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the Beijing Youth**

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**Creating Mediated Cosmopolitanism?  
Global Media Flows and the Beijing Youth**

TIANKAI TANG

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements of the University of Westminster  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## *Abstract*

This thesis aims to explore how the Chinese urban young generation experience different forms of cultural cosmopolitanism through the consumption of growing flows of de-territorialized media products – mainly, but not solely, US-led Western media products, including films and television programmes. It also examines how this generation is negotiating hybrid identities from the perspective of cultural cosmopolitanism, given their strong Chinese cultural influences and constant exposure and consumption of Western media products. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach, the research is designed to be an exploratory, though pioneering work, which also seeks a possible explanation as to what contributes to cultural cosmopolitanism. Drawing on a range of historical sources, the thesis throws light on the causes of cosmopolitanism within the Chinese context and relates it to stability and change in the social environment in China.

The empirical part of the research mainly draws from qualitative focus groups and in-depth interviews with 45 Beijing youths, aged between 18 and 30 years, based on the criteria of age, gender, occupation, class, local/non-local and overseas experience. According to the analysis of the data thus collected, the processes that Chinese urban youth engage in while consuming foreign media products are far more complicated than what might be explained as the consequences of globalization. They show different degrees of openness towards foreign - mainly US-led Western media – products and their main motives for consuming these are entertainment, and the fact that such media content is considered of better quality than what is available domestically. During the viewing of such content, it was observed that the youths more or less experience the process of ‘dialogic imagination’. The thesis argues that Chinese urban youth experience a unique form of cosmopolitanism, characterized by self-centered and strategic engagement with foreign media products, consistent with a pattern of openness that can be seen throughout Chinese history. Although cosmopolitan consciousness in a moral sense exists temporarily during the viewing of foreign media products, the thesis suggests, the consumption of such media has rather limited influence and therefore cannot lead to the kind of cosmopolitanism celebrated in Western discourses.

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*Author's Declaration*

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis conducted according the Regulations of the University of Westminster. All the material contained in this thesis is my own work except as cited in the references. Neither any part of this thesis nor the whole of the thesis has been submitted for a degree to any other University or Institution.

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Introduction***

Globalization is supposed to have made the world a more cosmopolitan place as transnational connectivity, global media flows and movements of peoples and ideas have become a reality in the twenty first century. The extraordinary expansion of international media and its consumption by varied audiences is contributing to creating pluralistic identities, especially among the youth across the globe. Within this broader cultural and communicative interaction, the notion of cosmopolitanism, which has developed in the West, is increasingly being applied to non-Western contexts. However, there are few academic works – especially in the field of media and communication studies – which look at this phenomenon in the non-Western countries. The present study focuses on how the urban Chinese youth are consuming largely Western media content and whether such consumption is making them more cosmopolitan individuals.

## **Background and context of the research**

As an irreversible process, globalization has intensified the relationship between different cultures. Tremendous changes have taken place, not only between nation states, but also within societies (Beck, 2002; Roudometof, 2005). People do not need to travel across the national boundaries to experience foreign cultures: due to different forms of flows - global migration patterns and the availability of a range of media products from across the world – individuals can experience different cultures on a daily basis without leaving home. Thus debates on globalization have shifted from having to prove its existence to its consequences (Rantanen, 2005). Arjun Appadurai in his widely-cited article, ‘Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy’, suggests that the core issue of global interaction is the conflict between cultural homogenization and heterogenization (1996:32). Homogenization and heterogenization stand for two contrasting tendencies of social transformation under globalization. The interactions of different cultures lead to either homogenization as a result of unification, or heterogenization, which demonstrates that cultures are diverse and hybrid (Khatib, 2010: 279). As globalization increasingly blurs the boundaries between ‘the home

and away, local and global, traditional and de-traditionalized, and here and there' (Skrbiš, Kendall and Woodward, 2004:116), the traditional thinking of nation-states, boundaries, consumption and communication needs to be rethought (Delanty, 2009).

China is currently experiencing two great social transformations, both locally and globally, as a result of globalization. The first one is the process of modernization since early modern times, and the second to become an information society, which started around twenty years ago, even before the former transformation was fully complete (Fei, 2000: 14). Since the late 1970s, opening up to the world has been one of the main themes in the modernization of China (Ding, 2014). For the first time since its extensive interactions with and learning from the West during the early modern period of 1840s to the May 4 New Culture Movement in 1919, China demonstrated great initiative and pro-activeness in the process of globalization rather than being a passive recipient of foreign ideas. It is also the first time since the Tang Dynasty (seventh to tenth century AD) that China has experienced a high level of mobility and different forms of flows (Ding, 2014).

During the interaction with the outside world from that time to the contemporary era, nationalism was evoked by Chinese leadership to promote the progress of Chinese history, and the themes of nationalism changed in different periods. For example, in the nineteenth century, the theme was 'clashes of civilization between China and the West' and the goal was to 'maintain the quintessence of Chinese culture'. In the 1930s and 1940s, the focus was the 'Sino-Japanese War' and the goal was to save the nation from extinction. In the 1960s and 1970s, nationalism was about 'anti-imperialism and anti-revisionism', and the goal was to 'rely on one's own efforts'. In the 1980s, the concept was about 'membership in a community of nations' and the goal was 'modernization'. In the 1990s, there was no need to save the nation from extinction; no one mentioned 'relying on our own efforts' and 'modernization' was frequently challenged and questioned. The themes of 'clashes of civilizations' and confrontation between cultures were most prominent (Xu, 2006: 103). Fei Xiaotong, who was a pioneering and prominent Chinese sociologist and anthropologist,

proposed a solution to ‘the clashes of civilizations’ that ‘each appreciates its own best, appreciates the best in others, all appreciate the best together for the greater harmony of all’ (各美其美, 美人之美, 美美与共, 天下大同) (Fei, 2004: 27). In this poetic sentence, Fei conceived an ideal future and at the same time offered the approach to achieve this objective of ‘harmony with diversity’. It requires that one not only appreciate one’s own culture but also acknowledges and respects other cultures. Also, it calls for one not to judge other’s culture as ‘inferior’ or not by the standards of his/her own culture. However, achieving this is very difficult. For example, many developing countries in Asia, the Middle East and Africa were colonized by Western countries for a long time, resulting in two opposite tendencies in these societies: a blind worship of Western civilization, on the one hand, and an adoption of a strict closed-door policy and hatred towards the West, on the other, at the extreme (ibid).

The concept of cosmopolitanism has been revitalized in many disciplines, two thousand years after its birth (Skrbiš, Kendall and Woodward, 2004). Cosmopolitanism in its cultural dimension is highly relevant to the context mentioned above. On the one hand, cultural cosmopolitanism can be a possible solution to the cultural issues caused by the ‘clash of civilizations’ and by globalization, as a way of dealing with new forms of experience in the globalized age (Skey, 2012). On the other hand, the concept of cosmopolitanism in its cultural dimension as an analytic tool enables an examination of how the global and the local interact at a micro-level within the processes of globalization, as a powerful and strong complement to globalization. Cultural cosmopolitanism is one of the largely under-researched aspects of processes associated with globalization, particularly in the context of media consumption among non-Western social and cultural milieus. For most Chinese people, as for most people in the world, their image of the rest of the world is gained through the media. Although most contemporary theories are a product of modern Western thought, some scholars more recently have started to focus on cosmopolitanism in non-Western countries, such as China, which has its own ancient concept of cosmopolitanism based on Confucianism (Delanty, 2009; He and Brown, 2012).

Cultural cosmopolitanism is a very attractive analytical tool at first glance, which concerns ‘openness towards culturally different others’. However, it has three main issues, which are hardly new but need to be solved urgently (Kendall, Woodward and Skrbiš, 2009; Calcutt, Woodward and Skrbiš, 2009; Skrbiš and Woodward, 2011; Skey, 2012; Elverskog, 2013; Roudometof, 2005; Molz, 2012). The first is its equivocal and ambiguous definition with multiple dimensions and different facets and layers. The second is the difficulty of conducting empirical research due to the amorphous and diffused definitions. Thirdly, what triggers cosmopolitanism remains unknown. The first two issues largely influence research design and research practice. In this research, the first issue has been solved by delimiting it into the cultural field, following the tradition of this area that is to first demarcate it. The second issue has been addressed by the combination and synthesis of existing practice-based approaches in cultural cosmopolitanism and the audience-research tradition. The third issue is addressed by introducing the historical dimension.

### **The aims of the research and original contribution to knowledge**

This research aims to explore how Chinese urban youth experience different forms of cultural cosmopolitanism through the consumption of the growing flows of de-territorialized media products mainly films and television programmes, as well as to examine how this young generation is negotiating hybrid identities from the perspective of cultural cosmopolitanism, given the strong Chinese cultural influences and constant exposure and consumption of mainly, but not solely, US-led Western media products. Rather than simply describe what is taking place in China through the investigation, the research also sought a possible explanation as to what contributes to cosmopolitanism in the case of China. Keeping in mind the enormous diversity – in terms of economic development and access to Western media content – in a continental size country of 1.3 billion people, the research focuses on the young generation in metropolis of Beijing, as the most potentially cosmopolitan of the Chinese youth population, regularly and routinely consuming foreign entertainment, increasingly on digital platforms. Situating the research by using secondary sources from historical literature, the methodology adopted included qualitative research methods via in-

depth interviews as a pilot study, focus groups and thematic analysis. Between March and August in 2015, the researcher conducted nine qualitative focus groups and four in-depth interviews with 45 Beijing youths in total, aged 18 to 30 years old, based on age, gender, occupation, class, local/non-local and overseas experience.

The research aimed to find answers to the three main research questions:

1. How do Chinese urban youth experience cultural forms of cosmopolitanism throughout the consumption of foreign media products?
2. What are the possible determinant elements of cultural cosmopolitanism in the case of China?
3. Does the consumption of foreign media products lead to a greater level of cultural cosmopolitanism?

The hypotheses of this study are as follows:

It is tentatively proposed in this thesis that there is a pattern to the openness of Chinese people to the world that can be seen in Chinese history. Throughout history, at times when Chinese society was relatively strong or in a stable state and its cultural system could meet people's needs and answer their questions, people found no need to look outwards and society was more closed. Conversely, when Chinese society was relatively weak, or constantly changing, and the cultural system was unable to meet people's needs and could not provide solutions to their problems, there was more of a spirit of openness to other cultures. This pattern can also be seen today. This relationship gives a possible explanation about how foreign cultural media products might trigger people's cosmopolitan consciousness, in the case of China, which is the basic premise for the research presented later in the thesis.

In addition, the thesis argues that Chinese urban youth show openness to foreign media products - mainly US-led foreign media products - for the major purpose of entertainment. They experience 'dialogic imagination', which leads to different forms of cultural

cosmopolitanism during the consumption of foreign media products. Cosmopolitan consciousness in its moral dimension is recognized but, in most cases, the forms of cosmopolitanism they experience are more superficial and temporary. The most notable form of cosmopolitanism that they are experiencing is related to the pattern of openness linked to the rapidly changing society. This form of cosmopolitanism is self-centered, strategic and for survival. Many members of the Chinese urban people tend to be a ‘cosmopolitan patriot’. Also, it argues that the consumption of foreign media products, which have very limited influence on people’s lives, currently cannot lead to a greater level of cosmopolitanism.

In general, the research contributes to enriching the discourse of cosmopolitanism studies and globalization studies in relation to their cultural dimension. This research is highly relevant to current research trends in cosmopolitanism studies. On the one hand, it provides empirical support, especially in relation to ‘mundane’ and ‘everyday’ forms of cosmopolitanism, as defined by scholars such as Skrbiš and Woodward (Skrbiš and Woodward, 2013). On the other hand, it investigates the urban youth experience of cosmopolitanism and the meanings produced during the process of encounter with foreign ‘meaning systems’ through the consumption of foreign media products, rather than simply labeling ‘who is a cosmopolitan’ by deploying certain parameters and criteria (Skey, 2012; Rovisco and Nowicka, 2011). In addition, the research attempts to discover what causes cultural cosmopolitanism, which is of interest to scholars, and helps to answer the question of whether the consumption of foreign media products can produce ‘authentic’ and ‘deep’ cosmopolitanism.

The researcher found there was not a well-established foundation within Chinese academia of cosmopolitanism studies in its cultural dimension. In the main Chinese academic databases (such as CNKI, Wanfang Data and CQVIP), the majority of the studies on Chinese cosmopolitanism take historical, philosophical and political perspectives. Although the sporadic introduction of Western concepts could be seen, which plays an important role in bridging communication, this was limited to an introductory level and there was no interests

in going any further or delving deeper, especially in relation to discussions about communication within contemporary Chinese society (An, 2003; Zhang, 2005; Chen, 2010; Wang, 2012; Zhou, 2014). Thus, the reality is that the study of cosmopolitanism in its cultural dimension in China is underdeveloped. In the absence of theoretical and empirical support from Chinese studies, the purpose of this research is primarily exploratory. On the one hand, the research provides an overview of media-induced cosmopolitanism among Chinese urban youth, laying the foundations for future investigation. On the other hand, it makes a contribution to the development of cosmopolitanism in its cultural dimension in China, as well as the field of media and communication studies. In addition, the research plays a role in building bridges through reciprocal dialogue between mainland China and the rest of the world.

This research takes an interdisciplinary approach. The advantage of this is that it can spark new and interesting ideas in a symbiotic way. Firstly, the thesis invites history into the research, as it can bring novel insights into modern forms of cosmopolitanism. History is often neglected in the fields of cultural studies, communication studies and cosmopolitanism studies. In the absence of theoretical and empirical studies from China, Chinese history might be able to provide possible explanations of the origins of cosmopolitanism. For this research, which focuses on Chinese cosmopolitan tendencies among urban youth, the definition of what constituted cosmopolitanism in the Chinese context was crucial. Given that there is limited literature on this subject within Chinese media and communication studies, it was difficult for the researcher to directly transpose Western theories of cosmopolitanism into the Chinese context. Western concepts may not be applicable to the reality of China (Guo, 2015; Fang, 2005; Wu, 2013) and may not fully explain some phenomena in developing countries and civilizations such as China and India (Thussu, 2009). Secondly, the thesis combines the audience research approach with the study of cosmopolitanism, which are highly compatible. With the help of relatively developed audience research, especially Stuart Hall's three readings of media texts – dominant, negotiated, oppositional - the enquiry of cosmopolitanism is properly anchored and becomes

more practicable and operable. Thus this thesis also offers a contribution to research methodology in relation to research into cosmopolitanism and media consumption.

### **Outline of the thesis**

This thesis is divided into eight chapters. Chapter 1 is the Literature Review, which traces the core themes, theories and approaches; highlights the key issues related to the research questions, and provides a comprehensive overview of the main theoretical debates about cosmopolitanism and its contested definitions and applications, drawing on a range of literature from sociology, anthropology and cultural and media studies. Two main fields constitute the literature review – cosmopolitanism studies and communication and media studies. The chapter starts with a brief introduction to the rise of contemporary cosmopolitanism studies along with the progress of globalization. The major part on cosmopolitanism studies discusses the current issues and debates on its multiple definitions and the resulting difficulties in conducting empirical research, as well as the causes of cosmopolitanism that remain unknown, followed by an examination of existing practice-based approaches. These issues are not new but need to be solved urgently, which largely influences the process of research practice.

Much of the discussion relies on theories and discourses of cultural cosmopolitanism that have emerged and developed in the West because of the lack of studies in China of cosmopolitanism in its cultural dimension. This study is concerned with how Chinese urban youth deal with notions of cosmopolitanism mediated through mass media. Since the focus is on China and China is not only a very old country but one of the world's largest and continuously surviving civilizations, there is a discussion of the relationship between cosmopolitanism and globalization from the perspective of history. It is therefore considered necessary to provide a historical context to the concept of cosmopolitanism in the case of China.

Chapter 2 examines the concept of cultural cosmopolitanism in the context of Chinese

history. This chapter outlines and summarizes Chinese attitudes towards ‘foreign’ and otherness in an historical context. The main purpose of this historical chapter is to explore the relationship between openness and social transition, through a brief survey of Chinese history from the Zhou Dynasty (1046-256 BC) to the present, in order to find, or more precisely, to get closer to the mechanism of cosmopolitanism. The chapter briefly introduces some of the doctrines of a group of Pre-Qin philosophers from different schools in China that reflect a sense of cosmopolitanism, mainly in terms of ethics and the governance of the world.

Research by a group of key scholars from mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and overseas working on the intellectual history of China, history and Chinese philosophy have informed this chapter. A unique pattern of openness is tentatively proposed. In order to demonstrate the argument, the origin, development and collapse of the concepts of ‘Tianxia’ and ‘Sinocentrism’, which are key to understanding this relationship, are discussed with a series of historical examples. The chapter examines how the national consciousness - Sinocentrism – to a great extent influenced attitudes towards culturally different others (Jin, 1993; Liu, 1993).

Chapter 3 presents the methodology and methods that were selected for the research, providing a chance for readers to assess the validity and reliability of the research. This chapter is divided into three parts. The first section is mainly concerned with how the researcher locates herself as a Chinese researcher based in the UK – a Western society, encountering different academic perspectives, views and stances with a reflexive attitude. The second section concerns how the researcher legitimizes the research designs and research methods chosen to carry out the investigation. The researcher articulates how she identified the philosophical perspective on which the thesis is based – critical realism, followed by a detailed discussion of the research methods selected - the interdisciplinary approach including history and the qualitative focus groups for primary data collection. The third section sets out the procedure for collecting the primary data and the qualitative method

of thematic analysis.

Chapters 4 to 6 present the findings and analysis. These three chapters address the research questions with the help of empirical data. Chapter 4 focuses on the general usage pattern of foreign media products by Beijing youth. Choosing to use foreign media products with different motives and reasons is an action that demonstrates a certain degree of openness towards the 'Other'. It is very important to know what happens in participants' minds and what they are thinking during the interaction with different cultural 'meaning systems'. Chapter 5 aims to explore how cosmopolitanism in its cultural aspect is experienced by different groups of participants while they are consuming foreign media content. Thus, it explores their varied cosmopolitan experience during the use of foreign media products, mainly Western media. After establishing the main themes of the findings in chapters four and five, the last findings and analysis chapter – chapter six – discusses the relationship between social change, global media and cosmopolitanism with Chinese characteristics, through reference to the historical chapter.

In the final chapter, several broad conclusions are drawn from the analysis of the primary data from the focus groups and secondary sources from historical literature in relation to the original research aims and questions. Part two of the chapter indicates the issues and questions raised during the process of research, arising from, for example, the limitation of the qualitative focus group method, which is effective for data collection at the exploratory stage but can lack depth and invites opportunities for further investigation. Finally, it demonstrates the contribution and significance of the research to the field. The interdisciplinary approach in this research, specifically the use of history, helps to propose a new way of understanding cosmopolitanism, bringing fresh insights into it, resolving the issue that Western-oriented concepts might not fully explain the phenomenon in developing countries or a civilization such as China. In addition, the audience-reception approach has enabled this research into cosmopolitanism - a concept lacking a clear and unequivocal definition - to be properly anchored in an empirical study, making the research more feasible

and practicable.

Overall, the themes of this thesis are highly relevant to current research trends. This research provides direct empirical findings and evidence on this topic from China, enriching the discourses of both cosmopolitanism and globalization in a cultural dimension. At the same time, it also makes a contribution to the rather under-developed study of cosmopolitanism in China and plays a role in building bridges through reciprocal communication and dialogue between mainland China and the rest of the world. Also, it presents the practical value of cultural cosmopolitanism as a possible solution to cope with the issues related to cultural differences in this increasingly interconnected world.

## *Chapter 1*

### *Literature Review*

The basic aim of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive overview of the main theoretical debates about cosmopolitanism and its contested definitions and applications, drawing on a range of literature from sociology, anthropology and cultural and media studies. To put it simply, the literatures consists of two main fields: cosmopolitanism studies and communication and media studies.

The chapter starts with a brief introduction to the rise of contemporary cosmopolitanism studies along with the progress of globalization. The major part on cosmopolitanism studies discusses the current issues and debates on its multiple definitions and the resulting difficulties in conducting empirical research, as well as the causes of cosmopolitanism that remain unknown. An entrenched research tradition or culture at a practical level has not been firmly established in this area. The author draws on a wide range of literature from conceptual and theoretical work to practical and empirical studies. As no preexisting method could be directly used for conducting the research, the Literature Review pays specific attention on reviewing on practical and empirical literature - for the epistemological purpose and the conduct of fieldwork for the research such as sampling, data collection and data analysis in the relevant area. The social-cultural context of cosmopolitan openness – global media flow and its reception, theories and empirical studies on the media and communication researches, especially audience studies in relation to globalization will be discussed. These issues will be further elaborated in the Literature Review.

#### **1.1 The rise of contemporary cosmopolitanism**

Contemporary cosmopolitanism studies in cultural dimensions started to rejuvenate at the end of the 1980s, and has kept developing and burgeoning in academia and various scholars – belonging to different disciples including sociology, anthropology, media and cultural

studies and politics – have contributed to its expansion. Cosmopolitanism has become an attractive buzzword like globalization, appearing in more and more academic works, ranging from political studies to history to communication to anthropology to almost all areas of social sciences (Vertovec and Cohen, 2002; Vertovec, 2009; Delanty, 2012; Elverskog, 2013).

Cosmopolitanism is deep rooted in European civilization, and it can be traced back to Enlightenment, although classical cosmopolitanism is distinguished from modern cosmopolitanism (Delanty, 2009). The word ‘cosmopolitan’ derives from two Greek words ‘cosmos’ and ‘polis’, which means citizen of the world (Rantanen, 2005; Delanty, 2009). Diogenes the Cynic’s (BC 412 -323) manifesto of ‘I am a citizen of the world’ has echoed in both classic and contemporary cosmopolitanism studies throughout history.

Delanty (2009) pointed out that two meanings in his statement have inspired most subsequent studies in cosmopolitanism - firstly reflecting a recognition of a world, and secondly implying an indifference to one’s local belonging (Delanty, 2009). For Skrbiš and Woodward (2011), there are also two meanings reflected in this statement. First, from the perspective of space and time, the statement implies certain detachment from the local and a distance to immediacy. Second, from the perspective openness, the statement manifested a degree of openness that allow individuals not confined themselves to the local, but can also embrace the non-local which might quite different from the local. It is true that more or less, the essence of the statement could always be seen at least in contemporary studies.

In general, cosmopolitanism has been developed into three strands: ethical or philosophical dimension, normative political dimension, and sociological-cultural dimension (Vertovec, 2009; Delanty, 2009). Scholars also divide the cosmopolitanism research into ‘international and social level’ or ‘macro and micro level’ (Vertovec and Cohen, 2002; Skey, 2012). The former is concerned with issues relating to beyond the national borders while the latter is concerned about a personal individual level. Vertovec and Cohen have put forward six types of cosmopolitanism through characterization that most current scholars use (2002; 2002,

cited in Rovsco and Nowicka, 2011). According to them, theories on cosmopolitanism have been divided as ‘a socio-cultural condition; a kind of philosophy or worldview; a political project towards building transnational institutions; a political project for recognizing multiple identities; an attitude or disposition; and a mode of practice or competence’ (ibid).

It offers space for interdisciplinary research and follows the logic of globalization. Cosmopolitanism in cultural dimension has been closely related to globalization. Some scholars, such as Yilmaz and Trandafoiu (2015) have argued that cosmopolitanism is a result of globalization. However, it is difficult to see a causal connection between globalization and cosmopolitanism. In recent literature on cosmopolitanism, one notices very high frequency of several key topics closely associated with globalization. They include increasing interconnection of the world, increasing strength of transnational connections, a growing possibility of a networked world, a break of culture and a locality or a territory, flows of cultures and mobility of people, nationalism (Hannerz, 1990; Vertovec and Cohen, 2002; Beck, 2006; Roudometof, 2005; Skey, 2012). Many other scholars have expressed similar principal features of globalization and late modernity, more or less at the same wavelength. Although contemporary cosmopolitanism in cultural dimension has deeply entangled itself with globalization, it is important to emphasize the fact that cosmopolitanism is not exclusively associated with the discourses of globalization. Instead, it can appear at any society and any time throughout the history (Delanty, 2009). Cosmopolitanism can and does occur within domestic and personal spaces and is related to characteristics of cosmopolitanism itself, as elaborated below.

### **1.2.1 Issues in cosmopolitanism studies in cultural dimension**

In order to explore various dimensions of cosmopolitanism, it is necessary to know and identify the issues and disputes in previous studies. These relate to the epistemological consideration of this study. For a start, how to make cosmopolitanism, already an abstract

concept, useful as a theoretical framework within which to analyze the empirical material remains a challenge. This problem is hardly new. In the field of cosmopolitanism studies, most previous research has directly and indirectly reflected this recurring issue, and this is manifested in two aspects.

Firstly, there are a lot of discussions and disputes about the definition of cosmopolitanism itself. Many scholars have suggested that the problem of cosmopolitanism studies is its ambiguous and broad definition, as well as it being a rather diffused and amorphous concept (Kendall, Woodward and Skrbiš, 2009; Calcutt, Woodward and Skrbiš, 2009; Skrbiš and Woodward, 2011; Skey, 2012; Elverskog, 2013). For example, the use of the term in globalization studies. Skey (2012) has examined and discussed different approaches to cosmopolitanism and pointed out the key issues in theorizing cosmopolitanism. He acknowledges that cosmopolitanism gives a very attractive first impression as an analytical tool. In particular, compared with the abstract and broad consequences of globalization – homogenization and heterogenization - the cosmopolitan approach could be an effective complement to demonstrate a dynamic and grounded picture of interaction between the global and the local, adding more empirical support. After examining a great number of studies in this area which started to appear in the 1990s, Skey was concerned about the rather uncritical and ambiguous use of the term “cosmopolitanism”, leading to a situation which was described by Harvey as ‘an abstracted discourse with no tangible meaning’ (2000: 547; cited in 2012).

Scholars belonging to different disciplines have acknowledged that there is no single form of cosmopolitanism. It all depends on how scholars define this concept and how to use this as a lens to carry out an inquiry. Almost all the research articles and books consulted for this project showed that the scholars have to define and refine the meaning of cosmopolitanism for their own research purposes.

For example, scholars like Skrbiš and Woodward, who are very active in cosmopolitanism

studies (2011:53), claimed that they were ‘at pains’ to describe the situation that despite a strong desire to escape from defining the term, sociologists and philosophers have no choice but to face it. A strong sense of helplessness is implied.

Another aspect is that definition of cosmopolitanism caused the problem of identification, bringing difficulties in operational practical level. A direct critic is from Laube, who asserted that the concept of cosmopolitanism gives a very ideal and splendid idea, but it was, ‘too large for almost everybody’ and therefore was criticized on the lines that ‘if it does not take on a concrete individual form, it might as well never existed’ (Laube, 1973: 131, cited in Beck, 2006:1).

Many researches were built and developed on rather abstract definition and concepts for example, based on Hannerz’s definition’s ‘openness towards’ or ‘a willingness to engage with others’ (Hannerz, 1990: 239; Skey, 2012: 472). Due to a lack of an agreement and the abstractness of the concept, scholars constantly discussed and gave rise to more questions on the issue and concerns such as what refers to ‘openness’ and who is an ‘other’. For example, Skrbiš and Woodward (2011) have pointed out that the idea of openness as a key characteristic shared by a majority of cosmopolitanism studies throughout the history was a useful way to think about the notion of cosmopolitanism. However, they found it difficult to actually talk about what constituted openness. Under such situation rather than demystifying the concept and giving solutions, although the purpose is to clarify the concepts, the attempts often generate more questions than find plausible answers (Skey, 2012).

The conceptual ambiguity leads to the emergence of different forms of cosmopolitanism. ‘X’ cosmopolitanism’ was proposed by Vertovec on his lecture (n.d.) to refer to various prefixes which we were being increasingly deployed to describe the phenomenon in emerging literature on practices of cosmopolitanism. Skrbiš and Woodward listed the term or adjective to prefix or describe cosmopolitanism appearing in cosmopolitanism studies, such as ‘ordinary, practice and everyday’ (Lamont and Aksartova, 2002) ... ‘vernacular’ (Bhabha, 1996), ‘actually existing’ (Malcomson, 1998), ‘working class’ (Werbner, 1999)...

‘banal and reflexive’ (Beck, 2006), ‘mundane’ (Szerszynski and Urry, 2002)... ‘instrumental’ (Ong, 2009)’ (2013: 4). Skrbiš and Woodward found that the list was too long and therefore they had to stop adding adjectives and prefixes to the forms and types of cosmopolitanisms. Having a quick look at even the short list (mentioned above), it is very clear that many forms of cosmopolitanism have been suggested by various scholars and the concept itself has been constantly evolving in the past 25 years.

If one takes a more optimistic view, the ambiguity and endless disputes can be regarded as a driving force for further exploration in this area. However, from the pessimistic view, a relatively infirm theoretical foundations of cosmopolitanism may weaken its role as an useful analytical tool for researchers, and it might dampen some scholars’ initiative, especially when one is trying to adapt the notion of cosmopolitanism in a context with its cultural and socio-psychological complications such as China. A case which illustrate such a problem was during the Conference ‘Chinese Cosmopolitanism 1600-1950’ organized in 2012. The organizer of this major international conference Elverskog (2013) had summarized the papers and discussions in various panels of the conference that generally led to two main results shared among the participant scholars. First, it was the same old problem about the definition of what exactly cosmopolitanism was. Second, more and more scholars reached an agreement that they were questioning the value of cosmopolitanism in the context of the field of Chinese studies, especially for the concerns that the cosmopolitanism itself was an amorphous and diffused concept with a long genealogy. They criticized that bringing in this complicated concept into the Chinese study, rather than helping solve and navigate the issues of China, it might perplex already very complicated and intricate Chinese studies. Elverskog (2013) acknowledged the major concerns and critiques provided by the participants, but he himself held a positive view and insisted that cosmopolitanism could be regarded as a very useful and valuable theoretical approach to offer some new insights into the study of China’s past. Although what he commented was on China’s cosmopolitanism studies in the past, his remarks could still be applied and worked for contemporary Chinese studies.

The second problem on cosmopolitanism is around ‘what are the determinant elements of cosmopolitan attitudes and disposition’ (Kendall, Woodward and Skrbiš, 2009: 14; 2004). It has already reached an agreement that the encounters with ‘the Other’ might cause cosmopolitanism. What triggers cosmopolitanism during those processes remains unclear. Skrbiš and Woodward (ibid) appeal for more empirical studies in ‘mundane’, ‘every day’ and ‘ordinary’ forms of cosmopolitanism, in order to explore as to how and to what extent encounters with cultural differences influences people’s practices and attitudes. In terms of cultural aspect, Molz (2012) attempted to discover how cosmopolitanism has been linked with culture-oriented consumption, and proposed a similar idea which suggests that it still remains unknown the extent to which feelings can make ‘superficial’ cosmopolitanism convert into ‘authentic’ cosmopolitanism. In their work, Skrbiš and Woodward’ pointed out that many scholars hold sceptical views whether those ‘mundane’ forms of cosmopolitanism could engender deeper and authentic cosmopolitan attitudes (2013). Scholars like Roudometof (2005) have asked such questions as whether ‘transnationalism lead to greater levels of cosmopolitanism’ (113). In addition, Skey (2012) also pointed out that it is necessary to investigate why and how such cultural goods are consumed. Only through understanding the reasons why people consume these cultural goods and the way how these goods are distributed, used and assessed, can researchers evaluate those beliefs that there is a relationship between cultural consumption and an authentic/deeper cosmopolitanism.

The issues discussed above have a profound implication on the processes of research practices. Specifically, for this research, which focuses on Chinese cosmopolitan tendencies among the urban youth, the definition of what constituted cosmopolitanism in the Chinese context was crucial. Given that there is limited literature on this subject within Chinese media and communication studies, it was difficult for the researcher to ‘implant’ Western theories of cosmopolitanism on the Chinese situation. It would have been very helpful for this researcher had there been a reasonably well-established foundation of cosmopolitanism studies within the Chinese academia, especially in its cultural dimension. In the absence of

this, project had to operate under a limited indigenous theoretical support. However, it would be unfair to dismiss Chinese scholarship in this arena or to claim that Chinese scholars are not much interested in cosmopolitanism studies. In most authentic Chinese academic databases (such as CNKI, Wanfang Data and CQVIP), the majority of the studies on Chinese version's cosmopolitanism studies revolve around historical, philosophical or political perspectives. Notable studies within this tradition include such work as Zhao Tingyang's *The Tianxia System: An Introduction to the Philosophy of a World Institution* (2005) or Wang Mingming's *All Under Heaven (Tianxia): Cosmological Perspectives and Political Ontologies in Pre-modern China* (2012). Other work has largely drawn on Western scholarship, for example, about introducing Chinese scholars and researchers to Western political and philosophical dimensions of cosmopolitanism (An, 2003; Zhang, 2005; Chen, 2010; Wang, 2012, Zhou, 2014). Though introductory in nature, such studies are a welcome addition to academic literature in this field, especially since they are often playing a key role in bridging the intellectual gap between the Western and Chinese scholarship. However, it is a pity that many of these studies just stop at the stage of introduction and do not appear to be interested in going any further or delving deeper, especially in relation to discussions about communication with contemporary Chinese society. As has been mentioned earlier, cosmopolitanism in its cultural dimension is hardly evident in either theoretical or empirical studies published in China. The researcher, came across one Master's dissertation research, on 'consciousness of cosmopolitan and cosmopolitan education in the globalized age - a case study of Nanjing's middle school students', carried out by Liu Qihong through the method of quantitative questionnaire (2011). The research focused on political responsibility to be a world citizen and therefore was not of much help for this thesis. However, such work is a good start and indicates that there is growing awareness of cosmopolitanism within Chinese higher education – perhaps also indicating the need to better understand the 'other' as China's engagement with the wider world deepens. The questionnaire in this work did mention some issues such as, sense of political participation, tolerance, respect of difference, co-existence, sustainable development, environment but the range of questions designed were too broad while some questions were framed in such an abstract language that it was

very difficult for middle school students to fully understand them.

As a brief summary of recent development of cosmopolitanism studies in China, as outlined above, shows that the literature in this emerging field lacks a cultural dimension. This research, therefore, is a modest intellectual effort to advance the discourse on cultural cosmopolitanism within China. It remains fully aware of the theoretical limitations of deploying Western theories and approaches to analyze Chinese cosmopolitanism. However, precisely because of such awareness, it makes an effort to selectively use Western theory, so as to approximate it to the Chinese realities.

### **1.2.2 Research trends**

As noted above, Skey has outlined attempts by various scholars at labelling, by certain parameters and criteria, who is a cosmopolitan (2012). He also criticized that there were very few studies investigating the meaning behind the label ‘cosmopolitan’ and was also skeptical about what cosmopolitan practices meant in the real world, especially since the societies everywhere were continuously evolving and changing. Partly influenced by recent research on globalization and cosmopolitanism in such subjects as sociology, anthropology and Cultural Studies, many scholars have started to make contributions to further theorizing of the notion of cosmopolitanism. One can detect an intellectual shift from merely concentrating on defining and mapping the different layers and multi-faceted nature of cosmopolitanism – in any case an abstract concept - to probing into it as a grounded social category (Rovisco and Nowicka, 2011). Indicating such a shift, scholars are not just focusing on labelling ‘who is cosmopolitan’ and ‘who is not’ - which is more of descriptive approach rather than analytical category – but they have begun to show more interest in how multifaceted cosmopolitanism can be and how the concept has evolved over the decades and needs to be seen in the context of how it is experienced by people in their everyday life under the processes associated with the logic of globalization (ibid). Broadly speaking, this thesis deploys this more inclusive approach and benefits from the everyday nature of cosmopolitanism – in the context of China’s urban youth.

### **1.3 Cosmopolitanism in cultural dimension**

In this section, the key forms of cosmopolitanism and the work by key scholars relevant to the research questions for this project will be presented. The section starts with a discussion of most of 'X' cosmopolitanisms and the work associated with such formulation.

#### *Hannerz's definition of Cosmopolitanism*

The Swedish anthropologist, Ulf Hannerz, is a key figure in relation to theorizing about the cultural dimensions cosmopolitanism. His famous definition of cosmopolitanism has been adopted or adapted and developed by many scholars. Hannerz defined cosmopolitanism as '... first of all an orientation, a willingness to be engaged with the Other, it is an intellectual and aesthetics stance of openness toward divergent cultural experience, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity.' (1990: 239). Also, it is 'a matter of competence' and 'a state of readiness, a personal ability to make one's way into other cultures, through listening, looking, intuiting and reflecting. And there is cultural competence in the stricter sense of the term, a built-up skill in maneuvering more or less expertly with a particular system of meanings and meanings and meaningful forms.' This initial definition was widely cited, especially in literature related to anthropology of globalization, as globalization became a popular academic discourse in the 1990s and since then. The topic has also kept Hannerz engaged for many years: According to his next relevant work on cosmopolitanism, published after almost 15 years, Hannerz discussed cosmopolitanism in cultural terms. He argued that the primacy of cultural interaction was central in understanding globalization, as he noted that concerns about what he called 'meaning management' for 'coping with cultural diversity' (2005). In other words, cosmopolitans have capability to astutely manage different cultures. However, Hannez's approach does not engage with the complex processes of negotiating with the Other, which might and does take place within individuals (Calcutt, Woodward and Skrbiš, 2009). Here the work of late German sociologist Ulrich Beck is relevant as it complements Hannez's. Beck's idea of what he has called 'dialogic imagination' (2002) has given an explanation about what takes place during the cosmopolitan moment. 'Dialogic

imagination' is the core feature of cosmopolitan perspective, which means 'the clash of cultures and rationalities within one's own life, the 'internalized other'. The dialogic imagination corresponds to the coexistence of rival ways of life in the individual experience, which makes it a matter of fate to compare, reflect, criticize, understand, combine contradictory certainties.' (Beck, 2002: 18). Delanty (2009) expressed a similar view, arguing that a cosmopolitan person has the capacity for revitalizing cultures. It is a kind of self-problematization and self-reflexivity, part of a constant learning process. Individuals discover and know themselves through comparing and contrasting their encounters with 'the Other'.

Hannerz's cosmopolitanism concerns especially with the Other and varieties of mobility, has raised as many new questions as it inspired, and therefore received their share of criticism, in line with what Skey (2012) had criticized previously. Some of his views and concerns will be discussed later with other scholars. Hannerz provides impressive discussion on situations and moments to distinguish between what can be labelled as 'the cosmopolitan', and what can be called 'the transnational' (1990). Physically movement of populations and the resultant transnational cultures can make some people to become cosmopolitans, but some may choose not to. It has been suggested that 'on the move' cannot necessarily engender the cosmopolitan. The concept 'home plus' proposed by Paul Theroux is to describe the motives of many tourists (1986: 133; cited in Hannerz, 1990). For many people, writes Hannerz, 'Spain is home plus sunshine, India is home plus servants, Africa is home plus elephants and lions' (241). Hannerz further developed this concept by suggesting that tourists look for home plus landscape; the exiled look for home plus freedom or safety; the labour migrants pursue home plus higher income. He distinguished these people from real cosmopolitans since unlike them, such groups rarely engage with any seriousness with what he called foreign 'meaning systems'. However, Hannerz does not account for what causes cosmopolitanism.

### *Mundane cosmopolitanism*

At the same time when Hannerz was theorizing about cosmopolitanism from an anthropological perspective, Hebdige too, working within the Cultural Studies tradition which was gaining strength during the early 1990s, was writing about how globalization was influencing cultures. In his 1990 book, *Fax to The Future*, Hebdige predicted that it is globalization which will bring about the changes in the nature of communities that used to be traditionally described as ‘rooted’, ‘local’, ‘homogeneous’. He suggested that it was an imperative for people to rethink and re-examine the existing cultural models and the complex and ever-changing relationships between ‘place’ and ‘cultural belongingness’ (Hebdige, 1990). He argued that cosmopolitanism especially was regarded as an inauthentic ‘Other’ and it would dilute the cultural purity of rooted communities, as a threat to undermine their ‘local’ and ‘lived’ characters. Contrary to subsequent academic literature on cosmopolitanism which tended to see the phenomenon in generally positive terms, Hannerz saw it differently at that time and implied that it was not welcome at that time as it undermined local traditions (Ibid). Hannerz (1990) also pointed out that instead of thinking of cultures in isolation and as separate clusters, it was important to recognize the fact the cultures always tend to mix – as human history has shown. There are no pure cultures – there is always a give and take, a blurring of boundaries – between high and low culture; national and regional culture and national and foreign cultures (Hannerz, 1990). Other scholars too have provided useful analysis of cultural interactions. British cultural theorist John Tomlinson, for example, has argued that traditionally, culture usually implies a close bonding to a fixed locality where the majority of cultural communication by individuals were confined to a fixed territory, in a face-to-face level. However, with the expansion and democratization of information and communication technologies, Tomlinson argued, culture can detach from the locality and ‘move’ to other places (Tomlinson, 2011, [1999]).

Hebdige used the term ‘mundane’ cosmopolitanism to describe how foreign ideas influenced ordinary lifestyles, suggesting such every day exposure to different cultures was part of people’s ordinary life and they need not travel to distant lands or consume commodities and information from remote places, since in the age of globalization and due to ‘space-time

compression,' such experiences became a daily routine as people and commodities from around the world gravitated towards the world's cosmopolitan centres, making, to some degree, more and more people cosmopolitan in a mundane sense (Hebdige, 1990: 20). Urry (2002) added that at least in the prosperous parts of the Western world, more and more people were experiencing this kind of cosmopolitanism. However, this picture he delineated was not an aspect of everyday life for ordinary Chinese people in the 1990s, though in the last decade this beginning to change as China opened to the world and the outside world – especially its cosmopolitan centres became increasingly involved in China for mostly economic reasons.

Hebdige demonstrates a sense of subtle sarcasm when he mentions that there is no entry requirement to be a cosmopolitan. Unlike the traditional and typical view of what constitutes a cosmopolitan individual, he argued, that you do not have to be a well-educated or wealthy person or an adventurer to be a cosmopolitan. Most people today are in some shape or form living in a cosmopolitan culture, disseminated across the world by new communication and information technologies (Hebdige, 1990). This concern about stereotypes have been criticized by several scholars, and a subsection of the chapter will be focused on this aspect.

### *Age of comparison*

Over one hundred years ago, the German philosopher Nietzsche had predicted a similar picture suggesting that an 'Age of Comparison' was coming:

The less men are bound by tradition... Who is there who now still feels a strong compulsion to attach himself and his posterity to a particular place? Who is there who still feels any strong attachment at all? Just as in the arts all the genres are imitated side by side, so are all the stages and genres of morality, custom, culture. – Such an age acquires its significance through the fact in it the various different philosophies of life customs, cultures can be compared and experienced side by side; which in earlier ages, when, just as all artistic genres were attach to a particular and time, so every culture still enjoyed only a localized domination, was not possible. Now an enhanced aesthetic sensibility will come to a definitive decision between all these forms offering themselves for comparison...It is the age of comparison! (Nietzsche, 1996 [1878]: 24)

In his prediction, an age of comparison has been closely related to cosmopolitanism (1996:

24; Beck, cited in 2002). By this moment, people still have a strong sense of attachment to specific places and are restricted by tradition. As cultures keep penetrating and interacting with each other, the age of comparison will finally arrive: every culture, lifestyle and customs would lie alongside everywhere, and every moment needs to be compared, contrasted and negotiated, while in the earlier age, culture still was tied to a particular place and time. Here, on the one hand, the age of comparison Nietzsche foretold, requires people to acquire competence to tackle and manage different cultures simultaneously. Such a point of view shows similar attitude to the reflexive character of some of the discussions on cosmopolitanism. On the other hand, Nietzsche implied that the connection between traditional culture and a particular locality was being undermined in an age of comparison, and in that age culture will run away from the domination of particular locality.

#### *Banal cosmopolitanism*

Inspired by Billing's banal nationalism (1995), the concept of 'banal cosmopolitanism' was proposed by Beck (2003, 2006) following a similar logic. In Billing's banal nationalism, a member of a given society identifies with others in that society through daily routines and mundane difference such as waving national flag and sing national anthems (Billing, cited in Szerszynski and Urry, 2002; also see Molz, 2013). Beck used the example of food to articulate 'banal cosmopolitanism': 'If we are what we eat, none of us is national anymore... we are now all used to finding foodstuffs that used to be separated by continents and cultures freely available side-by-side as mass market commodities.' Billing argued that 'the basic ingredient' of what he called 'culinary cosmopolitanism' was changing ideas of nationalism adding that 'world society is in some ways baking in the oven and boiling in the pan' (2003: 37, cited in Molz, 2013: 36).

Banal cosmopolitanism thus reflects at least two meanings. Firstly, it is bound up with cultural consumption in daily life. Secondly, following the similar logic of banal nationalism, banal cosmopolitanism has a sense of politics. It implies a relationship between consumption of different cultures and establishment of cosmopolitan consciousness (ibid).

Ong (2009), through a review of different forms cosmopolitanism, summarized a cosmopolitan continuum based on different level of openness in the field of media and cultural studies. The continuum constitutes of closed cosmopolitanism, instrumental cosmopolitanism, banal cosmopolitanism and ecstatic cosmopolitanism. Closed cosmopolitanism tends to reject openness and stay in a familiar and predictable individual comfort zone. Instrumental cosmopolitanism is self-centered, through utilizing knowledge of the Other to promote or show off themselves. Banal cosmopolitanism is, as stated above, mundane, ordinary and everyday version of cosmopolitanism. Ong held similar views as those of Rantenan (2005), suggesting that people's background influenced the construction of their cosmopolitan identities. Ecstatic cosmopolitanism is highest level of other-centered cosmopolitanism. He also pointed out that the relationship between media and cosmopolitanism as a moral identity was not well-developed, primarily due to lack of robust empirical studies.

*'A happy face' and 'a worried face'*

According to the literature we have been discussed above, the ethos of cosmopolitanism can be reflected through people's thoughts and performance. Individual' transnational experience can be simplified into two main situations. In the first situation, people initiate to interact with culturally different others, in an active way. People show desire and initiative to embrace different cultures. In the second situation, people have to deal with culturally different others, in a sense of passivity. Especially, in the globalized world, cultures keep interpenetrating and interconnecting, and people have higher likelihood to come across culturally different others in their everyday life, such as in their work place. In the first situation, it is a feeling of ease and relaxation as described by Hannerz (2005); while in the second situation, it implies a sense of pressure and some anxiety, 'a worried face'. It contains a standpoint of morality and ethics, which is to do with the responsibility towards humanity in respect to culture. It is a dichotomic way of thinking. On the one hand, it requires a recognition of the world that there are no 'Others' as human beings, but at the same time it

also requires an awareness of the world which consists of different cultures. On the other hand, it calls for acknowledgement and respect of cultural diversity and equality (Tomlinson, 2011, [1999]: 194; Ong, 2009; Roudometof, 2005; Delanty, 2009). The disputes revolve around whether cultural consumption – ‘happy face’ can lead to a greater level of cosmopolitanism- normative oriented ‘worried face’.

*The disputes around eligibility to be a cosmopolitan*

In the early studies of cosmopolitanism, there was, more or less, an operational unwritten code that said cosmopolitans implied an elite and privileged feature. Many scholars such as Tomlinson (2011, [1999]) and Szerszynski and Urry (2002) criticized this kind of assumption on the basis of gender bias, the center- periphery/ West-East distinction, and with a particular emphasis on a cosmopolitan-local distinction. They argued that in several early studies of cosmopolitanism, there was an in-built gender bias. Cosmopolitan connotes ‘on the move’ but in most historical literature, men were always portrayed on the move, traveling, on tour or on adventure, while the figure of women were immobile and housebound – they were at home. Even in Hannerz’s first paper (1990), ‘he’ was used to refer to the cosmopolitan person.

The second ideological bias that was highlighted was related to the fact that cosmopolitanism was associated with urban, sophisticated and affluent people from Western world who were taken for granted to be cosmopolitans. The rest of the world – in fact the majority world – of people with less economic capital in the periphery were disregarded and ignored (Tomlinson, 2011, [1999]; Featherstone, 2002; Hannerz, 2005; Roudometof, 2005). In such formulation, the world was divided into two main groups, ‘the rich’ who can and do move across the globe – for trade, travel or study and ‘the poor’ who remain immobile and local. Several reasons could account for why the bias was engendered. Traditionally, considering that culture was fixed to a certain locality, most of cultural flows took place at a face-to-face level. Only people who could move from one territory to another, could encounter and engage with culturally different Others and those who were educated, could appreciate and

understand other cultures better than those who were not. Hannerz in his later work, for example, his 2005 article revised his earlier position and appeared to recognize and express a similar critique of implicit cosmopolitan elite feature, first formulated by Tomlinson's argument Hannerz, (2005). Hannerz mentioned that the early view of cosmopolitanism was deeply entrenched with economic and cultural privilege – it was suggested to be truly cosmopolitan, it was almost a requirement that one should be highly educated and must have travelled widely as well as having other material support to gain access to different cultures coupled with having relevant knowledge and ability to appreciate the cultural differences and similarities (Hannerz, 2005). With growing global flows of ideas, images and peoples – a reflection of the changing times - the trends have shifted. Today, almost everyone has the potential to be cosmopolitan or become one.

#### **1.4 The relationship between globalization and cosmopolitanism**

Globalization and cosmopolitanism are two big abstract words, containing multi-dimensional meanings and multi-layered understandings as well as different aspects. What is the relationship between cosmopolitanism and globalization in cultural dimensions?

As Beck has argued in his 2002 book *Cosmopolitan Society and its Enemies*, along with the progress of globalization, the world is undergoing tremendous changes as the processes of globalization brings economic, political, technological and cultural changes. On the one hand, increasing interconnections take place between nations across the national boundaries and on the other hand, profound changes take place within any given society (Beck, 2002; Roudometof, 2005). Beck proposes what he terms as 'internal globalization' defining it as 'globalization from *within* the national societies' (2002:17). Globalization changes the quality and social reality of a society as it is exposed to ideas and institutions of a foreign origin. From the perspective of culture, Roberston pointed out that there was an intensified relation between cultures in a time-space compression (1997, cited in Khatib, 2003). Globalization is not just large and abstract concept, it is taking place in people's everyday life. People do not need to travel across the national boundaries to experience foreign

cultures, due to global migration patterns and the availability of a range of media products from across the world, different cultures can become individuals' local experience on a daily basis. They can experience these cultures through media, or encountering aliens such as travelers, refugees, professionals (Roudometof, 2005). Such formulation of cosmopolitanism conforms to 'mundane cosmopolitanism' is portrayed by Hebdige and outlined above (Hebdige, 1990).

Thus, all these ideas articulated that the core debates of globalization in fact revolve around the interaction of the global and the local and the tension and consequences caused by local-global interaction— homogenization and heterogenization (Appadurai, 1990; Khatib, 2003). The broader consensus is that the academic history of globalization in cultural aspects can be regarded as contestation between two approaches - homogenization and heterogenization. These contestations about the consequences of globalization correspond with the new theoretical developments in the study of international communication and global media.

Some scholars such as Yilmaz and Trandafoiu believe that cosmopolitanism is a result of globalization, as noted at the beginning of this chapter (Yilmaz and Trandafoiu, 2015). Pichler mentioned that scholars have reached an agreement that 'globalization is driving force of contemporary cosmopolitanism' (Pichler, 2011: 22). Pichler's statement is reasonable though it could lead to a misunderstanding that globalization is the precondition of the emergence of cosmopolitanism. On a broader level, scholars have evolved a consensus that cosmopolitanism might be a consequence of the cultural interactions encountered in the process of the contact with the Other. However, engagement and involvement in the affairs of 'the Other' has been happening long before contemporary globalization took place, in the post-Cold War world. That is one of the reasons why scholars like Delanty (2009) maintained that cosmopolitanism can take place in any society and occur at any time, not just because it is deep-rooted in European civilization, and can be traced back to Enlightenment, although classical cosmopolitanism should be distinguished from modern cosmopolitanism (Delanty, 2009). There is little doubt thought that the process of globalization increases the

interconnections across the national borders. Tremendous transnational exchange and activities take place everywhere giving greater opportunities than hitherto to many and making it easier for people across the globe to have self-reflexivity and self-discovery. Thus, instead of thinking of globalization as the precondition of emergence of cosmopolitanism, it is better to regard globalization as a catalyst to produce cosmopolitanism (Rantanen, 2005; Delanty, 2009).

Delanty has also stated that cosmopolitan moment resides in the interplay between the global and the local, the Self and the Other (2009). The relationship between cosmopolitanism and the consequences of globalization could also be regarded as a resistance to the process of cultural homogenization. Arguments of ‘Westernization’, ‘Americanization’ and ‘cultural/media imperialism’ are normally closely linked with cultural homogenization thesis. Many critical theorists believed that rather than what the early development model or the modernization model advocated to help the development of the so-called Third World, United States used communication software and hardware such as promoting and propagating its lifestyles and value via media, which made developing countries dependent on Western media, thus undermining their cultural autonomy, also distorting their economic and political goals (Thussu, 2006; Nye, 1990, cited in Schiller, 1991). However, it is not coercion but persuasion which is used to retain Western hegemony: Harvard Political Scientist Joseph Nye has called such influence as ‘soft power’ which refers to the capacity of nation states to achieve their political goals without resorting to hard power – instead depending on their cultural and communication resources (including mass media) to promote and safeguard their geo-political and economic interests. (Nye, 2008). In line with the view of cultural imperialists, the local is vulnerable and passively absorbing all American cultures. In such formulation the local has been traditionally described to have no ability to resist. However, one of the key characteristics of cosmopolitan outlook is ‘dialogic imagination’ which can directly confront and challenge the view that passively accept all American cultures without thinking. Theoretically, it shows a great degree of activeness among people, as Rumford has pointed out: ‘Cosmopolitanism requires us to recognize that we are all

positioned simultaneously as outsiders and insiders, as individuals and group members, as Self and Other, as local and global. Cosmopolitanism is about relativizing our place within the global frame, positioning ourselves in relation to multiple communities, crossing and re-crossing territorial and community borders' (2008: 14).

Wise has suggested that cultural cosmopolitanism consists of two aspects – one that pertains to the processes of positively engaging with the Other, and the second which entails that people through transnational cultural experiences might become self-reflexive and begin to realize how globalization influence their everyday life and to think about their own place in the world (Wise, 2008).

Others have argued that the consequence of globalization - cultural heterogenization/hybridity, the idea of positive recognition of the 'Other' – and the resultant cosmopolitanism, could be regarded as a peaceful method to deal with cultural diversity, a means of addressing new ways of lifestyles and new experiences that emerge in people's everyday lives and practices (Skey, 2012; Delanty, 2009; Roudometof, 2012). Appiah (2007) points out that to have some tinge of cosmopolitanism and learn others' culture, acquire other's experience and listen to other's story might not achieve very much in cultural terms, but it helps people to get used to each other and learn to live in a harmonious and peaceful way in this increasingly interconnected world (Appiah, 2007).

Heterogenization theory, however, also has come under criticism. It cannot deny that the homogenized phenomena are easy to be noticed everywhere. For example, the globalization of fast food restaurants such as McDonald's and KFC, the growing convergence in urban lifestyles, and other manifestations of American popular culture. Some cultural imperialism theorists hold skeptical views about audiences' ability to resist (Schiller 1991). Also, they pointed out that heterogenization supporters fail to consider the formidable and globalized power of US media firms, especially the economic power. US-led Western media is still in a dominant position in the world, although there have existed the counter-flows from regions

that once were considered as the peripheral (Rantanen, 2005; Thussu, 2006). It is suggested that the consequence of globalization combines both, homogenization and heterogenization tendencies. These are not exclusive, and both appear in the process of globalization (Rantanen, 2005: 116). According to Rantanen's empirical study around four generations of three families from different places in the world, the young generation share many ideas that Western media contain, but at the same times they retain their local identities (Rantanen, 2005:117).

One goal of this research is to explore the interaction between the global and the local in the perspective of cultural cosmopolitanism. Several issues need to be considered. Mazlish was concerned about the relationship between the global and the local. The local could be referred to 'the family, the tribe, the state, and the nation, each in contest with the other and all potentially now against the global' (Mazlish, 2005: 93). He also mentioned that the global might have more or less similar meaning to different countries, however, the relationship between the global and the local could vary in different countries.

It has been widely acknowledged that globalization is multifaceted and is not only associated with economic process – though that remains the driving force behind it. Globalization also has deeply intertwined with modern culture. Two illusions or misunderstanding needs to be clarified. First, globalization is not the only element that influences modern culture and the power of the local cannot be ignored (Tomlinson, 2011 [1999]). If we carry on the investigation purely from the angle of globalization, regardless of the history and transformation which have happened within China in recent decades, it is obviously not comprehensive and enough to understand contemporary Chinese society and the Chinese urban youth. Second, this thesis pays more attention to cultural dimensions of globalization and cultural practices. However, it does not mean that we deny the significance of other dimensions such as politics and economics as driving forces in processes of globalization (Tomlinson, 2011 [1999]). This view conforms with that of Delanty, although his interests are inclined towards the political and normative field of cosmopolitanism, he provided a

three-level analysis approach for a better understanding of how political community is being shaped in at a time when tremendous social changes are taking place. First, the analysis should depart from the context of the local – at least, the main national, regional and native cultures and tradition should be taken into consideration. Second, the influence from the ‘Other’ such as other cultures or global forces, should be taken into consideration to understand the interaction between the Self and the Other. The third level of analysis is emphasis on a cosmopolitan way of thinking, outlook and feeling. There is a perspective neither from the Self or the Other, it is a view combining of the Self and the Other – a cosmopolitan view (Delanty 2009).

### **1.5 Issues of attachment**

Hannerz borrowed the idea of national identities to explain the identity of a cosmopolitan. According to him, nationalism can be understood in two ways: ethnic nationalism and civic nationalism. Ethnic nationalism is thick; it has its cultural and historical depth. Civic nationalism is thin and narrow; it does not require a deep commitment to the culture and history, only the need to follow the political order. By making a comparison between culture and nationalism, Hannerz believes that there only exists thin cosmopolitanism. That is to say that the cosmopolitans have a tendency to have less commitment to cultures (Hannez, 2005; see also Hall, 1990b; Woodward, 1997).

Hannerz (2005) also talked about issues surrounding rootless and rooted cosmopolitans. In history, the figure of cosmopolitan is rootless, and their loyalty to homeland is questioned. He believed the relationship between the degree of rootedness and cosmopolitanism varies. He used Appiah’s argument as an example of rooted cosmopolitanism – cosmopolitan patriot ‘can entertain the possibility of a world in which everyone is a rooted cosmopolitan, attached to a home of his or her own, with its own cultural particularities, but taking pleasure from the presence of other, different, place that are home to other, different, people’ (Appiah 1996: 22). In this case, there is no necessary contradiction between commitment to certain culture and embracing to otherness. It is different from ethnocentrism which is a disavowal of

cosmopolitan belief. Those who adopt ethnocentrism tend to regard that their own culture is superior to any other culture in the world (Routometof, 2005). Besides, there is an issue that the local experience and the local culture can be and often is easily misinterpreted and conflated. To have less commitment to the local culture does not mean to look down on local experience. The cosmopolitan elite always gave the impression that the local experience is inferior to the non-local experience. In other words, the misunderstanding is that the cosmopolitan implies a sense of designation that the local is subordinated to it. There was a tendency to slander and defame the local experience and life. Mistakenly, connotation of the local life more or less links with description such as ‘ill-informed’, ‘provincial’, ‘narrow-minded’ or ‘parochial’ (Tomlinson, 2011, [1999]; Beck 2002).

Roudometof (2005; Cook, 2011) had developed a continuum of cosmopolitanism based on the degree of attachment to four aspects – nation, locality, local culture and national protectionism. This research has examined whether the foreign media products loosen urban young Chinese people’s tie and attachment to their country and to the Chinese culture, more specifically.

### **1.6 Media and cosmopolitan at home**

Although Hannerz discussed very little about the role of media in facilitating cosmopolitanism, instead focusing on transnational cultures, he expressed positively on the possibility of being cosmopolitans without moving through media. In his later writings he however reaffirmed that media have an ability to weaken the bond between people and fixed locality (Hannerz, 2005).

For the majority of people in the world, experience of globalization is not a direct physical move or to have a direct exotic cultural experience, but rather staying at home to enjoy cultural experience, indirectly, through the media (Rantanen, 2005; Tomlinson, 2011). De-territorialized media come across the country’s boundaries which offer alien system of meaning to the local audiences without them having to move from their surroundings. There

is no doubt that media can provide a repertoire of images, texts, narratives and stories to audiences, giving them de-territorialized cultural experience (Appadurai, 1996; Tomlinson, 2011; Robertson, 2012). Anderson's work on 'imagined communities' (1991) elaborated the reason for formation of national consciousness, suggesting that with the widespread expansion of print media, especially newspaper, and convergence of economic activities under capitalism, people can imagine their fellow countrymen's life without meeting them. Since the 1990s, satellite television has played a similar role as did the print media in the nineteenth century, beaming messages across the national boundaries, offering ample sources for the audiences to imagine the world and create a globalized consciousness of the planet (Cunningham, Jacka and Sinclair, 1996).

Skrbiš and Woodward (2011) pointed out there are two trends for social-cultural contexts of contemporary cosmopolitan openness. The first trend was about the different forms of global flows. The second trend is concerned with the reception and reaction to the first trend. For this thesis, as one form of global flows, the flow of global media has been set to be one of the subject investigated, and the reception and reaction to this kind of flow would follow the line of media effect and reception tradition. It needs to be noticed that the context is more complicated. Key scholars and works on these two trends would be discussed. Poster (2008) urged that cosmopolitanism scholars should have paid more attention to media. There are relatively few studies on it, not to mention about global media and cosmopolitanism. In line with Skrbiš and Woodward, the first part in this subsection will outline overall media flows in the world. The second part focuses on media use and reception among the audiences, as well as the theories and studies on audiences' interpretation of de-territorialized media. It is assumed that factors which affect the likelihood of de-territorialized media used by the audiences in the global media arena, are the volume of media, and, how people get access to the media. Inequalities and disparity in the process of production and distribution of de-territorialized media might influence cosmopolitan experience.

### **1.6.1 Global media flows**

Thussu (2006) portrayed the worldwide media flows, pointing out that although there appear the contra-flows such as Indian Bollywood and Latin American telenovelas that seem to challenge dominant flows emanating from the US-led Western media, it cannot be denied that there is a noticeable imbalance between the volume and value of the two flows. Similarly, the 'generic model' proposed by Boyd-Barrett recognized the diversity and multi-dimensionality of media forms. He argued against Schillers' formulations and refigured the old center-periphery model (1998). It is suggested that the peripheral countries can have imperialist influence over their neighbors in each region: for example, the domination of South African media in that continent (Thussu, 2006; Teer – Tomaselli, Wasserman and de Beer, 2007: 136-137). This phenomenon can be also observed in East Asia and South Korea – which Thussu (2006) called 'subaltern flows' have strong influence on the countries in the region (Iwabuchi, 2002; Kim, 2009).

Straubhaar (1991) has explained some reasons for this disparity from the perspective of technology. He enriched and developed further the concept of 'asymmetrical interdependence' proposed first by Galtung (1971, cited in Straubhaar, 1991). Straubhaar pointed out that although countries realized that they are in an unequal position in many relationships, it does not mean the inequality is overwhelming; instead they develop their own initiatives in politics, economics and culture. Straubhaar rightly pointed out that the inadequacy of earlier dependency theory, arguing that it was not only the Third World nations but also some small Western countries showed dependency or interdependency. Many Western nations have limited resource for media production, such as limited markets, small population, untrained personnel etc. Straubhaar suggested that during the early years, lack of technology could be considered as an important constraint for media production for many countries. The majority of countries in the Third World could not afford the expensive equipment for production or satisfy the local needs by themselves. They relied on imported – largely US-products which cost less, particularly in 1950s and 1960s. Since the late 1970s, television production has gradually increased in some countries due to the falling price of production equipment (Antola and Rogers, 1984; Tunstall, 1977, cited in Straubhaar, 1991).

### **1.6.2 Media use and reception**

Media effects, media use and audience analysis are the three main traditions in audience research (McQuail, 2005). Broadly speaking, the history of audience theories seems to be a contest between passive and active, manipulation and resistance. The tradition of media supports that media as stimuli can control and significantly influence audiences. From this perspective, audiences used to have a negative denotation that they are passive and easily manipulated by the media. This kind of view can be found in the early studies of mass media and international communication studies, such as ‘media imperialism’. More recently, this view has been criticized as oversimplified, as discussed in the previous section (Straubhaar, 1991; McQuail, 2005).

Two approaches that believe audiences are active have been proposed from the aspect of audiences’ choice and the process of interpreting media context. Apart from selection, interpretation and negotiation, audiences are also active in discussing media content with their family, friends and social circles (Katz and Liebes, 1984 and 1993; Longhurst, 2008).

The former approach refers to ‘uses and gratification’ theory. Media use tradition believes that audiences have the ability to select the media they would like to use. Many complicated models have been built on this fundamental idea, but there will not be further discussion about these here. In this tradition, researchers do not focus much on media content and context. In this research, using foreign media products is regarded as a form of openness towards culturally different others. The motives and reason why Chinese urban youth choose to use foreign media products will be investigated. Audience reception theory involves some media use theory, but it emphasizes how audience interprets the media content. Hall’s famous ‘encoding and decoding’ (1990a) model has significantly challenged the idea proposed by Frankfurt School theorists that audiences passively consume mass media (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1972). Instead, it has been forcefully argued that the audiences can actively engage with the media texts. Hall proposed three positions of decoding a

television discourse by audiences – dominant/preferred reading, negotiated reading and oppositional reading. Each society has its own taken-for-granted knowledge and common sense which have been naturalized into people's everyday life, as dominant cultural order, although it is not the only cultural order and it might be contested. Communication is a complicated process, and it entails many different aspects and audiences are a product of the social-cultural context. The reaction of audiences to certain pieces of media is an outcome of their personal experience and background (McQuail, 2005). Thus, audiences from different backgrounds may have different reading of the same pieces of media text. When audiences have a dominant reading, they show general agreement with what the media producer expected. Negotiated reading happens when audiences only agree with some part of the media texts. Oppositional reading takes place when audiences completely reject and resist media content (Hall, 1990a). Hall also pointed out that the reason for causing low effectiveness of communication between what television producers attempt to convey. Abstruse terms, confusing arguments and complicated logic, unfamiliar language or foreign culture in television content might make it difficult for audiences to follow (ibid). Consumption of foreign media is a form of involving in culturally different others, and Hall's three types of readings could be regarded as three different performances after 'dialogic imagination'. It also reflects different levels of openness. This helped cosmopolitanism in media and communications become more operable to some extent.

Another key thing need to be noted is about media experience. The term 'mediated-cosmopolitanism' has been coined by Rantanen (2005). It is noted that all the cultural experience provided by de-territorialized media as a form of mass media is a one-way communication. It is unidirectional. Thompson (1995) used 'mediated quasi-interaction' to refer to this mono-logical interaction. It is not like face-to face communication which can offer feedback and be reciprocal from the other party (Rantanen, 2005; McQuail, 2005; Tomlinson, 2011). Thus, although people can experience alien culture through de-territorialized media, it is still different from direct, two-way dialogical interaction.

Asymmetry and inequality take place not only in the distribution of media but also the use of resources. Besides the structural relations set out above, here, we should pay attention to the patterns of audiences' use of de-territorialized media. A great number of production and export of de-territorialized media from Western countries means abundant resources, which allow people all around the world easier access. In addition, audiences in other countries have more chance to come across the alien system of meaning.

With the development of new information and communication technologies as well as the popularization of digital devices including mobile ones, people can get access and possess initiative to select the media resources they want, rather than passively obeying the planned program guide provided by traditional media. The asymmetrical use of resources can be linked with the term 'digital divide', a concept which refers to the inequality or gap between those who can get access to internet and own relevant information literacy and those who do not. Lack of telecommunication infrastructure, computer (or devices that can access internet) and the ability of handling computers are some reasons for the 'digital divide'. Even the ability of searching for information and the design of search engines can influence the result (Noam, 2004; Pannu and Tomar, 2010; Halavais, 2009).

Tunstall (2008) followed the tradition of cultural proximity, and pointed out that four types of media attract more domestic audiences than international media – local media, regional media, national media and foreign media from neighboring countries. These media usually share common or similar geography, language, religion and culture. He believed that in the large population countries, audiences spend many more hours watching these four types of media than US-led media.

Straubhaar agreed that there is a tendency that the local audiences watch more national media products, basing his arguments on the case study of Latin American audiences (Pool, 1977 cited in Straubhaar, 1991). He also pointed out that the audiences are not homogeneous, and they have different preferences, especially in respect of social class. Straubhaar in his early

study carried out in São Paulo, found out that the education background and the cultural capital have influence on audience choice of media and preference. On the contrary, lower classes tend to follow the cultural proximity tradition which means that they use more domestic media.

Bourdieu emphasized cultural capital as another important source of social inequality, like economic capital (Bourdieu, 1984:144). Cultural capital refers to cultural knowledge and acquaintance that people acquire and accumulate through education and the process of individual socialization. Bourdieu drew analogy between cultural capital and economic capital. Cultural capital can be utilized to create money, power and social status. Every social class has its own culture. During the process of socialization, people acquire the cultural knowledge such a values and perspectives from their surrounding social class culture, and become a marker of the social class they belong to. 'We distinguish ourselves by the distinctions we make.' (114). According to Bourdieu, an individual preference or taste is conditioned by their social class. An individual internalizes his/her surrounding social class condition, and embodies what he/she has acquired and expected about cultural experience in everyday choices and 'habitus' which suggest his/her social class conditioning, and maintain the boundaries between other social classes (ibid; Longhurst, 2008; Dillon, 2010).

### **1.6.3 A Brazilian empirical study**

In a recent empirical study on exploring connection between Brazilian youth media consumption and cosmopolitan experience by conducting the qualitative interviews and quantities questionnaires among university students in São Paulo (Bekesas, Riegel and Mader, 2016), the result showed that the cultural consumption of global products by university youth is mainly for entertainment and this kind of experience cannot necessarily be converted into reflexivity. The result varies. The research defined these young people as amateur cosmopolitans.

It made contributions to the empirical studies especially in the respect of cultures of

cosmopolitanism, cultural/media globalization and cultural consumption. At a first glance, it seems that the study and this thesis are peers in the same camps, with similar key terms like ‘youth’, ‘media consumption’, ‘cosmopolitanism’, ‘entertainment’, ‘cosmopolitan’, ‘global’ and ‘local’. The original authors had mentioned that their research was a part of an international project ‘Cosmopolitanism: Culture of Young People’, and in order to make a comparative research with the French case, so that they followed a set criterion of age that is from 18 to 24 and university students as target population on the account of their higher education background and higher possibilities as global entertainment consumers. Although they had claimed it was just an initial step, and further research would be developed, there were some differences from this thesis (ibid). The study emphasized the variety of global entertainment as it contains so many different forms and elements such as television, film, music and so on. The global entertainment as the objects of media consumption texts might be a little bit too broad for their research. Second, the research demonstrates a sense of exclusion to some extent especially for the reason that the sample is rather limited and confined to young people in higher education and those who are consuming global entertainment. Although study did agree that higher cultural capital or education background tends to consume more international products (mainly US films), educational background cannot be the only criteria. University students cannot represent all youth groups. The young consist of different people, they are not homogenous. They are diverse.

#### **1.6.4 Chinese audiences**

As a major media power, China produces every year a large number of programming both for its television and films, although the quality of productions may vary, most are not comparable with the Western products now available, especially to the younger generation of the Chinese urban population. In recent years, Chinese audiences have shown a tendency to complain about the quality of most local television and film content. In addition, among those products of good quality, in order to achieve high audience rating and become more competitive, through cutting out scenes and shortening the contents, many local television stations attempt to be the first one to broadcast the final episode of a popular work. The lack

of uniform regulation has aggravated an already serious shortage of good television products (Liu, 2014). Wang Yandan, who is Deputy Director of China's Propaganda Department of State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television, pointed out that television programs in China have been criticized for overly relying on stars, excessive entertainment and weak scripts, while good quality is of overriding importance that can attract and maintain audiences (2015). This is an important factor why young people shift to using de-territorialized media. Although China has relatively strict media policy for imported foreign media, yet people, especially young generation, can search sources from the internet. During the fieldwork in Beijing, a majority of participants who the researcher interviewed, expressed a similar view.

Although television was well developed, empirical research in Chinese social science, especially communication was not well established. James Lull's book *China Turn On: Television, Reform and Resistance* (1991), from the perspective of a foreign researcher, based on empirical ethnographic data collected in China through interviewing television executives and approximately 100 families in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Xi'an provides a picture of the everyday use of television by urban Chinese audience and explored the role of television in culture and politics in the late 1980s.

Within rich empirical data, his results and findings, which are most related to this research, especially for the cultural consequences are as follows. Like many other countries' audiences in the world, the primary value of television watching is for entertainment (1988, as cited in Lull, 1991:155). In terms of Chinese television, boring and predictable content of the program quality, the repetition of the same programs due to the economic and political condition, poor and "amateurish" production technique and improper timing were criticized by Chinese audiences. Audiences expressed their acknowledgment of the products from foreign countries for better at artistic and technical level in terms of production (160-162).

The television serials from the United States, Japan, Mexico, Brazil, Taiwan, Singapore and

Hong Kong were very popular among audiences (131) Through smuggling in from the West and Hong Kong, the copies of videos of films were circulated within China (ibid). In late 1980s, the most popular television in China was not from the West. It was a Japanese soap opera called *Oshin* because of cultural proximity and economic power (175-181).

One important argument Lull proposed is that television was regarded as the main “cultural reference point” by Chinese audiences to compare and assess the state of China with ambivalent feelings. On the one hand, they were inspired by a “dream of a better future” but at the same time they “feared and were angered by the barriers that stand in the way” (170). For Chinese audiences, television played the role of “a mind opener”: it not only offered novel ideas but also a new way of thinking (170). Fewer Chinese people compared to today could travel abroad at that time. For most people, through television, they experienced “vicarious travel” (171). Chinese people were also keen to compare and contrast between China and the rest of the world to find out the similarities and differences (171-175). Although audiences got access to Western values and ideas through television, it did not mean that they would like to get rid of their own values completely. While, in the past 30 years, Chinese society has been experiencing huge difference, and it will be interesting to see whether any changes take place.

This chapter has provided a comprehensive overview of the main theoretical debates about cosmopolitanism and its contested definitions and applications, drawing on a range of literature from sociology, anthropology and cultural and media studies. The intellectual progress has been tracked, especially the major issues and debates. The issues on the definition of cosmopolitanism and the subsequent difficulties in conducting empirical research were concerned. An entrenched research tradition or culture at a practical level has not been firmly established in this area. The debates on the relationship between cosmopolitanism and globalization, on the one hand, has confirmed and reinforced the significant role of cosmopolitanism as a powerful theoretical analytical tool to supplement globalization theory. However how to apply this theoretical analysis at the empirical level as mentioned above, is

still a challenge to be solved.

Taking these issues into consideration, this study paid specific attention on reviewing on practical and empirical literature - for the epistemological consideration and the conduct of fieldwork for the research such as interview questions design, sampling, data collection and data analysis. For example, the discussion on eligibility to be a cosmopolitan by a group of scholars (Tomlinson 2011, [1999]; Szerszynski and Urry, 2002; Featherstone, 2002; Hannerz, 2005; Routometof) influences who are selected to be interviewed. This is a novel attempt to bring together the cosmopolitanism studies and audience research tradition, to make the research operable. In particular, the combination of Stuart Hall's three readings of media text (1990a) and Beck's "dialogical imagination" (2002) can work well together. This combination captures three different moments of encounter with otherness - foreign media products - during the consumption stage and explore the meanings behind them in an order of degree of openness. In addition, scholars in the field of cosmopolitanism have called for more attention to be paid on media and communication studies (Skrbiš and Woodward, 2011; Poster, 2008). This paper provides direct empirical finding from China, enriching the discourse of both fields. The author hopes that the interdisciplinary combination can provide some reference for empirical studies in the future, especially in terms of methodology.

Besides, this study responds to research trends to great extent and contributes to cosmopolitanism studies in many other aspects. First of all, like many other scholars in cosmopolitanism studies (Kendall, Woodward and Skrbiš, 2009; 2004; Molz, 2012; Skrbiš and Woodward, 2013; Skey, 2012), one of the interests of this study is to find the determinant elements that cause and contribute to cosmopolitanism and the mechanisms behind it. The hypothesis statements are proposed in the Chapter 2. In line with the critical realism, the author hopes this possible explanation from the case of China could make some contribution to getting closer to the mechanisms. Second, this research responds to the call for more empirical studies in exploring how cosmopolitanism is experienced by people in their everyday life under the processes of globalization (Rovisco and Nowicka, 2011), through

the case of Chinese urban youth, which provides rich empirical data.

Finally, the debates on the relationship between cosmopolitanism and globalization, on the other hand, clearly show that the cosmopolitan moment resides in the encounter with the Other. This helped the author go beyond the current research tradition of doing contemporary cosmopolitanism studies which focuses primarily on the era of globalization, and find an alternative way to explore it in a broader historical context. The cosmopolitan experiences take place during the encounters with otherness. It implies that history might offer some clues. Another important reason is that much of the discussion, though, relies on theories and discourses of cultural cosmopolitanism devised and developed in the West. The cosmopolitanism studies in cultural dimension is underdeveloped and there is lack of an existing theoretical framework for analyzing cosmopolitanism in China. This paper draws upon a range of historical material and the insights of studies on Chinese history, especially in relation to China's interactions with the relevant "Others", which brings novel insight into the modern forms of cosmopolitanism, opening up new vistas to probe into the relationship between the global and the local.

Since the focus is on China and China is not only a very old country but one of the world's largest and continuously surviving civilizations, it is therefore considered necessary to provide a historical context to the notion of cosmopolitanism in the Chinese case. The next chapter will attempt to discover a possible determinant element of cosmopolitan attitudes and disposition by looking back into Chinese history, tracing the roots of how the Chinese have traditionally viewed its 'others' and analyzing the interaction with its 'others' in historical events.

## *Chapter 2*

### *Historical context of Chinese cultural cosmopolitanism*

This chapter examines the concept of cultural cosmopolitanism in the context of Chinese history. The main purpose of this historical chapter is to explore the relationship between openness and social transition through a brief survey of Chinese history from the Zhou Dynasty (1046-256 BC) to the present, in order to find, or more precisely, to get closer to the mechanism of cosmopolitanism.

The chapter will first briefly introduce some of the doctrines of a group of Pre-Qin philosophers from different schools in China that reflect a sense of cosmopolitanism, mainly in terms of ethics and the governance of the world. Researches by a group of key scholars from mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and overseas working on intellectual history of China, history and Chinese philosophy have informed this chapter. In the light of these, the thesis argues that people's view of openness in Chinese society followed a unique pattern. Throughout history, at the times when Chinese society was relatively strong or in a stable state and its cultural system could meet people's needs and answer their questions, people found no need to look outwards and society was more closed. Conversely, when Chinese society was relatively weak, or constantly changing, and the cultural system was unable to meet people's needs and could not provide solutions to their problems, there was more a spirit of openness to other cultures. This pattern can also be seen today. This relationship gives a possible explanation how foreign cultural media products might trigger people's cosmopolitan consciousness, in the case of China, which is the basic premise for the research presented later in the thesis.

In order to demonstrate the argument, the origin, development and collapse of the concepts of 'Tianxia' and 'Sinocentrism' – both discussed in detail below - which are key to understanding this relationship, will be discussed with a series of historical examples.

## Part 1 Cosmopolitanism and Confucian China

### 2.1.1 A Chinese worldview

According to the literature, scholars and politicians since the age of Confucius were already considering ‘worldwide’ issues. It should be noted that during the 300-year period (approx. 800 BC- 500 BC) before Confucius was born, in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Period (770 BC- 221 BC), the population suffered greatly from endless wars, political corruption and wealth inequality (Hu, 2013 [1919]: 26). It was also the period in which traditional Chinese philosophy was born. A Hundred Schools of Thought emerged in response to the miserable circumstances, eager to change the status quo. In the emergent schools of Confucianism, Taoism and Mohism, some doctrines of these schools are arguably close to the idea of cosmopolitanism.

Confucianism was developed by founder Kongzi/Confucius (551 BC- 494 BC) and his disciples. ‘Rén/仁’ is the core concept in Confucianism, which means ‘benevolence’, ‘humanity’ or ‘goodwill’ (Hagen, 2007; Hu, 2013 [1919]: 76-78). It is often interpreted as ‘love’ (ibid.), ‘to love others’. Another concept related to cosmopolitan attitudes towards others is ‘harmony’. ‘Harmony’ (Hé/和) is the central theme throughout Confucianism’s discourse. The state of ‘harmony’ is achieved by reconciling differences (Feng, 2013 [1947]: 168). A well-organized society is a harmonious unity. As the ‘highest virtue’, harmony is said to be necessary for the ‘peaceful life of individuals, the family and the state’ (Yao, 2000: 172). For the rulers in ancient China, ‘benevolent rule’ (wángdào/王道) was required by Confucianism, i.e. the world is expected to be peacefully ruled and maintained, rather than using of military force (Liu, 1993; Wang, 1997).

Mohism - another very influential school in Chinese philosophy, and one which was opposed to Confucius thought, was developed by Modi, known as Mozi, and disciples. The concepts that most represent his doctrine are ‘jiān’ài/兼爱’ (inclusive concern or universal love) and

‘fēigōng/非攻’ (rejecting aggression) (Fraser, 2009: 141; Hu, 2013 [1919]: 114; Feng, 2013 [1947]: 54). These two concepts refer to:

To achieve social order and exemplify the virtue of ‘Rén/仁’ (humanity, goodwill), people must be inclusive and concerned for each other, having as much moral concern for others’ lives, families, and communities as for their own. Thus, in our relations with others, we should seek mutual benefit. It harms others in pursuit of selfish interest while failing to benefit Heaven, the spirits or human society (Fraser, 2009: 141).

Mozi’s ‘inclusive concern’ advocated that everyone should love others equally and disinterestedly. His doctrine opposes the Confucian’s ‘differential order of love’ that states, for example, that parents deserve particular affection (Hwang, 2012: 114; Feng, 2013 [1947]: 54; Hu, 2013 [1919]: 76).

Compared with Mohism and Confucianism as philosophies of the world, focusing on morality and involving people’s social activities (Bocock, 1992: 254; Feng, 2013 [1947]: 7), Taoism is an other-worldly philosophy that tends to escape from society and turn away from the world. Confucianism emphasizes the relationship between man, society and the world, while Taoism emphasizes the relationship between man and nature. As the founder of this school, Laozi advocates that man should follow the law of nature and not go against it. The law of nature also penetrates people’s life and guides the way people do things and interact with others. ‘Tolerance’ (Rěn/忍) is one of the major principles that guides people how to save themselves and keep away from trouble in society (Fan, 1995: 121). One application of the principle of ‘tolerance’ is that in order to maintain something, it is necessary to tolerate its opposite.

All of the doctrines of Confucianism, Mohism and Taoism mentioned above revealed a moral sense of cosmopolitanism to some extent. The doctrine of Mohism “inclusive concern” shows an other-centric moral ideal, the highest level of cosmopolitanism according to Ong’s category. Compared to the “inclusive concern”, Confucianism has a self-centric tendency, as it advocates ‘differential order of love’. In addition, Confucianism, Mohism and Taoism are

all in pursuit of avoiding conflict. Confucianism's "benevolent rule" largely avoids the possibility of racial segregation and genocide (Ge, 1993; Wang, 1997). Mohism's doctrine directly rejects aggression. Taoism's "tolerance" provides a practical way for dealing with difference in people's life. However, Taoism shows a sense of passive compromise and suppression. Confucianism's "harmony" shows a reconciliation of different sides.

At first sight, it seemed that cosmopolitanism did echo and occur in ancient China, at least in relation to the moral side by those principles written in the classical Chinese philosophies proposed by different schools of scholars that have been mentioned above. However, one needs to be aware of the broader social and cultural context in interpreting these philosophies. In pre-modern China, these philosophies were applied on the premise of sinocentrism and Tianxia concept. Under sinocentrism and Tianxia concept, ancient Chinese showed different attitudes towards culturally different others. The following subsections elaborate on a. the concepts of sinocentrism and tianxia; b. the possible reasons for the formation of these concepts; c. the criteria to distinguish "*Hua*" (ancient Chinese, the Self) from "*Yi*" ("barbarians" regarded by ancient Chinese, the Other) according to a range of researches by a group of key scholars from mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and overseas working on intellectual history of China, history and Chinese philosophy.

### **2.1.2 Chinese World Order – Tianxia, Sinocentrism and Law of Heaven**

The literal meaning of 'tianxia/天下' is 'under the heaven'. The word originates from 'tian/天' which refers to sky, heaven or celestial. For ancient Chinese people, 'tian' was something distant, unknowable, invisible, intangible and incorporeal but at same time omnipresent and a real entity (Ren, 2014). It had such awesome power that it was sacred and holy, and played a vital role in an agrarian society that depended on favourable weather for crops. Thus, they held rites and ceremonies to worship 'tian' (heaven), praying 'tian' to bless them. It maintained nature and ruled people's life and upheld the order of society. For example, a natural disaster was considered as an act of 'tian', usually interpreted as a warning of a

regime change (Lin, 2013, cited in Ren, 2014). Thus, in the name of ‘tian’, Chinese ancient emperors called themselves as ‘tianzi/天子’ (the Son of the Heaven), and their empire as ‘tianchao/天朝’ (Kingdom of Heaven or the Celestial Empire).

In general, before the appearance of modern nationalism, ancient ethnic groups used to regard their own culture and society as the only reasonable world order. Ancient civilizational consciousness generally has an exclusive and closed character (Jin, 1993). Ancient China more or less fits this pattern. Sinocentrism refers to the world order understood by ancient Chinese people. It included the order and relationships between ethnic groups as well as attitudes towards ethnic groups that all followed the ethical and moral order of Confucianism. Within this order, the Chinese cultural system was regarded as the best and most advanced, and no other system could transcend it. China is in the middle of the world. Tianxia concept is Sinocentric. *Hua-Yi* distinction is the way of identifying the Self and the Other.

In Chinese terms this Far Eastern world was sinocentric. T’ien-hsia<sup>1</sup>, ‘all-under-Heaven’ presided over by T’ien-tzu<sup>2</sup>, the ‘Son of Heaven’, sometimes was used to embrace the whole world including everything outside of China (Chung-kuo<sup>3</sup>, ‘the Central States’, the Middle Kingdom); but in common usage it was taken to designate the Chinese empire, which in any case included most of the known world. (Fairbank, 2013 [1968]:2)

Having achieved a consensus among Chinese scholars, at least two main aspects - China’s geographical position and relatively rich culture compared to its neighbors, lead to the formation and development of tianxia and Sinocentrism.

Chinese scholars argue that there is a connection between geography and the way ancient Chinese people viewed the world. The geography of China influenced Chinese people’s way of thinking to a large extent. The Yellow River Valley and Yangtze River Valley, as the origin

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<sup>1</sup> In the quotation, the ‘T’ien-hsia’, ‘T’ien-tzu’ and ‘Chung-kuo’ follow Wade-Giles romanization system of Mandarin Chinese. For this paper, the author uses Hanyu Pinyin System which is the official romanization system for Standard Chinese in mainland China. ‘T’ien-hsia’- ‘Tianxia’ in Hanyu Pinyin System.

<sup>2</sup> See footnote 1. ‘Tianzi’ in Hanyu Pinyin System.

<sup>3</sup> See footnote 1. ‘Zhongguo’ in Hanyu Pinyin System.

of Chinese civilization, are very far from other great civilizations from a geographical perspective. A continent-sized country, China is bordered by the Pamir and Himalayan mountains, vast deserts and seas. Although East Asia is part of the huge Eurasian continent that is also attached to Africa, the interactions among them were limited by difficulties in transport and communication in ancient times. It took a very long time to travel from China to other civilizations overland route or by sea. These natural barriers formed China as a unique and isolated unit. In other words, it means that, compared to other civilizations, Chinese civilization was relatively isolated. Chinese civilization interacted and communicated mostly with the surrounding areas and neighboring ethnic groups. As a result of these barriers of ocean, deserts, plateaus and mountains, and the lack of strong communications with other civilizations, China independently evolved a culture with unique traits (Liu, 2014; Qian, 1994 [1948]; Hu, 2013 [1919]; Feng, 2013 [1947]). For the ancient citizens who lived there, the world consisted of only what they knew. Thus, Chinese people used ‘tianxia/ 天下’, which means ‘under the heaven’, and ‘sihaizhinei/ 四海之内’, which means ‘within Four Seas’, to refer to ‘the world’. Another direct example is the word ‘rén/ 人’ which means ‘man’ or ‘person’. For the ancient Chinese, ‘man’ referred to all mankind, who were the Chinese people. Thus, during early ancient time, people’s understanding of world was not beyond the territory of China (Feng, 2013 [1947]).

The use of ‘tianxia’ can be dated back to the Zhou Dynasty. Zhou emperors called themselves Zhou Tianzi, and the territory and area ruled by Zhou emperor was called ‘tianxia’. Not until the Pre-Qin Dynasty, did the Confucian meaning of morality and order get brought into this concept (Ren, 2014). The Hua-Xia nation/civilization was relatively well developed by the early Zhou Dynasty (1046-256 BC). It established a unique political and cultural system – Grand Unification, which had a significant influence on subsequent dynasties. In relation to Confucianism, ‘tianxia’ could be regarded as concentric circles. Tianxia, on the one hand, refers to the geographical world known by ancient Chinese people; on the other hand, it was a realm divided into different levels based on the degree of the acceptance of Confucianism, where virtuous people lived in the core of it; those partly accepted lived in the outer layer;

while those who did not follow the principles of Confucianism as barbarians lived in the peripheral layer (Jin and Liu, 2010a). Wang points out that this relatively advanced system, compared to other neighboring ethnic groups, facilitated the waking up of national consciousness (1997). Chinese scholars have warned that the concepts of ‘nation’ and ‘nationalism’ should be treated with great caution, because both of these are modern concepts that were introduced into China from the West (Zhong, 1997; Wang, 1997). However, it does not mean that there was no national consciousness in ancient China.

Hua-Xia people’s relatively advanced rites and music cultures gave rise to a sense of cultural superiority, looking down on their neighbors – the *Yi* people. This kind of cultural superiority was further legitimated by Chinese ancient classic philosophical doctrine. At that time, for Hua-Xia people, their culture and ethics were regarded as the only and the best culture and ethics in the world (Wang, 1997). Chinese scholar-officials believed there existed a universal ‘Law of Heaven’ (tiandao/天道- natural law), shared by all humanity that transcended all ethnic groups and cultures. They believed the ethics and morality of Confucianism was better than any other culture and knowledge, and considered it as the sign of identification rather than language, race and territory. The rejection of foreign cultures was not because they were foreign, but because they contradicted the ‘Way of Heaven’ (Liu, 1993). It appeared only right and natural that *Yi* groups needed to be conquered and civilized. The Hua rulers just had no interest to know and explore their cultures (Jin and Liu, 2006; 2010a). The order and relationships between different ethnic groups was comprehended from the perspective of Confucian ethics. John King Fairbank coined the term ‘Sinocentrism’ to refer to this way of understanding of the world order by ancient Chinese people (2013 [1968]; Liu, 1993).

For these reasons, Chinese people believed that they had the mission to spread the ‘Way of Heaven’. They believed that a nation’s territory would keep extending till it reached the whole world. Where people applied these ‘rites’, the land belonged to the territory of China. In such a formulation ‘tianxia’ takes on the meaning of where the ‘Way of Heaven’ was implemented, the realm of Great Harmony under the principle of Confucianism (Liu, 2013;

Liu and Jin, 2006, 2010a).

All these factors - the extreme confidence in its 'Way of Heaven', the strong urge to unify, as well as the limited knowledge of geography - can be found in the Pre-Qin dynasty in China's first literary anthology, the *Book of Poetry*:

溥天之下， Under the wide heaven,  
莫非王土。 All is the King's land.  
率土之滨， Within the sea-boundaries of the land,  
莫非王臣。 All are the King's servants.  
- 《诗经·小雅·北山》  
- *Book of Poetry · Minor Odes of the Kingdom · Decade of Beishan*  
Translated by James Legge (1991: 360).

From the point of view of contemporary world, this is a naïve and utopian vision arising from ancient Chinese's ignorance and pride. However, Wang argues that this concept did work effectively throughout Chinese history in the assimilation of nomadic neighbors. For example, in the Qin Dynasty (221-207 BC), the area of culture and 'rites' constantly expanded (Wang, 1997). The first unification of China by the Qin empire (221 BC) was believed by the Chinese people at that time to be the unification of the world. For most of the time since the Qin Dynasty, 2000 years ago, China was in a united state and was governed by one central government of different empires, in order to keep a peaceful 'tianxia', or in other words, to maintain a peaceful world. In contrast, the disunited status was considered to be abnormal (Feng, 2013 [1947]: 174-175).

### 2.1.3 *Hua-Yi* Distinction

According to Jin (1993), nationalism consists of at least two aspects. On the hand, it concerns feelings of national identity; on the other, it influences the attitudes towards the rest of the world and how to treat other nationalities and ethnic groups. In Section 2.1.2, sinocentrism formed by the geographical factor and culture superiority is the world order understood by ancient Chinese people. In the ancient China, by making the distinction between *Hua* and *Yi* was a manifestation of early national consciousness. This section 2.1.3 will further introduce

the development of criteria to distinguish from *Hua* (the Self) to *Yi*. Part 2 will elaborate on the attitudes towards the rest of the world and how ancient Chinese people treated other nationalities and ethnic groups with examples. These will provide the basis for examining attitudes towards culturally different others and views of openness and social change and help to develop hypotheses for the research.

Ancient Chinese people believed there were three types of creatures in the world: *Hua*/华, *Yi*/夷, and animals. *Hua* – another name for the Chinese people is Hua-Xia. This kind of national consciousness created a framework for mutual identification and acknowledgement of common interests among members (Wang, 1997).

Since pre-Qin dynasty, China had started to distinguish *Hua* from *Yi*. Settled with an agrarian economy in the central plains of China, the Chinese had a strong consciousness of their more sophisticated civilization and considered the nomadic *Yi* people to be ‘barbarians’. According to He’s research, *Yi* referred to a person carrying a bow. This sense of superiority can be traced back to the Spring and Autumn and Warring Period (Feng, 2013 [1947]: 181-183; Liu, 2008; Ren, 2014). The criteria to distinguish *Hua* from *Yi* changed in different periods of time from kinship, to geo-territory, and to the principles of culture and morality.

The earliest criterion was based on kinship and concepts of the patriarchal clan were predominant in the Spring and Autumn Period (Ge, 1993), such as ‘those who are not our kin are sure to be of a different heart’ (非我族类, 其心必异). With the increase of population and the enlargement of the territory, the old criteria no longer applied. To distinguish *Hua* from *Yi*, the criterion was changed to be based on where a person lived. This method was not accurate, and accentuated the difference between territories (Liu, 2008). In the third stage, culture and morality became the principle measurements, such as dress, social etiquette, rites and rituals; those who did not follow the ‘Rite of Zhou’ advocated by Confucius, were regarded as *Yi* or barbarians. From a Confucian point of view, whether or not a person followed the rites was the vital criterion (Ge, 1993).

However, this distinction could be overcome. If a *Yi* would like to speak Chinese, wear Chinese dress and adopt the Chinese method of farming, they would be seen as *Hua* and would not be discriminated against. Thus, to distinguish who was a *Hua* and who was a *Yi* was based on whether they received the 'Rite of Zhou' or not. If a *Yi* learned and applied the 'Rite of Zhou', they were no longer a barbarian but would be regarded as a *Hua*, who was civilized. It is notable that this kind of distinction was based on culture rather than race. Moreover, if a *Hua* looked down on the 'Rite of Zhou', then they did not belong to *Hua* any more, they were considered as a barbarian (Liu, 2008). With Confucianism gradually establishing dominance in ancient China, this ideology became orthodox among *Hua* - Chinese people, and also the emperors of different dynasties, even including those non-Chinese rulers. Any member of another ethnic group if they accepted the doctrines of Confucianism or were loyal to the ruler, could rise into the upper society and even become the ruler of the Middle Kingdom (Zhang, 1993).

It seems that the ideology accentuated the difference between *Hua* and *Yi*, however, it was also a way of promoting the culture and membership of Chinese society. As advocated by Confucianism and the ancient rulers, this promotion of Chinese culture was used to assist to assimilate outsiders to achieve the ultimate goal of unification (Liu, 2008: 150), which was so important for ancient Chinese rulers. At the same time, ancient China as an agrarian society had a strong desire to have stability around its borders. Throughout history, nomadic people move from one place to another, scrambling for natural resources for survival, were often in conflict with settled agricultural societies.

The *Hua-Yi* distinction played an important role in dealing with nomadic people with the aim of building a stable geographical environment on the periphery (Liu, 2008: 151). Besides conquering neighbors by force of arms to incorporate them into the kingdom and enlarge their territory, the rulers utilized what today might be called 'soft power' to attract their neighbors. This approach not only reconciled the conflicts and differences between China

and its neighbors, but also attracted the outside *Yis* to be the inside *Huas* without military force (Liu, 2008).

Confucianism looked upon social order as the embodiment of the ethical order, and a reasonable society should be a morally edified society ruled by a virtuous person (Liu, 1993). Although the so-called ‘world ruler’ (pingtianxiazhe/ 平天下者) in ancient China did not rule out the use of military force, the aim was to achieve the goal of peacefully ruling and maintaining the world through the ‘benevolent rule’ (wangdao/ 王道). In this sense, Confucianism and the tradition of ‘benevolent rule’ that is embedded in Chinese cultural national consciousness, did limit the use of brutal force considerably and allowed ‘ruling the world’ in a civilized way. It effectively suppressed the likelihood of racial segregation and genocide happening (Ge, 1993; Wang, 1997). It cannot be denied that the ancient Chinese rulers used military force to wage war and take large-scale bloody reprisals against certain ethnic groups, such as in the late-Jin Empire (1115 AD - 1234 AD), against the northern Jurchen people (Ge, 1993). However, it never had race-based genocide and segregation within people who had already accepted and followed *Hua* culture.

All these lead to a conclusion that ancient Chinese rulers valued culture promotion above economic plundering. It has been argued that China’s 5,000-year history is full of the stories that the *Hua* discriminated and oppressed other ethnic groups. However, the reality is more complicated. From a multi-ethnic perspective, it was a process of assimilation and integration of *Hua* gradually absorbing *Yi* groups and *Yi* groups gradually following and learning the way of life of *Hua* (Zhang, 2011). This conclusion might easily give rise to a misunderstanding of Chinese history. For researchers, it is clear that so-called ‘Sinicization’ was not the only way of thinking about the relationship between *Hua* and *Yi* groups throughout history.

The formation of the Chinese nation is the result of interaction among history, culture and politics. During this long process, there was large-scale and regular migration and the

resultant fusion of nationalities as well as cultural assimilation and dissimilation (Wang, 1997). Over two thousand years, a variety of ethnic groups and a great number of people from the North such as the Huns (匈奴), the Xianbei (鲜卑), the Qiang (羌), the Jurchen (女真) and from the South such as the Yue (越), the Ba (巴) and the Liao (僚), had integrated into *Hua*, and some groups had been fully assimilated and disappeared. This is one of the reasons that Han ethnic group has the largest population now (Ge, 1993). Besides, although *Hua* lacked the awareness of the importance of self-consciousness for very long time, the process of infusion of different cultures and ethnic groups in fact had enriched the culture of *Hua* and many practical applications had greatly affected many important fields such as people's life and productive activities (Ge, 1993).

## **Part 2 China's openness to other cultures**

This part will further elaborate on the attitudes towards the rest of the world and how ancient Chinese people treated other nationalities and ethnic groups with examples in Chinese history. The openness of ancient Chinese when dealing with trade exchange and culture has been explored. These will provide the basis for examining attitudes towards culturally different others and views of openness and social change and help to develop hypotheses for the research.

Some scholars hold a very positive view that China was open to the other cultures in the pre-modern era, and strongly opposed and criticized the thought of 'cutting off China itself from the outside world', especially questioning the inward looking of the Ming and Qing dynasties (Li, 2014), which is regarded as the mainstream view among Chinese scholars of the nineteenth and twentieth century. In fact, the idea of 'China cutting itself off from the outside world' was put forward by Western intellectuals in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, mainly reflecting European perceptions of China. Many European leading thinkers of the period considered China as an inward-looking society in terms of economy, culture and politics.

For instance, the philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder in 1787 in his *Ideals for the Philosophy of the History of Humanity* criticized Chinese culture for its stasis and lack of vitality: ‘The [Chinese] empire is an embalmed mummy painted with hieroglyphics and wrapped in silk; its internal life that of animals in hibernation’ (XIV: 13, as cited in Martínez, 2008: 10; Liu, 2014) .

Similarly, Karl Marx, in his article *Revolution in China and in Europe* in *New York Daily Tribune* in 1853, also looked at Old China as a mummy:

All these dissolving agencies acting together on the finances, the morals, the industry, and political structure of China, received their full development under the English cannon in 1840, which broke down the authority of the Emperor and forced the Celestial Empire into contact with the terrestrial world. Complete isolation was the prime condition of the preservation of Old China. That isolation having come to a violent end by the medium of England, dissolution must follow as surely as that of any mummy carefully preserved in hermetically sealed coffin, whenever it is brought into contact with the open air.

However, in terms of foreign trade and commodity exchange, ancient China was not isolated, but quite open before the world was fully connected as a whole.

### **2.2.1 Economically open to the other**

It has been widely accepted that, since ancient times, China has interacted with other cultures and has been influenced by them. Qian Mu (1994, [1948]; cited in Wang, 2007, 2014) argues that the interaction between East and West started centuries before the concepts of modern Europe truly impacted and shook the East. China had engaged in interaction with its geographical west such as India, Persia and the Arab world for a long time. The famous ‘Silk Road’ is the epitome and representation of political, economic and cultural interactions between China and various ethnic groups in the West. Travel between China and the geographical West could be made by land and by sea in ancient times. The old Silk Roads consisted of ‘Continental Routes’ and ‘Maritime Routes’ (Liu, 2014).

Lisa Rofel (2012) has provided a historical perspective on cosmopolitanism during different periods of time in China and presented its distinctive features in each phase, based on the definition of cosmopolitanism as 'feeling at home in the world'. She divided Chinese cosmopolitanism into four different stages: pre-modern phase, colonial period, socialist stage and post-socialist period. She paid particular attention to the aspect of commodity exchange. Before the sixteenth century (Ge, 2012), exchanges between ancient China and other foreign countries were mainly limited to material commodities, basically evoked by commercial need. Foreign trade was active in both the Ming dynasty (1368 to 1644 AD) and Qing dynasty (1644 to 1912 AD), and there was a period of great prosperity in Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD). The import of foreign goods was constant (Li, 2014; Fei, 1988; Ge, 1997). Throughout Chinese history, China has imported rare and luxury goods, such as jewelry or rare Akhal-teke horses, spices, glass and grapes. This form of cultural acquisition was a pleasant supplement to life, it did not challenge Chinese cultural self-confidence. The import of exotic goods might satisfy and meet ancient people's curiosity and stimulate the imagination of foreign lands. Similarly, Wang (2007; 2014) also pointed out the two purposes for commodity of exchange in the ancient time. On the one hand, the exotic goods became a part of taste hierarchy among the aristocracy. For example, the exotic Western instruments introduced by the missionaries were seen as playthings for many people in Ming and Qing Dynasty. However, the systems behind them were not closely studied or utilized. When the Western missionaries left China, these instruments were often discarded in the Palace (Ge, 2012). On the other hand, using exotic goods was for the purpose of enhancing national power.

### **2.2.2 Chinese cultural self-confidence and self-enclosed nature**

Ge Jianxiong (1993) has pointed out that for the Chinese traditional national consciousness on the one hand, exposure to other cultures through trade played a positive part in and made contributions to promoting the formation and development of the Chinese nation. However, on the other hand, the core and essence of Chinese culture is self-enclosed rather than open (Ge, 1993; Ge, 2012; Liu and Jin, 2010a). In terms of culture and thoughts, China did display

isolationism and refuse to learn from other cultures, mainly because of Sinocentrism. There is a consensus among Chinese scholars that, in pre-modern times, except for the introduction of Buddhism, other cultures have hardly influenced Chinese culture (Sun, 2004; Jin and Liu, 2010a; Ge, 2012). Some scholars have even argued that the Confucian *tianxia* concept supported a tendency to cultural imperialism (Qu, 2014).

Sinocentric *tianxia* focused on promoting and achieving the goals of Confucian ethics. In ancient times, the *Yi* were considered as culturally inferior groups for the reason that the development of morality was not as advanced as *Hua*, as mentioned in the previous part. *Yis* were considered as subjects to be ruled and conquered by *Hua* rulers as a matter of course (Jin and Liu, 2006, 2010a) and to force them to adopt the *Hua* culture. Understanding or appreciating the knowledge and culture of *Yi* was not necessary and their Chinese rulers showed no or little interest in them. As quoted in the poem above, ‘Under the wide heaven, all is the King’s land. Within the sea-boundaries of the land, all are the King’s servants.’ (溥天之下，莫非王土；率土之滨，莫非王臣) This imperialistic view is a very good example of Sinocentrism.

#### 2.2.2.1 Two modes of Sinocentrism-led Tianxia

Jin Guantao’s early research on Sinocentrism consists of two aspects: on the one hand, it has a tendency of cosmopolitanism (1993), which should be understood here as an awareness of culturally different others, which has been clarified by his later research. On the other hand, it reflects the view that the Chinese system was considered always the most advanced in the world. Based on his early research, Jin and Liu (2006, 2010a) have observed Chinese history and further proposed that there are two models of traditional Tianxia concept – an open pattern and a closed model.

When China was relatively strong in politics and economy, the core of *tianxia* revealed a characteristic of openness. The most distinguished example of this was the golden age of the Tang Dynasty. During this era, not only were there hundreds of thousands of foreign

businessmen living in China, but foreigners were also allowed to join the official service of the Tang Empire. According to scholars (Ge, 1993; Wang, 2007 & 2014; Jin and Liu, 2010b). Most foreigners and non-Chinese people who initially entered into Tang territory, realized that in some areas the way of people's life had been influenced by northern ethnic groups and therefore a certain cosmopolitan openness was in evidence (Jin, 2013). Yet, despite this interaction, the cultural confidence and superiority of the Hua people had never been shaken. Similarly, Fei argues that ancient China's principles of cultural tolerance and inclusiveness can be seen throughout history (1998), even if it was not always observed. He argues that there are several examples from the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods, the Han Dynasties and the glorious age of Tang Dynasty which provide the best manifestations of these principles. However, behind the tolerance and inclusiveness was always a strong and solid national strength.

However, when the Hua society was in turbulence or when national power declined, the Sinocentrism-led *tianxia* tended to be closed to the outside world and became extremely exclusive. China did not have the ability to show off its power to other nations, at the same time, it wanted to save its face and keep the position of having the most advanced ethics and morality in the world. Then China had no choice but to cut off itself from the outside world in order to protect its cohesive social order. This kind of 'nationalism' of Sinocentrism protected Chinese culture and systems and resisted the influence from outside. The belief was if its own culture and systems proved not to be the best, Sinocentrism might collapse (Jin, 1993; Jin and Liu, 2006, 2010a).

### **2.2.3 Attitudes towards other civilizations entering into ancient China**

Under the premise of Sinocentrism, Chinese people held a firm faith in their own superiority and absolute confidence in their own culture, without any need to look for ideas from outside world (Zhang, 2011). When a foreign civilization entered into China, there were normally two reactions. First, for those not threatening Confucian ideology, ancient China seemed to welcome the new knowledge, thoughts and skills, but ancient scholars would re-explain

them by using Chinese traditional knowledge and thoughts. To put it in another way, Chinese intellectuals, by using the strategy of ‘the Western Learning Originated from China’ and ‘Chinese learning as essence and Western learning for its utility’, maintained Chinese traditions as well as national pride. Because China has very long and rich history, they always could find something similar as a kind of reference. Chinese learning was regarded as the ultimate basis for rationality. Knowledge from other civilizations was used at a practical level. For a long time, Western knowledge and learning was strictly used in limited fields, such as astronomy, mathematics and manufacture of artifacts.

Although Emperor Kangxi admitted the precision of Western learning, he still believed this originated from ancient China. On the one hand, this showed an open attitude towards new things; on the other hand, at the same time it upheld national esteem (Han, as cited in Ge, 2012; 316). However, some people in the Ming and Qing dynasties were open to Western knowledge and not only accepted it but wanted to learn more and even explore the values and beliefs that were so different from Chinese traditional thinking. Ge (2012) gave a possible reason that these people were convinced by the usefulness of tools and wanted to understand the system behind them. However, it was the absolute self-confidence of possessing universal truth that enabled such people to have an open attitude towards the new knowledge.

This process gradually challenged the monopoly of Chinese thought by offering alternative explanations and opened the door to introduce new knowledge into China. Opposing this were the firm defenders of tradition, Chinese intellectuals who absolutely rejected the knowledge, values and beliefs that challenged Confucian ideology because they realized that the incompatibility of the two systems would lead to a collapse of Chinese traditional thought and belief. They vetoed any Western knowledge that might threaten the wholeness of traditional thought, giving rise to radical nationalism and conservatism to maintain their own interests (*ibid.*).

### 2.2.3.1 Social change - society tends to be open

Under the premise of Sinocentric-led *tianxia*, it was only when the rulers and Confucian intellectuals faced difficulties in governing the kingdom, in relation to carrying out Confucianism ethics in practice and facing the threat from Yi groups to their politically dominant and ruling position, that the situation changed. Confucian scholars started to learn about the cultures of different groups and study all aspects of knowledge in order to strengthen the defence of the kingdom. In other words, their ‘embrace’ or openness towards culturally different others was in reaction to outside threats, for the purpose of strengthening the regime and consolidating power (Jin and Liu, 2006, 2010a).

Sun (2004) firmly believed that Chinese people would never truly accept foreign culture. Only when its own cultural value system collapsed or was in danger, would Chinese people seek help from the others. However, ‘the Other’ would eventually be integrated or deployed to serve the stability of the Chinese culture system. Throughout Chinese history, the introduction into China of foreign ideas such as Indian Buddhism or Western Marxism coincided with extreme social turmoil.

Interestingly, compared to a self-critical, mainstream view of openness, one Chinese scholar has expressed a relatively romantic and unique argument. In Wang Mingming’s book *The West as the Other: A Genealogy of Chinese Occidentalism*, he proposed, in investigating the history of travel in China that, in Chinese culture, there existed a virtue of embracing the other. Wang added that, as a country of the East, China has to have its own ‘Occidentalism’- if this word can be used in the same way as the ‘Orientalism’ proposed by Edward Said, which contains a ‘mixture of romanticism and strategic knowledge of the exotic’ (2014: 18; 2007:13) and ‘has less to do with the Orient than it does with ‘our’ world’ (2014, 8). For the ancient Chinese, the remote West could never be a part of their world (Zhong, 2000: 1, as cited in Wang, 2014: 50). There were stories about the geographical West in ancient times, but they were nothing more than rumours. In this sense, the image of the geographical West viewed by ancient Chinese is sharply different from the real West. Through investigating

documents such as King Mu's *Journey to the West* and the Monks' pilgrimage to 'the West Territories', Wang pointed out that these journeys constantly express an ideal image for the ancient Chinese that the Other in a distant land always had something that could remedy the weakness of ancient China - the self (ibid:76).

Wang described King Mu, who was not an anthropologist, as a benevolent explorer. The purpose of his journey was to find wisdom in the geographical West to make his kingdom better. During his journey to the West, whenever he met a different ethnic group, they exchanged gifts, feasted and said farewell. He always showed great politeness to those people who were culturally different from him and appreciated their wisdom and lifestyle. It seems that the difference between them was never a reason to prevent them from communicating.

Another example Wang wrote in his book is about 'the West Territories'. This was how India was referred to during the spread of Buddhism in China. People looked on India as the House of All Sages (2014: 158). To a great extent, going on a pilgrimage for Buddhist scriptures to ancient India was driven by unrest within society, in pursuit of peaceful methods of governing society as well as how to restore order. Thus, based on this argument, Wang pointed out that, in the modern era, the desire of Chinese intellectuals to go 'on a pilgrimage' to the West for new concepts also reflects unrest in the home culture and an attempt to find solutions.

From the perspective of anthropology, Fei Xiaotong (1992) has shed light on social change at a micro level. In his theory, social structure is a part of culture, which is created by people to meet their needs. When the old structure no longer meets people's needs, then they want to change society. When people meet a new situation, they normally use the old method first to solve the problem. However, old methods cannot solve new problems or only deal with them ineffectively, which inconveniences people. The old methods gradually lose the trust of people and they seek new methods to cope with new circumstances. These new methods

are normally invented by people or learned from other cultures. Also, the new methods should be tested to see whether they can deal with the problems. There might be some person to show new methods to people and get people's trust. Fei refers to this kind of person as a 'cultural hero'.

According to Fei (1992), this kind of hero might have followers and accumulate power. Fei called this 'temporal power', which is brought about by the change. 'A cultural hero' often appears in a period of rapid social change or social instability. By contrast, in a relatively stable society, because the social structures meet people's needs, there is no need for change, nor for a 'cultural hero'. During a social transition, experience might not be sufficient as a guide to the current situation and people may rely on principles that are not necessarily invented and developed by their elders. Moreover, habits can be an obstacle to adaptation and experience mean a stubborn and outdated way of life, which may even be viewed as a threat to survival.

Above all, there are two similar points which scholars mentioned above have emphasized. First, when Chinese society initiates to embrace the Other, it seeks for something that its culture lacks or cannot meet people's needs in a certain aspect. Second, this tends to take place in a period of social transition or in an unstable state. Bearing this in mind, it could be argued that in general, if Chinese society is in a relatively stable state and its cultural system is meeting people's needs, the level of openness is low. However, if Chinese society is experiencing transition or is not stable and its cultural system cannot satisfy people's needs, the society tends to become more open.

### **Part 3 Open to the West**

In the third part of this chapter, three historical events in China, which are highly relevant to the thesis, will help further illustrate the relationship between instability and openness: a. the introduction of Buddhism in ; b. the collapse of Sinocentrism in the late Qing dynasty c. the

rise and collapse of Neo-Sinocentrism and Reform and Opening Up in New China. These three events are three turning points in Chinese history. The stability of the society, the possible reasons for the openness and people's attitudes towards the Other will be explored in each event.

### **2.3.1 Open to the 'West Territory' - Buddhism**

Before the First Opium War (1839-1842), China did not interact directly with other civilizations, with the exception of the introduction of Buddhism from India – known then as the 'West territory'. Cultural exchanges and communication played a more significant role in understanding and knowing another civilization, and the interchange between two civilizations tends to have a more profound and deeper impact on people than just exchanging of goods and commodities. Only the introduction of another civilization could make the ancient Chinese aware that there could be others that were equal to or even more advanced than themselves. This experience would bring the realization that *tianxia* might extend beyond *Hua* territory, and the concept of China as the centre of the world would change, as well as the Chinese map of the world (Ge, 2012). The spread of Buddhism made Chinese people aware that beyond the territory of China, there existed other civilizations.

Buddhism has had a profound influence on China's philosophy, literature and art, enriching Chinese culture (Thussu, 2013: 45-46; Zhang, 2009: 39). There is no clear date when Buddhism was first introduced from India to China – it is still in dispute among Chinese scholars – but there is agreement that it was in the first century AD (Han Dynasty) that Buddhism was officially acknowledged by the Han Empire. Buddhism spread in China through a gradual and long process. At this time China experienced a very long period of social unrest and turmoil. The Jin Dynasty (AD 265-420) and Period of the Northern and Southern Dynasties (AD 420- 589) lasted almost 300 years and the population suffered from endless wars and uprisings. Confucianism was in crisis, and the authority of it was questioned at that time: pre-Qin Confucianism only consisted of the sayings of Confucius and Mencius, which were not systematic and theoretical. It could not sufficiently answer

many questions, explain the nature of the world, whereas Buddhism offered an explanation why people suffered. Under this pressure, Confucianism started to learn from the thought of Buddhism and Taoism in order to maintain its authority (Xie, 2016).

It was not until the fifth century AD that Buddhism became popular among all walks of life – not only among elites but also ordinary people. This was thanks to the prolific translations of Buddhist texts by Buddhist monks, especially Kumārajīv (鳩摩罗什). Kumārajīv, an Indian Buddhist monk and scholar, born in Kingdom of Kucha (located in Xinjiang Province in China), translated a great number of the Buddhism Scriptures written in Sanskrit into Chinese, at the same time, he also taught many students. His great contribution significantly promoted the spread of Buddhism in China (Thussu, 2013; Feng, 2013 [1947]: 230-242). Combined and fused with local culture and philosophies, such as Taoism, Buddhism evolved into a unique form in China.

Buddhism and the civilization of India behind it prompted the ancient Chinese people to reconsider China's position – both geographical and civilizational in the world. Indian civilization had its own territory and it was not the same as *Yi* which was unterritorial and subordinate to the *Hua*. India was a civilization, like China, that had breadth and depth in wisdom. All led to the conclusion that China eventually acknowledged that there was another civilization in the world. Only another civilization that brought about earthshaking change in ancient China could make the ancient Chinese people reflect upon themselves in this way.

### **2.3.2 Open to the West - the collapse of Sinocentrism**

Although Buddhism influenced China to a great extent, and let the ancient Chinese people realize that there was another civilization to the west of *Hua* Territory, Chinese people did not yet abandon the concept of Sinocentrism-led *tianxia*. Chinese people still held a superior attitude towards the Other until the Ming Dynasty (AD 1368 - AD1644) and Qing Dynasty (1616 AD - 1912 AD), particularly the late Qing dynasty, when the entire civilization was shaken fundamentally by the West and 'ancient China' was forced to enter a new modern

world, being shaped by the European powers.

Since the middle and late Ming Dynasty, different forms of Western knowledge were constantly being introduced into China, and gradually infiltrated into the Chinese knowledge system. However, for a long time, the fundamental confrontation between the two systems did not take place, let alone the subversion of the Chinese system. With a very long history, China had rich enough historical resources and accumulated knowledge to support and construct its meaning systems, values and beliefs. It was very difficult for foreign knowledge to overthrow the system. Ge (2012) argues that over two centuries' infiltration of Western knowledge from Ming Dynasty to Qing Dynasty had changed parts of Chinese knowledge to some extent and had triggered many scholars' curiosity. Although it was not a fatal attack on the traditional world, the process of accumulation planted the seeds for ancient Chinese to rethink and question the traditional knowledge systems.

At the end of the sixteenth century, during the Ming Dynasty, Mateo Ricci's world map, produced in 1602 by a Jesuit priest, Matteo Ricci (1553-1610), was introduced into China. This can be regarded as another moment that changed ancient Chinese people's perspective of the world. During that period of time, some intellectuals acknowledged Mateo's map and admitted that China was not 'the world' and was not the centre of all civilizations (Ge, 2012). Besides, they realized that there was no 'high' or 'low' difference between civilizations, and questioned the superiority of Chinese civilization. The new map challenged the established knowledge and authority, not only of the ruling group. However, given the power of tradition and history, many Chinese scholars still could not accept this great change of the image of 'the world'. They began to realize that other belief systems such as Catholicism needed to take into consideration to redefine in order not to subvert the concept of Sinocentrism (ibid).

Chinese people's belief in the Sinocentric *tianxia* concept and *Hua-Yi* distinction were prevalent. During the initial interactions with Europeans in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Chinese elites, they took it for granted that European people were regarded as

barbarians, a type of *Yi*. “Hung-mao-fan” (红毛番) which means ‘Red-Hair barbarians’ was used to call both the Dutch and the English by the local (Fairbank, 1942:136). And also the Chinese thought that there was no threat to national security by the arrival of the foreigners.

Fairbank described in *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast*:

The western merchants who reached the east coast of China by sea in modern times were designated, literally, ‘eastern barbarians’ [*Yi*]...by this simple fact of terminology they were prejudged and stigmatized with the characteristics traditionally assigned to barbarians. (as cited in Chung, 1973 :9)

However, the ideology of Sinocentrism started to collapse after the humiliation of the two Anglo-Chinese Opium Wars. The First Opium War took place between 1839- 1842, while the Second Opium War was between 1856 -1860 – and in both China was defeated by the British – then the rising power in Europe and globally. The humiliation of the military defeat made the Chinese elites realize that the civilization in Europe was different from the traditional sense of *Yi*, and it seemed to be even more powerful and advanced than *Hua*. This recognition is reflected in how the Qing government addressed the Westerners. Prior to the outbreak of the Opium Wars, Westerners were called *Yi*. After the two wars, the term ‘*Yang/洋*’ (foreign) was used for Westerners (Liu, 2008).

Another shock to Chinese people and shock to Sinocentrism was from China’s eastern neighbor: Japanese aggression in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century dealt China a critical blow and brought a significant change. The military defeat by Japan, a small country that had traditionally looked at China for inspiration and ideas, and which the Chinese elites looked down upon and mostly ignored, astounded Chinese people. In 1895, China had to cede territories and pay war indemnities to what was widely seen as another national humiliation. It was not until 1894 that China stopped considered itself as a country that owned cultural superiority and exported culture (Jin, 1993; Jin and Liu, 2010a; Ge, 2012). It truly hurt Chinese people’s feelings of pride when the country had to sign terms of surrender with a country that was once entirely disregarded. It was a mixed feeling of anger, grief, ignominy and helplessness. Ge (2012) used a metaphor of a person suddenly waking up from a deep sleep, with some anger, some panic and bewilderment to describe China’s reaction to it. The reaction of panic and tension gave rise to the subsequent series of radical reforms and

the ideas and strategies for a revolution against traditional elites.

Later, during the 1950s and 1960s, Chairman Mao Zedong repeatedly expressed gratitude - 'thank Japan for aggression' - when he met foreign leaders: it was Japan's aggression that had awakened and taught the Chinese people to unite and resist against the war (cited in Li, 2008). Every stratum in China, from the conservative and stubborn government officials, civilians to intellectuals, as well as Europeans, supported carrying out the wide-ranging reforms to compete in a modern world. The direction of reform was to learn from the West. In that era, all different of kinds of innovative and daring ideas emerged – mostly from the West, questioning and criticizing the traditional approaches. After 1895, Chinese people were forced to admit that, at least in terms of practical knowledge and skills, the West as well as Japan were more advanced and developed than China, and that China had to carry out reforms and learn from the West and Japan (Ge, 2012).

China experienced a dramatic social transition in the 30 years between the Sino-Japanese Wars (Luo, 2007; 271). Such huge changes had not been seen since Buddhism was introduced in China. Scholars have noted that 1895 was the line of demarcation. After 1895, with the rise of elite press, modern publishing and new education system, modern Western thought was spreading on an unprecedented scale and speed. According to Britton, in 1895, there were only 15 printing presses in China, and based on the statistics provided by Woodbridge, written in *Encyclopedia Sinica*, the number of presses increased sharply to 2,000 in 1917 (cited in Zhang, 1999: 29). According to the estimates of Hu, in 1919, approximately 400 new presses were established (ibid; Zhang: 2010: 12). It is interesting to see a phenomenon that eager for transformation, in order to learn Western knowledge faster, China started to translate books that Japan had already translated from the West (Ge, 2012).

### *2.3.2.1 Relocating China's place in the world*

Chinese scholars especially in the late Qing dynasty had discerned that China was no longer the Celestial Empire that it saw itself as; it was no longer in the middle of the world, and the

country was but one of many on the planet. They gradually acknowledged that the ‘world’ had replaced ‘*tianxia*’, and had a strong willingness to integrate into this new ‘world’ (Luo, 2007). For a very long time, China had lacked a proper ‘Other’ to be a mirror or a reference, for it to know about the ‘Self’ (Ge, 2012). During the period of Emperor Kangxi (AD 1654-AD1722) and Emperor Qianlong (AD1711 - AD1799) in the Qing Dynasty, the rulers had arrogantly refused Western missionaries and diplomatic envoys, while, during the period of Emperor Jiaqing (AD1760 - AD1820) and Emperor Daoguang (AD1782 - AD 1850), the Chinese people had to accept reality. Correspondingly, in the nineteenth century, a great number of books about geography appeared in China (Ge, 2012). The modern ‘world’ as we know it today was a new and unfamiliar concept to Chinese people during the period of the late Qing dynasty. They attempted to explain the relationship between China and the World. In their understanding, the ‘world’ only consisted of ‘the West’ – Western Europe and the United States, excluding many other areas such as Eastern Europe and most of Africa, Asia and Latin America. The ‘world’ was constructed and controlled by ‘the other’. Chinese people believed that China should integrate into it first and then change its passive position (Luo, 2007). For example, Liang Qichao (1873-1929), divided the history of China into three stages: the first stage started from the era of the Yellow Emperor (approximately between 2700 BC – 2600 BC) and ends in Pre-Qin Dynasty (221 BC). It was a period in which different tribes and nations were unified and China was the world. The second stage was from the Qin Dynasty (221 BC) to the Qianlong Emperor (1711 AD – 1799 AD, Qing Dynasty): China interacted with its neighbors and China belonged to Asia. The third stage was from the Qianlong Emperor to the present: China and other Asian nations interacted with the West, China belonged to the world (cited in Luo, 2007).

During the transition period, Western ideas about cosmopolitanism were also introduced into China, but were only adopted by intellectuals. However, the First World War stimulated nationalism. Levenson points out that it was a sign of intellectual and cultural progress that China changed from *tianxia* to a ‘nation-state’ (cited in Luo, 2007). The intellectuals in late Qing and early republican China were in a dilemma. On the one hand, the endless national

humiliation and exposure to Western influence made them choose modern nationalism. On the other hand, they desired to apply a version of cosmopolitanism that went beyond nationalism. Writing in 1923, Li Huang (1895- 1991), as a nationalist, mentioned that those who promoted cosmopolitanism would lose their heads as long as they saw their own countries under threat (cited in Luo, 2007: 289). Faced with choosing between cosmopolitanism and nationalism, few were loyal to cosmopolitanism and most turned to nationalism. This also suggests cosmopolitanism is vulnerable and easily influenced by circumstances. One good example was Peng Yihu (1887-1958) who suffered having to compromise between the reality and the ideal, noting in 1919:

I am a person supporting cosmopolitanism and humanism. However, cosmopolitanism and humanism sometimes are not incompatible with nationalism. I have to compromise the reality that at current stage human beings had not achieved the level of supranationalism. It was not a proper time for only one state and nation to advocate cosmopolitanism while the whole world was talking about nationalism (cited in Luo, 2007: 289).

### *2.3.2.2 The collapse of Sinocentrism*

Once Chinese culture and systems were no longer regarded as the most advanced by Chinese people, Sinocentrism began to collapse. The traditional Chinese culture and system under that circumstance even could not stop the instability of society and could not well respond and defend itself from invasion by the outsider: maintaining the old system, in other words, meant being disloyal to the Chinese nation. In this kind of situation, different forms of nationalism, based on diverse criteria with obvious features, emerged and were developed.

Jin (1993) observes three forms of nationalism. First, the widely accepted criterion of national identification was ethnicity. It gave rise to the anti- Manchu Movement (1900-1911). For Han Chinese, the Qing Dynasty was in fact once an ethnic minority that became the master of the Central Plains like Mongolia (Jin and Liu, 2010b). It accepted and adopted the traditional Chinese culture and system, thus many Chinese scholar-officials acknowledged its legitimacy. It took place based on the principle of Sinocentrism, in which the criterion was culture. The Manchu sincerely studied and learned Chinese culture. Before formally

entering into Central Plain, the Manchu had already started to systematically imitate and learn the Chinese system. After they became the rulers, they not only kept the structure of the Ming Dynasty, but also started to collect and revise the scripts and classics of Chinese culture in a large scale during Kangxi period and Qianlong period. This largely wore down Chinese intellectuals' resistance to Manchu governance and even gained their tacit consent and cooperation. Since the Qianlong Emperor and Jiaqing Emperor period, it had been a prevailing custom that intellectuals were obsessed with textual research. It was a way to protect themselves from the ruling group from another ethnicity. Gradually, they did not insist so much on *Hua-Yi* distinction (Wang, 1997).

However, when Sinocentrism was no longer valid and the systems of the West were regarded as more advanced and developed, the legitimacy of Qing-Manchu empire was questioned, and it was eventually toppled. In a reversal of traditional thinking when Western system was believed as a superior law, then the Qing – Manchu was regarded as *Yi*. It could not be accepted that China was ruled by 'barbarians'. Thus, compared to the aggression of the West, Chinese held more intolerant attitudes towards Qing -Manchu as rulers. Thus, the target group of this kind of nationalism was Qing-Manchu rather than the West. On the other hand, the Manchu, especially its aristocracy, were privileged and the Han Chinese were discriminated against and repressed. The failures of wars and a series of unequal treaties, aggravated the contradiction between Chinese and Manchu. In this case, culture could not serve for identification and ethnicity soon replaced it (Jin,1993; Wang 1997).

The second form of nationalism was based on culture. Different subversions of this form emerged. Though after the defeat by Japan, and especially from 1895 onwards, it was widely recognized by most Chinese scholar-officials that Chinese traditional social and political systems were not as developed as the West, some still believed that Chinese culture, especially the ethics and morality of Confucianism was the best and the most advanced in the world. Thus, based on the view of maintaining Chinese traditional culture and ethics, a cultural form of nationalism sprang up. Kang Youwei proposed to establish a new form of

Confucianism by combining Confucian ethics with Western philosophy and social political systems. Zhang Taiyan supported using Chinese history for national identity and developed ethnic cultural chauvinism.

The third form was to treat national sovereignty as national identity. From the perspective of Sinocentrism, national sovereignty sometimes was not as important as saving the face of Celestial Empire (Jin, 1993). After the collapse of Sinocentrism, the Qing court gradually put more attention and made more effort on maintaining sovereignty and national interests, especially in international diplomacy, even though it was rarely effective.

Jin (1993) proposed that neither culturally-based nationalism nor ethnicity-based nationalism would be competent for the double tasks of resisting aggression and achieving the goal of modernization. Resisting foreign aggression called for social mobilization and cohesion, and to achieve modernization required Chinese people to learn from the West. The main function of ethnicity-based nationalism was anti-Qing-Manchu, which could not meet the demands of social mobilization and cohesion, while culturally-based nationalism had a strong tendency to refuse to communicate with foreign cultures and to learn from the West in order to maintain its own culture.

The third form of nationalism could meet these both tasks at the same time. Many intellectuals had realized that to resist foreign aggression does not mean to reject foreign culture. Since the nineteenth century, the debate between ‘wholesale Westernization’ and ‘anti-wholesale Westernization’ in different forms has continued. The term ‘wholesale Westernization’ was formally proposed by Hu Shi in the article ‘Cultural Conflict in China’ from the *China Christian Year Book* in 1929 in the United States (Feng, 2005; Chi, 1992). Hu Shi coined this term. Although he was influenced by the western thoughts to great extent, he actually was not an advocator of ‘wholesale Westernization’. The term referred to a complete transformation from Chinese civilization into Western civilization. Without doubt it received many critiques. This concept originated at the end of the nineteenth century,

especially in the Reform Movement of 1898 used by the reformers to radically fight against the Conservative's advocacy that 'Chinese learning should be followed as the essence; Western learning as the practical application', for the purpose of achieving the goal of modernization and reforming the old system (Feng, 2005).

Similarly, in the same period, pioneers like Liang Qichao proposed to bring about the modern spirituality into China. Will Durant (1978, cited in Ge, 2001) has observed Chinese modern history and pointed out that Chinese people in fact had a very strong hatred for foreign people, however, the most powerful action force was to worship foreigners. China had no choice but to worship because of the crucial reality ahead. Two roads were in front of it, either industrialization or colonialization. The internal tension and the external stress gave rise to ambivalent dilemma. On the one hand, an urgent emotion that Chinese people would like to keep their traditional culture and 'root' stimulated the development of nationalism to great extent, supported by the campaign slogan like 'save the nation and make it strong'. However, on the other hand, the Western learning and concepts had already overturned and challenged the traditional Chinese values and beliefs. May 4 New Culture Movement (1919) was the best example.

The concept of 'wholesale Westernization' had been well developed. The modern civilization replacing China's outmoded civilization was a dominant idea of the Movement. It was a period of time to reevaluate everything in China (Zheng, 2009). Before May 4 New Culture Movement, any mass movements called for social mobilization in the name of nationalism had features of exclusivity in different degree, such as Boxer Rebellion/ Yihequan Movement (1899-1901). Ethnic based nationalism and cultural based nationalism could not effectively separate national independence from learning foreign knowledge and thoughts. That is the reason why the intellectuals in the May 4 New Culture Movement could radically criticize the traditional and old culture, while, at the same time, they could passionately participate in the anti-imperialist activities. Thus, May 4 New Culture Movement was the first nationalistic social mobilization without absurdly indiscriminate

rejection of everything foreign. It was a form of nationalism with an open attitude. On the one hand, Chinese people could keep their commitment to the homeland, but on the other hand, learn from the foreigners (Jin, 1993).

It is easy to notice that the society of China was in an extremely instable and weak state during this period of history. Keeping the old system could not stop the instability of the society, and even led to an end of the nation. The appeals for different forms of reforms and learning from the West and Japan no matter in a radical way or in a conservative way, after all show a strong willingness that Chinese people at that time would like to survive, defend the country, avoid the further loss of their homeland and stop deterioration. The main feature of openness at that period of time tends to be instrumental and very purposeful.

### **2.3.3 Rise and fall of Neo-Sinocentrism in new China**

#### *2.3.3.1 Socialist cosmopolitanism and the rise of Neo-Sinocentrism*

The last kind of nationalism did not last for long. Neo-Sinocentrism emerged during the Mao Era, during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) (Liu, 1993; Jin, 1993). Some features of this period of time were very similar to the characteristics of Sinocentrism (Liu, 1993; Jin, 1993). The world was divided into two camps according to ideology – the Communist camp and the Capitalist camp. China chose to belong to the Communist camp in order to achieve the goal of an equal and progressive global communist society. First, according to Sinocentrism's definition in this research, there must be a universal 'Law of Heaven' for all humanity. In traditional China, ethics and morality of Confucianism was seen as the best system and the universal 'Law of Heaven'. Cranmer-Byng (1973) pointed out "China in the world view developed by Mao also had a universal mission... of a world revolution in which China's example and ideological 'rightness' would be crucial". Especially after 1962, the relationship between China and the Soviet Union deteriorated to the extent that the Soviet Union was seen as socialist imperialist power. Maoism was regarded as the most active and orthodox development of Marxism-Leninism at that time among Chinese people. Similar to Sinocentrism, China as a member of the Communist camp confronted the Capitalist camp,

rejecting the West, at the same time exported its ideology and revolution into other developing countries – especially in Africa. Liu (1993) points out that Chairman Mao issued a statement supporting the civil rights movement after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr in the United States. By July 1967, the Little Red Book of quotations from Chairman Mao had been issued in more than 100 countries and regions, almost becoming the Bible for anti-imperialism in the Third World. According to statistics, during the period of the Culture Revolution China gave the most money in aid to the Third World (ibid).

Second, a new world order was established based on different strength of national power, and China seemed to be the core of the world revolution, as during the pre-modern time China, the less developed ethnic groups was around China. In 1974, when Mao met the President of Zambia Kenneth Kaunda he proposed a ‘Three Worlds Theory’. He mentioned that the superpowers United States and the Soviet Union were in the first world; Japan, Europe and Canada as lesser power were in the second world; Asia except for Japan, Africa and Latin America belonged to the Third world. Thus, these similarities all lead Jin (1993) and Liu (1993) to believe that the emergence of similar patterns with different content had deep connection with Sinocentrism and define the phenomenon as ‘Neo-Sinocentrism’.

#### *2.3.3.2 The fall of Neo-Sinocentrism and the attitudes towards the West in 1980s*

After the Third Plenary Session of the 11<sup>th</sup> Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in 1978 and the Sixth Plenary Session in 1981, two tremendous changes took place in relation to Chinese foreign policy. First, the whole country once again began to look to the West for knowledge and expertise. Deng Xiaoping used the similar concepts of reform in and asserted that “there was indeed a fundamental structure of Chinese moral and philosophical values that gave continuity and meaning to the civilization. Holding on to that belief, China could then afford to adopt quickly and dramatically all sorts of Western practices, and to hire Western advisers” (Spence, 1991: 225). Second, the Chinese government stopped rendering free aid to the Third World countries. On the one hand, Reform and Opening up acknowledged that it was necessary for China to learn from the

West. On the other hand, shifting from exporting revolution, China started to focus more on its own national interests and give priority to China's development and stability and promote common prosperity. These signified the collapse of Neo-Sinocentrism (Liu, 1993; Jin, 1993).

Since the end of the 1970s, the situation of 'openness' has brought economic reforms and opening up of China. Thus, the way in which mainland Chinese scholars have dealt with and applied Western thinking in their research has been profoundly influenced by this opening up. Chinese intellectuals were generally the first to get access to Western thoughts and they recognized the gaps between China and the developed countries in many aspects (Jiang, 2017). This period of openness in the 1980s provides a useful reference point for this author for this thesis in exploring Chinese society with very little resources in the Chinese 'home-grown' literature and relying greatly on non-Chinese research. The discussion in this subsection plays a double role. On the one hand, this part aims to explore the attitudes towards Western thinking and the possible reasons behind it since the Reform and Opening up, for the purpose of answering the research questions. On the other hand, on the methodological level, this also exhibits the general problems and issues that the scholars came across when dealing with foreign literature especially from the west in social science, providing the experience, suggestions and warn from previous researchers. It happened that there are very little resources in the Chinese 'home-grown' literature on Cosmopolitanism studies and this research relies greatly on non-Chinese literature.

The 1980s saw a fever for Western thought in China. The end of the Cultural Revolution and changes in national policies led to confusion and disappointment with Communist political system and traditions. After the transformation, China was a relatively open society in the 1980s and was full of optimism and idealism – everything was tried out to realize the goal of China's modernization, what Deng Xiaoping characterized as 'crossing the river by the feeling the stones' (Yu, 2002). However, although academics were urged to research and propose possible solutions to social issues arising from modernization, such as changes to marriage and family, urban and rural life, labour etc., they lacked a theoretical framework to

support their work (Guo, 2015). This was one of the reasons during this period a significant amount of Western learning and thoughts especially from the United States were introduced into China through translation, (ibid; Fang, 2005; Wu, 2013). It was very common to see scholars directly copying and applying theories and concepts from the West, without testing and questioning whether they were in fact applicable to or effective for Chinese society.

This phenomenon of 'blind worship' - total and uncritical acceptance - of the West has changed since the 1990s. However, it needs to be acknowledged that the flow of Western concepts did bring new ideas and significant changes in Chinese academia. Many in Chinese academia were very keen to escape from the previous rigid systems and doctrinism that had largely restricted academic development (Fang, 2005; Wu, 2013).

However, there was also a completely opposite tendency, which takes two different forms reflecting how ancient Chinese scholars treated foreign knowledge and thought. First was to show a radically opposing attitude that deliberately confronted the West's discourse and highlighted the heterogeneity between Chinese society and the West, demarcating a clear boundary between China and the West because of nationalism. As discussed above, due to conflict and tension between China and the West in the modern period, Chinese people are susceptible to a culturally dominant nationalism, rejecting dialogue and communication (Feng, 2005). Their concern is how they can be confident that their perspectives are pure and not at all influenced by the outside sources.

Another scholar Liu Dong (2001, cited in Zhu, 2010) is not as radical, but concerned that systematically introducing foreign academic discourse to China would have a fatal impact on the autonomy of the native academic environment. Wang Mingming expressed a similar idea (2014). Many contemporary Chinese people are very interested in discussing Western thoughts but this often reflects a rather contradictory logic: if they could grasp modern concepts from the West, then they can control their own destiny and this means that they are catching up with the developed West. At the same time, this means traditional Chinese ideas

are fading away out of public consciousness. He is very concerned about this situation and warns that, there is a danger that Chinese scholars will neglect and lose their own knowledge. He finds it disturbing that history and knowledge are no longer represented by the Chinese symbolic system but instead they are using that of the West and China's knowledge is being cut off from its historical roots. This is then becoming naturalized in popular thinking (ibid).

Likewise, scholar Zhang Zhizhou (2014) strongly supports this view. He points out that it is lamentable to gain cultural diversity at the expense of losing the autonomy of China's own culture. The naturalization of cultural 'West-centralism' in Chinese society reflects the phenomenon of the cultural inferiority complex. Zhang (2014) traces the root of this to the long-term imbalance of power between the West and China since the nineteenth century, which led to the embracing of 'advanced Western culture' and the abandonment of 'backward Chinese culture'. West-centralism inevitably penetrated into Chinese people's everyday lives, which, during the phase of modernization, gave rise to a distorted attitude of 'worshipping everything foreign'. However, Zhang, argued that it was a logical fallacy to equate national strength with superiority of culture (ibid). Zhang (2014) also argues that there is another form of West-centrism among Chinese intellectuals. That is in order to prove 'we have what you have' or the homogeneity of the East and West, or in order to get recognized by the West, it was common to interpret a word or a concept from the West by referring back to ancient Chinese literature. In other words, it is a reappearance of the strategy of 'the West Learning Originated from China', but in a modern version.

Since the 1990s, academic exchange with international academia, the introduction of significant theories and convergence of academic approaches has been gradually happening in China. Chinese scholars have started to make contributions to Western scholarship and to take part in the global academic dialogue. However, for them this raises the issue that some researchers are detached from the reality of Chinese society and ignore what is happening in the country as it transforms into a major economic power (Fei, 1998; Guo, 2015). They need to understand the circumstances China is in and the changes taking place inside the country

in all its complexities. Guo urges Chinese scholars to address two fundamental issues. First, it is critical for research to take social reality into account, especially social transformation. Second, it is necessary to actively take part in international academic discussion and dialogue.

Guo (2015) has pointed out that China is experiencing a unique era, not only because it has the largest population in history, but also it plays an increasingly important role in the world. China is undergoing tremendous social transformations, and it is exploring ways of survival and development in the face of great challenges. Guo (2015) argues that this in fact also offers great opportunities and rich material for scholars to gain inspiration and construct knowledge that can actually help to deal with complex social issues, rather than abstract and theoretical knowledge far from reality and only existing in books. In terms of globalization studies in relation to culture, particularly dealing with the interactions between China and the West, the global and the local, the consequence of globalization – cultural homogenization and heterogenization – this should be rooted in real social issues. Feng (2005) proposes that Chinese scholars should avoid talking about culture in a broad and abstract way.

Since Reform and Opening up, one purpose of openness is very clear: learning from the knowledge and expertise from the West could help stop people's confusion and disappointment with the previous Party system after the Cultural Revolution, maintain the social stability and facilitate the national development in order to maintain the regime and achieve the goal of modernization. Again, the feature of openness is self-centric, instrumental and purposeful.

As China has consolidated its domestic economic and social strengths while retaining the strict control of the communist party in political arena, its global profile has grown significantly. This has been evolving since the country began opening-up to global markets – becoming a factory to the world in the 1990s. Since then the globalization of China has meant that old ideas of isolation and Sinocentrism have increasingly given way to trade and

investment relations with the rest of the world, making China the world's largest economy – in terms of purchasing power parity. This economic power has also encouraged the Chinese elite and its people to relate at various levels – cultural, sociological and economic – with an increasing number of global 'others', necessitating a development of a Chinese version of cosmopolitanism. This chapter has outlined and summarized the Chinese attitudes towards the 'foreign' in a historical context. In the next chapter, the focus is on a review of relevant literature on Methodology.

### *Chapter 3*

#### *Methodology*

This chapter presents the methodology and methods used in this research. It consists of three main sections. The first part of this chapter sets out how the researcher used a reflexive methodology throughout the research and then explains how the researcher situated this research in relation to the academic context, as a Chinese researcher undertaking a PhD in London and fieldwork in China. The second part sets out the philosophical stance informing the methodology of the thesis and the role of critical realism. It also argues for the use of an interdisciplinary and historiographical approach to provide a context for investigating cosmopolitanism in the fieldwork. Finally, in the third section, the chosen methodology of focus groups, interviews and thematic analysis is set out and discussed.

This interdisciplinary research was designed to be exploratory, as the initial step in laying a foundation for carrying out further investigations in the absence of theoretical and empirical work in cosmopolitanism studies in the cultural dimension in China. Strictly speaking, exploratory research is to explore a new phenomenon that people do not know much about it and lack understanding of (Gray, 2013). In cosmopolitanism studies, although there is much literature on this in the global field, this research identified a lack of direct theoretical and empirical support from current Chinese literature, which meant a strong reliance on the primary data from the experiences of young people. Only when enough data had been accumulated and foundation had been laid could further investigations be carried out. The main research methods in this thesis for collecting empirical data consisted of qualitative focus groups among young people in Beijing, complemented by in-depth interviews.

Between March and August 2015, I conducted nine qualitative focus groups and some in-depth interviews with 45 Beijing youths in total, aged 18 to 30 years. I conducted research with nine focus groups according to gender, education, occupation, class, age, origin and overseas experience. I also held four in-depth interviews with participants who grew up in

Beijing but now are in the category of diaspora group.

Three methods were used to recruit participants based on ‘snowball method’, including online recruitment through my friends and contacting employers. I then transcribed the recorded interviews and focus group data and analyzed the transcripts and translated them into English. I used thematic analysis to interpret the information the participants had conveyed to me. I also paid attention to the contradictions and hesitations in their discourse, to indicate the reflexive process they used when they dealt with ‘otherness’, instead of simply concentrating on what can be labeled as cosmopolitan.

### **Beijing**

As the capital city and political and cultural center of China, Beijing is characterized by the constant flow of people, communication, commodities and culture. However, China is not a country of immigrants. Although there are more foreigners visiting Beijing compared with other cities, the opportunity for ordinary people to have face-to-face communication with foreigners is still relatively low. According to the data from Six National Population Census, Beijing, there were 107,445 non-Chinese mainland residents (staying in China longer than 3 months) in Beijing in 2010. Foreigners (91,128) formed about 0.46% of the population of Beijing (19,612,000) with 8,045 people from Hong Kong, 500 people from Macau and 7,772 people from Taiwan (The Sixth National Population Census-Beijing Leading Group Office, *et al.*, 2011).

Beijing is not like London, New York or other similar metropolitan cities in which people are used to seeing, working with or living with foreigners. Having direct communication with a foreigner still can be regarded as an uncommon event for ordinary people who live in Beijing. While the reception of media content is the subject of this thesis, it is important to note that media is not the only factor that can influence and shape individuals’ identities and attitudes. There are many other factors which have an impact on shaping cosmopolitan sensibilities.

### **3.1.1 A reflexive methodology**

Empirical research in reflective mode starts from a skeptical approach to what appear, at a superficial glance, as unproblematic replicas of the way reality functions, while at the same time maintaining the belief that the study of suitable (well thought out) excerpts from this reality can provide an important basis for a generation of knowledge that opens-up rather than closes, and furnishes opportunities for understanding rather than establishes ‘truths’ (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2009:5).

In agreement with Alvesson and Sköldbberg, this thesis aims to follow a reflexive tradition at all stages of the research. The starting point of this research was the researcher’s own interests. A process of careful interpretation and reflection has been used during the research, which are two characteristics of reflexive research pointed out by Alvesson and Sköldbberg (ibid). First, it is all about interpretation. The literature, second-hand sources and primary data collected in the field have all been interpreted and organized in a way that reflects how the researcher understood the world at this stage of her life, according to her past experience. The same material would be read differently by other researchers. There is not just one of possible attempt to answer the research questions. Besides, it acknowledges that research only following the principles of modern science and social science can result in the exclusion of subjectivity to a great extent (Mruck and Breuer, 2003), although it does influence how data and materials are interpreted. Reflexivity is an important characteristic of the Enlightenment and modernity, contrary to what one might expect, as it challenges the certainty of knowledge. Any theory or principle, no matter how reasonable it seems, has to face being revised, challenged or even disposed of when new evidence or new concepts emerge (Giddens, 1991).

#### *The researcher: A reflection*

The researcher is a young scholar from mainland China, familiar with many aspects of China and able to access and read Chinese literature in the original, as well as undertake research

without language problems. At the same time, the researcher has lived in a Western society – the United Kingdom - for five years. Overseas experience has offered the opportunity for the researcher to leave ‘the Self’- Chinese society - and to have the distance to observe it from the ‘outside’. Although the ‘prejudice’ the traditional culture brings has been noted (Fei, 1990), it is still impossible for the researcher to have no bias at all. Distancing helps the researcher to be more objective and less influenced by nationalism, and also gives the space to reflect. At the same time, being unfamiliar with other aspects of China, the researcher has looked back into Chinese history. Although the researcher is not a Sinologist and this thesis is not about history, nevertheless the existing literature in the history of Chinese philosophy and history of Chinese intellectual thought as related to the view of ‘openness’, which is a significant core of cosmopolitanism, were closely read. In addition, the researcher’s academic training is influenced by the British tradition, to a great extent, and this research is bound to reflect that. Thus, this thesis might be considered, to some extent, as coming from ‘the Other’ by Chinese domestic scholars. Strictly speaking, this research would be classified as ‘overseas Chinese studies’ (see discussion below). Instead of debating whether it is the Self or the Other, this research is an endeavour to build a reciprocal communication and dialogue between China and the outside world.

### **3.1.2.1 ‘The Self’ and ‘the Other’ in Chinese studies**

This section investigates the interactions of different attitudes, perspectives and standpoints and reflects on how to critically study Chinese society and have an open mind in dialogue with non-Chinese academia, itself an exercise in operating in a cosmopolitan space. An issue related to this is classification: ‘Sinology’ is another name for Chinese Studies, but they have slight differences. Sinology is the academic study of China in relation to history, language, culture and literature. ‘Historical China’ is the object of Sinology, while Chinese Studies tends to deal with issues in contemporary China since the Second World War. Nowadays, any issues related to China can be included in the realm of Chinese Studies (Tang, 2010; He, 2011). This thesis tends to draw more upon the Chinese Studies approach, although it does include some history of Chinese thought, for the purpose of a better understanding of

contemporary Chinese society.

It is very common that cultures identify themselves as the center of civilization (Guo, 2015). As a member of the first generation of scholars in modern China, Li Ji criticized Sinocentrism in academia:

Until now, Chinese historians seldom go beyond the limits of 'Central Kingdom.' They are limited by their ignorance of other cultural centers, which also have the same human weakness. These include the Egyptian, the Ancient Greek, and the Roman centers. These ancient peoples also took their own countries as the centers of the world and the foreigners as the barbarians... But unless the foreigners had made connections with China, Chinese historians did not have any interest in studying them (2005 [1928], as cited in Wang: 2014: 19).

To put it in another way, people grow up within a given culture, and find it difficult to perceive their own culture within a wider world society (Fei, 1990). Tang (2010) has observed how overseas Chinese Studies' scholars carry out their research and noticed that they follow a mode of 'detour and access'. This phrase is from the book *Detour and Access: Strategies of Meaning in China and Greece* written by French Sinologist François Jullien (2000). The core of Jullien's argument is that the strategy is to locate and know 'the Self' through 'the Other'. In Jullien's work, China as 'the Other' helps Greece to gain a better understanding of itself. Jullien believed that for Graeco-Roman European civilization, Chinese culture was very alien, but it could help Europeans to avoid ethnocentrism. Jullien studied major Chinese philosophy such as the *Book of Songs* and Confucianism and by comparing it with his own culture broke away from ethnocentrism. He wrote in *Why We Westerners Cannot Avoid China in Our Study of Philosophy* to illustrate his strategy:

When we choose to start, we actually choose to depart so that we could have a broader view for our meditation. In the remotest corners of the exotic world, such activities are carried out all the time. We pass through China because we want to know Greece better. Despite some gaps in our knowledge, we are still too close to and familiar with the Greek thought which is part of our own heritage. In order to understand it and make new discoveries, we have to cut ourselves off from this familiarity so that we could form a fresh perspective from outside (Cited in Yue, 2012: 130; Tang, 2010).

Chinese academia -based within China -regards domestic Chinese Studies as ‘the Self’ and overseas Chinese studies as ‘the Other’. Following a similar logic, through detouring by and distancing from Chinese culture, using the perspective from the outside is a way to get rid of Sinocentrism, achieve reflection and finally access to China again. Through learning and assessing novel theories and methods from ‘the Other’ and establishing dialogue and communication between ‘the Self’ and ‘the Other’, self-reflection, introspection and self-criticism can contribute to the development of domestic academia (He, 2011). Ge (2008; 2008, cited in He, 2011) believes that Chinese studies carried out overseas are essentially foreign and fundamentally different from Chinese studies carried out in China. The content, design and approach of academic research are often influenced by and associated with factors like academic tradition, ideology and status quo of the country of origin. Thus, he argues against imitating and copying from overseas Chinese studies without questioning and assessing. For example, Ge (2010) studied Japanese Sinologists’ research methods and pointed out that, for Japanese Sinology, China is ‘the Other’ to Japan. Studying China from Japan is to locate and better understand Japan - ‘the Self’. Japanese Sinology is in a relatively peripheral position in Japanese academia. While for China, the study of China itself is always at the center of academia, and China is ‘the Self’. Putting China in the context of the world is to locate and better understand China. Ge (ibid) uses an old Chinese saying, ‘the stones from other hills are from other hills after all’ as a metaphor for his position. The original saying is ‘the stones from other hills may polish the jade’, which means the talents and ideas from other countries may make a contribution to solving the problems at home. This saying contains two meanings. Firstly, on the one hand, Ge acknowledges the significance of overseas Chinese studies to Chinese academia; on the other hand, he asserts the otherness of overseas Chinese studies and warned scholars to treat it with great caution.

In line with Liu Dong (2001, cited in Zhu, 2010), Tang (2010) further proposes that it is necessary to hold onto the subjectivity of one’s own culture, while at the same time pointing out that narrow nationalist sentiments should be avoided. Likewise, Feng (2005) believes

that it is never wise to use nationalism to exclude the other culture and slow down the development of China as every civilization has its own version of wisdom and are a rich resource for all human beings. Similarly, Fei Xiaotong (2004), from an anthropological-social perspective, also believes that all cultures in the world contains the crystallization of human wisdom and deserve to be studied. For example, India is a country with a long history and has been widely acknowledged as a treasure house of ideas, culture and wisdom that have spread out across the world and been learned by other cultures (Basham, 1997 and 2004, [1967]; cited in Thussu, 2013). India has various religions and ethnic groups, and has accumulated a wealth of experience and knowledge in communicating between different groups, which offers inspiration for solving cultural issues in the age of globalization (Fei, 2004). This view is in line with his earlier belief that it is narrow-minded to study China and its culture in isolation; it should be a cultural resource to enrich and transform the world (Fei, 1990).

Jullien (as cited in Tang, 2010) believes in the benefit of two civilizations encountering and understanding each other through a long-term dialogue, rather than rejecting or conquering each other (the conquered people might lose their traditional culture). The purpose of dialogue between different cultures is not only to reduce conflicts and confrontation, but also for harmonious co-existence. Tang (2010) as well as Ge (2010) urge Chinese scholars to be open to the world and have a confident yet modest attitude in participating and engaging in academic discussion with scholars from all over the world.

### **3.1.2.2 Sources**

This research not only uses Western scholarship, but also draws upon a group of key scholars from mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and overseas working especially on intellectual history of China, history and Chinese philosophy (see Chapter 2). Chinese language sources occupy certain proportion and play an important role in developing arguments of this thesis. Within Chinese language sources, there are sources from mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and overseas Chinese scholars. These sources provide deep analysis and perspectives

from within the same culture sphere, but at the same time the diversity of the origin of these sources can largely reduce the limitation and bias caused by academic constraint due to the particular political and social environment of a certain country. James Lull wrote about the social and cultural research in China 30 years ago: “some recent studies of mass media habits and opinions, which do not reflect favorably on the media system or on political leaders cannot be published outside the internal channels” (Lull, 1991: 33). The situation still does not change that much now. The censorship has filtered certain voices that challenge the ideology. Some Chinese language sources not from mainland China are currently blocked online or not easy to get accessed to in mainland China. For example, *Twenty-First Century*, a cultural journal founded in 1990 by Institute of Chinese Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Compared to academic environment in mainland China, the academic censorship in Hong Kong and Taiwan is less strict. On the one hand, the system does not stop scholars to get access to a wide range of sources, and allow scholars to express their ideas. On the other hand, especially, in Hong Kong higher education system, most courses are taught in English so that there is no barrier for scholars to find perspectives from English language sources. Together with the western scholarship, the Chinese language sources from Hong Kong, Taiwan and overseas reduced the bias that from mainland China and makes this research more comprehensive.

### **3.2 Philosophical stance of the research: Ontology and epistemology**

Traditionally in philosophy, ontology refers to ‘the study of being’ (Gray, 2013: 19; Crotty, 1998: 10, as cited in Scotland, 2012; Gruber, 1993); in other words, it is concerned with ‘the nature of existence and what constitutes reality’ (Gray, 2013: 19). Epistemology deals with ‘what it means to know’(ibid), it is about ‘ways of knowing and how we know’ (Wenning, 2009: 3), as well as ‘what constitutes valid knowledge’ (Raddon). The identification of the ontology behind the research influences the choice of research methods through the epistemology. To make sense of this research’s philosophical stance – its ontology and epistemology - on the one hand, can help to clarify the rationale for the research design. Rather than merely regarding research methods as tools for the purpose of accomplishing

research design, it is critically significant to determine which methods and design are legitimate and appropriate for the research questions. In other words, the identification of the philosophical perspective largely influences the consequent research procedures (Gray, 2013).

This research follows the ontological tradition that emphasizes an unchanging reality, which has been in a dominant position in the west for very long time (Gray, 2013). This type of ontology has developed different epistemological traditions. Positivism, interpretivism (including social constructivism, they are often used interchangeably) and critical realism are the three most common epistemological positions that are seen in the literature on research methods as most relevant for general research (Deacon, *et.al*, 2007; Gray, 2013; Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2009). The ontological and epistemological framework, the methodology used, the theories deployed and research methods selected for gathering data to answer the research questions should be consistent and congruent with each other and be referred to coherently throughout the research and the thesis.

### **3.2.1 Critical realism**

In epistemological terms, this thesis follows the tradition of critical realism. Although it is not used as widely as social constructionism – mainly a British tradition - it is becoming more popular. Overall, critical realism is viewed as an alternative to positivism and a reaction or a critique to social constructionism (Deacon *et al.*, 2007; Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2009).

The fundamental difference or disagreement between positivism and social constructivism is about what constitutes reality. Positivism in social science, following the tradition of natural science, tends to be unidirectional and ‘objective’, pursuing a rational cause-effect relationship. Positivist researchers firmly believe that social facts exist independently. Detached and impersonal ‘number’- quantitative - research methods are often chosen. As an alternative to positivism, social constructivism questions whether knowledge is purely rational and objective and argues that social reality does not exist independently. The central

notion of this approach does not aim to find relations of cause and effect, but attempts to understand how people make sense of the world through the way they express, 'language, sound, imagery, personal style and social ritual' (Deacon *et al*, 2007: 5) based on their historical and social viewpoint (Creswell, 2009). They aim to reveal how social reality is socially constructed. Qualitative research methods, especially ethnographic practices originating from anthropology, are generally used in social constructivism, which are also very common in the investigations of media and contemporary life. Qualitative methods can produce a wealth of information, which can be interpreted in different ways and show a multifaceted view. In general, this approach is not as theory-oriented as positivism.

Unlike social constructivism, critical realism argues that social structures do exist independently, and they shape people's everyday actions (Deacon, *et al*. 2007). At the same time, everyday actions respond to the social structure and might give rise to change. It is a two-way process. Rather than being polarized between 'objectivity' and 'subjectivity', the critical realism approach seems to be more objective than the interpretative approach but is still more subjective than positivism. There are overlaps between the critical realism approach and both the interpretative tradition and positivism and they are not completely incompatible. Unlike positivism, researchers inquire whether everyday actions might also shape the structures.

Partly agreeing with positivism, critical realists show more interest in seeking causality, finding out underlying mechanisms and making generalizations, and they seek to establish what is reality. Overall, an independent reality and mechanisms that can generate events and phenomena are two central elements in critical realism (Bhaskar, 2008; Minger, 2006; Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2009). First proposed by Bhaskar, this comprises three domains: the *empirical*, the *actual* and the *real*. The *empirical* domain refers to the phenomena we can observe and experience. However, what we can experience and observe in this world is very limited and narrow. The *actual* domain refers to events that are generated by mechanisms which act independently. In this domain, the events can be partly or completely experienced

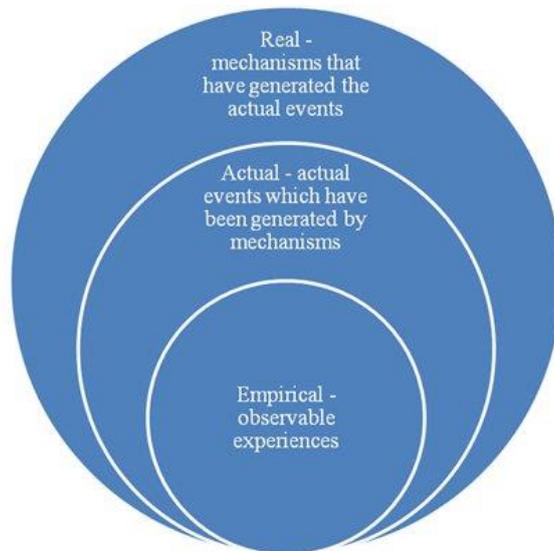
and observed, or beyond people’s consciousness. The *real* domain contains mechanisms that generate events and the superficial phenomena we can experience and observe. If something has a causal effect, it is believed to be real (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009; Bhaskar, 1978).

**Table 3.1 Domains of reality**

	<b>Domain of empirical</b>	<b>Domain of actual</b>	<b>Domain of real</b>
Mechanisms			✓
Events		✓	✓
Experiences	✓	✓	✓

Source: Bhaskar, 1978: 130; as cited in Seo, 2014 :19; Bhaskar, 2008: 56

**Figure 3.1 Domains of reality**



Source: Mingers, Mutch and Willcocks, 2013

Thus, for critical realists, there exists an independent world which is ‘out there’ independent of people’s conceptions. The *empirical* is the tip of the iceberg, while the majority of the iceberg is hidden under the surface of the water. Critical realists argue that the social constructionism tradition is too superficial because it only pays attention to observable experiences. For critical realists, not only the empirical - impersonal material objects - but

also discourse, ideas and those things that social constructionists firmly assert to be subjectively interpreted are real, in line with what Alvesson and Sköldberg claim ‘The fact that it is socially defined and produced does not make a societal phenomenon any less real’ (2009: 41). During the research process, critical realists do not stop at the level of the empirical, but attempt to dig deeper and further into the world of reality. There is a strong belief shared among critical realists that the real exists and can be identified through a causal relationship, although the ultimate truth is difficult to come by (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009; Gray, 2013).

Here, the concept of the ‘mechanism’ mentioned above is central to critical realism. Basically, a mechanism is an unobservable structure that can generate and activate events. Some events can be observed, but some cannot be experienced, even though they do exist. For example, most people can only detect a tiny part of the electromagnetic spectrum - visible light - with the naked eye, but the rest of the spectrum, such as ultra-violet and infra-red, cannot be detected without equipment. In some cases, if other mechanisms interfere, different events happen. For example, amber sinks in fresh water, but, if enough salt is added into fresh water, it will float. Observing these events can enable us to get nearer to understanding the reality. It is important to note that the ultimate goal of critical realism is not to list all the events but to discover the underlying mechanisms. For the choice of research methods, critical realism follows the principle of pluralism. The methods being used for an inquiry are not restricted, while very flexible and based on need (Deacon *et al.*, 2007; Gray, 2013) and a combination of different methods is common.

### **3.2.2 Epistemological pluralism and interdisciplinary research**

The approach used in this thesis is interdisciplinary to some extent and not only because critical realism is traditionally characterized by interdisciplinary and mixed methods. Nor is the researcher following the fashionable tendency to blur the boundaries between disciplines (Norman and Lincoln, 2008). The rationale for choosing interdisciplinary methods follows below.

On the one hand, the research questions of this thesis are broader than one discipline. Besides cosmopolitanism studies, this research is also concerned with the issues related to Cultural Studies. Both cosmopolitanism studies and Cultural Studies also have traditionally interdisciplinary approaches. In this research, there is a convergence of media and communication, international communication studies and globalization studies, encountering and reacting with each other. On the other hand, the advantage of the interdisciplinary approach can sometimes help overcome the limitations of adhering to one particular disciplinary approach, given the subject matter of this thesis. (Tait and Lyall, 2007). From the perspective of cosmopolitanism studies, cosmopolitanism is always regarded as an abstract concept with fuzzy boundaries and entangled definitions, which can be confusing to the new researcher. Although a interdisciplinary approach is relatively time-and energy-consuming for researchers compared to other approaches, interdisciplinary techniques can provide different perspectives, integrate different aspects and create more imaginative space to synthesize them into new knowledge, models and instruments to solve complex issues (Tait and Lyall, 2007). Interdisciplinary research is always described an innovative and creative tool for intellectual enquiry. Disciplines have their own epistemologies and ways of acquiring knowledge. Each discipline can provide rich and valuable knowledge for researchers from their perspectives. One of the most important issues in interdisciplinary research is how to use moderation and accommodation of the different disciplines in order to serve a particular intellectual enquiry (Miller *et al.*, 2008).

However, interdisciplinary approach also has its pitfalls. Interdisciplinary researchers have tendency to isolate themselves from the core of their field, lose sight of the main themes and stay at the edge of different fields (Kanakia, as cited in Jones, 2010). The high specialization may generate new barriers for other knowledge to integrate. That is one of the main differences from multi-disciplinary research. This thesis seems to have to face to the similar risk in exploring different fields, and have high likelihood to be criticized for being not as deep – sociologically or psychologically – as it would like to be. The arguments proposed in

this research may not necessarily demonstrate fully developed ideas and the interpretations might have inadequate backdrops and shortcomings, nevertheless, it is worth starting on an intellectual adventure and being questioned.

### **3.2.3 Engaging with history**

If discipline-based research can be described as ‘straightforward’, then interdisciplinary research can be described as ‘sinuous’. For the researcher, the approach was not completely finalized at the start but evolved through a process of exploring and adjusting as the issues emerged. It became clear that cosmopolitanism, media and communication studies, cultural studies were not sufficient to find full answers to the research questions and it was recognized that history was also important for the investigation. There were several important reasons for this. Firstly, and most fundamentally, this research concerns individual human beings and their histories and cultures. Fei Xiaotong explained that ‘culture is the collective social experience perpetuated by a symbolic system and individual memories. In this way, each person’s ‘present’ contains not only the projection of his or her own past but also that of the whole group’s past (Fei, 1992 [1938]: 55). Especially after coming back from the fieldwork, the researcher realized that she had very little knowledge about China and that it was necessary to learn more about the culture, society, history and traditions of China, in order to establish a broader context to better understand the research target population. It was important to know how for them the ‘past’ and ‘present’ intertwined together and is reflected in their everyday consumption patterns in cosmopolitanism terms. In addition, it was important not to divorce the research from reality, especially given the lack of relevant literature and empirical studies on this subject in China. The great Chinese historian and thinker, as well as master of Chinese studies, Qian Mu firmly points out that to understand questions of China and its culture, it is essential to look at them from the perspective of history (1987). Thus, it was necessary for the research to look at those disciplines relevant to China itself, and to undertake extensive reading on China’s history, society, ancient philosophy and history of thought.

Secondly, the invitation of history was evoked by cosmopolitanism itself. Cosmopolitanism can occur during the interaction between different cultures and is not new to the modern era of globalization. With five thousand years' experience of cultural interactions, exchanges and communications, historical experience might offer some insights. Thus, secondary sources from historical literature were studied in relation to the questions of historical patterns of openness towards the Other, through Chinese people's geographical understanding of the world, their attitudes towards culturally different others and interactions between the West and the East throughout Chinese history, as well as in the modern period. The entanglement between China and the West is the key to understanding the development of Chinese society and changes in Chinese thought and culture (Fang, 2005).

However, it is notable that history often has only a tangential position in media and communication studies (Thussu, 2017) and cultural studies (Pickering, 2008c). However, this does not mean that it is unimportant to academic enquiry. Thussu (ibid) points out that while history is frequently overlooked in communication studies, communication studies itself has a tradition that is deeply rooted in Western history. Instead of paying attention to a relatively short history of media and communication - about two hundred years from nineteenth century onwards - he urges that a broader historical context should not be excluded in academic enquiry. In his study of soft power in a non-Western context - *Communicating India's Soft Power: Buddha to Bollywood* (2013), Thussu instilled cultural and historical contexts into inquire and argued that the countries and civilization such as India and China should be invited and inclusive to broaden and enrich the field of global communication, which provides a very broad view in the perspective of both time and space.

As gaining illuminating insight and synthesizing new ideas from different disciplines is one of the advantages of the interdisciplinary approach. Pickering has pointed out the significance of historical perspectives in several influential works in the field of cultural studies, and regarded history '... as a broad set of techniques and strategies for thinking about historical experience...in the present' (Pickering, 2008c: 194). In other words, scholars

should look at bringing the historical and cultural analysis together, as history can be a strong and powerful complement to cultural analysis. However, cultural studies scholars tend to forget the important value of historical understanding and practice. Two reasons might explain this phenomenon. History and cultural studies have some similarity in their research traditions as both of them focus on empirical studies. However, fundamental differences exist in that history naturally pays more attention to the past and is not as interested in theorizing as cultural studies, while cultural studies tend to accentuate the present and advocates conceptualization based on contemporary social and cultural realities (Pickering, 2008a). Pickering suggests that instead of seeing them as opposed to each other, they can learn from each other. For many cultural studies scholars, history is a new and alien but potentially rewarding field offering many insights (Pickering, 2008c). One example is that throughout Chinese history, regular patterns of openness can be seen that relate to periods of social transformation. Another example is that during the process of data analysis, the sense of history and of their past for the research participants seem to relate both to this pattern of openness and to people's present experiences.

Overall, this research has infused many different aspects together – cosmopolitanism, media and cultural studies, as well as history. The interdisciplinary method sparked new and interesting ideas, as well as enriched each other. This research used both perspectives in a complementary way to endeavour to make sense of cosmopolitanism and the relationship between the local and global in this interdisciplinary context. The interdisciplinary approach helped untangle the messy concepts to some extent. With the help of history, a new way of understanding cosmopolitanism is tentatively proposed. This way does not follow the old method of identifying and labeling particular characteristics and actions listed by previous scholars to define who is 'cosmopolitan', as this would be too rigid and inflexible. The implication that being cosmopolitan is a fixed attribute is erroneous and does not acknowledge that the feelings of human beings are complicated and vulnerable. It recognizes the fact that people change, and identity is not static. It also argues with Hannerz's concept of cosmopolitanism as highly context-based. In addition, as Skey (2012) has criticized, the

old definitions do not take account of the motives and meaning behind these actions.

### **3.3 Selected method for data collection: Focus groups**

The previous section introduced the philosophical foundation of the research and the rationale for the choice of research methods. This section describes what methods were chosen to gather the primary data to provide the basis for answering the research questions. Several reasons are proposed for choosing the qualitative research method - focus groups - as the main research method for gathering the empirical data. The thesis has two typically distinguishable characteristics of cultural studies: exploring people's experiences and audience reception/media consumption (Pickering, 2008b; Meyer, 2008). In communication and media studies, focus groups have been very popular since the early 1980s, especially for audience reception, as they 'highlight the social context of media consumption, the agency and discernment of audience members in the decoding process' (Deacon *et al.*, 2007: 57). Moreover, this thesis also engaged with experience. Experience is one of key elements in cultural studies, in relation to the concept of subjectivity. One of the key research interests in cultural studies is how social-cultural structures and arrangements are made sense of and understood by people (Pickering, 2008b). Several issues need to be considered when research engages with experience. First, the researcher can ask the research participants directly about their experience, but observable empirical experience cannot be the only source of knowledge from an interpretative point of view. The interview data can provide a 'picture' of people's experience, but it does not mean that the 'picture' is real (ibid; Miller and Glassner, 1997). The observable empirical experience is part of the domain of the real, according to the philosophical perspective underpinning this thesis. However, there is a risk that the participants hide their true thoughts during the interviews. Second, experience is a form of grounded knowledge, but it is also important to explore how it relates to the broader social-cultural structures and arrangements (Pickering, 2008b). In addition, in the first stage of exploratory research, as mentioned previously, focus group methods are often used. Focus group interviews are a typical qualitative research method for data collection to gain an initial understanding of certain phenomena, especially for exploratory research (Saunders *et al.*

2007, cited in Grey, 2013) and provide a useful foundation for further research.

In general, the focus group method is valuable and flexible for exploring what people do, what and how they think (Liamputtong, 2011). Focus groups can provide researchers with a wide range of views of participants through different forms of expression, such as debate, conversation, silence, and so on. Impersonal quantitative research methods like questionnaires cannot offer the insight into people's attitudes and knowledge that happens during interaction. This is the advantage that focus groups can offer - rich information on people's 'feelings, thoughts, understandings and impressions of people in their own words' (ibid:6). Moreover, focus groups can provide a wide range of understanding and comprehension on one particular topic. In addition, participants might feel more comfortable and relaxed compared to one-to-one interviews, as they can answer the research questions together. Sometimes, a one-to-one interview is like an interrogation, which might lead to nervousness. The charm of the focus group is that it can generate and evoke different views through different types of interactions and communication. Researchers can catch them both in verbal and non-verbal forms. However, the focus group method has its own problems and is not always appropriate. It has been criticized for being superficial and not in-depth enough for the researcher to know participants' experiences (Liamputtong, 2011). The researcher did come across some of these issues in the fieldwork.

### **3.3.1 Preparation stage**

#### *3.3.1.1 Familiarization with relevant knowledge*

Before undertaking research in the field, the relevant knowledge was acquired

This informs what kind of data and phenomenon should be collected and noted in the field. The idea that researchers should go directly to the field without a search of literature first is based on the view that literature or perceived ideas will influence the researcher's actions when researchers immerse themselves in the field during the process of observation, collecting and interpreting data. The researcher may not be sensitive enough to discover the meaning behind the phenomena and the data cannot be fully expressed for themselves

because of the researcher's preconceptions. In other words, preconceptions will interfere the way researchers interpret data to some extent, and affect the result. However, it is impossible for a human to have no bias in interpreting data and no preconceived notions. The review of literature did not stop after having gathered the empirical data as it was needed to inform the interpretation of the data. Revisiting and looking back to the previous academic work and methodology led to different interpretations, inspiration and new ideas. Interpretation takes place throughout the whole research process.

#### *3.3.1.2 Familiarization with the cultural context of the foreign media products*

The researcher has had everyday life experience in using foreign cultural/media products from different regions and genres. The researcher noticed that the cultural/media products from Japan, United Kingdom, United States and Hong Kong were used much more frequently than those from other regions such as of South Korea, Taiwan, India, Thailand, Spain, France, Mexico, Nigeria and so on. Although there showed an imbalance, the purpose here was to show that the researcher is familiar with these objects and has involvement in them.

### **3.3.2 Fieldwork**

Between March and August in 2015, the researcher conducted nine qualitative focus groups and 4 in-depth interviews with 45 Beijing youths in total, aged 18 to 30 years old.

#### *3.3.2.1 Pilot studies*

With the help of the researcher's friends - two males and one female, three in-depth interviews as pilot studies were carried out before the formal focus group started in order to achieve the appropriateness. On the one hand, it confirmed whether they could understand the interview questions the researcher designed. For example, some of them mentioned that certain questions were asked in an abstract way and they did not know how to answer. On the other hand, although the in-depth interview is different from the focus group, pilot study helped to prepare for the group discussions. Two issues were noticed: firstly, the participants

had a tendency to use ‘foreign country’ to refer to US-led Western developed countries. It was necessary to ask participants first, or it might influence the interpretation of the data. Secondly, three of them said that the literal meaning of the term ‘cosmopolitanism’ in Chinese had very strong political connotations and they did not know other meanings of the concept. Considering the Chinese term might bring bias, the interview questions were then designed to elicit relevant information in an indirect way instead of directly using the term.

Three methods were used to recruit participants based on the ‘snowball method’.

**Online recruitment:** The researcher recruited participants online. There are many Beijing-based youth communities in social networking websites such as Douban.com and instant messaging QQ. After getting the permission from administrators of these communities, recruitment letter with requirements were posted. **Friends’ Connections:** I connected with my friends who are currently working and studying in Beijing, and they helped me to distribute the information to their friends.

**Asking for permission directly:** I visited a construction site near where I was staying. I explained my purpose and asked permission from the leader to approach the workers. The leader provided support and also introduced his friends.

### **3.3.3 Focus groups**

#### *3.3.3.1 Sampling*

Most people have some experience of consuming foreign cultural/media products. There was no specific requirement that the participants had to have specific knowledge about cosmopolitanism. There was no requirement for the participants to be users of specific foreign cultural/media products. As argued in the literature such experiences are not confined only to privileged and elite groups and everyone has the potential to be cosmopolitan. One of the research aims was to explore the cultural phenomenon among urban youth. Young people as audiences are not homogeneous: there are various groups within youth. The main criteria were their age and that they were resident in Beijing. The researcher conducted research with nine groups, divided and varied according to gender, education, occupation,

class, age, origin and overseas experience. A group that consists of long-term overseas experience participants was designed as a category. Compared to other groups, this group of participants had immersed themselves in other meaning systems for a very long time. Even within them, they could be further divided into different groups, such as ‘only communicating with Chinese people’, ‘not communicating with any Chinese people’, depending on different duration time and occupations. Although more and more people in China have overseas experiences, for most Chinese people, long-term overseas experience is still unusual. Thus, this group was finally not considered. It might be separately explored in a future study.

**Table 3.2 Focus group composition**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Composition</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>
Group 1 Students, younger	Young undergraduate students,	Mixed	5
Group 2 Students, older	Postgraduate students, combination of masters and doctoral students	Mixed	5
Group 3 middle class	‘White-collar’, mixed occupations	Mixed	5
Group 4 blue-collar/working class	Mixed occupations	Mixed	4
Group 5 local residents	Combination of students and professionals	Mixed	4
Group 6 non-local residents	Combination of students and professional, gender composition, participants	Mixed	5
Group 7 Male	Mixed occupations of students and professionals	Male	4
Group 8 Female	Mixed occupations of students and professionals	Female	5
Group 9 Short-term/no	Mixed occupations of students and professionals,	Mixed	4

overseas experience			
<i>In-depth interview</i>			
Group 10 Long-term overseas experience	Combination of students and professionals, diaspora and those who have come back to Beijing	Mixed	4

### 3.3.4 Observations and reflection on the fieldwork

The researcher summarized the outcomes of each focus group and interview and considered the problems and difficulties that the researcher encountered. For example, sometimes the way I expressed a subject or my presentation skills could confuse participants about the questions. Thus, I used simple and easy expressions and explained to the group the research project more than once.

When the researcher first conducted a group that consisted of postgraduate students, I realized there was an age gap within the young generation. Thus, another focus group that consisted of younger undergraduate students was added. In relation to the participants' activity, it was easy to observe that if participants do not know each other, they become introverted and reserved, making the whole process of interviewing relatively silent and a focus group to run ineffectively. When everyone knew each other, the participants were active and relaxed and showed greater confidence to comment, offer and challenge each other's opinions.

#### 3.3.4.1 Overall group dynamics

In this part, the researcher is going to describe a general observation of group dynamics as a self-reflection, including the issue of power sharing between the researcher and the participants, as well as among participants. It is interesting to observe that before all focus groups and interviews started, the researcher formally asked the participants for permission and whether they felt comfortable to be recorded by a video camera for the purposes of this research. Most of them showed hesitation and reluctance. They preferred a digital voice recorder to a video camera. They used the words such as feeling 'stressed', 'uneasy' and

'insecure' in front of the camera to express their concerns. Some participants said that in front of the video camera they might hide or avoid expressing some of their honest thoughts. Finally, to respect participants' wishes and to record participants' real views and perspectives as closely as possible, the researcher decided to use a digital voice recorder to record the whole process and write down as much detail as she could instead of using a video camera.

### **Group 1: 'Students, younger'**

There was an imbalance in power between the researcher and the research participants at the beginning of the focus group. It might be because the researcher is older. As the focus group got underway, the participants started to be more active. One girl in particular, kept some distance from the others, but halfway through the interview questions, she began to be active in discussions and in engaging with others.

### **Group 2: 'Students, older'**

Through the snowball method, with the help of the personal connections, this group of participants was a pre-existing group of research students, the same age as the researcher and they knew each other. The venue for the focus group was a coffee shop near their research institute. It was a place they often visited and felt comfortable for them. Two participants were good friends of the researcher. They actively moderated the atmosphere of the conversations.

### **Group 3: 'White-collar'**

This group was a pre-existing group and very active. They had been exposed to foreigners and foreign culture for a long time. They were very confident in expressing their opinions. They spoke very good English and some of them knew a second foreign language, such as Spanish and Japanese. The group had a work project to do later after the focus group, then in order to save their time, the focus group was held at a small restaurant near where they worked. They knew each other well and sometimes they made jokes during the focus group. In some cases, the researcher had to pull the conversation back to the theme. Overall, the

group were very enthusiastic and enjoyed the whole process of discussion and debate. Some participants demonstrated great self-reflexivity during the focus group.

#### **Group 4: 'Blue-collar/working class'**

According to the literature, working-class participants might have different cultural/media consumption patterns. This group of people did have tendencies to watch fewer international programs and prefer using domestic products, which was borne out by previous research studies. It was a very interesting group to observe. There were clear imbalances of power between participants in this group. To some extent it was also a pre-existing group and the participants knew each other. Three of them were in the same construction site group. Two older members were more confident. They looked relaxed and comfortable. They knew each other well. Both of them kept calm in expressing their opinions, even when sometimes they held different stances. On the contrary, two younger participants showed less confidence and were uneasy, and expressed very little about their ideas. The researcher as a moderator tried as hard as possible to get them involved in the conversation. At the end of the interview, the researcher realized that she had actually failed to get the young participants to join in the discussion.

There was an imbalance of power between the participants and the researcher took place as well. The researcher felt strongly that she was treated as an outsider by this group. Before the focus group was formally held and at the stage of inviting, they reconfirmed the researcher more than once and said like 'are you sure you want to interview us?' or 'As you know, we are just construction workers. We have nothing worth being interviewed.' From what they said, the researcher felt that they saw themselves as an invisible group neglected by society. It is dangerous if they naturalized this kind of thought and took it for granted. The researcher was an outsider, but they were never unfriendly. They expressed curiosity and great surprise, and accentuated the huge difference of educational background between the researcher and them. The researcher attempted to explain her intentions, encourage them to participate in the research and share power with them as Nightingale (2008) advocates.

**Group 5: ‘Local residents’**

All participants in this focus group knew each other well. There were no imbalances in the power relations during the whole discussion.

**Group 6: ‘Non-local residents’**

One male participant lost interest in the last thirty minutes.

**Group 7: ‘Male’**

This was a mixed occupation group. Three of the participants were from the same company, but one was a salesman, another two were older, blue-collar workers. The other one was a student who knew the salesman. The salesman helped the researcher on his own initiative, such as breaking the ice. As the researcher had failed to get the two young construction workers to participate in the discussion in Group 4, the blue-collar participants in this Group could be regarded as a valid source of data for the analysis. One blue-collar participant did not talk much, but with the help of the salesman and the researcher’s encouragement, his tension was gradually relieved, and his voice was heard.

**Group 8: ‘Female’**

One participant was not active at all. She only answered very simple questions and showed less interest in the topic. Three of the participants actively expressed their ideas.

**Group 9: ‘Short-term/no overseas experience’**

An active and relaxed discussion took place. There was no power balance issue in this group.

Due to the limitation of human resources, time and finance, I could only stay in Beijing for half a year. Fortunately, most of the research volunteers showed great understanding and support to help me with my research. The focus group method requires arrangements for meetings in the same place and at the same time. The more participants a focus group

consists of, the more difficult to make an agreement for meeting times. Different occupations have their own work routines. Professionals prefer to have focus groups at dinner time or choose weekends. Working class groups are busy to make a living, thus I had to trace their work schedules and remind them all the time. When considering students, it was better to avoid exam seasons and summer holiday. Students were less likely to participate during their last-minute revision for their exams. Also, non-native students went back to their hometown for summer holidays. In addition, summer in Beijing is usually very hot, which could result in the absence of participants. Luckily, most of the focus group interviews had been conducted by July.

### **3.3.5 Post-interview stage**

After finishing the focus groups and in-depth interviews, I kept in touch with several participants through Wechat and QQ (instant messaging platforms). For those participants that the researcher had not met before, they were more relaxed online through casual conversation, compared with the tension they showed during the interview or focus group. It helped the researcher to have a better understanding of their lives, their comprehension of a rapidly changing society and their position in it. However, this casual conversation between them and the researcher was not used as formal data. Besides making friendships, this kind of experience also helped the researcher to make sense of the information they conveyed to me during interviews and focus groups, as a significant supplement to the empirical fieldwork.

#### *3.3.5.1 Consent, transcription and ethics*

Before formally starting the fieldwork, the ethical approval from University of Westminster was applied for and obtained. All the participants were informed about the objectives of the research. Before the focus group formally started, the participants' interview consent forms were signed. They had the right to leave the interview whenever they wanted. The focus groups were recorded and transcribed verbatim into text transcripts. With the help of an online technology transcription service, the time-consuming transcription process was

shortened. This online transcribing service uses automatically transcribing technique by machine. The Homepage of this online transcribing service is as follows: <http://www.iflyrec.com/>. The researcher ensured the issue of confidentiality and confirmed that the articles listed in the confidentiality agreement of this service met the criteria of research ethics (the agreement webpage: <http://www.iflyrec.com/help/agreement.jsp>).

The original participant information sheets, participants' interview consent forms and related documents and notes are in safekeeping with the researcher. In addition, the researcher uploaded the digital vocal data to the online service, which means the risk of confidential data disclosing this still exists. Considering the potential risk of confidentiality, the design of interview questions and the whole process of focus groups and interviews has strictly followed the *Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research* by University of Westminster. Thus, even if the worst-case scenario takes place, the identity of all participants would not be disclosed. Once the whole research is finished, the researcher will destroy and dispose of the data securely.

All the conversations have been reconfirmed and reviewed by the researcher several times for the reason of accuracy, familiarization of data and to uncover the subtle meanings that the participants convey via the way they expressed it and group interactions. As all the conversations were in Mandarin, they were translated into English.

#### *3.3.5.2 Qualitative analytic method: Thematic analysis*

The qualitative data collected were manually coded by the researcher based on thematic analysis. This fundamental qualitative analysis method is about identifying 'themes' related to the research questions (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The advantage of this method is its flexibility; it is not limited to certain subjects. Thematic analysis looks at the choices and making decisions (ibid). The process of thematic analysis does not start at the stage of data analysis. Rather, choices and decision making started at the very early stages of the research with the literature review, and it is also directly related to the design of the interview

questions. The resulting data was very rich, so it has been summarized and/or organized into charts and tables so that it can highlight the most useful and relevant data (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2014).

The key themes identified for the data analysis are listed as follows:

- **General use of foreign media products**
  - Interpretation of “foreign country”
    - ✧ Frequency of country mentioned
  - Frequency of viewing
  - Preference for the domestic or international content?
  - Preference – countries/ region
    - ✧ High proportion-Global flow: US-led global media production
    - ✧ Contra-flow
  - Motives and reasons for viewing
    - ✧ Leisure, recreation, entertainment
    - ✧ Quality
    - ✧ Self-improvement,
    - ✧ Easy access to resources
    - ✧ Curiosity
    - ✧ Idol
    - ✧ Social influence, social opinion
    - ✧ Language
    - ✧ Genre/plots/content
    - ✧ Fan subculture
    - ✧ Taste
    - ✧ Accent
    - ✧ Personal preference
    - ✧ Accompany family
    - ✧ Habit
  - Channels for accessing the products
    - ✧ Mobile Internet-connected device
    - ✧ Traditional media: television, cinema
- **The consumption stage and the interaction with products**
  - Recognition that there is ‘no Others’
    - ✧ Justice

- ◇ Love
    - ◇ Emotions and desires
    - ◇ Power struggles
    - ◇ Education
  - Recognition of difference
    - ◇ Justice
    - ◇ Housing issues
    - ◇ Power struggles
    - ◇ Cultural difference
  - Audience Reception: ‘Dialogic imagination and cosmopolitanism’
    - ◇ Preferred reading
    - ◇ Negotiated reading
    - ◇ Oppositional reading
    - ◇ Changes in readings
  - The degree of attachment to the local and local culture
    - ◇ Degree of attachment to China
    - ◇ Degree of attachment to the local culture
  - Difference between the mediated experience and the real experience
- Post-consumption stage
    - Effect on audience post-consumption
      - ◇ Use as a reference point
        - Provide guide, knowledge and experience
        - Language improvement
        - Inspire new ideas and provide alternative ways to solve the issues in everyday life
    - Encounter with foreigners in everyday life
    - Long-term impact of the products
    - Channels for imagining the world
      - ◇ From experience
      - ◇ From media
    - Global media, social change and cosmopolitanism as strategies for survival
    - A greater level of cultural cosmopolitanism

## *Chapter 4*

### *Findings and Analysis 1: Use of foreign media products by Beijing youth*

Findings and Analysis in the thesis will be divided into three chapters to address the research questions with the help of empirical data. The first chapter, chapter 4 will mainly revolve around the general use of foreign media products by Beijing youth. The current trends of global media flows and contra flow from the perspective of consumers will be presented. Also, the motives and reasons why the urban youth open to the foreign media products have been discussed. Chapter 5 will explore the varied cosmopolitan experience of the use of foreign media products, mainly Western media. After establishing the main constructs of the research by chapters four and five, the last findings and analysis chapter – chapter six - will discuss the relationship between social change, global media and cosmopolitanism with Chinese characteristics, through combining with historical chapter.

#### **4.1 What do you mean by ‘Foreign Country’?**

The focus group started with a warm-up ‘first reaction or thought’ question. Based on observation, not only in people’s daily conversation, but also in pilot studies, Chinese people have tendency to use the term ‘foreign country’ (waiguo/外国), for any country instead of referring to its particular name. This happened many times during the interviews. Thus, it is very important and necessary to know what young people mean when they first refer to ‘foreign country’. This would largely influence the interpretation of the data. The question ‘what would be your first reaction or thought in your mind when you hear of ‘foreign country’?’ was asked. The researcher asked all the participants to write their answers down on a paper that had been prepared on the table in front of them, and they were not allowed to see each other’s papers. All the participants wrote down the name of certain country or countries. Table 4.1 presents the basic demographic information of all participants from the nine focus groups, including their gender, age and occupation, and also their answers to the first question.

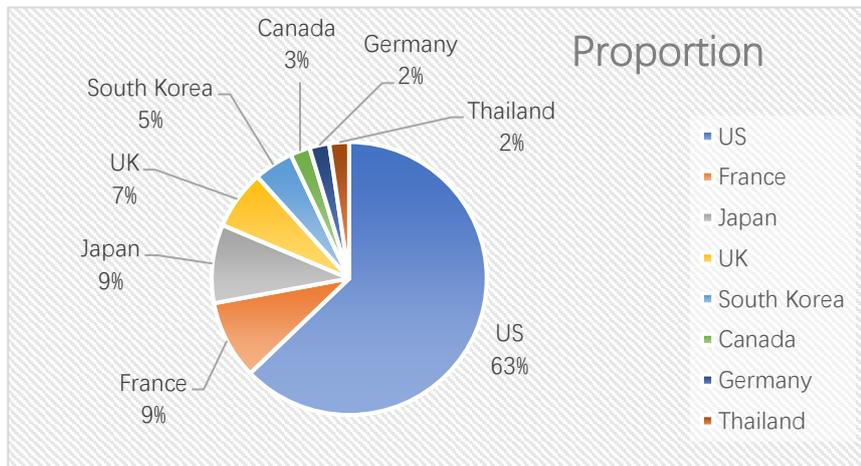
**Table 4.1 Participants' demographic information and their first reaction to 'foreign country'**

<b>Users</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Gender F/M</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>First reaction/ thought</b>
Student, Younger	1	M	18	Undergraduate student	United States
	2	F	19	Undergraduate student	South Korea -Her idol is from South Korea -Travel experience in South Korea
	3	M	20	Undergraduate student	United States
	4	F	19	Undergraduate student	Canada
	5	F	19	Undergraduate student	United States
Student, older	1	M	26	PhD Candidate	United States United Kingdom
	2	M	26	PhD Candidate	United States
	3	F	25	Postgraduate student	United Kingdom
	4	F	25	Postgraduate student	United States
	5	M	25	Postgraduate student	Japan
White- collar	1	F	23	Spanish and English interpreter	United States
	2	F	26	Interpreter and program assistant	United Kingdom
	3	F	26	Secretary	United States Thailand
	4	F	28	Spanish interpreter	United States
	5	M	23	English interpreter	United States

Blue-collar/ working class	1	M	24	Construction worker	France
	2	M	18	Construction worker	Japan
	3	M	23	Construction worker	Japan
	4	M	18	Construction worker	Japan
Local residents	1	M	25	Masters Student	United States
	2	F	25	Company employee	France
	3	F	26	Doctor	United States
	4	F	26	Company employee	United States
Non-local residents	1	F	18	Undergraduate student	United States
	2	M	20	Undergraduate student	United States
	3	M	30	Financial Analyst	United States
	4	F	29	Company employee	United States
	5	F	18	Undergraduate student	United States
Male	1	M	23	Salesman	United States
	2	M	30	Automotive mechanic (B)	United States
	3	M	22	Undergraduate student	United States
	4	M	30	Automotive mechanic (B)	United States
Female	1	F	20	Undergraduate student	United States
	2	F	20	Undergraduate student	United States
	3	F	20	Lawyer assistant	France
	4	F	19	Undergraduate student	United States
	5	F	23	Lawyer assistant	France
Short-term/no overseas experience	1	M	18	Undergraduate student	United States
	2	F	25	Business strategist	Germany 'A place I always want to visit since I was young.'

	3	F	26	Programme promoter	South Korea ‘My work has to deal with Korean Entertainment.’
	4	F	25	Journalist	United States

*Note on Education Background: Except for blue-collar/working class group and No.2 and No.4 from male group, the rest of participants have had higher education or are studying at a university.*



**Figure 4.1 Proportion of countries mentioned**

**Table 4.2 Number of times a country mentioned**

Country	The number of times mentioned
United States	27
Japan	4
France	4
UK	3
South Korea	2
Canada	1
Germany	1
Thailand	1

As Table 4.1 and Table 4.2 demonstrate, the United States was by far the most mentioned country, followed by Japan, France, United Kingdom, South Korea, Canada, Germany and Thailand, on much lower numbers. Though such Asian nations as Japan, South Korea and Thailand as neighboring countries of China have been mentioned, the answers mostly refer to the Western developed countries. The whole of Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe, large part of Asia and Australia are missing. The data presented in Figure 4.1 shows this clearly. Thus, when Chinese young people mentioned ‘foreign country’, it has a high likelihood that they refer to US-led Western developed countries. Besides, it is noteworthy that the media products of top four countries - US, Japan, France and UK – also have a global reach (Thussu, 2006).

#### **4.2 Frequency of viewing**

Participants were asked how often they watched television dramas and films. In terms of frequency of viewing and time spending, all the participants mentioned that it was affected by their workload, work or study agenda or film/ drama release date. Viewing media products is an everyday and ordinary activity. Particularly, for those blue-collar/ working class participants, all of them mentioned that they focus on work a lot and have very limited time for taking rest, not to mention spending time on entertainment and in watching films and dramas. However, it does not mean that they have no experience of consuming foreign media products. In the following part, the data from these groups is based on their relatively limited experiences as far as they could remember.

#### **4.3 Preference for the domestic or international content?**

According to Table 4.3, overall the youth have a tendency to use more international media products than domestic products. Approximately two thirds of participants prefer using international products, though it does not mean that they stop watching domestic products. Among the participants interviewed, some of them watch domestic dramas sometimes. Social influence and opinion, for example, hearing about the drama from friends, or if there is a hype or a top search on Weibo, will be one of the reasons that influence their choices

(Beijing, 2,3; Short-term/no overseas experience, 3). Moreover, certain genres, such as documentary and history, also attract participants' eyes (Short-term/ no overseas experience, 1 and 2). A female participant pointed out that the noise of domestic drama sometimes served as a kind of companion and relief when she was alone and felt scared at her flat (local, 2).

According to the data (see Table 4.3), the major reason for those who prefer using domestic products is related to the issue of cultural proximity. Language and comprehension of culture have been mentioned by the participants with relatively high frequency. First, participants have mentioned that domestic products are closer to their real life (male 3; female 3). Two participants found it difficult to understand foreign culture (blue-collar 1; male 3). Second, three participants mentioned that due to their poor English-language ability, it was too energy-consuming for them to look at the subtitles all of the time (local 1; male 1; female 3). The male (local 1) added that spending more time on domestic products did not mean that he was against watching foreign media products. His answer was later confirmed as the discussion progressed. In terms of economic reasons, one blue-collar participant (1) mentioned foreign products charged fees. This was the only participant to mention it during the research. However, there might have been another interpretation of this statement, but the data is not sufficient to provide the explanation. It is well-known that the copyright system is not well-developed in China and consciousness of copyright is very weak among Chinese people (Zhang, 2015; Wang and Deng, 2013). Young people can always find a way to freely download the foreign products they want to watch from the internet or watch it online, at least those in fashion. It might be inferred that it is related to the 'digital divide' (Noam, 2004; Pannu and Tomar, 2010; Halavais, 2009). It is likely that a member of the working class might not know how to get access to these resources, especially those which can be accessed for free. Or he preferred watching domestic products, as he might not have much interest and motivation to consume foreign media products.

It is also noteworthy that all six blue-collar/working class participants (including male group, 2 and 4) preferred watching domestic products. This result is consistent with the empirical

findings of Straubhaar's research in Brazil (1991). The major reasons are the issues of language and comprehension of a foreign meaning system. It seems to be related to cultural capital as well. Compared to the rest of participants, they are relatively less-educated, most of them without a college degree.

While it should be noted that some participants prefer using domestic products, it does not mean they do not use the international products. The six blue-collar/ working class participants also have some experience in consuming foreign media products. From this perspective, participants have consumed some foreign media products, so they have experienced some 'mundane' cosmopolitanism.

The quality of the domestic media products is one important reason that participants gave for watching international products. One participant highly lauded the quality of early domestic dramas, but showed great disappointment about the present-day ones (Young student 3). Another participant also expressed similar feelings for the shift of her interest (Older student 4). A male student jeered at the phrase 'tear a Japanese soldier apart using bare hands' (手撕鬼子) to express his dissatisfaction using sarcasm to indicate how ridiculous a great number of domestic-made anti-Japanese plays were that did not respect history and were detached from reality in order to achieve high ratings and gain profits (Older student 2). The quality of Chinese programmes was also criticized by Chinese audiences in late 1980s (Lull, 1991). More discussion of motives of using international products will be covered in 4.5, where the issue of the quality of domestic programming will be revisited.

**Table 4.3 Beijing youth preference for television and dramas, by domestic or international**

Users	No.	Domestic (mainland)	International	Neutral	Comments
Student, young	1		✓		
	2			✓	
	3	Television	film		I feel...the early domestic television they were of good quality, however, the recent ones become more and more unreasonable. I am not...not...interested in them. You can feel that the early dramas gave you a great sense of sincerity. Very special, 'attractive'*. *The participant used 'attractive' in English in the focus group.)
	4		✓		
	5		✓		
Student, older	1		✓		
	2		✓		(the domestic...) do you mean 'tear a Japanese soldier apart using bare hands'? Hehehe...  *'tear a Japanese soldier

					apart using bare hands’(手撕鬼子)is a sarcastic phrase expressed by Chinese audiences to refer to a great number of highly exaggerated domestic-made anti-Japanese TV plays
	3		✓		
	4		✓		I liked watching domestic television when I was a kid, but not now.
	5		✓		100%!
White-collar	1		✓		
	2		✓		
	3		✓		
	4				Depends on the subject.
	5		✓		
Blue-collar/ working class	1	✓			I like Romance. But I can't understand foreigner's romance, so I have to choose the domestic version.
	2	✓			In general, I don't watch foreign media products. But... It all depends

					whether it is funny or not. *He has some experience in watching foreign cultural products.
	3	✓			Foreign media products – they charge fee.
	4	✓			I don't understand the language. *He has some experience of watching foreign cultural products.
Local residents (Beijing)	1	✓			a. I do not need to pay attention on subtitles, I can just listen to the voice. b. But it does not mean I resist watching foreign media products. It is just because I am lazy.' c. In fact, my English is not good enough.
	2	sometimes	✓		a. When I am alone at flat and feel scared, a (domestic) TV in the background can help me deal with the loneliness. b. Because it is a hot social issue.

	3	sometimes	✓		<p>a. I sometimes watch it (domestic), because friends around me watched it...so I will follow their advice.</p> <p>b. 'I feel that people around me consume the domestic media more than foreign media. The older generation, they don't watch US dramas.'</p>
	4		✓		
Non-local	1	Television	Film		
	2		✓		International! International!
	3			✓	
	4		✓		
	5		✓		
Male	1	✓			<p>I hold the similar view as No.3.</p> <p>We have different custom. Probably, the language, if there are no subtitles... it is too energy consuming.</p>
	2	✓			
	3	✓			<p>The domestic are easier to accept and to understand.</p> <p>The international... I don't</p>

					know enough about their 'background information'.
	4	✓			
Female	1		✓		
	2		✓		
	3	✓			The domestic are closer to our life, and the international... you have to look at subtitles. Or I can't understand. It is too troublesome.
	4		✓		
	5		✓		
Short-term/ No Overseas experience	1	History	✓		I rarely watch the domestic. But, I watched the domestic on history. For example, the one about Deng Xiaoping  *历史转折中的邓小平 <i>Deng Xiaoping at History's Crossroads</i> (2014)
	2	Documentary	✓		For the domestic, I might watch if it is a hype.  But for documentary, I prefer the domestic.
	3		✓		I found <i>All Quite in Peking</i>

					<p>is worth watching, some time ago.</p> <p>If it is a top search on Weibo, I might choose to watch some footage. But not the full television play, I can't bear to watch a full play...</p> <p>*北平无战事 <i>All Quite in Peking</i> (2014) Domestic TV program</p>
	4		✓		

#### 4.4 Preferences by countries /regions

Table 4.4.a shows data and comments from some participants on their preference for dramas and films by countries or regions. Table 4.4.b is a summary of the frequency of the countries/regions mentioned by participants, and Figure 4.2 shows this as the proportion of countries watched by participants.

According to Table 4.4.b and Figure 4.2, the products from US as in the first reaction question, are overwhelming and mentioned most of the time, followed by the UK, then Japan and South Korea. Hong Kong, India, Thailand and France appear in the interviews less frequently, while Spain, Latin America and Italy are mentioned only once and Taiwan twice. Two answers – English speaking countries and Europe and America - have been mentioned by participants twice and three times, but do not fit the classification. In the Chinese context, in general they refer to Western developed countries. Due to their small number, they did not influence the analysis. It is noteworthy that the whole of Africa, large part of Asia and Australia are not mentioned by participants.

Thussu's *Mapping Global Media Flow and Contra-flow* (2006) from a perspective of films and televisions' flow, provides a useful model for analyzing this part of the data. According to Thussu, the dominant flows with United States as the core, come from the global North. However, compared to the dominant flows which have rich resources for production, 'subaltern' contra-flow refers to those come from the periphery of global media industry (Thussu, 2006). Thussu notes that the US-led Western media have a global reach and influence. The United States, United Kingdom and France are leading players in the global media landscape. In addition, Japan, a non-Western but developed country, has a global reach with its animation. Two participants became very excited about Japanese animation (Older student 5; non-local 4). From Figure 4.2 it is not surprising to see that the frequency of products mentioned from the United States, United Kingdom, France and Japan account for over 50 per cent. Unquestionably, the United States takes the lead. In addition, according to the two Tables, it is clear that products of South Korea, Hong Kong and India as subaltern

flows are at the top of contra-flows. India's popular film industry - Bollywood - attracts more audiences due to cultural proximity within South Asia, though the industry produces more films than any other in the world (ibid). Bollywood's unique song and dance genre is well-known around the world including in China. It is interesting to see three participants who when they mentioned Bollywood/India and they just started to imitate the dancing moves with happy faces (non-local, 3,4; short-term overseas/no experience, 3). In addition, according to Boyd-Barrett's 'generic model', the peripheral countries have a quasi-imperialist influence on their neighbor countries (1998). It is also one of the reasons that Japan and South Korea are top two countries with regional influences that have been mentioned most. In particular, South Korea's 'Korean wave' – popularity of its television dramas, popular music and films - has a strong influence on the countries in East Asia (Iwabuchi, 2005; Kim, 2009).

One participant would not watch Japanese products for reasons of history and nationalism (Blue-collar/working class 3). Instead, he consumed Hong Kong and Taiwan products which share similar culture and language. (The original Hong Kong products are dubbed in Cantonese or subtitled). As mentioned above in the previous section 4.2, blue collar workers claimed they did not understand the content of Western media products. The cultural capital (educational background) could be one of the reasons to account for this phenomenon. Except for the six blue collar/working class people in the research, the rest of participants have higher education or are studying at the university. As Straubhaar (1991) would predict, the former tend to consume more domestic and products from neighboring countries due to cultural proximity, and participants with better educational backgrounds tend to consume more US-led Western products.

According to Tunstall (2008), who supports the cultural proximity argument, audiences in large population countries prefer more local media, regional media, national media and foreign media from neighboring countries than international media. It seems, from this research, that young people have a tendency to use more international media, although

neighboring countries have been mentioned several times. In other words, at least in the consumption of foreign media products, even with subtitles on the screen, cultural capital could be considered as an important reason influencing people's openness towards culturally different meaning systems.

The next section will further explore the motives and reasons why participants choose to consume foreign media products. The resources of global media flows will also be discussed in the next section.

**Table 4.4.a Beijing youth preference for international television and dramas, by countries/regions**

Users	No.	Countries/Regions		
		Consumption of Global Media Flow: US-led Western media and Japan (frequency)	Consumption of Contra-flows (including regions: Hong Kong and Taiwan)	Comments
Students, younger	1	US (high)		
	2		South Korea (high)	
	3	US (high)		
	4	US (high)		
	5	US (high)		Very exciting!
Students, older	1	US (high)		
	2	US (high)	Hong Kong	
	3	US (high) UK(high) Japan		
	4	N/A		
	5	Japan (high), US and UK		Japanese animation and comics are Top in the world!
Middle-class	1	US (high), Japan	Spain (high) and Latin America (high), South Korea, Thailand (low)	

	2	UK and US (high)		
	3	UK and US (high)		
	4	US (high)	South Korea (high, but 2 years ago) India	
	5	US (high)		
Blue- collar/ working class	1	US (high)		Researcher: within the products he used.
	2	N/ A.	N/ A.	
	3	US	Taiwan and Hong Kong (high)	'No Japan!' South Korea (dislike)
	4	N/A	N/A	
Local residents (Beijing)	1	US (high) UK( <i>Sherlock</i> )	Hong Kong (film, high)	
	2	US (high) UK (high) Japan		Japanese animation and comics!
	3	US		Hong Kong dramas, for me... they give me a sense of affectation.
	4	US UK	South Korea Hong Kong	'Refuse to watch Hong Kong drama! (She changed her mind after No.1 and No.3 discussion.) Only if I am too bored, I might watch Hong

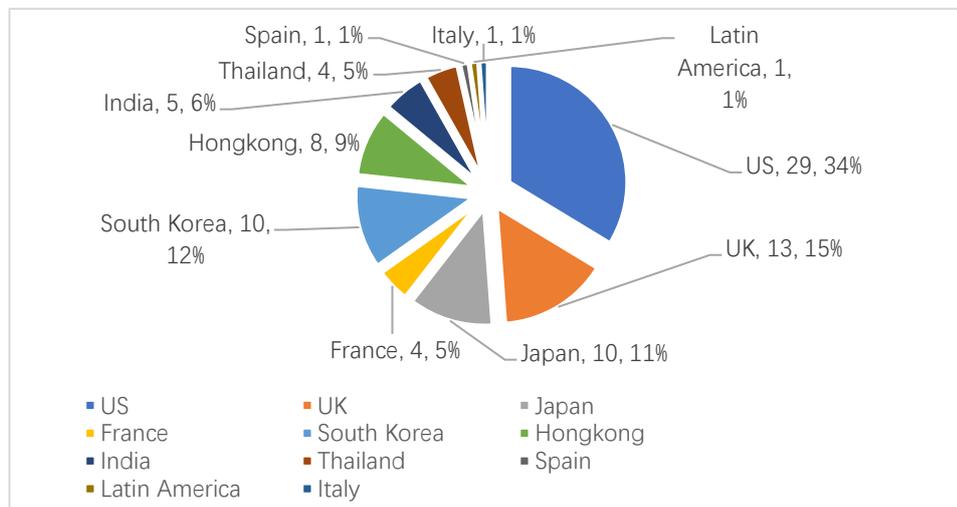
				Kong dramas if it is on TV. But I will never choose, proactively.’
Non-local	1	US (high)	South Korea (recently relatively high)	My classmates recommended me some Korean films recently.
	2	US (high)		
	3	English-speaking countries (high)	Thailand India Italy (sometimes)	Thailand Ghost! Indian Bollywood film! (start to imitate the dance moves with happy face)
	4	English-speaking countries (high) Japan (high)	India	Japanese animation and comic! Indian comedy, Bollywood. Singing and Dancing’ (Start to imitate the dance moves with happy face.)
	5		India Hong Kong and Taiwan	I always watch Indian Bollywood with my mother. Hong Kong and Taiwan dramas always are on TV.’
Male	1	US (high)		I dislike Korean drama.
	2	Europe and America (high)		
	3	Europe and	South Korea	

		America (high) Japan (low)	(low)	
	4	Europe and America		
Female	1	US (high)		
	2	US and UK (high)		
	3	US (high) UK (high) France	India (moderate) South Korea (high) Thailand Hong Kong	
	4	N/A	N/A	
	5	US and UK France Japan	South Korea (high) Hong Kong (high)	‘I like Hong Kong TVB dramas, like Police and Gangster, Commercial War.’ ‘Japanese Ghost’
Short-term /no overseas experience	1	US Japan	South Korea	
	2	US (high) UK (high) Japan (‘when I was young’) France	Hong Kong (high)	No.2: French films... We (No.2 and No.3) had to watch them when we were undergraduate because of our major. No. 3: Yes, one of them was very impressive. No. 2: It is an X-rated

				<p>film.</p> <p>No. 3: I was totally freaked out by the film at that time.</p>
3	<p>US (high)</p> <p>UK (high)</p> <p>France</p>	<p>South Korea (high)</p> <p>India</p> <p>Thailand (sometimes)</p>		<p>(When No.3 mentioned India, she started to imitate the dance moves with happy face.)</p> <p>No. 3: For Thailand, I think the target audiences are not for the youth like our age. Maybe people at 40 would like to watch it.</p> <p>No. 4: I know it from some clips or pictures from Weibo.com and Tianya.com.</p> <p>No. 2: Their facial expression is too exaggerated, and their body language seems to be almost the level of last century.</p>
4	<p>US (high)</p> <p>UK (high)</p> <p>Japan (high)</p>			

**Table 4.4.b Beijing youth preference for international television and dramas, by countries/regions**

Global flows		'Subaltern' contra-flows	
United States	29	South Korea	10
United Kingdom	13	Hong Kong	8
Japan	10	India	5
France	4	Thailand	4
		Taiwan	2
English-speaking countries	2	Spain	1
Europe and United States	3	Latin America	1
		Italy	1



**Figure 4.2 Frequency of country/region mentioned as proportion**

#### **4.5 Motives and reasons**

There are different motives and reasons why participants use foreign media products, or in other words, are willing to engage with foreign meaning systems. The outputs of the qualitative focus group produced a large amount of rich information, which has been summarized as far as possible in Table 4.5. In terms of motives and reasons why young people use foreign media products, the data shows that there are certain key points, as discussed below.

Firstly, these foreign media products play an important role in leisure, recreation and entertainment, for example as a stress relief (younger student 5), a time killer watching Korean drama (middle class 1) and relaxation - not having to use the brain (local 1). This result is consistent with James Lull's (1991). Only one group (blue-collar/working class) did not mention it as entertainment. No. 1 thought watching it is more about appreciation than entertainment. This implies an admiration for the products, and a positive attitude in acknowledging it. However, there was one participant (No. 2), who for the previous question mentioned that watching depended on whether it was funny or not, although he rarely watched foreign media products in his leisure time. This can be interpreted as entertainment.

Secondly, compared to domestic media products, the better quality of the foreign media products (here mainly referred to US-led Western products by participants) were the main reason that attracts the young people to watch. This reason was mentioned repeatedly, for example in the previous section *4.3 Preference for the domestic or international?* and the next section *4.6 Channels to get resources*. The young people have listed some aspects of the international products that are better than the domestic, such as special effects (young student 1; non-local 3, 4); actors and actresses with good acting skills (young student 1) and blockbusters (blue-collar/ working class 1, non-local 4, male 1, female 1). A participant (female, 1) considered American films the same as blockbusters, even using the equals sign.

The third reason is for self-improvement and practice improvement. Except for the blue-

collar/working class and male group, the rest of the groups all mentioned a common self-improvement reason – learning and practicing languages. English is the main object. One participant from the middle-class group practices Spanish by using products from Spanish-speaking countries (2). For the self-improvement and language skills reason, the middle-class group initiated a very interesting discussion about how they draw on dramas and films to learn and improve language skills in details. No. 1's occupation is a Spanish (major) and English interpreter. No. 5 is an advanced English interpreter, and he expressed that he very much enjoys the way of learning English through America dramas and films. The following interview excerpt is part of the whole conversation.

No.1: 'For practicing Spanish listening skill... For language study, thus, the proportion of the Spanish and Latin American is relatively high.'

No.5: At the very beginning, I paid a great attention to language.

No.2: He only watch 'Raw Meat'.

No.1: You only watch 'Raw Meat' ah?!

No. 4: (Speaks to No. 1) He is watching for his language study! Come on!

No.5: ...Hmm I truly like this way of learning. I watch each episode (of the American drama) for very very long time. I watched clips repeatedly.

No. 1: I did the same! Like *El Tiempo Entre Costuras* (2013), I have watched 4 times, OK?

No. 5: One episode might last for 45 minutes. For me, I probably would spend over 1 hour watching it.

No. 1: I have watched it four times! Oh my god!

No. 2, 3 & 4: Oh! Hahahaha!

No. 4: Look at his in-depth study.

No. 5: Sometimes, when I come across some useful phrases, I take notes.

From the conversation, No.1 and No.5 displayed how they practiced and learned language through repeatedly watching the products and products without Chinese subtitles – 'Raw Meat', taking notes and writing down useful phrases. Watching foreign dramas and films

without translation, and at the same time understanding the story is very difficult for non-native speakers. Accentuating ‘only watch ‘Raw Meat’ by No. 2 and followed by a rhetorical question with a surprise by No.1 expressed a sense of awe at No. 5’s way of learning. Contrary to the middle-class groups’ high learning enthusiasm, blue-collar/working class participants showed low interest in studying because of the need to make a living, which has been repeatedly mentioned throughout the interviews. As No. 3 said: ‘now... I can’t absorb new knowledge, and too busy to learn, not to mention English’.

In terms of practice improvement, the undergraduate course that No. 2 and No. 3 from short-term/no overseas experience studied was related to film and drama studies, so they had to watch all kinds of films. When ‘the class introduced a French director, then I search for his films and watch’ (No. 2).

Fourth, easy access to the media resources of certain countries is a significant reason for the participants. The replies largely correspond with what Thussu has argued in terms of dominant media flows (2006), which was discussed in the previous section *4.4 Preferences by Countries /Regions*. Except for the blue-collar/working class group, the rest of the groups mentioned this issue. According to participants’ observations, they can easily find resources from the United States, United Kingdom, Japan and South Korea. A great number of American media and entertainment resources could always be found on the internet (young student 3, older students 3, middle-class 2 and 5) with a large production volume per year (older student 2, female, 1). As one participant (young student 3) described: ‘when you open a webpage, 2 Broke Girl is right there’, or ‘when I click Sohu.com, the American drama are just everywhere’ (young student 4). Similarly, Japanese and South Korean products are always available online (local 2), and products from the UK tend to be increasing in recent years (older student 3).

Some participants provided their opinions on countries with limited media resources/products and countries that were ‘missing’. Compared to resource-rich countries

like America, it is not easy to find dramas and films from peripheral cultural industries such as Thai dramas (middle-class 5). Likewise, participants from the 'local' group (2) expressed a similar idea in 'people don't easily get access to the resources from the rest of the world. These resources are not as many as American dramas. People select from the existing and easily available material'. Meanwhile, a few participants claimed that they would not even start to search for these countries with limited resources for reasons such as 'don't know much about other countries' (non-local 1) and 'no one recommended' (non-local 3). Their answers are concerned with how far the product is familiar. On the one hand, they show less interest in unfamiliar countries. On the other hand, they seek out 'familiarity'. No.1 tends to choose to consume media products she is familiar with, staying in her 'comfort zone': trying something unfamiliar means jumping out of one's comfort zone. 'No one recommended' indicates that for No. 3 (non-local), something unfamiliar should be tested and acknowledged by other members of his social group first. Then he would make decision whether it is worth watching or not. Moreover, some participants said they were not deliberately avoiding these products. They said that if they came across it by accident, for example Indian drama, Thai drama, they would choose to watch it (middle class 1, non-local 5).

Fifth, social influence and social opinion also affect young people's use of media. Audiences are active in discussing media content with their family, friends and social circles (Katz and Liebes, 1984 and 1993; Longhurst, 2008). In this research, the data contains at least two factors. On the one hand, the participants start watching foreign media products through other's recommendations (middle class 3, female 3), for example their relatives (young student 5), classmates (middle class 5), English teacher (local 3), or according to audience rating (blue-collar/working class 1, non-local 1). Middle class, No.5 participant used to watch a lot of American dramas, showing an attitude change from avoiding Korean dramas to embracing them under the influence of his classmates:

I was not interested in Korean drama. I only watched three dramas. To be honest, it was my classmates, they were watching *Dae Jang Geum* (2003) at that time. At first, I didn't

want to see it at all. But on their recommendation, I started to watch, and I was enthralled! *High Kick* (2006) as well.

On the other hand, social influence and opinion can sometimes exert pressure to make participants watch. When members of the participant's social group keep discussing one thing or watching the same product and the participant was anxious about being left out and isolated, they started to follow the fashion: 'my roommates keep discussing a drama...' (local 4), 'everyone around me is watching...' (male 3), 'for a conversation piece among friends' (male 1). One participant (local 1) in some cases he had to watch when his parents went to the cinema and bought a ticket for him.

Sixth, genres, plots and contents play very important roles in enriching young people's watching menu. The participants expressed their preference for certain genres. For example, a male liked heroism and action films, thus he followed Marvel Studio's products (local 1). A female participant liked the exotic feeling provided by the foreign media products, which created the space for imagination (local 2). American media products are welcomed for other reasons too such as the tight plot (middle class 3), attractive stories and more tolerance of different cultures in the content as well as the strong attention to detail (female 2). A female participant said that she sometimes could identify herself with some content (short-term/no overseas experience 2). It is noteworthy that the participants tend to compare the foreign media products with the domestic programming. New, novel and interesting plots and content that the domestic media do not have or are weak at are some of the factors that attract young people (female, 1). Even watching dramas from the same country, participants pay attention to and hold diverse views on different aspects. It is very individual experience. For example, the middle-class group had a discussion on Korean dramas, with a variety of views on genres, plots and content:

No.1: For example, sometimes I get bored and then I watch a Korean drama. I am enthralled by the drama. I notice that the ideas or thoughts Korean dramas reflected, including their theme on social issues and social-cultural context is more

harsh and thought-provoking than the domestic one, indeed.

No. 3: Yes, some points are very novel and new.

No. 1: They did reflect some social issues.

No. 2: But the plot is developed too slowly! For example, *You Who Came from the Stars* (2013), I only watched 5 episodes, and I couldn't stand anymore!

No. 3: Korean dramas are too long! Time is precious!

No. 2: Those about doctors are very good!

No.1 treated the Korean drama as a time killer, but at the same he liked and admired the thought-provoking content and ideas reflecting Korean social issues. Meanwhile, he made a comparison to the domestic products and implied that the domestic products should learn from the Korean dramas. No. 3 agreed with No. 1's opinion, but expressed her intolerance of the slow development of the stories. No. 2 expressed her strong resistance to slow plot with exclamatory mark as No. 2, however, at the same time, she showed a preference of the dramas of vocation – stories about doctors. The reasons for participants liking something and disliking others vary from person to person. While watching Korean dramas, a female participant (short-term/no overseas experience 3) was keen on the Korean setting, as well as the handsome and beautiful leading actors and actresses. She was amazed by Korean's cultural industry and commented:

Korea is a fantastic country. This country uses materials all over the world for reference. For example, many popular Korean dramas are remake of Japanese dramas. Not to mention Taiwan dramas and Hong Kong films, Korea absorbs others' and make them become their own style. Especially East Asian area, like Taiwan, Hong Kong and Japan, maybe ... it is because of a shared culture.

In addition, many other different motives were mentioned by participants. Curiosity about different cultures (young student 1, blue-collar/working class 1, short-term/no overseas experience) was mentioned sometimes (short-term/no overseas experience, 4). One participant mentioned watching American drama has become a part of her life:

...after watching American dramas for a long time, it just naturally becomes a habit. You know today there will be a new episode released. No matter how bad the quality might be, you just sit in front of the screen and wait. err... for those you like a lot.

Also, Korean idols (young student 2, middle class 4), language - familiarity with English compared to other languages (older student 1), penchant for certain sub-cultures surrounding fandoms (middle class 4) and British accents (local 3), as well as personal preference for certain countries like Germany (non-local 1) are diverse reasons provided by participants. Besides, one female participant mentioned she enjoyed the company of her mother watching Indian dramas (non-local 5). Another female (local 2) believed that individual's preference for certain media products was developed through a process of choosing by comparing and contrasting between different products.

At least from the previous sections and this section, it can be concluded that on the one hand, young people in Beijing more or less are experiencing 'mundane cosmopolitanism' at least from the perspective of consuming foreign media products. On the other hand, the media products of the countries they choose to use are very limited.

**Table 4.5 Motives and reasons for choosing foreign cultural/media products**

++ = mentioned very high frequency      ± = mentioned, with different mixed opinion

+ = high frequency      – = low frequency but mentioned

Users	Motives	Comments
Students, younger	<p>a. Leisure, recreation and entertainment ++</p> <p>b. Better quality than the domestic ++</p> <p>c. Self-improvement: study and practice English ±</p> <p>d. Easy access to resources ++</p> <p>e. Curiosity –</p> <p>f. Idol –</p> <p>g. Social influence, social opinion –</p>	<p>a. No. 5: ‘Very exciting! They help me to relieve stress.’</p> <p>b. No. 4: ‘More hilarious elements and the sense of humor is different. You probably never see them in the domestic programmes.’</p> <p>No. 1: ‘Their special effects are superb. The plot seems to be real. The actors and actresses may not be well-known... not like in China, always A-list Stars.’</p> <p>No. 2: ‘They’ve got talented screenwriters...yes, Korean.’</p> <p>c. No.1, 3 &amp; 4: ‘Practice English!’</p> <p>No. 5: ‘I look at the subtitles.’</p> <p>No. 4: ‘But have little help, to be honest.’</p> <p>d. No. 3: ‘Compared to others, the US resources could always be found on the internet. For example, when you open a webpage, <i>2 Broke Girl</i> is right there.’</p> <p>No. 4: ‘When I click Sohu.com, the American dramas are just everywhere.’</p> <p>e. No. 1: ‘Just for curiosity at first, and I had an attempt with a good feeling.’</p> <p>f. No.2: ‘Just for my Korean Idols.’</p> <p>g. No. 5: ‘On my uncle’s recommendation’s,</p>

		I started to watch American dramas.'
Students, Elder	<p>a. Leisure, recreation and entertainment ++</p> <p>b. Better quality than the domestic ++</p> <p>c. Self-improvement: Study and practice English ++</p> <p>d. Easy access to resources ++</p> <p>e. English is relatively easy to understand +</p> <p>f. Genre/Plots/Content</p>	<p>a. 'Main reason'</p> <p>b. -</p> <p>c. No. 3: 'Of course for improving English listening skill.'</p> <p>d. No. 3: 'On the one hand, you can notice that there are a lot of American resources on the internet. In recent years, I watched more UK dramas. Now, the internet has got more resources about UK.'</p> <p>No. 2: 'After all, in terms of volume, America itself produces a lot every year.'</p> <p>e. No.1: 'Compared to other language, English is relatively easy to understand.'</p> <p>No. 2: 'the Japanese language, you can also understand some.'</p> <p>f. No. 5: 'I get used to studying the plot.'</p>
Middle-class	<p>a. Leisure, recreation and entertainment ++</p> <p>b. Better quality than the domestic ++</p> <p>c. Self-improvement and practice improvement: Study and practice language ++</p> <p>d. Easy access to resources ++</p>	<p>a. No. 1: For example, sometimes, I get bored and then I open an Korean drama. I am enthralled by the drama...</p> <p>b. -</p> <p>a. No. 3: 'It contains education in amusement.'</p> <p>No. 1: 'For practicing Spanish listening skill... For language study, thus, the proportion of the Spanish and Latin American is relatively high.'</p> <p>No. 5: At very beginning, I paid a great attention on language.</p>

	<p>e. Social Influence +</p> <p>f. Genre/ Plots/ Content +++<u>±</u></p> <p>g. Idol -</p> <p>h. Fan sub-culture -</p>	<p>No. 2: He only watches ‘Raw Meat’.</p> <p>No.1: You only watch ‘Raw Meat’ ah?!</p> <p>No. 4: (Speaks to No.1) He is watching for his language study! Come on!</p> <p>No. 5: ...hmm I truly like this way of learning. I watch each episode (America drama) for very very long time. I watched clips repeatedly.</p> <p>No. 1: I did the same! Like <i>El Tiempo Entre Costuras</i> (2013), I have watched 4 times, OK?</p> <p>No. 5: One episode might last for 45 minutes. For me, I probably would spend over 1 hour watching it.</p> <p>No. 1: I have watched it four times! Oh my god!</p> <p>No.2, 3 &amp; 4: Oh! Hahahaha!</p> <p>No. 4: Look at his in-depth study.</p> <p>No. 5: Sometimes, when I come cross some useful phrases, I take notes.</p> <p>No. 2: Taking notes...</p> <p>No. 3: (Speaks to No.1 in a teasing way) I don’t think your Spanish has made any progress.</p> <p>(No. 2, 3 &amp; 4: All girls laugh out loud.)</p> <p>b. No. 2 &amp; 5: ‘There are a great amount of American dramas on internet.’</p> <p>No. 5: ‘You can always find American drama, but you might not find a certain Thai drama that you would like to watch on the internet.’</p> <p>No. 1: ‘I would see a Thai drama when I come</p>
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		<p>across it.’</p> <p>c. No. 5: I was not interested in Korean drama. I only watched three dramas. To be honest, it was my classmates they were watching <i>Dae Jang Geum</i> (2003) at that time. At first, I didn’t want to see it at all. But on their recommendation, I started to watch, and I was enthralled! <i>High Kick</i> (2006) as well.</p> <p>No. 3: Yes, in most cases, depending on others’ recommendation. Or I am influenced by others’ opinion.</p> <p>g. No. 3: Genres attracts me a lot and I like their tight plot.</p> <p>No. 1 ‘For example, sometimes, I get bored and then I open an Korean drama. I am enthralled by the drama. I notice that the ideas or thoughts Korean dramas reflected, including their theme on social issues and social-cultural context is more harsh and thought-provoking than the domestic one, indeed.’</p> <p>No. 3: ‘Yes, some points are very novel and new.’</p> <p>No. 1: ‘They did reflect some social issues.’</p> <p>No. 2: But the plot is developed too slow! For example, <i>You Who Came from the Stars</i> (2013), I only watched 5 episodes, and I couldn’t stand anymore!’</p> <p>No. 3: Korean drama is too long! Time is</p>
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		<p>precious! No. 2: Those about doctors are very good!</p> <p>h. No. 4: ‘For Korean drama, oh! Handsome boys!’</p> <p>i. No. 4: ‘maybe it is also because of <i>Ragbear Fansub</i>, thus I choose to watch certain drama’ (<i>Ragbear Fansub</i> mainly translate English dramas and films into Chinese.)</p>
Blue-collar/working class	<p>a. Appreciation +</p> <p>b. Social influence +</p> <p>c. Better quality than the domestic</p> <p>d. Curiosity</p> <p>e. Plots/Content</p>	<p>a. No. 1: ‘Not for entertainment, but for appreciation.’</p> <p>b. No. 1: ‘I prefer watching those with high audience rating and great impact. And others comment that it is good! Then I will choose to watch it.’</p> <p>c. No. 1: ‘Sometimes, I will choose to watch those better than the domestic – blockbusters. It is true that the domestic has very few blockbusters.’</p> <p>d. No. 3: ‘I prefer those with very exciting plots.’</p>
Local residents (Beijing)	<p>a. Leisure, recreation and entertainment ++</p> <p>b. Better quality than the domestic ++</p> <p>a. c. Self-improvement:</p> <p>b. Study and practice</p>	<p>a. No. 3, 4: You don’t need to use your brain when you are watching it. At first, I ... was for learning English. Gradually, I watch them for entertainment.</p> <p>No. 4: Very enjoyable!</p> <p>b. The quality is so good!</p> <p>c. No. 3: For practicing English</p> <p>d. No. 2: In terms of resources, the public</p>

	<p>English ++</p> <p>c. Easy access to resources ++</p> <p>d. Social influence +</p> <p>e. Genre/ Plots/ Content ++</p> <p>f. Taste –</p> <p>c. h. Accent –</p>	<p>watch more American dramas, then Japanese and Korean dramas. People don't easily get access to the resources from the rest of the world. These resources are not as many as American dramas. People select from the available and easily accessible material.</p> <p>e. No. 3: At first, it was my English teacher's recommendation</p> <p>No. 4: My roommates kept discussing a drama, then I started to watch it.</p> <p>No. 1: Sometimes, my parents visit the cinema and buy a ticket for me...</p> <p>f. No. 1: I like heroism very much; thus, I am following Marvel Studio's products.</p> <p>No. 2: For me, I like the exotic feeling in the dramas, give you a lot of space for imagination.</p> <p>No. 1: I prefer action film, and I don't really care about the plot. I focus on their special effect.</p> <p>g. No. 2: I think people experience a process of choosing. For example, you have watched some Korean, Japanese and American dramas. You probably will make a comparison and contrast, and then you know your own preference.</p> <p>h. No. 3: British accent is one of the reasons that I choose to watch British drama.</p>
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Non-local	<p>a. Leisure, recreation and entertainment ++</p> <p>b. Better quality than the domestic ++</p> <p>c. Self-improvement: Study and practice English ++</p> <p>d. Easy access to resources ++</p> <p>e. Social influence +</p> <p>f. Genre/ Plots/ Content ++</p> <p>g. personal preference for certain country –</p> <p>h. Accompany Family</p>	<p>a. Just for entertainment</p> <p>b. No. 3: For special effect</p> <p>No. 4: Blockbusters and special effects</p> <p>No. 5: Better quality.</p> <p>c. No. 2: Practice listening skill.</p> <p>d. Expect for those have mentioned countries above in this group, they will not search for other countries on their own initiative. For the reasons:</p> <p>No. 1: Don't know much about other countries.'</p> <p>No. 3: No one recommended.'</p> <p>No. 5: I might watch an Indian drama, if I come across it on TV.</p> <p>e. No.1 &amp; 5: Other's recommendation</p> <p>No.1: Sometimes, I would like to watch something. I would look at the audience rating first, and then choose the highest one.</p> <p>f. No. 1: Sometimes, I prefer watching inspirational stories.</p> <p>No. 2: For plots and stories.</p> <p>g. No. 1: I just like this country.</p> <p>h. No. 5: Sometimes I accompany with my mother. She likes watching Indian dramas.</p>
Male	<p>a. Leisure, recreation and entertainment +</p> <p>b. Better quality than the domestic.</p>	<p>a. Entertainment.</p> <p>b. No. 1: Blockbusters</p> <p>No. 2: Very exciting.</p> <p>No. 2. The better</p> <p>c. No. 3: Everyone around me is watching</p>

	<p>c. Social influence</p> <p>d. Easy access to resources +</p> <p>e. Genre/ Plots/ Content</p>	<p>something, then I become curious.</p> <p>d. No. 3 &amp; 1: Relatively easy to find the resources.</p> <p>e. No. 1: Yes, American film is more exciting than the domestic film. And the special effect is better as well.</p> <p>No. 1: For a conversation pieces among friends.</p>
Female	<p>a. Leisure, recreation and entertainment ++</p> <p>b. Better quality than the domestic ++</p> <p>c. Self-improvement: Study and practice English ++</p> <p>d. Easy access to resources ++</p> <p>e. Social influence +</p> <p>f. Genre/ Plots/ Content ++</p>	<p>a. Better quality.</p> <p>No. 1: When it comes to America, it must be blockbusters</p> <p>b. No. 4 &amp; 5: For study purpose</p> <p>c. No. 1: High volume of production.</p> <p>d. According to other's recommendation, I will choose to go to the cinema or not for the blockbusters.</p> <p>e. No. 1: More interesting and exciting than the domestic films.</p> <p>No. 2: They pay a lot of attention on details. American dramas are more tolerant of different cultures. Very open. Stories and plot are good.</p> <p>No. 3: For Hong Kong Police and Gangster, the plot and stories are very attractive.</p>
Short-term overseas experience	<p>a. Leisure, recreation and entertainment ++</p> <p>b. Better quality than the domestic ++</p>	<p>a. -</p> <p>b. Better quality than the domestic ++</p> <p>c. No.1: For practicing English, I sometimes watch films.</p> <p>d. Easy access to resources.</p>

	<p>c. Self-improvement: Study and practice English ++</p> <p>d. Easy access to resources ++</p> <p>e. Genre/ Plots/ Content ++</p> <p>f. Curiosity +</p> <p>g. Habit -</p> <p>h. Practice improvement: Work/ major related reason +</p>	<p>e. No. 3: For Korean dramas, I like their scene. The leading actors and actresses are always handsome and beautiful. Korea is a fantastic country. This country uses all materials all over the world for reference. For example, many popular Korean dramas are remake of Japanese dramas. Not to mention Taiwan dramas and Hong Kong films, Korea absorbs others' and make them become their own style. Especially East Asian area, like Taiwan, Hong Kong and Japan, maybe ... it is because of a shared culture.</p> <p>No. 2: When I watch them, sometimes I identify with some content. And there are more genres to choose, especially those I like.</p> <p>f. Curiosity for different cultures. (not as the main reason)</p> <p>g. No. 3: 'After watching American dramas for a long time, it just naturally becomes a habit. You know today there will be a new episode released. No matter how bad the quality might be, you just sit in front of the screen and wait. err... for those you like a lot.'</p> <p>h. No. 2: The class introduced a French director, then I searched for his films and watched them.</p> <p>No. 2 &amp; 3: we were in the same major. In the class, we watched all kinds of films.</p>
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#### **4.6 Channels for accessing foreign media products**

It is now obvious to say that people can now ‘stay at home’ without moving physically to enjoy exotic cultural experiences through electronic media. It is important to understand which channels young people use to consume foreign media products, especially in an era of rapid change in information and communication technologies.

According to the data (see Table 4.6), a variety of mobile internet-connected devices such as laptops, phones, iPads are the main methods and first choices that participants use to access foreign media products. The traditional ways of watching dramas and films – television and cinema - are no longer as popular as before, especially television. This is particularly relevant for the two student groups as, in general, in Chinese universities there is no television in student accommodation. Participants from the local (Beijing) group have provided several reasons why they gave up using television. First, No.1 complained that American drama on TV has generally been dubbed. In other words, it has to some extent been localized and lacks its original flavor. Moreover, television is not as flexible as mobile internet-connected device. Television has limited resources for them to choose and cannot meet their needs, at the same time, people have to follow the television programming schedule. It is not as flexible and resource-abundant as a mobile internet-connected device (2 and 4). Also, TV shows many more domestic products rather than foreign media products (2), and those foreign dramas and films shown on TV normally strictly follow the policy of the State Administration of Radio Film and Television, so those products young people prefer might be filtered out by Chinese media policy (4). Their statements reflect this strict policy - *Announcement of the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television on Further Strengthening and Improving the Management of Introduction and Broadcasting of Foreign Film and Television Dramas* (2012, the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television of The People’s Republic of China). A stricter policy – *Announcement of Relevant Regulations on Further Implementation of the Management of Online and Foreign Film and Television Drama by the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television of The People’s Republic of China* (2014) – was enacted in 2014. Part

of the two policies is related to rigid control over the copyright and the import limit on the number of foreign media products. It cannot be denied that there are issues of copyright infringement among young people. At least, at the time of interviews, these policies could not stop participants searching for resources online. There is a common saying in China to describe this kind of phenomena. That is ‘the government has its policies and people down below have their own ways of getting around them’.

Compared to using television, which seems to be out of fashion, and the high rate of using mobile internet-connected devices, going to the cinema to watch films is still common. Going to cinemas for foreign blockbusters is welcomed (middle class 3 and 4, local; non-local; short-term/no overseas experience). Cinema has its own advantages, particularly in relation to witnessing the ‘special effects’. By contrast, several participants have mentioned they would not spend money going to see domestic films. One participant held a very negative opinion on the quality of domestic films and asserted ‘there is no need to go to cinema for the domestic films’ (local group). These answers give the impression that domestic films are very likely to flop badly at the box office. However, one participant mentioned that, besides blockbusters, he sometimes goes to the cinema to domestic films depending on who were the directors and actors (non-local 3). One participant (short-term/no overseas experience) claimed that if it cost no money, she would go to see domestic films. It implies that most young people are unwilling to spend money on products of low quality. According to their answers, the quality of domestic films was a concern.

**Table 4.6 The channels participants choose for consumption**

User	Mobile Internet-connected Device	Traditional Media	
		Television	Cinema
Students, younger	++ Phone/ laptop/ computer/ iPad	–	–
Students, older	++ Internet/ download from ITV	No we've not got TV in our student accommodations. Hahahahaahaha! (all began to laugh out loud.)	+
Middle-class	++ Internet/ iPad	–	– No. 3 & 4: In general, only Blockbusters I will choose to go to cinema. No. 5: I don't care whether it is blockbuster or not. I seldom visit the cinema.
Blue-collar/ working class	++ Internet/ iPhone/ Laptop	No	– No. 1: 'To tell the truth, I am so busy that I have no time for cinema.'
Local residents (Beijing)	++ Internet (online platform:	– No.1: In general, the American drama on	+ -For blockbusters and its special effects.

	<p>Youku/Iqiyi/ Renren)</p>	<p>television is dubbed. (complain)</p> <p>No. 2: The number of domestic dramas are overwhelming on television. You hardly come across something you like on television. It is just like... you suddenly come across someone you really like in the vast anonymous mass of population. Such a small chance!’</p> <p>No.4: Television is not as flexible as internet. You can keep watching on internet, but...for television, you have to follow the television program table. Those you like have been generally filtered by the State Administration of Radio Film and</p>	<p>- There is no need to go to cinema for the domestic film.</p>
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		Television.	
Non-local	++ Internet	No	+ For blockbuster and special effects. No. 3: For domestic films, it depends on the film directors and actors and actresses.
Male	++ Internet: Youku Phone	-	-
Female	++ Internet Phone	-	-
Short-term overseas/no experience	++ Internet Online iPad Mobile device	-	+ For blockbusters. No domestic films, except for free of charge.

Legend:

++ = very high frequency mentioned

± = mentioned, with different mixed opinion

+ = high frequency

- = low frequency but mentioned

## *Chapter 5*

### *Findings and Analysis II: Cosmopolitan experience during consumption of foreign media*

Choosing to use foreign media products with different motives and reasons is an action that demonstrates certain degree of openness towards the ‘Other’. It is very important to know what happens in participant’s minds and what they are thinking during the interaction with different cultural meaning systems. Thus, this chapter aims to explore how cosmopolitanism in cultural aspect is experienced by participants during the time when they are consuming foreign media content.

#### **5.1 Recognition that there are ‘no Others’**

5.1 and 5.2 are concerned about whether the foreign media products triggered moral and ethical oriented cosmopolitanism during the viewing stage. This facet of cosmopolitanism calls for a recognition that there are no ‘Others’ in the world but all are human beings. At the same time, it requires an awareness that the world consists of different cultures (Tomlinson, 2011; Ong, 2009; Roudometof, 2005; Delanty, 2009). The participants were asked to talk about ‘whether they noticed people are the same as human beings when they are viewing foreign dramas and films’. A range of examples collected from the interview suggests that participants do recognize that there are ‘no Others’ when engaging with foreign media contents. The participants mentioned diverse topics they came across on the screen before, such as love, truth, goodness, the pursuit of justice, emotions, desires, social issues, family, education, peace and power struggles. They show a great empathy for others situation and express understanding, as human beings share some similar nature, feeling, emotions, desires, certain values and life experience that transcends nations, boundaries, cultures. Some of the answers were remarkable and unexpected, as demonstrated by the examples discussed in this chapter and collated from some of the important excerpts from the data (see the complete conversations in the Table 5.1 at the end of the chapter).

## **Justice**

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### Example 1

No.1: I like science fiction film. ... the common pursuit of justice is same. Justice eventually will defeat evil. And the true, the good and the beautiful – they must be good thing. (student, elder).

### Example 2

No. 1: ... no matter whether it is a foreign or domestic film with positive energy, there is a hero to save the world or save us. The meaning that *Ultraman\** and *Transformers* want to convey to the audiences, such as saving the whole world or the triumph of justice over evil is similar. (non-local)

\**Ultraman* is a Japanese television series.

### Example 3

No. 3: Look at American blockbusters, they promote justice. Good and kind people will be blessed by God. In general, these aspects are same. (female)

In terms of justice, three participants from different group made similar comments. These examples illustrate how the participants noticed human beings have similar attitudes towards justice during the media consuming process. Especially, example 2 used two media products from Japan and the United States as representation of the East and the West.

## **Love**

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### Example 1

No matter which countries' dramas or films you are watching, some scenes depict common behavior of humans all around the world. For example, about love, even though you are from different countries, when you see it, you feel touched. (middle-class 5)

### Example 2

Look, China's got *Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai\**, while the West's got *Romeo and Juliet*. I think to some extent, human nature is similar. (local 2)

\**Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai* is a Chinese classical tragedy known by almost every

Chinese person.

In Example 1, the participant used his true feeling – touched, when he saw the theme of love, as an example to describe his observation of some common behavior of humans all over the world. In example 2, the participant used Western classical tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* and Chinese classical tragedy *Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai* as examples to express how love is the common theme for human beings across the globe.

### **Emotions and desires**

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Example 1

Pain and suffering in life. (middle-class 4)

Example 2

We are human beings. We all have different variety of emotions and desires, but with different fate. (middle-class 4)

Example 3

No. 1: Look at those American films, with the development of stories, you can notice that the conflicts are often caused by man's greed. Many films follow the same logic. (non-local)

The three examples above show that the participants noticed human beings shared common emotions and desires, such as pain and suffering in life. Example 3 used the American films, which also reflects that conflicts are often caused by greed, very different from Chinese culture.

### **Power struggles**

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Example

When I was watching *House of Cards*, many cases of the power struggles in the drama are very similar to Chinese dramas, such as *Empresses in the Palace*. Men and women are the same, struggling for power. (short-term/no overseas experience 3)

Similarly, this example also used an American drama as an example to illustrate that power struggles not only exist in both China and the United States, but also between genders.

## **Education**

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Example

I noticed that the aspect of education, parents all over the worlds always want that their kids have good results. (3, middle-class group)

In this example, the participant paid attention to education, parents and children, and drew a conclusion that the expectations for the better future of their children among parents are very similar, all over the world. These statements made by participants are similar to what Lamont and Aksartova summarized as ‘universality of human nature’ in their research published in 2006 (Lamont and Aksartova, 2006: 2, cited in Skey, 2012).

### **5.2 Recognition of difference**

At the same time as recognizing universal aspects of human nature, they also noticed ‘the Otherness’ of the foreigner with distinct cultural differences. Participants mentioned similar themes but noted that these themes are manifested by different cultural forms.

## **Justice**

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(A discussion by older students group)

No. 1: ...the common pursuit of justice is same... However, in terms of culture, the West tends to show more individualism, while in the domestic Chinese context...you hardly see it. Almost all of them (the Western films) highlight only one hero. Like *Captain America* or *Iron Man*.

No. 2: It just reminded me of *Pacific Rim* (2013). Why there are always three people in Chinese warships? Because, three people can set up a party branch! Hahaha...

In this excerpt on justice, two participants discussed that the same themes are manifested differently because of different cultural attributes. During the process of pursuit of justice, the Western films tend to show more elements of individualism, while China emphasizes collectivism that was illustrated in a joke by No. 2, as noted above.

### **Housing issues**

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(A discussion begins with *Desperate Housewives* by older students group)

No. 1: They live in big houses.

No. 4: Yes, they live in big houses!

No.1: (Look at me, seriously) Especially, you are doing research in Beijing, people pay more attention on housing issues here.

The rest: Hahahahaha!

No. 2: You should watch more Hong Kong dramas and films.

No. 1: Yeah?

No. 2: Then, you will feel that our houses are so so big!

No. 1: Or Japanese ones?

No. 5: Their families live in a small house with a backyard. Only rich people live in a tower block.

This example is close to people's everyday life and down-to-earth. People in Beijing paid more attention to housing issues. Participants initiated the topic and compared housing space from United States to Hong Kong and Japan.

### **Power struggles**

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No. 3: Compared the domestic historical drama to the foreign one... the domestic dramas seemed to contain more conspiracy, while I'd say the foreign tend to have more...more... open. I don't know. It is so difficult to describe. It is just different.  
(older students)

Chinese domestic dramas always contain many elements of power struggles. The participant, on the one hand, implies there exists power struggling in both in the Western programming and in Chinese dramas. On the other hand, she noticed that the ways and forms how power struggles are carried out by the Westerner and Chinese people are very different.

### **Cultural difference**

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#### Example 1

(A discussion by the middle-class group.)

No. 5: When you watched *Friends*, for the first time, you don't understand, why they laughed sometimes. These may be part of their unique culture. This is their characteristic. You do not understand at first. It is an example of difference. Or sometimes comedies have some background laugh noise that cued me there is something funny or punch lines just happened. But if no one tells you how it works, you still think it is not funny. Because you don't belong to this culture.

No. 2: It is so difficult to understand a joke in a different language.

No. 5: Sometimes I feel the gap between differences could be overcome. But it is so difficult.

No. 2: People grow up in a different language environment and education systems, the way they think is so different from each other.

No. 4: True, the starting point has already been different.

#### Example 2

(A discussion by non-local group.)

No. 4: I don't think Japan and Korea have so many similarities with us, instead, there are many differences, such as lifestyle and eating habits.

No. 5: In Japan and Korea, they have very high standards of etiquette. But in China, it is not rather strict, but relatively go-as-you-please.

No. 4: Yes, also, they have different historical backgrounds. In Japanese and Korean dramas, there are always a big family, then the stories develop. In additions, these dramas give me a feeling that the status of women in these two countries are very low.

In terms of cultural difference, in example 1, the differences are more easily noticed. Participants talked about the cultural difference between China and America, clearly realized and expressed that the difficulties in understanding the jokes in *Friends* and other comedies. These are two very different cultures. The conversation triggered another small discussion concerned with whether it is possible to bridge gaps between the cultures. From the discussion, it is noteworthy that No. 5 believed there might be a way to solve the issues generated by cultural difference. Although he was hopeful, he recognized it was difficult to achieve. The following responses by No. 4 and No. 2 also indicate the difficulty bridging this gap because the cultural environments and education systems are very different.

In contrast to Example 1, Example 2 showed that within countries – Japan and South Korea - in East Asia which generally believed to have shared cultures, participants compared them with the situation in China and noticed differences in details of lives such as lifestyle, eating habits, different standards, historical backgrounds, women's status and so on. Although three countries are neighboring countries, the participants through consuming the cultural products realized they are heterogenous.

In terms of beliefs and values, the West's individualism, individual freedom and open attitude towards sex always are used to compare with China:

Example 1

No. 5: Obviously, they (the West) are much more open than us... (older students)

Example 2

No. 3: Values are different, for examples: (the West) stressing individuality and free individual character, and open attitudes towards sex. (female)

The blue collar/working class group did not reply to the question directly. They answered by referring to the evidence of 'universality of human nature' with culturally differences, by using their experience in real life, not with their media consumption experience.

Overall, young people have provided evidence on human being's similarity and difference through their observation during their consumption process which reflected a sense of ethnocentric attitudes toward foreign peoples.

**Table 5.1 ‘No Others’ and ‘Difference’**

Users	‘No Others’	Differences
Student, younger	Family, social issues, romantic stories  Cultures (Korean drama)	Cultures (American drama)
Student, older	<p>No. 4: Pain and suffering in life.</p> <p>No.1: I like science fiction film. For example, broadly speaking, the common pursuit of justice is same. Justice eventually will defeat evil. And the true, the good and the beautiful (真善美) – they must be good thing. (Difference is starting to state here.) However, in terms of culture, the West tends to show more individualism, while in the domestic...you hardly see it. Almost all of them (the Western films) highlight only one hero. Like <i>Captain America</i> or <i>Iron Man</i>.</p> <p>No. 2: It just reminded me of <i>Pacific Rim</i> (2013). Why there are always three people in Chinese warships? Because, three people can set up a party branch! Hahaha</p>	<p>Cultures</p> <p>Housing Issues (<i>Desperate Housewives</i>)</p> <p>No.1: They live in big houses.</p> <p>No.4: Yes, they live in big houses!</p> <p>No.1: (look at me, seriously)</p> <p>Especially, you are doing a research in Beijing, people pay more attention on housing issue.</p> <p>The rest: Hahahahaha!</p> <p>No. 2: You should watch more Hong Kong dramas and films.</p> <p>No. 1: Yeah?</p> <p>No. 2: Then, you will feel that our houses are so so big!</p> <p>No.1: Or Japanese ones?</p> <p>No. 5: Their families live in a small house with a backyard. Only rich people live in a tower block.</p>

		<p>Power struggles</p> <p>No. 3: Compared the domestic historical drama to the foreign one... the domestic seemed to contain more conspiracy, while I'd say the foreign tend to have more...more... open. I don't know. It is so difficult to describe. It is just different.</p> <p>Attitudes towards Sex</p> <p>No. 5: Obviously, they are much more open than us...</p>
Middle class	<p>No. 4: We are human beings. We all have different variety of emotions and desires, but with different fate.</p> <p>No. 5: No matter which countries' dramas or films you are watching, some scenes are common behavior of human all around the world. For example, about love, even though you are from different countries, when you see it, you feel touched. It is an example of similarity.</p>	<p>No. 5: When you watched <i>Friends</i> for the first time, you don't understand, why they laughed sometimes. These are part of their unique culture. This is their characteristic. You do not understand at first. It is an example of difference. Or sometimes comedies have some background laugh noise that cued me there is something funny or punch lines just happened. But if no one tells you how it works, you still think it is not funny. Because you don't belong to this culture.</p>

		<p>No. 2: It is so difficult to understand a joke in a different language.</p> <p>No. 5: Sometimes I feel the gap between difference could be overcome. But it is so difficult.</p> <p>No. 2: People grow up in a different language environment and education systems, the way they think is so different from each other.</p> <p>No. 4: True, the starting point has already been different.</p>
Blue-collar/working class	N/A	N/A
Local residents (Beijing)	No. 2: Look, China's got <i>Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai</i> , while the West's got <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> . I think human nature is similar, to some extent.	
Non-local	No.1: In terms of films, no matter whether it is a foreign or domestic film with positive energy, there is a hero to save the world or save us. The meaning that <i>Ultraman</i> and <i>Transformers</i> want to convey to the	<p>No. 4: I don't think Japan and Korea have so many similarities with us, instead, there are many differences, such as lifestyle and eating habits.</p> <p>No. 5: In Japan and Korea, they</p>

	<p>audiences, such as saving the whole world or the triumph of justice over evil is similar. Look at those American films, with the development of stories, you can notice that the conflicts are often caused by man's greed. Many films follow the same logic.</p>	<p>have very high standards of etiquette. But in China, it is not rather strict, but relatively go-as-you-please.</p> <p>No. 4: Yes, also, they have different historical backgrounds. In Japanese and Korean dramas, there are always a big family, then the stories develop. In additions, these dramas give me a feeling that the status of women in these two countries are very low.</p>
Male	<p>No. 3: I noticed that the aspect of education, parents all over the worlds always want to their kids have good results.</p>	N/A
Female	<p>No. 3: Look at American blockbusters, they promote justice. Good and kind people will be blessed by God. In general, these aspects are same.</p> <p>No. 2: Peace.</p> <p>No. 5: Positive energy.</p>	<p>No. 3: Values are different, for example: stress individuality and free individual character and open attitudes towards sex</p>
Short-term oversea	<p>No .3: When I was watching <i>House of Cards</i>, many cases of the power struggles in the drama are very similar to Chinese dramas, such as</p>	Cultures

	<p><i>Empresses in the Palace</i>. Men and women are the same, struggling for power.</p>	
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### 5.3 Audience reception: ‘Dialogic imagination’ and cosmopolitanism

According to Beck (2002, 2006), cosmopolitan sensibility and competence might be engendered during exposure to different cultures. ‘Dialogic imagination’ means the process of ‘internalization of difference’ (2006: 89), in other words, to ‘compare, reflect, criticize, understand, combine contradictory certainties’ and different cultures within one’s own life or in the individual’s experiential space’ (Beck, 2002:18). It is a process of self-discovery and self-relativization. Foreign media consumption provides a space for this dialogic imagination. In the previous sections (5.1 and 5.2), recognizing there are ‘no ‘Others’ and recognizing differences are the result of ‘dialogic imagination’ – participants have experienced this through the process of what has been termed as to ‘understand, compare and contrast’. This section will examine how the characteristics of cosmopolitanism including ‘dialogic imagination’ were experienced by young people, using Hall’s three readings of media texts – preferred reading, negotiated reading and oppositional reading - to help manage and categorize the data. In general, there is no conflict with preferred reading: it is calm, peaceful and comfortable. However, it does not mean that the dialogic imagination does not happen in this reading. In negotiated reading, dialogic imagination needs to be relatively active. According to the data, there are many examples that show young people are very active in interpreting what they consume and have their own thinking, rather than passively absorbing everything in the foreign media products. The term ‘negotiated reading’ is relevant to the way they deal with culturally different others during consumption as it does reflect a process of negotiation. Finally, oppositional reading implies rejection. In other words, it is opposite to openness and tolerance. What kind of content in these products might cause this form of reading, and people’s reactions to it, are the subject of this investigation. It should be noted that this approach of examining cosmopolitanism is highly context-related. In other words, there is evidence that the cultural aspect of cosmopolitanism is highly

individually determined and not fixed (Rantanen, 2005; Ong, 2009).

### 5.3.1 Preferred reading

Overall, the majority of participants accept most of the content and meaning that foreign media products convey to their audience. Participants pointed out the many values and beliefs prevalent in China were also noticeable in Korean, Japanese, Hong Kong and Taiwanese media products (young student 4, middle class 2 and 4, local 1, non-local 5, female 5, short-term/no overseas experience 1 and 4). According to participants' observations of Korean drama, values such as respect for elders, being family-oriented (young student 4), the relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law (local 1) are very similar to Chinese audiences. On the contrary, participants claimed that the values and beliefs in US-led Western films and dramas were very different to China's (middle-class 5, male group, female group). However, there are two interesting examples, of rare similarities in values, mentioned by two participants. In Example 1 and Example 2, views of China and the United States are very different, but they found a similarity while watching.

Example 1:

No. 5: Quite rare in American dramas and films. But still got some. For example, the week before last week, we went to watch *San Andreas* (2015). In the end, the American flag appeared. I was wondering Errrr...it was just like China! (middle class 5)

Example 2:

No. 2: Once I watched a film about Apollo Moon-landing Project. A scene is very impressive. An air machine converter does not fit, and the chief engineer swore 'Bureaucratism!' Then I was wondering 'ha! the government bodies are almost same all over the world.' (non-local 2)

Example 1 and Example 2 demonstrate that the young people experienced a process of rethinking and relocating the images they had of the United States and of China. The reaction

of ‘it was just like China!’ and ‘ha! the government body are almost same all over the world’ contains a lot of information. First, the national ‘flag’ implies a sense of nationalism. In No. 5’s (middle class) previous understanding, the use of the Chinese national flag is in order to enhance Chinese people’s national belongingness and patriotism. Besides, Chinese schools pay particular attention to fostering patriotism, and the theme of patriotism can be always seen in domestic media products, including dramas and films. It seems that this participant never expected the United States to do such a thing, because it is a very Chinese characteristic. The expression ‘errrr...’ expressed by No. 5 also revealed his inner thought. ‘errrr...’ (额) is a ‘mood word’ among Chinese young people, expressing a sense of speechlessness, and showed a strong sense of surprise. He would never have thought of seeing such a scene in an American film. A shift took place in his mind. It is not just a Chinese characteristic any more. The meaning of the national flag and the meaning of patriotism are more or less the same in both China and the United States. This example reflects a process of rethinking about the United States and China by a young male participant.

Example 2 is also related to a media product from America. As in Example 1, the assumption of the participant was that ‘bureaucratism’ was a typical Chinese characteristic and did not expect it in the United States. Thus, the reaction - ‘ha! the government bodies are almost same all over the world’ implies at least two layers of meaning. Firstly, she was amused by the direct comment by chief engineer on the screen because it was so rare to see such open critique of the government in a domestic scene. Secondly, she experienced a discovery with a sense of surprise, sarcasm and disappointment – ‘the government bodies are almost same all over the world’. Also, she used ‘impressive’ to describe her feeling when she saw the scene, which means it had a strong effect. Before, in her imagination the American government was a role model to be learned from, not another case of bureaucratism. However, the film undermined her image of the US and made her think perhaps people were too critical of China’s government if such a developed country and a superpower also had the same problems.

Example 3 (A conversation by older students)

No. 5: If I dislike or resist certain aspect about myself, my country or my own culture... For example, I dislike too much emphasis on collectivism. I really dislike it. Errr...then those displaying individuality will influence me a lot. And I will put them into practice.

No. 2: That is to say, if you watch too many hits, your attitudes towards sex would become open!

No. 5: Don't be silly! (He became shy and slapped No.2 on the back.)

In Example 3, No. 5 consciously showed a strong resistance to collectivism, which is a key part of Chinese culture. He was very aware of Chinese culture and he also knew the foreign media products convey individualism, which for audiences is opposite to Chinese society. He knew himself very well at least in relation to this aspect. On the one hand, he had a preferred reading in this case. Not everything that media products convey would influence him. He only picked and selected values he thought to be useful to him and is not a passive audience absorbing everything he watches. Despite what he says, he was still sensitive to the social environment on one point - the traditionally conservative approach to sex. When No. 2 teased him, he became shy and slapped No. 2 on the back. (No. 2 made use of No. 5's claim 'I dislike too much emphasis on collectivism' to make a joke on No. 5. In Chinese society, the attitude towards sex is conservative and repressed. If someone takes an open view on sex, he/ she may get a bad reputation). No. 5 is experiencing a form of cosmopolitanism in terms of the individual choosing what is suitable for him (Hannerz 1990: 240). No. 5 chose the individualism of the West but still maintained a conservative attitude towards sex.

### *5.3.2 Negotiated reading*

From the fieldwork data, most participants tended to accept almost all the content and meaning conveyed to them during the dialogic imagination process and internalization of difference. Following on from the above, the negotiated reading discussion begins with the participants' attitudes towards sex. It is a topic that has been mentioned or discussed many

times by different groups. In example 1 below, the participants all accept the Western concept of sex and relationships. This value tends to challenge current Chinese tradition. However, all of them took account of the social circumstance and tradition. Three of them, both male and female, were concerned about their family and tradition. Although No. 2 and No. 5's sentences were not finished, it was clear that family was very important – the older generation tend to hold very conservative views towards sex and relationships in China. No. 1 could predict what would happen in his family if he chose to follow this Western value. It seems that participants can hold different values while choosing not to follow them out of consideration for the feelings of family, social environment and tradition. The participants know the possible risks and results they might have to face if they put the value into practice. In other words, these participants make the decision to select values to reduce potential conflict, instead of challenging the social environment.

#### Example 1 (Middle class)

No. 2: In American dramas, in terms of sex and relationship...

No. 5: Yes.

No. 2: I can accept relationship, but my family...

No. 5: Yes, their relationship concept is open, I can accept, but if I put them into practice, my family...

No. 4: You are just constrained by something conservative and traditional.

No. 5: Yes, yes.

No. 1: Sometimes, I was wondering, if I put this value into practice, whether I would be killed by my family... (exaggerated facial expression). Probably I would be knocked out by my dad...for sure.

Example 2 and Example 3 are two examples that show the process of internalized other: the participants show admiration of some Western values, but society and social norms restrict their decision to do something which might be considered reasonable in the West, as the current system cannot meet their needs or wishes.

### Example 2

(local)

No. 2: Sometimes, I am jealous. Something is reasonable in America, but might be another story in China. The society and norms probably not allow you to do it.

No. 4: I have to add a point. Sometimes I have to admire! They have such way of thoughts!

No. 2: Sometimes, make me yearn for...(interrupted)

No. 3: Same here.

### Example 3

No. 1: Many cases, for example. In foreign education systems, you don't have to worry about GPA, however, it is impossible in China. I completely admit and admire their system, but it is impossible for me to ignore my results in China... (male)

Some participants showed understanding of others' culture while others regarded the media products as just stories and entertainment. For example, one participant (local 2) thought 'it might just be a plot or it is part of their culture, then I could keep watching and it doesn't bother me.' Or another participant (non-local 3) treated films and drama as a way of entertainment, regarding them as not reality. According to their answers, two participants demarcated a safety line between them and the media products. It is a simple solution not to feel challenged by a clash of cultures by regarding them just as entertainment. As Hannerz said, 'all the time [the cosmopolitan] knows where the exit is' (1990: 240).

#### *5.3.3 Oppositional reading*

Although in most cases, participants tended to accept the contents and meaning, there were some things they did not accept, understand or even felt offended by. The occurrence of oppositional reading illustrated and proved that the cosmopolitanism is highly context-based as well as changeable (Vertovec and Cohen, 2002; Rantanen, 2005). In this section, three main themes mentioned by most participants are analyzed as follows: 'sex and relationships', 'denigration and demonization of the image of China and the Chinese' and 'gory and erotic

elements'. According to the conversation, these three themes arouse participants' emotions and they use more negative words and phrases to express their feelings. Interestingly, in oppositional reading, there was one example of cosmopolitanism in discussing 'gory and erotic elements' in a participant from the middle-class group. A further three examples will be discussed which are not quite as challenging to Chinese values.

In terms of oppositional reading, the theme of 'sex and relationships' emerged again. In Example 1 below, some scenes or clips in American products were too open and erotic for the participant and was in direct conflict with his traditional values that he could not accept.

#### Example 1

No. 1: For me, I come from a very traditional family. There are many scenes in American dramas and films which are too erotic for me. And it is rare to see in the domestic ones. Thus, I can't accept some scenes or clips about sex and sexual relationship. (male)

Example 2 is a short discussion. First, No. 3 expresses her feeling, 'dislike', towards the complicated and chaotic sexual relationships portrayed in American dramas. For her the solution was to stop watching. She shut it down directly, and did not let such values bother her, which collided with her original values to a great extent. She came back to her 'safety zone'. For No. 2, she questioned the reality of the dramas. She does not believe it would happen in real life and it is not reasonable according to her understanding of the world. No. 4 used the word 'shocked' to describe her feeling of unbelief when she saw the relationship between Rachel and Ross in *Friends*. It is clear from the participants' expressions and statements, that this area is one which has huge differences between the two cultures

#### Example 2

(short-term/no overseas experience)

No. 3: I dislike the stories that have very complicated and chaotic sexual relationships such as *Gossip Girls* and *Twilight*. Their attitude towards sex is...too...open! I can't bear it. Then I chose not to watch it anymore. However, I feel it is OK for me to watch *Fifty Shades of Grey*, but not *Gossip Girls*. The relationships are too complicated and messy. It is just too

much. It did challenge my own values. You know, it is too open.

No. 2: Will it really happen in the real world?

No. 2 & 3: We just can't accept it.

No. 4: It just reminded me of *Friends*, When I saw the scene when Rachel conceived Ross's baby and they made decision to give birth but still not to make a commitment; I was so shocked, and it doesn't make sense.

No. 3: Yes, it is true that those values and the attitude towards sex and relationships are so different from us.

Secondly, the theme of the negative portrayal of China or Chinese figures has been mentioned by different groups of people. In other words, when 'the Other' showed no respect to the participants' culture and nation, participants got offended. In Example 3, participants tended to express unacceptance and dissatisfaction when Chinese figures are denigrated or demonized on the screen. Participant No. 4 denied nationalism, but these contents made her feel uncomfortable. No. 5 understood what No. 4 attempted to express in relation to the portrayal of the Chinese leader that was deliberately distorted in *Madam Secretary*. Similarly, the words 'offended' (see example 4), 'angry' and 'ridiculous' (see example 5) were used to describe the participants' feelings. They have a strong and intense feeling for China. In Example 6, the participant frowned when he mentioned a clip from an American drama that satirized the Chinese Red Cross. This facial expression showed his unhappiness about the negative portrayal of China as a joke in the eyes of Americans.

### Example 3

(a conversation happened among middle-class)

No. 4: Yes, yes. I had this kind of experience. For example, those scenes that denigrate or demonize Chinese people.

No. 1: Ah! A strong emotion of nationalism is in your heart!

No. 4: No, no, no.

No. 5: I know what you mean. In *Madam Secretary*, a Chinese leader was played by an Asian

American. Bareheaded, angular. He was portrayed as being short, not noble-spirited and always wearing a suit with a bigger size.

No. 1: Have you guys watched *The Dictator* (2012) This film just made China look ugly.

No. 5: The 4<sup>th</sup> episode of *Madam Secretary* on Sino-Japan issue was banned.

#### Example 4

No. 2: I would be offended if the foreign products denigrate Chinese people. (local)

#### Example 5

No. 5: My example is from *The Big Bang Theory*. Sheldon's mother made a cake for him, and there is a smiling face on it, and Sheldon says it doesn't look nice. His mother said, you can just imagine it is a face of a Chinese person. When I saw this, I was very angry. How can you imagine it as a face of a Chinese person? It is ridiculous! I couldn't take it. (non-local)

#### Example 6

No. 1: I would like to talk about a drama on mercenaries, but I forgot the name of it. I clearly remembered there was a clip that satirizes the Chinese Red Cross. In my own reading, the figure of China is a joke for America (frown). (male)

Thirdly, participants tended to reject the product if it consisted of too many gory and sexual elements because they cause great psychological or physical discomfort (see examples 7, 8 and 9). In Example 7, middle class participants had a discussion. They had listed several names of the products that they found uncomfortable. Some negative words such as 'very disgusting', 'too abnormal' and 'gloomy' were used by participants to describe how they felt about this 'clash of cultures'. No. 2 expressed her astonishment about cartoons for children containing many violent elements. However, No. 1 still kept watching them, though this did not mean he could accept them. Why he was open to them was for the purpose of learning Spanish. No.1 did not show any pleasure in watching it. He used the word 'numb' to describe

his feelings. In this case, No.1 experienced a form of cosmopolitanism that is similar to Landau and Freemantle termed ‘tactical’ and ‘de facto’ cosmopolitanism (2009: 382, cited in Skrbiš and Woodward, 2013). This form of cosmopolitanism is not related to any pleasure in engaging with culturally different others nor a strong sense of morality, but for work-related strategic purposes. For No.1 this is a very limited kind of cosmopolitanism.

Example 7

(Middle class)

No. 2: Sometimes, I was wondering how they can make something such violent and even those cartoons, for kids! *Happy Tree Friends*, it is so violent.

No. 1: *Games of Thrones*, hmm violent and erotic.

No. 5: American people they like it! *Spartacus*, it...is...too much...too much.

No. 2: Completely naked.

No. 5: Men and women, they are naked. And *The Walking Dead*, is also disgusting... very disgusting.

No. 3: Err, I dislike it.

No. 1: I dislike it as well, but I have watched a lot, I am numb.

No. 5: In my opinion... (interrupted)

No. 1: It reminded me of Spanish film *La Piel Que Habito* (2011) (No. 2 & 3: yes, yes.). In particular, those from Spain, Latin America including Argentina.

No. 2: Yes, especially Spanish ones, very erotic and very violent.

No. 1: Those from these countries, subject matters are...too abnormal and gloomy.

No. 4: That Spanish film director, Pedro Almodovar.

No. 1: They just made you sick, very sick, but you still have to watch them.

No. 2: What keeps you going and carrying on?

No. 1: Because they are speaking Spanish. (He bursts out laughing.)

(The rest all laugh out loud.)

#### Example 8

No. 1: I'd say there are many differences between the domestic films and the foreign films.

I prefer Korean horror films. And it gives you a great visual impact. And you can never see this in a domestic film. And in some blockbusters, there are many gory scenes, very very gory. I just can't bear it. It is so scary. In *Jurassic World* (2015), the dinosaur ate people... It was just too much... scary... (non-local)

#### Example 9

No. 4: For me, I don't accept the gory scenes. (short-term/no overseas experience)

In the following three examples, the first is an interpretation of American drama. The other two examples show that oppositional reading can take place during the consuming process. For No. 4 (see example 10), she totally understood the content and meaning of the drama. Living in big house and drinking coffee every day for her means a happy and leisured life and she could not understand why they were desperate. In example 1, No. 2 understood the content of Korean dramas. Her use of the word 'always' and her facial expression - 'puzzled' and 'unbelievable'- reflected her questioning why young women in Korean drama were always so weak and portrayed as victims. She showed a dislike for this kind of drama. In Example 12, the participant totally understood that bowing is part of Japanese culture. According to her response, the concept of inequality between men and women is not supported by her. She experienced an oppositional reading.

#### Example 10

No. 4: I couldn't understand to some extent. In *Desperate Housewives*, look at them, they live in such big houses, drink coffee every day. And they are desperate. (students, elder)

#### Example 11

No. 2: The girls are in Korean dramas so miserable, always being hurt (she had a puzzled

and unbelievable facial expression). (local)

#### Example 12

No. 1: In Japanese dramas or films, the status of women is lower than men. For example, a lady should say something like ‘welcome home’ on bended knee. It is their culture, but I can’t accept it. (female)

The blue-collar/working class group, with limited consumption, also expressed incomprehension of the meaning several times. One mentioned that he did not understand the meaning the films attempted to convey to the audience, even though there are always Chinese subtitles at the bottom of the screen for audience to read. In his dialogic imagination process, there is a problem of understanding the alien cultural meaning system.

No. 1: I went to cinema to see *Intouchables* (2011). But, I didn’t understand what it is talking about. And many people don’t understand as well. To go to see a film you don’t understand is a waste of money.

#### 5.3.4 Changes in readings

Participants mentioned that as they got older they changed their consumption in some ways. Participants changed from passively absorbing everything to actively having their own judgement towards the content. One participant (older student 4) had claimed ‘When I was young, I probably would absorb them all. I was very curious about new things. But now, it changes. I have my own judgement’. Another direct example is from the short-term/no overseas experience group: they had experience in negotiated reading (see Example 1) and dialogic imagination took place. The participants used ‘resistance’ and the verb ‘challenge’ to describe the interaction of different cultures, implying that they thought there were conflicts and confrontation between different cultures. Example 2 indicates that with time, something once regarded as taboo for children shifted into the status of preferred reading. The participant used an example about ‘kissing scenes’ to show how it had changed.

### Example 1

(short-term/ no oversea experience)

No. 4: I would like to say, when I was young, I tended to passively absorb all the values these products conveyed to me.

No. 2 and 3: Yes, but now some resistance might appear sometimes. Resistance might be not a proper word to describe.

No. 4: Or in other words, some ideas that challenge what they convey to us.

No. 2: Yes.

### Example 2

No. 1: ... When I was young, every time when I came across kissing scenes, my mother would awkwardly say 'it is not suitable for kids'. Later, I went to the university, it becomes suitable, because no one around me would say 'it is not suitable for kids'. It is no longer a taboo. Similar kind of feeling. (non-local)

	<b>Table. 5.3 Short-run effects</b> <b>(User's states or their thoughts during consumption)</b>		
	<b>Preferred reading</b>	<b>Negotiated reading</b>	<b>Oppositional reading</b>
Students, younger	No. 4: I feel... in Korean dramas, kids should respect the elders; family is very important. Just like China	No. 3: Although many things are different from China in American dramas, I can accept most of the values they convey.  No. 3: I noticed that in American dramas, they like accentuating 'individual freedom', and when I was watching the scenes on this topic, I probably think that our government accentuates 'collective'. In the drama, it accentuates that an individual	No. 3: Well, it depends. If it is going too far, or deviated from the norm too much

		<p>should do blablabla, and think of collective all the time.</p> <p>No. 5: Once I saw a scene, all residents in the town sit together and discussed an issue. You can't see it in China.</p>	
<p>Students, older</p>	<p>No. 5: If I dislike or resist certain aspect about myself, my country or my own culture... For example, I dislike too much emphasis on collectivism. I really dislike it. Errr...then those displaying individuality will influence me a lot. And I will put them into practice.</p> <p>No. 2: That is to say, if you watch too many hits, your attitudes</p>	<p>No. 4: When I was young, I probably would absorb them all. I was very curious about new things. But now, it changes. I have my own judgement.</p> <p>No. 3: I can accept most of their values and sometimes they do influence my thoughts, but whether to put them into practice in my daily life? Well, it all</p>	<p>No. 4: I couldn't understand to some extent. In <i>Desperate Housewives</i>, look at them, they live in such big house, drink coffee every day. And they are desperate.</p>

	<p>towards to sex would become open!</p> <p>No. 5: Don't be silly! (he became shy and slapped No.2 on the back.) (Negotiated reading).</p>	<p>depends on the environment around me.</p>	
Middle-class	<p>No. 2 &amp; 4: Values in Korean films are similar to us.</p> <p>No. 5: Quite rare in American dramas and films. But still got some. For example, the week before last week, we went to watch <i>San Andreas</i> (2015). In the end, the America flag appeared. I was wondering it was errrr... just like China!</p>	<p>No. 2: In American dramas, in terms of sex and relationship...</p> <p>No. 5: Yes.</p> <p>No. 2: I can accept relationship, but my family...</p> <p>No. 5: Yes, their relationship concept is open, I can accept, but if I put them into practice, my family...</p> <p>No. 4: you are just constrained by something conservative and</p>	<p>No. 4: Yes, yes. I had this kind of experience. For example, those scenes that misrepresent or demonize Chinese people.</p> <p>No.1: Ah! A strong emotion of nationalism is in your heart!</p> <p>No. 4: No, no, no.</p> <p>No. 5: I know what you mean. In <i>Madam Secretary</i>, a Chinese leader was played by an Asian American. Bareheaded, angular.</p>

		<p>traditional.</p> <p>No. 5: Yes, yes.</p> <p>No.1: Sometimes, I was wondering, if I put this value into practice, whether I would be killed by my family... (exaggerated expression) Probably I would be knocked out by my dad...for sure.</p>	<p>He was portrayed as being short, not noble-spirited and always wearing a suit with a bigger size.</p> <p>No.1: Have you guys watched <i>The Dictator</i> (2012) This film just misrepresented China.</p> <p>No. 5: The 4th episode of <i>Madam Secretary</i> on Sino-Japan issue was banned.</p> <p>Gory and sex dramas and films</p> <p>No. 2: Sometimes, I was wondering how they can make something such violent and Even those cartoons, for kids! <i>Happy Tree Friends</i>, it is so violent.</p> <p>No. 1: <i>Games of Thrones</i>, hmm violent and erotic.</p>
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			<p>No. 5: American people they like it! <i>Spartacus</i>, it...is...too much...too much.</p> <p>No. 2: Completely naked.</p> <p>No. 5: Men and women, they are naked. And <i>The Walking Dead</i>, is also disgusting... very disgusting.</p> <p>No. 3: err, I dislike it.</p> <p>No. 1: I dislike it neither, but I have watched a lot, I am numb.</p> <p>No. 5: In my opinion... (interrupted)</p> <p>No.1: It reminded me of Spanish film <i>La Piel Que Habito</i> (2011) (No.2 &amp; 3: yes, yes.). In particular, those from Spain, Latin America including Argentina.</p>
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			<p>No. 2: Yes, especially Spanish ones, very erotic and very violent.</p> <p>No. 1: Those from these countries, subject matters are...too abnormal and gloomy.</p> <p>No. 4: That Spanish film director, Pedro Almodovar.</p> <p>No. 1: They just made you sick, very sick, but you still have to watch them.</p> <p>No. 2: What keeps you going and carrying on?</p> <p>No. 1: Because they are speaking Spanish. (he bursts out laughing.)</p> <p>The rest all laugh out loud.</p>
Blue-collar/ working class	N/A	N/A	<p>No. 1: I went to cinema to see <i>Intouchables</i> (2011). But, I didn't</p>

			understand what it is talking about. And many people don't understand as well. To go to see a film you don't understand is a waste of money.
Local residents (Beijing)	<p>No. 1: I prefer watching American Blockbusters. Thus, I'd say rare.</p> <p>No.1: In Korean drama, the relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law is quite similar to us.</p>	<p>No. 2: Sometimes, I am jealous. Something is reasonable in America, but might be another story in China. The society and norms probably not allow you to do it.</p> <p>No. 4: I have to add a point. Sometimes I have to admire! They have such way of thoughts!</p> <p>No. 2: Sometimes, make me yearn for...(interrupted)</p> <p>No. 3: Same here.</p>	<p>No. 2: The girls are in Korean dramas so miserable, always being hurt.</p> <p>No. 2: I would be offended if the foreign products misrepresented Chinese people.</p>

		<p>No. 4: Quite a lot values in the dramas are different from ours.</p> <p>No. 2: But I think it might just a plot or it is part of their cultures, then I could keep watching and don't bother me.</p>	
Non-local	<p>No. 1: Yes, of course, but I couldn't remember it now.</p> <p>No. 2: Once I watched a film about Apollo Moon-landing Project. A scene is very impressive. An air machine converter does not fit, and the chief engineer swore 'Bureaucratism!' Then I was wondering 'ha! the government</p>	<p>No. 3: A lot of examples.</p> <p>No.1: They often say 'oh my god'. But in China, there is no one says something followed a celestial being.</p> <p>No. 3: I think watching films and dramas is just a way of entertainment. It is not reality. It is</p>	<p>No.1: Before, I had similar experience, but now I feel Ok. When I was young, every time when I came across kissing scenes, my mother would awkwardly say 'it is not suitable for kids'. Later, I went to the university, it becomes suitable, because no one around me would say 'it is not suitable for kids'. It</p>

	<p>bodies are almost same all over the world.’</p> <p>No .5: I was watching a Japanese film the day before yesterday. It is called <i>Little Forest</i>. In this little forest, plough the field in spring and till it in summer, and harvest in autumn and store of grain in winter. It was very similar to agrarian society in ancient China.</p>	<p>just a film.</p> <p>No. 3: I would like to take B-movie as an example, why I can accept them. There are many plots about so-called abnormal people with distortion of the personality from the perspective of us - normal people. If you put yourself in his place, normal people were abnormal in his world. What I have said just now is not only for China, but for the any society in the world.</p>	<p>is no longer a taboo. Similar kind of feeling.</p> <p>No. 5: My example is from The Big Bang Theory. Sheldon’s mother made a cake for him, and there is a smiling face on it, and Sheldon says it doesn’t look nice. His mother said, you can just imagine it is a face of Chinese. When I saw this, I was very angry. How can you imagine it as a face of Chinese? It is ridiculous! I couldn’t take it.</p> <p>No. 1: I’d say there are many difference between the domestic</p>
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			<p>films and the foreign films. I prefer Korean horror films. And it gives you a great visual impact. And you can never see this in the domestic film. And in some blockbusters, there are many gory scenes, very very gory. I just can't bear it. It is so scary. In <i>Jurassic World</i> (2015), the dinosaur ate people... It was just too much... scary...</p>
Male	For American films, there are so many values different from China.	<p>No. 1: Many cases, for example. In foreign education systems, you don't have to worry about GPA, however, it is impossible in China. I completely admit and admire their system, but it is impossible</p>	<p>No. 1: I would like to talk about a drama on mercenaries, but I forgot the name of it. I clearly remembered there are a clip that satirizes the Chinese Red Cross. In my own reading, the figure of</p>

		<p>for me to ignore my results in China...</p> <p>No. 3: There is a British drama called <i>Black Mirror</i>, I think everything happened in the drama is totally different from China, but I can accept.</p> <p>No. 2: What I wondered it might be even very different from UK.</p>	<p>China is a figure of a joke for America (frown).</p> <p>No.1: For me, I came from a very traditional family. There are many scenes in America dramas and films are too erotic for me. And it is rare to see in the domestic ones.</p> <p>Thus, I can't accept some scenes or clips about sex and sexual relationship.</p>
Female	<p>Rare in Western dramas and films</p> <p>No. 5: I think the products from Hongkong, Taiwan reflect many similar values</p>	<p>No. 5: Generally speaking, it happens when some values are relatively open to me. It shocks me during viewing. I won't follow these values and you have to take</p>	<p>No. 2: No, I can accept all.</p> <p>No.1: In Japanese dramas or films, the status of women is lower than men. For example, a lady should say something like 'welcome</p>

		the social environment into consideration.	home' on bended knee. It is their culture, but I can't accept it.
Short-term overseas experience	<p>No. 1 &amp; 4: Many values in Japanese and Korean dramas are similar to China.</p> <p>No.1: Compared to Japanese and Korean dramas, in the Western products, there are many new and novel things for me.</p>	<p>No. 2: So many examples.</p> <p>No.4: I would like to say, when I was young, I tended to passively absorb all the values these products convey to me.</p> <p>No. 2 and 3: Yes, but now some resistance might appear sometimes. Resistance might be not a proper word to describe.</p> <p>No. 4: Or in other words, some ideas that challenge what they convey to us.</p> <p>No. 2: Yes.</p>	<p>No. 4: For me, I don't accept the gory scenes.</p> <p>No.3: I dislike the stories that have a very complicated and chaotic sexual relationships such as <i>Gossip Girls</i> and <i>Twilight</i>. Their attitude towards sex is...too...open! I can't bear it. Then I chose not to watch it anymore. However, I feel it is OK for me to watch <i>Fifty Shades of Grey</i>, but not <i>Gossip Girls</i>. The relationships are too complicated and messy. It is just too much. It did challenge my own values. You</p>

		<p>No. 1: For me, I only care whether it is reasonable or not or whether it makes sense or not.</p>	<p>know, it is too open.</p> <p>No. 2: Will it really happen in the real world?</p> <p>No. 2 and 3: We just can't accept it.</p> <p>No. 4: It just reminded me of <i>Friends</i>, When I saw the scene when Rachel conceived Ross's baby and they made decision to give birth but still not to make a commitment. I was so shocked and it doesn't make sense.</p> <p>No. 3: Yes, it is true that those values and the attitude towards sex and relationship are so different from us.</p>
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#### **5.4 The Degree of attachment to the local and local culture**

This section explores how far the degree of participants' attachment to or detachment from China and local culture is influenced by foreign media consumption. From the data, all focus groups said that foreign media culture cannot influence their loyalty to China. They answered 'no', 'impossible' or 'home is home' (middle class group) without any doubt. However, there are differing degrees of attachment to and detachment from the local culture. One female claimed 'I took my everyday life and my culture for granted before, but after watching foreign products and made a comparison...oh! It is not taken for granted!' (female, 5). In addition, there is no other culture that can reach the same level of attachment as Chinese culture. However, this can vary. Relatively few participants said that after viewing the products they tended to increase the degree of attachment to the local culture. Some participants said there was no influence or negligible influence (younger student 4, blue-collar/working class 1 and 3, male 2 and 4).

The following examples show that, on the one hand, participants tend to be 'patriots' and show a high degree of loyalty to China – a high degree of attachment to the nation; on the other hand, the degree of attachment to local culture is not as high as to the nation. There are common features among the five examples. First, the participants experienced the process of dialogic imagination: they would 'compare, contrast, understand, reflect and criticize' during the process of cultural interaction. One participant (Example 4, No. 2) expressed a positive attitude towards cultural equality 'other cultures would not be inferior to Chinese culture. There is no difference. Or you can't not label 'good or 'bad'. It reflects a respect of cultural equality. The participants acknowledged and admired the good or advanced aspects of other cultures that were worth learning (Example 1, No. 3; Example 2, No. 1). At the same time, they realized and criticized the weak aspects of China. In Example 5, a female participant (No.3) expressed a distinction between the good and the bad. For her, the good could be applied universally, and there are many things from other cultures that could be learned by China. Besides, she clearly stated that she would not defend China's shortcomings or weaknesses just because she is Chinese, instead she would criticize them.

At least in terms of culture, participants ‘evaluated, assessed and reflected’ on other cultures, and also wanted to know more about Chinese culture. Some participants did ask ‘why our country can’t be like this’ (Example 1, No. 3), ‘what is China’s problem?’ ‘what is missing in China?’ (Example 4; No.1) or imagined what would happen if some good aspects were introduced into China, what society would be like (Example 2, No. 1; Example 3, No. 1). In Example 4, the participant (No. 2) observed that Japanese cartoons help to preserve and promote their own culture, while pointing out and expressing pity that China does not do well in this regard. Besides, some direct expressions such as ‘aspire to change’ (Example 1, No. 3), ‘make effort to develop my country’ (Example 1, No. 5) reflected the participants desire to make their country better. In addition, more radically, one participant wants to do something himself to change society (Example 2, No. 5). One argument made by Lull is that television was regarded as the main “the cultural reference point” by Chinese audiences to compare and assess the state of China (1991). It is true that the participants in this research used the foreign media products to compare and contrast between China and the rest of the world to find out the similarities and differences, the advantages and disadvantages. They are inspired by “dream of a better future” but they are not “frustrated and angered by the barriers that stand in the way” (170). Through the examples and the ideas offered by the participants, they do not stubbornly stick to local cultures and blindly reject all other cultures. Instead, they have a positive view to embrace something that could change and transform society and make it better. Participants tended to show a very high degree of attachment to the nation - China, but less attachment to the local culture. They can separate the culture from its locality. Patriots are not the same as ethnocentric nationalists. Ethnocentrics have the tendency to think one’s own culture is the best and look down on other cultures (Roudometof, 2005).

Example 1

(Student, younger)

No. 3: Sometimes, I engendered a feeling of anger: why our country can't be like this. In particular, when I see some very good aspect in their society in the drama, but current China doesn't have it. At those kind of moments, I really aspire to change.

No. 5: When I watched the American dramas, and especially saw the gap between China and America in American dramas, I have a strong feeling that I want to make efforts to develop my country. Thus, I'd say attach to local more.

#### Example 2

(Student, older)

No. 1: Sometimes, I was wondering that the future trends of China in respect of culture, will be a unique form. On the one hand, it inherits the best part of Chinese traditional culture; on the other hand, it will fuse some advanced part of Western culture. Then to form a unique ... in our society, we have already mentioned so many times this word, and maybe have been used too many times, but it is indeed a proper word - 'characteristics'. I am going to talk about culture. It is a culture with Chinese characteristics, neither so open as the West, nor so conservative as the pre-modern traditional Chinese culture. ('Characteristic' derives from the term 'socialism with Chinese characteristics'.)

No. 5: I started to reflect on my own culture. Maybe, I am a little bit radical, I sometimes attempt to put them into practice to change the society and things around me.

#### Example3

(Middle class)

No. 1: Not really. But I would say I compare and reflect. For example, I might imagine if our society had certain things whether the society would become better or not, or what would happen. I couldn't say these media products weaken my identity, I'd say, they supplement and enrich my identity.

#### Example 4

(Non-local)

No. 1: I can't deny that there exists cultural invasion. For a certain value or phenomena, I might think the differences and do some comparison. What meaning does this value want to convey to us. What is China's problem? What is missing in China? I like doing such things. I have my own thinking.

No. 2: No...I didn't think about it before. But I'd say other cultures would not be inferior to Chinese culture. There is no difference. Or you can't label 'good' or 'bad'. Through my observation, for example, the domestic cartoons don't have good quality, and they don't promote Chinese culture. While, the Ninja theme in Japanese cartoons have many historical elements, and Japanese people pay a lot of attentions on the quality and cultural influence.

Example 5

(Female)

No. 3: For me, good is good, bad is bad. I can accept those good things, but not those which are bad. What I mean good is something considered to be good all over the world. Other cultures have so many things we need to appreciate and learn. It does not mean because I am a Chinese I am not going to acknowledge and criticize something bad in our society.

In the second situation, Example 6 and Example 7 show that after watching foreign products, participants have a strong willingness to learn about China. Foreign media products provided another way for the participant to know about China. Similarly, in Example 7, after watching, the participant (No. 3) suddenly realized that Chinese culture – Kungfu, could be interpreted and displayed in another way, in an admirable way. This triggered his thinking about the issue of the neglect of traditional culture – it is a regret that Chinese know less about their own culture. While in Example 8, the participants show a sense of alienation and less commitment to the local culture. She seems to be self-centered to some extent. She picked and selected those values useful and suitable for her. According to her reply, she knows about

the advantages and disadvantages of China, the reason why Chinese culture is best for her is because she lives in Chinese society.

#### Example 6

Local

No. 2: Sometimes, I saw foreigners talking about China in the dramas, and I learn about China from another angle. I have a strong willingness to learn about China.

No. 3 I also have a strong willingness to learn about China.

#### Example 7

Male

No. 3: In recent years, I am getting closer to the traditional Chinese culture. It is happened all of a sudden. I like Chinese Kungfu, especially martial arts. I like watching Kungfu films. Many foreigners play military boxing in the screen, or some other boxing styles. When I see such scenes, I will have some reflection. Why can foreigners display and manifest our national cultures so well? Why can't I attempt to do this? Sometimes, I have this kind of feeling.

#### Example 8

Female

No. 1: Basically, it's better to have comparison between different cultures. It is because I am living in China, in this society. I know many advantages and many disadvantages of this society, but I still think Chinese culture is the best for me. The problem is if I have chance to immerse myself in a foreign culture for a while, then I can be my own judge whether certain values or culture is the best for me or not.

The short-term/no overseas experience group provided rich data and a variety of views. Example 9 is an excerpt of their conversation. It is a relatively long excerpt. Compared to other groups, it is a thought-provoking discussion, and every member participated in this

round of discussion. No. 1 realized it is an unchangeable fact that they are shaped by Chinese culture. It also indicates that she understands people from other cultures are also shaped by their own culture. No. 2 revealed a sense of national pride. No. 4 agreed with No.1's view and pointed out they are profoundly influenced by their culture and suggested an unavoidable cultural bias. No. 3 further expressed her love for Chinese culture, and she believed the experience of short-term overseas experience and mediated-experience through books, television and dramas are insufficient to understand other cultures well. No. 4 and No. 2 said there are no high-low distinctions between cultures, and they are equal. No. 4 showed a willingness to embrace other cultures and believed it was not necessary to make a commitment to keep original values. This participant exhibited and admitted a high degree of detachment to the local culture. New and fresh ideas from the foreign media products inspired her. In contrast, No. 3 did not think these products reduced attachment, rather new values can be regarded as a supplement to broaden horizons. No. 2 and No. 1 held a similar view that these products helped to make them better. Also, No. 2 pointed out it helped her understand what is not suitable or proper in Chinese culture.

The participants not only spoke about themselves but also related it to wider Chinese society. No. 4 noticed the gap between China and other countries. It is interesting to see No. 4 has a relatively low degree of attachment to the local but she has high degree of attachment and loyalty to China. Especially, she hoped she could make contribution to reducing the gap. No. 3 wondered about the situation in China. No.1 said the products made him notice aspects he had previously never paid attention to. Likewise, No. 2 thought she tended to be more objective, and she no longer took Chinese culture for granted after comparing and contrasting it with other cultures. Besides, No. 4 realized that most of the foreign cultural flow was from developed countries to developing countries and noticed a large part of world culture was missing in this global media arena. She believed that the different values coexisted within her own. No. 2 agreed with this coexistence, but there might be an order of priority, she argued.

Example 9

(Short-term/no overseas experience)

No. 3: Our worldview, philosophy and values system are developed on the basis of the Chinese culture.

No. 2: I am so proud.

No. 4: People just can't decide where they are born. We are deeply and profoundly influenced by the Chinese culture. It is deep rooted.

No. 3: Also, you can't just make an arbitrary decision and say the foreign cultures are better than ours just through maybe travelling, books, television and dramas, you never stay there for a very long time. I like my Chinese culture a lot!

No. 4: For me, there is no high-low distinction between cultures. (No. 2: yes.) I would like to embrace other cultures, and I don't think I have to keep my original values.

...

No. 4: I felt I tend to detach myself from the local. These products help me form new ideas.

No. 3: I am not going to say it weakens my belongingness or attachment to the local culture. Maybe, it is a form of supplement. It broadens your horizons.

No. 2: Yes, it has a function of betterment or perfection. Also, it helps me to reject something not proper in Chinese culture. At the same time, it adds something fresh and new.

No. 1: I don't have very strong feelings. I agree it is a kind of betterment and perfection.

No. 4: When I saw the gap between China and other countries, I really want to make my effort to change the situation and reduce the gap.

No. 3: And think why China is like this? But I don't pay much attention on Chinese traditional cultures.

No. 2: Before I think I took Chinese cultures for granted, but now I'd say I tend to be objective. Sometimes, I dislike certain aspects of the Chinese culture.

No.1: Through other cultures' permeation and comparison, I started to focus on issues I ignored and neglected before.

No. 4: In my opinion, the distribution of culture in the world is from the powerful developed countries to developing countries, depending on the economic strength. Different

values are coexisting in my body.

No. 2: Coexists, but maybe ignore some. I can't be 100% sure to say they are coexisting.

Some is more, some is less.

The main finding is that there is no influence or only negligible influence from watching foreign media products on the degree of attachment to local culture. One participant (young student 4) said that these dramas had little impact in general: 'my balance tips only during viewing. After viewing... no... We are just watching dramas!' Through her answer, the role of these products seemed more like entertainment. Similarly, two participants from blue collar/working class (1 and 3) also said these products were only for fun and entertainment and they will 'never, ever' change them. Another two blue collar/working class participants from male group (2 and 4) said that because of work they were too busy to think about it.

**Table 5. 4 Degree of detachment/attachment to local culture**

Users	No.	Degree of detachment/attachment to local culture
Students, Younger	1	No change
	2	
	3	Sometimes, I engendered a feeling of anger: why our country can't be like this. In particular, when I see some very good aspect in their society in their drama, but current China doesn't have it. At those kind of moment, I really aspire to change.
	4	Negligible influence, in general. My balance tips only during viewing. After viewing...no... We are just watching dramas!
	5	When I watched the American dramas and especially saw the gap between China and America in American dramas, I have a strong feeling that I wants to make effort to develop my country. Thus, I'd say attach to local more.
	All participants expressed that foreign culture media products cannot influence their loyalty towards the local.	
Students, older	1	<p>Quite obvious.</p> <p>Sometimes, I was wondering that the future trends of China in respect of culture, will be a unique form. On the one hand, it inherits the best part of Chinese traditional culture; on the other hand, it will fuse some advanced part of Western culture. Then to form a unique ... in our society, we have already mentioned so many times this word, and maybe have been used too many times, but it is indeed a proper word - 'characteristics'. I am going to talk about culture. It is a culture with Chinese characteristics, neither so open as the West, nor so conservative as the pre-modern time traditional Chinese culture.</p>

		(‘Characteristic’ he used, derives from the term ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics’.)
	2	<p>No, no. But I feel my national identity is weakened.</p> <p>I don’t think Chinese traditional cultures should be necessary labelled ‘good’. It is a form of culture, like any other cultures in the world. And for other cultures introduced into China, I’d like to use the phrase ‘mutual promotion’ and ‘harmoniously coexistence and compatibility’.</p> <p>The use of identity, you should depend on the situation. Sometimes when I go back to my hometown, I have to change a bit in front of my parents. I am a good kid!</p>
	3	Increase
	4	<p>No, no.</p> <p>Coexistence.</p>
	5	<p>No</p> <p>I feel that I identify more with the culture before Song Dynasty. Because, before Song Dynasty, the Hua nation (No. 2: Han and Tang Dynasty.) showed a great advancement in the world. After that, the development of its philosophy and the whole environment was strange and disappointing.</p> <p>I started to reflect on my own culture.</p> <p>Maybe, I am a little bit radical, I sometimes attempt to put them into practice to change the society and things around me.</p>
	All participants expressed that foreign culture media products cannot influence their loyalty towards China	
Middle-class	1	I believe that even I live abroad for a long time, this kind of royalty is always in your heart, gushing now and then.

		<p>Sometimes, when I saw the foreign drama display some Chinese culture, but I don't know. I will search it online.</p> <p>Not really. But I would say I compare and reflect. For example, I might imagine if our society had certain thing whether the society would become better or not, or what would happen.</p> <p>I couldn't say these products weaken my identity, I'd say, they supplement and enrich my identity.</p>
	2	But I do feel my Chinese becomes bad.
	5	Have very high degree of loyalty although I quite like America. My Chinese becomes bad.
	All participants said that foreign culture media products cannot influence their loyalty towards China: 'home is home'.	
Blue-collar/ working class	1	No, never, ever It is just for entertainment.
	3	No, never, ever. It is just for fun, and it can't change me.
Local residents (Beijing)	1	Tends to use more foreign products. Not values.
	2	Sometimes, I saw the foreigners talking about China in the dramas, and I learn about China from another angle. I have a strong willingness to learn about China.
	3	I also have a strong willingness to learn about China.
	4	Sometimes I have to make decision between values. I choose Western style, it does not mean I don't know about Chinese culture.
	All participants said that foreign media/culture products cannot influence their loyalty towards China. They also felt they had many identities and these coexisted.	
Non-local	1	But my national identity is weakened

		I can't deny that there exists cultural invasion. For a certain value or phenomena, I might think the differences and do some comparison. What meaning does this value want to convey to us. What is China's problem? What is missing in China? I like doing such things. I have my own thinking.
	2	I noticed that my national identity is weakened. No...I didn't think about it before. But I'd say other cultures would not be inferior to Chinese culture. There is no difference. Or you can't label 'good' or 'bad'. Through my observation, for example, the domestic cartoons don't have good quality, and don't promote Chinese culture. While, the Ninja theme in Japanese cartoons have many historical elements, and Japanese people pay a lot of attentions on the quality and cultural influence.
	3	My national identity is weakened.
	4	My national identity is weakened. I have my own understanding. In my understanding, with the time passing by and social change, our elders like our grandparents' generation, they know more traditional and national culture than my parents' generation. When it comes to the generation like us 1980s and 1990s, there are so many values and things from the outside world for us to see, to try and to choose. Chinese own traditional things are ignored, because young people have a breadth of vision.
	5	No change in my national identity. But I notice that I know myself a little bit more than before.
		All participants said that foreign media/cultural products cannot influence their loyalty towards China; there were too many choices from outside and insufficient cultural heritage.
Male	1	My national identity is not weakened. Absolutely not.

	2	Too busy to think about it.
	3	<p>In recent years, I have become close to traditional Chinese culture. It is all of a sudden. I like Chinese Kungfu, especially martial arts. I like watching Kungfu films. Many foreigners play military boxing in the screen, or some other boxing styles. When I see such scene, I will have some reflection. Why foreigners can display and manifest our national cultures so well? Why can't I attempt to do this? Sometimes, I have this kind of feeling.</p> <p>Very short time. I can detach myself from the real life and immerse myself into the scene. When finishing the film, I come back to the real life again. I am in China, following the rules and norms of Chinese society.</p> <p>I do make some comparison and reflection. When I watch the American dramas, I would compare the difference between two countries.</p>
	4	I don't think that much. Too busy.
	All participants said that foreign culture media products cannot influence their loyalty towards China	
Female	1	Basically, it's better to have comparison between different cultures. It is because I am living in China, in this society. I know many advantages and many disadvantages of this society, but I still think Chinese culture is the best for me. The problem is if I have chance to immerse myself in a foreign culture for a while, then I can make my own judge whether certain value or culture is the best for me or not.
	2	No
	3	For me, good is good, bad is bad. I can accept those good things, but not those bad. What I mean good is something considered to be good all over the world.

	<p>Other cultures have so many things we need to appreciate and learn. It does not mean because I am a Chinese I am not going to acknowledge and criticize something bad in our society.</p> <p>There is no influence on my national identity. About foreign identities... I think they are coexisting in my body. It doesn't mean when I learned some new values, and those Chinese values I have already accepted were forgotten by me. They fuse together and serve me.</p>
	<p>4 No influence on my national identity.</p>
	<p>5 I took my everyday life and my cultures for granted before, but, after watching foreign products and made a comparison...oh! It is not taken for granted!</p> <p>In my opinion, in some cases, some cultures in a drama... you know the drama is from a certain country, and what the drama tries to convey to foreign audiences normally is good and positive sides of their society. It is a kind of promotion. For example, the films and dramas made by China won't show foreign audiences any negative aspects of their society. It follows same logic. So, sometimes what we see and encounter, is only small part of their society and culture. A society must have both positive/good and negative/bad sides. We just don't know the negative part yet. And those good sides may expand.</p>
<p>Short-term overseas experience</p>	<p>This group discussed loyalty to China.</p> <p>No. 3: Our worldview, philosophy and values system are developed on the basis of the Chinese culture.</p> <p>No. 2: I am so proud.</p> <p>No. 4: People just can't decide where they are born. We deeply and</p>

	<p>profoundly influenced by Chinese culture. It is deep rooted.</p> <p>No. 3: Also, you can't just make an arbitrary decision and say the foreign cultures are better than ours just through maybe travelling, books, televisions and dramas, you never stay there for a very long time. I like my Chinese culture a lot!</p> <p>No. 4: For me, there is no high-low distinction between cultures. (No.2: yes.) I would like to embrace other cultures, and I don't think I have to keep my original values.</p> <p>No. 4: I felt I tend to detach myself from the local. These products help me form new ideas.</p> <p>No. 3: I am not going to say it weakens my belongingness or attachment to the local culture. Maybe, it is a form of supplement. It broadens your horizons.</p> <p>No. 2: Yes, it has function of betterment or perfection. Also, it helps me to reject something not proper in the Chinese culture. At the same time, it adds something fresh and new. I don't have very strong feelings. I agree it is a kind of betterment and perfection.</p> <p>No. 4: When I saw the gap between China and other countries, I really want to make my effort to change the situation and reduce the gap.</p> <p>No. 3: And think why China is like this? But I don't pay much attention on Chinese traditional cultures.</p> <p>No. 2: Before I think I took the Chinese culture for granted, but now I'd say I tend to be objective. Sometimes, I dislike certain aspects of the Chinese culture.</p> <p>No. 1: Through other cultures' permeation and comparison, I started to focus on issues I ignored and neglected before.</p> <p>No. 4: In my opinion, the distribution of culture in the world is from the powerful developed countries to developing countries,</p>
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	<p>depending on the economic strength. Different values have coexisted in my body.</p> <p>No. 2: Coexist, but maybe ignore some. I can't be 100% sure to say they are coexisted. Some is more, some is less.</p>
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### 5.5 Differences between the mediated experience and the real experience

Compared to the situation James Lull wrote 30 years ago, few Chinese people can travel abroad. While, the situation changes, travel abroad is not so difficult as that time. Some participants of this research had overseas experience. In this section, the difference between the mediated experience and the real experience has been investigated (see Table 5.5).

The replies from these participants are the same in that they feel there are differences. In general, they mentioned three aspects of difference, firstly, whether these products really portray their country of origin. Some participants mentioned the difference between the content they saw on the screen and the real places they had visited. For example, a female participant (younger student 2) said she felt disappointed when she visited South Korea, a similar experience was narrated by No. 2 from middle class. A female participant expressed the view that there was not much difference between Japan and the Japanese dramas she had seen.

Secondly, some expressed a difference between the viewing experience and real experience when immersing themselves in a foreign country. The participants have realized that it is a two-way communication with emotion and mood exchange when they are in the country, while it is a unidirectional mass-mediated communication when they are watching foreign media products (McQuail, 2005). 'Mediated-quasi interaction' proposed by Thompson (1995: 84) refers to interaction with media, not real interaction. It does not have the same quality and feeling as face-to-face communication. The data in this research support Thompson's argument. Participants used various ways to describe their feelings. A male

participant (older student 5) thought people were more like ‘observers’ when viewing media products and there was a distance. When immersing in a foreign environment, he did not deny there still some distance from the Other, however it was less compared to foreign media consumption. People are not only observers: they have a direct and immediate experience with feedback and emotions:

...If you communicate with a real person, this person will give you feedback with emotion immediately. But through films and dramas, you can’t have same experience. These products provide you a one-sided view, you actually can be regarded as an observer. While, when you immerse yourself in a culturally different environment, you are not only an observer, you have a direct and immediate experience. Compared to the screen, the distance from culturally different others is considerably shortened.

Similarly, another female participant (local 4) thought of herself as a ‘listener’, listening to other people’s stories, to refer to the process of watching foreign media products. When travelling, it was her own story – she actively created her own experience, and there was no need to stay in front of the screen and passively listen. Likewise, a female participant (non-local 4), used ‘just an action of looking’ to describe her watching experience. Travelling abroad has a great impact. Overall, consuming media involves verbs to ‘observe’, ‘listen’ and ‘look’, which suggest a limitation, a passive attitude, lack of feedback with immediate emotion and mood exchange. Thirdly, a participant expressed that compared to dramatic, exaggerated story-telling, traveling allows you to see more ordinary and everyday behavior (short-term/no overseas experience 1). In addition, a participant from same group said that dramas had a limited view, and traveling was a broader experience (4).

**Table 5.5 Differences between the mediated experience and real experience**

User	No.	Comments
Students, younger	2	There are many different aspects in real Korea from Korea on the screen. In the dramas, in stereotype, many places are luxury and grand, and the food people eat looks very delicious. But I don't think they taste as good.
Students, older	5	There is some difference. If you communicate with a real person, this person will give you a feedback with emotion immediately. But through films and dramas, you can't have same experience. These products provide you one-side view, you actually can be regarded as an observer. While, when you immerse yourself in a culturally different environment, you are not only an observer, you have a direct and immediate experience. Compared to the screen, the distance from culturally different others considerably is shortened.
Middle class	group discussion	<p>No. 2: It looks so beautiful and clean in all aspects on the screen. But when you visit there, you just realized that the place is disordered and a bit dirty.</p> <p>No. 1: I don't have strong feeling to be honest. Unless the environment is rather different from China. For example, lingering in the tropical rainforest in South America. It was so so different!</p> <p>No. 2: Wow, you were in a rainforest before?</p> <p>No. 1: Yes! I was! (with a proud expression) ('but do please take bodyguards if you want to travel there. It was dangerous.' he added this after finish focus group.)</p> <p>No. 4: Maybe I am a bit different. I have been there for one</p>

		<p>week, and I really wanted to go home. Because I think some things there, are not as good as at home!</p> <p>No. 2: You are a family woman.</p> <p>No. 4: Not comfortable. Hmm... a sense of belongingness.</p>
Beijing	group discussion	<p>No. 4: Viewing and travel... travel is more flexible and free.</p> <p>No. 2: Travel has a greater impact.</p> <p>No. 4: Theoretically, I believed it is foreign drama. Because, when I watch it, I know nothing about a foreign culture, or only small part of it. Then I have to believe everything that the drama tries to convey to us. While, travel is my own story, at least, not as a listener.</p> <p>No. 2: Drama is like a legend, and travel makes that legend come true.</p>
Non-local	4	<p>No. 4: When you watch something, there is a sense of distance. What you do is just an action of 'look'. The story might have some influence on you, but limited. But, if you are physically in a foreign culture, it has a direct impact on me.</p> <p>No. 3: I did not think about this question, to be honest.</p>
Short-term/no overseas experience	group discussion	<p>No. 1: The films display a given situation and condition. What we have seen during the travelling is ordinary and everyday behavior. It is not as dramatic, embellished and subtle as what delineated in the films.</p> <p>No. 4: In drama, it tends to display a microscale world, but in travelling, it tends to be relatively macroscale.</p> <p>No. 2: It is just different. But I don't feel there is huge difference at least between the Japanese dramas and travelling.</p>

## *Chapter 6*

### *Findings and Analysis III: Social change, global media and cosmopolitanism with Chinese characteristics*

This chapter will be divided into two main part. Subsection 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4 will continue to present the last groups of data collected in the field. The questions that asked the participants are concerned about the interaction with the Other at post-consumption stage and in their everyday life as well as the long-term effect on the urban youth. Discussions on the relationships between global media, social change and the nature of cosmopolitanism as well as the possibility of realization of other-centric cosmopolitanism by foreign media consumption will be made in Section 6.5 and 6.6, through combining the data and previous historical chapter together.

#### **6.1 Effect on audience post-consumption**

In terms of post-consumption, the author asked ‘did foreign media products bring any change in your life? Did you do anything after watching foreign media products?’ The participants provided different answers which fell into two general categories, depending on whether they used the media as a reference or not.

First, the foreign media played role as a reference for participants. A summary of the response data is presented in the Table 6.1a. On the one hand, foreign media products can provide a guide, knowledge and experience in transnational communication for participants, as well as the improvement of language. No. 5 from the middle-class group had had personal experience of cross-cultural communication, and the cultures he came across in the dramas and films (mainly American products) provided some guide and experience in his work ‘...in many ways, they are exactly the same, especially those formal diplomatic receptions, for example the way people dress, behave and speak’. Similarly, another participant said that she also learned some social etiquette from dramas (Short-term/ no overseas experience 2). Also, for participant No. 5 from the middle-class group, the knowledge that he could learn

from foreign media products reassured him. Especially, when he came across some situation that Chinese culture and knowledge could not help with, the knowledge and experience he learned from the foreign media products did sometimes help. On the other side, he pointed out the limitation of foreign media products. The experience these products could provide represented only a very small part of real life. According to his experience and observation, experience accumulated in real life was more important. Likewise, for No. 3, Korean products gave her ideas about how the Korean cultural industry operated. As she worked with Korean people, the attitudes to work of the Korean people shown in these products helped her to work with them (Short term/ no overseas experience). In addition, the improvement of language skills was mentioned in Chapter 4 as a motivation for using foreign media products (see Table 4.5).

Foreign media products can also inspire participants with new ideas and offer alternative values and ways to solve problems in life. Quite a few participants in the previous section mentioned that new values and new ideas enrich and improve their lives. In the table below, one participant (local 4) found that some of the ways of expressing love and care in American drama provided an alternative way of thinking about relationships. This is similar to one of the results found by Strelitz (2003) in his research into the attitudes of South African youths towards American drama. Similarly, another participant was amazed by the alternative ways of solving issues in terms of family and relationships (local 2).

Secondly, the consumption of foreign media products does not always lead to using it as a reference point (see Table 6.1b). There are several aspects in this category. First is to listen to the original sound track as entertainment as fans (non-local 3). Secondly, there is a curiosity to explore the foreign meaning system for enjoyment. For example, the same participant was interested in detective stories because of *Sherlock*, and found that Japan had a strong culture in detective stories (non-local 3). Japanese people portrayed in the Japanese comics and animation appeared to express a great ardour for life and this aroused one participant's curiosity and led him to explore Japan (student, younger, 1). Thus dramas and

films influence the participants' interest in travel destinations by attracting viewers to visit. One participant from the blue collar/ working class group expressed his wish to visit America to see the Statue of Liberty because it always appears in American films (3). For a local resident (2), she said her travel preferences were influenced by the media consumption to some extent, but she also thought her curiosity for certain countries would decrease after having visited there – it might not last.

Third, the consumption of foreign media tends to influence participants' lifestyles to some extent. It attracts participants to have a healthier lifestyle. A male participant from a non-local group (4) after viewing *The Terminator* started to go to the gym as he wanted to have a figure like Arnold Schwarzenegger. Similarly, another male participant admired the exercise habits displayed in (American) products, and he wanted to try such outdoor recreation. In addition, these media products enrich their lives by inspiring them to try out new things, such as playing Xbox, tasting the cuisine of different countries (local 3, 2 and 1). Another participant has mentioned that watching these media products made her feel cool and special (young student 4). No. 3 agreed with her. Here, she is experiencing a form of instrumental cosmopolitanism (Ong, 2009). The core of instrumental cosmopolitanism is through consuming otherness and making use of their knowledge to promote oneself and further demarcate oneself from others (ibid). By consuming foreign media products, she felt 'cool' and 'special' compared to others who watch the domestic. However, No. 5 pointed out that everyone can get access to these resources, so it is not special or anything to be proud of. The curiosity and interest in traveling seem to be evidence of a further engagement in the foreign meaning system, whereas the other reasons are more instrumental.

**Table 6.1.a Using foreign media products as a reference**

**Provide guide, knowledge and experience in transcultural communication**

No. 2: I have learned some social etiquette from dramas. (Short-term/ no overseas experience)

No. 5: We have watched many foreign films and dramas do provide some experience, for example dancing, dating, and diplomatic reception. In many ways, they are exactly the same, especially those formal diplomatic receptions, for example the way people dress, behave and speak.

Those dramas and films broaden your horizon and give you some experience, at least they play some role in preparation for my work. Especially, we work with foreigners for most of the time, we have high likelihood to meet something we never come across before in Chinese social and cultural context. But these products can give you something as reference, but not always. Then when you meet something you don't know, you won't panic. However, experience from films and dramas is only small part. Your real life's experience is more important. When you are well-informed and sophisticated, have accumulated experience and seen the world, you will be calm most of time and easily adapt to new things. (Middle class)

No. 3: I learned their working attitude, and my work is related to Korean entertainment. When I am watching Korean dramas and films, at the same time, I am observing the way how Korea shapes their actors, actresses and entertainers, and how Korea promotes them. The contents of the products sometimes produce an effect on our industry. (Short term/ no oversea experience)

### **Language improvement**

No. 1: Learn some useful phrases. (Female)

(Middle class)

No.1: I learned some phrases

No. 5: Yes, but very soon, I forget.

No. 3: Sometimes, the way they express is different from my Chinglish way.

No. 5: Use for reference. Help build up my language sense.

No. 1: But I realized and confused that some phrases can be used, but some are not. I don't know.

### **Inspire new ideas and provide alternative values and ways to solve the issues in everyday life**

Local:

No. 4: For example, when it comes to dealing with the issues of relationship, before, I was extremely conservative and traditional in relationships. After watching American dramas for a long time, I started to think and question whether I was too conservative. I think some ways in dramas is a nice and caring way or expressing love. They (values on sex and relationship) are not always too unconventional. I was just overthinking.

No. 2: Yes, I think in some issues such as relationship and family, American dramas seem to open a door for me. Wow, these problems could be dealt with in this or that way. Sometimes, I feel I am more confident in myself.

Interviewer: ...give you an alternative solution to the problem. And what do you mean by 'confidence you have mentioned'?

No. 2: Yes, for example, if I did something in an improper way, I would have terribly upset, felt self-abased, or felt embarrassed. After watching the dramas, I realized that so many people in the world do the similar things. Then I think, oh, it's Ok, never mind. Then many things that once bothered me before, don't bother me too much now.

**Table 6.1.b Post-consumption**

Activities		Comments
Use or purchase the film/drama products	Entertainment	Listen to original sound track (high frequency)
	Purchase products	Non-local No. 3: I like <i>The Big Bang Theory</i> very much. I like Sheldon's styles' T-shirts and his periodic table of chemical element shower curtain very much. And I bought them.
Curiosity	Find something interesting and start to explore.	<p>Non-local No. 3: After I had watched <i>Sherlock</i>, I started to be very interested in detective themes. Then, I also found Japan has a very strong tradition in detective theme.</p> <p>Beijing No.1: ... I paid some attention in military science in my spare time. Some scenes in the foreign films aroused my interest and my curiosity, then I started to explore this area and learn it on my own.</p> <p>Student, younger No.1: In Japanese comic and animation, Japanese people always display a great ardor for life. It arouses my curiosity to explore this nation. Also, because the country is very beautiful.</p>
		<p>Travelling</p> <p>Beijing No. 2: The target of my curiosity... it changes with different period of time. The foreign films have some influence on me. When I was young, I liked to watch the Soviet Union films a lot under the influence of my parents. I was very interested in Russia. Then</p>

		<p>when I was in girlhood, during this period of time, like many other girls, I fancied French romance. And now it's America's turn, America gives you a sense of reason, it is not that unreasonable... down to earth. (No.1 interrupts: Haha! Does UK give you a sense of calm?) (Pause, and continue) To some extent it influenced my decision where to travel. I travel in one country, then my curiosity shifts to another country. The curiosity does not last for a long time.</p> <p>Blue-collar No. 3: I would like to travel to America to see the Statue of Liberty because you can always see it in American films.</p> <p>Blue-collar No.1: For me, Las Vegas</p>
Influence lifestyles	To have a healthier lifestyle	<p>Go to gym. Non-local No. 4: I started go to gym and use the fitness and physical conditioning equipment. I would like my figure as stout as Arnold Schwarzenegger in <i>The Terminator</i>.</p> <p>Beijing No. 3: In the film or drama, in general, they have exercise habit. It is very good! And they like outdoor recreation very much! I always want to have a try.</p>
	Enrich life	<p>Play Xbox, have western/Japanese food/ drink coffee</p> <p>Beijing No. 3: I tried some food just for adding some new things in ordinary life.</p> <p>Beijing No. 2: In terms of the spice of life, look at those foreign women in the drama and film, the way they act and the way they live is very attractive. They are very</p>

		<p>charming.</p> <p>Beijing No. 1: I agree. Before I went to university, I visited canteen, every day, same. But after viewing, I started to try new food. Japanese food taste good!</p>
	Cultural capital	<p>Students, younger</p> <p>No. 4: I feel cool and feel special.</p> <p>No. 3: Yes.</p> <p>No. 5: I don't think so, as everyone can access these resources.</p>

## 6.2 Encounter with foreigners in everyday life

The frequency of encounters and dialogue with foreigners in everyday life has also been explored. According to Table 6.2, it is clear that, except for the middle-class group and No.3 from the short-term/no overseas experience group, participants did not have many chances to have two-way communication with the Other in their everyday life. Although they have some experience of communicating with the Other in different forms, such as having foreign teachers in the schools but hardly speaking to them (non-local 1 and 2, male 3, female 2, short-term/no overseas experience 2); having foreign experts visiting and academic exchanges a few times a year (older student 2, local 1, 2 and 3); asking a question of a foreigner (younger student 3); saying 'hi' to a tourist (blue-collar/working class 1), the environment they live in is a 'secure zone'. They are familiar with Chinese culture and know how to live in Chinese society. They are not living in an environment where they need to communicate with culturally different others very often. The middle-class group and No. 2 from the short-term/ no overseas experience group work with foreign people. They have to expose themselves to culturally different others. In order to communicate well, they need to have certain competences, such as language, some knowledge about the culture in order to work with the Other. It does not seem to be very important for other participants to have

such competences.

The following conversation is an excerpt of the discussion from the blue-collar/ working class group that came to the author's notice. During the interviews, participants from eight groups more or less said they could feel the impact of globalization in their everyday life, such as foreign restaurants, information flows, interconnected world, global village. However, the blue-collar group held the opposite opinion. They do not feel that globalization is happening in their everyday lives. For No.1, the changes in the world have nothing to do with him. Also, he distanced himself from the well-educated people. He belonged to the domestic culture and preferred this way of life. He treated the domestic culture and the international culture equally. In addition, this group mentioned money every time. They paid more attention to working and making a living, and spent less time in entertainment, at least in consuming foreign media products:

No. 1: I don't feel globalization.

No. 3: No.

No. 1: I don't feel it in my everyday life.

No. 3: Same here.

No.1 & 3: I don't feel it has any influence in my life.

No. 1: Globalization. It means nothing to me. No matter how globalized this world is, it won't influence how much money I have in my pocket and how much I use for food.

And I am from here. I like the domestic way of life and environment. Those international lifestyles are for well-educated people with good qualities. I think I am not. The domestic and the international, they are equal. There is no such thing as superiority. They are all equal. For example, Westerners like eating bread, but we like eating noodles. You just can't say that this is tasty and that is not. They are both equal.

**Table 6.2 Frequency of two-way communication with foreigners in everyday life**

Users	How often do you have two-way communication with foreigners in your everyday life?	Activities
Students, younger	Very low frequency	No. 3: Once I asked a question on <i>Quora</i> , and got some replies.
Students, older	Not so often.	<p>No. 2: Sometimes, we have got the chance of academic exchange. I helped two exchange students to buy camera.</p> <p>No. 5: Chat with friends through Facebook, but not so often.</p>
Middle class	Very high frequency.	<p>No. 1: Make jokes.</p> <p>No. 4: Daily conversation and academic communication.</p> <p>No. 1: I felt sometimes academic communication is easier than daily communication.</p> <p>No. 1: I think the group you are interviewing is a bit unique. When we are working, we expose to the foreigners almost 24 hours a day. Please imagine anything that could happen between Chinese people, it might happen when we are working.</p>
Blue-collar/ working class	Hardly ever	No. 1: Once said 'hi' to a tourist.

Local	Sometimes	<p>No. 1: Sometimes, there are academic exchanges in my lab. After communication, we introduce them to Beijing as an interpreter. (Twice or three times a year.)</p> <p>No. 2: Sometimes, some foreign experts visited our company. (Twice or three times a year.)</p> <p>No. 3: Same here.</p> <p>No. 4: Some exchange students would like to participant in our astronomy activities.</p>
Non-local	Low frequency	<p>No. 2: There were foreign teachers in my middle school, but I did not communicate with them very often.</p> <p>No. 1: In my university, there are foreign teachers, but I hardly communicate with them.</p>
Male	Hardly ever	<p>No. 3: There are foreign teachers in my university, but I hardly communicate with them.</p>
Female	Hardly ever	<p>No. 3: I only had communication with foreign teachers three or four times in the school.</p>
Short-term/no overseas experience	Low frequency (except for No. 2)	<p>No. 3: I am working on cultural industry work with Korean people, so it is a quite high frequency.</p> <p>No. 2: We had foreign teachers in the university, but I did not talk to them.</p>

		No. 4: I came across a foreign teacher in New Zealand on the subway, then we made small talk.
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### 6.3 Long-term impact of foreign media products

In the previous section, the short-term effect during the consumption process has been explored. The long-term impact of consumption in general has also been investigated. Data have been presented in Table 6.3. Overall, according to the participants' experience, the long-term influence of foreign media products on participants tends to be limited. A majority of participants said that it was little, negligible and not much influence on their daily life. Some participants said quite frankly that they treated these products just as a form of entertainment, for relaxation (young student 5, blue-collar/working class 1 and 3) just for fun (local 1), for leisure time (female 1), or a relief from stress (older student 1). Some participants (middle-class 1) could separate the dramas from reality very well, by clearly saying 'Drama is drama. Real life is real life'. A similar view has been stated (non-local 3) in terms of the short-term media effect. Other general effects were mentioned such as expanding participants' views, broadening horizons, enriching life (younger student 2, 3, 5; older student 3, 4,5). The participants from the middle-class group thought the foreign media products had some influence on them, but this was limited by the social environment. In the conversation, No. 2 described 'there are many small little sparks' in her head. 'Many little sparks' is a metaphor for new feelings and ideas challenging Chinese traditions, but she did not resist and even she would like to have a try. 'You just can't say 'oh can I have a steak please?' in our canteen', No. 5 said. His example is a metaphor as well: 'Steak' here represents Western values, and 'our canteen' the Chinese social environment. Thus, he suggests that people's actions have to follow the norms and practice of Chinese society and people, similar to what No. 4 mentioned.

**Table 6.3 Long-term impact of foreign media on daily life**

Users	Long-term impact on daily life in general
Students, Young	<p>No. 1: Some influence.</p> <p>No. 2: Influence my choice on fashion and fashion magazines.</p> <p>No. 3: Expand thinking ability and a source of entertainment. Fashion.</p> <p>No. 5: Broaden my horizon, relax and adjust mood.</p> <p>No. 4: Sometimes, in the social level, these products may lead waves of ‘classical lines’ in public. But I may not follow. It all depends.</p>
Students, Older	<p>No. 1: For me, entertainment and relieving stress is most important thing. But I think, many people have been influenced to great extent, but at our age, they know what choose to do. It just depends on who you interview.</p> <p>No. 2: True. Most thinking takes place just during viewing. Then you just come back to your life. Too lazy to think it deeply after viewing. Nothing changes.</p> <p>No. 3: They enrich myself.</p> <p>No. 4: American dramas often gives you inspiration to life and living. While the domestic dramas and films are brainless.</p> <p>No. 5: Wow, an issue can be solved in such way!</p>
Middle Class	<p>No. 1: The influence over my life is small. In most cases, I separate them. Drama is drama. Real life is real life.</p> <p>No. 2: In some cases, I will not even be aware of it.</p> <p>No. 3 and 4: Yes, I agree. Maybe, they have exerted a subtle influence on me, in a silent way. But we don’t notice it.</p> <p>No. 5: It has a huge influence on my daily life.</p> <p>No. 4: Daily life? Then no.</p> <p>No. 2: Can I say there are many small little sparks in my head?</p> <p>No. 4: Everyday life... you have to take people and surroundings</p>

	<p>around you into consideration.</p> <p>No. 5: Yes, it is true that if there is no external condition, you still cannot put them into practice. You just can't say 'oh can I have a steak please?' in our canteen.</p>
Blue-collar/ working class	<p>The foreign dramas and films have little influence on their life.</p> <p>Just for the entertainment</p>
Local Resident (Beijing)	<p>No.1: Very little. In general, I watch film is just for fun, I don't think that much to be honest.</p> <p>No. 2: Little, not that much.</p> <p>No. 3: So-so. I would give it a 5 on a scale of 10.</p>
Non-local	<p>No. 2: Theoretically, it should have great influence on me. However, in my everyday life, very little influence.</p> <p>No. 1: Only a little, negligible effect on me.</p> <p>No. 4: Very little.</p> <p>No. 3: Very little.</p>
Male	<p>No. 2: Very little, negligible.</p> <p>No. 3: I treat it just as an entertainment activity in my leisure time. And we don't have much time for relaxing. It is something watched not very often.</p> <p>No. 1. It has a strong impact on me in terms of education. I would like to talk about it. If I have my own kids in the future, I will send them abroad, because I don't want them to suffer huge stress.</p> <p>No. 4: No influence.</p>
Female	<p>No. 3: Not much, but only a little. I can feel it by myself.</p> <p>No.1: They play an important role in my leisure time.</p>
Short-term/no overseas experience	<p>No. 2, 3, 4: Big influence.</p> <p>No.1: Moderate.</p>

## 6.4 Channels for imagining the world

Table 6.4 provides responses on the question of what channels young people use to imagine the world. The film and dramas are not the only sources for imagining the world. The answers focus on two main aspects. First, the vast majority of participants rely greatly on their own individual experiences and learn also from the experiences and stories of others, for example of their friends, relatives and acquaintances. Second, the world is imagined through media. The news plays an important role in helping them imagine the world. Both authentic and non-authentic online information and comments also play an important role in their understanding and imagination of the world, as well as books. The influence of foreign drama and film varies according to different people. One participant expressed the limitation of personal experience, but television and dramas helped her open-up a window to see the world without physically moving.

Local (Beijing) 2: Why we imagine something, one important thing is that we can't immerse ourselves in this, thus we imagine. Especially, when I was young, I had limited experience. I couldn't go abroad at that time. I had no other choices but to use media to imagine outside world. Thus, dramas and films have influence on me to great extent.

Some participants questioned the authenticity of the media:

Younger Student 4: I came across a girl from North Korea before, and I asked her some information about her country. After the conversation with her, I felt that sometimes what we see and listen on TV and media is not true. I personally feel that to have face-to-face communication with foreigners can provide more reliable information

It is important to note from the research that foreign films and dramas are not the only thing that determines how young people imagine the world, even though they play a considerable role.

**Table 6.4 Channels through which young people imagine the world**

Experience	Media
Everyday life and Personal experience ++	News+ +
Experience from others ++	Books
Friends	Authentic Online information,
Relatives	comments++
Acquaintances	Non-authoritative online information,
	comments ++
	Film and drama ±
	Not really
	To some extent
	To great extent
	Half-half
	Not much +
	40%
	10-20%
	Less than 50%
	Much

++ = very high frequency mentioned      ± = mentioned, with different mixed opinion

+ = high frequency

- = low frequency but mentioned

## **6.5 Global media, social change and cosmopolitanism as strategies for survival**

This section discusses the relationships between global media, social change and the nature of cosmopolitanism that is shared among participants, based on the previous results.

The focus group data has shown that young people are experiencing different forms of cosmopolitanism in relation to its cultural aspects, during the viewing of foreign media products. Consuming foreign media products is in itself an experience of mundane cosmopolitanism. The results show that there is a form of cosmopolitanism and a pattern of openness towards the Other, which is consistent with the historical context set out in Chapter 2. Beyond the traditional characteristics of openness and dialogic imagination, the key motivation for this form is strategic, 'for survival'. This form of cosmopolitanism tends to occur when there is a new, challenging environment. There are some similarities with what Datta describes as a 'strategic engagement with others through coerced choices in order to survive in new environment' in her studies of everyday cosmopolitanism among London's Eastern European construction workers (Datta, 2009: 2, cited in Skrbiš and Woodward, 2013).

The new environment can take many forms. For example, the introduction of Buddhism into China was to help solve the crisis of Confucianism and stabilize society. In early modern times, learning from the West was for the survival of the nation under attack. The opening-up and reform policies arose from the need to deal with the confusion and disappointment of Chinese people with the old political systems and living conditions, and the late joining of the WTO was in order to survive in an era of globalization. In the past 20 years, opening-up to the world is one of the main characteristics of China's policy. In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, rather than being a passive recipient in the process of globalization as it had been since the first direct Sino-Western interactions, China's government has showed great initiative and determination to be an active participant in this process. The landmark was China's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1999. It is also the first time since the Tang Dynasty that China is experiencing a great level of mobility (Ding, 2014).

According to Fei Xiaotong's description and observation, Chinese society is experiencing two major dramatic social transformations at the same time. He used the term 'triple jump' to refer three phases and two transformations that are taking place in Chinese society (2015:12; 2000:14). The first social transformation is from a traditional and agrarian society (the first phase) to a modern, industrial society (second phase), which is generally called a process of modernization. The first transformation has not fully completed yet, while the second transformation started to emerge 20 years ago. That is from a modernization process toward the information society (the third phase). Globalization complicates the situation of Chinese social transformation.

This form of cosmopolitanism is reflected in participants' use of foreign media products. It is also seen as providing competencies for survival and better adaptation to the rapidly changing environment. With such a huge social transformation new issues and new problems arise and existing experience and traditions might not be sufficient or appropriate to help people answer their questions and cope with problems in their lives. Thus, foreign media products serve as "a mind opener" (Lull, 1991) for participants as they might offer solutions for these new issues arising from the new environment and can provide an alternative way to deal with them. Most of the participants could be regarded as 'cultural heroes' as proposed by Fei Xiaotong (see Chapter 2). Fei's 'cultural hero' appears to propose new solutions, test out new ideas and gain people's trust. In contrast, media products appear to provide new values, new ideas and alternative solutions. In this situation, young people can test out ideas themselves and judge whether new ways and methods could be applied to Chinese society. The essence of this process is dialogic imagination. For the participants, they use foreign media products as a reference for 'survival' in the changing world. In addition, in the negotiating reading section, many participants have mentioned that they could accept most of the meanings and values that products convey to them, but they might not put them into practice because of social environment and tradition. Their choices are also for 'survival' – to survive in the local environment. On the other hand, transnational work requires

participants to have certain cultural competence to work with foreigners, so foreign media products played an important role in this, because Chinese society and knowledge are not well-placed to cope with the situation of cross-cultural communication (middle class group and short-term/ no overseas experience 3). These participants used foreign media products for ‘survival’ in a transnational work environment. Both ways of using foreign media products as a reference is self-centered, strategic, and for ‘survival’. The former one is for a better adaptation to the rapidly changing world. The latter is for ‘survival’ in a working environment full of foreigners.

Besides, in the previous chapter, section 5.4, on the degree of attachment to the local culture, the data showed that many participants were not only operating at an individual level, they thought about China and Chinese society at a national level: the answers were nation-centered. According to Fei (1998), cultural self-awareness means those living in a given culture have a knowledge of their own culture. That is, they know where it comes from, how it forms, what distinguishing features it has and how it is likely to develop in the future. The purpose of having self-knowledge is to enhance cultural autonomy during the process of cultural transformation, in order to better adapt to new circumstances, new ages and new challenges, thus it is important to have cultural self-awareness. Foreign media products played an important role as a mirror to help the young people to know their own Chinese culture and society better and enhance cultural self-awareness to some extent through dialogic imagination.

This has been clearly demonstrated in previous sections. Even where participants show less attachment to the local culture, they still tend to be patriots and show great loyalty to China. During the viewing process, they recognized both the advantages and shortcomings of the foreign country and China, as well as the gap between China and foreign countries. They showed a sense of responsibility towards China. It does not mean that they are ethnocentric. Participants think about how to improve the current situation through learning from foreign media during the viewing. Development helps survival, for example the May 4<sup>th</sup> New Culture

Movement in 1919. On the one hand, it was open to culturally different others in order to learn new knowledge from the West and achieve the goal of modernization. On the other hand, it also defended national sovereignty. Liu and Jin (2010) criticize the current generation that, unlike their parents' or grandparents' generations, who had the heavy burden of responsibility of moving China out of hunger and poverty, they are materialistic and focus on themselves, their personal career and life goals, immersing themselves in consumerism. The findings in the research have contradicted this criticism.

Another key finding is that US-led global media products constitute a high proportion of the foreign media products that the participants consume. US-led global media products reflect the fact that they are from the richest and most developed countries. Chinese people tend to associate these with 'developed', 'advanced', 'their experience is worth learning', 'they have relatively successful experience'. This implies that they provide experiences that can be relied upon and valued, although during the interviews, participants have stated that they do have their own judgement. This might influence young people's degree of openness to foreign media from other countries to some extent. Two participants have mentioned that they would not start watching media products from peripheral countries. Further investigation needs to be carried out to compare whether young people hold similar attitudes towards the reception of foreign media products from peripheral countries.

Moreover, in terms of consequence of globalization, the results of this research have provided evidence in support of the argument that cosmopolitanism can contribute to the cultural homogenization. However, the data also shows that the participants are not passive, they are very active in the way they negotiate with the media texts they consume. For the process of heterogenization, this form of cosmopolitanism acts as a competence for surviving and adapting to a new globalized media environment. Also, in terms of the interaction between the global and the local, the experience from dialogic imagination described by different participants took the form of a complicated, concrete and delicate inner monologue, which reflected how they related to 'the Other' at an individual and micro-level. Therefore,

it can be argued that cosmopolitanism, in its cultural dimension, can be regarded as a useful analytical tool, which can provide insightful support to globalization studies.

In this research, one group is missing: blue-collar/working class people. They were more concerned about making a living and being busy at work. It does not mean they did not have the potential to be cosmopolitan. There are many different ways of interaction with culturally different Others. Consuming foreign media products is just one of them. It is worth mentioning that even within China, there are many ethnic minorities in China and people living in different regions have different cultures.

### **6.6 A greater level of cultural cosmopolitanism?**

All things considered, according to the findings, it appears that foreign media products have very limited influence on creating a greater level of cultural cosmopolitanism. Several reasons have led to this conclusion.

#### *Population in Beijing*

As the capital city and the political and cultural center of China, Beijing is characterized by a constant flow of people, communication, traffic, commodities and culture. However, China is not a country of immigrants. Although there are more foreigners visiting Beijing compared with other cities, the chance for ordinary people to have face-to-face communication with foreigners is still relatively low. According to statistical data from Six National Population Census, Beijing (The Sixth National Population Census-Beijing Leading Group Office, *et al.*, 2011), there were 107,445 non-Chinese mainland residents (staying in China longer than 3 months) in Beijing in 2010. Foreigners (91,128) form about 0.46% of the population of Beijing (19,612,000) with 8,045 people from Hong Kong, 500 people from Macau and 7,772 people from Taiwan (*ibid*). Beijing, however, is not like London, New York or other similar metropolitan cities in which many people are used to seeing, working with or living with foreigners. Having direct communication with a foreigner still can be regarded as an uncommon event for ordinary people who live in Beijing.

The answers from the participants have verified the above observation and statistics. Having communication with foreigners is not an ordinary and everyday thing for most of the participants. It means that they do not have to think much about how to deal with them. In other words, it is an issue far away from their daily lives. People select to experience. People only choose to see those things have relevance in their lives (Fei, 1992; 2000). It seems that they do not need to worry about the issue of cultural-coexistence in their everyday lives, as the current situation does not raise issues of survival.

It is too early to be optimistic and celebrate the cosmopolitan experience provided by foreign media products. The main motive of consuming foreign media products is for entertainment and recreation purposes. Participants do not treat it very seriously. Moreover, most of the experience of dialogic imagination takes place during the viewing process. For most participants, foreign media products only have a short-term effect. In the longer term, there is very limited influence on participants' daily lives. It is welcome to see that during the dialogic imagination, the participants recognized human beings' similarities as well as differences. This is the moment related to ethics and morality. However, participants ultimately return to their own self-interest and that of China, rather than of the Other. Thus, although the participants have experienced cosmopolitanism during consumption of foreign media products, authentic and deeper cosmopolitanism does not seem to have taken place. In other words, this research has demonstrated that at this current stage, consuming foreign media products does not lead to a greater level of cosmopolitanism. Using the word 'this research' and 'at current stage' mean that the author still holds the optimistic view that consuming foreign media products can eventually lead to a greater level of cultural cosmopolitanism. The author speculates that possibly it is only when people's interests are related to those of the Other can the consumption of foreign media lead to a greater level of cultural cosmopolitanism.

## ***Chapter 7***

### ***Conclusion***

The overall goal of this interdisciplinary research was designed to ‘be exploratory rather than definitive’, as in Szerszynski and Urry’s *Cultures of Cosmopolitanism* (2002: 477), as the initial step in laying a foundation for carrying out further investigations in the absence of theoretical and empirical work in cosmopolitanism studies in the cultural dimension in China. Specifically, the research aimed to explore how the Chinese urban young generation experience different forms of cultural cosmopolitanism throughout the consumption of the growing flows of de-territorialized media products, as well as to examine how this young generation is negotiating hybrid identities from the perspective of cultural cosmopolitanism, given their strong Chinese cultural influence and constant exposure and consumption of mainly, but not solely, US-led Western media products. The research also sought a possible explanation as to what contributes to cosmopolitanism.

#### **7.1 Key findings**

Several broad conclusions could be extracted from the rich first-hand data gathered by qualitative focus groups among Beijing youth, as well as the secondary sources from historical literature, on the view of openness in relation to particularly important turning points in Chinese history. Firstly, according to the collected first-hand empirical data, urban youth have experienced different forms of cosmopolitanism, without physically moving, through engagement with a form of ‘the Other’ in foreign media products that contain foreign ‘meaning systems’. The urban youth have a tendency to consume more foreign media products than domestic products. However, there is a significant difference in media use preference between the blue-collar/ working class and other social groups. For this type of engagement – use of foreign media, the blue-collar/working class tends to be excluded. This social group has a tendency to more heavily consume domestic content due to the issues related to cultural proximity and cultural capital. Also, they pay a lot of attention to work and are busy making a living. Besides, unlike other groups who have experienced the

influence of globalization in their everyday life, this group of youths hold the opposite view that these changes in the world have nothing to do with their lives. They keep a distance from foreign lifestyles and tend to prefer their own domestic culture and lifestyle.

Secondly, the motives and reasons for the use of foreign media products vary among urban youth. The main reasons are for entertainment and recreation. Besides, compared with the relatively unsatisfactory domestic products, the better quality of foreign media products attracts youth to use foreign media products (mainly the US-led Western media products).

Thirdly, urban youth have experienced the process of ‘dialogic imagination’, which is a key characteristic of cosmopolitanism during viewing of media products. In terms of morals and ethics, they have been aware of cosmopolitan consciousness that there are ‘no others’ but all are human beings across the world, while at the same time recognizing that the world consists of different cultures. In terms of degree of attachment to the local culture, they experience rooted cosmopolitanism and so can be regarded as a form of ‘cosmopolitan patriot’. The foreign media products to some extent loosen and dissolve people’s ties to their own local culture, i.e. the majority of urban youth show some degree of detachment from the local culture. Local culture is not taken for granted any more but at the same time both local and foreign cultures are treated equally. Ethnocentrism – Sinocentrism is less evident in this research, nevertheless, they show great loyalty and commitment to the nation. They show a sense of responsibility to the nation during the viewing process. Some strengths and weakness of both foreign countries and China are noticed and acknowledged through the dialogic imagination process. A sincere hope for making China better is expressed, especially through imagining how China might learn or adopt certain aspects from ‘the Other’.

In terms of long-term effects, foreign media products have a limited influence on young people’s everyday lives. The dialogic imagination only takes place temporarily during the viewing process. As mentioned before, for the majority of people, the main purpose of use is still for entertainment and recreation. There is some evidence that a deeper involvement

with the foreign meaning system can take place, and foreign media products also sometimes serve as a reference point. Findings also show that foreign media have a more influential impact on young people who are involved in transnational work. Although the experience that foreign media products provide represents only a very small part of real life, they can offer guidance, knowledge and cultural understanding that is helpful in their work, as Chinese society and knowledge system are considered not sufficient to deal with the situation of cross-cultural communication. On the other hand, these products also inspire participants with new ideas and offer alternative values and ways to solve problems in people's lives.

Moreover, the most exciting finding in this research is that Chinese urban youth experience a distinctive form of cosmopolitanism with unique characteristics, which is consistent with the pattern of openness throughout Chinese history to a great extent. This form of cosmopolitanism tends to be self-centered, strategic, and for 'survival', and this form is mostly like to happen in an unstable or a rapidly changing society. In a rapidly changing society, the old methods and past experience become insufficient to meet people's needs and do not provide solutions to their problems in life. Thus, during these periods there is a greater spirit of openness to ideas and cultures of other cultures. This argument has been supported from the historical events as well as first-hand empirical data. Foreign media products appear to provide new values, new ideas and alternative solutions. The urban youth test out ideas themselves and judge whether new ways and methods could be applied to Chinese society. The essence of this process is dialogic imagination, and everyone has the potential to be their own 'cultural heroes' in their lives. Using foreign media products as a reference is fundamentally for 'survival'. Those who are involved in transnational work can use foreign media products for 'survival' in an environment full of foreigners. Those who learn alternative ways of life from these products are able to better adapt to a rapidly changing world. The 'negotiated' readings and 'oppositional' readings of media content are then also for survival, but in the local environment and social tradition, by protecting the young people from physical and psychological discomfort, even though some values are very attractive to them. Their aspirations to improve their country also reflect the motivation for China's better

survival in the world. Young people go through a journey, starting with embracing ‘the Other’, then having an imagined dialogue within themselves and end by returning to their own lives and interests, as well as to the national interest.

In fact most of Chinese urban youth do not have many opportunities to have two-way communication with foreigners or foreign ‘meaning systems’ in their daily lives at present, despite China’s growing global presence and increasing international interactions with foreigners visiting China for travel, trade or to study. This means that knowing how to peacefully coexist and live with foreigners and different foreign cultures is not a big issue that they currently have to deal with but still very far away from their everyday lives. In most cases, they live in a relative comfort zone in which Chinese knowledge and tradition is sufficient to solve and answer their problems. The familiar environment does not force them to think much about it as the current situation does not raise issues of survival that directly concerns their immediate interests. The research did not reveal much evidence of an ‘other’-oriented, more authentic and deeper moral version of cosmopolitanism beyond the self and national interest. In its current form, the consumption of foreign media is not likely to lead to a greater level of cosmopolitanism.

This thesis investigated whether Chinese urban youth experience a unique form of cosmopolitanism, characterized by self-centered and strategic engagement with foreign media products, consistent with a pattern of openness that can be seen throughout Chinese history. The proposed pattern and hypotheses of this research have been validated through the data and analysis. As shown in the thesis, although cosmopolitan consciousness in a moral sense exists temporarily during the viewing of foreign media products, the consumption of such media has rather limited influence and therefore cannot lead to the kind of cosmopolitanism celebrated in Western discourses.

## 7.2 Questions for further investigation

As was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, this research is an exploratory study of a constantly evolving situation. The qualitative method of focus groups is appropriate method to gain an initial understanding of certain phenomena, especially for exploratory research (Saunders *et al.* 2007, cited in Grey, 2013) and establish a useful foundation for further research. However, it has been criticized for being superficial and not in-depth enough (Liamputtong, 2011). The data collection produced a huge amount of rich data and provided a rich source for analysis, but at the same time, by addressing the initial research questions it became clear that the data also raised more questions that need further investigation and further data to follow up the emerging themes. Qualitative in-depth interviews could be introduced to do this for further investigations.

Firstly, the main theme that warrants further study is the issue of openness to different sectors of foreign media. The US- dominated global media products and the products from neighboring countries – notably Korean and Japanese media content and occasional film and entertainment from India - form the majority of Chinese urban youth's media consumption. The participants provided many reasons such as richer resources and better quality but their answers were also concerned with how far the product was familiar. It is remarkable that some participants would not watch products from other countries and regions on their own initiative because of unfamiliarity. This reflects an asymmetric degree of openness towards different cultures. Thus, this raises the question about what causes the different degrees of openness towards different cultures, whether an uneven distribution of media products influences the shape of cosmopolitanism and how mediated-cosmopolitanism reflects power relations.

Secondly, many Chinese urban youth tend to use foreign media products because of dissatisfaction with domestic media products, which raises the question of whether if the quality of domestic products improves, this will change the balance of urban youths' consumption patterns between the domestic and international. Thirdly, based on Hall's three

readings of media texts, this research has provided some initial examples in terms of preferred reading, negotiated reading and oppositional reading. It would be beneficial in future to explore which social-cultural factors are involved in relation to how these are accepted, negotiated or rejected, as Skey has appealed for in future studies in cosmopolitanism (2012). Fourthly, there is scope for more research among the urban youth who have long-term overseas experience. This category can be subdivided into further groups based on the countries and regions they stayed in, length of residence, occupation, education, class and so on. This group tends to have more direct experience with culturally different others. Some of them might have experienced closed cosmopolitanism, that is they stayed in Chinatown while abroad or only talked to Chinese people as categorized by Ong (2009). It would be interesting to explore their media consumption patterns, and how they experienced cultural forms of cosmopolitanism throughout the process of foreign media, and the relationship between their overseas experience, media consumption and cosmopolitanism. Fifth, there could be a rich field of research into cosmopolitan concepts in Chinese philosophy, looking at ancient Chinese experience and wisdom, which could offer inspiration for solving cultural issues (Fei, 2004). For example, the concept of ‘harmony’ from Confucianism might be used to solve problems such as conflicts between different cultures and civilizations, which were evident in ancient China under the framework of Sinocentrism. These concepts seem to be relevant to today’s context and how these can be used or developed further to help resolve the issues of coexistence is very necessary and urgent, given the growing Chinese presence around the world. Finally, the data of different age groups (e.g. older groups, middle-aged group, juvenile groups) can also be collected in the future. It will be interesting to see whether there exists any difference between different age groups. Besides, the category of area/region can be also taken into consideration in the future as China is a big country. A series of questions can be asked and investigated. For example, do urban youth in other cities show similar results (e.g. first tier city: Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen; new first tier city: Hangzhou, Ningbo, Chongqing, etc)? Do data vary from city to city? How about the experience of youth in rural areas in China?

### **7.3 Contribution and significance of the research**

This research took an interdisciplinary approach, covering many different aspects and combining them together – cosmopolitanism, media and cultural studies, as well as history. The advantage of the interdisciplinary method is that it can spark new and interesting ideas in a symbiotic way. Especially through the inclusion of history, a new way of understanding cosmopolitanism has been tentatively proposed.

The issues and debates existing in current cosmopolitanism studies were covered in the Literature Review chapter, although most of them not very new and have damped some scholars' initiatives. The issues discussed in that chapter had a profound implication for the design and process of research practice. Although scholars have reached a broader consensus that there is no single form of cosmopolitanism, the amorphous, diverse and abstract nature of cosmopolitanism with multiple dimensions, facets and layers leads to considerable difficulties in conducting empirical research. Thus, this thesis has paid more attention to practice-based approaches in cosmopolitanism studies and was based on bringing together the audience research tradition and cosmopolitanism studies. This made the research more feasible and practicable to be carried out. The tradition of audience research enabled the research into cosmopolitanism- a concept lacking a clear and unequivocal definition- to be properly anchored in an empirical study and the interweaving of them mutually promoted the process of research, especially in order to design the interview questions for fieldwork and data collections, as well as for data analysis. In particular, the use of Hall's three readings has helped to capture the different moments of encounter with otherness and meaning behind them in an order of degree of openness. In essence, the three forms of readings are expressions of 'dialogic imagination', which makes this relevant to cosmopolitanism and applicable to cosmopolitanism studies in a cultural dimension, especially in relation to media consumption. In addition, the concept of the transnational has also been highly useful in this research.

As for many other scholars, one interest of this research was to discover the determinant

elements that cause and contribute to cosmopolitanism and to understand the mechanism behind the phenomenon. Cosmopolitanism resides in the moment of encounter with otherness and this phenomenon does not only exist in the contemporary era although there is often a misunderstanding that it emerged as a result of globalization. The historical perspective was introduced because of the nature of cosmopolitanism itself. A discussion of the relationship between cosmopolitanism and globalization was presented to clarify that globalization is not the precondition for cosmopolitanism and that history provides a necessary context to properly understand the concept. History often has only a tangential position in media and communication studies (Thussu, 2017) and cultural studies (Pickering, 2008c). It cannot be denied that Western originated concepts and Western-oriented media and communication theories have offered unique and profound perspectives, however these cannot fully explain some phenomena in developing countries and civilizations such as China and India, thus there is a need to develop new methodological frameworks to meet the demand of academic enquiry (Thussu, 2009). Pickering (2008c) encouraged researchers to increase awareness of the important value of historical understanding and practice, because history can be a powerful complementary tool for cultural analysis.

On the other hand, as this thesis points out, cosmopolitanism is a response to the consequences of globalization. A cosmopolitan approach can open-up a new perspective to explore the relationship between the global and the local in present-day globalization at an empirically micro level. Building on Elverskog, as mentioned in Chapter 2, whose interests focused more on the Qing dynasty, this thesis places more emphasis on contemporary China (2013). Regardless of the complexity of Chinese studies and cosmopolitanism studies, Elverskog positively insisted that the cosmopolitan approach can bring new insight into old material. While, holding a similar position as Elverskog, the converse is also true in that the old historical material can bring novel insight into the modern forms of cosmopolitanism, opening up new vistas to probe into the relationship between the global and the local.

Overall, the themes of this thesis are highly relevant to current research trends. This research

provides direct empirical findings and evidence on this topic from China, enriching the discourses of both cosmopolitanism and globalization in a cultural dimension. At the same time, it also makes contributions to underdeveloped cosmopolitanism studies in China and plays a role in building bridges through reciprocal communication and dialogue between mainland China and the rest of the world. The researcher has borrowed and learned from the fruitful research of other scholars in different fields, put them together and attempted to connect the diffused dots. She hopes to see a coherent and clear broader picture with the joint efforts from scholars – both in China and outside - in the future.

Ultimately it does not mean that people in this globalized world will necessarily follow the principles of cosmopolitanism or be cosmopolitans. However, possessing cosmopolitan outlook and competence is of practical value, as Appiah points out (2007), that it helps people to understand each other and learn how to live in a harmonious and peaceful way in this increasingly interconnected world. In the case of China, developing a cosmopolitan competence and outlook might be regarded as one of the possible solutions to cope with the issues related to cultural difference, cultural tolerance and cultural diversity within China, during the ongoing processes of globalization and opening-up to the world. Moreover, through the Chinese government's Belt and Road Initiative – the \$1 trillion project which has the potential to hugely strengthen China's geo-economic presence across the Eurasian region, China is looking forward to more international and regional exchange and cooperation. Thus, with further opening-up, communications and exchanges between different countries and cultures will become increasingly frequent. China will be a frontline of interactions of different cultures. At present, although most Chinese people do not have many opportunities to encounter foreigners in their everyday life, it is noteworthy that within China, there are many different ethnic groups with a great diversity of cultures. Flows of peoples and cultures have always taken place within China. Ethnic issues have existed since early modern times and become increasingly fraught in recent years (Bilik, 2014). Cultural cosmopolitanism might be a possible way in dealing with issues related to cultural differences in order to achieve peaceful coexistence in people's everyday lives, which is vital

to the stability and prosperity of China. On the other hand, cosmopolitanism might prevent a potential returning to irrational nationalism - Sinocentrism that seems to be deeply rooted in Chinese tradition and might aggravate 'the clash of civilizations'.

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## Appendix

### Timeline of Chinese Dynasties and Major Historical Events in the Thesis

1046-256 BC	Zhou Dynasty 周朝		
770-476 BC	Spring and Autumn Period 春秋		
475-221 BC	Warring States Period 战国		
221-206 BC	Qin Dynasty 秦朝		
206BC-AD 220	Han Dynasty 汉朝		
AD 420-589	Period of the Northern and Southern Dynasties 南北朝		
AD 1115-1234	Jin Empire 金国		
AD 618 - 907	Tang Dynasty 唐朝		
AD 1368-1644	Ming Dynasty 明朝		
AD 1644-1911	Qing Dynasty 清朝	AD 1654-1722	Kangxi Emperor 康熙
		AD 1711-1799	Qianlong Emperor 乾隆
		AD 1760-1820	Jiaqing Emperor 嘉庆
		AD 1782-1850	Daoguang Emperor 道光
		AD 1839-1942	First Opium War/ the Anglo-Chinese War 第一次鸦片战争
		AD 1851-1864	The Revolutionary War of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom 太平天国运动
		AD 1861-1895	The Self-Strengthening Movement 洋务运动
		AD 1894	First Sino-Japan War 甲午中日战争
		AD 1898	Hundred Days' Reform 戊戌变法/维新变法
		AD 1899-1901	Boxer Rebellion/ Yihequan Movement 义和团运动
		AD 1900-1910	Anti-Manchus Movement 排满运动
1912-1949	Republic of China 民国时期	AD 1911	Xinhai Revolution/ the Revolution of 1911/ the

			Chinese Revolution 辛亥革命
		AD 1919	May 4 New Culture Movement 五四运动
1949-present	People's Republic of China 中华人民共和国	AD 1966-1976	Culture Revolution 文化大革命
		AD 1978-present	Economic Reform: Reform and Open Policy 改革开放
		AD 1999-present	Accession to WTO 加入 WTO
		AD 2013-present	The Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21 <sup>ST</sup> Century Maritime Silk Road (The Belt and Road Initiative) 一带一路