

薛惠娟◎著

文化适应与 个人资本形成

Cultural Adaptation and
Personal Capital Formation



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文化适应与个人资本形成

——中国学生留英经历研究

**Cultural Adaptation and Personal Capital Formation:
The Experiences of Chinese Students in UK Higher Education**

薛惠娟 著

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内 容 提 要

研究运用布迪厄的资本理论,在综述资本形成、资本形成在社会分层中的作用、文化再生产、教育在社会流动中作为“建构性结构”(structuring structure),以及国际教育,包括文化适应与留学生海外经历研究的基础上,以定性研究为主要方法,采用个人及焦点团体访谈,以“封闭式”问题提供补充性定量数据,探讨了中国留学生文化适应与资本形成之过程及其关系问题。

研究证明中国学生通过接受国际教育收益甚厚。学生形成的资本体现在:提高了英语水平、在国际期刊上发表英语文章的科研能力、跨文化交际能力、跨文化环境中就业和职业发展之能力以及更丰富的学术、文化和社会知识、更广阔的视野、更广泛的社会网络、新友谊及新形成的“个性”和“惯习”(habitus)。研究指出:中国留学生在海外面临学习、生活上挑战并克服困难之时,他们实际上就是在积累文化资本,其中,英语语言水平为“资本一个性”转换过程中最关键点。研究证明留学生毕业后无论在海内外工作,都享用了其积累的文化资本,特别是享受了国际教育的象征资本(symbolic capital)和卓越。

研究为中、外国际教育实践者提供了重要借鉴。本书适于曾接受过、正在接受和打算接受国际教育的中国学生阅读,也适于中外国际教育实践者和研究者阅读。本书还为国际教育决策者提供了重要参考依据。

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Preface

This book explores the experiences of Chinese students in UK higher education. The overarching research question is to understand the process of cultural adaptation and capital formation undergone by Chinese overseas students. The research applies Bourdieu's capital theory, and explores literature on capital formation and its role in stratification, cultural reproduction and education as a primary "structuring structure" in social mobility. Writings on international education, including acculturation and the learning experiences of overseas students in host countries are extensively reviewed. The methodology is principally qualitative, applying interviews and focus groups, with "closed questions" eliciting supplementary quantitative data. The combination of qualitative and quantitative data improves the reliability and validity of the research through triangulation. The study involves Chinese students (past and current) and practitioners of international education in China and Britain.

The research demonstrates that Chinese students benefit significantly from international education through participating in globalisation. In facing challenges and overcoming barriers and difficulties in their study and life abroad, they are forming or have formed cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1997), with the English language being the critical vehicle of transmission, the transforming point. The capital formed is embodied in their improved English proficiency and enhanced learning and research abilities leading to publications in English in international journals, good communication skills, enhanced employability and career development in cross-cultural environments, as well as enriched academic, cultural and social knowledge, broader horizon, wider social networks, new friendships and freshly-formed identities and "habitus". The research evidence suggests that past students — the real beneficiaries — reap benefits through their accelerated promotion and career enhancement both at home and abroad. They distinguish themselves from those lacking overseas experiences, enjoying significant symbolic capital and distinction associated with international education. Data from past students and international education practitioners help to complete the knowledge gap in past research.

In addition, this research contributes to the knowledge of managing overseas students undertaking international education. It concludes that international

education is a capital-identity transformation process and that the temporary negative experiences are part of the price — the “entry fee”(Bourdieu, 1993) — that Chinese students as new players coming from a different ethnic cultural background lacking capital in the right form have to pay for their value-added international degrees. It reveals the uniqueness and symbolic capital of international education. This research has implications for both British and Chinese education practitioners.

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My sincere gratitude goes to the Chinese overseas students and all those who participated in this research for their precious time and invaluable views.

This book is the culmination of a Doctor of Philosophy and I would like to record here how invaluable I have found this research experience. As the research itself shows, such an overseas educational experience will underpin my future career development significantly, whether I remain in the UK or return home to work.

Abbreviations

BC	the British Council
CAS	Chinese Academy of Sciences
CCP	the Chinese Communist Party
CET	College English Test
CPO	China Projects Officer
CR	the Cultural Revolution
CSC	the China Scholarship Council
ENS	école normale supérieure
ESoCE	the Education Section of the Chinese Embassy
FDI	foreign direct investment
GDP	gross domestic product
GRE	Graduate Record Examination
HE	higher education
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI	higher education institution
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
JVs	joint ventures
LSE	London School of Economics
MNCs	multi-national corporations
MoE	Ministry of Education
NC	Northern Consortium
NHS	National Health Service
PMI	the Prime Minister Initiative
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
SES	socio-economic status
THES	The Times Higher Education Supplement
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TEM	Test for English Majors
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
UKCISA	UK Council for International Student Affairs (Formally called UKCOSA; UK Council for Overseas Student Affairs)
WTO	the World Trade Organisation

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1 Introduction: Chinese Students and UK Higher Education

1.1 My Own Story

Looking back, I see very clearly how education, UK higher education (HE) in particular, has impacted on me tremendously in forming my new “habitus”^① (Bourdieu, 1977a; 1990a; 1990b; 2000), casting my new identity and setting my life trajectory. My free Chinese HE after the college entrance examination resumed in 1977 completely changed my fate as a village girl, who would otherwise have spent the whole life in the countryside unless some good luck befell me partly because of “hu kou”, the “household registration system” at that time. My first degree in English literature awarded at the age of 21 as one of the early university graduates after the “Cultural Revolution”(CR, 1966-1976) qualified me to become a university English teacher and put me in a brand new environment — the prerequisite for my personal career development from my new habitus. Teaching in HE endowed me with the opportunity to enrich knowledge, accumulate experience, broaden my vision and acquire professional qualifications, in other words, accumulate personal cultural capital. It in turn entitled me to a scholarship awarded by the China Scholarship Council (CSC) affiliated with the Ministry of Education (MoE) to conduct research in Britain in the twenty-first century — a century epitomised by the information revolution and globalisation with knowledge, skills, experiences and international identity being most important in personal development. During my one-year stay in a UK higher education institution (HEI), I secured another opportunity to conduct my doctoral research with a student bursary and work as a China Projects Officer (CPO) in the same university. Such a position has enabled me to display fully the knowledge, experiences, abilities, skills, particularly the bicultural knowledge and bilingual skills of Chinese and English, which I have accumulated as a student and associate professor in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) in China and as an academic visitor in UK HE. Such a position and experience overseas compounds the benefits one can enjoy from education.

From a simple rural girl to a quite experienced associate professor in Chinese HE

^① “Habitus”, one of Pierre Bourdieu’s key theoretical concepts, is “systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures” (Bourdieu, 1977a: 72).

to a promising visiting scholar overseas and ultimately a PhD candidate and CPO in UK HE, I understand profoundly how each stage of my education has underpinned my career, through which I have been developing my new identity and forming fresh cultural and social capital^① (Bourdieu, 1977b; 1997; Lin2, 2001; Lin2 et al., 2001), leading to a completely different life had I remained in the village. Evidently, education is pivotal to my professional career development; international education, the critical transition in my life course, functions as the most important rung of my career ladder upwards.

However, during my initial stay abroad, I, to a certain extent, experienced “culture shock”^② (Lysgaard, 1955; Oberg, 1960; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Ward & Kennedy, 1994; Ward et al., 1998; 2001), and the “language barrier”^③ although I have been enriching my British cultural and social knowledge and improving my English proficiency initially as a student majoring in English and subsequently as an EFL teacher. The first thing that shocked me upon arrival is the failure to understand simple “English”! When a Scottish driver picked me up in London, to my astonishment, I could understand nothing but “hello” and “good-bye”! What English had I learned in China? Do local people speak English no one can understand?

Then unexpected things followed one another. No school gate! Everybody can enter a university? Entering the classroom, I found it was indeed the case; one middle-school teacher was doing her Master’s aged over 60, after her retirement! In class, academics do not bother to speak standard English while lecturing students from across the world and with completely different cultural backgrounds! To make things more complicated, non-native lecturers speak with foreign accents! Local accents — authentic language? How can Chinese students follow the speed and diverse accents? Oral presentations, teamwork, seminars and tutorials — how do students participate in such communicative and dynamic classroom activities? Brought up to respect teachers and knowledge in the collectivist and harmony-valued culture, how can the Chinese challenge publicly without worrying about making others “lose

① “Cultural capital” and “social capital” are Bourdieu’s key concepts. Based on Bourdieu’s theory (1997), cultural capital exists in three forms: the embodied, objectified and institutionalised states. Social capital is the totality of actual or potential resources linked to one’s social networks, directly usable in the short or long term.

② “Culture shock” refers to the feelings of stress, anxiety, risks, uncertainty, confusion, disorientation and physical and emotional discomforts which accompany the adaptation process in an unfamiliar culture.

③ “Language barrier” means the language deficiency which handicaps one in expressing oneself appropriately.

face”^①? No textbooks! How can students cope with lectures, seminars and exams? Hardly any notes on the blackboard or whiteboard! What will students base their studies on? When rote-learning and memorisation fail to function in the British education system, how can they take and pass exams? With a bank branch on campus, one still needs to wait at least two weeks or even longer to open a bank account! Where is the convenience? An appointment with a dentist should be booked half a year or one year in advance. . .

All of a sudden, I found myself, somewhat disorientated and frustrated, endeavouring to work out the rules and regulations that govern British people’s daily lives since what I had accumulated through socialisation, education and inculcation in China became dysfunctional overseas, namely, coming from a different ethnic cultural background, my personal habitus failed to fit the British institutional habitus. Due to the gap between book knowledge and real British life, my previously acquired knowledge and lived experiences, even the learning and teaching styles and successful techniques and strategies applied at home, did not prove very helpful in coping with my overseas study and life during my initial stay. It was after a period of acculturation that I gradually began to enjoy my stay as a foreigner abroad. Such an experience made my interest grow immensely in exploring the experiences of Chinese students in UK HE. It is true that they value international education and believe it bolsters their future careers, but what do Chinese students undertaking UK HE actually feel, perceive, think and experience? What do they expect from the education overseas? How do they face the challenges of culture shock and language barrier and cope with different learning and teaching styles in a dissimilar educational system? How do they accumulate cultural capital overseas and transmute it into capital applicable at home and abroad? To seek answers to such questions, I became a doctoral research student where I had first been an academic visitor.

1.2 Globalisation and International Education

Globalisation was *the* concept of the 1990s, and in the twenty-first century its omnipresence can be perceived in every aspect of modern human life (Giddens, 1999; 2000; Scholte, 2000; Sklair, 2002). It is an all-encompassing social, economic, cultural and political reality and it connects all fields supranationally. Globalisation implies that cultural, social and economic movement displaces people, goods and values from local or national settings and makes them subject to global forces (Webb et al. , 2002). As McGrew states:

① To “lose face” in China is to suffer a loss of dignity.

Nowadays, goods, capital, people, knowledge, images, communications, crime, culture, pollutants, drugs, fashions and beliefs all readily flow across territorial boundaries. Transnational networks, social movements and relationships are extensive in virtually all areas of human activity.

McGrew, A. 1992: 65-66

Likewise, as Giddens put it;

Globalisation is by no means wholly economic in its nature, causes, or consequences. It is a basic mistake to limit the concept to the global marketplace. Globalisation is also social, political and cultural.

Giddens, A. 2000: 68

Globalisation is “the word slogan of the socio-political and economic discourse in the epoch of late modernity” (Cairns et al. , 2001: 2-3). Its impact “has not only been felt in the economic realm but, indeed, has also caused significant changes in the ideological-cultural realm and in the transformation of time and space” (Mok, 2000a: 148-149).

Despite different attitudes towards globalisation, many consider it as the best choice for China to be part of the global economy, culture and politics when it entered the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2001 (Yang1, 2000; Yang2, 1999; Yang3, 1999). Globalisation is in essence modernity or modernisation. Throughout the history of the modern world, modernisation began with industrialisation — the first stage. The Industrial Revolution in Great Britain (1750-1830) transformed a large rural population making a living almost entirely on agriculture to a town-centred society engaged increasingly in manufacturing, which brought about economic growth through establishing world markets. Other European nations underwent the same process soon afterwards, followed by Russia and Japan in the first half of the twentieth century. In some countries this transformation is still in process, whilst in others it remains in the future. It can be argued that the progress of countries that were the first to develop depended on the lack of development of others, but significant gaps among different countries continue to exist.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the second stage of modernisation proceeded with an emphasis on the equilibrated development of society, contributing to the development of social welfare nations and improving the quality of life in Europe. In the third stage, modernisation centres on development through the creation of knowledge economy in modern western countries. Concerning China, it is contested that;

there has never been anything like the Chinese industrial revolution, the great transformation from basic needs centrally-controlled Communism into a so-called socialist market economy

Day, 10 March, 2005

Day is to a degree correct to present such an argument, but it can be contended that Chinese modernisation began with the “Self-Strengthening Movement”^①. Chinese industrialisation assumes “subsequently-developed and outward-generated” characteristics. In other words, modernisation in China started later than that in advanced western countries, with both “ends” of the process, as it were, outward-directed, namely raw materials imported and end products exported, with the “middle” part, the manufacture of goods, being undertaken in China. Viewed in this light, the Chinese modernisation may be seen as a “processing-type modernisation”. In contrast to the British Industrial Revolution, which led to scientific and technological advances and innovation, including the steam engines, spinning and weaving machines, the former has far less historical significance than the latter. Since the late 1970s after the CR, China adopted the “open-door policies” and began working towards the “four modernisations” of industry, agriculture, national defence and science and technology through socialist construction^②. Scientific and technological innovation is underlined in post-Mao China, consistent with the national policy of “rejuvenating China through science and education”, the highlight of Deng Xiaoping’s Theory (Deng, 1994: 78; 91).

Geographically, modernisation begins with developed countries, or it is “Anglicised”, “Europeanised” or “Westernised”. Structurally, it takes the form of a “centre-borders” world system, or Wallerstein’s “core, semi-periphery, periphery and external” world system (1974; 1980; 1989), epitomised by the process of knowledge creation and application, with developed western countries being the central pole, and developing ones forming the bordering areas. The development direction and order is from centre to borders, exhibiting the typical form of globalisation. It is argued that the flow and exchange of cultural capital among the cultural elite^③ is the central axis of the value chain in the whole process, which can be transformed into other value chains such as power and wealth again from centre to borders. The capital transformation of Chinese students follows this process: they flux into the centre to receive international education and then flow from the central

① The Self-Strengthening Movement (1861-1895) refers to the institutional reform in Chinese history. It aimed at saving the Qing Dynasty from being destroyed by internal rebellions and foreign aggression through preserving and rejuvenating the dynasty and rehabilitating the devastated economy. The movement marked the beginning of Chinese industrialisation, with arsenals, dockyards, schools and factories developed first.

② “Socialist construction” is the situation in which every Chinese citizen contributes to the prosperity and thriving of the socialist country. It started after the establishment of P. R. China in 1949. In the post-Mao era, it aims to build the country towards modernisations with Chinese characteristics, and with an infrastructure capable of sustaining a market economy.

③ “Elite” means those who enjoy superior cultural, social, economic or political status.

loci of western culture into their domestic cultural resources at the border. During this globalising process, they enjoy upward social mobility due to the newly-acquired capital, which dramatises the significance of overseas education in their career development.

International education — one key factor in the knowledge economy — plays a critical role in the global age, with exhibitions held throughout the world. The USA, Great Britain, Australia and other English-speaking countries sponsor such exhibitions in China every year, each trying to take the lion's share. Various programmes are provided at different levels to attract Chinese students to pursue overseas education, or to undertake some part of it. Some universities establish their own offshore campuses (eg. Nottingham Ningbo Campus) and others strengthen international recruitment with combined resources. For instance, the UK Northern Consortium (NC) reveals its obvious advantages in recruitment overseas. Many foreign HEIs use Chinese agencies to help take and consolidate their China market. UKCISA (UK Council for International Student Affairs, formally called UKCOSA: UK Council for Overseas Student Affairs), provides detailed information regarding how to study and work and where to live in Britain. The British government changed policies so that international students might remain in the country for 1-2 years after graduation to gain work experience, if they chose so (<http://www.ukcosa.org.uk>). Seminars and conferences are frequently held on how to enhance international/Chinese students' experiences in UK HE, how to manage large numbers of Chinese students, how to help them in their transition to British HE, and how pastoral care may help produce a positive experience abroad.

A brief review of international student mobility in recent years illustrates the large scale of overseas education in the global economy. The enrolment of overseas students in the US exceeded 580,000 in 2001/02 and more than 154,000 American students studied abroad in 2000/01 (Chin, 2002). In Canada, international students increased by more than 110,000 in 2002, and in Australia more than 188,000 students were enrolled abroad in the same year (Arthur, 2004). In New Zealand, the numbers of overseas students were 52,695, 82,020 and 118,644 in 2001, 2002 and 2003 respectively (Holloway, 2004). The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) revealed the total number of international students in Britain in 2003/04 increased by 9 per cent, from 275,270 to 300,055. In 2004, over 275,000 international students were undertaking UK HE (10 per cent of the undergraduate and 37 per cent of the postgraduate population), with another 70,000 receiving further education (UKCOSA, 2004a). The "Vision 2020: Forecasting International Student Mobility" suggests that the total global demand for international student

places will increase from about 2.1 million in 2003 to approximately 5.8 million by 2020, whilst the demand for places in main English-speaking destination countries forecasts to increase from about 1 million to about 2.6 million (<http://www.britishcouncil.org/goingglobal>).

International education is an important transition in the life trajectories of Chinese students. In undertaking it they complete upward social mobility while participating in the process of globalisation, flowing along the cultural value path of “borders-centre” and “centre-borders”. To date, overseas education has nurtured millions of Chinese who are contributing significantly to the construction of China.

1.3 The China Market — Chinese Students and UK Education

This section elaborates on the China market, Chinese students and UK education against a background of globalisation and the internationalisation of HE (Mok, 2005). It reviews the Chinese HE system during and after the CR before examining overseas education in the China market.

The Chinese Higher Education System

The Chinese HE system has experienced momentous changes over the past three decades. The downfall of the “Gang of Four” in 1976 ended the “CR” and ushered in a new era in China. Politically, China has adopted open-door policies ever since the CR was over, with the degree of openness increasing over the years. Entry into the WTO made China an indispensable part of the global economy. Economically, there has been a boom starting from the countryside “ge ren cheng bao zhi” (household responsibility system), a system for farmers to take responsibility for their leased land growing whatever they want, leading to the transformation of property rights. The privatisation of property brought about rapid economic development in China, with annual GDP (gross domestic product) growth rate reaching over eight per cent for more than a decade (see Figure 1.1). The year 2006 witnessed a 10.7 per cent GDP growth rate (<http://www.china.org.cn>).

In education, the year 1977 witnessed the nationwide historic resumption of the college entrance examination which changed the life course of millions of young people, regardless of origin (birthplace and family background), who would otherwise have remained in the countryside or been sent there as “educated youth” for re-education, and which subsequently led to the huge investment in education in modern China, particularly in overseas education. Culturally, there has been much international exchange and collaboration over the past three decades. The number of international students going to China for education, particularly the number of Chinese receiving education abroad has been increasing in the twenty-first century.

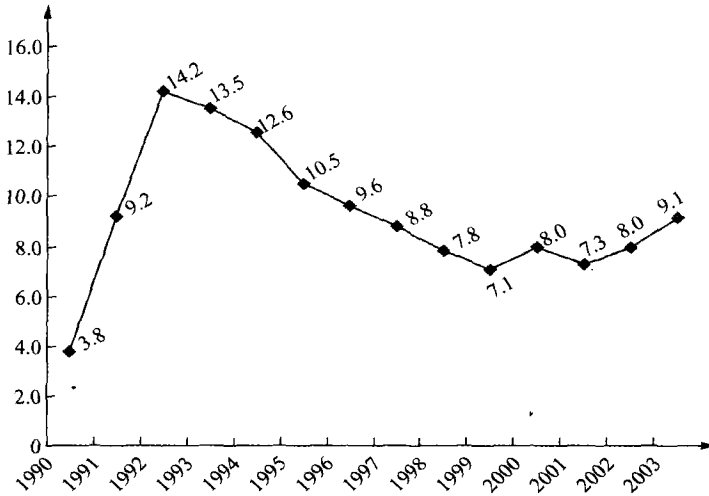


Figure 1.1 GDP Growth Rate in China (1990-2003)

Source: Yu, Y. 2004.

The significant growth in the latter has made Chinese students an important part that cannot be overemphasised in international education, a completely different picture from the CR when there was the nationwide disruption and discontinuation of schooling at all levels.

The 1977 HE resumption brought about fundamental changes in the Chinese educational system. In the first few years after the resumption, however, the recruitment rate was very low, with about one per cent school-leavers being admitted to HE, a serious effect of the “talent shortage” caused by the 10-year CR. To set things right and return China to normality, the Chinese government tried every means possible to promote education, including promulgating a series of national education laws which provide a broad legal framework across the educational system: the Regulations on Academic Degrees (1980), Compulsory Education Law (1986), Teachers’ Law (1993), Education Law (1995), Higher Education Law (1998) and Privately-run Education Promotion Law (2002) (Law, 2002; Li2, 2004). According to Li Lanqing (2004), the former Chinese Vice-Premier in charge of education, the MoE has enacted about 200 departmental regulations on most aspects of education, and over 150 local laws and regulations have also been decreed. Such laws and regulations have fundamentally transformed the educational system and ensured a quick and steady development of Chinese HE. The enactments demonstrate that China has begun to exercise law to enforce education in post-Mao