a long queue was frequently complained by my interviewees. For example, one interviewee complained that she waited in a municipal health care center for a long time as a pregnant woman when her elder son was sick. It is understandable that when people have health problems, it is indeed uncomfortable for them to wait for a long time. Unfortunately, the problem of long waiting cannot be easily solved because there are a large number of patients at health care centers.

Maternal care is a specific area of health care. In spite of good general coverage of maternal care, migrant origin women were more likely to receive unsatisfied treatment than Finns (Malin & Gissler, 2009). My interview data show two contradictory examples of accessing maternal care in Finnish hospitals. Two Chinese interviewees experienced the treatment of having childbirth in Finland but they had different attitudes. One interviewee commented:

'The Finnish hospital took very good care of my pregnant wife while delivering our baby. We were very satisfied with the treatment of Finnish maternal care.'

However, the other interviewee experienced a terrible treatment. She recalled:

'The nurses at that Finnish hospital totally forgot me for about 24 hours. Nobody came to help me have a caesarean section until the next morning when a nurse realized I was still waiting at hospital with high fever. The service there was terribly bad. It was a nightmare to me.'

The two examples vividly show variations of treatment that individuals may encounter at hospital. It is uneasy to judge whether Finnish public health care services are good or not because variations exist on the micro level. The degree of satisfaction greatly

depends on personal experiences when they gain access to health care in Finland. With regard to maternal health care, it seems that bad experiences of having childbirth in Finland among Chinese women are not uncommon. One interviewee reported:

'There is a popular saying among Chinese mothers in Finland. It is neither good to give birth in July nor on Christmas holiday because many good doctors are on vacation during those periods. I do not know whether it is true. But my experience of delivering in July was terrible. There is another popular joke among some Chinese mothers who had childbirth in Finland. The joke is that the reason for the small Finnish population is because 50% babies die in that Finnish hospital. The service there is not good although it has some excellent doctors. It depends on your luck. I was totally in bad luck when I gave birth there.'

The joke itself is ironic without any solid proof. However, the popularity of the joke among Chinese mothers in Finland implicitly reveals that a number of Chinese women who gave birth in Finland were not satisfied with the maternal health care services. It appears that Chinese ethnic migrant women are likely to experience bad experiences when they utilize maternal health care services in Finland.

Another perspective on Finnish health care services provided by my interviewees is that Finnish health care centers have more sophisticated testing facilities than Chinese hospitals. However, they feel doctors and nurses in Finland are less experienced than Chinese ones. From their perspective, Finnish doctors and nurses mainly learn medical knowledge from textbooks or at laboratory while Chinese ones learn more from direct contacts with real patients in clinics. In their opinion, Finnish doctors were in the lack of clinical cases because of the small Finnish population.

One typical saying is:

'I cannot say the medical treatment in Finland is bad. Finland has very sophisticated medical facilities. But I feel that Chinese doctors see different illnesses very often while Finnish doctors are in the lack of enough clinical cases because of the small population of Finns. I feel Chinese doctors and nurses are more experienced and efficient than Finnish ones.'

It is crucial to keep it in mind that the satisfaction with Finnish health care depends on individuals. Some interviewees felt very satisfied while others did not. One unsatisfactory story told by one Chinese interviewee:

'I got very sick once. I went to a Finnish public health care center and they did not find the problem. But I felt terribly ill. Later I decided to go to a private hospital although it was very expensive. After testing, they told that I got Hepatitis A Virus. The doctors there just told me to go back home without giving me any medicine or treatment. They simply asked me to take more rest. I felt much worse and could not hold up. So, I called my friends in China and told them that Finnish hospitals were unable to help me. I decided to go back to China to receive treatment. I stayed in a Chinese hospital for about one month and later I recovered and came back to Helsinki.'

The above individual case reveals two interesting aspects. It shows a private hospital is perhaps better than a public hospital in Finland. The Finnish public hospital was unable to efficiently find the health problem while the Finnish private hospital found it. More interestingly, the private hospital did not conduct any practical treatment after the problem was found. Finally, my interviewee went to China to receive the medical treatment and recovered in China. The unique personal example breaks the illusion of that Finnish health care must be better than Chinese one. The example may support the comment made by a few Chinese immigrants in Finland: Finnish health care centers are with better medical facilities but the doctors are not experienced as Chinese ones because of the lack of clinical cases. The interviewee felt very unsatisfied with Finnish health care services because of her personal experiences. Nowadays she prefers to go back to China to receive medical treatment if she feels very sick.

Another interesting point is that the Chinese immigrants prefer to go back to China to adopt traditional Chinese medical treatment, for example, by taking Chinese medicine or receiving acupuncture when they feel Finnish medical treatment is not beneficial. It is meaningful to notice that China has its own medical knowledge, which is very different from the western medical treatment. In certain cases, it seems that the Chinese traditional treatment is more helpful than the western medical treatment. As my interviewee said:

'I know some old Chinese immigrants in Finland always go back to China to have acupuncture or other traditional Chinese treatment if they feel very uncomfortable. They say that is more helpful than the Finnish medical treatment.'

Satisfaction is a very subjective feeling, which can vary much because of different personal experiences in access to health care in Finland. As I have presented above, both positive and negative comments were provided by the 15 Chinese immigrants. It is impossible to make any generalization to claim the Chinese interviewees were well or badly treated in access to Finnish health care. Most Chinese immigrants felt greatly satisfied with Finnish public health care services while several Chinese interviewees felt very unsatisfied.

However, the common point is that all interviewees showed gratitude to the Finnish government for granting them the equal right. Chinese immigrants can enjoy the same right of accessing free Finnish public health care services as long as they are legally employed or with permanent residency. Although variations of treatment from Finnish public health care exist, there are two common obstacles (linguistic difficulty and cultural differences) that seriously decrease the quality of accessing the Finnish public health care services among all Chinese immigrants. Unsatisfactory social encounters with Finnish public health workers lead to unsatisfactory feelings which further make my interviewees feel alienated and isolated as immigrants in Finland. When health care in Finland is perceived as unhelpful, my interviewees prefer to go back to China to receive medical treatment. All interviewees recognize that Finnish hospitals have better medical facilities than Chinese hospitals. However, very interestingly, a few interviewees held a very conservative comment on Finnish doctors and nurses. Several Chinese interviewees, according to their own personal experiences, considered that Finnish doctors and nurses were less experienced than Chinese ones.

In conclusion, my qualitative data show that Chinese immigrants in Finland are much less likely to utilize private health care services than Finns because of their tight financial budget. Chinese interviewees are indeed in a vulnerable position in accessing high-quality private health care in Finland. As to accessing Finnish public health care services, technically speaking, the Chinese interviewees enjoy equality because they are officially entitled to utilize municipal health care services for free as long as they are

employed or with permanent residency in Finland. However, in practice, Chinese immigrants are in a weaker position in access to public health care in Finland.

The lack of knowledge about the Finnish health care system, self-medication by adopting Chinese or Western remedies, the Finnish language barrier, and cultural differences prevent Chinese immigrants from efficiently utilizing available public health services in Finland. It is common for Chinese immigrants to adopt self-treatment by taking basic drugs or traditional Chinese medicine when they feel they can handle health problems alone. The linguistic difficulty and cultural differences may lead to some misunderstandings, resulting in the unsatisfactory feelings in access to public health care in Finland.

How to help Chinese immigrants access high-quality Finnish public health care services is a very challenging question. According to Bischoff et al. (1999), there are three ways: by increasing awareness of specific cultural and ethnic knowledge, by providing adequate information on administrative procedures of health care in migrants' languages, and by making interpreter services available. The suggestions are useful. However, in practice, due to limited resources, it is impossible for Finnish health care workers to be aware of Chinese culture and to make interpreter services available. From my perspective, currently, the practical way is to provide more available information on Finnish public health care services in the Chinese language. Not all Chinese immigrants in Finland know English very well. Those Chinese immigrants who neither know English nor Finnish are more vulnerable in access to health care. As well, a Chinese ethnic health worker at a health care center may have an important role in connecting the cultural gap.

6.7. Access to child care

Not all Chinese interviewees had children in Finland. Nine interviewees lived with their own children in Finland. Those with children provided rich data while those without children did not respond to the aspect. In Allardt's concept *Having* (1989 & 1993), access to child care is not mentioned as a concrete aspect. But it is closely related to well-being of individuals with children. In fact, the difficulty of accessing child care may produce more pressures in immigrants' life.

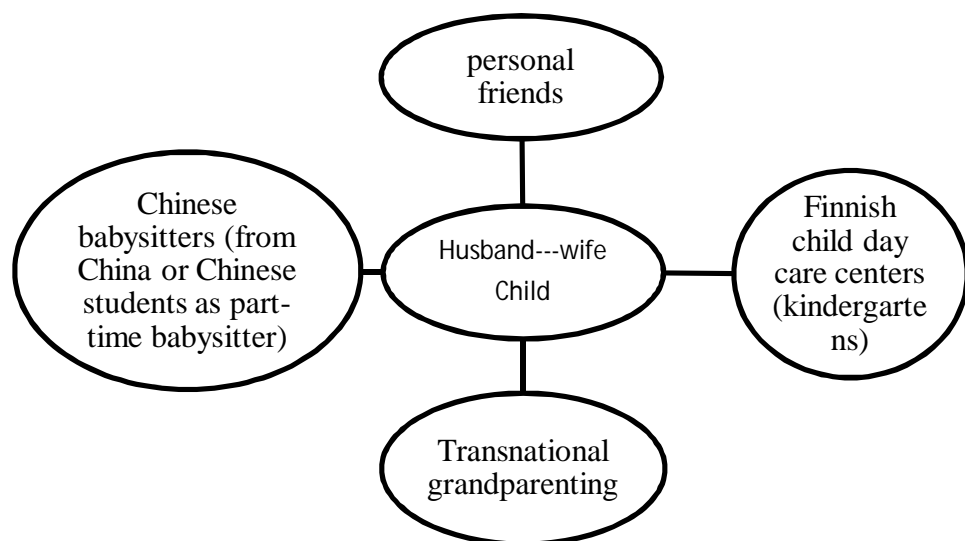
The Finnish government adopted laws by enabling all guardians of children under three the subjective right either to send their children to day care centers provided by the

Finnish council or to take a home care allowance in 1985 (Sipilä & Korpinen, 1998). Ethnic immigrants are more vulnerable to suffer from child care problems because of the absence of close kin networks, strong pressure to work and other social problems such as social isolation and lack of information on services (Wall & Jose, 2004). How Chinese immigrants deal with child care in the Finnish context is an interesting research question. The discussion about access to child care among Chinese immigrants in Finland is divided into three elements: social relations in access to child care, satisfaction with access to child care in Finland and adopted languages in child care. The analysis of social relationships in access to child care is framed within the concept *Loving* (needs for social relationships) of Allardt (1989 & 1993) and the discussion about satisfaction with access to child care is contextualized in the concept *Being* (needs for social integration) of Allardt (1989 & 1993). As well, it is meaningful to examine adopted languages in child care among Chinese immigrants in this part.

6.7.1. Social relations in access to child care

The fundamental social relationship of child care is the parent-child relation within a nuclear family. There are four supportive social relations to assist child care among my interviewees in Finland. Personal friendships, Finnish child day care centers, Chinese babysitters and Chinese grandparents of children are the four supportive social relations my interviewees mainly employed in child care. The model of social relations in access to child care is presented to clarify my following discussion (see Graph 3).

Graph 3. A model of social relations in accessing child care



Parents are both obliged to take care of their children when they are available. However, in reality, Chinese fathers and mothers do not share the same amount of responsibility. My interview data show Chinese mothers took greater responsibility of child care than Chinese fathers. One practical reason is Chinese fathers are employed while some of their wives are unemployed. A few interviewees mentioned their wives were unable to obtain a job in Finland. It is an effective strategy for an unemployed Chinese mother in Finland to full-time take care of children at home. Those unemployed mothers receive a certain amount of child care subsidies from the Finnish welfare sector, which releases financial burdens of a whole family. Another reason for the unbalanced responsibility of child care between Chinese fathers and Chinese mothers is the traditional Chinese masculine culture. Chinese women are expected to take good care of the family members while Chinese men are obliged to be breadwinners. When a Chinese father and a mother are both employed, a Chinese mother is still expected to shoulder a little more responsibility than a Chinese father. My interview data prove the unbalanced social responsibility between Chinese mothers and Chinese fathers with regard to child care. Two Chinese mothers who married with Chinese men expressed that they took greater responsibility of taking care of their children at home than their husbands. Very interestingly, the two Chinese mothers did not complain about their husband. Rather, they were proud of being responsible as traditional Chinese mothers in Finland. Two Chinese young mothers, who married with Finns, also took a little greater responsibility of taking care of children. One Chinese father divorced and he only took care of his child at weekends, although he hoped he could spend more time with his child. His Finnish ex-wife took care of their son on weekdays. All in all, my interview data show Chinese mothers spent more time with their children than Chinese fathers. Chinese mothers played a more active role in child care than Chinese men in a nuclear family in Finland.

For those parents who are both employed in Finland, to a large degree, the challenges of child care depend on their job types. The Finnish child day care centers such as kindergartens are the main supportive organizations to assist Chinese immigrants. My interviewees sent their children to a Finnish child day care center in the morning and took them back home in the evening. A few Chinese immigrants mainly relied on the Finnish child care centers when both parents were employed. The social relationship with Finnish child day care centers is very useful for employed parents to assist child

care. As one interviewee said *'Normally I send my kids to a kindergarten in the morning and my wife picks them up in the evening. It is easy for us.'*

However, the social relationship with Finnish child day care centers is not sufficient to support those Chinese parents who do not have normal-time-schedule jobs. One interviewee was employed as a nurse in Finland. Nurses are sometimes required to do night shifts. When my interviewee did night shifts and at the same time her husband was not in Finland, she had to ask help from her Chinese friends to attend her small children at night. A few interviewees also relied on support from their Chinese friends to pick up their small children when they overworked in the evening. It is without any doubt that a personal friendship is a crucial supportive social relationship in access to child care among Chinese immigrants. As well, it is worthy of noticing that my interviewees mainly asked help from their Chinese friends. One practical reason is their good friends were limited within the Chinese community in Finland. They were unwilling to resort to help from their Finnish acquaintances.

Personal friendships can be occasionally taken advantage of in access to child care. However, it is impossible to utilize friendships to take care of children every day. Alternative solutions have to be found. The work time schedule of Chinese restaurant workers is different from the normal working time schedule. Chinese restaurants are usually open from 10am to 10pm. Not similar to nurses, workers at Chinese restaurants do not have any work shift. They usually have to work in Chinese restaurants from 10am to 9pm. Therefore, it is impossible for them to pick up their children from a Finnish child day care center at about 5.30pm every day. It is necessary to find other social relations in supporting child care. One Chinese interviewee and her husband both worked at Chinese restaurants. They adopted the strategy of hiring a Chinese student in Finland as their part-time babysitter in the evening. Later when they ran their own catering business and became wealthy, they hired a full-time Chinese babysitter from China to take care of their children in Finland. There are two main reasons to hire Chinese babysitters. First, it was too expensive to hire Finnish babysitters. Practically, hiring Chinese babysitters are much cheaper than hiring Finnish babysitters. Second, the Chinese babysitters could be fully trusted because they were introduced by personal friends. In other words, the social relationship with Chinese babysitters is not only based on an employment contract but also on a friendship that is established between Chinese people.

Another useful strategy adopted by two Chinese interviewees is to rely on transnational grandparenting. Transnational grandparenting refers to the voluntary social support of child care from grandparents by transnational mobilization between China and Finland in my research context. There are two directions of transnational grandparenting: inviting Chinese grandparents from China to take care of children in Finland; sending children from Finland to China. Two interviewees invited Chinese grandparents to take care of children from China to Finland. They applied for visiting visas for grandparents of children to come to Finland. My interviewees were very content with child care offered by grandparents. Grandparents and parents of children were satisfied with the family unification as an extension family in Finland. As well, child care provided by grandparents was highly valued as high-quality with love according to Chinese immigrants. My interviewees preferred to have grandparents available for child care assistance in Finland. However, according to Finnish migration law, the family reunification is only limited within a nuclear family. The visiting period of grandparents in Finland is usually three months. The short period of visiting was not enough for Chinese interviewees to overcome the difficulty in child care. One interviewee complained:

'The Finnish immigration sector only gave 3 months for my mother to visit me in Finland. I asked my mother to come to Finland to take care of me and my kids when I was pregnant. After 3 months, she had to go back to China because her visa was expired. It was too short. What I needed was that she could stay in Finland for a longer time to take care of my kids.'

In fact, the short-period visiting visa, expensive travelling fees and insurances greatly prevent Chinese immigrants from inviting grandparents from China to Finland to assist child care. Therefore, the other direction of transnational grandparenting strategy (sending children back to China) was also adopted. One interviewee was not able to take care of her two children in Finland. Her Chinese husband was unavailable to offer enough help because of work pressures. It was too expensive for them to have paid babysitters in Finland. As well, it was impossible to rely on help from her Chinese friends in Finland every day. She finally decided to send her children back to China to rely on the assistance from grandparents.

From my perspective, it is reasonable to consider transnational grandparenting as a special social relationship based on an extended family. My interview data show grandparents can play significant roles in assisting child care both in China and in Finland especially when other social resources are unavailable. Chinese grandparents feel obliged to offer assistance to their grandchildren in the Chinese cultural context. For Chinese people, having children means a lifelong commitment, even when children have their own offspring (Da, 2003). Grandparents are very willing to offer support when their grandchildren are born abroad if possible. In a word, the strategy of adopting transnational grandparenting is functionally important in access to child care for some Chinese immigrants in Finland.

6.7.2. Satisfaction with access to child care

In the following part, subjective feelings about access to child care in Finland among Chinese immigrants are discussed. The general comment on access to child care in Finland is very positive. For those interviewees who take care of children at home, a child care allowance is offered by the Finnish welfare sector. For those dual income families, Finnish child day care centers provide practical support. Kindergartens as key child care centers offer great help to most of my interviewees. Generally speaking, affordable Finnish child day care services and financial subsidies for children from the Finnish social welfare sector are highly valued by Chinese immigrants. The quality of child care in Finnish kindergartens is also highly recognized by most interviewees. To put it simply, satisfaction with access to child care in Finland is the highest among the four aspects of *Having* (Housing, employment, access to health care and access to child care).

However, there is one exception. One interviewee explicitly expressed her discontent with a Finnish kindergarten. She had transferred her child to an English-speaking kindergarten by the time I interviewed her. She was satisfied with the English-speaking kindergarten in Finland. She said:

'I feel Finnish way of treating children is similar to the treatment of animals. The kids play themselves in a certain place and the teacher guards the door without letting children go outside. And that Finnish kindergarten put all kids under 4 years old together without consideration of individual difference. I felt my daughter was not

happy there. So, I decided to take her to an English-speaking kindergarten. Now I noticed she was much happier than before.'

Reasons for the unhappiness of her child in a Finnish kindergarten are perhaps more complicated than what the interviewee explained to me. The interviewee was the only one who raised critics towards Finnish child care centers. She explicitly mentioned she was not very satisfied with the Finnish way of treating children and she hoped teachers could offer more guides to small children.

Although Finnish care day centers and family child care subsidies play significant roles in assisting child care, a few interviewees had much more challenges because of their job types. They actively sought for different alternatives: asking help from personal friends, hiring Chinese babysitters, inviting grandparents of children to come to Finland or sending their children back to China. In spite of difficulties of taking care of children when they just arrived in Finland, the interviewees managed to solve problems by utilizing different social relations. Generally speaking, they felt satisfied with their alternative ways in access to child care.

6.7.3. Adopted languages in child care

Child care involves not only with non-verbal care but also with verbal communication. The adoption of languages in child care greatly depends on the choice of parents. International research shows that Chinese migrant parents hope their children can know Chinese in order to keep Chinese culture (Ou & McAdoo, 1993). At the same time, in order to well integrate into the mainstream society, Chinese migrant parents also expect their children can proficiently grasp the official language of their receiving country (Ou & McAdoo, 1993). The compromise between the above two expectations motivates the strong desire of bilingual education among Chinese migrant families (Ou & McAdoo, 1993). It is interesting to examine the adopted languages in child care among Chinese interviewees in the Finnish context.

Family relations are significantly important in language maintenance for Chinese immigrant children (Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002). According to the interview data, Chinese migrant parents have good family relations with their children in Finland. Most families of my interviewees are single-ethnic Chinese families. Chinese migrant parents teach their children Chinese in the process of child care. For those single-ethnic Chinese

families, Chinese is the main language adopted for communication at home. Occasionally, English and Finnish are also spoken at single-ethnic Chinese families.

Two families are mix-ethnic families. Fathers of children are Finns while mothers are Chinese women. The adopted child care languages are more complicated. It depends on different situations. One Chinese mother can speak fluent Finnish. When she attends her child alone, she chooses to communicate only in Chinese. When her Finnish husband takes care of their child alone, the adopted language is only Finnish. But when she and her Finnish husband attend their child together, the adopted language is mainly Finnish. Occasionally, English is also spoken. Another Chinese mother cannot speak fluent Finnish. When she and her Finnish husband separately take care of their child, the only adopted language is their native language: Chinese and Finnish. However, when they attend their child together, the main adopted language is English, which both the Chinese mother and the Finnish father can mutually understand. One interviewee divorced. His ex-wife is a Finnish woman. His child only stays with him at weekends. He communicates with his child in both English and Chinese when he attends his child alone. His ex-wife mainly speaks Finnish to his child. Occasionally, English is also spoken in child care by his ex-wife.

As I have mentioned before, as well as the basic family child care, there are four different supportive social relations in access to child care among my interviewees. Personal friends, Finnish child day care centers, Chinese babysitters and transnational grandparenting are also the language media for child care. Chinese friends, Chinese babysitters and Chinese grandparents mainly speak Chinese when they attend children. On the contrary, Finnish child day care centers mainly adopt Finnish in child care.

All children of my Chinese interviewees are often communicated in three languages (Chinese, Finnish and English), although the frequency of using the three different languages is various among individual families. The discussion about the expectation of bilingual-ability from Chinese migrant parents by Ou and McAdoo (1993) seems limited in the Finnish context. According to the interview data, Chinese immigrants in Finland expect their children can be tri-lingual. In fact, according to my interviewees, their children are able to speak Chinese, Finnish and English on different levels.

Chinese, as a native language for my Chinese interviewees, is a carrier for Chinese culture. They hope their children can preserve Chinese cultural heritage by learning the

Chinese language even though their children are brought up abroad. In addition, China is developing very fast. The Chinese market has caught the attention all over the world. Proficiency in Chinese can possibly help their children to obtain better careers in the global business world in future. What's more, the population of native Chinese speakers is among the largest in the world. It is a very useful language.

Finnish, as a national language of Finland, is undoubtedly crucial in Finland. Only one interviewee sent her child to an English kindergarten because she was not satisfied with the previous Finnish one where her daughter stayed. But her daughter kept learning Finnish since her Finnish husband mainly spoke Finnish with their daughter at home. All the rest interviewees sent their children to Finnish day care centers where their children learnt Finnish. My Chinese interviewees themselves experience the language barrier of obtaining better job opportunities in Finland. As well, it is problematic to fully integrate into the Finnish society without knowing Finnish. The interviewees hope their children can proficiently grasp Finnish in order to better integrate in Finland in future.

English, as an international lingua franca, is extremely important in today's world. All the Chinese interviewees who have children in Finland know English well. They teach some English words to their children at home and they sometimes communicate with their children in English. From their perspective, proficiency in English is of significant importance to the development of their children in future.

The above expectations motivate the Chinese interviewees hope their children can become tri-lingual instead of being bi-lingual. In conclusion, Chinese, as a useful language, is perceived as a cultural legacy, which is culturally important for their children to learn. Finnish, as an official language, is a practical language for their children to facilitate better adaptation in Finland. English, as a lingua franca, is of significant importance all over the world. All the interviewees hope their own children can grasp the three languages. Therefore, the adopted child care languages are Chinese, Finnish and English among Chinese immigrants in the Finnish context.

6.8. Leaving or staying in Finland in future?

As I mentioned, in the beginning, Finland was not perceived as an attractive migration destination for most Chinese interviewees. They came to Finland mainly because they had no other alternative. The allure of the Finnish social welfare system did not have

strong resonance among Chinese immigrants on account of little knowledge about Finland. Only four interviewees mentioned the Finnish social welfare system was an appealing point when they decided to migrate to Finland. It is interesting to see changes when the 15 Chinese immigrants became much more familiar with the Finnish social welfare system with long-time residence in Finland. In this part, whether the Finnish social welfare system became an attractive factor in permanent migration among the 15 Chinese immigrants is examined.

It is crucial to be aware of that reasons of leaving or staying in Finland in future are very complicated. As well, it is equally important to notice that unpredicted events in future may dramatically change plans of leaving or staying in Finland. The uncertainty is inconstant as places are always changing, contingent upon the socioeconomic, political and historical circumstances (Ma, 2003, page 11). By the time I interviewed the 15 Chinese immigrants, they presented their ideas (see Table 6).

Table 6.Future plans

| Number of interviewees | future plan |
|------------------------|--|
| 9 | to spend their rest life in Finland |
| 3 | Before retirement, staying in Finland; After retirement, leaving Finland to China |
| 1 | hesitant |
| 2 | to go back to China |

Nine interviewees preferred to permanently migrate to Finland. A variety of concrete reasons were given. Established families with Finns strengthened the determination of the permanent settlement in Finland. Unpleasant Chinese situations stimulated a few Chinese immigrants to decide to spend their rest life in Finland. All the nine interviewees provided a common reason for their decision of permanent migration to Finland, that is, the good Finnish social welfare system. The public health care system, free education for children, necessary support for child care from the Finnish government, convenient traffic services are all mentioned as attractive points for them to choose to permanently settle in Finland. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that the Finnish social welfare system plays a very positive role in their determination of

permanent migration to Finland among the nine Chinese interviewees after long residence.

However, life is complicated. A few interviewees, who decided to permanently settle in Finland, had to face challenges. On the one hand, they had to deal with life difficulties in Finland as immigrants. On the other hand, they had to consider about how to attend their old parents in China. It is ungraceful to send parents to Old Age Homes in the Chinese cultural context. Most Chinese interviewees visited their parents in China once per year. However, they had not found a perfect solution of the challenge of taking care of their old parents. As one interviewee said:

'I visit my parents once per year in China. I have thought about whether I should go back to China in order to attend my parents when they get really old. My parents are not willing to stay in an Old Age Home. But my husband is a Finn and he definitely prefers to stay in Finland. I do not know how to solve it.'

Another interviewee decided not to apply for the Finnish citizenship in consideration of his parents in China. He said:

'I think the social welfare of Finland is really nice. I want to stay in Finland for my rest life. But I will not apply for the Finnish citizenship. It is not convenient for me to visit my parents in China if I become a Finnish citizen.'

How to attend old parents involves not only actual physical care but also the mental and emotional comfort (Zechner, 2008). As to physical care, Chinese immigrants can send remittances to ask a nurse or a family relative to take care of their old parents. The main issue is how to provide emotional comfort to their old parents when they are absent. There are two categories of Chinese immigrants: those who are the only child of a family and those who have siblings. For the former type of Chinese immigrants, they have to face the problem seriously because they are the only child who can offer family emotional support. When they decide to permanently settle in Finland, they have to sacrifice family emotional support to their own old parents in China. In contrast, for Chinese immigrants with siblings, their family emotional support can be transformed as remittances to their siblings who can emotionally take care of their old parents. Their absence does not seriously cause emotional problems to their old parents because their siblings can emotionally substitute their family roles.

Three Chinese interviewees decided to stay in Finland before retirement. However, after retirement, they preferred to return to China. The Finnish social welfare system was also perceived as attractive. The public health care system, child care support and free child education were highly valued. Although all the three interviewees agreed on the good social facilities of Finland, they did not have strong feelings of belonging to Finland. They felt they were a little isolated from the majority Finnish culture in spite of that they were able to communicate in Finnish. They expressed that they had no interest in spending time with other old people in pubs after retirement like Finns. They hoped they could spend more time with their family relatives and friends in China when they were very old. Emotionally attached to their native place, they hoped they could return to China for retirement. Chinese immigrants describe it by adopting an ancient Chinese idiom ' luò yè guī gēn (落叶归根)', which is a metaphor of that falling leaves would physically and emotionally return to the root of trees. They explicitly mentioned they were not well integrated into the Finnish society, which led to their decision of returning to China after retirement. As one interviewee reflected:

'I will go back to China after retirement. I feel my root is in China. When I listen to Finnish songs, I do not have any strong feelings. However, when I listen to Chinese songs, I have strong resonance in my heart. I do not well integrate into the Finnish culture. I have more emotional intimacy with Chinese culture.'

One interviewee had not made his final decision. On the one hand, the Finnish social welfare system was attractive. His children were able to enjoy free high-quality education in Finland. On the other hand, his job career in Finland was not satisfactory. In addition, he had to consider about how to attend his old parents in China.

When Chinese immigrants strongly feel they are not integrated into the Finnish society, the attraction of the good Finnish social welfare system becomes very weak, finally leading to their leave. As Ma (2003) mentions, physical stay of an immigrant in a place does not always coincide with feelings of belonging to the same place. A few Chinese immigrants who physically stay in Finland do not have emotional feelings of belonging to Finland. Their temporary stay is to maximize economic benefits. Once their work contracts are terminated, they prefer to return to China.

In conclusion, for most Chinese immigrants, the Finnish social welfare system gradually becomes an attractive factor in permanent migration when they reside in Finland for a long time. Intimate encounters with the Finnish social welfare system have a general positive role in influencing Chinese immigrants to continue staying in Finland. However, concerns of how to attend old parents in China and strong feelings of isolation and alienation in Finland have negative influences in permanent migration to Finland. It seems that when Chinese immigrants strongly feel they are not integrated into the Finnish society, the attraction of the good Finnish social welfare system becomes very weak, leading to their leave from Finland.

6. Further discussion

The four concrete aspects (housing, employment, access to health care and child care) have been separately analyzed in the previous parts with two main trajectories (social relationships and satisfaction). In this particular part, the original research questions of my research are further discussed by combining previous empirical analyses.

The Finnish social welfare system has been discussed in social relationships of the four concrete aspects (housing, employment, access to health care and child care). Generally speaking, the previous empirical analyses show that the Finnish social welfare system plays a positive role in providing necessary help to Chinese immigrants. On the aspect of housing, Chinese immigrants, who come to Finland as students or university researchers, are able to enjoy direct social benefits from the Finnish social welfare system. Students and doctor candidates can apply for cheap but good-quality dwellings via the Finnish student housing system that is funded by the Finnish social welfare sector. When Chinese immigrants are unemployed, it is possible for them to apply for Finnish council housing. When Chinese immigrants, who come to Finland with a family reunification visa, are unemployed, they are offered Finnish language courses and working-skill training courses. Such training in nursing and the Finnish language have helped a few Chinese immigrants to obtain jobs in Finland. The Finnish public health care system is crucial for Chinese immigrants to utilize affordable health care services in Finland. As well, Chinese immigrants with children are entitled to enjoy the same social benefits from the Finnish day child care centers and the Finnish schools as Finns. In addition, when they hold a permit for permanent residency, they can enjoy child

allowances from the Finnish welfare sector. Therefore, it is plausible to make the conclusion that the Finnish social welfare system is supportive to Chinese immigrants.

However, it is worthy of noticing that Chinese immigrants do not heavily rely on the support from the Finnish social welfare system, which is consistent with the previous finding of Katila (2010). There are two main reasons. First, the entrance door of migration to Finland for the Chinese is not widely open. Finnish migration policy is restrictive and selective. Unlike European citizens, Chinese immigrants cannot freely migrate to Finland unless they hold valid visas. There are three main types of visas for the permission of residing in Finland for Chinese immigrants: student status, family ties and working. When Chinese immigrants apply for a student visa, according to the Finnish migration law, they have to prove their financial support (at least 500 euros per month or 6000 euros per year). As well, it is a precondition for obtaining a residence permit that a Chinese student has valid health insurance cover with a reliable and solvent company or institution. Only those Chinese students with enough financial support and reliable health insurance are permitted to enter Finland. When a student visa expires after graduation, Chinese graduates have to leave Finland unless they find jobs or form family ties with Finns in Finland. When Chinese immigrants apply for a family visa, according to the Finnish migration law, they are required to prove their income (at least 630 euros per month or 7560 euros per year for an adult). For those Chinese immigrants who have jobs, their application for a work visa is required to include proof of their work contract. When they are employed in Finland, their basic needs are usually satisfied. To a great degree, the Finnish government only selects the Chinese migrants who are financially capable of dealing with their basic needs in Finland. In other words, the Finnish migration law only grants the residence permits to those Chinese immigrants who are able to be financially independent by excluding those Chinese applicants who are more likely to heavily rely on Finnish social welfare protection. Therefore, the Finnish migration law technically makes the likelihood of heavy reliance on the Finnish social protections among Chinese immigrants very low.

Second, heavy reliance on social protection from the Finnish government makes Chinese immigrants feel embarrassed. Chinese immigrants prefer to solve problems themselves via different methods before adopting the strategy of resorting to social protection from the Finnish government. As is shown in the previous parts, various social relations (personal friendship, family ties, migration labour brokers and

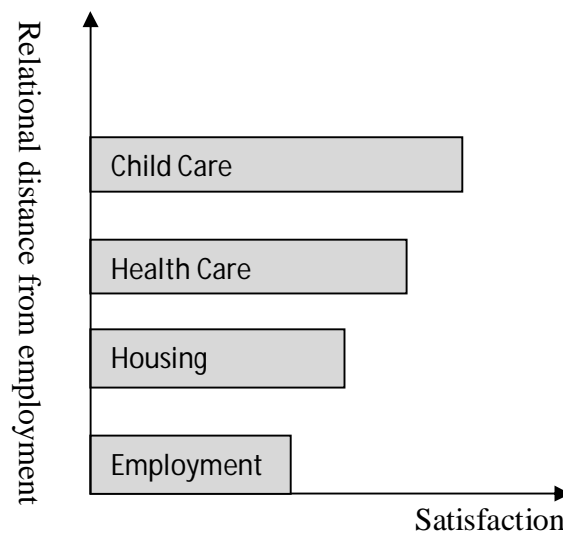
employers) are employed to solve difficulties in finding accommodation, obtaining job opportunities, attending children and taking care of health. In addition, the Internet resources and the Finnish newspapers are useful to support Chinese immigrants to find accommodation and jobs. However, when those social relationships are insufficient to support Chinese immigrants, they have to take advantage of Finnish social protection via the particular social relationship with the Finnish government in order to survive in Finland.

Among all types of social relationships, personal friendships are specially emphasized by Chinese immigrants. Personal friendships provide not only emotional comfort but also practical help on the four aspects (housing, employment, access to health care and child care). However, it is imperative to notice that intimate personal friendships among the 15 Chinese interviewees are mainly limited within the Chinese community in Finland. Few Chinese immigrants mentioned they had intimate Finnish friends. Most of my interviewees complained they did not have any deep contact with Finns even though they had been in Finland for a long time.

Satisfaction with the four aspects (housing, employment, access to health care and child care) has been separately discussed in previous parts. Satisfaction greatly depends on individual subjective feelings. Therefore, it is rather difficult to make any generalization because satisfaction levels among Chinese immigrants are various. However, when exceptional individual feelings are excluded, it is plausible to compare general satisfaction levels between the four aspects. The comparison is based on the general feedback from the fifteen Chinese immigrants, instead of strict quantitative measurements. The general satisfaction level of access to child care is the highest. Very positive comments on access to child care were given by Chinese immigrants in Finland. The Finnish public health care system is satisfactory on the whole and ranks the second level among my Chinese interviewees. Although housing situations were unsatisfactory in the beginning, with long residence, housing conditions had been greatly improved. Thus the general satisfaction with housing is ranked as the third level. Despite the fact that all the 15 Chinese interviewees were employed, most of them felt their talents were greatly devaluated in Finland. Their current jobs were only considered as instrumental tools of surviving in Finland. They were in general least satisfied with the type of employment available to them in the Finnish labour market.

Even though the four aspects (housing, employment, access to health care and child care) have above been discussed separately, in reality the four aspects are closely intertwined. Interconnection exists between employment and the other three aspects (housing, access to health care and child care). Employment has the closest relationship with housing. In other words, employment has a direct influence in housing because housing conditions largely depend on the salaries from working. When Chinese immigrants obtain nice jobs with good salaries, they are able to rent more comfortable accommodation or to purchase their own housing property, and vice versa. Employment has the second closest relationship with access to health care in the Finnish context. When Chinese immigrants have limited earnings in Finland, the private health care system is not utilized. However, the public health care system funded by the Finnish welfare sector is available. Employment has the third closest relationship with access to child care in the Finnish context among Chinese immigrants. The low salaries do not seriously affect the equal right of enjoying the affordable child day care centers and free school education. However, when Chinese immigrants with children are employed in evening or night shift work, they have to face more challenges of attending children, which is also seen in the previous research by Wall and Jose (2004).

Graph 4. An exploratory model of satisfaction and relational distance between employment and housing, health care and child care



In general, the Finnish social welfare system provides certain support related to all the four aspects in the settlement among Chinese immigrants in Finland, but the level of support seems various. My analysis shows that employment is the central basis in well-being. All the other three aspects (housing, health care and child care) are linked to employment on different levels. Accordingly, a relationship exists between the level of satisfaction and the relational distance from employment in the Finnish social welfare context as my exploratory model (see Graph 4) shows.

The more distant the relationship with employment is, the higher the level of satisfaction is. As I have mentioned above, the relationship between the quality of employment and the quality of housing is the closest. Not surprisingly, when Chinese immigrants tend to be dissatisfied with income available to them, this lack of satisfaction with employment is directly reflected in their unsatisfactory experience of housing conditions due to their incapacity of affording better accommodation. The relationship between employment and child care is the remotest, which is reflected in the fact that Chinese immigrants were in general most satisfied with the child care they were accessing. My study suggests that the quality of employment is fundamental for the successful settlement of Chinese immigrants to the Finnish society. As is shown in Graph 4, it seems that employment situations tend to affect the other three aspects (housing, health care and child care) on different levels. The housing situations directly depend on salaries. The Finnish social welfare sector does not provide extra support on the aspect of housing when Chinese immigrants are employed. Chinese immigrants' general dissatisfaction with their employment is related to working in the low-skilled labour market with relatively low salaries, which in turn directly influences the satisfaction level of the type of accommodation they can afford. As to health care, although Chinese immigrants cannot afford private health care services, they are able to enjoy the Finnish public health care system, which weakens the direct influence of unsatisfactory employment and makes Chinese immigrants feel relatively satisfied with public health care in Finland. With regard to child care, affordable day child care services, family child subsidies and free school education are equally guaranteed to Chinese immigrants. Therefore, access to child care is the least influenced by unsatisfactory employment as a consequence of equal support from the Finnish social welfare sector. In other words, the relatively remote relationship between access to child care and employment is because of the inclusive support from the Finnish social welfare

system. The model can be interpreted to suggest that support from the Finnish social welfare sector can improve the satisfaction levels among immigrants, especially when it mitigates the effects of low-skill, low-paid employment. However, it is necessary to keep it in mind that my exploratory model is based on a small study of 15 Chinese immigrants in the Finnish social welfare context. The model may neither be suitable in other contexts nor be generalized to all Chinese immigrants in Finland. Further research is needed to examine whether the model can be widely employed.

Finally, reflection on the theoretical concepts (*Having, Loving and Being*) of Allardt (1989 & 1993) is addressed here. *Having* (needs for materials), *Loving* (needs for social relations) and *Being* (needs for social integration) are catchwords of material and non-material human needs, crucial for human development and existence in a welfare society (Allardt, 1989 & 1993). However, Allardt (1989 & 1993) did not explicitly clarify the intertwined relations of *Having, Loving and Being* in his works. My empirical study of Chinese immigrants in Finland shows that *Having, Loving and Being* are interwoven. *Having* (needs for materials), *Loving* (needs for social relations) and *Being* (needs for social integration) are all involved in the four concrete aspects (housing, employment, access to health care and child care). Social relations (*Loving*) are taken full advantage of by Chinese immigrants while seeking for better material conditions (*Having*) of housing, employment, access to health care and child care. Unsatisfactory material conditions (*Having*) and lack of intimate social relations with Finns (*Loving*) lead to inadequate social integration (*Being*) into the Finnish society among Chinese immigrants, which leads to their leave from Finland. On the contrary, satisfactory material conditions (*Having*) and functional social relations (*Loving*) make great contributions to better social integration (*Being*) into Finland.

7. Conclusion

Chinese immigrants had a strong desire to leave China to explore better opportunities overseas with uncertainties. Most of them had relatively decent life in China before migration. Better salaries, better education, more comfortable living conditions, and political safety were what Chinese immigrants expected when they decided to migrate abroad. Finland was not perceived as an ideal migration country for most Chinese interviewees. As well, the Finnish social welfare system was not a great attraction for their decision of coming to Finland. This research result is consistent with the previous

research by Thuno (2003) in the Danish welfare context. Instead, the choice of Finland was mainly because they had no alternative if they inclined to go abroad to explore better opportunities. However, very interestingly, with longer residence in Finland, the Finnish social welfare system gradually became a crucial appealing factor in their permanent settlement in Finland. And meanwhile, social responsibility of attending their old parents in China, strong feelings of being isolated in Finland especially in the Finnish labour market, and insufficient integration into the Finnish society were influential factors for the decision of returning to China.

Different social relationships play effective roles in Chinese migration to Finland and in the settlement process of housing, employment, access to health care and child care among Chinese immigrants in Finland. The Finnish social welfare provided support to Chinese immigrants on different levels. However, Chinese immigrants did not heavily rely on the social relationship with the Finnish social welfare sector.

Social relationships with personal friends, migration brokers, schools, employers and family relatives, which were formed before migration, had great influences in Chinese immigrants' first accommodation in Finland. When Chinese immigrants stayed in Finland longer and when they gradually became familiar with the new environment, new social relationships were formed. The significant influence of migration brokers and Chinese restaurant employers in changing accommodation among Chinese immigrants was seriously diminished with longer residence in Finland. Newly-formed social relationships with their new personal friends were the stimulants to help Chinese immigrants detach themselves from their dependence on migration brokers and employers while seeking better dwellings. The social relationship with the Finnish social welfare sector provided supportive help when Chinese immigrants were unemployed for a certain period. In the process of changing accommodation, in contrast to the process of finding first accommodation, Chinese immigrants were capable of employing different social resources (personal friendships, the Internet and the Finnish newspapers) at the same time. They had more available information and opportunities of finding comfortable accommodation with their longer residence in Finland.

Some well-educated Chinese professionals were able to be employed via applying for research jobs via the Internet. Social relationships with personal friends, migration labour brokers and Chinese restaurants are crucial stimulants to support Chinese

immigrants to obtain jobs in Finland. The social relationship with the Finnish social welfare sector is established on various levels among Chinese immigrants. Only Chinese immigrants with a family reunification visa or with permanent residency are granted the right to access free Finnish training and work-related courses. Support from the Finnish social welfare sector was of great importance to assist a few Chinese immigrants to obtain nursing jobs in Finland. However, with longer residence, most Chinese immigrants were unable to achieve upward mobility in the Finnish labour market. This research result is consistent with the previous research by Valtonen (2001) and Ahmad (2005), showing great difficulties for immigrants to be well employed in the Finnish labour market. Newly-formed social relationships with other Chinese immigrants in Finland did not bring more beneficial information on employment. Social relationships with workmates in Finland are heterogeneous. In general, most Chinese immigrants established friendly social relationships with their colleagues. However, they felt it was difficult to develop close personal friendships with their Finnish colleagues outside of work.

Personal friends, family relatives, employers, migration labour brokers and individual schools provided certain information on the Finnish public health care system, which is helpful to Chinese immigrants in access to health care. Social contacts with nurses and doctors in the Finnish public health care centers are heterogeneous. Most Chinese immigrants experienced friendly social relations with nurses and doctors, although several Chinese immigrants did not have pleasant experiences. The communication difficulties resulted from the language barrier and cultural differences inevitably have a negative influence on the social contacts with the Finnish public health care workers. The findings in the Finnish context are similar to previous results in other contexts (Chan & Quine, 1997; Bischoff, et al., 1999; Bischoff, 2003; Ozolins & Hjelm, 2003; Green, et al., 2006; Leininger, 2001; Helman, 2007; Ma, 1999).

As to access to child care, a parent-child relationship is the most crucial. Fathers and mothers shoulder the responsibility of taking care of their own children. However, in reality, the social responsibility of child care among Chinese immigrants is unbalanced, which can be partially explained by the traditional Chinese masculine culture. Chinese mothers spend much more time with their children than fathers do. Unemployed Chinese mothers received a certain amount of child care subsidies from the Finnish social welfare sector, which greatly released family financial pressures. The Finnish

child day care centers were the main supportive organizations to assist Chinese immigrants who were employed. However, the child day care services were insufficient to support Chinese immigrants who did not have normal-time jobs. Personal friendships with other Chinese immigrants were crucial support with regard to child care. As well, the strategy of hiring a part-time Chinese babysitter or a full-time Chinese babysitter was employed among Chinese immigrants. Another useful strategy adopted by Chinese immigrants in Finland was to rely on so-called transnational grandparenting, which is also shown in previous research in the Australian context (Da, 2003). When a visiting visa was granted, Chinese grandparents were invited to come to Finland to assist child care. Small children were sent from Finland to China to receive assistance from grandparents when their visa was not granted. Transnational grandparenting, as a special social relationship based on the extended family relations, played a significant role in child care both in Finland and in China especially when other social support was unavailable.

Subjective feelings of satisfaction with the four aspects (housing, employment, access to health care and child care) are crucial with regard to integration into the Finnish society for immigrants. My results show that Chinese immigrants who stayed in crowded accommodation provided by migration labour brokers were the least satisfied with their housing conditions. Typically, accommodation greatly improves after an immigrant becomes independent of migration brokers and Chinese restaurant employers. All Chinese immigrants were satisfied with their current housing by the time I interviewed them.

As to satisfaction with employment, although all Chinese immigrants I interviewed were employed, most of them worked in the Finnish low-skilled labour market. Chinese immigrants who worked in Chinese restaurants were the least satisfied because of long working hours with relatively low salaries. However, they managed to save money to run their own catering businesses after long residence in Finland. They were satisfied with their current self-employed careers. A few well-educated Chinese immigrants were able to obtain decent research jobs in Finland. It is not surprising that they felt satisfied with their current jobs. Nevertheless, most Chinese interviewees felt their talents were greatly devaluated in Finland and their current jobs could not satisfy their personal career development but only sustain their basic life needs in Finland. Most of them felt

alienated in the Finnish labour market, which seriously prevented them from integrating into the Finnish society.

The private health care system was seldom utilized by Chinese immigrants because of their tight financial budget. Chinese immigrants were satisfied with the low cost of accessing the Finnish public health care services. The Finnish public health care system offers great support to improve health conditions of Chinese immigrants, which significantly relieve the financial burden. Satisfaction with access to health care also depends on personal experiences. With regard to maternal health care, positive and negative comments coexisted because of two contradictory individual experiences. Although variations of treatment from Finnish public health care exist, there are two common factors (the language barrier and cultural differences) that can possibly lead to dissatisfaction among Chinese immigrants. When Chinese immigrants felt the Finnish medical care was useless, they preferred to receive Chinese medical treatment in China.

Affordable Finnish child day care services and financial subsidies for children from the Finnish social welfare sector were highly valued by Chinese immigrants. As well, the quality of child care in Finland was highly recognized by most Chinese immigrants. A few Chinese immigrants had more challenges because of their job types, which is similar to the previous study of Wall and Jose (2004). However, they managed to obtain support from personal friends, Chinese babysitters and grandparents of their own children. Generally speaking, Chinese immigrants felt very satisfied with access to child care in Finland by taking advantages of different social relations.

This research also suggests that employment is the central basis in well-being. Support from the Finnish social welfare sector can improve the satisfaction levels among immigrants, especially when it mitigates the effects of low-paid employment. Employment situations directly affect the quality of housing. Accordingly, the general satisfaction level of employment is directly reflected in that of housing. The Finnish public health care system weakens the direct influence of unsatisfactory employment, which is reflected in the relative satisfaction with access to health care among Chinese immigrants. Affordable day child care services, family child subsidies and free school education are equally guaranteed to Chinese immigrants. Therefore, access to child care is the least influenced by unsatisfactory employment and it is the most satisfactory life aspect among Chinese immigrants in Finland.

Finally, my empirical study of Chinese immigrants in Finland shows that relations between *Having*, *Loving* and *Being* are intertwined. Social relations (*Loving*), including the particular social relation with the Finnish social welfare sector, are crucial for Chinese immigrants to seek for better material needs (*Having*) on the four aspects (housing, employment, access to health care and child care). The unsatisfactory material conditions (*Having*) and the lack of intimate social relations (*Loving*) with the local Finns result in that Chinese immigrants subjectively felt they were not integrated into the Finnish society (*Being*). In contrast, satisfactory material conditions (*Having*) and functional social relations (*Loving*) contribute to the subjective feelings of better integration into the Finnish society among Chinese immigrants.

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Appendices

Semi-structured questions

1. Gender (without asking)
2. When and where were you born?
3. What is your highest education? Where did you get your highest education?
4. When did you move to Finland?
5. Why and how did you come to Finland?
6. Did you know something about Finland before your coming to Finland?
7. What kind of visa type did you have when you first came to Finland?
8. What kind of residence permission do you have now?
9. Can you speak Finnish?
10. What's your family status? Do you have a family in Finland or in China?
11. How did you find your first accommodation when you first came to Finland?
How about the housing situations of your first accommodation?
12. Have you changed your accommodation? How did you change your accommodation? How about your current accommodation? Do you like it?
13. When you first arrived in Finland, did you have any job? What kind of job did you have? How did you find it? Did you like it?
14. Have you been unemployed while living in Finland?
15. Have you changed your job in Finland? How did you change your job?
16. What kind of job do you have now? How did you find it? Do you like your current job?
17. Did you get sick in Finland? How did you deal with your health problems in Finland? Are you satisfied with health care services in Finland?
18. (only asking those interviewees with children in Finland) How do you deal with child care in Finland? Is it difficult for you to take care of your children here?
19. (only asking those interviewees with children in Finland) Which languages do your children know?
20. Do you want to permanently migrate to Finland? Why?
21. Do you have something else (related to housing, employment, health care and child care) to tell me?

Consent to a research interview

- *Cao Qian's Research for Master's Thesis Project in Sociology concerns Chinese immigrants' experiences about moving to Finland and about settling down in the country. The Master's Thesis Project is carried out within the International Master's Programme in Ethnic Relations (ERI), based at the Centre for the Research on Ethnic Relations and Nationalism CEREN, Swedish School of Social Science, University of Helsinki.*
- *Cao Qian's research is supervised by Dr Sirpa Wrede*
- *More information for Cao Qian's studies and research can be given by Dr. Sirpa Wrede, sirpa.wrede@helsinki.fi, 09-19128424.*

I have received information about the above-mentioned research project and its aims.

The researcher has informed me of that the information I give in the interview will be used in the following way:

1. The things I say in the interview will be reported in project reports in ways that do not allow the identification of me or any other individual person that I mention.
2. The concealment of the interview is secured so that all persons who come in the contact with the interview materials sign a confidentiality agreement.
3. The interview will be transcribed into a text file and in that process both my name and the names of other persons and organizations are changed into aliases (invented names). My personal information is not included in the text file.
4. When the interview has been transcribed into a text file, my name and address information will be destroyed. When the Master's thesis reporting the study is completed, the recording of the interview will be destroyed.
5. After the above-mentioned study is completed the text file prepared from the interview will only be used in scientific research and teaching. Each person who uses the text file will sign a confidentiality agreement. The use of the materials is supervised by Dr Sirpa Wrede. The copyright to the collected materials belongs to Cao Qian.

This document has been done in two identical copies, one of which remains with the researcher and the second with the informant.

Place and date _____

Signature of the informant _____

Signature of the researcher _____

Consent to a research interview (in Chinese)

硕士论文调查合同

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硕士项目：民族关系研究 (Ethnic Relations, Cultural Diversity and Integration)

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调查目的：

笔者硕士论文研究的目的是为了更好地了解中国移民群体在芬兰的生活状态。中国移民目前的数量虽然较少，但增长速度较快。笔者希望通过访问调查一些中国移民，了解一些中国移民目前的真实生活状况，以中国人的视角去分析中国移民。笔者希望能收集一些中国移民关于住房条件，医疗保障，孩童教育以及就业状况的看法。

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地点和时间：

被调查者：

调查研究者：