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Chinese Migration and Their Families in Spain: A Case Study on Barcelona

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CHINESE MIGRATION AND THEIR FAMILIES IN SPAIN: A CASE STUDY ON BARCELONA

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Contents

List of figures and tables

Abstract

This research provides a comprehensive overview of Chinese migration to Spain from the late 1980s onwards, highlighting the internal diversification of Chinese communities and the continuous influx of migrants over the past four decades. Additionally, through an analysis of the spatial distribution and relocation strategies of Chinese immigrants in the Barcelona Metropolitan Region, the research explores the impact of Chinese migration on urban morphology of the local society and investigates internal variations within the ethnic group. Combining a macro and micro perspective, this study aims to address key questions related to the demographic composition of Chinese migrants, their motivations for leaving China and settling in Spain, the sociopolitical context of their departure, and their migration and integration experiences in different historical periods.

At a macro level, this research delineates Chinese migration to Spain into two distinct chronological stages: the late 1980s to 2013, characterized by economic migration, and from 2013 to the present, marked by the dominance of middle-class migration, encompassing urban middle-class families and international students. Notably, the study illuminates how the introduction of capital-linked migration policies in Spain since 2013, including the implementation of the non-lucrative residence (2011) and Entrepreneur Support Law (2013), constitutes a significant turning point in Chinese migration dynamics. Given that this paradigm shift and the subsequent stage remain underexplored in academic literature, this study aims to address this research gap comprehensively.

At a micro level, employing in-depth interviews and participant observations with Chinese individuals and their family members, this research investigates the lived experiences and perceptions surrounding migration, facilitating a nuanced understanding of the internal diversification within the Chinese migrant population in terms of migration patterns and family dynamics. Moreover, the study examines parent-offspring relationships and parenting styles among different migrant groups, revealing substantial disparities.

1. Introduction

1.1 Chinese diaspora beyond ethnic entrepreneurship

Spain, historically not considered a primary destination for labor migration, has experienced a notable transformation since the late 80s. Transitioning from its legacy as a nation characterized by emigration, Spain has evolved into an immigrant-receiving country, attracting individuals from various global regions, including Africa, Latin America, and Asia (Castles et al., 2014). Although Spain's history as an immigrant host nation spans only a few decades, it has witnessed a diverse influx of international migrants. Notably, among these migrant communities, the Chinese diaspora has emerged as a prominent entity, currently ranking as the sixth-largest nationality in Spain as of 2022 (INE, 2022).

Over the last four decades, Chinese immigrants have gradually become one of the biggest migrant groups in Spanish society, attracting a wide range of attention from local media and mainstream society. Given the fact that Chinese entrepreneurial practices and subsequent labor migration staged the center of constant inflows of Chinese immigrants to Spain from the end of the twentieth century, many mainstream media have focused on their ethnic economic activities and labor exploitation of Chinese migrant workers (García Bueno 2009; EFE 2009; García Bueno and Verdú 2015). The local community has long considered their dynamic entrepreneurial activities and social connections within the Chinese diaspora as cloaked in mystery (Coyle, 2021).

In the aftermath of the economic crisis in 2008, with the aim of attracting more foreign capitals and boosting national economy, Spanish government launched a series of capital-linked migration policies like non-lucrative residence visa (Real Decreto 557/2011) and Law 14/2013, known as *Golden Visa Policy*[1] which attracted an increased inflow of

[1] Spain's non-lucrative residence visa caters to financially self-sufficient individuals such as retirees or project pursuers. Applicants must demonstrate financial solvency, health insurance, and stable economic status without engaging in any remunerative activities in Spain. Law 14/2013, known as *Golden Visa Policy*, initiated in September 2013, lures non-EU investors through substantial real estate or economic investments, providing residency. Notably, distinctions emerge in financial proofs and economic engagement. The non-lucrative policy underscores self-sufficiency without employment, while the *Golden Visa* offers the advantage of remunerative work, permitting holders to engage in economic activities. This key differentiation empowers *Golden Visa* holders to actively participate in Spain's labor market and commercial

affluent individuals from China. These policies aimed to attract foreign investments and stimulate the national economy, resulting in an influx of affluent individuals from China. Unlike their predecessors, who often engaged in arduous work to sustain ethnic businesses, these newcomers exhibited minimal economic incentives to participate in remunerative work in Spain for survival. Their acquisitions of commercial and residential properties exceeding half a million euros garnered considerable attention from the local Spanish media (Fontdeglòria 2016a, 2016b; Maqueda 2017; Quesada 2019).

Concurrently, China experienced significant economic growth and improvements in living standards over the past two decades. Pertinently, recent emigration trends from China have witnessed a shift, with lower-skilled labor migrants giving way to an exodus of prosperous and highly educated individuals (Xiang 2016).

In summary, the evolution of Chinese migration to Spain, transitioning from mass labor migration to the influx of affluent and highly educated Chinese nationals, underscores the multifaceted nature of contemporary migration patterns. Spain, characterized by the internal diversification of the Chinese diaspora in recent decades, presents an ideal empirical context for the exploration of these complex realities.

As Sassen (1990) indicates, "*Understanding why a migration began entails an examination of conditions promoting outmigration in the countries of origin and the formation of objective and subjective linkages with receiving countries that make such migration feasible.*" To understand the initiation and continuations of Chinese immigration to Spain from the end of the twentieth century needs a more comprehensive examination of socio-historical conditions of both the receiving and sending countries that facilitated and sustained the mobility, as well as interlinkage and dynamics between two societies.

To achieve this, the present work is structured in a manner that enables a comprehensive examination of the multifaceted phenomenon of Chinese migration to Spain. Firstly, it delves into the historical evolution of this migratory process, with a particular emphasis on the developments that took place during the late 1980s. During this time, a significant number of Chinese immigrants had already established themselves in Spain, mainly for

landscape, contributing to economic growth, whereas non-lucrative residents are precluded from remunerative work under this specific policy.

economic reasons, engaging in ethnic businesses that drew the attention of scholars (Beltrán and Sáiz 2009, 2013; Sáiz 2012;). Subsequently, the Chinese diaspora underwent a process of diversification, characterized by the emergence of new migrant groups consisting of investors, students, or non-profit residents, who were skilled and had higher socioeconomic statuses than the earlier migrants. Secondly, the work explores the sociodemographic characteristics, residential locations, and migratory trajectories of these diverse migrant groups. Thirdly, it delves into the individual experiences of these transnational mobilities, focusing on the various motivations for immigration. These individual narratives offer an analytical perspective for comprehending social changes in both the country of origin and destination, as well as the ways in which migration infrastructures are mobilized and organized for different migrant groups. Lastly, the work examines the family relationships established within these two migratory profiles and models. This involves analyzing family relationships between parents and children in former migrants and domestic arrangements and parenting styles among new migrants, within a context of change.

1.2 Myths unfold: Give voice to the ‘voiceless’

Chinese immigration in Spain has been the subject of scholarly research, with studies examining the history of migration and the development of Chinese communities in Spain, as well as the role of transnational linkages in the migration process (Beltrán 2003, 2009; Beltrán and Sáiz 2013; Nieto 2003). For example, Nieto's work (2003) comprehensively reviewed Chinese migration in Spain from the 1990s to the early 2000s, incorporating a geopolitical perspective by intertwining Spanish strategic planning toward the People's Republic of China (PRC) with migration studies. Notably, the Spanish government's Asia-Pacific Framework Plan for 2000-2002 aimed to augment trade and tourism ties with non-Hispanic regions, particularly Asia, elevating China as a priority partner. Besides, Sáiz (2012) has made unprecedently important contributions to the existing theoretical understanding of transnationalism embedded in Chinese migration to and in Spain. This notion enabled them to unfold how transnational linkages come into play in the initiation and continuation of Chinese migration to Spain and in their subsequent consolidation in production and reproduction practices after migration (Masdeu 2020; Robles-Llana 2018).

Despite the extensive research on Chinese migration in Spain, a critical gap exists in terms of incorporating the perspectives of Chinese immigrants themselves. The exclusion of these voices can be attributed to the linguistic and cultural barriers that scholars face as outsiders. This limitation impedes a detailed account of the immigrant experience. However, the present research, which adopts an insider role, overcomes these barriers and delves deeper into different Chinese migrant groups and ethnic communities by listening to individuals who have been silenced and unheard due to language barriers, cultural estrangement, or fear. This study aims to give voice to these individuals and gain a comprehensive understanding of their decision-making processes, settlement strategies, mobilization of resources, and pre- and post-migration lived experiences. In particular, by examining how Chinese individuals perceive their migratory trajectory and life course in the context of migration, this research illuminates the initiation and continuity of Chinese migration in Spain. This is achieved through the voices and perspectives of various migrant groups, highlighting their unique words and viewpoints, which constitutes the central contribution of this study.

As the new economics of migration emphasizes, international migration is not solely a matter of individual choice but is also intrinsically embedded in the arrangement of a family unit (Massey et al.1993). In this regard, various existing studies have demonstrated the significant role that family plays in the mobility, settlement, and integration of Chinese immigrants in Spain (Beltrán 2009; Beltrán and Sàiz 2013; He 2018). Therefore, it is essential to examine the role of the family unit in the migratory trajectory and settlement of immigrants in the new country in this research.

This work discovers that the diversification of Chinese migrant compositions in Spain has brought about changes in family arrangement and life, which are embedded in broader processes of social change and transformation of the migrant population. As a previous study revealed (He 2018), family life and parent-child relations in these immigrant families are significantly configured by migration projects and ethnic businesses. For instance, migration of parents during the early development of children could lead to long-term consequences of parent-child relations, even after family reunification in the receiving country. This study found that emotional distance and functional interdependence are common in Chinese immigrant families with ethnic businesses, where family life and

economic activities are greatly compressed together. Under livelihood pressures and ethnic minority status, many Chinese parents have little involvement in children's schooling and feel incapable of helping children with school issues, which reconfigures parenting style and childrearing practices.

Nevertheless, as the influx of newcomers continues, a new scenario of family life has been witnessed in the Chinese community in Spain. Many newcomers attribute family migration to children's education, and parents invest heavily in enrolling their children in elite schools in Spain and dedicate much of their time and attention to their development after migration. Consequently, the construction of child-parent dyads and family arrangement has changed significantly, in tandem with the evolution of Chinese immigration in Spain. Thus, this research explores the mutually constitutive effects of "migration" and "family" in the context of Chinese migration in Spain.

In the existing body of academic literature on Chinese migration in Spain, a noticeable gap exists regarding the internal diversification within the Chinese diaspora that has transpired in recent decades. This paucity of research is compounded by the scarcity of empirical studies that incorporate the perspectives of Chinese immigrants themselves, whose own narratives and accounts could greatly enrich the thick description (Geertz 1973) of international migration studies, especially within the context of the ever-evolving social realities and temporal spectrum. Furthermore, the role of family in the migratory project and parent-child relations has been underexplored in the context of Chinese migration in Spain at the micro level, despite the fact that family relations demonstrate different motifs among different migrant groups, particularly after 2013. Therefore, the aim of this study is to bridge these knowledge gaps.

1.3 Research questions and objectives of the dissertation

In light of all the aspects mentioned previously, there is still a significant knowledge gap in the study of Chinese migration in Spain. To fill the existing knowledge gap in the current literature, the present study sets out three research questions.

Firstly, *how has Chinese migration to Spain changed from the 1980s, and what are the main typologies?* This research aims to examine different waves of Chinese migration to Spain over the last four decades and to unpack the heterogeneity within the Chinese

diaspora in Spain by differentiating between economic migrant and middle-class migrant groups.

At a macro level, this study aims to scrutinize the emergence of distinct Chinese migration waves in Spain over the last four decades, delving into their characteristics through the lenses of social, economic, political, cultural, and historical perspectives both in Spain and China. In parallel with this macro-level analysis, the micro level will focus on individual agency as the central pillar of approach. The intention is to illuminate the lived experiences of diverse migrant groups, shedding light on who has undertaken the journey to Spain, the motivations behind their decision to emigrate from China, and the strategies employed in establishing their lives in Spain. By centering on the voices and lived experiences of these individuals, this work seeks to portray the inherent heterogeneity within the Chinese diaspora in Spain at the present moment. Through this dual-level examination, the study endeavors to offer a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted dynamics of Chinese migration to Spain, encompassing both overarching patterns and the nuanced narratives of individual migrants.

Secondly, *what are the spatial patterns and residential patterns of the Chinese population in Spain?* Drawing upon the categorization of Chinese migrant groups introduced in the first research question, the objective is to scrutinize the socio-geographical characteristics of various Chinese migrant groups. This examination aims to shed light on their distinct settlement strategies and how these strategies contribute to the internal diversification of the Chinese diaspora in Spain. In this research Barcelona Metropolitan Region is chosen as a case study, given that official data (Padrón Continuo, 2022, INE) indicates 22% of the Chinese population resides in this region, showcasing diversity in the composition of Chinese migrant groups.

Finally, *how do family relationships between Chinese parents and their children vary after migration, and what are the parenting styles of Chinese immigrant families with regard to the two major migrant groups identified in the first research question?* This study aims to examine the diversity of family relationship dynamics and parenting styles in Chinese immigrant families with regard to the two major migrant groups identified in the first research question. Given the heterogeneity of Chinese migration projects and socio-demographic backgrounds, it is important to understand how family relationships between

Chinese parents and their children vary after migration. As mentioned previously, Chinese families have exhibited more diverse backgrounds and migration practices in the past decade, particularly after the launch of Law 14/2013, as Chinese population and their migration projects vary significantly in terms of socio-demographic backgrounds and migration objectives. Furthermore, family-run ethnic businesses are no longer the protagonist in family life in the newcomers' households. Thus, this research studies the magnitude of internal diversification of Chinese immigrants, extending parallelly into the family facet.

1.4 Structure of the dissertation

The present dissertation is briefly outlined as follows: Chapter 2 reviews the existing literature and breaks down this research into various theoretical approaches; Chapter 3 demonstrates research design, methodological considerations and empirical contexts of this study; Chapters 4, 5, and 6 provide a comprehensive description of the empirical findings, encompassing the internal diversity within the Chinese population and main migrant groups, spatial distribution and localization strategies, as well as family relations in different Chinese migrant groups and Chapter 7 carries out concluding remarks of this dissertation.

Chapter 2, *Theoretical Framework*, intends to tackle three research questions from several theoretical approaches. First, this chapter begins with the state-of-art of relevant studies about migration from China to other countries over the last two centuries to contextualize the specific case of Chinese immigration to Spain under the overall historical changes of Chinese international migration. Second, to address internal differentiation within Chinese communities this chapter begins with identification of main typologies of Chinese migration to Spain, which is one of the novelties of this dissertation. By clarifying terminology and reviewing relevant literature, this study grouped Chinese migrant population in Spain into two main typologies: *economic migration* and *middle-class migration*. The latter group can be divided into *middle-class family migration* and *student migration*. To grasp this internal diversification of Chinese migration in Spain, this study utilizes *the aspiration-capabilities model* by Hein de Haas (2021). Given significant relevance of role of family in Chinese migration to Spain, it is also indispensable to

understand migration *per se* from the lens of parent-child relations and arrangement of family life after migration, in which the notion of *concerted cultivation* and *accomplishment of natural growth* (Lareau 2003) are applied with regard to different typologies of migrant groups.

Chapter 3 explains the research design of this study, in which both qualitative and quantitative approaches are applied. In qualitative approach the main methods used in this study include document analysis, participant observations, in-depth interviews, and typological analysis. These qualitative methods not only disentangle different facets of historical changes within Chinese immigrant population in Spain, but also give the immigrants themselves voices. In terms with quantitative approach, descriptive research is of the core of this study. First, official sources of data provide an approachable way to gain a comprehensive understanding of the scale and evolution of mobilities and distribution of Chinese immigrants in Spain. Second, census data and continuous municipal register enable me to understand internal sociodemographic changes of Chinese population.

Chapter 4, *From "Treasure land" to "Wonderland": Evolution of Chinese Immigration in Spain*, unpacks two main socio-historical stages of Chinese migration to Spain over the last four decades and provides a comprehensive analysis of each historical stage and its respective migration typologies with regard to their socioeconomic features, motivations, migratory patterns, and settlement strategies. In detail, there are two significant historical stages of Chinese migration to Spain: 1) From the late-1980s to 2013; and 2) 2013 to the present. After clarifying the features of these two stages of migration and socio-demographic changes over the last four decades, the study delves into a detailed analysis of the three principal typologies of Chinese immigrants. In addition to discerning the individuals who arrived in Spain and the motivations underpinning their migration within each typology, the research offers a platform for their voices to be heard. This includes depicting their lived experiences both pre and post-migration, as well as providing insight into their process of making sense of the life they have experienced in both their country of origin and their host nation.

Chapter 5, *Spatial Distribution and Segregation of Chinese Immigrants in Barcelona Metropolitan Area,* demonstrates where and how Chinese nationals settle down in Spain by analyzing the case of Barcelona Metropolitan Region, the second largest Chinese-

concentrated areas in Spain. By using location quotient and index of segregation, this study identified several municipalities with relatively high level of residential concentration of Chinese nationals. this study incorporates ethnographic observations to shed light on pivotal aspects. These observations are particularly instrumental in unveiling the emergence of residential concentration within specific regions and elucidating the distinct settlement trajectories of each typology within the migration groups.

Chapter 6 delves into the parent-child relationships prevalent within Chinese immigrant families in Barcelona. This subject has previously been addressed in a antecedent work (He, 2018), where the present author, engaging in both investigations, concentrated on intergenerational dynamics among parents and children within families reliant on modest-scale ethnic enterprises in the service sector. Extending the scope of this antecedent research, the current thesis widens the inquiry. Firstly, it introduces supplementary case studies aimed at portraying the father-child dynamic as characterized by "*emotional detachment yet functional interdependence*" Furthermore, it complements this analysis with a broader examination of the additional profiles of newcomers who arrived under capital-linked visa schemes.

Finally, Chapter 7, *Conclusions*, lays out the main findings and its original contribution in this study. This chapter recognizes the novelty of this dissertation on establishing typologies of Chinese immigrants and exploring a thorough landscape of Chinese migration in Spain. In addition to this research significance, this study also provides empirical richness by incorporating individual voices and perspectives into a broader lens of social transformation. It unpacks diverse, class-specific individuals' lived experiences in the study. It also moves beyond the individual migratory trajectory and depicts family life and parent-child relations as an important approach to comprehensively understand Chinese migration in Spain over the decades. The novelty of this study also has its limitations. The empirical and theoretical limitations have been both put forward in this chapter.

2. Theoretical framework

Migration studies have a well-established tradition of examining the underlying motivations and aspirations that drive migratory phenomena. Within the framework of the drivers of migration and the socio-economic profiles of migrants, the migration of Chinese nationals to Spain can be categorized into two primary groups: economic migration and middle-class migration. Section 2.1 will delve into the historical trajectory of Chinese emigration, dating back to the early 20th century, serving as the cornerstone for subsequent waves of migration and the sustained pattern of Chinese emigration to Spain. Subsequently, the succeeding section will concentrate on diverse typologies of Chinese migration to Spain, with a specific emphasis on migration occurring from the latter half of the first decade of the 21st century. The term "middle-class migration" is employed to characterize recent cohorts of Chinese immigrants who have relocated to Spain under capital-related migration programs initiated since 2013. To encapsulate the various typologies and migration practices within the spectrum of Chinese migration, the theoretical framework integrates the Aspiration-Capabilities Model proposed by Hein de Haas (2021). Sections 2.4 and 2.5 will engage with distinct theoretical perspectives concerning spatial patterns, residential behaviors, and family dynamics within the context of migration.

2.1 Chinese Migration from the 20th Century to the Present

Prior migration from China during the last century can be roughly divided into four historical patterns: *Huashang* (Chinese trader) pattern, *Huagong* (Chinese coolie) pattern, *Huaqiao* (Chinese sojourner) pattern, and *Huayi* (Chinese descent) pattern (Wang 1991; Poston and Wong 2016).

Tracing back to the Qin dynasty, *Huashang* (Chinese trader) pattern has persisted throughout history and has dominated the main emigration flows from China, mostly heading to Southeast Asia since the nineteenth century. They are mainly composed of males and many of them settled down in the host country and chose to bring up a local family, while some other migrants returned to the homeland country after having accumulated wealth (Wang 1991). Yet they maintained close ties with the homeland

country by sending back remittances and keeping their Chinese characteristics in host society (Wang 1991). The second historical pattern is *Huagong* (Chinese coolie) pattern which is also a male-dominated migratory flow to the North America and Europe since the end of the nineteenth century to the World War I. They worked in gold mining and railway building and later on developed ethnic small businesses, such as laundry and restaurants. After this historical stage of outmigration of Chinese coolies, *Huaqiao* (Chinese sojourner) pattern was prevalent between the 1920s to the 1950s. Greatly affected by nationalist movements in China, many well-educated young people left the homeland to advanced societies with the hope of saving the country by education during this historical stage of migration from China. After that, *Huayi* (Chinese descendant) pattern started prevailing since the middle of the twentieth century. Most of *huayi* (Chinese descendant) migrants left from Southeast Asian countries like Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia due to the rising economic, political and social persecutions towards Chinese population.

By going through these four historical patterns of migration from China during the last century, the implications shed light on the fact that Chinese prior migration was mainly driven by survival and prosperity elsewhere. Under an exploitative and poverty-stricken nature of labor migration during this historical stage, Chinese migrants were predominantly mobilized by chain migration, labor and slave trade, and irregular itinerary. Thus, a homogenous image of Chinese migration in the last century was uniformly negative, portrayed as '*yellow peril*' and a threat of job competition in receiving country (Sue and Kitano 1973; Hu-DeHart 1980).

Nevertheless, with economic and political ascendancy of China at a global scale since the end of the 1970s, the patterns of migration from China have changed significantly in terms of socioeconomic composition of migrants and their concomitant attitudes towards international migration. There are some salient features of contemporary migration from China in the last decades. According to the study of Gun (2021), an intersection of *hypermobility*, *hyperdiversity* and *hyperconnectivity* has redefined the evolution and consolidation of contemporary Chinese diasporas in the world.

Hypermobility can be found in the vast volume of Chinese population and its expanding spatial distribution in the world. First, Chinese diaspora has become the fourth largest diaspora with a sheer size of over 10 million overseas Chinese in the world in 2021

(McAuliffe et al. 2022). They are globally distributed with overseas Chinese in every country in each continent of the world. In addition to the sheer size of the population, a shift of geographical concentration from Asia to the Americas is also a key feature of *hypermobility* of contemporary Chinese migration. In the early 1980s nearly 90 percent of the overseas Chinese population lived in Asia, largely in Southeast Asia. Yet this predominant Chinese-ethnic concentration has significantly shrunk into 73 percent in 2011 with a growing dispersion towards the Americans, Europe and other continents (Gun 2021).

In terms of *hyperdiversity*, a wide range of individual features and their migration histories are manifested in Chinese diaspora across the world: origins, linguistic assets, educational attainment, socioeconomic status and destination countries. During the last century, Chinese emigrants were predominantly originated from coastal provinces. For example, people from Guangdong and Fujian provinces were more likely to migrate to other Asian countries and the Americas due to geographical proximity and previously established co-ethnic networks, while Zhejiang province has always been a main source of Chinese migrants to Europe owing to its chain migration resources accumulated by itinerant merchants and traders from Qingtian and Wenzhou counties from the end of the nineteenth century (Thunø 2003).

Yet this homogenous coming from coastal regions with similar background has been greatly altered since the 1980s after the Chinese economic *Reform and Opening Up* and its concomitant liberalisation of emigration policies from the 1980s onward (Xiang 2016; Gun 2021). According to the study of Xiang (2016), a watershed event of Chinese citizenship happened in the year 1986, which is the launch of national ID card system in China. Before the launch of ID system Chinese individual had no right to apply for personal passport without the admission and collaboration of their employer, mostly a state-owned company or public department. Although this personal ID card system was initially designated to enhance social control and fight crimes by registering personal information and trajectories based on their place of residency, the ID card enabled individuals to apply for a passport, open a bank account, transfer money, and buy flight tickets. This significantly facilitated the mobility of individuals. Additionally, with an overall liberalisation of visa schemes in China, there were a rapidly growing number of Chinese individuals managed to leave China under student visa, family reunification, marriage, and foreign employment since

the 1980s. In the following decade, the dream of going abroad turned out to be a feasible and accessible reality for many Chinese ordinary people and a going-abroad fever (*chuguo re*) has become a viral phenomenon in China in this turning of millennium.

Thus, Chinese migrants with an increasingly diverse origins headed to abroad with different occupations, educational background, and socioeconomic status under different migration types. Rather than driven by poverty and survival necessity, this historical stage of Chinese migration was predominated by a 'gold-gilded' (*du jin*, 镀金) narrative, by which immigrants were expected to make higher personal achievement and upward mobility by studying and working abroad, especially in the United States and other advanced societies.

Under this new hallmark of migration from China since the end of the twentieth century, Chinese emigration has been more sophisticatedly broken down into two main trends by Xiang (2016): a decrease of low-skilled or unskilled migration and an increased emigration of highly educated and wealthy individuals. The selective nature of migration policy shifts in destination countries and rigid exit controls in the homeland country contribute as two structural forces that reshape patterns of migration from China.

First, a growing number of developed countries have launched capital-linked visa regimes. These migration policy shifts set the stage for transnational mobility of both capital and wealthy individuals across borders. A significant amount of foreign direct investment and increased inflows of wealthy immigrant investors have been actively mobilized under investor visa regimes, such as EB-5 visas in the United States, the Start-up and Investor visas in Canada, the Significant Investor visa in Australia and a series of *Golden Visa* policy in Europe like Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Malta and among others. China has grown into one of the most important sources of immigrant investors in these destination countries.

Second, outflows of highly skilled individuals and students from China are largely facilitated by the liberalization of self-funded overseas education since the 1980s and marketisation of overseas education agency in China in the early 2000s. Before the economic reform in the late 1970s studying abroad was barely an option for Chinese individuals, especially during the Cultural Revolution of 1966-1976. After the state opened the market to the world in the late 1970s, restrictions on overseas education have been

gradually lifted up. As a result, a study-abroad fever lasts decades since then and the age of Chinese students continually decreases all along the last four decades (Qiang 2012).

Meanwhile, emigration of low-skilled or unskilled individuals from China has encountered growing institutional and market constraints since the early 2000s given stricter controls on illegal migration enhanced by both China and the receiving countries. Additionally, the government has also developed more sophisticated regulations and rules to monitor international labor recruitment, which led to a higher cost and more complicated procedure for labor migrants (Xiang 2016).

Hyerconnectivity is another salient feature of Chinese migration in the recent decades (Guo 2021). Based on kinship and socio-cultural ties, prior migration flows in the twentieth century are predominantly mobilised through chain migration, labor mobility, family visits and remittances. With the consolidation of Chinese diasporas in different countries and development of a globalised economy in China, the economic, political and social ties between Chinese diasporas and the homeland have been profoundly integrated together. For example, Chinese entrepreneurs were encouraged by the Chinese government to conduct foreign direct investment in the homeland country after carrying out the economic reform, *Reform and Opening Up*. International trades between China and other countries of destination were greatly promoted and developed by Chinese immigrants. These constantly growing transnational networks through business not only accelerated the evolution and consolidation of Chinese diasporas in the countries of destination, but also enhanced the mobility of suppliers, capital, and market opportunities in both the sending and receiving countries (Guo 2021). With the passage of time, “Chinese globalization” has come into being and brings about a wide range of migration realities (Pieke 2004).

2.2 Typologies of Chinese Immigrants in Spain

Wang (2018) made a comprehensive summary of Chinese migration and their development of economic activities in Spain from the fifteenth century to the economic crisis in 2008. The first wave can be traced back to the beginning of the period of the "Manila galleon" until 1910. Since Manila had become an interchange point for Spanish and Chinese trading ships, several Chinese commercial pioneers first arrived in Spain from the Philippines and Mexico in the middle of the fifteenth century. The second wave of

Chinese migration to Spain started from 1910 to 1949, when emigrants from Wenzhou and Qingtian county initially settled down in Spain from mainland China and other European countries. Their settlement in Spain shared homogenous motivations and trajectory: earn money by selling petty on the street, go back to the homeland after accumulating enough savings, and purchase land to become a landlord in hometown.

After World War II, Chinese immigration to Spain entered a two-decade-long period of stagnation, even as Chinese students from Taiwan began to arrive in Spain. This era, spanning from 1950 to 1973, is commonly identified as the third wave of Chinese migration to Spain. It wasn't until 1973 that Spain and mainland China reestablished diplomatic relations, signifying a crucial turning point between the third and fourth waves of Chinese migration in Spain. Subsequent to the normalization of Spain-China relations, there was a notable surge in Chinese immigrant arrivals in Spain. These newcomers primarily concentrated in the Chinese restaurant sector, significantly reshaping the landscape of ethnic economies and migration hubs within the host country. Notably, events such as the 1992 Barcelona Olympics and various immigration amnesties[2] initiated by the Spanish government further accelerated the influx of Chinese migrants from China and other European countries (Beltrán 2003; Nieto 2003; Xu 1999). The period from 1974 to 1994, recognized as the fourth wave of Chinese migration in Spain, is considered a golden era for Chinese restaurants. During this time, Chinese restaurants not only contributed substantially to the prosperity of the Chinese diaspora in the host country but also rapidly developed migration hubs to accommodate new arrivals (Wang 2018).

During the 1990s, however, Chinese catering industry in Spain, a potent migration driver, has come to its saturation point. In the fifth wave, from 1995 to 2007, Chinese immigrants had to explore new economic possibilities in other industries, such as textile, wholesale trade, hair and nail salons, import and export sector, etc., which significantly enhanced expansion and consolidation of Chinese diaspora in the host country despite the

[2] During the 1990s and early 2000s, Spain instituted four notable immigration amnesties in the years 1985, 1991, 1996, and 2005. These initiatives were motivated by a confluence of factors. They aspired to facilitate the social integration of migrants by providing them access to essential services such as healthcare and education. Humanitarian considerations assumed a pivotal role, aiming to enhance the living conditions and safeguard the rights of vulnerable migrant populations. Spain's actions were also in consonance with its international commitments, aligning with established human rights standards. Moreover, these amnesty programs were perceived as contributing to political and social stability by mitigating risks associated with marginalized migrant communities.

saturation of restaurant business (Beltrán and Sáiz, 2013). In fact, it cannot be denied that this rapid growth of Chinese migration was deeply aligned with an increasingly growing Spanish economies. Favorable economic conditions played an essential role in attracting significant flows of Chinese newcomers. Thus, it will be reasonable to understand Chinese migration to Spain from the lens of social changes in both the sending and receiving society over the history, since the patterns of migration typologies and experiences of Chinese immigrants have been shaped by processes of social change of both societies.

2.2.1. Economic migration

There are various approaches to identity drivers and process of international migration. Massey and his colleagues intended to come up with generalized understandings of international labor migration phenomenon in their seminal overview of migration theories (Massey et al. 1993). Neoclassical economists provide both macro and micro theory to justify the initiation of international migration, in which demand-supply discourse and cost-benefit calculation set the main tones. More specifically, due to the economic backwardness and low incomes in home country, people in developing countries are more likely to emigrate to Western developed societies in search for higher incomes and better job opportunities. That is, the assumption of driving forces of international migration is based on the structural difference of economic development between the country of origin and that of destination. Yet this neoclassical approach, also known as push-pull theory, has limitations in explaining why people in the poorest countries demonstrate the least likelihood of emigration. In fact, international migration requires a great number of resources. As the study of De Haas shows (2010), the countries with highest level of emigration are of middle-level development like Mexico and Morocco. Thus, income difference between the origin and destination is not a sufficient premise to examine the drivers and conditions of international migration. There are more explicit and implicit forces tangled together.

The empirical study about Chinese migration in Spain implies that those who have financial resources and kinship/co-ethnic networks in the receiving country could finally make the migration into reality (He 2018). For example, some of them were officers of

civil services in local government or teachers in public schools. Although theses occupations were deemed as respectful and prestigious in the local society, it was an imperative for them to mobilize their resources to leave the country in search of prosperity and upward mobility.

This fact has two major implications. One the one hand, while their outmigration is incentivized by job and business opportunities in Spain, a sense of relative deprivation caused by constant comparisons within their reference group should be the most direct and decisive driving force for Chinese emigrants from the home village to Spain. On the other hand, transnational networks play an essential role in Chinese international migration.

Migration economists Stark and his colleagues identified the notion of *relative deprivation* as a theoretical tool to conceptualize incentives of labor migration (Stark and Bloom 1985; Stark and Taylor 1989). Based on Runciman's theory of relative deprivation, they argued that there are four conditions of *relative deprivation*: "*(i) when a person does not have X, (ii) he sees some other person or persons as having X, (iii) he wants X, and (iv) he sees it as feasible that he should have X*" (Runciman 1966: 10; Stark and Taylor 1989). In other words, relative deprivation is subjectively perceived by individuals with respect to other members of their reference group such as the village community. In terms of labor migration, *X* usually stands for income gains and economic betterment generated by emigration, and therefore may possibly lead to further social recognition and higher socio-economic status within reference groups. Those who don't have but want *X* will feel relatively deprived. Some survey-based studies showed that more relatively deprived do individuals feel and perceive in their reference groups, more likely they migrate to foreign labor markets (Stark and Taylor 1989).

Informed by this conceptual element, relative deprivation constitutes a significant explanation for early waves of Chinese economic migrants to Spain, notably from 1980s. It has been witnessed geographical homogeneity among the early waves of labor migration from China to Spain with regard to origin. Most of labor immigrants come from Zhejiang Province, notably from the counties of Qingtian and Wenzhou. These places have a long history of outmigration for economic incentives due to its impoverished agriculture and economic backwardness (Beltrán 2009). The pioneers who came to Spain in early 1920s accumulated not only material goods and money, but also widely gained social recognition

in their village of origin by sending remittances and sponsoring infrastructures in the home village (Beltrán 2003). Many Chinese interviewees observed that households with migrant family members abroad received large amounts of remittances and upgraded their consumerist habits in the origin. Additionally, those who came back from Spain and other European countries actively invested in constructions of roads and ancestral temples their villages, urban infrastructures, as well as participated in social activities (Liu 2022). Thus, due to the comparisons with these migrant townsmen who have made good fortunes abroad, those non-migrant villagers perceived income differentials and felt incentivized by the idea of "earning euros" (Stark and Taylor 1989).

Western world imaginary is a collective construct in the era after Open Up Reform in China. Under strong propagandas of globalization not only did Chinese people actively pursue commodities from Western brands, but also internalize many Western values and lifestyle. The fever of going abroad is deemed as a symbolic historical mark in that era. According to world system theory, migration flows are inevitable due to the capitalist development and expansion across the globe (Massey, et al. 1993). Many interviewees from Qingtian and Wenzhou in the study have shared the same perception about the going abroad fever in the late 1980s.

Europe, as a major destination for Chines economic migration, has over century-long history of Chinese settlement, especially those from Zhejiang province (Li 2009). According to the study of Li (2016), Chinese immigrants from Qingtian, a traditional emigratory county in Zhejiang province, established ethnic enclave in Paris in the early 1910s. With saturation of ethnic economies in France and other European countries, a small group of Chinese old settlers crossed the Pyrenees and arrived in Spain with the aim of exploring new opportunities of business growth. Yet the Civil War in Spain in 1936 led to an abrupt outflow of Chinese migrants back to their homeland country. Only dozens of Chinese bachelors remined and dispersed in Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia, among which ten got married with local females (Nieto 2003). Not until the end of 1980s economic migrants from China has got back into the center of Chinese immigration to Spain. In 1973 mainland China and Spain established diplomatic relations, since which channels of migration between two countries have been officially regulated and gradually developed. Chen Diguang's arrival as the first Chinese migrant with a visa from the Spanish Embassy

marked a milestone in the reconstruction of Chinese immigration to Spain (Li 2016). In the aftermath of Spain's accession to the EU in 1986 a rapidly growing flows of Chinese immigrants migrated to Spain with the aim of gold rushing. In the meantime, following Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms in 1979, which opened up the Chinese economy and facilitated migration, the significant arrival of Chinese migrants with different motivations and social capital did not occur until the 1980s and 1990s, resulting in a notable increase in the Chinese diaspora in Europe (Sáiz, 2012).

2.2.2. Middle class migration from China: beyond lifestyle migration

The economic crisis in 2008 placed Spain in a pressing need for economic recovery and employment expansion. During the tenure of Mariano Rajoy, Prime Minister of Spain from 2011 to 2018, the government prioritized economic growth through job creation and business development (Cinco Días 2013). To address these challenges, his administration introduced a series of economic reforms and advocated for Law 14/2013, known as the Entrepreneurial Support Law. One of its key aims was to bolster institutionalization and facilitation of foreign investment in Spain. In this regard, not only do foreign investors provide capital in this country, but also are issued with residence permit to settle down and develop their investment activities, such as real estate investment and other innovative entrepreneurial practices (BOE 2013).

This legislative framework facilitated a notable rise in Chinese migrant investors by encouraging financial engagement with the Spanish economy, marking a significant turning point in migration dynamics. They entered Spain through various investment avenues, including the real estate market, bank deposits, government bonds, and other investment portfolios. In reciprocation for their investments, they obtain a temporary residence card, which, following a specified duration of residency, can potentially be converted into a long-term residence card, and eventually, subject to eligibility, citizenship may also be pursued.

In addition to the notable influx of Chinese immigrant investors, it is imperative to highlight another noteworthy cohort of newcomers: non-lucrative residents. This category comprises individuals holding non-lucrative residence visas (*Visado de Residencia No*

Lucrativa). Such visa holders are obliged to reside in Spain for a minimum of six months annually and must possess sufficient financial resources to sustain their extended sojourn in the host nation, refraining from engaging in any form of remunerative occupation. This visa scheme also extends eligibility to the spouses and offspring of the main applicant. Many middle-class families also opt for this visa scheme to migrate to Spain as a family unit. This convergence of two distinct groups of newcomers has precipitated substantial waves of Chinese immigration to Spain from the early 2010s.

The definition of 'economic migrant' is mainly determined by migrants' migration motivations and its concomitant migratory trajectories. Unlike their economic-migrant counterparts, Chinese newcomers choose to migrate due to a mix of motives far beyond economic necessity. Looking for a safer and cleaner environment for Chinese immigrants themselves and their children is definitely one of the most repeated reasons of migration. Additionally, under excessive competition and stressful education in China, many parents opt out with their children by settling down in Spain with the hope of maintaining a happy childhood for their children and less stressful lifestyle for family. Apart from these reasons, their migration motivation consists of a complex of motivations which be hardly synthesized under a unique and single definition.

There are various notions to define the relocation of affluent individuals in foreign countries in search of better way of life. Yet existing migration typologies may fail to have explanatory strength to define this group of Chinese newcomers in Spain. For example, lifestyle migration is one of the most prominent notions to define affluent individuals who choose to migrate in search of better way of life (Benson and O'Reily 2009). This concept originally refered to people of all ages who moved from the developed world to places where they find better quality of life. It comes to be part-time or long-term residence of *lifestyle migrants* in a foreign country in which they could live a slow pace of life, afford relatively lower cost of living, enjoy comfortable climate and health benefits and even a feeling of community (Benson and O'Reily 2009; Hayes 2018). Other related notions include retirement migration and leisure migration (King et.al 1998; Böröcz 1996). Nevertheless, all these amenity-seeking motivations are so individualised that they fail to integrate one decisive reason of Chinese new immigrants in Spain, which is child-centred reason on migration.

Self-identified as middle class, these Chinese newcomers explicitly and implicitly distinct themselves with their counterparts in the United States, Australia, Canada and other developed countries which require higher level of investment in their capital-linked visa schemes. They are regarded as economic and political elites in China who are believed to have exclusive privilege and powerful patrons in the government. In this study, occupational status of the interviewees prior to migration are typical middle-class professionals, including department director, manager, self-employed petite bourgeoisie, etc. They have relatively limited economic and political resources.

Social class and migration are two interlinked components of identity formation. In the study of Scott (2006), mobility is deemed as a dominant feature of middle-class reproduction, as spatial and social mobility are intrinsically intersected amongst British middle-class expatriates in world cities like Paris. As a growing and diversified group of British middle class, they validate their professional careers and enrich their class identities by appropriation of different forms of capitals in the host society, which consists of an important dimension in middle-class distinction.

2.2.3. Student migration

With a growing emergence of urban middle-class families in China over the last few decades, studying abroad consists of an integral part of their consumption. While the existing studies mostly addressed issues in traditional destination countries like the U.S, UK and Australia (Fong, 2010; Ma, 2020; Tu, 2021), the stream of the burgeoning educational destination countries is neglected in academic studies. Spain, as one of the most popular emergent destinations for Chinese students, should be addressed more in order to understand the overall transnational educational migration from China.

The impetus for studying abroad has come from different sources. Study-abroad fever boomed in the 1990s after restrictions on self-financed overseas education were loosened by the Chinese Government in 1981 (Xiang and Shen, 2009). A deepening of commodification of international education in China, which was substantially fostered by three main agencies: the state, the market (educational broker), and the Chinese families, has been subsequently observed.

In 1991 the Plan for Revitalizing Education in the 21st century implemented by the state has substantially expanded higher education access in China. This trend results in an inflation of university degree; that is, a solely university degree is not sufficient to guarantee students a career prospect in job market. It is thus prevailing to see an increasing number to graduate students to keep pursuing upward mobility in academic ladder, either in top tier universities in China or in overseas universities.

Yet in tandem with constant growth of college enrollment since 1990s, from 1 million in 1998 to 6.4 million in 2009, the higher education has become subsequently more stratified in terms of an unequal distribution of educational resources between different tiers of universities. Hence, it is super-competitive to get into an elite university in China in order to receive a quality education by the only and decisive means of the college entrance examination (*Gaokao* hereafter). This test-oriented means of selection is unidimensional and decisive; that is, this exam largely determines for one- and only-time what tier of universities that students can get into, and what kind of educational resources they can receive. In this regard, overseas education is not only considered as a second chance to have a quality higher education for those who score low in Gaokao (Lan, 2018), but also as an alternative of educational opportunity for the Chinese families who intend to liberate their children from an oppressive test-oriented education system (Ma, 2020).

Given the limited knowledge about admission process and requirement of overseas colleges, thousands of Chinese families choose to turn to third-party agents, educational brokerage agents (Lan 2019). The services of these educational intermediary agents meet a variety of parents and students' demands, including choosing target colleges and majors, crafting a personal statement, communicating with schools on behalf of the students, and even a series of post-migration services such as airport pick-up, accommodations, helping with registration in the host university, etc. As Lan suggested (2019), these commercialized practices of commodifying overseas education, to a great extent, stimulate parents and students' desire for studying abroad by underestimating the difficulties they may encounter in the host country. This rise of consumerism in the field of overseas education is interpreted as a result of expansion of educational brokerage system across different tiers of cities, and also as a result of the state's deliberate efforts to encourage self-funded study

abroad to alleviate the problem of uneven distribution of educational resources (Lan, 2019, 2020).

2.3 The Aspiration-capabilities model and Chinese migration to Spain

To conceptualize motivations and processes of contemporary Chinese migration typologies to Spain, this chapter proposes the aspiration-capability framework as a analytical tool (de Haas 2021; Carling and Schewel 2018). Initially formulated from the aspiration-ability model by Carling (2002), de Haas (2021) developed the aspiration-capabilities model by overcoming the limitations of the aspiration-ability model as well as other functionalist and historical-structural theories.

2.3.1. Development of the Aspiration-Capabilities Model

First, Carling's work (2002) is influential in the sense that he originally highlighted the role of both aspiration and ability to migrate, which provided an important analytical approach to distinct *not wanting to migrate* and *not being able to migrate*. As he put it "*migration and non-migration are essentially two sides of the same question*", the existing migration theories at that period focused on mobility *per se* without paying attention to involuntary immobility. For example, the network theory pointed to the role of personal and familial networks on international movement, which is only capable of explaining why migration can be easier for some people than others (Massey 1990; Carling 2002). The new economics of migration took labor migration as an optimised risk-reducing strategy for the benefits of the whole household instead of that of individual (Stark and Bloom 1985). This theoretical approach fails to integrate a wider range of individuals out of the household scale when it comes to decision-making of migration. These inconsistencies of migration theories reside at a micro-level approach, whilst macro level theories demonstrate limitations on theoretical explanation how migration flows and individual activities are shaped by structural forces (Carling 2002).

The aspiration-ability model by Carling (2002) incorporates micro- and macro level of

explanations by two-delineation; that is, an aspiration and ability to migrate. Without either one, it can result in voluntary or involuntary immobility. Three modes of migration are formulated with reference to (im)mobility experiences: 1) Voluntary non-migrants, representing those who have no aspiration to migrate in spite of having the ability; 2) Involuntary non-migrants, representing those who have the aspiration to migrate without the ability; 3) Migrants, representing those who have the aspiration to migrate and also are able to realise this aspiration.

Both aspiration and ability which affect these migration modes are intrinsically embedded in a broader social spectrum, because the nature of migration is a socially constructed project (Carling 2002). In other words, a wide range of social, economic and political conditions in both the sending and receiving societies should be taken into account when it comes to analyse the role of aspiration and ability on migration. At a macro level, *emigration environment* which encompasses social, economic and political contexts effectively affects the aspiration of individuals' decision making on migration, while *immigration interface* sets the tone for the ability of individuals when calculating barriers to migration. The latter refers to immigration policies and its concomitant types of migration which determinate requirements, risks and costs of migration projects for individuals. On the other hand, at a micro-level, individual characteristics play an essential role in both the aspiration and ability to migrate. Carling suggests that gender, age, socioeconomic status, family migration history, educational level and personality traits all affect *who* will have the aspiration to migrate and *who* will have the ability realise it. It is worth mentioning that the macro- and micro-level of analysis should not be excluded from one another but intersected together as a combination of two levels of analysis to answer the same question.

Nevertheless, the aspiration-ability model by Carling focuses on migration per se limitation lies in the transient nature of aspirations *per se* without incorporating a broader historical lens. This limitation will be discussed in more detail later.

2.3.2. Applicability of the Aspiration-Capabilities Model in Chinese Immigration to Spain

In the context of migration from China to Spain in the last four decades, the aspiration-capabilities framework has stronger explanatory strengths than the previous aspiration-ability model. Subsequently, newcomers from China to Spain in the recent decade were more diverse, including students, highly skilled professionals, investors, retirees, etc. They also have shown their explicit and implicit migration aspirations and abilities in different period spectrums. Nevertheless, the aspiration-ability model could only horizontally approach to each stage of migration but fails to incorporate a vertical approach to understand Chinese migration to Spain from a historical and chronological lens. That is to say, the aspiration-ability model provides an analytical tool to understand *how* migration takes place and *who* is able to migrate and/or stay but fails to answer the question of *how migration propensities are shaped by broader process of social change*. This conceptual limitation is revamped by the aspiration-capabilities model by de Haas (2021).

De Haas's previous study suggested that the relationship between human development and migration is not linear, because higher levels of individual incomes in origin countries do not necessarily lead to a lower level of emigration (2010). On the contrary, economic development in developing countries is more likely to lead to take-off emigration. Because human development in economic factor, increased educational level, cultural exposure to role model in migration and social recognition are constantly at play in migration aspirations in origin countries, while increased living conditions enable people to aspire for life opportunities elsewhere. From this perspective, de Haas indicated that migration should not be a problem to solve, but an intrinsic part of social change and human development (2010). As de Haas suggests (2021) put: "*As long as societies change (which they always do), social stratifications persist (which is equally likely) and people go through life stages (which is inevitable), people will keep on migrating – and settling.*"

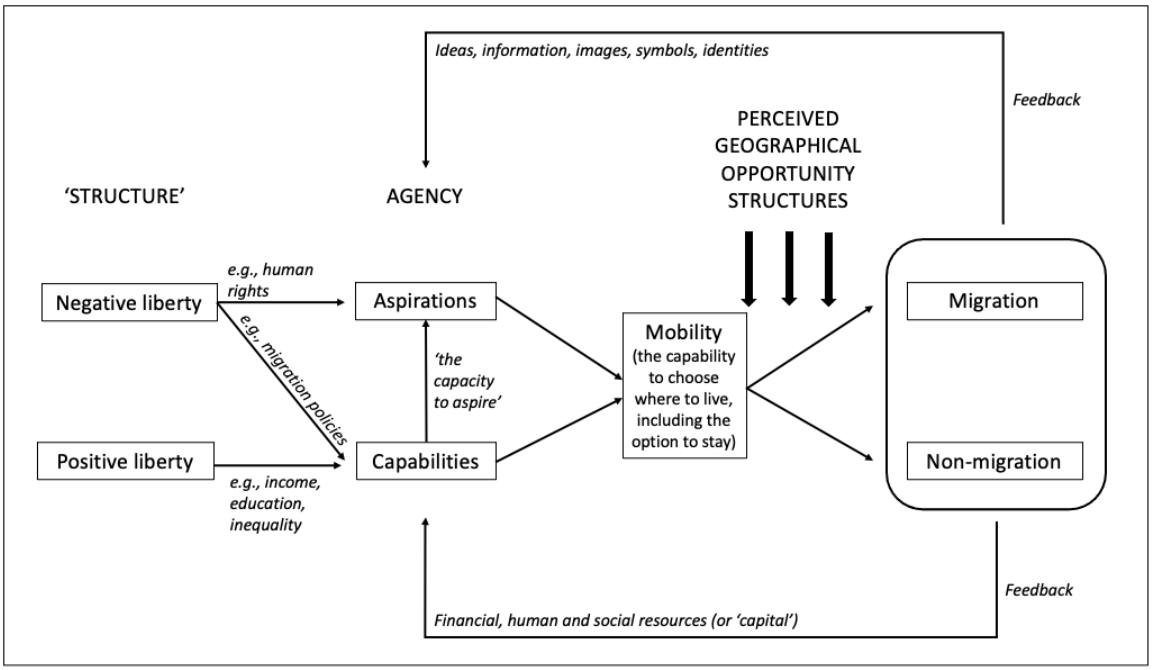
Chinese society has undergone a rapid and critical social transformation in the aftermath of the economic reform and opening-up in the end of the last century. In the aftermath of the economic reform and opening-up, especially since the late 1990s, China has rapidly undergone three-fold social transformation: *from an agrarian to an industrial/service/information society, and from an isolated to a globalising society*

(Gransow 2007). After a full-scale engagement in globalization, China has produced accelerated economic growth and achieved to become one of the biggest economies in the globe. Yet a series of social consequences have come into being: new forms of poverty, deeper social polarisation, environment deterioration, and inequalities between eastern and western regions (Gransow 2007). People mobilise their resources and also themselves to achieve upward mobility elsewhere. In addition to internal migration, international migration from China to other countries has also rocketed from the end of 1980s. This trend not only attracted significant inflows of remittance and other economic benefits back to China, but also built up the bridge between the Chinese government and foreign capital, which led to an increasingly growing scale of foreign direct investment. The *qiaoxiang* model and foreign direct investment play an essential role in the economic miracles of China (Li and Wong 2018). Observing these economic miracles brought by immigrants, more and more people sniffed the wealth and prospers abroad, which led to 'going-abroad fever' as well as 'study abroad fever' in the turning period of the millenia.

In tandem with social changes taking place over the last decades, migration from China to Spain has been constantly changing and evolving as well. More concretely, when hardship and poverty prevail in individuals' life in the homeland, people look for opportunities elsewhere and aspire for improving living conditions by migration; yet after economic betterment and improvement of living conditions in China, people are still leaving the country. As de Haas suggests, social transformation and development in sending countries can effectively shape people's migration propensities (2003, 2010). Thus, it will be reasonable to understand Chinese migration to Spain from the lens of social changes in both the sending and receiving society over the history, since the patterns of migration typologies and experiences of Chinese immigrants have been shaped by processes of social changes of both societies.

De Haas (2021) elaborated the aspirations-capabilities framework to '(*re)conceptualize migration as an intrinsic part of broader processes of economic, political, cultural, technological and demographic change embodied in concepts such as social transformation, development and globalization'* (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. Expanded aspirations-capabilities framework for conceptualizing migratory agency



Source: De Haas (2021)

Negative liberty refers to the absence of external obstacles and constraints on people's freedom of mobility, which affects both migration aspirations and capabilities of individuals (See Figure 1). This form of liberty focuses on institutional regulation, policy, social oppression and wars. For example, not until the liberalisation of emigration by the Chinese government in the late 1980s did ordinary people have access to obtaining a passport and applying for legitimate visa to go broad (Xiang 2016), which subsequently increased migration aspirations and capabilities and thus led to a cross-national 'go abroad' fever. Additionally, in the aftermath of the economic crisis, the launch of *Golden Visa* policy in various countries of Southern and Eastern Europe has increased migration aspirations of foreign people to migrate and settle down in EU, among which Chinese middle-class and high-net-worth individuals became one of the protagonist groups of *Golden Visa* newcomers.

Positive liberty encompasses people's own ability to control their life and their access to social, economic, and cultural resources (See Figure 1). This form of liberty primarily determines people's migration capabilities, which is equivalent to the term *ability* proposed by Carling (2002). For example, higher level of GDP per capita in China leads to an up-

and-coming formation of middle-class and high-net-worth population which makes a major contribution to the outflows of migrants from China to other developed countries during the last decades (Xiang 2016).

At the same time, positive liberty can affect people's migration capabilities and the latter, to some extent, determines how much people may aspire to migrate and pursue life opportunities elsewhere. In the case of Chinese diaspora in Europe, migrants from Zhejiang province have a long history of settlement in this continent and have successfully developed expanded ethnic networks based on kinship and origin. People from their homeland village are more likely to repeat migratory trajectories of their counterparts from the same village by shared information, social networks, and even mutual financial support. This chain migration is a conventional practice within traditional Chinese migration in Spain.

Based on de Haas's aspiration-capabilities model (2021), the present study develops thematic analysis of codes to examine how different migratory patterns begin and sustain (See Table 2 in Chapter 3).

First, to realize an international migration project, a well-rounded set of resources is indispensable: economic resources, social capital, cultural resources (information, knowledge and skills), and bodily condition (health and physical condition) (de Haas 2021). Given social hierarchies and structural inequalities, people's access to migratory resources is unequally distributed within societies and communities (de Haas 2021). In this regard, it is thus to see gradually stratified inflows of Chinese immigrants to Spain over the last decades, especially in the aftermath of the launch of several capital-liked visa schemes. For example, labor migration is evidently out of the consideration for the group of Chinese middle-class or high-net-worth individuals when they decide to migrate to Spain, while *Golden Visa* and non-lucrative residence visa are more likely to attract them.

Second, different social groups will develop different subjective life aspirations and tendencies to migrate or stay, even when exposed to similar set of social and structural stimulus (de Haas 2021). In this case, we can clearly see distinct sets of migration motivation and life aspirations among Chinese immigrant workers, students, investors, retirees and other types of migration. More concretely, immigrant workers are likely to consider the receiving country as a place of fortune; Chinese students may consider Spain

as a destination of educational credentials; immigrant investors regard this European country as a safe haven; retirees can live in Spain to enjoy its quality of life.

Migration aspiration refers to people's imaginaries and subjective life opportunities perceived elsewhere, which is necessarily affected by social development and personal dispositions. Rather than an instrumental and functional end for migration established by conventional migration theories, de Haas (2021) incorporated an intrinsic and innate reasons for migration. He broke down migration aspiration into *instrumental* and *intrinsic* dimensions. Instrumental dimension of migration aspiration is related to 'functional' or 'utilitarian' means to achieve purposes like higher income or social status, protection from human right oppression, and better education. On the other hand, intrinsic dimension is related to subjective wellbeing and fulfilment through migration, such as happiness and joy from exploring new cultures and societies, or '*experiencing the social prestige linked to providing oneself and enduring the suffering and taking the risks often associated with migration*'. The latter underscores the importance of bringing reputation, social recognition and respect (de Haas 2021). Two salient examples can be mentioned in this regard.

The first example is of Chinese *Golden Visa* holders in Spain. Chinese immigrant investors in Spain are likely to choose this country as a safe haven by investing real estates with the aim of transferring their wealth and assets to overseas and diversify economic and financial risks in China. This is an evidently 'means-to-end' desire for migration. Yet at the same time, it cannot be denied that they concurrently enjoy better quality of life, as well as free transnational mobility between China and Europe. The latter part is more innate and intrinsic desire for enhancing right and subjective well-being. As de Haas put (2021): "*The central idea is that the very awareness of having the freedom to move and migrate can add to people's life satisfaction, in the same way that freedom of speech and religion, the right to organise protest marches or to run for office can contribute to people's wellbeing, irrespective of whether or not they eventually use those freedoms* (p18)."

The other example should lie on the migration of Chinese students. To achieve higher education is no doubt a functional and instrumental end of international mobility, while like many Western youth, Chinese students also aspire to explore the world and broaden the horizon, which is seen as '*a modern manifestation of a more universal intrinsic desire of many young people* (de Haas 2021)'.

Migration doesn't function as an equal opportunity structure for every social group and class. The existing structural inequalities and discriminatory practices in both origin and receiving country leads to produce different migration opportunities and patterns (de Haas, 2021). There are many socio-economic facets to understand different forms of relocated groups through history. "*In geographical and national context, migration is a socially differentiated process*. (de Haas, 2021)"

2.4 Spatial patterns and residential behaviors of Chinese immigrants in Spain

Tébar (2010, 2013) examines spatial patterns of Chinese residents in Madrid by calculating residential concentration and segregation of Chinese residents in each district based on quantitative methods developed by Chicago School (Bell, 1954; Duncan, Duncan, 1955). Since the 1950s some scholars of 'Chicago School" started to quantify empirical measurements of spatial distribution of ethnic minority groups in urban areas. Their studies proposed quantitative indicators of segregation that empirically manifested an unequal distribution in space. Later, Massey and Denton (1989) classified these indicators and establish different types of residential segregation. Based on this methodological orientation, Tébar's study (2010) suggests that Chinese enclave economy plays an essential role in attracting Chinese immigrants relocating in some areas and inevitably shapes urban morphology by developing into an ethnic enclave. His study indicates a potential formation of Chinatown in Usera, a semi-peripherical municipality of Madrid.

Given a predominant composition of Chinese immigrants working in ethnic economy, both studies address results of residential behaviors and spatial distribution mainly focusing on the old-settler migrant group who primarily relies on enclave economy (Tébar 2010; Zhong and Beltrán 2020). Although Zhong and Béltran's study (2020) addresses new migrant groups and suggests a new segment of residential behaviors in recent years, more empirical data should be analyzed with regard to different migrant groups. Tébar conducted the study before the launch of Law 14/2013, which made him impossible to incorporate the group of newly arrived Chinese immigrant investors and other profiles with different socioeconomic status (2010). Therefore, to complement these previous scholarly works,

the present study will use quantitative indicators to examine spatial distribution and residential concentration and segregation of Chinese population with updated empirical data and emergent migrant groups.

From the beginning of the 21st century Spain has transitioned from an emigrant country to an immigrant country. With a large immigrant population residing in Spain, many scholars have started to study residential features of different ethnic groups and notice the impact of foreign population on urban morphology in the receiving country (Bayona-Carrasco and López Gay 2011; Galeano 2016; Galeano and Bayona-Carrasco 2018). With regard to Chinese migration in Spain, existing studies address some important observations about residential features and spatial distribution (Tébar 2010, 2013; Zhong and Beltrán 2020). Zhong and Beltrán (2020) conducted comprehensive qualitative research on residential patterns and behaviors of Chinese immigrants regarding different stages of migratory trajectory in the host country. They suggest that residential status of Chinese immigrants is mainly determined by their socioeconomic status and employment. During the initial settlement, Chinese newcomers are more likely to live in a shared apartment of relatives or friends. Also living in their workplace is another conventional option to accumulate more savings. With the betterment of economic conditions, many people move out from a shared apartment to their own household, either by renting or by purchasing to have a better quality of life. When they ultimately accumulate sufficient capital, buying real estate property in Spain and China for their own use and investment is regarded as the final stage of residential mobility for many Chinese immigrants. This study draws many important details about how Chinese immigrants decide where to live and when to relocate in accordance with their migratory trajectory, but little attention is paid to spatial distribution at a macro level.

2.5 Family relations between parents and children in a context of migration

"*Migration is an investment of families and individuals in a better future rather than a desperate flight from misery*. (de Haas, 2021)"

Chinese immigration to Spain is a relatively recent phenomenon compared to other European countries such as France, the Netherlands and Italy, with a growing influx of Chinese immigrants coming to Spain since the end of the twentieth century (Nieto 2003). As a result, the Chinese population is now the largest Asian group in Spain (Statista 2021). According to INE municipal register data, the population of Chinese nationality in Spain has grown rapidly from 12,036 to 232,617 between 1998 and 2020. With the family reunification policy in place, more and more Chinese immigrants have reunited with their spouses and children. In 2002, there were 6,178 Chinese children under the age of 15 in Spain, and this number has increased to 49,775 in 2020. It is therefore essential to understand Chinese migration in Spain through the lens of the immigrant family.

As noted above, migration doesn't function as an equal opportunity structure for all social groups and classes. Structural differentiation between different types of migration can be reproduced and manifested accordingly in the migrant family.

2.5.1. Traditional Chinese immigrant families in Spain

Contrary to the minority model stereotype represented by their counterparts in the US, the descendants of Chinese immigrants in Spain tend to have lower levels of educational attainment and aspirations, while their dropout rate is significantly higher than that of other ethnic minority groups, and Chinese parents are less likely to be involved in their children's schooling (Aparicio and Portes 2014; Yiu 2013). The first generation of Chinese immigrants in Spain is portrayed as a less educated peasant group, excluded from the mainstream labour market. As a strategic adaptation to the host society, they turn to ethnic entrepreneurship and build their way of life around family businesses (Beltrán 2007). As suggested by Yiu (2013), Chinese parents tend to develop entrepreneurial activities as an upward mobility path in a closed opportunity structure in Spain, and subsequently transmit the same aspiration to their children. Therefore, it is not surprising that the self-employed family business plays an important role in shaping parents' aspirations towards their offspring (Yiu 2013; Aparicio and Portes 2014).

Furthermore, previous studies suggest that Chinese children are more likely to be exposed to critical situations at school, given their experiences of discrimination and

difficulties in adjustment (Yiu 2013; Aparicio and Portes 2014). These negative perceptions and experiences have a significant negative impact on intergenerational relationships with their parents (Aparicio and Portes 2014). Interestingly, the same research also reports that the children of Chinese immigrants are the least likely to experience downward mobility in the host society, regardless of their educational attainment. Young people of Chinese origin who drop out of school early also show a high propensity to participate in the labour market and the lowest likelihood of downward assimilation, whether they work in the family business or in another co-ethnic business supported by their parents. On the other hand, those who have remained in school turn out to be more competitive than their peers and obtain more advanced qualifications in the Spanish education system, despite lower parental involvement and aspirations in their education.

Since the early 2000s, there has been a growing academic interest in the transnational trajectories and settlement patterns of adult Chinese migrants in Spain (Nieto 2003; Beltrán 2003; Sáiz 2005). More recently, studies have been conducted on Chinese descendants in terms of education, cultural identities and transnational mobilities (Yiu 2013; Aparicio and Portes 2014; Robles-Llana 2018; Masdeu 2020). However, less attention has been paid to the private sphere of the Chinese immigrant population in Spain, where the dynamics of parent-child relationships are underexplored. The present study takes Chinese immigrant families in the province of Barcelona as an example.

2.5.2. Economic migration and the family

Chinese migration to Spain, particularly in the area of economic migration, has often followed a pattern of chain migration, relying heavily on sponsorship of initial arrivals and pre-existing ethnic ties in the host country. This migratory process is influenced by strict immigration policies and post-migration financial challenges, resulting in the staggered movement of family members. As a result, parents are often forced to leave their children behind with the intention of reuniting with them at a later date (Foner 2009; Tyyskä 2007). This phenomenon of parent-child separation is not unique to the Chinese migration context; it is prevalent in many major migrant-receiving societies, including North America and

Europe (Suárez-Orozco et al. 2002; Menjívar and Abrego 2007; Smith et al. 2004; Bonizzoni 2009; Fresnoza-Flot 2009).

While it is hoped that such family arrangements are temporary, Suárez-Orozco and her colleagues (2012) found that the duration of separation between migrant parents and their children is often longer than expected. As a result, this prolonged separation has negative consequences for parent-child bonding, as well as for children's self-esteem and behaviour (Smith et al. 2004; Suárez-Orozco et al. 2002; Suárez-Orozco et al. 2011; Foner & Dreby 2011).

In the absence of the parents, the care of the children usually shifts to the grandparents or another extended family member as the primary caregiver, with whom the children have a strong attachment, even seeing them as more legitimate authority figures than the parents (Smith et al. 2004). Once the family is reunited in the new country, the process of reunion and readjustment is likely to be problematic. The loss of a caregiver in the country of origin is a double loss for children, causing the same anger and grief as separation from parents in the first place (Tyyskä 2007; Suárez-Orozco et al. 2011). In addition, reuniting with parents and, in some cases, with new siblings, as well as adjusting to the new country, is fraught with difficulties for children (Suárez-Orozco et al. 2011). However, the intergenerational relationship between parents and children should be understood as complex and dynamic rather than one-sided and static (Foner, 2009); that is, family dynamics change over time. Therefore, the complex and diverse nature of parent-child relationship dynamics allows us to explore more possibilities about transnational family configurations.

The intergenerational contract provides a rich theoretical tool for understanding family relations between the first generation of Chinese immigrants and their descendants in Barcelona. As Bengtson (1993) suggests, the intergenerational contract is 'a complex set of shared expectations and commitments that underlie intergenerational and inter-age relationships'. At the individual level of the intergenerational contract, viewed within the family lineage, the first generation takes care of the second generation until they can take care of themselves and raise the third generation, and in return the first generation receives support from their offspring when they cannot support themselves (Bengtson 1993; Walker, 1996). The concept of the intergenerational contract is usually explored and understood

within a specific socio-cultural and historical context (Ikels 1993; Whyte 2003; Göransson 2009; Croll 2010). In Confucian Asia, the pursuit of harmony and well-being of the family as a whole unit places a high value on mutual obligations between generations, i.e. the reciprocity of intergenerational relationships and the provision of care and inheritance promote intergenerational family dependency (Ikels, 1993; Whyte 2003; Göransson 2009; Croll 2010). It is commonly assumed that the younger generation has a moral obligation to respect and support the elderly, defined in Confucian rhetoric as filial piety. Although there is widespread concern in Asian society about the erosion of filial obligations in the wake of modernisation, migration, demographic change and the spread of Western individualist values, evidence shows that intergenerational family ties in Asian families are strengthened by a robust and reciprocal cycle of care (Croll 2010).

The intergenerational contract is sometimes implicit, unwritten and also unnegotiated. This salient feature can lead to conflict and ambivalence within the household. For example, as Davis (1993) points out, the intergenerational contract may be seen as violated by both old and young if parents fail to pay for their son's marriage. The son would then be less likely to fulfil his obligation to look after his parents. As elsewhere, a particular child would 'owe' more to the parents than his or her siblings as a result of an unfair division of inheritance, but this child might fail to take on care responsibilities for situational and practical reasons, such as the absence of public welfare, leading to inter- and intra-generational family conflicts (Ikels 1993).

As an analytical tool, the notion of intergenerational contract is very useful to understand the dynamics of the parent-child relationship in Chinese immigrant families in Barcelona. Similar to the second generation of Chinese immigrants in the Netherlands, who take on a wide range of filial obligations and family responsibilities in the host society (Cheung et al. 2020), the younger generation of Chinese in Barcelona also take on the responsibility of facilitating their parents' adaptation in the host society and the prosperity of the family as a whole. Many of them work in family businesses, translate official documents and administrative work for their parents, and take care of younger siblings. In addition, as self-employment is prevalent in the Chinese community, family life is deeply intertwined with the workplace, where multiple forms of relationships within the family lineage can be seen, i.e. employer-employee and parent-child relationships. However,

without being bilaterally negotiated or explicitly defined, the intergenerational contract implicitly defines the duties and responsibilities of all members in the virtue of daily interaction.

2.5.3. Newcomers and new motifs of Chinese immigrant families in Spain

Like many wealthy East Asian families, such as Hong Kong and Taiwanese, who move to the English-speaking world (Waters 2003; Chiang 2011), the wave of middle-class Chinese migrants to Spain in the last decade has been driven primarily by fears of political instability and economic collapse in China. More importantly, Chinese parents are sceptical about the Chinese education system, which is characterised by rote learning under excessive competition (Tu 2021). The introduction of a series of capital-led visa policies in Spain led to an influx of investors and their family members from China, which radically changed the diasporic landscape of both the ethnic community and the motives of Chinese migrant families in this country.

Unlike traditional Chinese migrants, whose economic activities play a dominant role in their post-migration process, newcomers prioritise children in the decision to migrate and in the process of settlement and integration in the new country. More specifically, a child-centred ideology dominates the migration patterns and process of newly arrived Chinese migrants. For example, the timing of migration is highly dependent on the children's schooling stage; whether the family would stay in Spain temporarily or permanently has much to do with the children's adaptation to the new environment; the relocation of the new household in Spain should take into account the children's new school.

Yet Liu (2016) synthesised the social meanings of this child-centred migration project as a 'class-based consumption', as she put it: "*migration is in fact a form of class-based consumption, a strategy for class reproduction, and a way to convert economic resources into social status and prestiges*." Rather than realising genuine geographical mobility, Chinese parents seek to develop a pathway to the global elite. Although Liu's study (2016) paid great attention to wealthy Chinese who migrated to the US on investment visas, the

cultural connotations of wealthy migration from China to the US could be consistent with the trend to Spain as well.

First, obtaining alternative residency or citizenship in a foreign country is seen as an exclusive commodity with the ability to signify class status (Liu 2016). Compared to the high threshold for investment portfolios in the US and other English-speaking countries, Spain and other southern or eastern European countries are more accessible to the middle class. A salient class distinction is explicitly and implicitly manifested by immigrants themselves when it comes to the choice of destination country.

Second, obtaining an alternative residence abroad doesn't necessarily mean actually moving to a foreign country. In this case, like many Chinese immigrant investors in the US, there is a significant proportion of Chinese *Golden Visa* holders who migrate to Spain without settling. Thus, it is not uncommon to see circular mobility between China and Spain among Chinese immigrant investors and their family members. For example, the astronaut family (Waters 2003) has recently become the predominant Chinese immigrant family. This means that one of the spouses stays in Spain to look after the children, while the other stays in China to look after the family and visits Spain from time to time throughout the year. More details are discussed in chapter 6. In addition, some of their bourgeois characteristics do indeed manifest themselves in parenting and family arrangements after migration, such as concerted cultivation (Lareau 2003) and intensive mothering/parenting (Hays 1996).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

As suggested in previous chapters, an increasing number of newcomers from China have arrived and settled in Spain with different socio-economic characteristics, such as investors, students, football professionals and others. However, the existing research on Chinese immigration in Spain has mainly portrayed the realities of economic migration from the last century. To fill this research gap in the current literature, this study divides the history of Chinese immigration in Spain into two phases: (1) from the late 1980s to 2013; (2) from 2013 to the present. Little is known about the internal differentiation and historical changes of migrant profiles within the Chinese population in Spain, especially in the post-crisis period. As mentioned above, three research questions have been developed in this study:

(1) How has Chinese migration to Spain changed from the late 1980s to the present and what are the main types of Chinese migrant groups in Spain?

(2) What are the spatial distribution and residential patterns of Chinese population in Spain (Barcelona Metropolitan Region as a case study)?

(3) How do Chinese parents and their children in Spain develop family relations after migration?

To better understand the *super-diversity* within a single diaspora, a mixed approach of research methods is necessarily applied (Vertovec 2007). In this study both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. Firstly, qualitative methods are useful for understanding the complex relationships of those being studied (Flick et al. 2004). Qualitative approaches pay particular attention to decision-making processes, meaning-making patterns and lived experiences of migration. These methods include documentary analysis, in-depth interview, multi-sited participant observation, and numerous informal talks over the past four years, which enabled to collect abundant first-hand knowledge of this new phenomenon in question. For example, given the novelty of the arrival of Chinese immigrant investors coming to Spain, their initial settlement and adaptation in the new society brings about new

insights, reflections, and real-life challenges in accordance with the passage of residence time and a changing degree of integration.

This variety of qualitative methods have different explanatory strengths in depicting social realities that complement each other. They play an essential role to answer all the three research questions mentioned above. For example, the first research question requires a thorough review of Chinese migration history to Spain. In this case, documentary analysis of historical archives, existing academic works, relevant media materials and marketing reports are important means to approach this history. Parallelly, empirical data collected from multi-sited participant observation and in-depth interviews provide first-hand knowledge to understand thoroughly the internal diversification of Chinese population under different migrant groups, and their concomitant migration trajectories, residential patterns, post-migration lived experiences and family diversities.

Secondly, quantitative approach can provide useful information about overall picture of a phenomenon. In this study, descriptive research was used to understand overall picture of Chinese population in Spain. Primarily focusing on the nature of demographic segments, the results of quantitative approach not only shed light on socio-demographic evolution of Chinese communities during the last decades, but also provides insights on a tendency of the on-going internal diversification within Chinese diaspora in Spain, which substantially answers the first research question. More importantly, residential features have been calculated based on official statistics of secondary sources to approach the answer to the second research question. In the following chapters more details of each method will be thoroughly discussed.

3.2 Qualitative approach

3.2.1. Documentary analysis

The present study embarked on its investigation through an analytical scrutiny of scientific literature, historical archives, news sources, reports, and migration laws and policies. Notably, following the introduction of the *Golden Visa* policy in 2013, a discernible surge of migration companies and real estate developers emerged, directed at the Chinese market. This surge was accompanied by a pronounced promotion of

investment and migration services through various social media platforms. Amidst the emergent nature of this phenomenon, scholarly exploration utilizing these empirical resources has been relatively scarce.

In this regard, the current study leveraged online resources detailing Chinese real estate investment in Spain, encompassing news articles, business reports, and marketing campaigns concerning *Golden Visa* programs facilitated by Chinese migration agencies within Spain. These materials, unearthing hitherto underexplored dimensions of Chinese investment migration in Spain, played a pivotal role in illuminating the intricacies of this phenomenon. Specifically, these resources provided crucial background information regarding the phenomenon at hand. This included insights into prevalent locations for real estate investment, the challenges encountered by investor migrants, and the underlying infrastructure facilitating this distinct category of migration (Xiang and Lindquist 2014).

3.2.2. Participant Observations

This study employs a multi-site participant observation methodology, focused on the Barcelona Metropolitan Region (BMR). This observational approach provides invaluable material that delves into the intangible and nuanced realities that exist beneath the surface of '*discursive consciousness*' (Giddens 1984), encompassing the explanations and self-descriptions articulated by the migrants themselves. At an individual and personal level, the decision-making process of migration is determined by a complicated set of intersecting factors. It may be too complicated for individuals to justify and verbalise in detail the process of reasoning behind every behaviour related to migration and relocation in the host country. In this respect, this method provides a tangible approach to understanding a complex set of attitudes and beliefs through their behaviours and everyday interactions, as Geertz (1973) puts it, 'a thick description'. At a collective level, participant observation provides opportunities to understand new phenomena and exotic groups in a local society.

Therefore, this study uses multifaceted ethnography, especially participant observation, to gain first-hand knowledge of the complexity and diversity of the Chinese diaspora in question. Most of the ethnographic fieldwork and participant observation will be recorded through field notes, audio recordings and photographs.

One of the most efficient ways to enter the field of ethnography was through my work as a translator. Since 2018, I have been working as a part-time freelance translator for Chinese immigrants. The main responsibility of this job was to accompany Chinese immigrants wherever they needed translation services. I play the role of a communication intermediary in banks, schools, government offices, local government offices, and so on. Working as a freelance translator in these years has given me access to a significant diversity of Chinese immigrants in terms of socio-economic characteristics, immigration statutes, social class and their related rights and constraints.

I've also been volunteering as a translator in public schools in Barcelona to facilitate communication between Chinese parents and schools during parents' meetings. As many Chinese parents are usually busy in ethnic businesses such as bars and restaurants, it's not easy to coordinate a suitable time for them to come. When they do manage to attend the parents' meeting, some typical problems of their children have been raised repeatedly, such as language barriers, falling grades, lack of concentration in class and violent behaviour at school. In addition, the reluctance of children to communicate with parents at home and with teachers at school was also reported to be common in various Chinese migrant families. In these scenarios, helpless parents and problematic school issues are portrayed in the narratives of educational institutions as a particular type of problematic family.

It's worth mentioning that my participant observations in the present study included both public and private sphere. The public sphere included Chinese-concentrated neighborhoods, workplaces, schools, and public service departments. For example, for newly arrived settlers, mostly golden-visa holders, this demand is indispensable and huge, especially when it comes to administrative procedure, school meetings and medical appointments. Some Chinese affluent parents used to hire me as personal interpreter charging for hours in school opening day or exclusive parent meeting in international elite schools. Yet for working-class parents I provided translation services mainly in parent meetings at schools, mostly as a volunteer, helping to deal with the issues of integration and school performance of their kids. Being an observant in two extremes of socio-economic ladder of Chinese community made me realize a wide breadth of internal differentiation within a single diaspora. These experiences and observations granted me

not only back information of the present study, but also an integral part of my participant observations.

Regarding the private sphere of ethnography in this study, fieldwork primarily took place within the homes of participants, encompassing family dinners, casual family visits, and social gatherings. Initially, through initial contacts and interactions related to translation services, two Chinese families engaged my services as a private tutor in Spanish and English for their children. These arrangements arose because the children faced difficulties in their initial adaptation to school and encountered language barriers during their first year of schooling. These closer interactions afforded me the opportunity to engage in participant observations within their households on a regular basis, typically weekly. It is noteworthy that in these two families, the children are still of school age.

Immersed in the day-to-day lives of people, I got to generate a better understanding of what they say and what they truly do. Participant observation couldn't always conform to narratives collected from in-depth interviews. For example, some accounts of immigrant investors and non-lucrative residence holders explicitly expressed that they had decided to migrate to Europe because they wanted to escape from a stressful and anxious education of China. However, when I conducted participant observations at their households, I noticed an interesting fact that some parents had enrolled a series of Chinese-tutored online courses for their children, such as mathematics, Chinese and English and occupied most of leisure time of children. In other words, while pursuing a happier and less stressful Western education, they also aspire to make the most of educational resources in both the host country and the country of origin.

3.2.3. Interviews

Participant observations provided a wealth of information and data that not only facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the Chinese immigrant community but also facilitated contact with different key informants, participants in in-depth interviews, and their family members. From informal talks during fieldwork to hour-long in-depth interviews at arranged places, all these information and qualitative data were so valuable to reflect and reinforce understanding about the complexity of Chinese diaspora in Spain.

Meanwhile, these contacts and talks conducted beforehand, to some extent, consisted of an integral part of my participant observations and a part of recruitment process.

From 2018 to 2021, 48 formal in-depth interviews were conducted, among which there were 20 structured interviews and 28 semi-structured interviews (See Appendix). Eight of the interviewees received follow-up interviews after the first one owing to more questions generated during the process of thematic coding. As the interview language was in Chinese, all the interviewees could talk as freely as possible to express their subjective perspectives of understandings and feelings without language barriers. The key criteria of selection of interviewees were their year of arrival and immigration status surrounding the three main types of migration (See Table 1). For ethical reasons, all names of participants in this study have been anonymized using pseudonyms.

Table 1. List of interviewees

Pseudonyms	Sex	Year of birth	Year of arrival	Year of interview	Migration typology and sub-typology
Jianlan	M	1943	1980	2021	Economic migration
Jiang	F	1965	1993	2021	Economic migration
Wenying	F	1961	1999	2021	Economic migration
Yingying	F	1985	2003	2021	Economic migration
Tingting	F	1985	2007	2021	Economic migration
Shangjun	M	1989	2008	2021	Economic migration
Zhu	M	1997	2008	2021	Family reunification (Descendant of economic migrant)
Xiaojie	F	1990	2016	2021	Family reunification (Spouse of economic migrant)
Xunfan	M	1987	2010	2021	Middle-class migration (Student)
Yisha	F	1988	2011	2021	Middle-class migration (Student)
Anqun	M	1989	2015	2021	Middle-class migration (Student)
Xionghan	M	1970	2017	2020-2022	Middle-class migration (Investor)
Panpan	F	1980	2018	2021	Middle-class migration (Investor)
Xuan	F	1981	2019	2021	Middle-class migration (Non-lucrative residence holder)
Tong	F	1979	2019	2020-2022	Middle-class migration (Non-lucrative residence holder)
Ping*	M	1988	2017	2020	Middle-class migration

					(Student)
Huiyao*	M	1989	2015	2020	Middle-class migration (Student)
Yin*	F	1989	2016	2020	Middle-class migration (Student)
Mayun*	F	1989	2016	2020	Middle-class migration (Student)
Nannan*	M	1991	2015	2020	Middle-class migration (Student)
Jianwen*	M	1993	2016	2020	Middle-class migration (Student)
Sangwei*	F	1994	2016	2020	Middle-class migration (Student)
Xiao*	F	1994	2018	2020	Middle-class migration (Student)
Siqi*	F	1995	2018	2020	Middle-class migration (Student)
Leng*	NA	1995	2019	2020	Middle-class migration (Student)
Xuechan*	F	1999	2017	2020	Middle-class migration (Student)
Yanke*	F	2001	2019	2020	Middle-class migration (Student)
Changhua*	F	1975	2018	2020-2022	Middle-class migration (Investor)
Jia*	F	1985	2019	2020-2022	Middle-class migration (Non-lucrative residence holder)
Yun*	F	1991	2017	2020	Middle-class migration (Highly skilled worker)
Ying*	F	1988	2016	2020	Family reunification (Spouse of economic migrant)
Shan*	F	1987	2016	2020	Family reunification (Spouse of economic migrant)
Meimei*	F	1985	2015	2020	Family reunification (Spouse of economic migrant)
Mi*	F	1991	2017	2020	Family reunification (Spouse of middle-class migrant)
Zeya*	F	1993	2015	2020	Family reunification (Descendant of economic migrant)
Xia	M	1997	Born in Spain	2018 2021	Family reunification (Descendant of economic migrant)
Wu	F	1998	2004	2018	Family reunification (Descendant of economic migrant)
Anjia	F	1996	2009	2018	Family reunification

					(Descendant of economic migrant)
Ran	F	1997	2006	2018	Family reunification (Descendant of economic migrant)
Rui	M	1993	2003	2018 2021	Family reunification (Descendant of economic migrant)
Tao	M	1998	2008	2018	Family reunification (Descendant of economic migrant)
Meng	M	1997	2007	2018 2019	Family reunification (Descendant of economic migrant)
Wen	M	1990	2003	2018	Family reunification (Descendant of economic migrant)
Jan	M	2004	Born in Spain	2018	Without migration experience (Descendant of economic migrant)
Jima	F	1975	1993	2018	Economic migration
Weiben	M	1971	2001	2018	Economic migration
Quan	M	1965	2001	2018	Family reunification (Spouse of economic migrant)
Maxing	F	1971	2007	2018	Family reunification (Spouse of economic migrant)

*Interviewees of MigraSalud project

Regarding the typology of migration, it's noteworthy that 22 of the interviewees can be categorized as belonging to the 'middle-class migration' group. Among this subgroup, the majority initially arrived in Spain using student visas (N=15), with only 7 individuals having migrated under the Law 14/2013 visa and non-lucrative residence visa schemes. It should be mentioned that while the sample size of investor migrants and non-lucrative migrants is relatively small, ongoing communication was maintained with most of them post-interview to facilitate participant observations and gather additional insights into their lives in Spain. Furthermore, despite the limited number of interviewees representing economic migrants (N=8), there were 17 individuals who came to Spain through the family reunification of economic migrants. This multifaceted composition of the sample offers a comprehensive perspective on different facets of Chinese migration to Spain.

What is noteworthy to mention is that I worked as a researcher in an external research group, MigraSalud, at Parc Sanitari Sant Joan de Deu from 2019 to 2022. My research at MigraSalud has a crucial significance for this dissertation in many perspectives, because twenty of all the forty formal in-depth interviews in this research were conducted under

their research project titled "*Study of Good Practices for Well-Being and Health in the Migratory Process: Stress and Perceived Discrimination"*[3] as I was given the permission to access all the empirical data of Chinese interviewees and integrate them into the present study. The objective of this project was to analyse risk factors that affect most the mental and physical health of newly arrived migrants (up to five years after migration). Given the fact that this profile of target participants highly corresponded to that of my own dissertation, I was responsible for the data collection of Chinese samples by adapting and redefining interview questions. Most of the interviews lasted over two hours. 26 interviews have been conducted in the MigraSalud project and 20 of them were used in the present study (see Table 1). The interviews encompassed five primary themes: 1) Biographical narrative; 2) Decision-making processes related to migration; 3) Trajectories of migration and family involvement; 4) Post-migration everyday life and adaptation experiences; and 5) Self-reflections on the migration journey.

It is worth emphasizing that one of the central aims of this study is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the residential preferences and mobility dynamics of Chinese immigrants in the Barcelona Metropolitan Region, especially those hailing from diverse backgrounds. Given that the MigraSalud study did not explicitly delve into this aspect, I undertook an independent set of interviews with 15 participants in the springtime of 2021, encompassing both economic migrants and middle-class migrants. These interviews were designed to encompass a range of topics, focusing on subjects such as mobility strategies within Spain, the decision-making processes behind selecting residential locations, and the dynamics of household arrangements. The selection of interview participants was a deliberate process, taking into account geographical considerations. For instance, participants were deliberately chosen from municipalities traditionally concentrated with a Chinese population, such as Santa Coloma de Gramanet, Barcelona, and Badalona. The interviews were designed to conduct in these traditional Chinese-concentrated neighborhoods to provide a more immersive understanding of their daily lives and interactions. Additionally, sequential interviews were also conducted with

[3] Project title: Estudio Buenas Prácticas para el Bienestar y la Salud en el Proceso Migratorio: Estrés y Discriminación percibida (II IN 190517 EN 162 FA 01). Period: 1/01/2020 – 12/31/2020. Funding Entity: Ministry of Labour, Migration and Social Security of Spain. Main Researchers: Paula Cristóbal, José María Haro Abad, Yolanda Osorio. Amount awareded: 157.386,00€.

two investor migrants whose households were situated in neighborhoods of Les Corts and Eixample. Frequent visits were paid to these households, enabling the author to closely observe their family dynamics and household arrangements. This approach contributed to a more holistic comprehension of their experiences and contexts.

Under escalation of lockdown restrictions and social distancing, conducting fieldwork and face-to-face interviews was by no means feasible during the year of pandemic, especially in the first two trimesters of 2020. In this regard, our research group decided to move the research online: sourcing profiles, recruiting participants, signing informative consensus and conducting interviews all by digital platforms. Similar to the approach taken with the Chinese target group, the interviewees were reached through various initial methods. These included displaying study posters and running online campaigns on Chinese community social media platforms, particularly on WeChat. The goal was to connect with Chinese migrants who had been living in Spain for less than five years. Meanwhile, several interviewees were recruited from my personal contact within Chinese community in Barcelona. Based on the qualitative data collected from the research project of MigraSalud, I could generate significant first-hand knowledge about migration motivations, migratory trajectories and post-migration settlement of new arrivals.

The selection of interview place was mainly determined by everyday routine of the interviewees. For the old settlers, it was more feasible to have interviews in their workplaces like self-employed bar or restaurant due to the labor-intensive nature of their business. As with the middle-class newcomers, I usually conducted interviews at their households or nearby cafeterias and parks to observe day-to-day interactions between parents and their children.

The majority of these interviews were audio-recorded. However, due to the sensitive nature of certain topics, particularly those related to the migration process and immigration status, some parts of the interviews were not recorded at the request of the interviewees, particularly those who had entered the host country in an irregular manner. All participants in the formal interviews gave informed consent (see Appendix) and their interviews were both audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed. These transcriptions were made in Chinese and then analysed in ATLAS.ti using thematic analysis methods, which will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter (Chapter 3.5.2).

In order to explore family relations between different migrant groups, a series of in-depth interviews were conducted with four recently arrived Chinese families between 2019 and 2022. These families had moved to Spain under the auspices of the *Golden Visa* policy and the non-lucrative residence visa scheme. Notably, two of these families had enrolled their children in local schools, while the other two had sent their children to the UK for higher education.

In addition, to augment the qualitative data collected, an analysis of data obtained in 2018 as part of the author's previous research on parent-offspring relationships within Chinese migrant families (He, 2018) was undertaken. This analysis was supplemented by follow-up interviews with four individuals of Chinese descent. The purpose of these follow-up interviews was to trace the evolution of family dynamics and individual life trajectories. Within this group, one individual had successfully established a bar with financial support from his family, while the remaining three individuals of Chinese descent had chosen to pursue higher education and professional development outside of Spain. This additional information not only contributed to a deeper understanding of family dynamics over time, especially in the context of parent-child relationships, but also facilitated a deeper reflection on the findings of the previous study.

3.3 Descriptive research on quantitative approach

To study demographic structure and changes of Chinese population in Spain, quantitative analysis is applied based on *Padrón Continuo*, Municipal Register (INE). The Municipal Register is an administrative register system in which every resident in Spain is mandatory to register the municipality they habitually reside. Beside the habitual residence and municipality, there is a list of other demographic information mandatory to register, including: name and surname, sex, nationality, place and date of birth, and number of National identity Document (NIE) in case of foreigners. Therefore, the Municipal Register provides valuable data with respect to population size, age structure, gender composition, birthplace, and nationality which enabled to present a general structure of demographic characteristics of Chinese population and its chronological changes. In addition to basic demographic features, this study also used this data base to calculate spatial distribution of Chinese population in Barcelona Metropolitan Region.

However, it is important to note that the available detailed data on Chinese nationals in this study only covers the period from 1998 onwards, providing an overview of the Chinese population in Spain only during the past two decades. Furthermore, it is essential to clarify that this study primarily focuses on demographic and territorial indicators based on citizenship rather than country of birth. This approach sets it apart from other migration studies, as it considers Chinese nationals who maintain their Chinese citizenship while living in Spain. Several reasons underpin this research decision. First, according to the data of the continuous municipal register, the number of Chinese nationals has started to surpass that of China-born individuals in Spain since 2009. Because many Chinese descendants acquire the nationality of their parents and maintain this national affiliation across generations, even if they were born in Spain. Second, during the last two decades thousands of Spanish families adopted minors from China who subsequently naturalized in Spain. Despite being born in China, these adopted Chinese minors have been fully assimilated and integrated into Spanish society, exhibiting different migration patterns and trajectories compared to other Chinese immigrants. By using the variable of "Chinese citizenship," this study effectively excludes this population from the Chinese immigrant category, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the overall Chinese diaspora. Therefore, all demographic calculations and analyses consider the category of "Chinese citizenship" rather than "China-born" migrants to provide a comprehensive depiction of the Chinese population in Spain.

3.4 Mixed methods to approach spatial concentration and residential segregation

To comprehend the spatial distribution and residential characteristics of the Chinese population in Spain, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies was employed. The research investigated the clustering of the Chinese population within the Barcelona Metropolitan Region (BMR) through the utilization of the Location Quotient (LQ) index, calculated for each municipality within the BMR using data from the Continuous Municipal Register (Padrón Continuo) (Brown and Chung, 2006). Adapted from a statistical analysis by Sargen Florence, the LQ provides a straightforward

measurement to examine the degree of spatial concentration of a particular population in a given local areal unit. The measure of the LQ is:

$$LQ_i = (c_i/t_i)/(C/T)$$

where c_i and t_i are the Chinese and total population in municipality i; C and T stand for the Chinese and total population in the BMR. The values of LQare bounded by 0 and ∞. It is understood that the bigger the value of LQ is in a certain municipality, the greater concentration of Chinese population can be indicated in this area. If LQ> 1, there is a significant concentration of Chinese population in municipality; if LQ< 1, it means that the presence of Chinese residents in municipality is underrepresented and less significant than the overall population in this area.

In addition to measure the spatial concentration of Chinese population, it also is necessary to examine if Chinese population is equally distributed or spatially segregated in these areas. Hence, in this study the index of segregation (IS) was measured (Duncan and Duncan 1955). Because this empirical evaluation enabled us to understand residential evenness of Chinese population in urban areas by measuring differential distribution of Chinese population and majority members across census tracts within a given municipality. The IS is measured as:

$$\mathrm{IS} = \frac{1}{2}\sum_{i=1}^{n}\left|\frac{x_i}{X} - \frac{t_i - x_i}{T - X}\right| \quad 0 \le \mathrm{IS} \le 1$$

where x_i and t_i are numbers of Chinese residents and total population in census tract i, and X and T are their city-wide total populations. The values of IS is between 0 and 1. The bigger the value of IS is, the greater the residential distribution between Chinese population and other mainstream members is indicated within a certain tract.

On the one side, the values of LQ of Chinese population in each municipality provide important insights to decide the locations of fieldworks by showing the Chinese-concentrated areas within the BMR. On the other side, the IS provides a straightforward insight of the degree of assimilation and residential integration of Chinese population in local community, which helps me to gain a comprehensive and panoramic view about the overall Chinese population in BMR. These two statistical calculations effectively complement qualitative methods applied in this study.

For instance, through empirical assessment of residential concentration, Santa Coloma de Gramanet and Mataró emerged as two municipalities within the Barcelona Metropolitan Region (BMR) exhibiting the highest Location Quotients (LQs) for the Chinese population. A series of fieldwork activities were conducted in these two municipalities between May and August 2021. Within the Chinese community, these locales are widely acknowledged as ethnic hubs, hosting a multitude of Chinese-owned businesses and ethnic services that cater to various facets of their daily life.

These municipalities, namely Fondo in Santa Coloma de Gramanet, Sant Roc in Badalona, and Pla d'en Boet in Mataró, were chosen as fieldwork sites for ethnographic observations. This selection was based on the prevalent belief, both within the local mainstream society and the Chinese community, that these areas play host to a notable presence of the Chinese population, particularly in Santa Coloma de Gramanet, Mataró, and their peripheral environs.

Ethnographic observations were systematically conducted within local neighborhoods, Chinese-owned establishments such as bars and restaurants, and industrial zones. The process involved gathering firsthand ethnographic data, utilizing a combination of photographs and meticulous field notes. This approach aimed to construct a comprehensive comprehension of Chinese-ethnic settlement patterns, employing tangible artifacts and morphological attributes as elucidative resources. Concurrently, informal conversations proved to be an invaluable source of insight into the genesis and evolution of these Chinese-ethnic concentrations.

3.5 Data Analysis

3.5.1. Typological Analysis

Typological analysis is a widespread technique in qualitative research, especially in comparative studies. This approach enables scholars to rescale complex realities into pragmatic hypotheses and research strategies by clustering data and elements based on a set of criteria (Escobedo, 2008). Despite criticisms against the classific and simplified

nature of typological approach, it provides a feasible means to approach novel and diverse phenomenon.

Regarding an increased diversification of Chinese population in Spain, this dissertation intends to rescale a socio-demographically complex population into several typologies based on the following criteria: 1) Aspirations and motivations for migration; 2) Socioeconomic status prior to migration and post-migration; 3) Migratory trajectories; and 4) Social historical contexts of migration. In this regard, three main migrant groups are systematically refined in this study: 1) Economic migrants from the late-1980s ; 2) Middle-class migrants from 2013 which breaks down into two sub-categories: *middle-class family migrants* and *student migrants*. Adapted from the EU definition of '*economic migrant*', economic migrants from the late-1980s in this study refer to Chinese nationals who emigrated from their country of birth to Spain with the hope of material improvements and prosperity. According to the everyday language used within the Chinese communities, they are called '老移民' (*lao yimin*, translated as '*old settlers/migrants'*) and to this day make up the vast majority of the Chinese population in Spain. While the second main group of Chinese immigrants are the 'newcomers' who are called '新移民' (*xin yimin*, translated as '*newcomers*'). This group of newcomers is seen as well-off Chinese immigrants, usually from the urban middle class, who come under privileged migration policies such as investor visa, non-lucrative residence visas and student visas. In fact, the terms 'l*ao yimin* (*old settlers/migrants*)' and '*xin yimin* (*newcomers*)' really illustrate a common understanding of the current landscape of Chinese migration in Spain. Therefore, from this commonly accepted division of migrant groups, the present study adapted 'economic migrants' and 'middle class migrants' as the two main typologies.

3.5.2. Data analysis of interviews: Thematic analysis

While the primary objective of this study is to delve into the complexity and diversity within the Chinese diaspora, it is crucial to identify recurring patterns of behaviors, narratives, and belief systems to attain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under examination. To achieve this, thematic analysis was employed for the analysis of

interview narratives. Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) definition, a theme is described as reflecting '*some level of patterned response or meaning within the dataset*'. Based on the aspiration-capability framework of De Haas (2021), the generated themes during the coding process in this study were predominantly categorized into three groups: *structure*, *agency*, and *lived experiences after migration* (as detailed in Table 2). The *'structure'* theme comprises codes related to socio-historical conditions and the resulting opportunities and constraints of migration. The *'agency'* theme encompasses codes related to the "aspirations" and "*capabilities*" of Chinese individuals and families regarding emigration. Lastly, the third main theme emerged through the analysis of post-migration experiences, with codes grouped under "*adaptation and integration*" of individuals in the host country. A certain degree of flexibility was maintained throughout the process of generating and selecting themes of analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006). Qualitative data were coded under various themes following the transcription of all interviews and were subsequently analyzed alongside fieldnotes in ATLAS.ti. The coding process adhered to an abductive analysis approach (Timmermans and Tavory 2012).

Table 2. Examples of codes and references of middle-class migrants in the thematic analysis

Code group	Code	Example
Structure	Fierce competition in China	"*If you want to keep maintaining your quality of life in China, you really have to work very hard, because the pressure from competition comes from a lot of everyday comparisons with others.*" (Xuan, middle-class migrant, female, 39 years old)
	Social institutions	"*The most important reason is the social system. To be honest, I don't like that atmosphere… It seems that there is an atmosphere coming into being. It's a strange feeling. After you come out, you can feel it.*" (Xionghan, middle-class migrant, male, 51

		years old)
Aspirations	Better education	"*One of the reasons [of emigration] is the education. I agree more with the European educational philosophy.*" (Changhua, middle-class migrant, female, 45 years old)
	Ideas surrounding 'good life'	"*[When living here] you don't have many things to worry about. Everyone lives their own life in weekends. You can hang out with friends if you like. No one will disturb your life. You'll never be bothered by your boss or police.*" (Xionghan, middle-class migrant, 51 years old)
Capabilities	Social resources	"*We have already had businesses here (in Spain).*" (Panpan, middle-class migrant, female, 41 years old)
	Low economic cost of migration	"*In fact, I wanted to immigrate to the United States, but my visa was objected. After I came to Europe, I realized that it is very cheap to live here and the consumption is very low.*" (Xuan, middle-class migrant, female, 39 years old)
Adaptation	Language barrier	"*Because of the language, he (the son) cannot understand anything in class.*" (Jia, middle-class migrant, female, 34 years old,)
	Difficulties in daily life	"*A small stuff can cause a lot of difficulties, such as paying water and electricity bills.*" (Jia, middle-class migrant, female, 34 years old)

All the interviews were conducted initially in Chinese and then selectively translated into English after several rounds of coding and content analysis. Accordingly, translation

could entail a certain level of interpretation of the researcher, especially when the researcher is also the translator in this study. Accordingly, the process of translating interviews could not always maintain an objective equivalence of semantic meaning of participants' narratives. Yet this is not supposed to be the case either. First, translation of the researcher indeed provides contextualized information and completes broken sentences with halting and faltering words when participants failed to complete. Second, the translator *per se* is also the researcher who got immerse in all the interviews as well as in the contexts where all the formal and informal talks happened. In this case, the translation accomplished by the researcher/translator, to some extent, entails more nuanced articulations and subtle observations collected in the field study.

3.6. Selection of field study

This research focus on a case study of Chinese community in Barcelona Metropolitan Region (BMR). The Barcelona Metropolitan Region (BMR) is a sprawling urban area comprising a total of 164 municipalities, making it one of the most extensive metropolitan regions in Europe. It is home to a substantial foreign population, with approximately 1.3 million foreign residents, representing over 16% of the total population (Padrón Continuo 2020, INE). This diverse mix of residents comes from various countries, including China, Pakistan, Italy, and Morocco, contributing to the region's multicultural fabric. Regarding the history of receiving Chinese migrants, BMR provides an interesting empirical field for this study, given the fact that Chinese population was the third biggest nationality of BMR in 2021, with an absolute population of 51,720, representing 6.72% of the total foreign population in BMR and 22.56% of the Chinese population in Spain; that is, over one-fifth of individuals holding Chinese nationality in Spain are situated within the BMR. After the launch of *Golden Visa* policy in 2013 (Law 14/2013) Barcelona has become one of the major destinations for Chinese investors. Currently, it consists of the second largest concentration of Chinese nationals in Spain after Madrid, but the proportions of Chinese population in both areas are nearly identical.

4. From ‘Treasure land’ to ‘Wonderland’: Typologies of Chinese Migrant Groups in Spain from the Late-1980s

4.1. Introduction

The history of migration from China to Spain is deeply embedded in the social transformations and political economy of both countries. The significant settlement of Chinese immigrants in Spain started in the late 1980s. Over the last four decades, Spain has undergone a transformation from a "treasure land," where migrants came to seek job and business opportunities, to a "wonderland" sought by Chinese middle-class migrants in search of happiness, quality of life, well-being, and the well-rounded development of the next generation. This chapter aims to examine the changes in the inflows of Chinese immigrants during the last four decades and their relationship with the socio-historical changes in the sending and receiving countries (See Table 3).

Table 3. Changing Spain Immigrant Policy and Characteristics of Chinese Immigrants

	Late 1980s — 2013	2013— Present
Macro-level context	Spain a) Joined in European Economic Community in 1986 b) Hold Barcelona Olympic Games in 1992	Spain a) Severely affected by the economic crisis in 2008
	China a) Poverty b) For the first time citizens were allowed to apply for private passport in 1980s	China a) Achieved rapid economic growth and urbanization from 2000s b) Deeply rooted in global economic restructuring

Immigration law	Several amnesties to irregular immigrants from 1986 to 2000s	Modification of the Non-Lucrative residence law in 2011 (Real Decreto 557/2011) Launch of the Entrepreneur law in 2013 (Ley 14/2013)
Types of migration	Economic migration Family reunification	Lifestyle migration Migration of professionals Student migration Retirement migration
Immigrant characteristics	Low socioeconomic status	High socioeconomic status

Source: Elaborated by the author. Adapted from the figure 'Changing U.S Immigrant Policy and Immigrant Characteristics' by Li (2009:35)

The economic landscape of Spain underwent a significant transformation in the late 1980s. Despite nearly stagnant population growth, Spain's economy experienced remarkable growth, leading to a situation where the domestic labor supply could no longer meet the demands of this accelerated economic expansion. This structural labor market imbalance prompted an influx of labor migration from other countries, particularly from nations with affordable and less skilled labor forces in the developing world (Caldera et al., 2011). With an unregulated migration industry and underdeveloped migration policies, clandestine migration became a prominent feature of migratory trends from the late 20th century to the early 2000s (Sánchez Alonso, 2011). For instance, nearly 80 percent of non-EU immigrants in Spain lacked proper documentation at some point during their migration journey (Sandell, 2012).

In 1986, Spain's accession to the European Union paved the way for a significant influx of Chinese migrants not only from China but also from other European countries in search of better job and business opportunities. The early waves of Chinese migrants in the late 1980s were mainly economic migrants who left their country for survival and prosperity. It is worth noting that after the Barcelona Olympic Games in 1992, Spain's tourism industry boomed, leading to a surge in the catering sector. Throughout the fieldworks, many

Chinese migrants mentioned they came to Barcelona to take advantage of this opportunity and opened restaurants during this period.

In terms of China's historical development of migration laws, it has also played a significant role in shaping Chinese immigration in Spain. China's ambitious socialist market economic reforms, known as *Reform and Opening-up*, were launched in 1978, which allowed the country to open its market and welcome foreign investment from Western industrialized countries as well as overseas Chinese. Meanwhile, in response to the split with the Soviet Union, passport regulations have been relaxed since the late 1970s, allowing ordinary citizens to apply for visas to go abroad. All Chinese citizens were permitted to contact their overseas relatives and obtain sponsorship from abroad (Liu 2007):

1) 1978: Initiation of the acknowledgment of the right to emigrate for Chinese citizens;
2) 1978-1985: Gradual relaxation of emigration laws, including passport issuance, exit visas, and single nationality;
3) 1985-2001: Comprehensive development of exit and entry governance; Expansion of emigration intermediary agencies.

In the 1980s, a significant Zhejiang diaspora emerged in Spain. It is worth noting that the early waves of Chinese immigrants in Spain were predominantly composed of peasant migrants from rural areas of Zhejiang province, comprising nearly 70% of the Chinese population in Spain (Beltrán, 2003; Nieto, 2003). Zhejiang province, particularly Qingtian and Wenzhou County, has a long history of emigration due to resource scarcity. Moreover, these areas have been strongly influenced by European colonial expansion through the sea, given their coastal location (Skeldon, 2007). Most of the migrants from Zhejiang province rely heavily on networks and family connections engaged in chain migration. That is, social capital must be circulated among extended family members or co-ethnic contacts abroad to facilitate migration. This network of social and familial relations plays a crucial role in economic migrants' travel and settlement in the host country. The exclusive nature of Zhejiang immigrants was predominant over other origins in the early waves of Chinese immigrant population in Spain.

Figure 2. Map of Mainland China Provinces

Source: Google Image

Based on the fieldwork of the present study, another notable group of Chinese migrants to Spain were workers from rural areas in Northeast China who arrived in Europe with fake entry permits via smugglers. In the late 1990s, industrial reforms in the three major provinces of Northeast China resulted in hundreds of thousands of laid-off workers who had to find a way out through internal or international migration. Unlike low-skilled and poorly educated peasant migrants from Zhejiang, migrant workers from Northeast China had job skills and education before coming to the host country. Many of them entered the garment industry as workers and later opened their own garment workshops after accumulating enough capital and experience.

Although many Chinese migrants have higher education degrees or professional job experience in their country of origin, most of them lack proficiency in the Spanish language and their professional skills and expertise cannot be transferred to the labor market in Spain.

Consequently, they must start from the bottom of the socio-economic ladder, working for other co-ethnic peers or starting their own ethnic businesses. Most Chinese migrants have worked in less skilled jobs, such as waiters and cooks, often working excessive hours and facing heavy workloads due to their limited language and professional skills.

The growth of the Chinese community in Spain has been affected by Spain's economic crisis in 2008. According to some interviewees in the present study, it has become more difficult to recruit new co-ethnic workers in service sectors as inflows of economic migrants from China to Spain have slowed down significantly. In fact, many previous settlers have even initiated reverse migration back to China.

In parallel with the Spain's economic miracles in early 2000s and its later abrupt downturn sparked by the economic crisis in 2008, China experienced an unprecedented economic development from the beginning of this century. In 2001 China became a member of World Trade Organization, which is regarded as the beginning of the "world factory" and its economic miracles in following years. This economic development led to increased opportunities for Chinese businesses and individuals to invest and expand their activities overseas, including in Spain.

Another potent driver is the rapid urbanization of China, prompted by urban housing reforms. Real estate has become a crucial foundation for the emergence of a large and up-and-coming middle class. The rise of the middle class in Chinese society is aligned with the emergence of a new economic landscape and social transformation. Unlike other East Asian countries such as South Korea and Singapore, where the middle class plays an essential role in the process of political democratization, the Chinese middle class is more actively involved in the economic sphere. They value their purchasing power far more than political power. Many middle-class families choose to migrate abroad to maintain their social class entitlement and expand their living boundaries by pursuing a "flexible citizenship" (Ong, 1999).

According to official data from the Spanish Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security, and Migration, as well as the Permanent Immigration Observatory (Observatorio Permanent de la Inmigración), there are some notable trends in the authorization of different types of residence permits for Chinese nationals in Spain from 2013 to the present (See Figure 3).

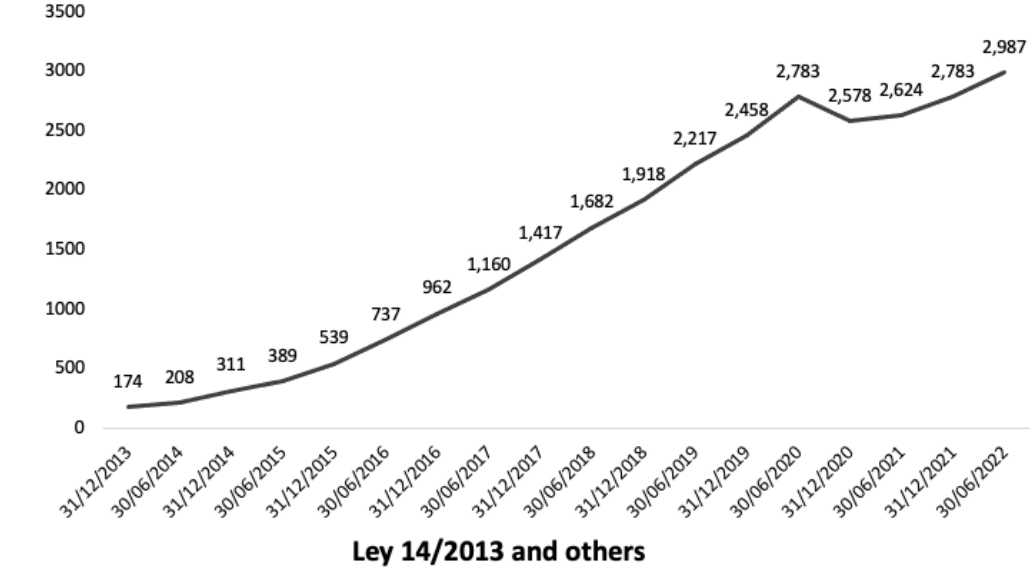
Out of the seven categories of residence permits, only two types of temporary residence permits have shown significant growth over the past decade: the Non-Lucrative Residence Permit (*Residencia Temporal No Lucrativa*) and the *Golden Visa* (*Ley 14/2013 y Otras*). Despite a disruptive cutback in the middle of 2020 due to the outbreak of the pandemic, people have continued to arrive in Spain under these two visa schemes at an accelerated rate since 2013. In particular, the number of Chinese nationals who obtained the investor permit has been on the rise and surpassed that of US citizens to become the biggest immigrant group under this visa scheme, also known as the *Golden Visa*, by the end of 2015. Although Russia took over as the biggest group in 2022, the number of Chinese nationals who have obtained this visa remains significant.

Another significant growth trend from 2013 is seen in the number of Chinese students coming to Spain. From 2013 to the middle of 2020, the number of Chinese nationals who came to Spain under student visas nearly doubled from 5,713 to 11,171. Although the pandemic has negatively affected the inflows of Chinese students to Spain, China has remained the biggest sending country of student migrants in Spain since 2013 (See Figure 3).

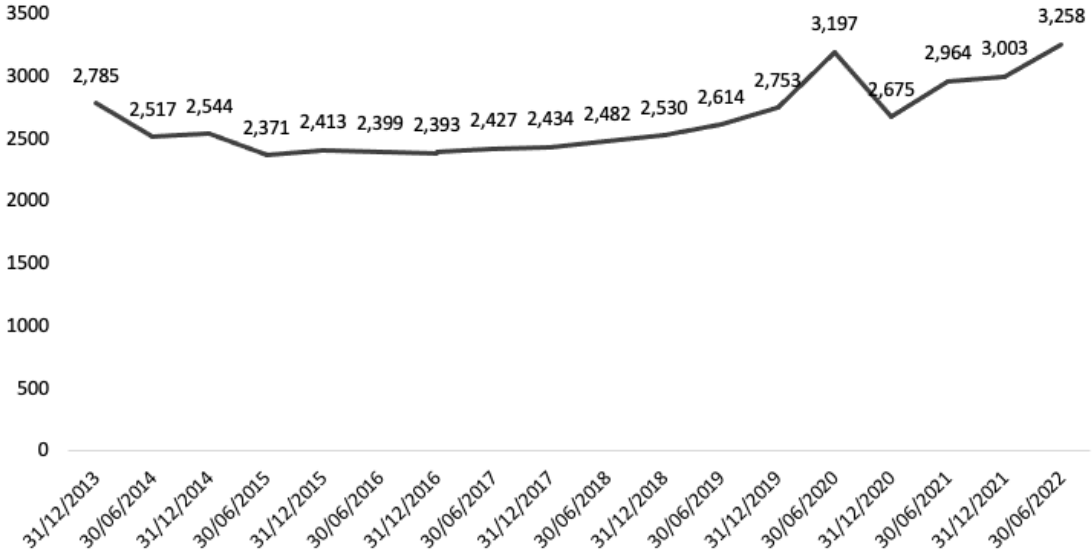
Over the past decade, two types of employment residence permit in Spain have significantly decreased, with those issued for employment by others declining by over half, and family reunification residence permits dropping by over 70% from 2013 to 2022. This suggests a decline in the number of newcomers under employment residence schemes.

It is interesting to note that Chinese nationals registered as long-term residents have consistently constituted much of the Chinese population in Spain over the past decade. This group has grown from 141,936 in December 2013 to 208,656 in June 2022, indicating the emergence of a consolidated diaspora. It appears that most Chinese citizens and their families have settled in Spain as long-term residents, with labor or economic migration no longer being the main driver of Chinese migration inflows to Spain.

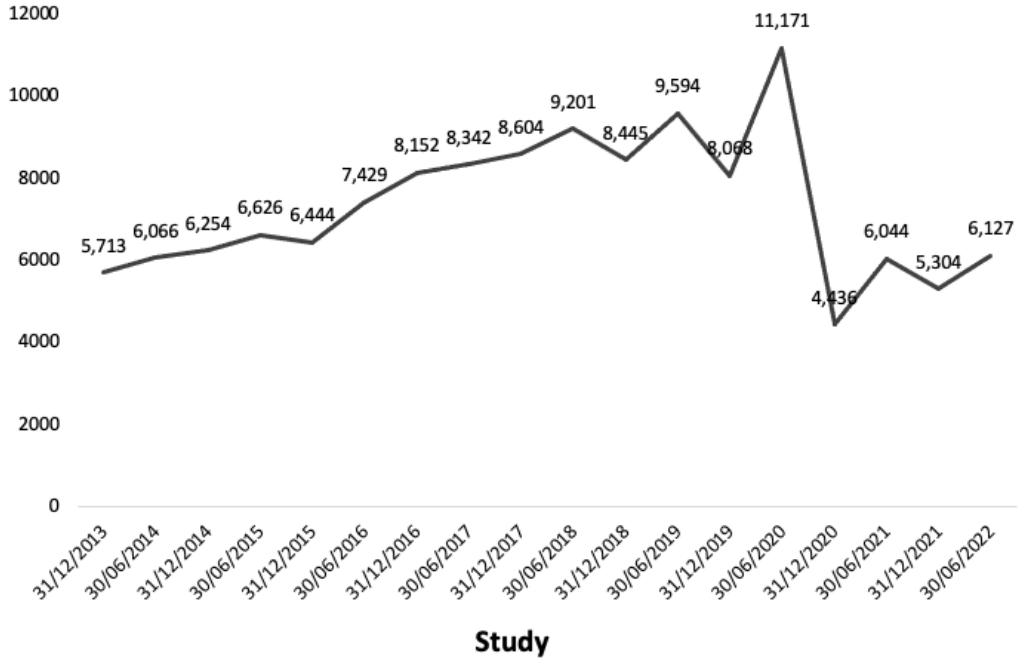
Figure 3. Evolution of Chinese nationals with main types of residence permits issued in Spain from 2013 to 2022



Ley 14/2013 and others



Non lucrative residence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8,604
9,201
8,445
9,594
8,068
11,171
4,436
6,044
5,304
6,127
31/12/2013
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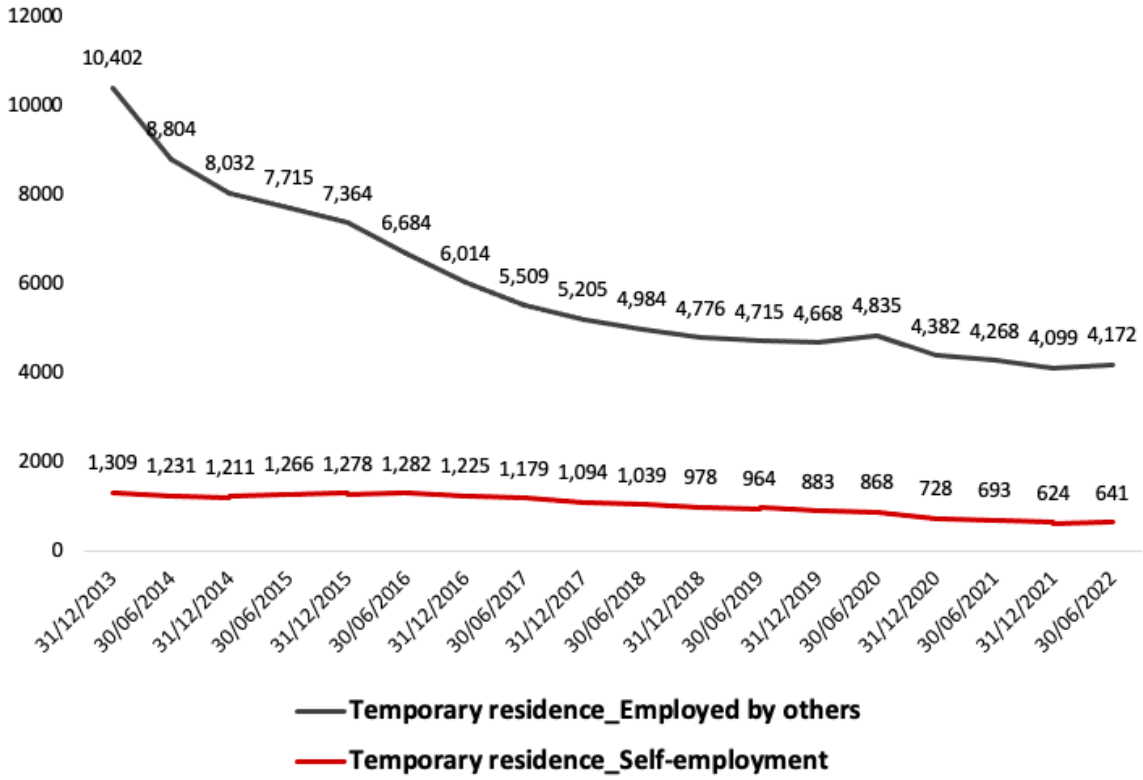
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883
868
728
693
624
641
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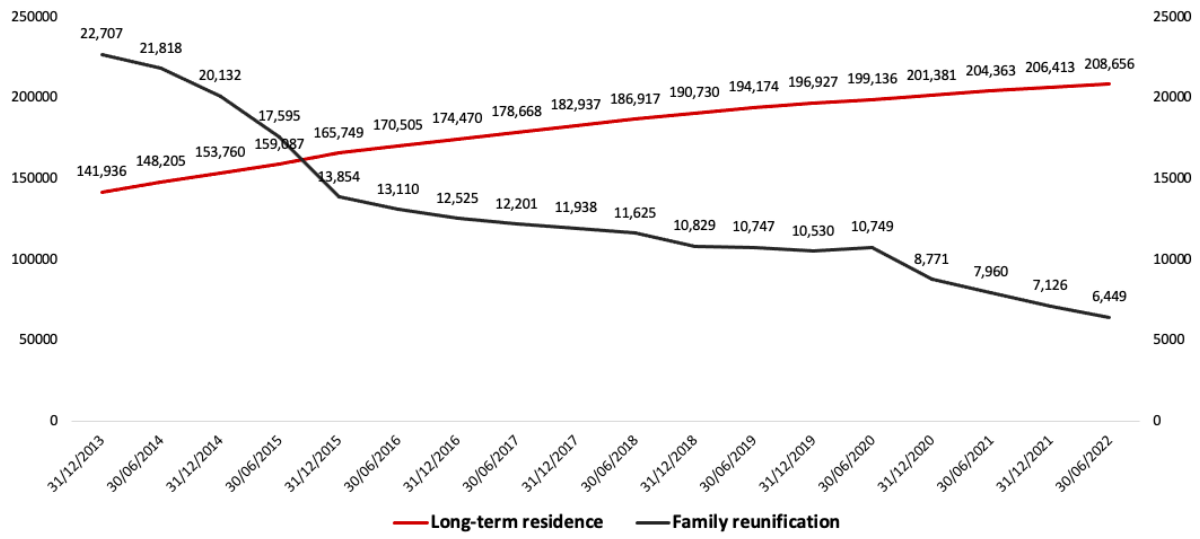
Temporary residence_Employed by others
Temporary residence_Self-employment



Source: Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration in Spain

Over the past few decades, Spain has been seen by many Chinese immigrants as a land of opportunity, where they could improve their economic situation. However, in recent years, there has been a shift in the aspirations of Chinese immigrants towards seeking happiness and a better quality of life.

Interestingly, the study discovered that Chinese immigrants in Spain have developed their own language to self-identify as either "老移民" (*lao yimin*, old settlers) or "新移民" (*xin yimin*, newcomers/new residents).

Lao yimin, or old settlers, are those who arrived in Spain more than a decade ago, typically from emigratory regions driven by economic incentives. They are commonly found working in Chinese restaurants, bars, and other ethnic economic ventures, often putting in long hours and managing heavy workloads. *Xin yimin*, on the other hand, tend to come from urban middle-class backgrounds in China. They may have previously worked as business professionals or entrepreneurs in urban areas. These individuals settle in Spain after the implementation of capital-linked visa schemes in recent years and often have aspirations that extend beyond mere economic improvement.

Although there is no academically defined boundary between these two groups of Chinese immigrants, *lao yimin* and *xin yimin* are subjective perceptions rooted in the increasingly changing social landscape of Chinese migration in Spain. More importantly, this old/new dichotomy of self-identification within the Chinese migration group not only

refers to two groups of immigrants based on distinct social classes and migration projects, but also implies two Chinas which have undergone radical social transformation and increasingly widening social inequalities during the last decades (Guthrie 2021).

Furthermore, the data shows that Chinese immigrants in Spain are more likely to have economically privileged backgrounds, with the non-lucrative residence permit and Law 14/2013 visa schemes showing significant growth in the last decade. Meanwhile, two types of employment residence permits and family reunification residence permits have decreased considerably during the same period, indicating that fewer newcomers are entering Spain under these schemes. However, the number of Chinese students in Spain has almost doubled since 2013, and China has consistently been the largest sending country of student migrants to Spain. Additionally, long-term residents from China have always constituted an absolute majority of the Chinese population in Spain, and their numbers have increased over the last decade, suggesting a consolidated diaspora.

4.2 Socio-demographic changes of Chinese population in Spain from the late-1980s

The Chinese community in Spain has a relatively short history, with the initial wave of migration occurring in the late 1980s after Spain became a full member of the European Commission. Most of these early Chinese immigrants hailed from the Zhejiang province, which has a long-standing tradition of emigrating to Europe ((Beltrán 2003; Li 2017). Over the following decades, the Chinese community in Spain continued to grow and become more diverse, with varying socio-demographic features and geographical origins. In this chapter, we will explore the socio-demographic changes of Chinese immigration to Spain over the last four decades. Additionally, we will examine the historical evolution of Chinese migration to Spain, which has been shaped by the social transformation of both countries.

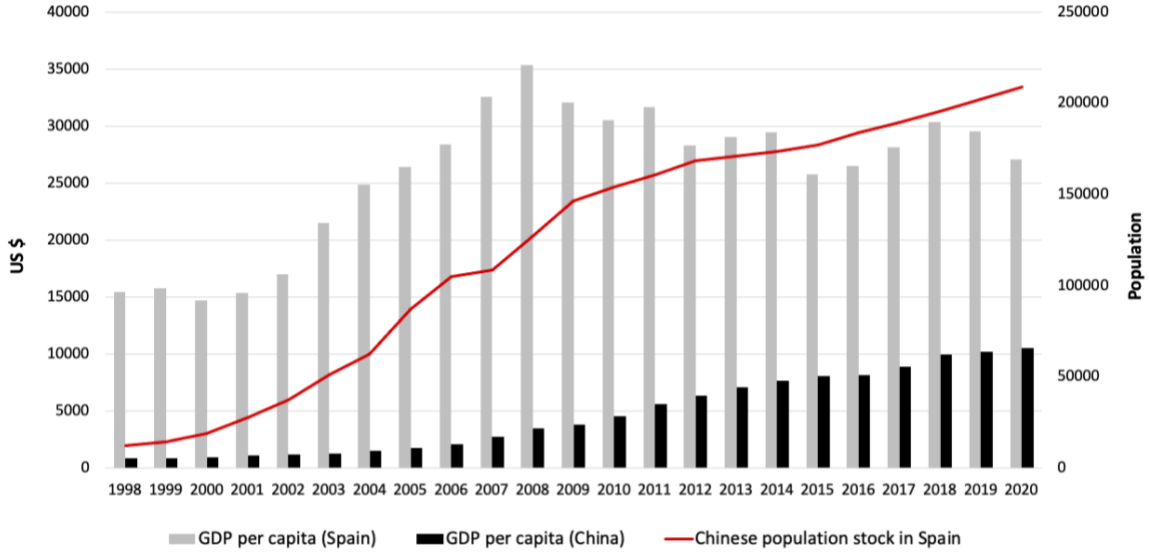
Beltrán (2003) conducted a comprehensive analysis of the waves of Chinese immigration to Spain from the late 19th century until the early 2000s. According to Beltrán, the first group of Chinese pioneers to Spain consisted of sculptors and stone dealers from Qingtian and Wenzhou who were renowned for their Qingtian Stone carving. They traveled

across the world to promote their traditional stone carvings and Spain was one of their destinations. By the end of World War I, most of these pioneers had managed to accumulate wealth and return to their homeland, which prompted future waves of chain migration through friendship and kinship networks. Between 1917 and 1949, male peasant immigrants continued to dominate Chinese migration to Spain. However, in the following three decades, the profile of newcomers became more diverse in terms of gender and migratory trajectories. Many of these newcomers chose to settle permanently in Spain rather than returning to China, leading to the consolidation and expansion of the Chinese diaspora in Spain.

However, the global economic crisis in 2008 marked a turning point in the trend of Chinese immigration to Spain. With the sudden decline of the Spanish economy, many Chinese-owned businesses collapsed, and unemployment rates skyrocketed, resulting in a decrease in the number of Chinese immigrants coming to Spain. As a result, the growth rate of the Chinese population in Spain slowed down significantly in the following years, as shown in Figure 4. Nevertheless, Chinese immigration to Spain has continued, albeit at a slower pace, and has demonstrated a growing diversification in terms of socio-demographic features and migratory trajectories.

After the peak growth period from 1998 to 2007, the growth rate of Chinese nationals in Spain has slowed down to 6.1% from 2008 to 2013 and further decreased to around 3.3% from 2014 to 2020. This indicates a stage of slow increase in Chinese immigration to Spain. However, during the same period, other ethnic groups in Spain have experienced stagnant or negative growth, highlighting the relatively stable position of the Chinese community in the country (Beltrán and Sáiz 2015). To some extent, this could imply that the motivations for Chinese immigration to Spain have diversified beyond just economic factors.

Figure 4. Evolution of Chinese population stock in Spain according to the evolution of GDP per capita in Spain and China from 1998 to 2020



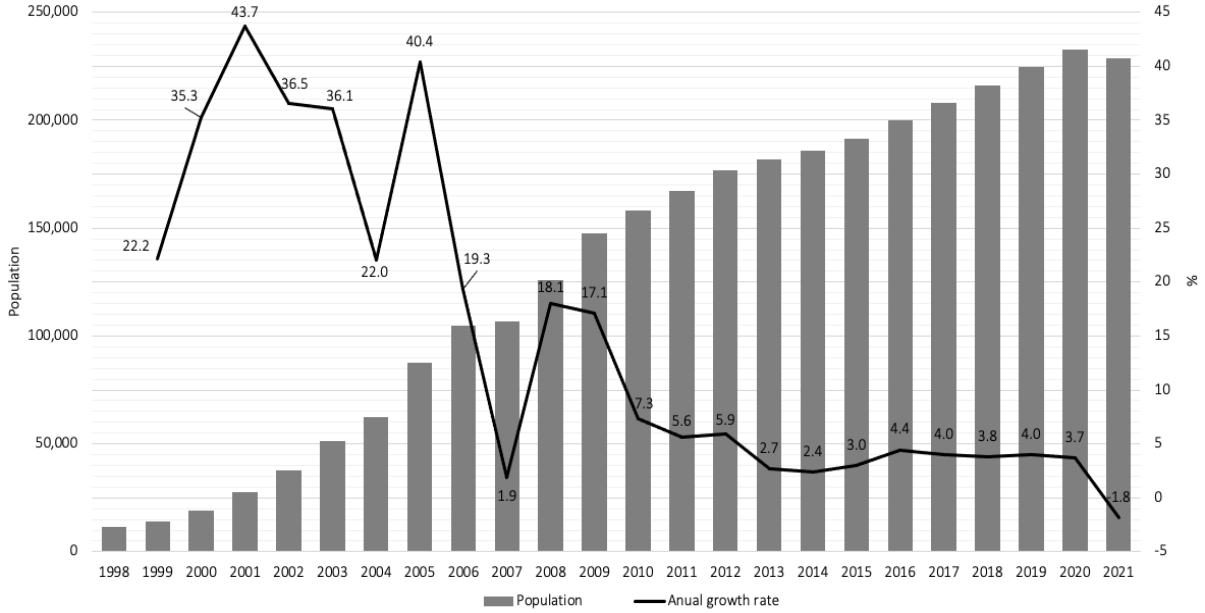
Source: Author's own elaboration based on GDP per capital of World Bank and Municipal Register of National Statistics Institute (INE) of Spain.

4.2.1. Evolution of Chinese Population in Spain

Figure 4 illustrates that Chinese population keeps growing in the last two decades, especially in the first half of the 2000s. Before this economic crisis in 2008, Spain had notable economic development, greatly prompted by the growth of construction sector and tourism. In the meantime, unfavorable living conditions and scarcity of job opportunities have pushed emigrant flows from China. Subsequently, economic reform and abolition of the planned economy have led to high unemployment rates for many citizens who had worked in factories and state enterprises in the Northeast of China. Due to high unemployment rate, migrants from urban areas migrated to Europe, either regularly or irregularly, to seek better living conditions. From 1990s to the early 2000s several amnesties designated to regularize the administrative status of irregular migrants were launched in Spain and have attracted massive inflows of Chinese immigrants from China and other European countries through chain migration and people smuggling industry (Nieto 2003). Before the pandemic, the growth of Chinese population in Spain has never been stagnant, while it has decelerated in the aftermath of the economic crisis. Not until

2021 did Chinese population demonstrate a negative growth owing to a significant reversed migration to China brought about by the coronavirus outbreak in Europe.

Figure 5. Population stock evolution of Chinese nationals in Spain from 1998 to 2021

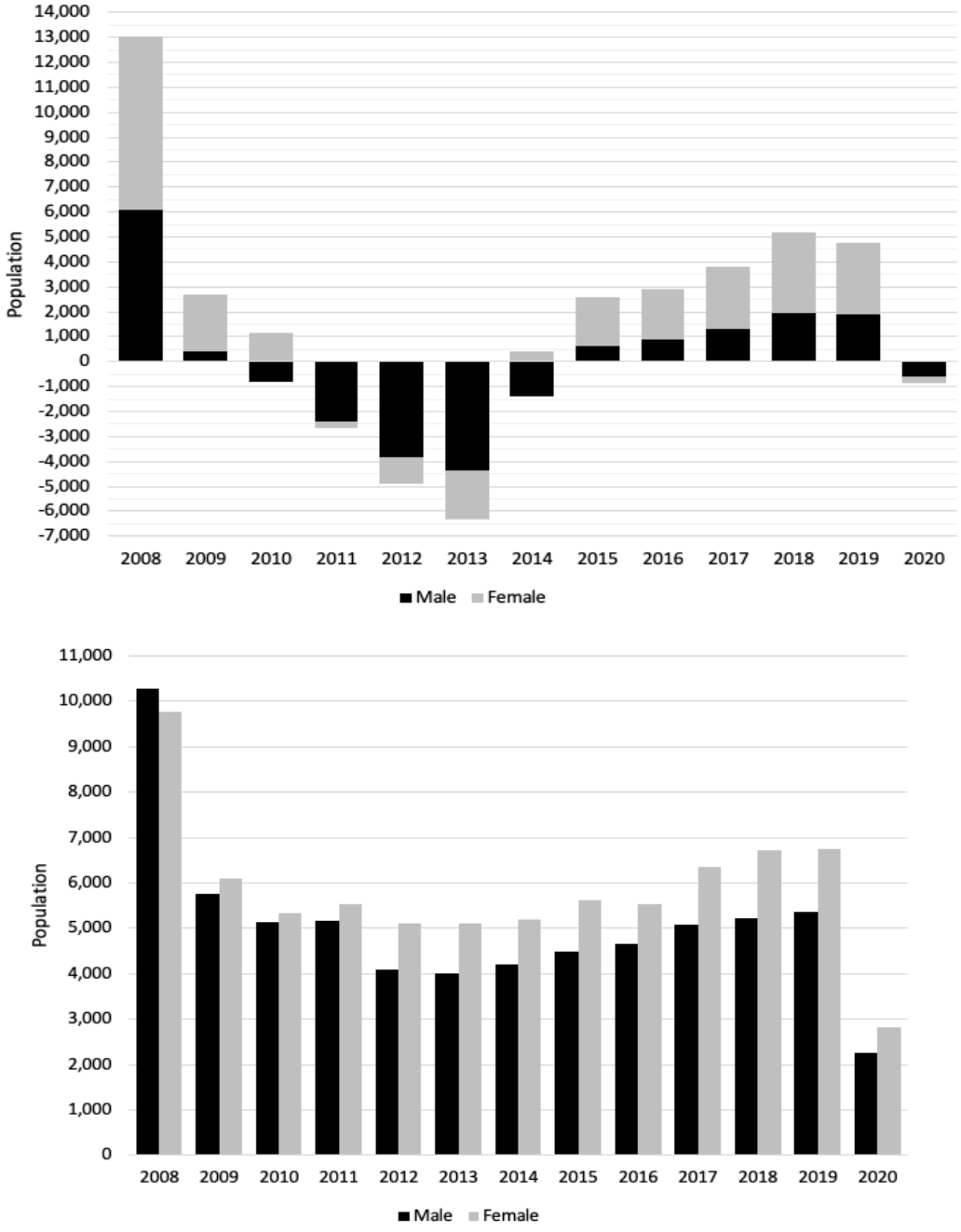


Source: Author's own elaboration based on Municipal Register data (Padrón Continuo)

Chinese migrants did not immediately initiate reverse migration following the economic crisis (see Figure 5). It was only since 2010 that an emigration trend of Chinese nationals to Spain consistently slowed down. This trend lasted from 2010 to 2014, coinciding with the overall outmigration of Spanish citizens and other nationals from Spain to other countries.

During this period, similar to other ethnic groups, the number of Chinese males exceeded that of females in terms of outmigration from Spain (See Figure 6). One reason for this is that male-dominated sectors, such as the construction industry, experienced more severe negative effects after the economic crisis. In the aftermath of the economic downturn, there has been an increasingly prominent gender difference in the inflow of Chinese nationals to Spain, with more female immigrants arriving compared to their male counterparts. One possible explanation for this is the presence of a significant proportion of Chinese female students among international students in Spain. Further details regarding this student flow will be discussed in the subsequent chapter.

Figure 6. Estimated migration balance and immigration flows of Chinese nationality in Spain from 2008 to 2020



Source: Author's own elaboration based on Residence Variance Statistics, EVR 2008–2020, INE

For those old settlers who chose to stay in Spain after the economic crisis, they have coped with rising unemployment and economic recession by looking for new economic niche market in a transnational space (Beltrán and Sáiz López 2015). Apart from dedicating in the traditional ethnic economic sectors such as catering and retailing, they tend to

diversity entrepreneurial activities and amplify realm of investment in a transnational space to diversify risks and make greater profits. For example, thanks to an accelerated urbanization in China from the second half of 2000s, a growing number of Chinese migrants in Spain choose to invest real estate market in China by buying properties or establishing construction companies. Additionally, there are more and more travel agencies run by Chinese immigrants in Spain whose main services not only include selling flight tickets to Chinese settlers, but also receive tour groups from China, notably of official authorities from Chinese governments and Chinese investors who wish to promote commercial relations between two countries. These transnational connections between Chinese community in the Spanish society and that in the sending country not only mobilize various forms of capital across borders, but also facilitate the entry and settlement of newcomers, since the old settlers play an essential role in building up a new migration industry targeted to new migrants with higher acquisition power. These newcomers constitute the major source of Chinese immigration flows to Spain from 2013 when Spanish government launched a series of capital-linked migration policies.

4.2.2. Socio-demographic Features of Chinese Population in Spain

The Chinese population in Spain has displayed relatively little gender disparity in terms of absolute numbers since the beginning of the 21st century (See Figure 7). However, a closer examination of the data reveals a notable shift in gender differences within the adult age group of 20 to 49 years old. In 2001, the number of male Chinese immigrants in this age group (10,253) exceeded that of females (8,682). Yet, over the past two decades, there has been a reversal in this gender difference, with the number of female Chinese immigrants in this age group (65,062) surpassing that of males (60,116) in 2021.

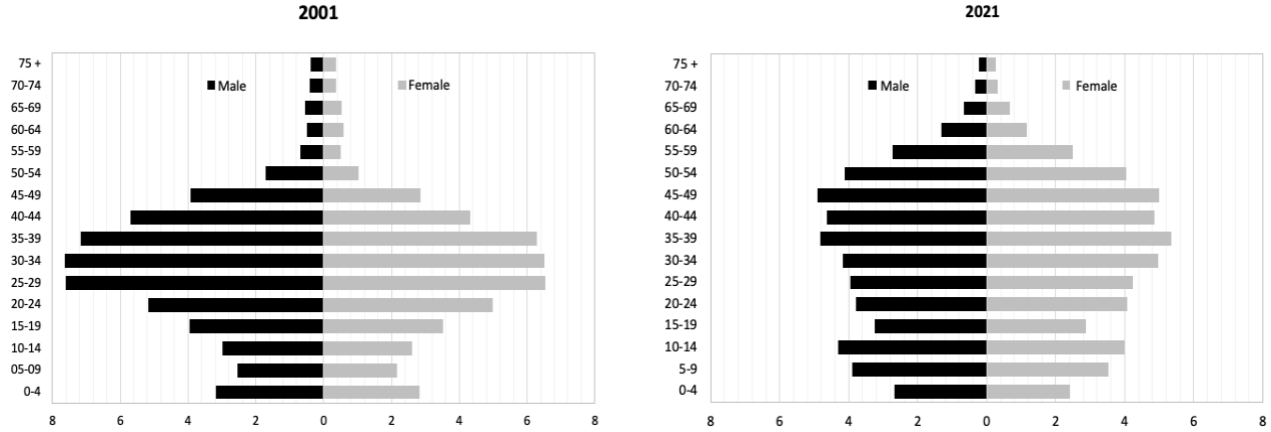
There are several factors that may contribute to the growing gender difference among the Chinese immigrant population in Spain. Firstly, the rising number of Chinese students pursuing higher education in Spain has played a significant role in this phenomenon, with female students comprising a majority of the Chinese student population in Spain, accounting for nearly 70% in 2020. Additionally, there has been a feminization trend in marriage migration, with a higher proportion of female migrants of Chinese nationality

obtaining residency through registering a marriage or civil union with a Spanish national than their male counterparts.

Moreover, another significant group discovered in the field study is female migrants, often divorced or without family, who seek work as live-in maids or helpers for Chinese immigrant families or as factory workers in manufacturing sectors, such as the garment industry. This feminization of migration is not unique to the Chinese immigrant population in Spain but is a global phenomenon that reflects the changing nature of international migration and the increasing role of women in the labor force (Parreñas 2001; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2007).

Chinese migration to Spain is characterized by family migration. The number of children and adolescents with Chinese nationality (aged 0-14 years) has increased significantly from 4,490 (16.3%) in 2001 to 47,576 (20.8%) in 2021, representing over a tenfold growth in absolute number (see Figure 7). In addition to natural growth, Chinese immigrants tend to apply for family reunification to be reunited with their left-behind children once they establish a stable life in Spain (He 2018). Furthermore, most of the capital-linked migration projects in recent years are applied as a family unit, where parents are more likely to migrate to Spain with their children. This phenomenon is driven by the desire of many middle-class Chinese families to provide their children with better education and well-being. This phenomenon will be elaborated on in more detail in the next chapter.

Figure 7 Age and sex structure of Chinese population in Spain in 2001 and 2021



Source: Author's own elaboration based on data of Municipal Register (Padrón Continuo) in 2001 and 2021

The second notable change in the past two decades has been a decrease in the proportion of young people, while the middle-aged and elderly population has increased considerably. As shown in Figure 7, the proportion of young adults aged between 20 and 45 years old decreased from 61.9% in 2001 to 44.9% in 2021. At the beginning of the century, Chinese migration to Spain mainly consisted of economic migrants who were seeking better job opportunities and economic survival. The group of active labor-age individuals, between 20 and 40 years old, made up the majority of the Chinese population in Spain. However, with the passage of time, this labor population has significantly decreased in the last two decades. One possible reason for this decline is the decreasing number of economic migrants from China in recent years due to the economic downturn in Spain since the economic crisis. Another observation regarding this demographic change is the general aging process of the Chinese population in Spain. As time goes by, many Chinese migrants choose to settle down in the host country and tend not to return to China for various reasons, especially those from Zhejiang province.

In addition, there is a growing number of senior immigrants. Intergenerational cohabitation, of namely three generations or even four generations, is also well noted in Chinese migrant families in Spain. This is because grandparents often serve as primary caretakers for their descendants, while parents are heavily focused on productive work, particularly self-employed businesses (Lamas-Abraira 2019). Therefore, not only are young children beneficiaries of the family reunification policy, but elderly people who accompany them also bear reproductive responsibilities and practice transnational care work in Spain.

4.2.3. Naturalization

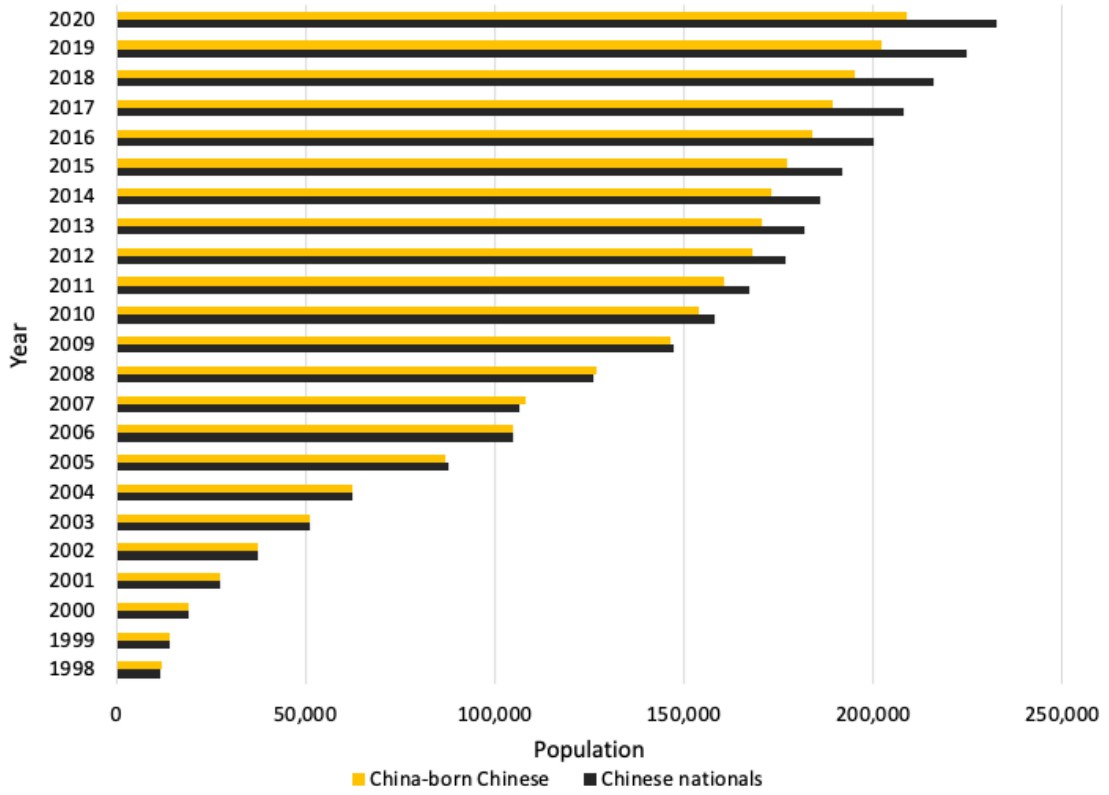
Over the past decade, the number of migrants holding Chinese nationality in Spain has steadily increased, even surpassing the number of individuals born in China (refer to Figure 8). Nevertheless, owing to the relatively recent emergence of Chinese migration to Spain, a large number of Chinese nationals do not meet the requirements for naturalization. To obtain Spanish citizenship, it is obligatory to demonstrate uninterrupted residency in Spain for a period of 10 years to become eligible for naturalization. Consequently, most applicants for Spanish nationality are either second-generation migrants or first-generation

old settlers. Simultaneously, Chinese citizens exhibit a greater preference for retaining their Chinese nationality in comparison to other ethnic groups.

The primary factor driving a significant portion of Chinese immigrants in Spain to maintain their Chinese nationality is the Chinese government's policy of not recognizing dual citizenship. This policy encourages both first-generation migrants and their descendants to retain their Chinese citizenship, making it easier for them to travel between China and Spain. Additionally, the long-term residence permits granted in Spain offer Chinese immigrants essential social and economic rights for their life in the host country, including the right to work and access social welfare. However, when it comes to political participation or voting in Spain, which is made possible through naturalization, many Chinese immigrants exhibit relatively low levels of interest during the fieldwork. This lack of enthusiasm may stem from factors such as a limited understanding of the Spanish political system or a stronger focus on economic and social aspects of their lives in Spain.

Qualitative findings from the fieldwork also indicate that certain Chinese immigrants opt to retain their Chinese citizenship out of patriotic motivations. Many first- and second-generation Chinese migrants maintain a strong cultural connection to China and, as a result, choose to preserve their Chinese nationality. Additionally, some Chinese immigrants express a sense of pride in China's economic progress and political influence, underscoring the emotional and legal importance of maintaining their Chinese citizenship. This attachment to their Chinese nationality enables them to preserve their ability to move between countries and return to China in the future.

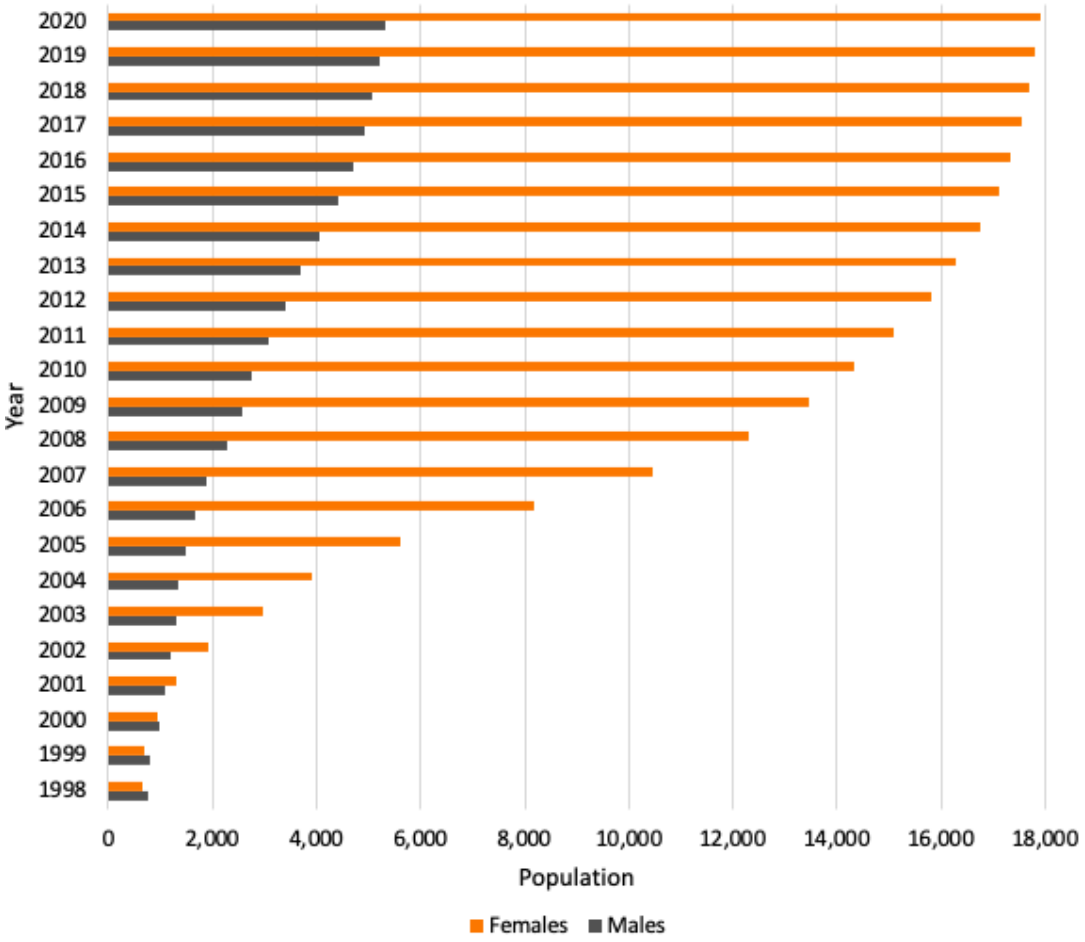
Figure 8. Evolution of China-born Chinese and Chinese nationals in Spain from 1998 to 2020



Source: Author's own elaboration based on Municipal Register (Padrón Continuo) of INE

Nevertheless, one notable characteristic of the China-born population who acquired Spanish nationality in the early 2000s is the significant gender disparities. Specifically, there is a higher proportion of females who were born in China and acquired Spanish nationality, accounting for over 70% of the total naturalizations from 2004 (See Figure 9). This gender disparity can be largely attributed to the phenomenon of child adoption by Spanish families in China. Until 2013, more than 13,000 Chinese children were adopted by Spanish families, with most of them being girls. Under the one-child policy, a higher number of baby girls were abandoned than boys, especially in rural areas where boys were considered more socially, economically, and culturally valuable at the time. As a result, there was a higher availability of girls for adoption. The adoption of Chinese children by Spanish citizens began in 1995 and increased dramatically until 2013, with over 18,000 adopted minors in 2015, mostly girls (Ling, 2017).

Figure 9 Evolution of Chinese-born population with Spanish citizenship in Spain from 1998 to 2020



Source: Author's own elaboration based on Municipal Register (Padrón Continuo) of INE

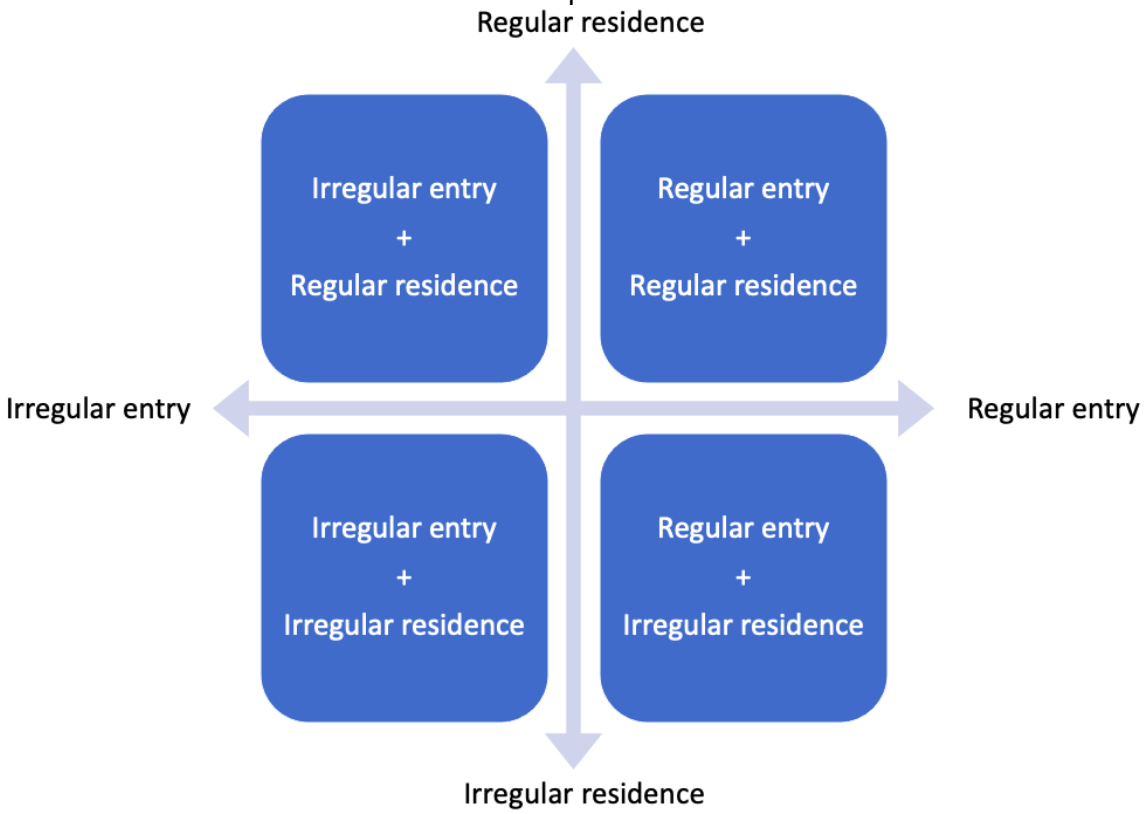
4.3 Economic migration from the late-1980s

Individual biographies are often shaped by broader social changes and historical transformations. This chapter aims to explore the agency and structure of migratory trajectories of Chinese economic migrants to Spain. By examining their personal experiences of international migration, this chapter seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the lives of individuals are intertwined with social transformations in both the sending and receiving countries during a particular historical period. Specifically, this chapter will outline the main patterns of early waves of economic migration and provide an overview of settlement in the host country from the beginning of the last century to 2013.

4.3.1 Migratory trajectories of economic migrants

Based on a two-by-two metric (see Figure 10), the migration patterns of Chinese economic migrants can be categorised into four main groups based on the legality of entry and residence. The first group consists of those who entered Spain legally and immediately obtained a legal residence permit, i.e. regular entry with regular residence. The second group consists of those who entered Spain with an officially issued visa or a forged visa-free passport (e.g. Japan and South Korea) and then overstayed without documentation, which is considered regular entry with irregular residence. The third group includes those who entered Spain in an irregular manner and subsequently managed to regularise their status through amnesties, arraigo and other policies, which is irregular entry with irregular residence. Finally, the fourth group includes those who arrived in Spain without a legal visa and did not regularise their administrative status during their stay in the host country, which is categorised as irregular entry with irregular residence. This categorisation provides a useful framework for understanding the different pathways and challenges faced by Chinese economic migrants in their migration trajectories to Spain.

Figure 10. Four main types of regular/irregular administrative status of Chinese migrants in Spain



Source: Author's own elaboration based on interviews

It is worth noting that Chinese economic migrants do not necessarily fit exclusively into one of the four groups of migratory patterns, particularly in terms of legality of residence. For example, irregular migrants who are initially classified as 'irregular entry with irregular residence' may, over time, move into the 'irregular entry with legal residence' group. Conversely, some immigrants with a residence permit in Spain may fail to renew it, thereby losing their right to legal residence in the host country. As such, this two-by-two metric works dynamically to identify migratory patterns of individuals' trajectories of settlement in Spain.

4.3.1.1. Regular migration: regular entry with regular residency

The migration trajectory of Chinese immigrants to Spain was primarily driven by family reunification policies, which had important implications for subsequent chain migration in the following decades. Although this group represented a relatively small

proportion of the total immigrant population in Spain, their settlement was of great importance for subsequent migration patterns.

At a time of widespread poverty in China, the Chinese government actively encouraged overseas Chinese to send remittances and invest back home. From the late 1970s, the government began to relax restrictions on passport and visa policies, implicitly encouraging emigration by ordinary citizens. Through the family reunification policy, a small group of Chinese immigrants with close relatives in Spain were able to obtain visas to leave their home country and settle in Spain. Since then, an increasing number of immigrants have arrived on family reunification visas and settled under this residence permit.

It was during this period that this group of immigrants with regular entry and residence became a major centre of settlement and migration. Moreover, through chain migration, they have facilitated the migration of thousands of would-be emigrants from China to Spain in subsequent decades. Understanding the role of family reunification policies in the migration patterns of Chinese migrants to Spain is therefore crucial to understanding their broader migratory trajectory.

During the course of the fieldwork, one case emerged that fits the above-mentioned group of Chinese immigrants. Specifically, Wenying, a married woman from Qingtian County, Zhejiang Province, worked as a high school teacher in her village during the 1990s. Her husband, who had immigrated to Spain in 1993 through people smuggling, was able to regularise his residence and obtain a work permit four years later, allowing him to apply for family reunification and sponsor Wenying's emigration to Spain. Wenying was eventually reunited with her husband and settled in Barcelona.

It is worth noting that those who are able to migrate with a legitimate visa and obtain a residence permit directly belong to a relatively privileged group in terms of their social and financial capital in both the sending and receiving countries. Compared to the other three groups, this group of economic migrants experiences relatively smaller difficulties in terms of mobility and settlement.

4.3.1.2. Clandestine migration based on chain migration

From the late 1980s to the early 2000s, the migratory patterns of Chinese migrants to Spain were characterised by clandestine practices (Nieto 2003). A significant settlement of the Chinese population was established throughout the country during this period. Undocumented immigration can be broadly classified into two types: 1) irregular entry, facilitated by human smugglers or migrant brokers; and 2) regular entry followed by overstay, i.e. entering Spain with a valid visa but staying in the host country beyond the visa's expiry date. These large influxes of immigrants have different origins and migratory patterns. The following example illustrates the transitional route of a Chinese migrant.

> *"On a cold night of October in 1995, a 19-year-old man, Zheng Jianmao, left his hometown of Qingtian and embarked on the road of smuggling…… Zheng Jianmao first took a train from Shanghai to Harbin, and then changed to an international train crossing Siberia and arriving in Ukraine via Moscow. Two weeks later, lurking in the river of Kiev, he finally entered Hungary. Afterwards, the 'snakehead' (smuggler) took him across the Dnieper and Transnez rivers, over the fir-covered Carpathian Mountains, across Slovenia, and entered an Italian border city, Udine, on December 13. This was the first stop for Qingtian people on a gate way to wealthy Western Europe…… He had to 'stay in black' (live without documentation) in Italy for 6 years. In 2001, he came to Spain and obtained permanent residency. Subsequently, Zheng Jianmao brought over six brothers and sisters from his hometown one after another to Spain. Today, nearly a hundred members of this family are fanned out in Spain, Italy and France*." — *Eight Immortals Cross the Sea* (cited and translated from *Strange Chinese* by Meng Yang, published in 2014)

The transnational journey of Zheng Jianmao in Europe is representative of many other Chinese immigrants' migratory paths, especially those who arrived and resided without documentation for a period of time. It is emblematic of the experience of tens of thousands of Chinese immigrants in Spain. Undocumented migration patterns can be observed mainly in two stages of the migration process: entry and settlement.

Firstly, the term 'irregular entry' refers to people who enter Spain in an irregular manner, without a legal visa or a visa-free passport. Human smuggling is one of the most

common means of illegal entry chosen by many Chinese immigrants since the end of the last century, especially in the 1990s and early 2000s. According to Smith (1994), more than 50,000 Chinese migrants were reportedly smuggled into Spain through various international smuggling routes by 1994. Many emigrants from Zhejiang and Fujian provinces in south-eastern China arrived through irregular channels run by "*she tou*" (snakeheads), people smugglers. Regardless of the mode of transport used, whether by land, air or sea, the journey from China to Europe was fraught with danger. According to the fieldwork, there were three main routes of human smuggling to Europe: the southern route, the eastern route and the northern route. The southern route started in Yunnan Province in China, passed through Thailand or Nepal, then crossed the Middle East before finally arriving in southern Europe. The eastern route was a longer journey that crossed the Pacific Ocean, passing through South America before reaching Spain. The northern route was relatively less risky than the other two, which crossed Russian territory and entered the destination country from Eastern Europe.

To illustrate the northern route of the smuggling business, Smith's study suggests that well-organised gangs of Chinese criminals set up fake companies in Moscow to facilitate illegal migration from China by issuing 'invitation letters' and 'admission letters', enabling them to apply for passports and visas. According to the field study of this research and Smith's work (1994), smuggling people by road from Russia to Europe was notorious for its violent criminals and drugs, as migrants were reportedly beaten and even raped by smugglers along the way. Smuggled people live under close surveillance by mafia figures in Russia before boarding a plane to Europe.

During the field study, people reported that the cost of smuggling was considerable, ranging from about ¥50,000 to ¥150,000 (¢7,500-¢21,000), depending on the route taken. Only the wealthy could afford these exorbitant fees. Most would-be emigrants had to borrow money from family, friends, neighbours or even their entire village to pay for the trip. Under great financial pressure, these migrants worked excessively once they reached their destination, trying their best to become wealthy as quickly as possible in order to pay off their debts and send additional remittances to their families back home. They also helped to finance the emigration of other family members or neighbours by repeating their migratory journeys.

Many Chinese immigrant entrepreneurs in Spain also successfully financed the departure of would-be emigrants from their home villages. In return, these newcomers had to work as free or cheap labour in their businesses for the next few years, until they finally repaid the debts of the smuggling operations. When the newcomers became established settlers with sufficient savings, they financed the passage of more newcomers, and the process was repeated. In this way, the later growth of Chinese migration to Spain was attributed to a chain.

Typically working as waiters and cooks, Chinese migrants could only enter the labour-intensive sector, doing less skilled jobs under harsh working conditions. Of all the migrants, many have higher education or work experience in their country of origin, but they do not speak the language and their previous work skills are hardly transferable to the Spanish labour market. As a result, most of them have to start from the bottom of the socio-economic ladder, either by working for other co-ethnics or by setting up their own ethnic business.

Moreover, irregular entry often leads to a period of irregular migrant status in the host country. The fieldwork carried out for this study has highlighted the fact that not all immigrants without a work permit or residence card in Spain actively seek to regularise their immigration status. This is often due to economic constraints. To illustrate this, a former owner of a textile workshop in Mataró, who arrived in Barcelona more than 20 years ago, shared her experience. She mentioned that purchasing a full-time work contract on the black market would typically cost around 5,000 to 6,000 euros. In addition to this substantial cost, individuals are obliged to make monthly payments for social security and insurance to their fictitious employer, the entity that issues the contract. As a result, the total cost of obtaining a work contract to regulate their stay in Spain can be as much as 10,000 euros. This financial burden discourages some people from seeking regularisation and they end up returning to their home countries.

Despite the clandestine nature of overall Chinese immigration to Spain, there have been various feasible ways to legalize one's identity, among which waiting for amnesties

and applying for *arraigo*[4] procedures are believed to be the most common practices for irregular migrants.

The implementation of general amnesties by the Spanish government from the 1980s to the 2000s has had a significant impact on the influx of new immigrants from China and other European countries. These amnesties were implemented through various legislative changes over the years. In 1986, the first major amnesty coincided with the enactment of the 1985 Law, which marked the beginning of efforts to regularise the stay of migrants. In 1991, the residence permit scheme was extended to workers who could prove their presence in Spain before 15 May 1991 and who had a job offer. In 1994, priority was given to family reunification, allowing foreign residents with renewed permits to bring their families with them. In 1996, an important development allowed people with work and/or residence permits issued after 1986 to apply if they had been in Spain before 1999. In 2001, applications that had been rejected in 2000 were re-examined. These amnesty programmes and evolving regulations played a crucial role in shaping migration patterns.

Nieto's research (2003) has shown that these administrative measures have provided tens of thousands of undocumented migrants with the opportunity to regularize their status and obtain residence permits. The first amnesty, commonly referred to by Chinese migrants as the 'xiao she' (little amnesty), was implemented in 1986, leading to a sharp increase in this migrant population by 53 percent over the previous years. For the next two decades, amnesty programs of varying sizes were launched every four or five years. Although these policies aimed to regulate the existing population, they brought in new waves of Chinese newcomers from China, as well as other European countries, including France, Portugal, the Netherlands, and Italy (Xu 1999).

> *In 1985 and 1991, two large-scale new immigrants were approved to obtain residence permits in Spain (commonly known as "little amnesty"). During the first "little amnesty", 8,000 or 9,000 Chinese settled in Spain legally. During the second*

[4] The 'arraigo' immigrant policy in Spain, established under the Ley Orgánica 4/2000 and subsequent regulations, provides a pathway for undocumented immigrants to obtain legal residence. It requires individuals to demonstrate their continuous residence in Spain for a specific period (usually three years) and fulfill certain criteria indicating integration into Spanish society, such as having stable employment, sufficient financial means, and social integration. Successful applicants may be granted a temporary or permanent residence permit, depending on the circumstances and fulfillment of requirements.

"little amnesty", 7,000 Chinese applied for settlement, and 5,438 were approved. In addition to immigrants coming directly from mainland China, there were also many overseas Chinese who had been unable to obtain residence permits in the Netherlands, Italy, France, Portugal and other Western European countries chose to move to Spain, which led to an increase in Chinese population in Spain, from 3,000 to tens of thousands. Nearly 80% of them were newcomers from Qingtian and Wenzhou County. (Xu 1999: 306)

Another group of clandestine migrants are those who arrived with a legitimate visa or visa-free passport and then found a way to legalise their identity during the first years of settlement. People who have been able to enter the host country legally are relatively well-off in terms of financial resources and social capital.

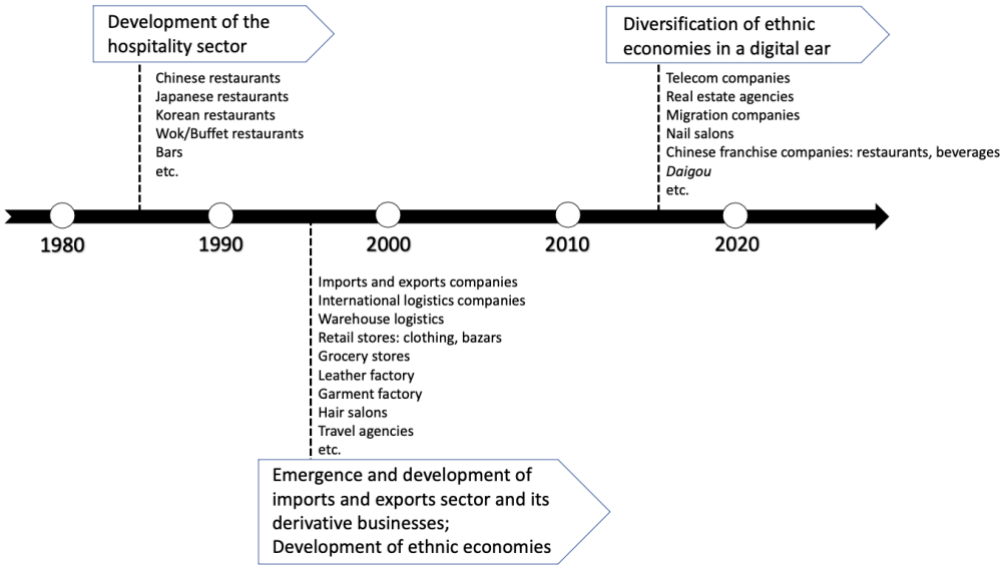
4.3.2 An overview of Chinese economic activities in Spain from the 1980s

Over the last four decades, ethnic economic practices in Spain have become increasingly integrated into the broader social structure between the country of origin and destination (Güell et al. 2015; Valenzuela-Garcia et al. 2017). Previous research has rigorously depicted the continuity of Chinese migration, especially economic migration, and its insertion into the host country (Beltrán 2003; Beltrán & Sáiz 2009, 2013). Many Chinese migrants lack Spanish language skills and transferable professional skills, making it almost impossible for them to integrate into the mainstream labour market of the host society. Therefore, an important means of socio-economic integration into the host society is through entrepreneurial activities. Various studies suggest that the Chinese community in Spain, particularly from Zhejiang province, is characterised by an entrepreneurial nature of migration (Beltrán 2003).

On the one hand, due to limited access to the mainstream labour market, many Chinese immigrants in Spain have turned to entrepreneurship as a means of economic integration (Yu, 2013). As a result, Chinese-owned enterprises have become increasingly prevalent, especially at the lower end of the market. These small businesses often require relatively small investments and generate low value added (Wang, 2018). Figure 11 provides a brief

historical evolution of ethnic economy of Chinese immigrants in Spain over the last four decades.

Figure 11. Overview of Chinese entrepreneurships from the late-1980s



Source: Author's elaboration based on interviews

4.3.2.1. Development of Chinese-owned hospitality in Spain

The emergence and continuity of Chinese economic migration to Spain is closely tied to the growth of Chinese restaurants. Zhejiang Province is a major source of Chinese immigrants in Spain, accounting for nearly 70% of the Chinese population (Sáiz, 2005). With the help of social capital and support from co-ethnic and family kinships, Zhejiang immigrants have been able to encourage and facilitate further migration from their community to Spain through transnational networks. This network provides a source of cheap labor from the same ethnic group (Beltrán and Sáiz, 2013). Zhejiang people have a strong cultural tradition of self-employment and have successfully developed transnational migration networks based on ethnic businesses abroad. For instance, if a pioneer immigrant establishes a successful business overseas, it is common practice for them to recruit co-ethnic labor from their origin and sponsor their trip and initial settlement in the host country. In return, the newcomers would work for the pioneers during the first years of migration and gain entrepreneurial experience through practical work, with the hope of opening their own businesses as soon as possible. This business model plays a vital role in sustaining the international mobility of Chinese economic migrants between the two countries.

For almost a century, Chinese-owned restaurants have been a familiar presence in many European countries. By the late 1980s, there were over 2,200 Chinese-owned restaurants in the Netherlands and more than 5,000 in France. In Spain, there were around 3,000 Chinese-owned restaurants, which were a significant driving force behind the development of the ethnic economy in previous decades (Zhang, 2017).

After the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona, the rapidly growing tourism industry in Spain led to an increase in foreign tourists who began to enjoy the exotic flavours of Chinese food during their stay in this Mediterranean country. According to the study by Beltrán and Sáiz (2013), the first consumers of Chinese restaurants in Spain were foreign tourists who visited prestigious coastal areas such as Málaga, Canarias, Baleares, Valencia and Alicante. Before the arrival of Chinese migrants from Zhejiang Province in this ethnic niche market, the Chinese restaurant sector was dominated by Chinese migrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan, who were believed to provide truly authentic and high-quality Chinese food in Spain. These old settlers had successfully cultivated this European market for a long time before the newcomers from mainland China created a new landscape of Chinese restaurants in the host country.

Jiang is the owner of a Chinese restaurant that opened in Santa Coloma in 2003. The landscape of Chinese restaurants in Spain has changed significantly since the 1992 Olympic Games. Following the Spanish government's international amnesty for all immigrants in 1991, there has been a significant increase in the number of Chinese migrants from China and other European countries seeking to legalise their administrative status in Europe. As a result of this migration trend, labour-intensive businesses, including restaurants, benefited greatly. With the loosening of migration restrictions, Chinese migrant entrepreneurs in the hospitality industry, particularly restaurants, were not only able to recruit more cheap co-ethnic labour, but also to expand their businesses across Spain. Falling labour costs and increasing market demand for this new exotic cuisine played a significant role in the growth of the Chinese restaurant business in Spain.

> "*The Chinese were mostly Hong Kongese and Taiwanese. They cooked authentic Chinese food, as their chefs had professional training… Before 1993, Chinese restaurants [in Spain] opened by Hong Kongese and Taiwanese were legally regulated in accordance with the Spanish regulations. They provided workers with*

full-time insurance and other benefits. Then a lot of Qingtianese people came here. Once they got money, they opened up Chinese restaurants right away as well… After Spain granted residence permits by the international amnesty, a flood of people flocked here. They didn't have anywhere to live, and they had nothing to eat. As long as employers gave them accommodation and food, they would work for them without salary." (Jiang, economic migrant, female, 56 years old)

During the flourishing period of Chinese restaurants, this business was so profitable that many Chinese economic immigrant aspired to open their own restaurant, especially after managing to pay back the debt of emigration. For example, Shangjun's trajectory in Spain denotes a typical portrait of a Chinese immigrant in pursuit of entrepreneurial success from opening a restaurant.

Shangjun arrived in Spain in 2009. Sponsored by his cousin, a Chinese restaurant owner, Shangjun's migration to Spain was not different from that of many others. Due to close kinship relation, he worked for his cousin in the kitchen of his restaurant for only half a year. Then he opened his own restaurant in a remote and small village in Lleida where there were barely no Chinese residents at that moment.

The influx of Chinese capital and labor into the hospitality industry, particularly in Chinese restaurants, engendered a competitive environment among Chinese immigrant entrepreneurs, who had to contend with a highly homogenous cuisine and business model. This intense competition compelled many of these entrepreneurs to engage in price-cutting strategies to stay afloat in the market. Consequently, such predatory pricing behavior not only had a negative impact on the overall quality of food and service, but also led to the saturation of the entire sector. In the face of this fierce competition, Shangjun ultimately chose to close his restaurant and open a small bar in a middle-class neighborhood in the outskirts of Barcelona.

4.3.2.2. Burgeoning Emergence of International Trading and its derivative businesses

Wang's (2018) study highlights two main strategies adopted by ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs in response to the saturation of Chinese restaurants in Spain: horizontal evolution and diversification of economic activities. The horizontal evolution strategy

involves efforts to improve services or innovate products within the same type of business. Many Chinese restaurant owners opted to open Korean or Japanese restaurants to avoid competition within the Chinese restaurant sector, while others introduced new business models such as wok or buffet, integrating a wider variety of food at relatively lower prices to attract local customers. In addition, opening a bar became another alternative for many Chinese immigrants who had accumulated some financial capital and entrepreneurial experience in the hospitality industry, particularly in the restaurant business. Compared to running a restaurant, running a bar is a more manageable venture in terms of financial and human costs, with only a couple typically needed to run a local neighbourhood bar. This small-scale entrepreneurial approach became a common survival strategy for many older Chinese migrants after the economic crisis.

On the other hand, some Chinese settlers in Spain diversified risks by exploring new business opportunities in other sectors, such as import and export. In the mid-1990s, there was an unprecedented trend to import cheap clothing, leather goods and other manufactured products from China to Europe. A few Chinese pioneers in Madrid and Barcelona seized the opportunity. The story of Jianlan, a Chinese immigrant who arrived in Spain in the early 1980s, offers insights into the entrepreneurial strategies of many Chinese immigrants during this period.

After working in the back kitchens of various Chinese restaurants in Madrid and other cities on the southern coast, Jianlan opened his own restaurants in Madrid and Arenys de Mar. However, his wife's previous work experience as an international trade officer in Beijing proved crucial to their entrepreneurial success. In 1991, the Chinese Trade Office in Madrid received an order for 90,000 short-sleeved silk shirts to be imported from China. Jianlan's wife received the order and Jianlan took it back to China to put it out to open bidding among Chinese silk garment manufacturers and suppliers.

In paralel, during the 1990s, the evolution of Chinese import trade in Spain was not only driven by market forces, but also by the wider geopolitical and economic changes taking place in China at the time. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, China struggled to recover from a major economic recession between 1989 and 1991, which led to high levels of inflation and overproduction in the domestic market. To address

these challenges, China's central and local governments actively welcomed foreign investors and overseas Chinese entrepreneurs to invest in the country (Xiang, 2011).

Under this economic climate, when Jianlan returned to China to bid for an export contract, he found that five state-owned import and export companies were vying for the opportunity. In order to maintain a long-term relationship with the Spanish market, one of these companies not only offered Jianlan a favourable commission, but also provided him with 80,000 low-cost shirts on credit for resale in Spain. This form of state-facilitated export trade appears to have played a role in accommodating the globalisation and diversification of China's overseas economy.

This trip to China not only allowed Jianlan to successfully complete the import order, but also to establish close relationships with Chinese garment manufacturers and suppliers who later sponsored him on credit for another shipment of 80,000 silk short-sleeved shirts back to Spain.

Buoyed by this success, Jianlan closed his restaurant in Catalonia and opened a clothes shop on Trafalgar Street in Barcelona. This move made him the first Chinese immigrant to open a garment shop in Trafalgar Street, which in the following decades became known as 'Little Chinatown' due to the concentration of Chinese entrepreneurs in the area. Many other ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs in Spain also seized this unprecedented opportunity and began to specialise in importing goods from China. This diversification of economic activities was one of the main strategies used by Chinese immigrants in Spain to cope with the saturation of Chinese restaurants in the hospitality sector. By exploring new entrepreneurial opportunities in other sectors, they were able to reduce their risks and increase their chances of success.

To some extent, the surge in Chinese import trade in Spain may not have been the result of market dynamics alone, but may have been influenced by broader political and economic changes in China. These changes may have led the Chinese government to adopt a more open attitude towards foreign investment and overseas Chinese entrepreneurs. As a result, ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs in Spain seized the opportunity to import Chinese-made goods, potentially contributing to the growth of Chinese entrepreneurial concentration in Spain.

Over time, the expansion of Chinese import and export trade in Spain not only reshaped the landscape of this industry, but also had a cascading effect on the broader ethnic economy. As import businesses flourished, related services such as logistics companies, warehousing services and retail outlets sprang up. Chinese entrepreneurs diversified their business models, including the establishment of leather goods, footwear and clothing factories. In addition, the influx of Chinese immigrants to Spain since the mid-1990s led to the rapid growth of the Chinese immigrant community, which fostered the development of ethnic economies. As a result, many Chinese-owned travel agencies, hair salons, grocery stores and supermarkets have sprung up to cater to the Chinese community.

4.3.2.3. Diversification of Chinese-owned businesses based on digital infrastructures

During the mid-2010s, as Spain began to experience economic recovery, the economic landscape of the Chinese community in the country underwent significant changes. With the advent of the digital era, Chinese entrepreneurs have increasingly turned their attention to digital platforms in search of new business opportunities. One such occupation that has emerged is the *daigou*, which is popular among both established and new immigrants, including students and the second generation of Chinese immigrants. The *daigou* occupation involves purchasing products on behalf of clients from their home countries, mainly China, and shipping them to clients from Spain. This trend reflects a broader shift in the Chinese community's business strategies in Spain, as entrepreneurs increasingly leverage digital technologies to expand their reach and access new markets.

The luxury market in China has been experiencing double-digit growth since 2016, owing to the emergence of a strong middle class with increased purchasing power. In response, the role of *daigou* has become increasingly important as a parallel channel for luxury purchases. *Daigou* refers to shoppers who are hired by Chinese residents in mainland China to purchase goods abroad, allowing them to buy premium products at relatively lower prices due to tax and monetary policies. Once the premium goods are purchased on behalf of their customers in China, the *daigou* then send the products back to China via exclusive logistics companies, which can handle tax evasion and even provide tax refunds through the use of tourist visas. In addition to tax avoidance, *daigou* can also

profit from differences in foreign currency exchange rates. For example, they charge their customers in RMB based on the real-time Euro exchange reference rate, but exchange Euros in the black market at a lower rate. These benefits have made *daigou* a profitable industry, attracting many newcomers. Despite strict regulations and fiscal and police interventions, the substantial profits generated by the emerging middle class in China have enticed many Chinese immigrants to enter this industry (Wang, 2017).

The rise of social media platforms such as WeChat has revolutionised *daigou* practices by enabling direct and real-time communication between *daigou* agents and their customers. This convenience allows for seamless transactions, with *daigou* regularly posting product photos on social media, giving customers the flexibility to inquire about prices and make purchases at their convenience. The exchange of information, goods and capital across geographical locations is effortless thanks to this digital financial infrastructure. It's important to note, however, that participation in this migrant profession is primarily feasible for Chinese migrants with established transnational networks of premium customers in China and local connections to buyers and sellers.

These individuals have cultivated robust transnational networks of premium clients in China and local relationships with buyers and sellers, enabling them to efficiently source high-quality products on behalf of their clients. They also maintain strong relationships with the sales staff of target brands, giving them exclusive access to limited editions, discounts and VIP pricing. In particular, many Chinese students and newcomers who arrived under capital-led migration policies have gravitated to this sector. This combination of transnational networking, local connections and personalised service underscores the success and appeal of *daigou* practices, particularly among female practitioners.

The presence of Chinese *daigou* is particularly noticeable in the luxury brand stores along Passeig De Gràcia in Barcelona, including Louis Vuitton, Hérmes and Chanel. Some *daigou* even live-stream their shopping experiences at La Roca Village, Barcelona's largest luxury outlet centre, to cater to their Chinese clientele. When shopping online, customers can request *daigou* agents to try on products and place premium orders in real time. In addition to luxury items, food and beverages are also popular categories for *daigou*, especially products that address food safety concerns in China, such as infant formula milk like Almirón.

It's also important to highlight the significant representation of women in *daigou* practices, including students and migrant mothers, who make up a significant portion of the workforce. The term 'migrant mothers' in this context refers to women who have recently migrated to Spain with their children and spouses. Some of them take on the responsibility of caring for their children while they are in Spain, and working as *daigou* agents gives them the flexibility to combine their parental duties. They often engage in daigou activities after sending their children to school, and some even work from home, communicating with clients through social media platforms.

To sum up, the emergence of *daigou* practices has allowed Chinese consumers to have access to a wide range of products, from premium luxury goods to daily beverages and foods, through a form of "globalization from below" (Wang, 2017). This transnational purchasing has not only influenced the way of life of Chinese customers but also shaped Western imaginaries of the up-and-coming middle class in China. The vast reach of these transnational purchases is facilitated by the use of e-payment platforms such as WeChat and Alipay, which enable seamless exchange of information, goods, and capital across geographical locations. As such, *daigou* has become an occupation accessible primarily to newly arrived Chinese immigrants with middle-class profiles and descendants of Chinese immigrants who have accumulated the necessary resources for both the demand and supply sides.

4.3.3 Collective memory of ‘eating bitterness’

The Spanish colloquial phrase '*trabajar como chino*' meaning '*to work like a Chinese'* is commonly used to describe the strong work ethic of Chinese immigrants, particularly those in the hospitality industry and service sector. The prevalence of Chinese-owned businesses such as restaurants, bars, and retail shops in local neighborhoods contributes to the perception of the Chinese community as hardworking and persistent. However, beneath this public perception lie concealed struggles, unvoiced hardships, and poignant experiences that Chinese economic migrants have endured for years post-migration. The term "*ku*", denoting bitterness, holds profound significance in the journeys of economic migrants who have settled in Spain. This term frequently arises in interviews, as it encapsulates their migratory narratives and the adversities they have confronted. This taste

of bitterness stems from the myriad challenges these migrants have surmounted, both physically and emotionally. Over time, however, this taste has transformed into a shared memory and an ethnic identifier among the inaugural wave of Chinese immigrants who arrived in Spain in the latter part of the previous century.

This chapter aims to shed light on the lived experiences of Chinese economic migrants since the end of the last century. It is important to understand how they have coped with these hardships and developed an '*eating bitterness*' philosophy, which has become an essential part of the settlement process for this ethnic group in the host country.

4.3.3.1. 'Bitterness' of physical and emotional hardship

Physical hardship is a recurring theme in the narratives of all economic-migrant interviewees in this study. Regardless of their education level or professional background in China, all had to start from scratch and work their way up from low-skilled, low-paying jobs in low-end sectors, such as restaurants, bars, and sweatshops, mostly owned by other Chinese immigrants. As a result, the "bitterness" of physical hardship was unexpectedly experienced due to the grueling nature of the low-skilled work they had to take and the volatile nature of some Chinese-owned businesses. In this study, most economic-migrant interviewees initially worked as porters at wholesale markets, dishwashers at bars and restaurants, and garment workers at sweatshops when they resettled in Spain. These jobs are commonly taken by Chinese economic migrants in the early stages of post-migration life. However, these jobs turned out to be unexpectedly "*Ku*" (bitterness).

In 2003, Yingying came to Spain when she was just turning 20 years old. At the time, there was a 'going abroad fever' in China during the transitioning years of the millennium, and she aspired to go abroad to start a career in a Western country. Since her aunt had migrated to Europe in the late 1990s and settled down in Barcelona, Yingying went to Spain with a student visa and reunited with her aunt. Without any professional skills and Spanish knowledge, Yingying started to work as a porter at a warehouse for Chinese employers at the beginning, but this job turned out to be far beyond her physical strength and imagination.

[I] worked for a month in the Badalona warehouse area, but I couldn't handle it.

> *At the time, I was very thin, being 1.78 meters tall and weighing only 55 kg, which made it difficult for me to lift heavy items. The warehouse sold goods to todo a cien (wholesale shops), which meant that all items were packaged in bulk, such as washing powder and other items, which came in boxes that were difficult for me to move. Having never worked in China before, I realized that young people from the north of China are quite pampered. Only after coming to Spain did I understand what ku (bitterness) really meant.* (Yingying, economic migrant, female, 36 years old)

In addition to the bitterness of physical hardships in labor-intensive works, relentless exploitation is another source of the 'bitterness'. Most of the interviewees mentioned that due to their clandestine status at the beginning of migration, they had been subject to the exploitation by Chinese employers. Bad working conditions, extremely low wages, long hours and unfair treatment are shared hardships among recent immigrants who explicitly put it "*ku*" (bitter).

Tingting, a Chinese restaurant owner in Barcelona, immigrated to Spain with her husband in 2007 with a tourist group and then overstayed. When they arrived in Barcelona, an old Chinese sojourner picked them up at the airport by arrangement and then took them directly to an underground Chinese-owned garment workshop. As soon as entered this sweatshop, Tingting felt overwhelmingly shocked.

> *[In the sweatshop there were] a dozen people, and it (the sweatshop) was very small. Every person worked by a machine. The room that I lived in had bunk beds and six people… There was no sun there. The sun could not be seen all day long. When I arrived [at the sweatshop], I saw that everyone's face looked pale and wan. I asked one of them: 'Are you here every day?' He said yes.* (Tingting, economic migrant, female, 36 years old)

Despite feeling overwhelmingly shocked, Tingting and her husband had no choice but to work in the underground sweatshop since they had no documents and no one to rely on in their new country. They worked extremely long hours without any day off, starting from 7 or 8 o'clock in the morning and continuing until 2 or 3 o'clock in the evening. As irregular

migrants, they were not permitted to leave the workplace and were locked down in the dungeon-like garment workshop.

> *Every day when we woke up, we had to start working immediately. We couldn't go out at all since the boss didn't allow it, as we were all illegal workers... After working for a month, I was so exhausted and sick that I couldn't even open my eyes. Can you imagine how bitter it was? When we had no work, we slept all day, and when work came, we worked until two or three o'clock at night, only to wake up again at seven or eight the next morning. [Eventually] I couldn't take it anymore and fell ill.* (Tingting, economic migrant, female, 36 years old)

Eventually, Tingting and her husband managed to leave the underground sweatshop and venture out on their own. They bought a Chinese-language newspaper to search for job ads, as they didn't know anyone in Spain who could help them. However, they soon realized that their lack of proper documentation was a major obstacle. Many Chinese employers refused to hire them for this reason, while others offered wages that were far below the industry standard, usually no more than 500 euros per month. Desperate for any job that would provide them with accommodation and a basic salary, Tingting and her husband tried to sell small items on the street, but they were chased away by law enforcement several times. Finally, they landed a job at a Chinese-owned bar. Tingting worked as a cleaner, while her husband helped in the kitchen.

> *On the first day, the boss asked me to clean the toilet, and I felt that he was bullying me because I had never experienced this kind of work in China. I felt that he was discriminating against me, so I asked him: 'Why did you let me clean the toilet?' He said that's how everyone started to work in a bar… When I first started working, my legs were swollen because the hours were too long, but I persisted. After several months, he just thought that since I didn't have a residence permit, he didn't give me any rest and asked me to keep working. He didn't even mention raising the salary, and the salary was very low, very, very low, and there was no day off. Then I said: 'Can you just give me some extra money?' He said the bar had no business and just let me take a break.* (Tingting, economic migrant, female, 36 years old)

For many recent economic migrants, the trajectory of exploitation is an all-too-familiar one. Tingting, like many others, has lived through bitter experiences in exploitative workplaces under the supervision of other Chinese elites. The majority of the economic migrant interviewees shared similar experiences in the same sectors and workplaces. Despite knowing that many ethnic enterprises abroad rely on the exploitation of cheap labor, especially of illegal migrant workers, these economic migrants often feel that they are prepared to accept such "bitterness" in pursuit of their dreams of success.

However, the desire for success can sometimes overwhelm migrants, causing them to underestimate the hardships and risks associated with migration. For instance, Yingying's aunt had warned her that working abroad would require a lot of "eating bitterness", as she put it like: "*If you want to work abroad, you should prepare for eating a lot of bitterness*." Yey Yingying decided to pursue her dream of leaving China. She believed that working in China would be just as bitter, and that going abroad would broaden her horizons.

In reality, the bitterness of their experiences was often beyond their anticipation and imagination. For Tingting, the realization hit hard when she arrived at the sweatshop. Her first thought was one of regret, and she soon called her family to bid them farewell. Without the option of returning to China, Tingting likened her situation to a life sentence. She called her family and said: "*Don't wait for me to come back. Take it as if I've sentenced to life imprisonment*."

Tingting's experience is not unique; many economic migrants in the ethnic group have also found it difficult to anticipate the harsh realities of working abroad. When the discrepancy between expectations and reality is significant, feelings of loneliness and helplessness often intersect and become apparent.

> *Whenever my husband and I talk to others about the past, we both cry. It was very difficult for us at the time, we didn't know anyone at all, no one helped you, and there was no place for you to cry. Only two people face it. Even if the sky had fallen, there would only be two of us, no relatives, no friends, and we were very lonely.* (Wenying, economic migrant, female, 52 years old)

> *Who (among Chinese immigrants) hasn't cried in Europe? They go back to work*

even after crying... I had just finished my yue zi[5] *and had to stand in the bar all day. The next day, when I got out of bed, my feet were very painful and it hurt when I stepped on the floor, but I didn't say anything. At that time, I was alone and helpless, you know?* (Jiang, economic migrant, female, 55 years old)

These bitter experiences of exploitation serve as a reminder that migration is not always the ticket to a better life. Economic migrants often face harsh working conditions, low wages, and a lack of support, making it difficult to realize their aspirations. The 'bitterness' of physical and emotional hardship prevails in every economic migrant's life trajectory in this study. Its manifestation is nevertheless embedded in a complex notion of cultural and structural factors which will be discussed above.

4.3.3.2. Successful Gold-digging Story with Unspoken Bitterness

What is worth noting is a shared sense of unwillingness to reveal their hardships and sufferings towards the people left behind in China. Many economic migrants were reluctant to tell non-migrant members the realities of poor working conditions and exploitative jobs they had lived through in the new country. In this study, the "bitterness" of surviving abroad is usually kept secret by immigrants from their family, friends and neighbors in hometown.

At a personal level, the reluctance to talk about lived bitterness abroad is subject to altruism and sacrifice embedded in traditional values of Chinese family. An old Chinese saying 报喜不报忧 (*bao xi bu bao you*), *carry only good news*, is manifested in overseas Chinese as well. Instead of revealing all the bitter experiences and negative emotions to their non-migrant family members, many overseas Chinese would rather keep the bitterness to themselves with the hope of reducing worries and concerns of family. For instance, despite relentless exploitation and low-end tedious works, Yunting never told her

[5] 月子 (yuèzi) is a Chinese postpartum tradition that involves a period of confinement for the mother and her newborn baby. It typically lasts for about a month and involves dietary restrictions, specific hygiene practices, and limited physical activity. The goal of 月子 is to promote postpartum recovery, prevent illness, and ensure the well-being of both mother and baby. The practice has been passed down for generations and remains an important cultural tradition in many Chinese families.

parents how hard the life had been in Spain because she didn’t want them to worry about her.

The study's findings reveal that, at a collective level, many economic migrants prioritize presenting *'success'* narratives over openly discussing the challenges they face while surviving abroad. Instead, their emphasis lies in conveying their achievements to non-migrant family members through substantial remittances and extravagant spending in their hometowns. They pointed out the disproportionately high financial burdens and psychological stresses associated with their visits back to China. These financial responsibilities go beyond meeting the basic needs and enhancing the consumption habits of their non-migrant family members. They feel obliged to present '*hong bao*' which are red envelopes containing money, as gifts to non-familial elderly individuals and neighbors when they return to China. This practice is a way of expressing gratitude for the support provided to their family members who remained in China while they worked abroad.

Despite the fact that certain economic migrant interviewees hold lower-skilled positions in Spain's job market and engage in labor-intensive and repetitive tasks, they manage to regain a sense of self-esteem and social recognition. This is achieved by emphasizing their financial achievements in their home country. By doing so, they downplay the more challenging aspects of their emigration experience, which contributes to their perceived success and competence upon returning to their homeland.

The unspoken *'bitterness'* experienced by many economic migrants affects not only their own lives but also the way that others perceive the opportunity structure embedded in migration. Specifically, those who have not migrated are more likely to underestimate the hardships and risks involved. This is exemplified by the experience of Wenying, who came to Spain in 1999 to reunite with her husband, who had migrated six years earlier by irregular means. During their six years apart, communication was difficult and expensive, leaving little time to discuss the realities of life in the new country. Despite hearing successful stories from returnees, Wenying was disappointed and regretful after being reunited with her husband in Spain.

> *It was a trend (go abroad) at that time, which you can hardly imagine. China was just starting to open up, but at that time what they earned here (Europe) and brought back*

home was nearly seven or eight thousand yuan. I was a teacher [in China] and we just earned no more than one hundred yuan per month. It is because of this that everyone wanted to go out [from China]. But all the hardship and suffering behind this [is unknown]. How did these people make such money? No one had known it. Only after we finally came out, we knew it. (Wenying, economic migrant, female, 52 years old)

As Wenying's account suggests, many returnees sent large amounts of money back home, but the hardships they faced in achieving this financial success were often hidden from view. While the prospect of making a fortune in Europe was alluring to many would-be emigrants, they often had little knowledge of the difficulties they would encounter in their new country. It was only after migration that they truly understood the bitterness of working in a foreign land. Rather than sharing the difficulties of their immigrant experiences with people in their hometown, many returnees preferred to keep the bitter parts of their stories to themselves. However, sending remittances home allowed them to restore a sense of achievement, esteem, and social worth within their place of origin, even if they lived in a marginalized and deprived position in their new country. The emphasis on success narratives, rather than stories of bitterness, contributed to the trend of "gold-digging" among potential economic emigrants. By holding back these bitter experiences from non-migrant family members and friends in the homeland, this quality of ‘eating bitterness’ is established as an important coping strategy and collective experiential identity shared among the Chinese sojourners.

4.3.3.3. More than a survival strategy

Chinese economic migrants in Spain have confronted both physical and psychological challenges, demonstrating their remarkable endurance over time. However, the present study goes beyond depicting their suffering's magnitude, aiming to emphasize the significance of how these migrants make sense of their experiences of "*eating bitterness*". This term encapsulates the concept of enduring hardship and suffering with resilience and perseverance—a coping strategy and shared collective feature within the Chinese migrant community.

In response to the demands of economic migration, Chinese migrants in Spain frequently adopt diligent work ethics, persistence, and determination to strive for a brighter future. Gradually, "*eating bitterness*" has evolved into a defining trait of the Chinese diaspora within the host country. It not only holds value as a virtue but also embodies a cultural identity among Chinese immigrants, signifying their capacity to withstand and adapt in the face of adversity. This is especially evident among migrants originating from Qingtian and Wenzhou, two prominent emigrant counties in Zhejiang province. In these locales, the concept of "eating bitterness" is deeply ingrained and acknowledged as a fundamental characteristic of the local populace.

> Researcher*: Most of the people here are from Qingtian. What do you think the characteristics of your Qingtian people are in comparison with people from other places in China?*
> Interviewee (originated from Qingtian): *One of their characters is that they can really chi ku (eat bitterness). I think they can really eat bitterness. So bitter… Here (in Spain) you'd better work 24 hours a day. They desperately make money.* (Meimei, economic migrant, female, 35 years old)

The experiences of Chinese economic migrants in Spain are characterized by significant hardship and struggle. These challenges arise from the structural deprivation and exploitation that these individuals often face in the host country. Despite their diverse educational backgrounds, social class, and professional experience, Chinese migrants share a collective memory of "eating bitterness" as a coping mechanism in the face of adversity.

The concept of "*eating bitterness*" has become deeply ingrained in the ethnic identity of Chinese immigrants and represents a mindset of resilience and determination in the pursuit of survival and success. While these difficult times represent only a snapshot of the migrants' life course, the narrative of "eating bitterness" remains an essential aspect of their construction of memory and identity.

As one interviewee explained, crying is a common occurrence among Chinese migrants in Spain. However, these individuals persevere and continue to work as usual despite the difficulties they face. The strength and perseverance exhibited by Chinese

economic migrants in the face of adversity serve as a testament to the power of human resilience and the importance of cultural identity in navigating life's challenges.

4.4 Middle-class migration from 2013

In the 1990s, the economic development of newly industrialized countries in Asia led to a growing demand for emigration by people with purchasing power. For example, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and South Korea were the three main sources of applicants for business migration programs in Canada since the 1990s. Under these capital-linked migration schemes, many immigrants were regarded as privileged and portrayed as wealthy, skilled, and well-off. The culture of migration of affluent individuals to developed countries has also manifested in China. From the culture of emigration to the Global North to the prevalence of sending offspring to study abroad, wealthy and well-educated Chinese people have become attributed to dominant outflows in recent emigration trends from China (Xiang 2016; Wang 2020; Ma 2020; Tu 2021).

Existing research on China-Spain migration has neglected this group of newcomers, as many studies have delineated a homogenous image of the Chinese group in Spain which is composed of family-based chain migration. This dominant migration pattern consists of a primary sojourner who chose to journey to the host country first for economic betterment, engaged in unqualified jobs or established ethnic businesses, and subsequently reunited with other family members or compatriots from the same region. As such, this approach has its limitations on a long-term insight to reveal the changing nature and internal differentiation of Chinese immigration in Spain. With the passage of time, Chinese migration to Spain has become far more heterogeneous in socioeconomic terms, which is composed of a wide array of migrant profiles, including street vendors, micro-entrepreneurs, students, investors, professionals, and transnational corporate employers. Thus, a more nuanced and complete understanding of the influx of Chinese immigration in the host society is required. The following section aims to fill the knowledge gap and map out the migration patterns and trajectories of Chinese middle-class people in Spain.

4.4.1. Middle-class family migration

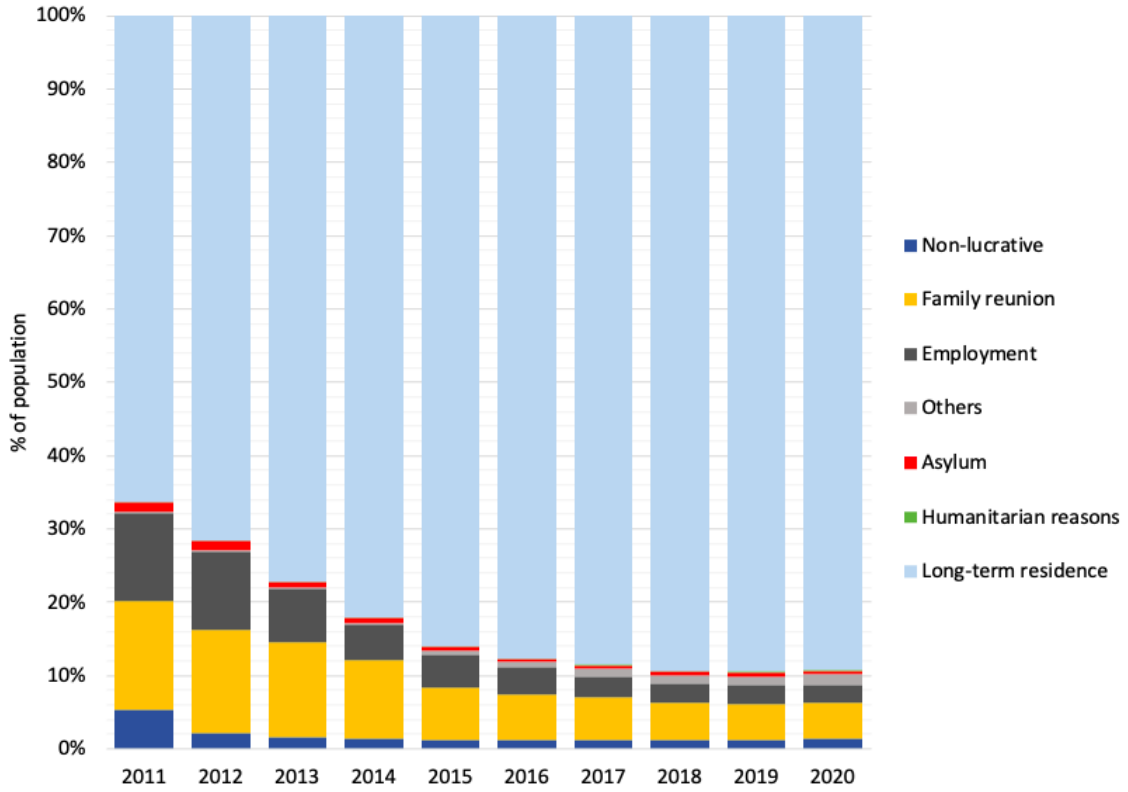
4.4.1.1. Who came?

Newcomers under Capital-linked Migration Schemes

In the aftermath of the economic crisis in 2008, the Spanish government launched new capital-linked immigration policies in order to attract more foreign capital. From 2013 the launch of Law 14/2013, along with modifications to the non-lucrative residence scheme, substantially prompted the arrival of many Chinese middle-class people. If we take a general look at the composition of Chinese citizens' residence in Spain from 2011 (see Figure 12), there are some notable changes to observe. The category 'Others' shows significant growth from 2016. This group is composed of investors, entrepreneurs, transnational corporate employers, highly skilled professionals, and academics, which aligns with the launch and implementation of the Residence Visa scheme under Law 14/2013. Another interesting change is the decline of non-lucrative residence permit holders from 2011, which dropped by nearly 56% the following year, yet increased again from 2016.

Figure 12 Composition of types of residence permit possessed by Chinese nationals in Spain from 2011 to 2020

	Non-lucrative	Others	Employment	Long-term residence	Family reunion	Asylum	Humanitarian reasons
2011	8,686	238	19,650	108,209	24,160	2,183	31
2012	3,789	230	18,145	121,823	23,980	2,157	19
2013	2,840	205	13,055	138,025	23,268	1,558	22
2014	2,551	472	9,151	153,760	20,132	1,303	21
2015	2,419	916	8,526	165,749	13,858	1,150	22
2016	2,395	1,505	7,130	174,470	12,525	1,012	34
2017	2,441	2,016	6,174	182,937	11,938	1,057	31
2018	2,540	2,297	5,633	190,730	10,829	1,173	38
2019	2,629	2,584	5,566	194,174	10,747	1,241	52
2020	3,215	3,168	5,600	199,136	10,749	1,072	57



Source: Foreigners with Registration Certificate or Residence Card in Effect, Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration of Spain

The Spanish Law 14/2013, launched in 2013, facilitated international mobility and transnational relocation of highly skilled and wealthy immigrants from non-EU countries in Spain. Known as *Golden Visa*, this law is designated to support nonresident foreigners who wish to make a significant financial investment and economic contribution in the host country. There are six target groups of interest under this residence visa: a) Capital investors; b) Buyers of real estate; c) Entrepreneurs; d) Highly qualified professionals; e) Researchers; f) Workers subject to intra-corporate transfers. Not only are these applicants beneficial under this European residence visa, their family members, mainly spouse and children, also can apply for the same residence right and access to the Schengen Zone.

Under this capital-linked Residence Visa scheme, the Spanish government designated investment packages including: (1) Purchase real estate in Spain worth at least €500,000; (2) Make an investment in the Spanish public debt of at least €2,000,000; (3) Buy shares in a company or make a deposit in a Spanish bank of at least €1,000,000; (4) Invest in a new business that will offer employment opportunities, contribute to scientific and/or

technological innovation and have a relevant socio-economic impact in the area where the business will be undertaken. Among all these listed conditions, investment on real estate markets consists of the most welcome choice by *Golden Visa* appliers of Chinese citizens. These developments have given rise to reports and headlines in the media, such as *'Apetito chino por el ladrillo español' (Chinese Appetite for Spanish Brick)* in the El País in 2016, and *'Los chinos se lanzan a la compra de pisos de más de medio millón' (Chinese launch half over half a million into the purchase of flats)* in the La Vanguardia in 2020.

As with the Residence Visa under the Law 14/2013, non-lucrative residence visa (*visado de residencia no lucrativa*) also plays an essential role for attracting middle-class migrants from China in recent years. Despite not being allowed to work in Spain, non-lucrative residence visa holders and their family members can establish a long-term life, as long as they can prove to have an ongoing income or substantial savings to sustain their living without engaging in any economic activity in the host society. It's not mandatory for applicants to invest in Spain, but they have to ascertain that they have sufficient funds to generate an income over 400% IPREM[6] monthly for the main applicant and 100% IPREM for each dependent during the time of residence. For example, in 2021 having 400% IPREM means that main applicants should have more than 27,115.2 euros in their bank account for one-year residence, and an amount of over 6,778.8 euros is required for each additional family member. Thus, comparing with half million euro of investment requirement under the *Golden Visa* scheme, non-lucrative residence visa is far more accessible for a lot more middle-class people. Therefore, this division of two capital-link migration schemes necessarily may reflect one of the internal differences within the group of newcomers in terms of their economic capabilities (See Table 4).

[6] IPREM (Indicador Público de Renta de Efectos Múltiples), translated as Public Indicator of Multiple Effects Income, is a public indicator used in Spain to assess income levels and determine eligibility for various social and financial assistance programs.

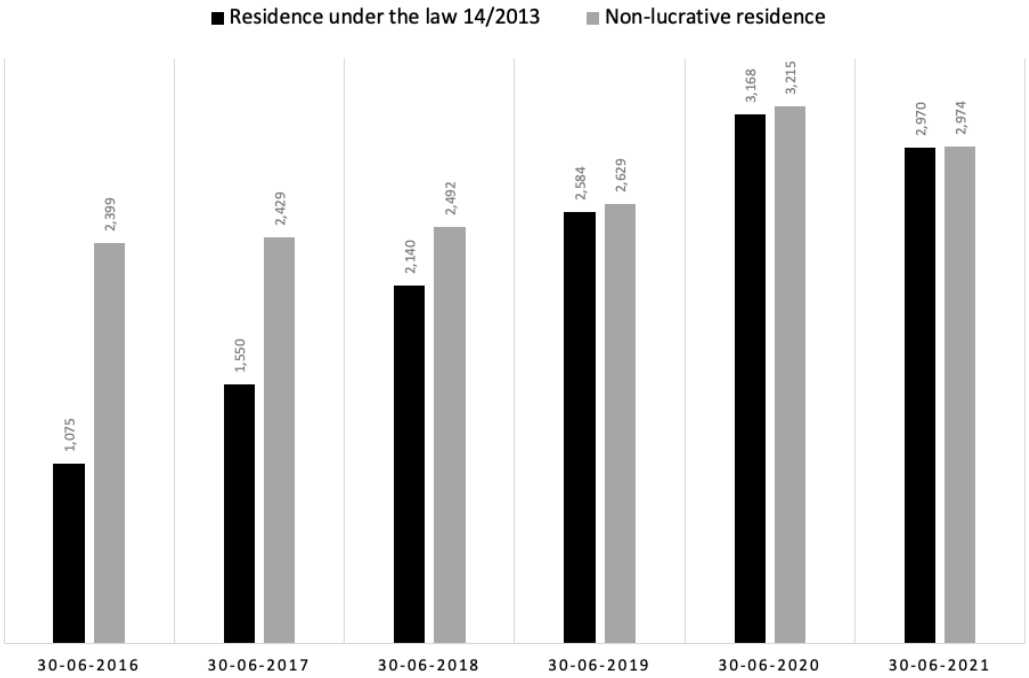
Table 4. Comparison of characteristics between non-lucrative residence and Residence under the law 14/2013

	Non-lucrative residence	Residence under the law 14/2013
Year	Modified in 2011	Launched in 2013
Qualifying investment		
Business	No	Yes
Investment fund	No	Yes
Government bonds	No	Yes
Bank deposit	Yes	Yes
Real estate	No	Yes
Contribution to public good	No	Yes
Minimum investment	400% IPREM (over 2,150 € monthly) 20,000 – 30,000 €/year	500,000 €
Duration of validity (initial residence)	1 year	2 years
Requirement of residence time	Yes	No

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Official State Gazette in 2011 and 2013 (Boletín Oficial del Estado)

According to the newest data from Central Registry of Foreigners in Spain, there are nearly 3,000 Chinese citizens who have already obtained their residence permit under the law of 14/2013 in 2021. This number went rocketing since the launch of this law despite slightly falling down in the pandemic year. From 2015 Chinese citizens have been the biggest group of investor migrants in Spain according to annual reports of Permanent Immigration Observatory (OPI). Even slightly bigger, the group of non-lucrative residence holders plays an evenly important role in attracting middle-class migrants from China especially in the last three years. According to the empirical data collected from the present study, these flows of newcomers are from socioeconomically privileged groups which include political elites, businesspeople, technical and managerial occupations, media celebrities, etc.

Figure 13 Evolution of Chinese nationals with Residence under the Law 14/2013 and Non-lucrative residence from 2016 to 2021



Source: Author's elaboration based on Central Registry of Foreigners (Registro Central de Extranjeros) by Ministry of the Interior of Spain.

The launch of migration policy *per se* cannot be a sufficient condition for a rapidly increased influx of Chinese investor migrants to Spain. A comprehensive set of migration infrastructures indeed makes this massive middle-class emigration from China to Europe into reality. Shortly after the launch of these capital-linked migration policies, some Chinese-owned migration companies and law firms both in Spain and China put into actions of the marketisation of these capital-linked migration policies in the China's market. They designated one-stop services from pre-migration preparation to post-migration assistance (See Figure 14). For example, the migration company Xinhuaernv, as one of the first officially licensed migration agencies in China, has broadened their target migration destinations from North America to Southern Europe including Spain. They successfully merchandise and standardize migration process of investment migration after the launch of the Law 14/2013.

Figure 14. Application process of investment migration to Spain designated by Xinhuaernv migration company whose headquater is located in Beijing

Step 1: [Company] Assess qualifications of applicant

Step 2: Prepare visa documents for initial visit to Spain

Step 3: Present documents to the Embassy of Spain to apply for a tourist visa

Step 4: Visit to Spain for property purchase and document signing

Step 5: Purchase properties and sign all the paper works under the requirement of the *Golden Visa*

Step 6: Wait for approximately 20 days for final resolution of *Golden Visa*

Step 7: Renew investor residence permit in the second year

Step 8: Renew investor residence permit in the fourth year

Step 9: Apply for a permanent residence card of EU in the sixth year

Step 10: Apply for Spanish citizenship after ten years of residency

Source: Web page of Xinhuaernv company, translated by the author

Anxious Middle Class on the Move

As noted earlier, there has been a growing number of Chinese immigrants arriving in Spain under capital-linked migration regimes such as *Golden Visa* and non-lucrative residence visa. Over the past five years, the composition of each category has remained relatively stable without significant changes, except for the non-lucrative residence category, which have shown a notable increase (See Figure 12). This increase is largely attributed to the growing number of middle-class Chinese emigrants in recent years. Similar immigration patterns can also be observed in Hungary, Portugal, and Greece, as noted by Gasper and Ampudia de Haro (2019) and Beck and Nyíri (2022).

After China's economic reforms in 1980s, especially the accession to World Trade Organization in 2002, decades of economic growth have given rise to burgeoning middle class amid a rapid urbanization and financial market expansion. According to Li's research (2010), people ascribed in middle class in China fall into three major clusters: 1) An economic cluster, including private sector entrepreneurs, urban small business people, foreign and domestic joint-venture employees, and stock and real estate speculators; 2) A political cluster, notably government officials, office clerks, state sector managers, and lawyers; 3) A cultural cluster or an educational cluster, like academics and educators, media personalities, public intellectuals, and think tank scholars. This group of urban middle class people increasingly embrace cosmopolitan values and actively practice cultural and economic habitus of Western countries. They are keen to nurture a middle-class consumerism and lifestyles created by economic globalization and international cultural exchange. Li suggests the consumption is the central feature of China's middle-class people saying: "They are expected to be able to afford large houses, luxurious cars, and other expensive goods. They wear mane-brand suits, work in modern office buildings, go abroad for holidays, invest in the stock market, and send their children to study abroad (Li 2010)." Newly arrivals from China to Spain in recent years are mainly composed of these socioeconomic features as well.

At the same time, however, a constantly increasing degree of uncertainty, anxiety, pressures, and grievances are inherent in this rapidly forming middle-class spectrum in contemporary China. Their fast-ascending social mobility is not only attributed to their

educational and occupational attainment but also to the rise of the stock and real estate markets. Living with uncertainty about China's economic and political climate in the future, they must constantly worry about whether the economy is strong enough to sustain their middle-class lifestyle and whether the political climate is stable enough to pass their middle-class entitlement and privilege to the next generation (Kharas and Gertz 2010; Tu 2021).

Under this nexus of material prosperity and internal insecurity, an increasing number of members of the middle class are turning to international migration as a way out. Since 2013, a growing number of urban middle-class members have left China through international education, *Golden Visa* policy and other capital-linked migration programmes to European countries such as Portugal, Hungary, Malta, Greece, and Spain (Gaspar and Ampudia de Haro 2019; Beck and Nyíri 2022).

Migration trajectory of Xionghan is a case in point. He and his family relocated to Barcelona in 2017. I first met him at the municipal gym. When he saw me speaking Spanish with gym staff, he came up to me and asked for tips on how to learn the language. Unlike some Chinese newcomers who haven't yet decided to stay in Spain permanently, Xionghan was convinced that he wanted to live in Barcelona for the rest of his life. He believed that it was important to learn Spanish well so that he could better integrate with the local people and have a better sense of well-being in the host society.

Xionghan, who is in his early 50s, had a construction company in his hometown. He might be a living example of the "Chinese Dream" who has reaped the benefits of rapid urbanization in this sector since the first decade of the 2000s. However, in 2015, he experienced one of the biggest stock market turbulences in China, which caused a loss of nearly one million RMB (approximately 130,000 euros). He began to feel unsafe and uncertain about the economic and financial climate in China.

> *I think Jinglian Wu (a Chinese economist) is absolutely right about Chinese stock market. [He said that] investing in Chinese stock market is like gambling without any market regulations. The banker (the state) in this gambling game always knows what card you have in hand… There is no way out for us if we don't have any political resources or capital.* (Xionghan, middle-class migrant, male, 51 years old)

This uncertainty and ambivalent attitude is also shared by Jia. She is a businesswoman who has her own restaurant chain and several beauty salons in China. After discovering her son's football talent, she decided to fully dedicate on his development and chose to relocate in Barcelona to train his football techniques. She still worries about losing their middle-class privilege and entitlement when the next generation comes to age. She explained:

> *If he (the son) cannot be a football professional in the future, can he have the same social status as us (the parents) or maintain the same quality of life like us? You know, we (the parents) were so lucky, because we lived a good time. It wasn't hard for us to earn money and easily become quite well off only in about ten year. But nowadays it's not like that anymore… well, I have already offered everything I can to him. I hope he will have a life which is as good as ours.* (Jia, middle-class migrant, female, 36 years old)

Xuan, a businesswoman from China, came to Barcelona with her 12-year-old son under the residence visa scheme. When asked about why she decided to migrate, her account showed a conventional concern about her social class entitlement worsening in the future.

> *We do not work in the state's departments like gong jian fa (abbreviation of public security organizations, procuratorial organizations and People's courts). For businesspeople like us, we are always living under great risks and pressures... Migration for me is not only a way of investment, but also a strategy of asset allocation. I feel that I have already reached a life stage in which I could not guarantee ongoing improvement [of life]. So at least I should find a new way to set a stop-loss limit for my life to sustain the same quality of life as what I have now… I cannot bear a worse future.* (Xuan, middle-class migrant, female, 39 years old)

The above accounts clearly highlight some shared concerns, anxiety and uncertainties among Chinese middle-class people, which prompted them to step ahead for an alternative life abroad. In the next chapter we will talk about why they choose Spain.

Privileged migration of 'unprivileged' people

Global mobility largely depends on an individual's access to economic assets (Hayes 2018). In China, people who are able to migrate through investment programmes are typically considered to be wealthy middle or even upper class. However, it is a misconception to assume that they are all uniformly super-rich, as in the American film 'Crazy Rich Asians'. As Koh and her colleagues (2016) note, individual foreign investor cohorts in global property markets can be categorised into four groups based on their disposable wealth: the new middle class (NMC), high-net-worth individuals (HNWI), ultra-high-net-worth individuals (UHNWI) and ultra-ultra-high-net-worth individuals (UUHNWI). According to the investment requirements of the Spanish *Golden Visa* schemes, the country is mainly attractive to the New Middle Class (NMC), which refers to people with disposable assets of US$1 million. Even among Chinese investor-migrants, not all of them are wealthy enough to easily undertake this migration project. In Changhua's case, for example, some Chinese families have to scrape together everything they have to apply for this visa, leaving them with few assets to make further investments in the host country.

Changhua's journey to Spain as a *Golden Visa* holder was quite different. She is a university professor in eastern southern China. To save her 6-year-old son from China's ultra-competitive education system, she scraped together the money by selling all her properties and migrated to Barcelona in 2018. Instead of making several trips to Spain like Xionghan, she paid ¥50,000 (about €6,500) to a Chinese agency that provided a variety of services, including procedural advice, house recommendations and arranged house tours in several cities. Convinced by the agent, she bought a two-storey apartment in Les Roquetes in Barcelona, which turned out to be one of her most regrettable investments in Spain. Not only was she duped by the agency into paying a much higher price than the original market price, but she also found the apartment in, in her own words, "*a dirty and*

overcrowded area within a Roma community". She enrolled her son in a public school in her community, rather than choosing an international private school as other wealthy Chinese parents do. Despite the fear and loneliness, when she saw her son quickly mastering the new languages and enjoying the new school, she felt that moving to Spain was a wise decision.

It might seem like common sense that only those with limited disposable assets would choose to relocate to Spain. As Changhua points out, however, not all Chinese investor migrants are super-rich and able to move wherever they please. In fact, for some families, the decision to migrate to Spain under the *Golden Visa* scheme requires selling their homes and cars just to be able to afford the minimum requirement of investment. Changhua explains:

> *We are not like those real rich people who can move to wherever they want. I have tried my best to take my son out of China by having to sell my house and car. If I want to go back to China now, I have nowhere to live… Now my only income is my salary [approx.1,000 euros per month] in the university [in China] which can barely make ends meet.* (Changhua, middle-class migrant, female, 45 years old)

Chinese nationals in Spain obtained non-lucrative residence visas based on an investment of at least €25,000 deposited in a Spanish bank account. Given the relatively lower economic conditions required compared to the *Golden Visa*, there is now an increasing number of Chinese citizens who have relocated to Spain with their spouse and children under the non-lucrative residence visa scheme, with many others still waiting in line.

Tong is one of the holders of the non-lucrative residence visa in Spain. She moved to Barcelona in 2019 with her 14-year-old son, hoping to cultivate his football career as a professional. She rents two bedrooms in an apartment for 400 euros and lives under the same roof as another Chinese family of four who run a local bazaar in their neighborhood. Despite sacrificing her own quality of life and well-being, Tong is willing to do anything to prioritize her son's future over her marriage.

We came here not to enjoy the life, but to chi ku (eat bitterness)…… I have another son, and my husband takes care of him in China. We are not like those rich investor migrants. We have the elderly and the youngster to take care of back in China. (Tong, middle-class migrant, female, 42 years old)

4.4.1.2. Why Spain?

A "cheap" European lifestyle for sale

There are a number of terms used to describe the international movement and relocation of middle-class people in a global context. Like its European counterparts with *Golden Visa* policy, such as Portugal and Hungary, Spain has attracted a rapidly growing flow of Chinese migrants by offering the right of lawful residence in the EU and free mobility in the Schengen Zone. Technically, the concept of '*lifestyle migration*' may partially explain some characteristics of the middle-class migration of Chinese nationals. This notion is elaborated by Benson and O'Reily (2009), which refers to the part-time or full-time settlement of affluent individuals in a foreign country in search of a better way of life. Narratives like 'pursuit of slow pace of life, community spirits, and climate and health benefits' are central to the motives of lifestyle migrants for their international movement.

For many Chinese middle-class newcomers, living in Spain represents an ideal concept of a "good life". On one hand, they highly value the good weather in the Mediterranean region, EU-standard food safety and quality, and clean air. On the other hand, their life in Spain is seen as a departure from the stressful and fast-paced life they have lived previously, and to some extent, it brings about feelings of being relaxed, free, satisfied, and respected.

There aren't many things to preoccupy or worry about [when living in Spain]. Everyone has their own life on weekends. You can hang out with your friends if you want. No one would disturb you. [On weekends] here you don't have to deal with work given by your boss or troubles made by police. (Xionghan, middle-class migrant, male, 51 years old)

When I live here, I feel like being released finally, an inexplicable sense of relaxation... I feel much better than before, because I really feel relaxed in an unexplainable way. As if there are not as many eyes staring at you as before. That is, you don't have to do what you have to do. [Before] as if there was some hidden call haunting you." (Changhua, middle-class migrant, female, 45 years old)

Everyone's life pace is very slow [in Spain]. I think this is very good. They don't worry too much or expect too much for the future… [Now] I don't hold that kind of fanatical fantasy about the future. I feel good… Back in China I always have to be in a state of fighting on a battlefield. (Jia, middle-class migrant, female, 36 years old)

People in European and American countries, whether they pretend [to be well-educated] or not, they treat you well and make you feel comfortable, at least in face (on the surface) … I think this place (Spain) makes you to stay without pressure in life. After all, we are willing to find a place [to live] where there is no pressure. (Xuan, middle-class migrant, female, 39 years old)

Lifestyle migrants are capable of relocating in lower-income countries because "*they inherited positions at higher latitudes of the global division of labor*" (Hayes, 2018). One of the best examples constitutes the relocation British citizens at costal regions in Spain to search for a better quality of life with relatively lower cost of living (Benson and O'Reily 2009). In fact, many interviewees regarded Spain as their secondary option for migration after the US, UK and other anglo countries. The reason why they choose to relocate in this Mediterranean country is a relatively lower price than migration to English-speaking countries. Xuan is in this point.

Actually, I wanted to immigrate to the U.S., but my visa got rejected. I originally didn't think about coming to Spain. But after I came to Europe, I found the life expense was so low. (Xuan, middle-class migrant, female, 39 years old)

Xionghan planned to enroll his 13-year-old son in a famous international school at Shanghai. At that time, he was informed by a friend who told him about Spain's *Golden Visa* program. After calculating the high tuition fee and life expenses in Shanghai, he was convinced that migrating to Spain should be a more cost-effective choice under the *Golden Visa* program.

> *I was looking for an international school in Shanghai at the end of 2014 to enroll my son. However I was informed by a friend about this policy (Golden Visa Program in Spain). In fact, I had to spend a lot of money in Shanghai (for the education of the son). So I thought I should come to [to Spain] to see… If it were not for this policy, I wouldn't have considered emigrating. For example, migration to the United States and Australia, I would not really want to do it, because it would be too expensive.* (Xionghan, middle-class migrant, male, 51 years old)

In addition, mobility freedom is deemed as a relevant component of intrinsic dimension which has been overlooked in functionalist migration literature, because mobility freedom not only allows people to fulfill their innate desire for adventure and discovery through migration, but more importantly also entails the awareness of *having to the option* of staying or leaving. In 90s Aihwa Ong (1999) developed the concept of '*flexible citizenship*' which particularly refers to '*the strategies and effects of mobile managers, technocrats, and professionals seeking to both circumvent and benefit from different nations-state regimes by selecting different sites for investment, work, and family relocation*'. As 'flexible citizens', they establish residential locations in different regions in the world with their family members in order to pursue political and economic benefits beyond national borders. *Golden Visa* policy in Spain enables the residence holders to include their family members to enjoy the same residence permit in Spain and freedom of movement in the Schengen Zone. In this regard, a purchase of property is not only an investment requirement, but a rigid demand for family migration project. Thus, many Chinese parents choose to migrate to Spain for family prospects, such as transnational business for adults and education for children.

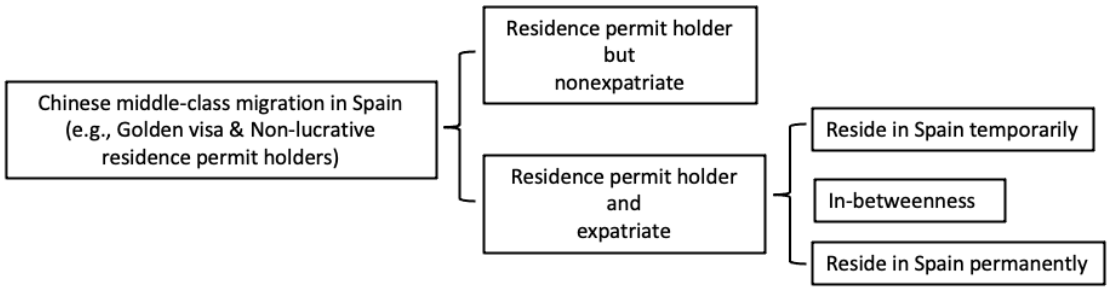
Emplacement in a transnational context allows Chinese affluent individuals to expand their households in a global landscape where ease of movement and living prospects can

be greatly improved by their second homeownership. Panpan, who runs an agricultural product company in China, has a long-term cooperation with a Spanish distributor in Barcelona. The launch of the *Golden Visa* policy facilitates transnational mobility and allows her to expand her entrepreneurial activities. She considers "no residency obligation" as one of the biggest benefits of the investor residence permit in Spain, which guarantees her mobility between China and Europe to the greatest extent.

> *We think it (investment requirement on real estate) is still quite easy. The most permissive point for us is that there is no residency obligation, because we did not plan to come at that time, but just obtained it (the residence permit). This means you don't need to stay here, that's it. It's not like that kind of non-lucrative residence which forces you to stay here for a year and a half. So it's okay if we don't come [to Spain]… Our idea was that if the child wanted to come, then we would live here; if not, we would put the house here for rent*. (Panpan, middle-class migrant, female, 41 years old)

The experience of Panpan serves as a prime example of the high degree of flexibility in the settlement and residency choices of affluent Chinese individuals who frequently traverse between China and Spain (See Figure 15).

Figure 15. Migration patterns of Chinese middle-class migration in Spain



Source: Author's own elaboration based on interviews

This phenomenon is not limited to Panpan alone, as other middle-class Chinese families also exhibit similar mobility patterns. Furthermore, the importance of children in shaping the emigration choices of Chinese middle-class families is highlighted in Panpan's account. This factor will be further elaborated in the subsequent chapter, shedding light on the migration decision-making process and trajectory of Chinese families.

"*New education gospel*" for stressed parents

The centrality of children in migration decision-making is a common discourse among the participants of this study, with education being a major motivation for many newly arrived Chinese middle-class migrants. The ultra-competitive educational system in China creates widespread pressure and anxiety among parents (Ma, 2020). This has led to the adoption of the American-style parenting culture of "concerted cultivation" (Lareau, 2011), whereby parents orchestrate their children's activities to excel in school. The term 鸡娃 (*jiwa*), meaning "chicken kids," is a metaphor widely used to describe this phenomenon. The term, derived from a popular pseudo-medical therapy during the Cultural Revolution, refers to the injection of chicken blood into humans to boost their energy. It has been widely used in public discourse to problematize the excessive amount of after-school curriculum-based tutoring and extracurricular activities, such as sports, music, culture, and other interests, that Chinese parents pay high tuition fees for. Parents also actively involve themselves in their children's schoolwork and spend a significant amount of time helping them with their homework.

Jia, a former businesswoman, put her career on hold after giving birth to her son and dedicated herself fully to childbearing. Prior to migrating to Spain, Jia spent seven years as a stay-at-home mom. She shared a typical weekday schedule for her son in China:

6:00 Get up and eat prepared for school

7:20 - 16:30 Study at school

17:30 - 19:30 Football training

20:00 - 20:30 Have dinner

20:30 - 23:00/0:00 Do homework

Weekends followed a similar schedule, with school time replaced by football matches, individual training sessions, and violin classes. Jia and her son often had to eat on the go between classes. Her son slept only six to seven hours per day from his first year of primary school, leaving both Jia and her son exhausted and overwhelmed with intensive parenting duties. Jia described this period of time as a "*state of fighting in a battlefield*," in which both parents and child were under pressure to compete and struggle. After experiencing an alternative parenting and educational style in Spain, Jia decided to stay.

Everyone's life pace is very slow [in Spain]. I think this is very good. They don't worry too much or expect too much for the future. There is no pulling shoots upward to make them grow (ba miao zhu zhang). There is no rush in children's education… [Now] I don't hold that kind of fanatical fantasy about the future. I feel good… Back in China I always have to be in a state of fighting on a battlefield. (Jia, middle-class migrant, female, 36 years old)

In addition, the 学区房 (*xuequfang*), or school district house policy, in China contributes to the imbalanced distribution of quality educational resources. This policy, which links school enrollment to a student's household registration location, has resulted in a situation where the availability of educational resources is restricted and unequally distributed. This has led to significant anxiety and economic pressure for many parents in China, particularly those from the urban middle-class. The policy reserves the quota of public key-point schools[7] exclusively for the students residing nearby, with only a limited number of such schools available. Consequently, parents who can afford a home near a better school can secure a quota for their children, while those who cannot afford it are left at a disadvantage. This has resulted in a skyrocketing increase in the price of housing around public key-point schools, making it increasingly challenging for middle-class parents to afford.

Changhua, a mother of a 6-year-old boy, made the difficult decision to sell all her property in China to finance her migration project to Spain. She was motivated to emigrate due to the ultra-competitive and stressful education system in China, which prompted her to seek a better life for her child and a less stressful environment for herself. One year before her child was set to start elementary school, Changhua observed the tremendous pressure and anxiety faced by her child's classmates' parents, and this pushed her to migrate. She witnessed many parents sacrificing their homes and downsizing to tiny apartments in

[7] Public key-point schools in China are government-funded institutions designed to provide high-quality education with a focus on specific key areas like science, technology, and the arts. They typically offer a more challenging and advanced curriculum compared to regular schools. Students are often exposed to higher-level coursework and enrichment programs. Admission to key-point schools is usually highly competitive, with students required to pass rigorous entrance exams or meet specific criteria related to their chosen specialization.

school districts, often with grandparents in tow to help care for the children. Changhua also recounted instances of couples resorting to fake divorces to purchase a school district home. The extreme measures taken by parents in pursuit of education illustrate the intense pressures of the education system in China.

> *One year before he should start elementary school [in China], I perceived such great pressure and anxiety from his classmates' parents that that I finally made up my mind to migrate. I've seen too many stressed parents with a sad face and sometimes I even felt the same pressure and anxiety… Some parents sold their chalet in order to buy a small and shabby school district house. This house remains as old as an 80's brick and steel concrete architecture. The three had to squeeze into this 40-square-meter apartment. Sometimes the grandparents came to live with them and took care of the child when the parents were busy at work… Some other couples also faked divorce in order to buy a school district house… Education can make people end up like this.* (Changhua, middle-class migrant, female, 45 years old)

As Ma notes, the culture of sending child to study abroad has become the *new education gospel*, an alternative of studying in a conventional test-oriented education system and participating the Chinese college entrance examination (2020). The *education gospel* refers to "*a system of belief, sometimes not entirely rational, that education is liberating and worth investing in and even sacrificing for, because it leads to a bright future*" (Ma, 2020: 27). This '*new education gospel*' mentality is shared among many Chinese middle-class parents. Many new Chinese migrants in Spain were triggered by an ultra-competitive education system to make up their mind to leave the country and relocate in a more humanist and child-friendly pedogeological environment. An account of Yisha, a migrant professional who has successfully traded more than 200 *Golden Visa* cases from China, illustrates this finding. She states:

> *Actually, one of the most important reasons (for emigration) is the hardship of education system in China. To put it frankly, children struggle at school while parents suffer the*

same. Those who want to give a happy childhood to their child will choose to bring them out. (Yisha, middle-class migrant, female, 33 years old)

The Westerner, The Better

Tu (2021) conducted an empirical study in major metropolitan cities in China to explore why upper-middle-class families are increasingly sending their children to American private secondary schools. Her findings suggest that there are three interconnected factors driving Chinese parents to seek educational alternatives abroad: *macro-level disagreement with the political narrative of the CCP (Chinese Communist Party), meso-level desire for a "well-rounded" education, and micro-level criticisms of test-oriented pedagogical practices in Chinese schools.* Similar to other affluent parents, concerns about their children's future education and development motivate them to relocate to more "developed" regions, notably Western countries, in the hopes of securing their middle-class entitlements and privileges across generations.

Prior to relocating to Barcelona, Xionghan made several trips from China to various Spanish cities with the hope of finding the most appropriate city to live in and the best school for his son. In the end, they bought an apartment in Dreta de l'Eixample in Barcelona, which had four bedrooms, two bathrooms, and a large balcony. Xionghan's son studied at one of the most prestigious international schools in Zona Alta, the city's most exclusive area.

Like Xionghan, Panpan is the mother of a 13-year-old boy. She wanted to buy property in Sarrià because she was told that "*most of the best international schools are in the area of Sarrià.*"

My goal is very clear. I only consider international schools, mostly in English, and Spanish should not be neglected either… M School (pseudonym of school) is relatively well-rounded and comprehensive, not too international, because it also teaches some local materials. (Panpan, middle-class migrant, female, 41 years old)

Having a Spanish long-term residence permit is a strategic step towards greater mobility for children's education. Some interviewees reported that Spain serves as a transitional stage for their children as they plan to onward-migrate to the United Kingdom, the United States, or other Anglophone countries. For many Chinese parents, English-language education and socialization are perceived as more attractive for investing in their children's future. For instance, Xionghan continued his migratory adventure by sending his son to a private boarding school in London two years later, reasoning like "*although we cannot claim that education in the UK is the best, it is certainly better than that in Spain.*" In 2019, his son, a 17-year-old young man, started his journey to London alone, and the following year, he received offers from two of the top 5 universities in the UK. Another example is Panpan, who is also applying for a British boarding school for her son and hopes to send him there during the summer to see if he can adapt well. If he does, he will start attending a high school in London after the summer.

The pursuit of international education among Chinese middle-class immigrant families is often driven by a construct of global elite identity, with English-speaking countries being deemed culturally attractive and academically competitive. In this context, obtaining an EU resident identity is seen as a strategic means of enabling transnational mobility and accessing Western educational resources beyond the limitations of the nation-state. By residing in Spain, these families are able to tap into educational resources of other European and American countries, which offer greater access to information, educational infrastructure, transnational mobility, multiculturalism, and cosmopolitanism.

4.4.2. Student migration

The rise of the urban middle class in China in recent decades has led to studying abroad becoming an integral component of their consumption patterns. Although existing studies have primarily focused on traditional destination countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia (Fong, 2004; Ma, 2020; Tu, 2021), there has been a lack of academic attention paid to the growing number of emerging educational destination countries. Spain, as one of the most popular emerging destinations for Chinese students,

merits greater consideration to gain a comprehensive understanding of transnational educational migration from China.

Since the early 2000s, the number of Chinese residents with student visas in Spain has grown significantly, increasing from 167 in 1998 to 11,171 in 2020 (see Table 6). This population comprises the largest non-EU student group in Spain, accounting for 16% of the total. While Spain may not have as many Chinese students as major destination countries such as the U.S., the U.K., and Australia, the rapidly increasing number of Chinese students heading to Spain cannot be overlooked. Therefore, this chapter aims to examine the recent flows of Chinese students in Spain and present a comprehensive profile of this group of young expatriates. To achieve this, it is crucial to investigate who chooses Spain as a destination for education and why. Additionally, it is essential to explore what these students aspire to do after studying in Spain. To answer these questions, we must consider broader social changes in China. As such, the first question to ask is: why do Chinese students choose to study abroad?

The impetus for studying abroad has come from different sources. Study-abroad fever boomed in the 1990s after restrictions on self-financed overseas education were loosened by the Chinese Government in 1981 (Xiang and Shen, 2009). Subsequently, a deepening of the commodification of international education in China has been observed, substantially fostered by three main agencies: the state, the market (educational brokers), and Chinese families.

In 1991, the Plan for Revitalizing Education in the 21st Century, implemented by the state, substantially expanded higher education access in China. This trend resulted in an inflation of university degrees, such that a university degree alone is insufficient to guarantee students a career prospect in the job market. Consequently, an increasing number of graduate students are pursuing upward mobility in the academic ladder, either in top-tier universities in China or in overseas universities.

Yet, in tandem with the constant growth of college enrollment since the 1990s, from 1 million in 1998 to 6.4 million in 2009, higher education has become subsequently more stratified in terms of an unequal distribution of educational resources between different tiers of universities. Hence, it is super-competitive to gain admission to an elite university in China in order to receive a quality education through the college entrance examination

(Gaokao hereafter), which is a test-oriented means of selection that is unidimensional and decisive. The exam largely determines, for one and only time, what tier of universities students can gain admission to and what kind of educational resources they can receive. In this regard, overseas education is considered not only as a second chance for those who score low in Gaokao to have a quality higher education (Lan, 2018) but also as an alternative educational opportunity for Chinese families who intend to liberate their children from an oppressive test-oriented education system (Ma, 2020).

Nevertheless, the lack of knowledge about admission processes and requirements for overseas colleges has led thousands of Chinese families to rely on third-party agents, also known as educational brokerage agents. These agents provide a variety of services to meet the demands of parents and students, including selecting target colleges and majors, drafting personal statements, communicating with schools on behalf of the students, and even providing post-migration services such as airport pick-up, accommodations, and assistance with registration at the host university. As Lan (2018) suggested, these commercialized practices of commodifying overseas education to a great extent stimulate parents' and students' desire to study abroad by downplaying the difficulties they may face in the host country. To sum up, the rise of consumerism in the field of overseas education is seen as a consequence of the expansion of the educational brokerage system across different tiers of cities and the state's deliberate efforts to encourage self-funded study abroad to address the problem of unequal distribution of educational resources (Lan, 2018, 2020).

4.4.2.1. Who came?

In the past two decades, there has been a significant increase in the number of Chinese students pursuing higher education in Spain, from 167 individuals in 1998 to 11,171 in 2020 (refer to Table 6). Since 2013, Chinese students have constituted the largest foreign student group in Spanish higher education, surpassing the number of students from Colombia and the U.S.

One of the primary drivers behind the influx of Chinese students to Spain is the growing number of Spanish language departments in higher education in China. Currently, over one hundred universities and colleges have established their Department of Hispanic

Philology in 2021 in China, as opposed to only fifteen universities with Spanish majors two decades ago. This growth is attributed to the increasing market demand for Spanish professionals with intercultural backgrounds in China, as the country seeks to establish more commercial and diplomatic relations with Latin America. This demand, driven by the state, serves as a significant reason why young people are applying for Spanish majors and studying in Spain. As a result, it is not uncommon to find that Spanish-major undergraduates constitute a significant proportion of the interviewees in this study.

Over the past two decades, the number of Chinese female students studying in Spain on student visas has surpassed that of their male counterparts (See Table 6). In 2020, female students made up nearly 60% of the overall Chinese student population. This phenomenon is particularly prominent in Spanish higher education, where the number of female foreign students is consistently higher than that of males.

Table 5. Evolution of population stock of Chinese citizens with student visa by gender in Spain, 1998-2020

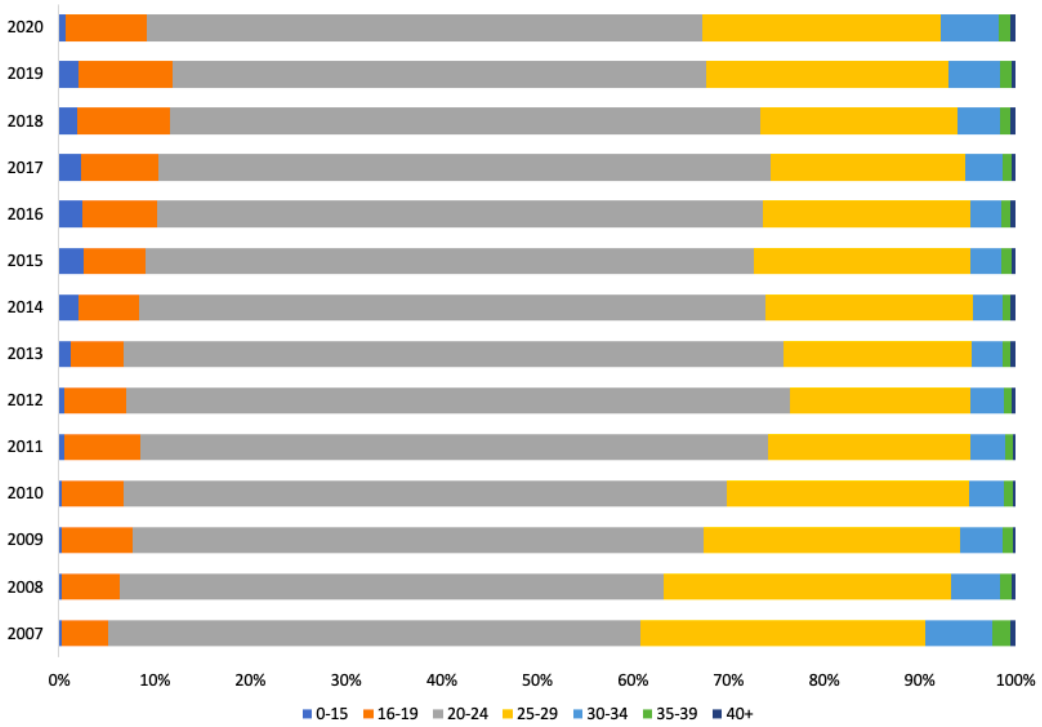
	Total	Male	Female
1998	167	65	102
1999	212	76	136
2000	244	88	156
2001	253	94	159
2002	395	166	229
2003	647	293	354
2004	938	343	416
2005	724	304	420
2006	908	370	538
2007	1,625	686	939
2008	2,500	1,091	1,409
2009	3,485	1,425	2,060
2010	4,018	1,539	2,479
2011	4,176	1,498	2,678
2012	3,985	1,354	2,631
2013	5,713	1,943	3,770
2014	6,254	2,199	4,055
2015	6,444	2,170	4,274
2016	8,152	2,852	5,300
2017	8,604	2,961	5,643
2018	8,445	2,987	5,458
2019	8,068	2,843	5,225
2020	11,171	4,253	6,918

Source: Author's own calculation based on annual reports of Ministry of Education

The preponderance of female Chinese students in Spain may be viewed as a complex phenomenon influenced by a couple of factors. One plausible explanation pertains to the existence of gender discrimination in the Chinese labor market, where women face barriers in accessing opportunities and are subject to lower pay (Xiang and Shen, 2019). To offset these disadvantages, female graduates may opt to extend their education and enhance their academic qualifications, leading to a higher proportion of female students pursuing overseas studies. On the other hand, in China, Spanish major undergraduates are primarily female, constituting a significant source of foreign student flows to Spain. Thus, the overrepresentation of female Chinese students in Spain may also reflect the gendered nature of Spanish language education in China, where women predominate in this area of study. Ultimately, these multiple factors may contribute to the observed gender imbalance in the Chinese student population in Spain.

The majority of Chinese students in Spain fall within the 20 to 24 age group (See Figure 16), mainly consisting of undergraduate students from China who seek to obtain a postgraduate degree in Spain. Pursuing a postgraduate program in Spain has become an attractive option for many Chinese students due to various factors. Firstly, a master's degree in Spain typically takes less than two years, whereas in China a postgraduate program generally lasts for three years and requires entrance exams due to limited quotas. Secondly, students with a three-year-college diploma (zhuan ke) are also eligible to apply for postgraduate programs and obtain a master's degree in Spain, which is not possible in China. For young individuals seeking to enhance their educational credentials, applying for a master's program in Spain presents an appealing opportunity. The second largest age group of Chinese students in Spain is between 25 to 29 years old, primarily consisting of master and doctorate students. With the passage of time, there is a growing number of Chinese students under 20 years old who come to Spain as freshmen in Spanish universities or as companions of family migration. Further details on this topic will be discussed later in this study.

Figure 16. Evolution of age groups of Chinese students in Spain from 2007 to 2020



Source: Author's own elaboration based on reports of Ministry of Education

4.4.2.2. Why Spain?

Many Chinese youth students interviewed explicitly stated that Spain was not their first choice as a destination for higher education. Findlay et al. (2012) note the existence of a global hierarchy of universities, wherein Chinese citizens and their parents predominantly aspire to attend elite universities in Anglophone countries, provided that their resources allow for it (Fong, 2004, 2011). The narratives of the interlocutors in the study highlight four reasons for choosing to study in Spain.

Firstly, the relative affordability of studying in Spain is one of the main reasons. In comparison to major English-speaking countries such as the U.S., UK, and Canada, higher education in Spain, particularly its public universities, is relatively more cost-effective for many salaried families in China.

My mom is a schoolteacher, and my dad just works in office getting a fixed salary. [Their income is] Very stable, very very stable, unlike that of businesspeople or ultra-

rich families who can send their children to UK or the U.S. My English is pretty good, and I've always wanted to be an English teacher. I would choose an English-speaking country [as a destination of higher education]. But it's too expensive. (Yanke, female, 18 years old)

I have considered economic reason. The tuition fee here [Spain] is relatively lower than in UK, U.S and Australia. I worked in China, and I had some savings, so I just came here with all I had. (Anqun, male, 33 years old)

Another reason why Chinese students opt to study in Spain is due to the relatively lenient threshold for university admission, which is perceived to be less stringent compared to other English-speaking countries that require higher scores in their respective entrance exams. The structural differences between the educational systems of Spain and China allow undergraduate students who may have scored lower on the Gaokao (the national college entrance examination in China) to receive quality higher education in Spain. For instance, Luna, who unfortunately failed in her Gaokao exams due to a high fever during the three-day exam period, was sent to Spain by her family.

I got a bad fever in Gaokao, so I didn't get good grades. I couldn't go to my dream university at last. I was thinking repeating a year. My mom was informed by her colleague that their children had been sent to Spain to go to university. So she asked about my opinion wondering if I would like to go to Spain too. Then I came. Only three months later after the Gaokao." (Yanke, female, 18 years old)

Although Spain is not the first choice for many student respondents, the Spanish language somewhat compensates for the disadvantage of its relatively low ranking in the global hierarchy of international higher education compared to other English-speaking countries. Spanish is the world's fourth most spoken language with nearly 500 million native speakers, mainly in Spain and Latin America. With the expansion of China's international trade in the EU and American continents, there is growing demand and popularity for learning Spanish in China. The number of universities offering a Spanish

language major has risen from 15 to 82 in the last two decades. For Chinese students who major in Spanish, Spain has become their top destination for overseas education. In other words, graduates of Spanish language majors constitute one of the main sources of Chinese student migration to Spain.

Additionally, many non-Spanish graduates also show increasing interest in studying in this European country because mastering this new language can be a bonus of overseas education that may enhance their competitiveness in the job market after returning to China. Especially for those who graduate from low-tier universities in China, studying at an elite university in Spain can compensate for the resume discrimination they may face in the job market. According to some interviewees, their utilitarian attitude towards Spanish played a significant role in their decision to choose Spain as their destination country.

> *"Spanish is a Xiaoyuzhong (minority language). Given the One Belt One Road initiative[8], I decided to study Spanish. So I definitely should come to Spain."* (Xuechan, female, 22 years old)

> *"When we chose which country [to go], I certainly wanted to go to UK, but it's too expensive. So I chose a Spanish-speaking country in order to learn a new language. Then I came to Spain."* (Jianwen, male, 29 years old)

However, when it comes to the next steps for some Chinese graduates in Spain, it is essential to acknowledge a significant development that should not be overlooked, namely, the substantial increase in the number of job-seeking visa holders. The job-seeking visa program was initiated in 2018 and targets non-European Union nationals who have completed their higher education in Spain and intend to secure a qualified job or establish a business in the country. This rise in job-seeking visa holders aligns with the growing trend of Chinese students pursuing higher education in Spain in recent years.

[8] "One Belt, One Road" (OBOR), also known as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), is a global development strategy initiated by China. Launched in 2013, it aims to enhance connectivity and cooperation between countries through a network of infrastructure projects, trade routes, and economic partnerships. By fostering trade, investment, and cultural exchanges, OBOR seeks to promote economic development, trade integration, and people-to-people connections across Asia, Europe, Africa, and beyond.

5. Spatial patterns and location strategies of Chinese immigrants in Barcelona

The spatial distribution of ethnic populations is a geographically selective process influenced by pre-existing place characteristics, shaping the migration and settlement dynamics (Zhou 1992). In recent decades, Chinese migration to Spain has exhibited increasing diversification concerning socioeconomic features, origins, and migratory trajectories. This trend has been especially pronounced following the implementation of economically selective migration policies by the Spanish government in 2013.

Understanding the spatial dimension is crucial for comprehending migratory dynamics, particularly considering Spain's role as a destination for the Chinese diaspora, with a distinct preference for major urban centers like Madrid and Barcelona. A previous study about Chinese ethnic enclave in Madrid indicates (Tébar Arjona, 2012) that patterns of spatial distribution reveal a propensity towards concentration, a common feature among cultural communities engaged in entrepreneurial activities. This prompts inquiries into the persistence of these concentration nuclei over time, the potential formation of ethnic enclaves, and whether the diversification of Chinese immigration contributes to a dispersion in the geographical distribution of this population.

This chapter aims to specifically scrutinize the residential features and patterns of the Chinese population in Spain. It involves measuring their spatial concentration and segregation, and analyzing the residential strategies of each migrant group, as developed in the previous chapter. Notably, the Barcelona Metropolitan Region (BMR) will serve as a case study. According to data from the Municipal Register (Padrón Continuo 2021), Barcelona province ranks as the second-largest province of Chinese nationals in Spain, with 54,800 residents, and nearly 96% of them reside in the BMR. Furthermore, after the implementation of Law 14/2013, BMR has emerged as the primary destination for Chinese newcomers under this visa scheme (OPI 2022). In essence, BMR provides an ideal field for gaining a comprehensive understanding of the internal diversification within the Chinese diaspora in Spain.

5.1. Spatial concentration and segregation

As mentioned earlier, there are currently 52,602 registered Chinese nationals in the BMR accounting for 96% of the Chinese population and making it the third largest foreign nationality in the area (Padrón Continuo 2021). Among all the municipalities in BMR, Barcelona (21,295), Santa Coloma de Gramanet (5,094), and Badalona (4,476) have the highest number of Chinese residents, making up nearly 60% of the Chinese population in the overall BMR. They are followed by L'Hospitalet de Llobregat (3,378), Mataró (2,437), Sabadell (1,634), and Terrasa (1,154).

To gain a better understanding of the spatial concentration of the Chinese population in BMR and to determine whether an ethnic enclave has emerged, the index of Location Quotient (LQ) is used (Brown and Chung 2006). LQ is a statistical calculation used to determine the degree of concentration and measures the relative proportion of a particular ethnic group in a local areal unit by comparing the percentage of this group in a given unit with the ratio of the same ethnic group in the whole metropolitan region. When the ratios are equal, the reference value of LQ = 1 is obtained, indicating that the percentage of this ethnic group in a local areal unit matches the relative proportion of this ethnic group in the overall municipality. An LQ value of less than 1 indicates that the presence of this ethnic group in the given local areal unit is underrepresented, whereas an LQ value greater than 1 indicates that this ethnic group has a relatively high level of representation in the local unit. In this study, the calculation of LQ is based on the continuous municipal register (Padrón Continuo) in Spain, which contains municipal register data from all 164 municipalities in the Barcelona Metropolitan Region.

As LQ is asymmetrically distributed ranging from 0 to ∞, the thresholds usually correspond with one standard deviation below or above LQ=1 (Brown and Chung 2006). However, in the case of Chinese population in Barcelona Metropolitan Region, two standard deviations below and above LQ=1 are applied in calculation. Over half of the population live in a very limited number of municipalities amongst the total 164 municipalities. Thus, in this study the results of LQ were divided into four groups: high level of representation (LQ>2), medium-high level of representation (1<LQ<2), medium-low level of representation (0.25<LQ<1) and low level of representation (LQ<0.25). If LQ of Chinese population in a given municipality is higher than 2, it suggests that the

percentage of Chinese residents in this areal unit is more than twice as high as that for BMR overall, which can imply an overrepresentation of Chinese population in this municipality. As with a municipality with the result of 1<LQ<2, it indicates a significant concentration of Chinese nationals in this area, identified as medium-high level of representation. On the contrary, when LQ is less than 1, there will be two levels of underrepresentation of Chinese population in a given municipality, medium-low (0.25<LQ<1) and low level of representation (LQ<0.25).

The Table 7 shows the first twenty municipalities in terms of LQ results in 2020. Despite a significant increase in the absolute population of Chinese nationals in all these municipalities from 2005 to 2020, their level of residential concentration does not align with the population growth. For instance, although the Chinese population in Barcelona has more than doubled from 2005 to 2020, its level of residential concentration is still modest, with an LQ only slightly higher than 1.

However, a noticeable decline in the residential concentration of Chinese nationals has been observed in the traditionally Chinese-concentrated municipalities of Santa Coloma de Gramanet, Mataró, and Badalona. The period between 2005 and 2020 saw the LQ of the Chinese population in Santa Coloma de Gramanet drop from 5.79 to 4.16, in Badalona from 3.57 to 1.90, and in Mataró from 2.13 to 1.93. This outcome can be attributed to several factors, including changes in residential patterns of the recently arrived population, consolidation and integration of Chinese immigrants in Spain, and dispersion of the population that arrived over 10 years ago and has settled down.

Table 6 Residential Concentration of Chinese Population in Main Municipalities of Barcelona Metropolitan Region in 2005, 2010, 2015 and 2020

	LQ				Population			
	2005	2010	2015	2020	2005	2010	2015	2020
Santa Coloma de Gramenet	5.79	6.47	4.71	4.16	3,362	5,507	4,465	5,156
Sant Adrià de Besòs	0.81	1.34	1.77	1.94	131	324	515	748
Mataró	2.13	2.10	2.09	1.93	1,220	1,828	2,110	2,578
Badalona	3.57	2.47	1.93	1.90	3,840	3,835	3,368	4,364
Montgat	0.49	0.84	0.80	1.45	22	63	75	182
Barcelona	1.17	1.24	1.34	1.31	9,145	14,221	17,466	22,487
Hospitalet de Llobregat	0.82	0.96	1.06	1.24	1,022	1,763	2,161	3,424
Barberà del Vallès	0.73	0.86	1.01	1.00	100	193	266	343
Sant Boi de Llobregat	0.56	0.73	0.93	0.91	222	429	619	795
Cornellà de Llobregat	0.74	0.88	0.88	0.91	304	544	614	842
Calella	0.58	0.62	0.66	0.82	48	82	98	162
Granollers	0.67	0.55	0.81	0.80	190	234	395	514
Rubí	0.91	0.82	0.81	0.76	305	430	492	613
Sant Feliu de Llobregat	0.50	0.70	0.83	0.75	104	214	295	351
Castelldefels	0.65	0.57	0.60	0.74	182	253	312	512
Sabadell	0.61	0.65	0.74	0.74	594	950	1,245	1,641
Mollet del Vallès	0.57	0.52	0.62	0.69	143	193	261	368
Sant Andreu de la Barca	0.35	0.44	0.56	0.68	43	84	124	192
Martorell	0.44	0.43	0.48	0.65	56	81	108	192
Esplugues de Llobregat	0.46	0.44	0.49	0.63	106	146	183	307

Source: Author's elaboration based on Municipal Register (Padrón Continuo)

Enclave economies significantly influence the concentration of Chinese nationals in these three municipalities. Santa Coloma de Gramanet has functioned as a prominent Chinese immigration center on the outskirts of the BMR for more than a decade, with a residential concentration level of 5.79 in 2005, surpassing the overall BMR figure. Fondo and its adjacent areas within Santa Coloma de Gramanet are recognized for hosting a considerable Chinese immigrant population (Beltrán 2009). This district embodies the characteristics of a Chinatown (Zhou, 1992), housing various ethnic businesses like Chinese restaurants, Asian supermarkets, grocery stores, beauty salons, travel agencies, legal services, and pharmacies. These establishments cater to the diverse consumption needs of Chinese immigrants, offering not only goods and services but also essential social support and employment prospects for newcomers (Beltrán 2009).

In addition to the concentration of ethnic economies, Santa Coloma de Gramanet has a long tradition of textile industry, along with Badalona and Mataró. The rise of a new component of ethnic businesses has taken place in Catalunya, as Chinese contractors open garment factories and workshops and employ other co-ethnic workers in these

municipalities, whose Chinese migrant population serve as a potentially large pool of cheap manual labor (Beltrán 2009). The development of this enclave economy shapes the residential concentration of Chinese population in these municipalities, as Chinese employers are responsible for taking care of the food and accommodation of ethnic employees (Tébar 2010). However, with the shrinkage of profitability and shortage of cheap manual labor, many Chinese immigrants have abandoned this sector and dispersed into other sectors or municipalities for more business opportunities. The next chapter will discuss more details about residential concentration in these municipalities.

Another interesting discovery pertains to the notable increase in residential concentration levels of Chinese nationals in Sant Adrià de Besòs, Hospitalet de Llobregat, and Montgat, although it's worth noting that Montgat still maintains a relatively small absolute number of Chinese residents. In 2020, the Location Quotient (LQ) in Sant Adrià de Besòs and Hospitalet nearly doubled compared to 2005, and it even tripled in the case of Montgat.

This phenomenon indicates the persistence of enclave economies within peripheral regions like Sant Adrià de Besòs and Hospitalet de Llobregat. Throughout the fieldworks in this research, numerous Chinese-operated establishments, including restaurants, bars, sushi takeaways, beauty salons, and retail stores, were identified in these areas.

To some extent, the ongoing growth of the Chinese community in Sant Adrià de Besòs and Hospitalet de Llobregat suggests a trend of residential dispersion among Chinese immigrants, moving away from the traditionally Chinese-concentrated municipalities and into neighboring or peripheral areas.

However, residential patterns of Chinese population in Montgat differ from those in previous cases. The LQ in Montgat has increased from 0.49 in 2005 to 1.45 in 2020, indicating a substantial growth in the concentration of Chinese residents in this municipality. During the fieldwork conducted in Montgat, an informant suggested that many Chinese investors have been attracted to the area because of its proximity t Barcelona, investment portfolio of real estate as well as educational resources, such as internationally renowned Hamelin Laie International School. According to some Chinese investors, parents choose to relocate here because of the seaside villas and proximity to the school. Although the absolute population of Chinese immigrants in Montgat is still modest, the

burgeoning presence of Chinese newcomers and their accompanying real estate investment is likely to shape urban morphology in this area. During the fieldwork, it was found that some real estate development companies were actively constructing new villas in Montgat and promoting *Golden Visa* migration project to potential Chinese buyers through social media.

To provide an overview of the concentration levels of the Chinese population in the overall BMR, table 2 has been created, which categorizes the results of LQ in all the municipalities into four groups from 2005 to 2020. Several trends are noteworthy (See Table 8).

Table 7 Evolution of different levels of residential concentration from 2005 to 2020

	Low level of representation		Medium low level of representation		Medium-high level of representation		High level of representation	
	Number of municipalities	Population	Number of municipalities	Population	Number of municipalities	Population	Number of municipalities	Population
2005	105	204	54	5,638	2	9,171	3	8,422
2006	105	358	53	6,554	2	11,422	4	10,064
2007	97	282	61	6,678	2	11,116	4	8,441
2008	94	316	64	7,462	3	12,738	3	9,256
2009	90	362	68	8,992	3	13,811	3	11,384
2010	98	399	60	9,401	3	14,586	3	11,170
2011	94	382	63	9,911	4	15,386	3	11,175
2012	97	472	61	10,551	4	18,247	2	9,084
2013	92	426	66	11,143	4	18,478	2	8,380
2014	93	493	63	9,397	6	22,464	2	6,536
2015	96	537	59	9,351	7	24,283	2	6,575
2016	94	637	62	10,039	6	25,896	2	6,964
2017	91	610	65	10,795	6	27,683	2	7,202
2018	90	672	66	11,722	6	28,515	2	7,434
2019	92	732	63	12,151	7	30,526	2	7,596
2020	89	718	67	13,388	7	34,517	1	5,156

Source: Author's elaboration based on Municipal Registres (Padrón Continuo)

Firstly, the overall residential concentration in highly Chinese-represented areas has decreased in terms of the number of municipalities. In 2005, there were three municipalities with a high level of representation: Santa Coloma de Gramanet (LQ=5.79), Badalona (LQ=3.57), and Mataró (LQ=2.13). However, fifteen years later, only Santa Coloma de Gramanet remained in this category with a decreased LQ value of 4.16. Before 2012, almost one-third of the Chinese population in BMR lived in the three municipalities with a high level of concentration. Less than 10% of the Chinese population still resides in these

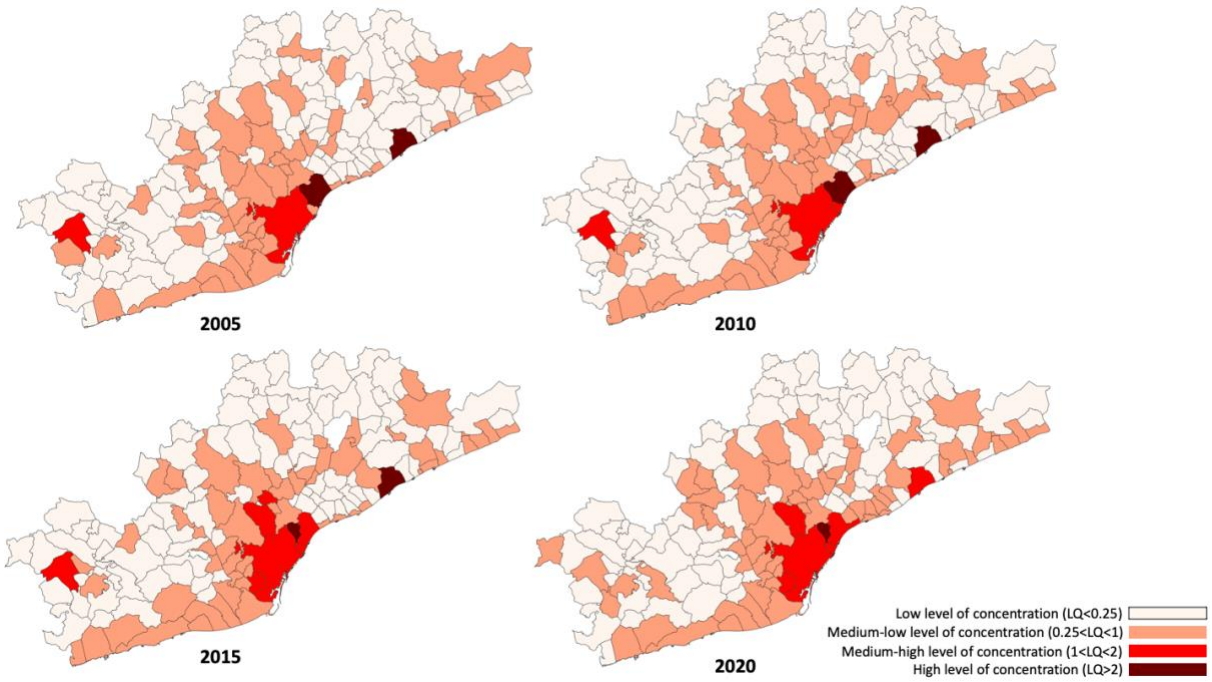
municipalities in 2020. It is likely that the Chinese population has diversified and dispersed throughout the region, contributing to the observed decrease in residential concentration in highly Chinese-represented areas. Therefore, the overall picture of Chinese residential concentration in the BMR is a complex one, shaped by multiple factors and dynamics.

Another noteworthy change pertains to the group of municipalities with a medium-high level of concentration, which has exhibited a significant and continuous growth in both the number of municipalities falling under this category and its absolute and relative population from 2005 to 2020. In 2005, Barcelona and Sant Martí Sarroca were the only two municipalities classified as having a medium-high level of representation with an LQ of 1.17 and 1.94, respectively. Since 2014, over a handful of municipalities have demonstrated a medium-high level of Chinese concentration, including Barcelona, Badalona, Mataró, Hospitalet de Llobregat, Sant Adrià de Besòs, Sant Martí Sarroca, Cerdanyola del Vallès, and Montgat. In 2020, over 64% of the Chinese population in BMR resided in only seven municipalities.

Modest changes have also been observed in the region with medium-low level of concentration, as there has been a slightly increased number of municipalities and absolute population. However, the percentage of Chinese population in these municipalities for the total number in BMR has remained relatively stable, varying between 24% and 28% from 2005 to 2020.

On the other hand, in the group of low level of concentration, there has been a growing degree of residential concentration in a smaller scale of territory. The number of municipalities with low-level concentration has decreased from 105 municipalities in 2005 to 89 municipalities in 2020, while the absolute population in the region has increased nearly fourfold during the same time span.

Figure 17 Geographical distribution of LQ results of Chinese population in Barcelona Metropolitan Region in 2005, 2010, 2015 and 2020



Concentration level		2005	2010	2015	2020
Low	Range of LQ	0-0.25	0-0.32	0-0.36	0-0.41
	Num. of municipalities	100	107	117	113
	Num. of population	167	674	1420	2001
Medium-low	Range of LQ	0.25-0.91	0.32-0.96	0.36-1.06	0.41-1.06
	Num. of municipalities	59	46	40	42
	Num. of population	5675	6557	11356	12097
Medium-high	Range of LQ	0.91-3.57	0.96-2.47	1.06-2.08	1.06-2.05
	Num. of municipalities	3	8	4	7
	Num. of population	10391	18977	21380	34517
High	Range of LQ	3.57-5.79	2.47-6.46	2.08-4.71	2.05-4.39
	Num. of municipalities	2	2	2	1
	Num. of population	7202	9342	6575	5156

Source: Author's elaboration based on Municipal registers (Padrón Continuo), INE

As Figure 17 and previous data indicate, although the size and density of region with high-level concentration have significantly shrunk from 2005 to 2020, the overall concentration of Chinese population in BMR has expanded regarding an increased number of municipalities with high and medium-high level of concentration and its concomitant

absolute population. It can suggest two parallel processes of settlement. On the one hand, Chinese immigrants are more likely to disperse out of the traditional Chinese-concentrated areas to other municipalities. On the other hand, a high share of Chinese residents still concentrates in the traditional ethnic center, Santa Coloma de Gramanet. Tébar's study (2013) also suggests these two trends in Madrid. While old settlers are driven by economic incentives to other municipalities looking for business opportunities, newcomers are more likely to settle down in the traditional ethnic enclave, Usera, to have better access to ethnic resources. Regarding an increasing level of residential concentration of Chinese population in Usera, he illustrates a potential formation of *Chinatown* coming into being in Madrid (Tébar 2010, 2013). In the case of the Barcelona Metropolitan Region, however, this pattern may not fully apply since investors, non-profit permit holders, and students may not choose the traditional *Chinatown*. As the informants suggest, they seek to be close to prestigious educational centers or municipalities with different economic standards.

The phenomenon of immigrant populations locating in specific neighborhoods, zones, or areas and producing a spatial concentration or "ghettoization" has been a topic of research in this subfield (Christiansen 2005; Yamashita 2013; Hatziprokopiou, et al. 2012). To examine whether this has occurred among the Chinese population in BMR, the index of segregation (IS) was calculated.

The study of the spatial patterns of migrant populations was first explored in the early 20th century by the Chicago School, which proposed a series of quantitative indices, including the index of segregation (Duncan and Duncan, 1955; Park and Burgess, 1921). The IS value ranges from 0 to 1, with a lower value indicating a lower level of segregation. For example, if the value of IS for the residential segregation of the overall foreign population in Spain is around 0.3 or below 0.5, it suggests a relatively moderate level of segregation (Bayona-Carrasco and López Gay, 2011). The index of segregation (IS) is used in this research to measure the distribution of the Chinese population in urban space and calculate the difference between the proportion of individuals in the minority group (X) and the proportion of the rest of the population in each spatial unit.

The literature on the topic indicates that the index of segregation in Spain has been relatively low and has even decreased with the expansion of foreign population. This trend implies a general trend towards assimilation and peaceful coexistence between migrant

communities and local populations in the host country (Sabater et al., 2013). Therefore, it is pertinent to investigate whether this pattern of integration has been replicated in the Chinese diaspora in Spain. The use of the index of segregation will be crucial in this investigation, as it provides a quantitative method for assessing unequal residential distribution of a particular group of people within urban space.

By calculating the index of segregation (IS) of Chinese population in Barcelona Metropolitan Region, this study intends to examine if Chinese diaspora in BMR has geographically transformed into an ethnic enclave (Zhou 1992; Tébar 2010). Thus, it will be interesting to see the IS of Chinese nationals in the areas with high level of concentration. Seven municipalities with the highest values of LQ in 2020 have been selected, including Santa Coloma de Gramanet, Sant Adrià de Besòs, Mataró, Badalona, Montgat, Barcelona and Hospitalet de Llobregat.

The analysis of the Index of Segregation (IS) reveals that, out of the seven municipalities with the highest LQ in 2020, only three of them have shown an increase in the IS value since 2008 (See Table 9). Specifically, Santa Coloma de Gramanet and Mataró have witnessed a growing residential segregation of Chinese nationals. In Mataró, the IS values have remained relatively low, around 0.3, since 2008. However, in Santa Coloma de Gramanet, the IS of Chinese nationals has increased from 0.47 in 2008 to 0.54 in 2020, indicating a continuous and significant growth in their level of residential segregation. This increase in residential segregation, combined with a high level of residential concentration with an LQ far beyond 2, suggests that Chinese immigrants may potentially be transforming Santa Coloma de Gramanet into a new *Chinatown* in BMR.

On the other hand, the analysis of the index of segregation (IS) for the Chinese population in Barcelona Metropolitan Region has also shown that Montgat is one of the municipalities with the highest level of segregation, as its IS value (0.57) in 2020 is the largest among all the selected municipalities. Despite having a moderate number of Chinese nationals, the growth in their residential concentration and segregation in this area is noteworthy. This trend can be attributed to several factors, such as the presence of new arrivals with high purchasing power and the formation of a Chinese community with cultural and linguistic ties. The situation in Montgat indicates that the phenomenon of residential segregation of the Chinese diaspora is not limited to the traditional ethnic

enclaves, but it is also occurring in other areas with high levels of Chinese population growth.

Table 8. Evolution of location quotient, index of segregation and absolute population of Chinese nationals in major metropolitan cities in Barcelona Metropolitan Region in 2008, 2010, 2015 and 2020

	LQ				IS			
	2008	2010	2015	2020	2008	2010	2015	2020
Santa Coloma de Gramenet	6.20	6.47	4.71	4.16	0.47	0.46	0.51	0.54
Sant Adrià de Besòs	0.88	1.34	1.77	1.94	0.41	0.44	0.46	0.39
Mataró	2.24	2.10	2.09	1.93	0.27	0.31	0.32	0.37
Badalona	2.49	2.47	1.93	1.90	0.50	0.48	0.42	0.40
Montgat	0.69	0.84	0.80	1.45	0.40	0.36	0.49	0.57
Barcelona	1.26	1.24	1.34	1.31	0.46	0.38	0.35	0.34
Hospitalet de Llobregat	0.91	0.96	1.06	1.24	0.45	0.38	0.33	0.31

Source: Author's elaboration based on Municipal registres (Padrón Continuo), INE

The present study has also observed a decrease in the index of segregation in a range of municipalities. Among them, Hospitalet de Llobregat, Barcelona and Badalona have shown a considerable decline in the level of residential segregation of Chinese nationals, as the IS values in 2020 were 0.31, 0.34 and 0.40 respectively, compared to 0.54, 0.45 and 0.50 in 2008. These findings can imply an overall trend towards the assimilation and integration of Chinese nationals in the local communities of BMR. Moreover, the IS values in most of the listed municipalities are below 0.5, indicating a low level of segregation of Chinese nationals.

The observed trend of a decline in the index of segregation of Chinese nationals in some municipalities in the Barcelona Metropolitan Region could potentially be attributed to the dispersion of Chinese immigrants to new locations with a lower concentration of ethnic counterparts and fewer co-ethnic business competitors. It is possible that saturation of Chinese-owned businesses in highly concentrated municipalities has prompted many Chinese immigrants to seek new opportunities to make profits, either by exploring new business models or entering new sectors and new locations. As Chinese employers are typically responsible for providing accommodation for their workers, the relocation of Chinese businesses may have a direct impact on the residential locations of Chinese immigrant workers.

Shangjun, a Chinese bar owner, currently resides and works in a middle-class neighborhood in Sant Just Desvern. Prior to opening his bar in this neighborhood, he had owned a Chinese restaurant in a small town in the province of Lleida where there were no other Chinese residents. He lived there with his family for three years and rented an apartment for his workers at the restaurant. As the only Chinese-owned bar in his current neighborhood, Shangjun's choice of location for his business reflects his mobility strategy.

> *I opened [the first restaurant] in Esparreguera. That location was really good, because there were few Chinese and were all local people…… I had to provide them (workers) a place to live. Otherwise, nobody would come so far to work…… I decided to open a bar here (Sant Just Desvern), because there was no Chinese at that time. Until today there is still very few Chinese, except some new migrants (investor migrants).* (Shangjun, economic migrant, male, 37 years old)

The account above illustrates two implications. First, due to the high level of homogeneity of entrepreneurial practices, ethnic entrepreneurs, particularly in the Chinese catering industry, are more likely to relocate their businesses to places with relatively fewer co-ethnic residents to avoid competition. Second, a high proportion of the local population is a decisive factor in generating profits. This account is consistent with the results of the segregation index presented, where an increasing number of Chinese immigrants are dispersing to local-concentrated areas, moving away from ethnic-segregated communities.

Beltrán and Sáiz (2015) also suggested that the shift in the spatial distribution of Chinese immigrants could be partly related to the emergence of a new generation of Chinese immigrants who are more educated and adaptable to new environments. A reduction in segregation could indicate a more even distribution of the Chinese population throughout the region, which may suggest greater community consolidation and social integration to some extent.

5.2. Location strategies of traditional Chinese immigrants

> *Metropolitan areas provide ideal geographic locations and stages for ethnic entrepreneurs and laborers to create new types of ethnic economy, such as*

> *subcontractors and entrepreneurs specializing in international trade, finance, as well as manufacturing. These areas often have large preexisting ethnic minority communities and ethnic economic structures, which lure ethnic newcomers (both entrepreneurs and laborers) and their investment.* (Li 2009:33).

As suggested previously, the ethnic economy significantly shapes the residential patterns and landscape of Chinese immigrants in the Barcelona Metropolitan Region (BMR). In order to understand the spatial distribution of Chinese immigrants and their decision-making regarding relocation, it is necessary to gain insight into the geographical development of the ethnic economy in Spain over the past few decades.

Ethnic entrepreneurship in the BMR has undergone significant development and restructuring during the last decades (Beltrán 2006; Beltrán and Sáiz 2013). Following the saturation of Chinese catering industry in Spain, many Chinese restaurant owners transitioned to importing low-end manufactured goods from China and engaging in international trading between Spain and China. This shift led to the development of a range of upstream and downstream businesses in the import and export trade, including garment workshops, footwear factories, warehouse services, and logistics companies.

The textile and clothing industries have played an important role in the Catalan economy since the nineteenth century. Given the labor-intensive and low-tech nature of these industries, not only did internal migrants from other regions of Spain come to Catalunya to explore work and business opportunities, but also foreign immigrants who newly arrived without access to the mainstream labor market chose to work in garment making as a survival strategy and buffer zone in the host country. For example, some Chinese entrepreneur pioneers used the existing infrastructures of the clothing industries and built into their own entrepreneurial landscape (Beltrán 2006). Jialin Zhang, one of the most well-known entrepreneurs in the Chinese community in Catalunya, used to be an importer of silk t-shirts from China and opened the first garment shop in Trafalgar Street. In the late 1990s he successfully transformed himself into an owner of a garment factory in Santa Coloma de Gramanet and became one of the first Chinese entrepreneurs who started to create his own clothing brand. Meanwhile, other ethnic entrepreneurs also seize this opportunity and start their entrepreneurial practices in the same areas and its neighboring cities. There are garment workshops, clothing factories, boutiques, warehouse

and wholesale centers for sale of garments, leather products, footwear and among other Chinese-owned enterprises.

Social-network effects also play a significant role in the emergence of ethnic economies among Chinese communities and their residential concentration in specific areas, such as Santa Coloma de Gramanet and its neighboring municipalities. As Sandell (2012) suggests, newly arrived immigrants often settle in locations where there are already established communities of past immigrants with location-specific social capital and resources. In other words, the location of past immigrants is a key determinant of where future immigrants choose to settle. For example, the textile and clothing industries in the area attracted a significant influx of migrants from Zhejiang province and urban laid-off workers from Northeast China for economic reasons. Without access to the mainstream labor market, they worked in workplaces such as garment factories or workshops for co-ethnic entrepreneurs who provided free accommodation and food (Tébar 2010). To some extent, the residential stability of economic migrants is subject to their employment status; when they change jobs, they often must also find new places to live.

Mataró is an ideal example of the settlement and consolidation of Chinese immigrants under this migratory pattern. This municipality has a long tradition in the textile and clothing industries. In the early 2000s, many Chinese economic migrants fled to this textile city to open factories and workshops, and Chou was one of them. In 2002, she arrived in Santa Coloma de Gramenet from the northeast of China and worked in a sweatshop there, since she had been a garment worker in China. One year later, she left the garment workshop for Mataró and opened her own workshop with her husband. Their orders mainly came from both local garment factories and Chinese-owned factories. These clients outsourced garment knitting to small-scale workshops and paid them per piece. For example, Jiang's workshop worked for small factories as well as big ones like Zara and Bershka by knitting sleeves and zips for tops and trousers.

The challenges faced by Chou in generating profits in a highly competitive sector were considerable. The textile and clothing industry was relatively easy to enter for Chinese immigrants seeking to establish themselves in a labor-intensive and technologically unsophisticated sector. As a result, many of them opted to open small-scale workshops, hiring a small group of labor workers, predominantly Chinese immigrants, but also

including individuals from other ethnic groups, such as African origins. Similarly, Chou and her husband employed a dozen co-ethnic workers in their workshop and provided them with free accommodation and food. Such benefits were necessary to attract workers, as there were few alternative employment options available to them. Chou further explained:

> *When laowai (local people) open factories, they only pay wages. They don't provide food or lodging [to their workers]. We Chinese cannot do it. If you don't look after what they (workers) eat and where they live, they won't come…… Our management capability is not good.* (Chou, economic migrant, female, 48 years old)

During the field study, some former owners of textile workshops, who had previously operated such businesses but eventually closed them, mentioned a significant impact on the Chinese presence within Mataró's textile and clothing industries. They attributed this shift to excessive competition emerging within the Chinese community itself, which subsequently led to a contraction in the market. This phenomenon is primarily attributed to the influx of new Chinese competitors who entered the industry. Chou further elucidated that, in response to this intensified competition, she was compelled to reduce her prices in order to remain competitive against the new entrants. This complex dynamic highlights the considerable challenges faced by Chinese entrepreneurs operating in this sector. The intense competition can create a downward pressure on pricing, potentially compromising both business sustainability and the livelihoods of workers.

Meanwhile, given the labor-intensive nature of ethnic economic activities in this sector, the cost of labor can be the key to success and also to failure. To generate higher revenues, it was essential for workshop owners to reduce labor costs and manage to hire cheap manual workers. To reduce labor costs, many Chinese entrepreneurs failed to run businesses under the laws of labor protection, such as not paying social security for employees and conducting labor exploitation, especially in the early 2000s (EFE Barcelona 2009; Castro 2015). Some of the interviewees in this study have illustrated their lived experience of being exploited and provided testimony of labor exploitation in garment workshops.

Nevertheless, the aftermath of Operation Wei in 2009 marked a turning point for Chinese entrepreneurs in Mataró. This municipal operation, carried out by the Catalan Government, resulted in the arrest of 77 Chinese citizens. The operation compelled Chinese

entrepreneurs to regulate their economic activities under labor laws, including paying full-time social security and sponsoring work permits for employees. As a result, profitability was inevitably reduced by the increased personnel cost. Additionally, the influx of economic migrants significantly slowed down in the aftermath of the economic crisis.

Like many other ethnic entrepreneurs, Chou faced a challenging period in the textile and garment industries due to intensifying competition among co-ethnic groups, rising costs, a scarcity of affordable labor and strict regulations. In 2017, after almost fifteen years in the garment sector, Jiang and her husband closed their workshop and opened a bar near a garment factory. They offer authentic Chinese cuisine to co-ethnic garment workers and other Chinese residents in the area. To some extent, Jiang's experience represents that of many other Chinese immigrants in Mataró. Despite the cramped conditions of ethnic economy practices in the textile and garment industries, many have opted to open bars and self-employed retail shops.

5.3. Coexistence of traditional economic migration and emergent middle-class newcomers

In addition to Mataró, Barcelona has been another important municipal destination with a relatively high level of concentration of Chinese nationals. As a metropolitan city, Barcelona has attracted a vast number of migrants from different countries. As with Chinese immigrants, it has been witnessed more diverse business landscapes in this municipality. A large composition of Chinese immigrants work in service sectors, such as restaurants, bars, wholesales, retail stores and other ethnic economies which serve their co-ethnic counterparts (Beltrán 2009; Beltrán and Sáiz 2013). For example, Street Trafalgar, notably Fort Pienc in Barcelona, is known as a ‘mini-Chinatown’ (Bertran 2013). Since the early 1990s, shortly before the Barcelona Olympic Games, Chinese migrants sought to set up big stock centers for clothing and wholesale business in this neighbourhood, from which a Chinese small colony started to come into being in this city. With the increasing number of newcomers, a sequence of other ethnic economic activities emerged, such as Chinese restaurants, Chinese supermarkets, hair salons, Chinese-owned pharmacies, and language schools for both adults and children. Not only did Chinese immigrants start business in this area, but also they settle down as permanent residents and integrate with local people,

which is indicated by a moderate level of segregation of Chinese nationals in this city.

Since 2013 the *Golden Visa* scheme and non-lucrative residence policy have become increasingly popular means for wealthy and well-educated individuals to migrate to Spain. As a result, a growing variation in the socioeconomic composition of Chinese migrants in Spain has emerged. Chinese middle-class migrants, such as investors and students, have become a significant source of newcomers during the last two decades, even though their numbers are still relatively low.

Some Chinese investor migrants prefer to buy properties located near international private schools, such as Zona Alta de Barcelona and Sant Just Desvern, to provide better education for their children, who are often situated far from traditional Chinese-concentrated areas. These migrants frequently acquire multiple properties, including apartments or commercial establishments, to lease out as their primary income source in Spain, rather than seeking employment in the local labor market. Many investors are optimistic about the prospects of the rental housing market in Barcelona and its surrounding regions and plan to purchase properties. In our research, some interviewees have often used the phrase 'location, location, location' to underscore the significance of property location in their investment decisions. According to a key informant in the study who used to work as a real estate broker in one of the biggest Chinese real estate development companies in Barcelona, there are roughly three types of real estate buyers since the launch of Ley 2013:

> *[First] many professionals in entertainment and media industry including celebrities and film directors [purchased property in Spain]. There were also some entrepreneurs [who purchased property in Spain]. Also, chai qian hu*[9] *from Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. They bought property [in Spain] with their demolish and relocation compensation [offered by governments or real estate development companies]. Another important source of property buyers is [fuelled by] hardship of educational system in China. Frankly speaking, [they left China] it's because their children study in China, while the parents suffer together. Those who want to*

[9] 拆迁户(*chai qian hu*) refers to households that are affected by urban redevelopment projects, where their homes or land are expropriated by the government or real estate developers for public or commercial purposes. These households are often compensated with a certain amount of money or alternative housing, and in mega cities like Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou the compensation may be so high that many people become millionaires overnight.

create a happy childhood for their children actually came here…… The last group is real residents among all of them. (Yisha, middle-class migrant, female, 33 years old)

Many Chinese middle-class parents choose to relocate to Barcelona for the sake of their children's education. Educational resources have become a decisive factor in the bourgeoning emergence of a concentration of newly arrived middle-class Chinese immigrants in this city, particularly in proximity to schools. The location of a prestigious school is one of the main considerations for newly arrived lifestyle migrants. They are more likely to buy or rent a property near international private schools (e.g., Les Corts, Sant Just Desvern, Montgat), which are often far from traditional Chinese-concentrated areas. An informant explained their decision-making process when it comes to relocating to this new country.

Researcher: *Why did you want to find an apartment in Sarrià?*

Interviewee: *Because I was told that most of the international private schools are here.* (Panpan, middle-class migrant, female, 41 years old)

With the help of intermediary agencies, these newly arrivals are dispersed in Barcelona Metropolitan Region given its cosmopolitan values and educational resources. Intermediary agencies play an important role in geographical dispersion of newcomers. Due to language barriers and little knowledge about Spanish society, they heavily rely on Chinese brokerage services to choose where and which property to invest and later settle down in the host country. In other words, real estate agencies and migration services companies actually play an important role in the dispersion of Chinese population in Barcelona Metropolitan Region, especially of the newcomers in recent years.

6. Chinese immigrant families in Barcelona

> "*Migration is an investment of families and individuals in a better future rather than a desperate flight from misery*." (de Haas, 2021)

The demographic landscape of Chinese immigrants in Spain has undergone a significant shift in recent decades, with a marked increase in population from 12,036 to 232,617 between 1998 and 2020, according to data from the INE's municipal register. This growth can be attributed in part to family reunification policies, which have enabled more Chinese immigrant parents to reunite with their spouse and children in Spain.

The province of Barcelona has undergone a comparable pattern as the Chinese population has risen from 13,416 in 2003 to 56,017 in 2020. Additionally, there has been a more than five-fold increase in the population under the age of 16, from 2,412 in 2003 to 12,285 in 2020. The arrival of middle-class families in Spain under capital-linked migration policies since 2013 has introduced a new dimension to the composition of Chinese immigrant families, resulting in new realities of family life and parent-child relationships within Chinese communities in Spain.

In previous chapters, the typologies of Chinese migrants in Spain were established and elaborated upon in terms of their socio-economic status, migration patterns, and settlement characteristics. This chapter focuses on the third research question: *How do parent-child relations differ in each typology of Chinese immigrant families in Spain?* To answer this question, the notion of "accomplishment of natural growth" and "concerted cultivation" (Lareau 2003) are adopted to illustrate class-specific differences in family life arrangement and parent-child relations between economic migrants and middle-class family migrants. Based on long-term ethnographic observations and constant follow-up interviews, this chapter aims to showcase the main hallmarks of parenting style and family life after migration in these two typologies of immigrant families.

6.1. Family Relations between Parents and Children in Chinese Old Settlers' Families

Qi is a 45-year-old father of three with a humble smile on his face, who runs a small bar in Hospitalet de Llobregat. I met him at an exclusive parent meeting at a public school near his bar, where he was invited due to an unfortunate incident with his 16-year-old son. To everyone's surprise, his son had lost 90% of his vision due to a congenital disease, and the parents had been completely unaware until this meeting was arranged.

During the meeting, a social worker from ONCE took the child aside to teach him how to use a guide stick, and Qi stayed in the meeting room listening intently to the medical description of his son's disease and the director's instructions. As his translator volunteer, I did Spanish Chinese translation for him, yet most of the time it was a one-way communication, as with many other parent meetings I had attended with Chinese immigrant families running small businesses in Spain.

After the meeting, Qi invited me to his bar for a coffee to express his gratitude, which I accepted. During the walk to the bar, he confided in me that he had no idea his son was suffering from this sudden vision loss. The only sign he noticed was that his son used a magnifying glass when doing homework, which he attributed to overuse of mobile phones.

Upon arriving at the bar and spending a full day there, I witnessed how their work and family lives were intertwined in this small 70-square-meter space. Qi and his wife worked tirelessly day and night to serve customers with food and drink while also keeping an eye on the bar's belongings due to the robbery problem in their neighborhood. After school, their oldest son would come back to help out in the bar or pick up his sister from school before doing his homework in a corner of the bar. Meanwhile, their three-month-old baby slept peacefully in a stroller by a closet in the back of the bar. Their work and family lives were intertwined, and they barely had time to eat together or converse without interruption.

This heart-wrenching story of the Qi family is not unique, but rather represents common patterns of parent-child relationships found in many Chinese immigrant families, particularly those running small businesses in the service sector.

6.1.1. Prevalence of Family Separation

The migratory journey of Chinese immigrants is fraught with hardships and financial uncertainties, especially during the initial stages of settlement in a new country. As a result, many migrant parents are forced to relinquish their caregiving responsibilities and entrust the care of their children to extended family members in China. Even if adult migrants give birth in Spain, they are often unable to provide the necessary care for their offspring and must rely on grandparents or other relatives in the country of origin to take on this role. Consequently, family separation is a common occurrence among first-generation Chinese immigrants and their children. In fact, most of the migrant children interviewed in the study reported experiencing separation from one or both parents during their childhood, with separation periods ranging from two to six years.

For instance, Wu, a 23-year-old college student in Barcelona, was born in China in the 1990s. When she was just two months old, her parents migrated to the Netherlands, where her father found work as a cook in a Chinese restaurant. Six months later, Wu's mother moved to Spain with a work visa sponsored by her cousin, who owned a bar in Barcelona. With the help of this cousin, Wu's father later joined his wife in Spain. During the years that Wu's parents were absent, she lived with her aunt and three cousins, without any visits from her parents. In the interview with Wu's father, Weiben, he explained that they had no choice but to leave their daughter behind due to the difficulties they faced during the migration process.

> *(In Spain) We didn't have money and we couldn't go back to China to visit her, because we had to pay back the debt to my wife's cousin. He helped her get a passport and work visa which cost over one million pesetas. She was only earning 40,000 pesetas per month at that time, and we had to pay the money back to him..... When we worked for other people, it was impossible to take our child to live with us here, because we lived under another compatriot's roof.* (Weiben, economic migrant, male, 47 years old)

The mere physical proximity resulting from family reunification does not necessarily guarantee a restoration of emotional closeness between migrant parents and their offspring. Despite the efforts made by parents to reunite with their children after a prolonged period

of separation, the emotional bond between them may remain distant and even non-existent. In the case of Wu's family, for instance, even after her parents had successfully paid off their debt and opened their own Chinese restaurant in a central municipality of Catalonia, their daughter's emotional attachment to her aunt, who had taken on the role of primary caregiver during the parents' absence, remained stronger than her attachment to her biological parents. This phenomenon underscores the complexity of the family dynamics in the context of migration and raises important questions regarding the factors that shape and sustain the emotional bonds between parents and their offspring.

> *She (the aunt) is another mother of mine and I talk with her more than I do with my mother. I don't know if it is because I have lived with her for a longer time when I started to have memories. There are many things that I would like to share with her rather than with my mother… I think I have two mothers. I always consider my aunt as my mother which is actually always being so. Now I still call her mom, and she accepts it. The things that I don't have in my own mother can be made up from my aunt.* (Wu, Family reunification/ Descendant of economic migrant, female, 20 years old)

Similarly, the strenuous work schedules of first-generation migrants do not contribute to mending the emotional distance with their offspring even after family reunification. Tao, whose parents were already running a small self-employed bar in Barcelona, lamented their prolonged absence from home and conveyed a pervasive sense of loneliness.

> *(When I arrived) I was always thinking like 'Why am I here?' I have no friends. I can barely see my parents every day... When I become a father, I will never let my child stay at home all alone. At least, because I have lived this. From the sixth to ninth grade, nearly four or five years, I have had to take care of myself all alone, cooking and doing laundry all by myself.* (Tao, Family reunification/ Descendant of economic migrant, male, 21 years old)

Similar to Wu's case, Xia's parents also opened a Chinese restaurant in a municipality of the Barcelona province in 1996, a year prior to the birth of their eldest son Xia, and later,

two younger sons. Although all three sons were born in Barcelona, they were separated from their parents for several years due to the parents' labor-intensive work schedule, which made it impossible for them to raise their children. Xia was eventually reunited with his parents at the age of seven, but still reported a sense of emotional distance, possibly due to the intense work demands on his parents within the family-owned restaurant.

> *Our relationship doesn't become any closer (after I came back to Barcelona), but we have become more familiar with each other since we started living together. Although even when I'm living with my parents, it is still my grandparents taking care of us at home, because my parents are always busy with the restaurant work, and sometimes they just ask me if I finish homework or how my grade is at school.* (Xia, Family reunification/ Descendant of economic migrant, male, 21 years old)

6.1.2. Lack of Parental Involvement in Schooling

Children's agency in migration decision-making is often limited, yet they bear the long-term consequences of their parents' choices. The interviewed youth in this study faced significant challenges when adapting to life in the host country, experiencing a sense of loneliness and estrangement upon arrival in Spain. The impact of parental migration on children's well-being and development has been widely acknowledged in the literature with studies highlighting the negative effects of family separation and prolonged absence on children's emotional, social, and academic outcomes.

> *Not only the language but the way of living was so alien to me. Unlike in China where I could go exploring wherever I wanted, here they (the parents) didn't allow me to go out and made me stay in the restaurant all day long. At that moment, I did want to go back to China.* (Wu, Family reunification/ Descendant of economic migrant, female, 20 years old)

> *I had no friends, and I used to be alone at that time. I believe that I might have some kind of personality disorder until the end of the secondary school. I think I had an issue.* (Ran, Family reunification/ Descendant of economic migrant, female, 21 years old)

The school environment is often seen as a crucial facilitator for migrant children to socialize and integrate into the host society. However, the effectiveness of schools in this regard is not always guaranteed, as evidenced by the experiences of many of the interviewed youth. Despite being enrolled in school at a young age, several descendant interviewees reported facing a range of integration and school-related issues in the Spanish context when they were between six and fifteen years old. These included incidents of bullying, social isolation, lack of motivation to study, grade retention, and even dropping out.

Unfortunately, despite the challenges they faced, many of these children did not feel comfortable seeking help from their parents. This reluctance stemmed from a belief that their parents, with limited socio-economic backgrounds and language proficiency, would be unable to provide any meaningful support. For instance, Meng, who experienced bullying at school, did not feel comfortable sharing this experience with his parents.

> *I was often being bullied at school because I'm Chinese. For example, they tripped me with feet in a dinning-hall or kicked a ball right into my head in the playground. When there was one child starting up the bullying, the others would follow him… I never told my parents (these issues), because they can never help me out. They speak too little Spanish to defend me by reporting to school officers.* (Meng, Family reunification/ Descendant of economic migrant, male, 21 years old)

Although the parents are willing to support their children, due to their modest sociodemographic status, they expressed reduced aspirations regarding their descendants' educational attainment. For instance, Wu's father expressed little knowledge about his daughter's school performance as he explained in the interview. This lack of information and limited educational resources may contribute to a dissonance between the parents' aspirations and the children's potential.

> *We speak little Spanish and there is nothing that we can do to help her schoolwork. We don't have much education and we have little knowledge, so it's meaningless for*

us to worry about her study or to tell her to study hard. (Weiben, economic migrant, male, 47 years old)

Despite the parents' limited capacity to provide assistance, some descendant interviewees who experienced academic setbacks also expressed a sense of dissatisfaction regarding their lack of involvement and guidance. For instance, Wang arrived in Spain at the age of 16 and encountered difficulties such as language barriers and racial discrimination in the school environment. Although he eventually graduated from a prestigious university in Catalonia, Wen had previously dropped out of high school for a period of two years. As a result, he harbors some grievances towards his parents.

I was about to stay down the year, which is something I could never accept, but my parents didn't care about it at all, so I used to complain to them (for not guiding me) …… My mother is a middle school graduate and my father, at most, graduated from high school? They didn't have any expectations for my study, because they know nothing (about the education here). (Wen, Family reunification/ Descendant of economic migrant, male, 28 years old)

Similar to Wang's experience, Meng also faced school failure and dropped out from vocational high school during his first year. He expressed a sense of discontent towards his parents, believing that they did not provide enough guidance and support for his education.

I think dropping out should not be blamed only on myself, but also on my parents. I was not a disciplined student at school, and my parents never asked me to study at home either. (Meng, family reunification/ Descendant of economic migrant, male, 21 years old)

As family life is considerably embedded in self-employed business, some parents reported a constant exhaustion which gives them little time to get involved in offspring's daily and school life. For example, Mao's mother runs a self-employed hair salon all by herself without employing other staff. When being asked about the daily life of the son,

she said: "*When he (the son) arrives home, we are still working and barely have time to take care for him. And also, he leaves home early in the morning. How can I know what he does every day? If he doesn't get starving or quarrel with us, then that's alright* (Mao's mother, 47 years old)." Wu's father has a Chinese restaurant and works as a cook in their own restaurant. In the interview with Wu's father, he could hardly answer questions about the daughter's daily routine and school life': "*When they get up and go to school, I'm still asleep. When we finish the work and go back home, they already fall asleep, because we usually arrive at home at twelve o'clock……I don't have much time to spend with my daughters and we don't have family activities either. We work every day, busy and exhausted. Every Chinese family here is the same, as long as they are running a restaurant.*"

6.1.3. Self-employed Family Business: Ambivalent Factor of Family Relations

Beltrán (2007) has noted that entrepreneurship constitutes a significant aspect of the lifestyle of Chinese immigrants in Spain, reflecting the cultural and social capital they bring with them. This is especially evident among those originating from Qingtian and Wenzhou, which together account for 70% of the Chinese population in Spain (Sáiz 2005). The majority of these entrepreneurs operate within the service and retail sectors, including restaurants, bars, retail stores, and textile factories (Nieto 2001; Beltrán 2005, 2009; Beltrán and Sáiz 2009). However, the prevalence of exploitation within the ethnic economy means that self-exploitation, as well as the exploitation of co-ethnic peers and family members, is also widespread (Beltrán and Sáiz 2013). Hard work is considered a cornerstone of family well-being and prosperity, and parents expect their children to participate in their businesses with similar work ethics. For instance, Wang's parents operate a bar from 8 a.m. to 3 a.m. every day, and to reduce labor costs, they work alone during the midweek and ask Wang to help out on weekends, even though he does not agree with this self-exploitation.

> *Running a bar is really exhausted. As a son I feel obliged to reduce some of their workload… They always complain to me saying like 'We are so tired. Can you just*

come to help us? We have no choice, since hiring someone else here is extremely expensive.' I hate this discourse... I tried so hard to persuade them to hire one more staff, so everyone of us could be liberated. But they said no, because every cost for them is seen as some kind of loss which is unacceptable. (Wen, Family reunification/ Descendant of economic migrant, male, 28 years old)

The results of our study indicate that the self-exploitative practices of Chinese immigrant entrepreneurs often result in familial tensions and ambiguous emotions among their children. Specifically, we observed that Jan, a high-school student born and raised in Barcelona, works at his family's restaurant as part of his daily routine. After finishing his own supper at the restaurant, he is required to stay and assist his parents for several additional hours. During our interview, Jan expressed his reluctance to work in the restaurant, highlighting the negative impact of such practices on family relationships.

I don't want to work at all. Especially when I realize that other classmates have more free time to play, hang out and do whatever they like, I feel extremely unfair... We have had so many quarrels on this issue, but now I'm already tired of these arguments, as they never understand it. Since in their generation, the children used to devote all their time to family domestic work instead of their study. However, in my generation the children are protected by laws which prevent child labor in any work, but my childhood and teenage are wasted and abused in this restaurant. (Jan, Family reunification/ Descendant of economic migrant, male, 14 years old)

Xia, the elder brother of Jun, has been working in the family restaurant since he was 13 years old. In addition to the disputes that arise between Xia and his parents over the restaurant work, he also experiences conflicts with his siblings regarding the division of labor hours. These conflicts not only create tension and resentment among family members but also reflect the complex dynamics of the Chinese immigrant family in Spain, where the pressure to succeed in business might be prioritized over individual desires and aspirations.

"Since my second brother and I both go to university, when we are in the period of final exams, we have to spend more time in the library. However, what we need to do first is to negotiate the shifts of the restaurant work. Sometimes we cannot reach an agreement, so we fight. In this case, if our mother watches us quarreling on this issue, she will get angry and ask both of us to work in the restaurant as a punishment. At that moment, we start to argue with her claiming that this is unfair. Then she always says that if we don't want to work in the restaurant, then we should make a living by ourselves outside home without asking them for money. (Xia, Family reunification/ Descendant of economic migrant, male, 21 years old)

The complex nature of parent-child relations in Chinese migrant families in Spain goes beyond the traditional roles of reproduction and care, and extends to the productive realm where parents assign work responsibilities to their children. The relationship between work and family should be viewed as intertwined and mutually constitutive. Our interview findings reveal that the majority of Chinese migrant children have worked, or are currently working in their parents' businesses, which are deeply embedded in their daily routines. For instance, Wu assists her parents in their restaurant by serving customers and answering phone calls after school, while Xia and Jun work as waiters and food delivery personnel in the family restaurant. An is employed in her parents' retail store as a salesperson and cashier on weekdays, and assists her father in procurement in Badalona on weekends. Similarly, Wang has worked in his parents' bar on weekends in the past. In this sense, from an exogenous perspective, the self-employed family business functions as a self-contained opportunity structure that limits the youth's exposure to the host society and at times leads to intergenerational conflicts.

In the case of Wu, she claimed that the work in the family restaurant was prioritized in his after-school time: "*My mother usually doesn't allow me to go out at night for the consideration of my safety. My friends and classmates used to invite me to go out at weekends, but these days are usually the busiest time for a restaurant, so I have to work. Though I had many quarrels with my parents about this issue, finally I gave up. Now nobody invites me, and I also feel reluctant to go out.*"

Nevertheless, despite the potential for intergenerational conflicts or family tensions, self-employed family businesses can also serve as an opportunity structure that fosters collaboration and interdependence between parents and children outside of the home environment. Chinese migrants and their descendants often maintain a collaborative family identity to ensure a well-off standard of living in the host society.

For example, Anjia, a 23-year-old girl, after dropping out from the vocational school started to work in her parents' convenience store. She described her responsibility as "*a mouth and ear of the shop*" which refers to guiding customers to the goods they look for and processing payments.

Rui's parents own a traveling agency and an insurance company in Barcelona city which can provide well-off quality of life. His obligation to give a hand to the parents' business also make him gain vocational experience. "*My father trusts me in many cases, so he let me deal with some business issues, such as procedure of opening a company, designing logos and business cards, marketing, etc. Sometimes he asks me to go back to China* with him for business occasion."

In conclusion, the parent-child relationship in Chinese migrant families in Spain is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that extends beyond traditional notions of reproduction and care. Work responsibilities are assigned to children by their parents, and this productive facet of the family should be viewed as integral to the formation of parent-child relations. While self-employed family businesses provide a closed opportunity structure that can constrain young people's exposure to the host society and lead to intergenerational conflicts, they also serve as a means of reinforcing interactions and interdependence between parents and children outside of the home environment.

Cultural factors, such as the deeply ingrained Confucian values of interdependence and sacrificing individual interests for the sake of the group, play a significant role in shaping family dynamics. Family well-being is of great importance, and individual sacrifice for the sake of the family is seen as a necessary obligation (Rozman 2014). This intergenerational contract often involves hard work and the accumulation of capital to pass on to the next generation, which serves to internalize a strong work ethic and familial values in younger generations.

Further research is needed to fully understand the complex nature of parent-child relations in Chinese migrant families in Spain. Nevertheless, the findings from this study emphasize the importance of recognizing the role of work in family dynamics, and the significance of cultural values in shaping these relationships.

6.2. Household Arrangement and Parenting Styles in Newcomers' Families

The experiences of Chinese immigrant families in the host society are not uniform but vary depending on a range of factors, including socioeconomic status, cultural background, migration trajectory, and institutional context. Middle-class families, in particular, occupy a unique position in the migration process, as they often possess higher levels of education, income, and social capital, which enable them to access better resources and services in the host society. However, they also face distinctive challenges and dilemmas in reconciling their middle-class aspirations and cultural values with the realities of the new environment, where they may encounter different norms, expectations, and constraints.

To understand the dynamics of settlement experiences of Chinese middle-class families in Spain, this chapter adopts a relational approach that emphasizes the interdependence and interaction between various actors and factors involved in the migration process. Through a detailed examination of the parents' daily routines, interactions with their children, and decision-making processes, this chapter seeks to illuminate the ways in which they construct and reconstruct their identities, values, and practices in response to the new challenges and opportunities presented by the migration experience.

6.2.1. Jia's Family

I first met Jia in early 2019 when I was working as a Spanish Chinese translator for a Spanish coach and a group of Chinese adolescent players in a football club. Jia had just arrived in Barcelona with her eight-year-old son, hoping to pursue their football dream. We met on a football campus, and I remember her wearing a black Nike jacket and a pair of

fashionable Gucci sneakers. She was thrilled to see another Chinese face in this foreign country and eagerly came over to greet me.

Jia explained that they had come to Spain to provide her child with the best possible opportunities for football and education. Initially, they had no plans for permanent residency and had come to Barcelona under the student visa scheme. Their plan was to transfer the student residence permit into a non-lucrative residence card eventually. However, despite a migration broker's assistance with the process, Jia felt cheated and overcharged on some occasions. She decided to handle all the administrative issues and daily life necessities herself, and that's when she was looking for a Spanish-Chinese translator to deal with communication whenever needed. We exchanged our contacts and kept in touch since then.

Immigrants who hold non-lucrative residence permit are prohibited from engaging in any paid employment in Spain. This means that for Jia, who had migrated to Spain with her 8-year-old son on a student visa, there are very few options to generate income in the country, especially given her limited Spanish language skills. Despite her husband being able to provide financial support from China, Jia feels that her lack of income could become a significant issue in the future, as she used to be an entrepreneur with a restaurant chain in her home country. In order to migrate with her son, Jia had to sell her businesses, and the prospect of not being able to earn money in Spain is a source of great anxiety for her.

Jia's entrepreneurial spirit, however, has not been quelled by the restrictions of her non-lucrative residence permit. To generate some income in Spain, she has taken up work as a *Daigou*, a kind of personal shopping service for Chinese clients looking to purchase luxury goods abroad. At the same time, she invests in a shop selling second-hand luxury bags in her city of origin, through which she can accumulate new sources of clients for her *Daigou* business. This means that Jia is often found in high-end shops on Passeig De Gracia or La Roca Village, or busy communicating with her clients on WeChat. Even when she is cooking dinner for her son in the kitchen, Jia remains on her phone, checking the details of shipping and communicating with her business partners in China.

Ziyang's athletic and thin build, coupled with his tanned skin, indicates his unwavering passion for football. Despite his apparent athletic prowess, he is a reserved and timid child, grappling with language barriers and cultural differences in his new environment. To help

him adapt better to the new country and educational system, he is enrolled in an international private school in Sant Just Desvern, where foreign students from non-English/Spanish speaking countries are required to take a one-year welcome class. The class aims to provide language and cultural orientation during school time. However, Jia is dissatisfied with this arrangement and feels that it is a waste of her child's time as she laments, "*What they do [in the welcome class] every day is playing games without learning any knowledge. But the rest of his own group is studying maths, English, science in class.*"

Jia's concern about her son's education reflects a common challenge faced by many Chinese immigrant families, namely navigating the educational landscape of the host country. While educational institutions strive to provide support for students from diverse backgrounds, there may still be gaps in meeting the unique needs of each student. The language barrier, in particular, can be a significant obstacle to learning and social integration. However, Jia's proactive involvement in her child's education and her persistence in seeking out appropriate resources demonstrates her commitment to providing her child with the best possible opportunities.

Jia is a highly attentive and devoted mother who places her child's needs above everything else. She maintains an open line of communication with her son, regularly discussing his experiences at school and any issues he might be facing in class. When Ziyang feels excluded or struggles to keep up with his classmates, Jia proactively brings up these concerns with the school and even enlists the help of others, such as me, as her translator to advocate on her child's behalf.

Jia's commitment to her son's education and athletic pursuits is unwavering. She organizes and coordinates a busy schedule for him, balancing his football training, personal tutoring, and weekend matches. Given their location in Sant Just Desvern and the distance to these activities, Jia often spends considerable time and resources driving her son to and from his commitments. While also managing her own business endeavors, Jia prioritizes her son's education and ensures that he has every opportunity to succeed in his studies and football pursuits.

6.2.2. Changhua's Family

Changhua and her family left their Southern coastal city in China to start a new life in Spain. As an artist and professor in China, Changhua is able to maintain both of these occupations in her homeland while living in Spain. In 2018, she arrived in Barcelona with a *Golden Visa* along with her husband and 8-year-old son. However, several months later, she got divorced, and since then, she has been living alone with her son in their new country.

I met Changhua at an event held by the Chinese Consulate of Barcelona, where she wore a beautiful Bohemian long dress and light blue eye shadows. She was tired of hearing the empty rhetoric of politicians and officials at the event and came to talk to me, and that is how we got in touch with this newly arrived artist and her family.

Changhua's migration to Spain was driven by two identities of hers, as an artist and a mother. As an artist, she feels that only the social, cultural, and historical milieu of Europe can supply artists with the nutrients that enhance creativity and encourage the creation of vanguard arts. As a mother and a university professor, she holds a negative attitude towards China's educational system and ideology. She says, "*I've worked in Chinese educational system for over ten years, nearly twenty years. As long as I see, this system can hardly be changed in a short period.*"

However, the European model of childrearing and education fascinates her much more than that of China. She believes in the European philosophy of education, saying: "*I agree with the European philosophy of education. When children are still little, like the age of kindergarten or the first grade in elementary school, there is no need to leave them too much homework or pressure on study. They (Europeans) take the development of an individual as a long-term mission.*"

Despite many unsupportive voices surrounding her decision to emigrate, Changhua insisted on leaving China with her son and starting a new chapter in their lives in an European country.

While many middle-class parents in the area are scrambling to enroll their children in prestigious and competitive private schools, Changhua took a different approach. She chose to enroll her son in a local public school immediately after their immigration to Spain. As expected, there was hardly any homework after school during the first year. However, to her surprise, her son became excited every time he had an assignment to do and was able

to complete it on his own. Changhua was pleased with the educational system because neither the school nor her son put pressure on her regarding his studies.

During the weekdays, Changhua relishes her freedom and dedicates her time to painting and other artistic pursuits, but once her son finishes school, her attention turns towards him. With football training three times a week, she watches him play from the sidelines, occasionally playing with him a little longer after the session ends. On the weekends, she organizes leisure activities such as hiking or day trips to other towns outside of Barcelona, believing it's essential to spend quality time with her child, especially in nature. To earn some extra money, she sometimes works as an art teacher in a Chinese language school on the weekends. However, unlike Jia, she doesn't adhere to a strict schedule for activities and work.

Pablo, Changhua's son, is an independent and confident young boy who is always eager to show me around his constantly expanding Lego world whenever I visit them. He takes pride in himself as an important pillar for the family, being the only male at home and feeling responsible for taking care of his mother. It's common to see him using his exceptional verbal and reasoning skills with his mother and even passing judgment on adults.

Their home is a two-story apartment located in a Romani-ethnic concentrated area in Nou Barris. Unfortunately, just like Jia, Changhua was also cheated by her real estate broker and overcharged by over 60% in the purchase of this property. With no more savings for further investment, they are forced to stay in this area despite their numerous complaints about the security and hygiene issues in the neighbourhood. For now, they have no plans to move out.

6.2.3. Concerted Cultivation in Chinese Middle-class Immigrant Families

The emerging cohort of Chinese immigrants in Spain, facilitated by the *Golden Visa* and non-lucrative residence visa programs, embodies a rising middle class within China. This group encompasses individuals who hold permanent residency in Tier-1[10] cities like

[10] In China, the term "tier-1 city" is commonly used to categorize the largest and most economically developed cities in the country. These cities are typically major economic and financial centers and are characterized by their high levels of urbanization and economic activity.

Beijing and Shanghai, where they possess moderately-sized apartments in fashionable neighborhoods and own personal vehicles. Many others come from the emerging New Tier 1 cities, such as Wuhan and Tianjin, which are characterised by rapid urbanisation. These migrants often have multiple property holdings and investments in equities. Irrespective of their visa category, whether *Golden Visa* or non-lucrative residence permit, this collective shows shared international consumption patterns. For example, all of the *Golden Visa* respondents had travelled to Europe and other countries before making the decision to migrate. A further common thread is their substantial investment in their children's education and personal development, as evidenced by a significant commitment of financial, emotional and cultural resources. Prior to migration, they were accustomed to purchasing foreign luxury goods, ranging from high-end branded bags to everyday cosmetics of international origin. This spending behaviour reflects their identity, but also creates a sense of anxiety due to constant comparison with their middle-class peers and concerns about the stability of the economic and political climate in China.

Lareau (2003) suggests that middle-class parents tend to engage in more-intensive *concerted cultivation* practices when it comes to childrearing. This approach is labor-intensive and time-consuming, as parents not only arrange a busy schedule of organised activities for their children, but also get highly involved in their school activities, extracurriculars, and social events. During this process of arranging a child-centred family life, middle-class parents "*actively foster and assess child's talents, opinions, and skills*" and "*stress the importance of reasoning with children and teaching them to solve problems through negotiation rather than with physical force*". Moreover, their parental involvement is highly visible in institutions such as schools and extracurricular establishments, as they are more likely than their working-class counterparts to advocate for their children with these institutions. However, while these hallmarks of concerted cultivation are also prevalent in Chinese middle-class migrant families, there may be some variations in their implementation.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the concept of *educational gospel* (Ma, 2020) has prompted many Chinese middle-class families to migrate to Spain in search of alternative educational pathways. This is in response to the intense pressure and competition that children face within China's exam-oriented educational system and ultra-

competitive cultural environment. In contrast, the more relaxed parenting style and child-rearing philosophy in Europe is often seen as a more desirable alternative.

Many Chinese middle-class parents in Spain, like Changhua, do not arrange private tutoring for their children and prefer to spend more time and money on leisure activities such as playing and traveling with them. While they may not structure their family life around a busy schedule of organized activities, they engage in extensive verbal conversation with their children at home to reason and negotiate. They are also actively involved in their children's formal and informal activities, providing emotional warmth and support. For example, Changhua always sits beside the football campus and watches Pablo train.

In contrast to the ultra-competitive cultural milieu and exam-oriented educational system in China, many Chinese middle-class parents who migrated to Spain pursue a less competitive educational system for their children, while still actively cultivating and assessing their talents, skills, and potentials through various leisure activities, including online courses, private tutoring, musical instruments, and sports. Jia, for instance, acknowledges the relaxed parenting style in Spain but still invests in tutoring and online math classes for her son Ziyang to keep up with the advanced mathematical knowledge that Chinese children are obligated to absorb in China. Other Chinese middle-class parents in Spain share the same concern and are also interested in enrolling their children in STEM courses, such as online courses for Math Kangaroo, an international math competition.

While Jia's parenting style seems more intensive and busier, both Jia and Changhua's families share the hallmark of concerted cultivation, where parents actively foster and assess their children's talents and skills and stress the importance of reasoning and problem-solving through negotiation. Despite the differences in their daily routines, the motivations for leaving China and the desire to provide their children with the best possible education have led both families to adopt a more intentional approach to parenting.

6.2.4. Intensive parenting and self-crisis after migration

Sharon Hays defines the process of child rearing in *intensive mothering* approach as "*child-centered, expert-guided, emotionally absorbing, labor intensive, and financially expensive*" (Hays 1996:8). This childrearing style is also conventionally practiced within

newly arrived Chinese middle-class families in Spain, both by mothers and fathers, by which I would name it as *intensive parenting*.

This intensive parenting has roots in their deep concern on middle-class entitlement. As an up-and-coming social class, this group of immigrants are main beneficiary who reaped profits of China's rapidly increased economic and political ascendancy, under which their individual upward social mobility has been accordingly fulfilled. Nevertheless, their upward mobility has been developed under a cultural logic of market economy which is subject to social class and associated dispositions mainly displayed by financial resources and social capital. In my field study, I observed that under this cultural ideology there are two main sources of anxiety and self-crisis perceived by this group of middle-class parents, which are: 1) economic insecurity after migration, and 2) loss of social recognition after migration in the new country.

Regarding economic insecurity, both migrant mothers and fathers share a common concern. Despite the fact that many Chinese middle-class immigrants can support their children in a European country without engaging in any paid employment, they do not identify as wealthy individuals with an exaggerated amount of wealth or political power. Instead, they consider themselves as "middle class" as they lack access to the political or economic resources at the top of the social hierarchy. Most of them achieved their upward mobility through education, work, small businesses, and investments in property or the stock market in China. Migration to Spain offers a relatively affordable option for transnational childrearing, but intensive parenting necessitates a substantial amount of time and money. As a result, due to institutional and language barriers, many Chinese middle-class parents gradually become anxious about their inability to generate new sources of income and earn a living once they leave China, particularly in the aftermath of the pandemic. Thus, many newly arrived middle-class parents experience a deeply rooted sense of anxiety and self-crisis. For example, Jia engages in Daigou businesses out of desperation because she believes that "*there is no job for her in Spain*"; Changhua and some other mothers in my field study choose to work in Chinese language schools on weekends, as well as other parents work in part-time jobs at Chinese-owned bars and manicure salons on weekdays when their children are in school.

It is important to note that while economic insecurity may not be a concern for all Chinese middle-class immigrants, international migration is often a privilege reserved for those with a certain level of social and economic capital. However, despite their relative privilege, middle-class immigrants may still experience a sense of loss or displacement when they leave behind the social and cultural contexts in which they were previously recognized and valued. For many middle-class immigrants, the desire for social and self-recognition in their new country is a driving force behind their efforts to establish themselves in their new environment. This can take many forms, such as Jia's dedication to building her business in Spain. In addition to providing economic security, her business is also a means of improving her perceived value as a productive member of society. Another migrant father who came with *Golden Visa* said:

> *If you are not tough enough, you may really get depresión (depression in Spanish) [after migration], very probably… many times you feel helpless here. After you go abroad, you can't even catch up with an illiterate person. That's true. This is not an underestimation. Illiterate people can speak at least. Although they can't read, they have no problem communicating with the others. Here [in Spain] you can't read, and you can't even talk to people, worse than illiterate people. So how do you live? How can you make money here? You don't want to eat bitterness either, do you?* (Xionghan, Middle-class migrant, male, 51 years old)

To sum up, the experiences of Chinese middle-class parents in Spain reveal that their family life and parenting style undergo significant transformations after migration. Their intensive parenting style reflects a stratified Chinese community in Spain, where old settlers' families cannot provide for their families without engaging in remunerative jobs. In contrast, Chinese economic migrants dedicate themselves fully to productive work, including reproductive work such as childrearing, and family time is deeply integrated into their economic production through family-owned ethnic businesses.

However, despite their privileged means of migration, many Chinese middle-class parents face economic insecurity and a sense of self-crisis, particularly in the aftermath of the pandemic. Due to institutional and language barriers, they worry about their inability to earn money and generate new sources of income. To overcome these challenges, they

often turn to entrepreneurial activities and take up part-time jobs. Therefore, while migration provides new opportunities for Chinese middle-class families, it also poses challenges and pressures that require them to constantly adapt and navigate new environments.

7. Conclusions

7.1 Main findings

This research has the important objective of providing a comprehensive overview of Chinese migration in Spain to fill up the existing knowledge gaps about Chinese migration in Spain. A central focus of this study is to examine the transformation and internal diversification of Chinese migration in Spain. Therefore, the research question "*How has Chinese migration to Spain evolved since the 1980s and what are the main typologies observed today?*" remains a central investigation in this study.

In order to answer this question, the present study embarks on a thorough exploration of the social, economic, political and historical factors that have shaped this migratory phenomenon, ultimately identifying two distinct chronological phases within this migration: 1) from the late 1980s to 2013, and 2) from 2013 to the present.

In the first phase of Chinese migration to Spain, the country was seen as a 'treasure trove', a promising destination for economic opportunities, with many migrants pursuing a 'golden dream' (Zhou 1992). During this period, Spain experienced significant social and economic changes following its accession to the European Community (now the EU) in 1986, resulting in policy changes that promoted a more open and inclusive migration landscape. At the same time, China was undergoing economic reforms and opening up to the world, which for the first time recognised emigration from China as a legitimate right of Chinese citizens and allowed ordinary people to apply for passports.

Changes in migration policy have played a crucial role in Chinese migration to Spain in recent decades. The introduction of Law 14/2013 marked a new chapter in the history of Chinese migration, beginning the second stage in which Spain became a 'wonderland' for Chinese immigrants. This stage was characterised by two intertwined social realities: an economically stagnant Spain recovering from the financial crisis, and a growing urban middle class in China amid rapid urbanisation and economic development. The *Golden Visa* scheme linked these two social realities, as it did in other EU countries (Gaspar 2019).

To fully analyse the Chinese community in Spain within the context of changing historical trends, this research utilises a social class framework to categorise Chinese immigrants into two main groups: *economic migrants* and *middle-class migrants*. The *middle-class migrant group* is then subdivided into two distinct subcategories: *middle-class family migrants* and *student migrants*. This classification is based on the dominant understanding of a crucial moment in migration policy reform. The approach enables a detailed study of numerous facets of Chinese migration in Spain, including noteworthy migration flows, adaptation techniques and differentiated socio-economic features among diverse migrant clusters. This methodology furnishes a comprehensive perspective to investigate the complex nature of Chinese migration in Spain.

The initial period, spanning from the 1980s to 2013, saw a surge in economic migration. Prior investigations reveal that migrants from Zhejiang Province in China were the dominant group in this wave of migration, though more varied origins arrived in Spain over time (Beltrán 2003, 2009). Economic migrants were motivated by the prospect of enhanced financial prospects, and consequently, worked arduously in adverse conditions to amass savings promptly and establish their own family-run enterprises.

In the second stage of Chinese migration to Spain, which aligns with the ascent of China as an economic and geopolitical force, migratory patterns are shaped by consumerist features and the globalization of the migration industry. Apart from economic compulsion, the choice to relocate to Spain is guided by a multifaceted range of motivations, including anxiety and uncertainty about China's economic, political and educational climate. Furthermore, the commercialization of international migration has extensively contributed to this migration trend. Professionals and intermediaries in migration offer comprehensive services that significantly ease the migration process for Chinese investors and students.

In addition to exploring the internal diversification of the Chinese community in Spain, this study aims to analyse their spatial distribution and residential patterns. Using the Barcelona Metropolitan Region (BMR) as a case study, the research question "What are the spatial distribution and residential patterns of the Chinese population in Spain?" has been addressed. Overall, the results identified a decline in residential concentration and segregation, alongside a greater geographical scattering of Chinese residents in BMR.

Initially, the study computes the location quotient (LQ) and index of segregation (IS) for Chinese citizens in every municipality within the Barcelona Metropolitan Region. These metrics are then used to evaluate the extent of residential concentration and segregation among Chinese immigrants in the area, respectively.

The residential concentration of Chinese nationals in Catalonia, Spain, has undergone changes from 2005 to 2020. Despite the absolute population of Chinese nationals increasing in all twenty municipalities examined, their level of residential concentration does not align with population growth. In fact, the traditional Chinese-concentrated municipalities of Santa Coloma de Gramanet, Mataró, and Badalona experienced a significant decline in the residential concentration of Chinese nationals. This may be due to the stagnant inflow of newcomers after the economic crisis and the outward residential dispersion of old settlers. Enclave economies played an essential role in the residential concentration of Chinese nationals in these municipalities, particularly Santa Coloma de Gramanet, which has been a Chinese immigration hub for over a decade. However, the rise of a new component of ethnic businesses, such as garment factories and workshops, has led to a dispersion of Chinese immigrants into other sectors or municipalities for more business opportunities.

On the other hand, there has been a substantial growth in the level of residential concentration of Chinese nationals in Sant Adrià de Besòs, Hospitalet de Llobregat, and Montgat. The enclave economy of Chinese immigrants is still prevailing in peripheral areas like Sant Adrià de Besòs and Hospitalet de Llobregat, where many Chinese-run businesses have been observed. However, the migratory patterns of Chinese population in Montgat differ from those in previous cases. Montgat is known as a middle to upper-class neighborhood, famous for its beaches, good public services, infrastructure, and educational resources. Many Chinese parents choose to relocate here because of the seaside villas and proximity to the internationally renowned Hamelin Laie International School. Although the absolute population of Chinese immigrants in Montgat is still modest, the burgeoning presence of Chinese newcomers and their accompanying real estate investment is likely to shape urban morphology in this area. These findings suggest a trend of residential dispersion of Chinese immigrants from the traditional Chinese-concentrated municipalities into other neighboring or peripheral areas.

Moreover, this study also examines the trends and patterns of residential segregation among Chinese nationals in the Barcelona Metropolitan Region between 2008 and 2020 by using index of segregation (IS). The findings indicate that while some municipalities, such as Santa Coloma de Gramanet and Montgat, have experienced a significant increase in the level of residential segregation of Chinese nationals, other municipalities, such as Hospitalet de Llobregat, Barcelona, and Badalona, have witnessed a considerable decline in segregation. This decline may be attributed to the dispersion of Chinese immigrants to new locations with lower concentrations of ethnic counterparts and fewer co-ethnic business competitors. The empirical findings suggest several potential explanations for this phenomenon. Firstly, the saturation of Chinese-owned businesses in highly concentrated municipalities may have prompted immigrants to explore new opportunities in areas with fewer co-ethnic residents, particularly in industries like ethnic catering where entrepreneurs are prone to relocate to minimize competition. Secondly, the reduced level of residential segregation implies a heightened level of social integration for Chinese immigrants within the host society. Lastly, the influx of newcomers with diverse socio-economic backgrounds has contributed to varied localization strategies, leading to settlement in a broader spectrum of residential locations beyond the traditional Chinese-concentrated areas.

Building on the typologies of Chinese immigrants set out in the previous chapter, this study delves deeper into the unique settlement preferences and location strategies of distinct migrant groups.

Initially, this research uncovers considerable differences in the living arrangements of economic migrants, particularly those who have arrived recently in the Barcelona Metropolitan Area. In this context, economic migrants typically migrate to the established ethnic economic hubs, namely Santa Coloma de Gramenet and Badalona, which serve as their primary point of entry into the region. Co-ethnic employers frequently provide these migrants with accommodation and sustenance, resulting in a concentration of Chinese nationals in these ethnic economies. Chinese entrepreneurs generally relocate their businesses and homes to areas with fewer Chinese residents in order to avoid competition with co-ethnic entrepreneurs. This pattern has led to their geographical expansion outward

to peripheral areas, resulting in an ever-changing relocation trend of Chinese workers who follow business locations or are attracted to locate beside them.

On the other hand, middle-class migrants display distinct relocation and residential preferences compared to economic migrants. In particular, middle-class families tend to choose local middle-class neighbourhoods, which are often situated outside of traditional Chinese-concentrated municipalities. Their settlement choices are significantly influenced by the availability and proximity of reputable and high-quality schools in the vicinity. Chinese middle-class families value properties located in close proximity to their desired school, especially private international schools like Hamelin International School in Montgat, American School, and La Miranda in Sant Just Desvern, which have recently experienced a significant increase of middle-class newcomers.

In light of their desire to live near university campuses, student migrants may find their options for on-campus accommodation limited. As a result, many opt to secure off-campus apartment rooms. This alternative allows them more control in deciding their preferred location, housemates, and accommodation budget.

In essence, the acquisition of knowledge about the diverse migration routes and living preferences of Chinese migrants in Barcelona reveals the complex connection between migration and urban development. Furthermore, it highlights the role of migration policies and intermediary agencies in shaping the cityscape. Overall, the findings suggest a trend towards Chinese nationals assimilating and integrating into the local communities of the Barcelona Metropolitan Region, potentially leading to improved community cohesion and social integration.

However, it is important to note that migration brokerage agencies, encompassing migration companies, real estate agencies, and commercial educational brokers, play a crucial role in helping Chinese middle-class migrants settle and adapt. These agencies provide all-round services for emigrants from China, both prior to and after migration. Nonetheless, it remains uncertain to what degree these agencies influence the housing choices and relocation plans of middle-class migrants, underscoring the need for additional research.

Furthermore, this study delves into the dynamics of parent-child relationships within Chinese immigrant families, focusing on the two main Chinese migrant groups. It

addresses the final research question: *How do family relationships between Chinese parents and their children evolve post-migration, and what are the parenting styles adopted by Chinese immigrant families, particularly within the two major migrant groups?* Chapter 6 is dedicated to this subject, providing an in-depth exploration of the family typologies established in preceding chapters.

By taking into account the socio-economic status of these families, the study sheds light on the distinct challenges faced by families of economic migrants and those of middle-class Chinese immigrants. These challenges encompass navigating the complexities of adaptation, bridging cultural disparities, striking a balance between academic expectations and emotional well-being, and navigating the intricate educational landscape in Spain.

The findings indicate that economic migrant families experience a tension between work and family, with parents working excessively and having limited time for family activities. Conversely, older Chinese settlers center their family life around family-run businesses, with all family members serving as essential laborers. This interdependence creates a strong bond and intergenerational relationship, centered around productive work. Additionally, the limited Spanish and Catalan language skills and low educational levels of migrant parents often result in scarce involvement in their children's schooling. Consequently, many Chinese migrant children are reported to exhibit emotional distance from their parents.

In contrast to the family life of previous settlers, the migration experiences of newly arrived individuals present unique features regarding their migratory paths and family dynamics after migration. Firstly, their decision to migrate is mostly motivated by a child-oriented mindset. This study shows that numerous individuals who choose to migrate to Spain under the *Golden Visa* and non-lucrative residence visa schemes do so due to the fierce competition in education in China. The decision to relocate to Spain was driven by the search for a more humane and child-friendly educational system for their children.

Additionally, old settlers' daily routines centre on work and family-run businesses, which differ from the lifestyle of newcomers. Newcomer parents often adopt an "*intensive parenting*" approach (Hays, 1996) after arriving in their new country. Their daily routines focus on their children's education, extracurricular activities, tutoring, and socializing with other families. They typically socialize with families of their children's classmates. In

contrast to parent-child relationships in families of old settlers, Chinese middle-class parents who immigrate to Spain under capital-linked visas are more likely to employ "*concerted cultivation*" (Lareau, 2003) in their new country, where their family structures are greatly influenced by their children's educational and developmental requirements.

In conclusion, this study highlights the dynamic and multifaceted nature of the Chinese migration phenomenon. The waves of Chinese migration to Spain reflect the changing global economic landscape, which has led to the emergence of new forms of global mobility and the emergence of transnational social fields. The shift from traditional forms of migration driven by poverty and political upheaval to modern forms of migration driven by education, development, and middle-class aspirations, underscores the complexity and diversity of Chinese migration.

7.2 Contribution to State of the Art

This study incorporated diverse types of migration based on different schools of theories on migration studies into the same empirical sample of Chinese migration to Spain (Massey et al. 1993; Benson and O'Raily 2009; Hayes 2018; De Haas 2021). Because the emergence of different waves of Chinese immigrants to Spain across the socio-economic spectrum provided a good empirical tool to evaluate explanatory strengths of each school of migration theory. For example, in the present study 'lifestyle migration' (Benson and O'Raily 2009) was not plausible enough to define Chinese immigrants who came under the capital-linked visa schemes. Beyond aspiration for new lifestyles, most of the investor migrants or non-lucrative residence holders interviewed in the study expressed a child-centered narratives on migration motivations. Even their settlement and staying in the host country has been carried out surrounding educational incentives and development for the next generation. It is noteworthy that existing migration theories may prove insufficient in addressing or explaining this particular case.

Other related notions include 'retirement migration' (King et al. 1998) and 'amenity-seeking migration' (Mitchell 2004) whose explanatory strengths are not applicable enough in this study. Beyond these traditional categories, 'middle-class migration' has greater explanatory strengths in this study. This notion is developed based on social disposition of newly arrived Chinese immigrants and could include a vast majority of newcomers since

2013 to Spain. Not only do those who came under capital-linked migration policy belong to this category, but also students, professionals and other non-working-class migrants share similar dispositions.

This study contributes to the under-explored Chinese migration to Spain. Firstly, the group of newly arrived immigrants who came under *Golden Visa* and non-lucrative residence visa schemes is under-researched. Existing scholar works comprehensively tackled the group of Chinese immigrants whose arrival was mainly fueled by economic necessities, since they indeed contributed a vast majority of Chinese population in the host country and had a relatively longer history of migration and extended period of staying (Nieto 2003; Beltrán 2003, 2009; Sáiz 2005). Nevertheless, given an increased inflow of Chinese nationals in Spain whose migration motivations were diverse and different from that of previous old settlers, this research gap should be filled up. Therefore, the present study intended to expand the overall understanding of Chinese immigrants from an ethnic entrepreneur-entered public image to a series of diverse portraits.

Based on aspirations-capabilities framework (De Haas 2021), this study provided an empirical approach to understand Chinese migration to Spain with regard to questions of *who* managed to migrate, *why* they migrated, under *what* social historical conditions they left, and *how* they migrated and settled down in the receiving country. The present study showed that this framework has explanatory strengths in unpacking the initial and continuity of Chinese migration to Spain with regard to socioeconomic stratum of migrant groups during the last four decades.

In addition, parent-child relations in Chinese immigrant families still consist of one of the most salient knowledge gaps, despite a few existing research addressing generational issues in traditional Chinese economic migrants' families (Sáiz 2012; Robles-Llana 2018; Masdeu 2020; Lamas-Abraira 2019). In 2018 I studied this topic as a first approach (He 2018), but the sample of the previous study had its limitations because the sample selected previously was greatly configured by family-run ethnic businesses. The present study therefore integrated another profile of Chinese immigrant families whose childrearing styles are totally different. By comparing parenting styles and family lives under both profiles, a complete set of class-specific differences between old settlers' families and that of newcomers were presented in an explicit way.

Another contribution worth mentioning is study on residential concentration and segregation of Chinese population in Spain. The 'migration boom' in Spain in 2000s led to three main geo demographic changes: 1) Residential segregation between local population and immigrants; 2) Residential concentration of immigrant groups; and 3) Increased diversification of the total population in Spain (Galeano 2016). In this study, it has been observed a prominent residential concentration of Chinese immigrants in a certain municipality. Nevertheless, it was indeed interesting to see that their residential segregation demonstrated a considerably low level, despite a high level of residential concentration of Chinese nationals in these areas. One of the explanations is the fact that Chinese-owned businesses are predominantly embedded in urban economies, notably in service sector, and heavily rely on local clientele. With regard to geographical proximity, Chinese immigrants would settle down in local communities and develop their businesses and life geographically integrated with local neighbourhoods. Therefore, this spatial and residential landscape challenge a conventional understanding of 'ethnic enclave' (Zhou 2004) and 'Ghettoisation/Chinatown' literacy (Zhou 1992) based on ethnic entrepreneurship in the U.S context. More specifically, the fact that an ethnic group has prominently concentrated in a certain area doesn't necessarily lead to residential segregation with local communities.

Another significant contribution in this study with regard to immigrant families included two main aspects. Firstly, I provided empirical data on migrant parents as well as migrant children to unpack parent-child relations and family life of Chinese nationals in Spain, which was under explored in existing scholar studies. Secondly, I incorporated a class-specific approach to understand to what extent social class could affect parent-child interactions, childrearing strategies, subjective wellbeing and way of living after migration.

This study also broadened a conventional understanding of global childrearing realities in terms of gendered division of labor. On the one hand, it is still prevailing to see a traditional gendered division of family arrangement in Chinese middle-class migrant families in Spain; that is, with a relatively high proportion of 'astronaut mothers' that also prevailed in other traditional Chinese-immigrant receiving countries (Waters 2005; Waters 2010), Chinese mothers are more likely to live with children in the host country, while fathers provide for family in the homeland country. On the other hand, in this study I also observed significant presence of Chinese migrant fathers who actively shouldered the

responsibilities of childrearing and household chores in the host country. They settle down in Spain without having to engage in any remunerative work and then take an active role in childrearing and family work. This reality doesn't necessarily imply having achieved gender equality of family responsibilities amid Chinese middle-class family migration, but it provided an alternative reality that contradicted traditional Confucian gendered division on family responsibilities.

Furthermore, a substantial contribution of this study lies in its deliberate effort to include a significant portion of Chinese narratives, effectively giving a voice to those who have traditionally been voiceless. The Chinese community in Spain has long faced challenges related to language barriers, which have created a sense of estrangement and made them difficult to engage with. However, through an extensive series of in-depth interviews conducted in Chinese and participant observations embedded within their daily lives, this research has successfully assembled a rich repository of first-hand empirical data. This collection of data not only underscores the originality and authenticity of Chinese migration experiences, both historical and contemporary, in Spain but also contributes significantly to broadening our understanding of this complex social phenomenon.

7.3 Limitations and Future Research

This study encountered certain empirical and theoretical limitations. On an empirical plane, the absence of official data sources constituted a significant constraint. To illustrate, the identification of the cohort of Chinese newcomers classified as 'middle-class family migrants' necessitated access to official statistics encompassing the annual count of Chinese nationals entering Spain under the categories of *Golden Visa* and non-lucrative residence visa. Regrettably, annually updated data pertaining to these visa types, as disseminated by the Spanish government, was lacking. The study could only draw upon relevant figures sporadically present in select annual reports. Considering these limitations, a heightened emphasis on data transparency, publication, and accessibility is earnestly advocated for.

In addition, as with theoretical limitations, this study could have expanded further its lines of inquiry from horizontal and vertical perspectives. The horizontal perspective refers to a broader diversification within each category of the Chinese migrant groups. This

research has roughly divided inflows of Chinese immigrants into merely two groups based on socio-economic stratification. Nevertheless, within each social group — economic migrants and middle-class migrants — it is possible to identify various subgroups whose social class and its concomitant constraints and advantages are intrinsically different. For example, the present study categorised investor migrants and non-lucrative residence visa holders into the same subgroup, namely *middle-class family migrants*. Nevertheless, given a considerable difference of capital requirement under these two visa schemes, immigrants indeed identified themselves differently with regard to their purchasing power and socio-economic status. For example, some non-lucrative residence visa holders without having purchased property in Spain believed that they were not as rich as investor migrants, because they still lived in a rented apartment and even they couldn't afford tuition fee in a private international school for their children. Thus, it would be interesting to ask in the future research: to what extent do golden-visa holders differ from those who came under non-lucrative residence visa in terms of migratory trajectories and settlement strategies?

Furthermore, it is imperative that future research refines the delineation of student migrants. Indeed, this classification could be perceived as somewhat tenuous among Chinese students, as not all those providing information identified themselves as 'migrants' or 'immigrants'. The rationale behind categorizing the cohort of Chinese students in Spain as a subset of middle-class migrants primarily rested on the social status of their families in their country of origin. These young individuals, who embarked on their journey to Spain with the objective of acquiring educational credentials, can genuinely be likened to their middle-class counterparts who arrived via the *Golden Visa* policy and the non-lucrative residence scheme. This alignment arises from their shared socioeconomic circumstances, which typically enable them to entrust the entirety of their migratory undertakings to intermediary agencies. The nature of these agencies is predominantly grounded in a straightforward market logic. Both groups rely extensively on the transnational commodification of the migration industry and the internationalization of social reproduction. It is important to note that this categorization is a provisional solution. In forthcoming studies, there exists the potential for a more precisely defined subgroup to be established for this particular influx of newcomers.

In addition to middle-class migrants, the group of economic migrants is not a homogenous whole either. Within the group of economic migrants, the internal differentiation between ethnic entrepreneurs and Chinese labourer workers is also worth more thorough inquiry. To sum up, grounded in the present categorisation of Chinese immigrants in Spain in this study, future research can systematically build more categories and migrant groups.

In addition to the vertical perspective, the exploration of 'time and temporality' (Cwerner 2001; Griffiths et al. 2013; King and Della 2020) in the context of Chinese migration to Spain holds promising prospects for future research. While the present study engages with the dimension of 'time and temporality' at a macro level, investigating the mechanism of Chinese migration within the broader context of social history, transformative dynamics, and political economy of both nations, a more nuanced micro-level examination is warranted. This micro-level exploration of 'time and temporality' would provide a deeper understanding of individual trajectories, the ebb and flow of mobility and immobility, and the cyclical pathways between the origin and host countries. Such an investigation is crucial as migration, whether undertaken by economic migrants or middle-class migrants, transcends the linear concept of geographical relocation from the home country to the destination country culminating in permanent settlement. The factor of ‘time’ makes a great deal of differences within all the migrant groups of Chinese immigrants. For example, the period of legitimate residency for investor migrants and non-lucrative residents is different, which leads to different strategies of staying and settlement in the host country. More concretely, to maintain an investor residence permit it is not mandatory for residence holders to stay in Spain for extended periods each year. On the contrary, non-lucrative residence permit holders are not allowed to leave outside of Spain for over a half year. This institutional difference on residency indeed determines many aspects of post-migration life within the same group of middle-class family migrants, such as transnational (im)mobilities, integration with the mainstream society, etc. Therefore, I would like to call for more attention on the perspective of ‘time and temporality’ for further reflection.

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Appendices

1. Consent Form (English translation)

Dear participant,

I am Yuelu He, a PhD student at the Faculty of Sociology of the University of Barcelona, and I would like to invite you to take part in my PhD thesis on "*Chinese Migration and Their Families in Spain: A Case Study on Barcelona*". The study aims to gain a deeper understanding of Chinese migration and family change in Spain through in-depth interviews. The interviews will be about 60 minutes long and will cover your experience of migration, the process of moving to Spain and the changes brought about by that migration. The interview will be recorded, but all the results will be encrypted so that no one but the researcher will have access to your personally identifiable information. Participation in this study will not bring you any direct benefits, but it will be of great scientific value for the study of the Chinese immigrant population, and I will be happy to inform you of the final results of the study if you wish to know them.

Name:

Email:

Phone number:

Are you volunteering to participate in this study?

Yes □

No □

2. Interview guides (English Translation)

MigraSalud's project (with selected interview questions adapted for use in the present study)

1. Introduction

The MigraSalud team would like to thank you for your participation in this interview. The information from our conversation today will be recorded in order to be able to analyse

later how the well-being and health of migrants in Spain in general is. The aim of this interview is to gain new knowledge on the subject, as well as to better understand the stress and social discrimination processes involved.

Any information you choose to share with me will be kept strictly confidential. This interview is completely voluntary. You may stop the interview at any time if you feel it is necessary.

Before we begin our conversation, we will ask you a few brief socio-demographic questions. The information provided will be used in a general way, never using specific information that could identify you individually.

2. Socio-demographic questions

1) How old are you?
2) How long have you been living in Spain (answer between 0-5 years)?
3) compulsory)
4) What is your country of origin?
5) What part of the country do you come from, and is your culture different from the rest of the country?
6) What is your gender? HINT: What is the gender with which you identify?
7) identify with? For example, male (cisgender), female (cisgender), I was born male, but I feel female or vice versa (transgender), I feel neither male nor female (agender), sometimes I feel male and sometimes female (gender fluid) etc....
8) What is your marital status (PLEASE CHOOSE: single, married, separated, divorced, widowed, widower, other)?
9) Do you have children? How many children do you have?
10) What is your level of education? (PLEASE CHOOSE: primary schools, middle school, high school, high school, college, university, other).
11) high school, high school, high school, college not completed, college completed, master's degree, doctorate, other).
12) Can you tell me in a couple of sentences what hobbies you have and what things you like?

3. Working in Spain

1) What is your legal status?

2) Do you currently work in Spain?
3) What is your occupation? That is, what is your occupation?
4) What is your current occupation (PLEASE CHOOSE: full time employee, part time employee, unemployed, unemployed, etc.)?
5) full-time employed, part-time employed, unemployed looking for work, unemployed not looking for work, student, retired, responsible for the household, self-employed, incapacity for work (due to disability, accident at work, physical/psychological illness).
6) Do you feel fulfilled in your job?
7) Tell me about your experience of getting a job in Spain. Have you
8) Did you have any difficulties?
9) What did you do in your country of origin?
10) I know this question may be difficult to answer, but could you please tell us approximately what your monthly salary is (PLEASE CHOOSE: less than 600 euros, between 600 euros and 1,000 euros, between 1,000 and 1,500 euros, between 1,500 euros and 2,000 euros or more than 2,000 euros).

4. The journey to Spain

First of all, I would like to talk about how you arrived in Spain. I am interested in hearing about the journey and/or the way to Spain.

1) What was the reason that led you to migrate?
2) What expectations did you have when you decided to migrate?
3) Within Spain, where have you lived? (Explore internal migratory movements within Spain as well as
4) movements within Spain as well as possible cultural differences between the different regions).
5) regions)
6) What did the people around you in your country of origin tell you when you informed them that you wanted to migrate to Spain?
7) What do you consider your physical and mental health to have been like before you migrated? HINT: By before migrating, I mean when you were living in your home country.

8) Did you have any difficulties during the journey? HINT: By road/travel I mean the journey from your country to here.
9) Did you have any physical or mental health problems along the way/journey? HINT: By road/travel I mean the journey from your country to here.

5. The future and reflections on the migration process

1) What expectations do you have now regarding your life in this country?
2) Would you migrate again if you could go back?
3) Would you go back to live in your country of origin?
4) What have you learned from migration?
5) Could you summarise your migration experience in one sentence?
6) Are there any issues that we have not talked about that you think are important in this interview?
7) Is there anything else you would like to talk about today?

Additional interview

1. Migration history

1) How long have you been living in Spain?
2) How old were you when you arrived in Spain?
3) What was the reason that led you to migrate?
4) Where have you lived in Spain?
5) Do you currently work in Spain? What do you do?
6) Do you have family here in Spain?

2. Residential background

Previously

1) How long have you been residing in the municipality?
2) When you arrived in Spain, how did you get the dwelling?
3) Before residing in this dwelling, where did you live?
4) How many times have you moved house after living in Barcelona?
5) In which municipalities have you lived?

6) What are the main reasons for moving?
7) Before living in this dwelling, what did you do for a living and where did you work?
8) Were you happy with the work you did?
9) Have you had any difficulties in Spain in relation to the adaptation process?

Now

1) How did you get your current housing?
2) Housing costs: % of your income?
3) How long have you been living in the dwelling?
4) How did you decide on the place/area of residence and the dwelling where you live now?
5) With whom do you live?
6) How many people live in your household and what are your relationships with each other (family, acquaintances, others)?
7) Do you consider that this flat is suitable for you?
8) Do you consider that this flat has any deficiencies? Which ones?
9) Do you consider that this neighbourhood is suitable for you?
10) I would like you to tell me about aspects of your life in this neighbourhood/municipality that you value negatively.
11) I would like you to tell me about aspects of your life in this neighbourhood/municipality that you value positively.

In the future

1) Do you foresee a change of residence, why and where would you go?
2) Do you foresee a change of municipality/province/country?
3) What prevents you from leaving?
4) What type of residence would you choose?

3. Examples of original data

Detailed data for Figure 18. Population stock evolution of Chinese nationals in Spain from 1998 to 2021

	Population	Anual growth rate
1998	11,611	
1999	14,184	22.2
2000	19,191	35.3
2001	27,574	43.7
2002	37,651	36.5
2003	51,228	36.1
2004	62,498	22.0
2005	87,731	40.4
2006	104,681	19.3
2007	106,652	1.9
2008	125,914	18.1
2009	147,479	17.1
2010	158,244	7.3
2011	167,132	5.6
2012	177,001	5.9
2013	181,701	2.7
2014	186,031	2.4
2015	191,638	3.0
2016	200,147	4.4
2017	208,075	4.0
2018	215,970	3.8
2019	224,559	4.0
2020	232,807	3.7
2021	228,564	-1.8

Detailed data for Figure 19. Estimated migration balance and immigration flows of Chinese nationality in Spain from 2008 to 2020

	Male	Female
2008	10,295	9,785
2009	5,772	6,108
2010	5,129	5,345
2011	5,158	5,547
2012	4,081	5,104
2013	4,013	5,114
2014	4,213	5,196
2015	4,500	5,633
2016	4,668	5,547
2017	5,078	6,346
2018	5,222	6,723
2019	5,353	6,744
2020	2,249	2,834

Detailed data for Figure 8. Evolution of China-born Chinese and Chinese nationals in Spain from 1998 to 2020

	Chinese nationals	China-born Chinese
1998	11,611	12,036
1999	14,184	14,029
2000	19,191	19,000
2001	27,574	27,589
2002	37,651	37,522
2003	51,228	51,091
2004	62,498	62,257
2005	87,731	86,964
2006	104,681	104,789
2007	106,652	108,258
2008	125,914	126,979
2009	147,479	146,336
2010	158,244	154,119
2011	167,132	160,788
2012	177,001	168,320
2013	181,701	170,677
2014	186,031	173,240
2015	191,638	177,292
2016	200,147	183,883
2017	208,075	189,497
2018	215,970	195,345
2019	224,559	202,093
2020	215,111	190,179

Detailed data for Figure 9 Evolution of Chinese-born population with Spanish citizenship in Spain from 1998 to 2020

	Male	Female
1998	764	648
1999	811	679
2000	980	949
2001	1,074	1,297
2002	1,194	1,909
2003	1,312	2,972
2004	1,349	3,910
2005	1,482	5,626
2006	1,676	8,171
2007	1,887	10,445
2008	2,295	12,298
2009	2,576	13,465
2010	2,758	14,341
2011	3,065	15,084
2012	3,419	15,831
2013	3,706	16,274
2014	4,053	16,740
2015	4,426	17,124
2016	4,708	17,342
2017	4,937	17,541
2018	5,075	17,693
2019	5,196	17,818
2020	5,321	17,917