WHAT'S IN A NAME: NAME CHOICE, AGENCY AND IDENTITY
FOR CHINESE AND CHINESE CANADIANS
IN SOUTHERN ONTARIO

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Abstract

This qualitative study addresses name choice among Chinese/Chinese-heritage students at two Ontario universities by asking if identity perception impacts the decision to maintain/change a name and who has agency in these naming choices. Ten out of the 11 participants opted for name change. Six participants attributed English name change to their teachers/education system in China; four asserted full agency in name choice; five were told to choose an English name, but selected their own; and two participants claimed no agency in either change or choice. Based on a grounded theory analysis, social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1992), Chinese naming habitus within a Canadian field (Bourdieu, 1984), and agency emerged as strong themes. Through these themes, participants' negotiation of the *third space* (Bhabha, 1994) became apparent. This study suggests a need for teachers to gain cultural onomastic awareness so as to respect naming choices and agency of students in Canadian classrooms.

Keywords: name choice, name change, onomastics, Chinese, social capital, cultural capital, habitus and field, Bourdieu, third space, cross-cultural, agency

DEDICATION

I dedicate my thesis to my parents, Bruce and Theresa Gellatly, who have always been supportive of my endeavors and have raised me to never give up. Their support over the past two years has allowed me to fulfill my dreams of completing a Master's degree and for that, I am grateful. But it is not only their support these past two years for which I am thankful; my parents have been my rock and I would not be the person I am today without them. Thank you and I love you, Mom and Dad!

I would also like to dedicate this thesis to my little sister, Shannon, who sat tirelessly by the phone as I ran idea after idea by her and who provided me with support as I went through this Master's journey and my brother, Jason, who always gave me an outlet when I needed a break—a joke here and there really allowed me to lighten up. Thank you!

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Chapter One: Introduction

As an immigrant-receiving country and global exemplar of multiculturalism, Canada has a responsibility to understand and address the challenges to cultural identity posed by integrating into Canadian society. Having taught in an international school in Hong Kong for three years, and experiencing the name change phenomenon first hand, I see the influence of Western culture on the lives of Chinese students in their home country. According to National Household Survey, the Chinese population in Canada is over 1,300,000, with over 500 000 Chinese people living in the Greater Toronto Area (Statistics Canada, 2011). Furthermore, Chinese languages (Mandarin, Cantonese, Hakka, Taiwanese, Chaochow, Fukien and Shanghainese) comprise 8.3% of the home languages of Toronto residents, and combined is the third largest mother tongue language spoken in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2011; Toronto City Planning, Research & Information, 2007). Given the staggering number of Chinese immigrants in Canada and the lack of research into name choice (Edwards, 2008; Kim, 2007; Thompson, 2006; Wang, 2009), my study is integral to developing a larger pool of research on the perspectives of Chinese immigrants on cultural integration through changing (or indeed maintaining) their cultural names. My research serves to respect the cultures, traditions and challenges faced by Chinese immigrants and Chinese Canadians through name choice, as well as provide implications for education.

Personal Experience

In my three years in Hong Kong as an Intermediate History and Geography teacher, I taught over 150 students annually. In that time, I observed that many of my students, especially Chinese students, opted for English names. While I understand that I was teaching at an English-language-based Canadian school, cultures and languages were respected through daily classroom interactions and school-wide cultural appreciation events and there was no explicit requirement for students (or staff) to select an English name. Outside of

school, many of my Hong Kong acquaintances and friends introduced themselves to me using English names. Although my experiences may not reflect my students', acquaintances' and friends' name uses with their non-English speaking counterparts, the overwhelming number of English names used in my experiences in Hong Kong made me wonder why English names were viewed as status quo and what that meant for the future of Chinese naming practices—a longstanding tradition (see Ch. 2 Chinese Naming Practices).

Growing up in Mississauga with many Chinese and Chinese Canadian friends, I had not thought of my friends' English names meaning anything other than something that I called them. When I was in Hong Kong, I never once thought about adopting a Chinese name even though I was in a Chinese culture. So why was it that my Chinese friends in Canada all used English names, even though I knew they had Chinese names? Questions like these led me to research name choice in Canada. I wanted to know if there were any reasons behind Chinese and Chinese Canadians choosing English names. Conversely, why do some people keep their Chinese names? How do Chinese people think about name selection, both English and Chinese?

Current Research on Name Change and Maintenance

As previously mentioned, there is limited literature on name change and maintenance, and of that literature, two qualitative studies focused on Korean immigrants: one study examined the role of personal name on the identity of three women born in Korea, but raised in the United States at a young age (1 and a half, 4 and 6 years old), working as professionals in their fields (Thompson, 2006); and the other focused on the attitudes and awareness of 6 Korean immigrants, age 31-65, toward name change and maintenance in a Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) English course in Toronto, Ontario (Kim, 2007). While useful in developing a richer body of research on name change and

maintenance, both studies examined a different culture than my study, as well, used a different demographic—older participants (Kim, 2007) and those settled in careers (Thompson, 2006), and although Kim's (2007) study takes place in a similar geographic location, Southern Ontario, the fundamental differences indicated above suggest the uniqueness and necessity of my study.

Two studies have been conducted on the name change and maintenance of Chinese individuals. Edwards' (2008) study examined Chinese university students (age 18-25) and their lecturers in England. She used 80 questionnaires and 20 interviews to approach the question: Why and how do Chinese learners choose or choose not to have English names? Edwards (2008) also explored the perspective of lecturers toward their students' name change; however, did not examine *why* students chose to maintain their names, as suggested in the research question. Lastly, Wang's (2009) comparative study interviewed 10 participants from Taiyuan, China and 9 participants who immigrated to Montreal, Quebec (after the age of 18) and compared how and why students change (or maintain) their names, as well as how English names connect to identity, given the different geographic and social environments.

Research Questions

My study investigates the name change (and maintenance) phenomenon (predominantly to names of Anglophone origin) among young Chinese and Chinese-Canadian students aged 19-27 within Southern Ontario by seeking to answer the following questions: First, does Chinese identity perception in a predominantly English culture (Southern Ontario) influence the decision to maintain or change cultural names for young adults? Second, who exercises agency in the decision to keep or change a name – the agent him/herself or the agent's family, community (religious or otherwise), or other agents? What

other factors (like religious affiliation) might explain this decision? Finally, what role does agency in changing or maintaining a Chinese name in Canada play in developing an individual's identity and how does this affect his/her experience as an immigrant or Chinese Canadian?

Methods

In order to address my research questions, my study uses Patton's (2002) concept of social constructivism as a theoretical orientation of qualitative research. In adopting the notion of individually constructed social realities, I conducted semi-structured interviews which optimized time with participants and ensure that the study questions were addressed, while not restricting conversation from veering into personal and unique responses. In light of the lack of information on name change and maintenance, it was in the interest of research to keep the interview as open to variable responses as possible; however, it is equally important to be able to seek commonalities in all participant interviews for comparability across participant experiences during data analysis (Patton, 2002, p. 346). In conducting semi-structured interviews, I referred to both Michael Patton's (2002) work on standardized open-ended interviews, as well as James Spradley's (1979) *Ethnographic Interview* (See Ch. 3 Methodologies). Interviews lasted approximately 20 minutes to 1 hour and 10 minutes and additional contact with participants took place through email, phone calls or text, according to participant preferences. Refer to Appendix A for samples of semi-structured interview questions.

Participants

While I concede Edwards' (2006) and Marshall's (2010) assertions on the complexity of the Chinese culture, stating respectively that there is no such thing as "Chinese identity" and that the Chinese are not a homogeneous group, rather a complex group with multiple

distinct languages/dialects and cultural beliefs, for the purpose of narrowing the scope of this study, I focused on the naming practices of the Han Chinese. It is with respect to the differences among the Chinese population that I limit my study participants, both in accordance with the Tri-Council's ethical policy on justice (See Appendix B for Ethical Clearance), and so as not to overgeneralize the Chinese and Chinese Canadian population. My study includes only those who identify as Han Chinese since the Han Chinese are the predominant population in China (Wen et al., 2004). My 11 participants were recruited from two universities in Southern Ontario through each university's Chinese student association. For a more detailed demographic breakdown of the participants, see Chapter Three.

Setting

In respecting the participants' comfort and convenience, the setting for the interviews reflected the choice of each participant and ranged from coffee shops to libraries, homes to hallways. More specifically, one interview took place in a coffee shop on campus, two interviews at the campus library, one interview with two participants at the participants' shared residence, and six interviews at, or near, the Chinese student associations' tables in their respective universities. Due to the personal nature of the interview, allowing participants to select their location allowed for a more natural and less intimidating atmosphere. I recommended a quiet, comfortable location out of ear shot to allow participants to maintain comfort, while minimizing the opportunity for them to be overheard. However, some participants were interviewed in noisier areas since they wished to be interviewed upon their recruitment.

Data Gathering Procedures

Data was collected using a hand-held voice recording device, texts, email, and handwritten notes. Although the option for a translator was made available to participants, only one participant demonstrated interest in a translator and later decided she did not need one given the time constraints of scheduling both her and the translator; therefore, there was no need for additional confidentiality agreements. All relevant data was transcribed into each participant's Word document and deleted from its original source or shredded, in the case of handwritten notes. All typed documentation of the interviews, as stated above, will be held on my laptop and external hard drive within a password protected file. Documents will be held for 3 years then be permanently deleted. Participants were given an idea of the questions being asked during the recruitment period. Following the interview, participants were invited to contact me with any additional information or questions they had pertaining to my study.

Data Analysis

Given the novelty of this field and in order to respect the data gathered, I employed the grounded theory approach to data analysis. According to Patton (2002), the findings deduced from grounded theory are based in the real world and on the theory or theories that emerge from fieldwork. Herbert Blumer (1978) stated that "the merit of naturalistic study is that it respects and stays close to the empirical domain" (as cited in Patton, 2002, p. 126). Following the collection of interview data and transcriptions, I coded the data according to relevant and apparent themes (See Chapter Five), while accurately and descriptively indicating the steps of the research to allow for future reproducibility of the study. Through themes that emerged from a grounded theory approach to exploring the data, Bourdieu's (1984; 1992) concept of *habitus and field*, as well as Bourdieu's (1992) *social* and *cultural capital* emerged as relevant concepts to support my themes.

Theoretical Frameworks and Concepts

Considering that the previous studies on name choice use qualitative methods, mostly semi-structured interviews and questionnaires, the research collected is specific to the culture and experiences of the participants and the demographics of the location, making my study the first to focus on the Chinese and Chinese-Canadian name change (or maintenance) experiences within Southern Ontario. While the literature addressed *why* and *how* names are chosen (or not), citing Bourdieu's (1992) *economics of power* within each study, only Wang (2009) and Kim (2007) explicitly addressed the influence of the in-between state of immigrants—through Bhabha's (1994) *third space* and Kramsch's (1993) *third culture* respectively—as a factor in name change and maintenance. Similar to the current body of research, my study uses Bourdieu's (1992) concepts of *social* and *cultural capital* in addressing the influences of name change and maintenance on participants; however, I also use Bourdieu's (1984; 1992) concepts of *habitus and field*—the lifestyle, customs and values of a social group and specific environments—to frame my research based on the themes uncovered through grounded theory, which may be instrumental in understanding the in-between state of Chinese immigrants in Southern Ontario.

Furthermore, I uses both Hall's (1996) and Norton's (2010) concepts of *identity* to review the current literature on name choice as it applied to identity, while also addressing Edward Said's (1978) concept of *orientalism* and Homi Bhabha's (1994) identity formation in the *third space* to examine current views of immigrant identity. In addressing *cultural identity* specifically, I refer to the collective definition of *cultural identity* given by my participants. In combining both literature and participant understanding of concepts, such as cultural identity, I aim to combat ethnocentrism by not relying solely on definitions typically bound to Western norms (Spradley, 1979). Further, I address how *agency* is defined by both Marx (1852) and Bourdieu (1984; 1992) and examine how *field* and *habitus* may influence

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the decisions of agents regarding name change or maintenance. Concepts and definitions are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two.

Limitations

My study was limited mainly by language and availability of participants. The greatest limitation to my study was the fact that I do not speak, understand or read Mandarin, leaving me with only English language studies on the topic of name choice. Although this limitation may restrict my full understanding of Chinese naming practices, there were several translations of naming histories, as well as name choice studies, which allowed for a richer understanding than the English resources alone provided. Furthermore, in not understanding the language, it was difficult for participants to describe the Chinese culture and naming traditions in their own words; however, by augmenting my theoretically-grounded concepts with the collective definitions of participants, as mentioned previously, I was able to, in part, circumvent the ethnocentric concepts I was, albeit unintentionally, imparting on my study.

Given that 10 out of 11 participants opted for name change, my study focused more on name change than maintenance; a large scale study of name choice may be useful in uncovering patterns in name choice, as well as a greater depth of understanding of name maintenance. A further limitation to my originally proposed research plan was that parental and familial interviews were not feasible given that nine out of 11 participants' families lived in China and did not speak English, one participant's family was on vacation at the time of the interviews and the other participant's family lived in Ontario, however, she did not want them to participate and another participant's family was on vacation at the time of the interviews. Although translations were optional, participants opted to not have families interviewed, so participant profiles were created through asking more detailed interview questions (See Ch. 3).

Below is an outline of the upcoming thesis chapters.

Overview of Chapters

The following chapters serve to situate my research among current literature, explain my study in detail, analyse the data provided and reflect on the implications of the study, both theoretically and practically. In Chapter 2, I go into further depth on the current literature surrounding name choice, as well as define concepts and theories relevant to my study. Chapter 3 addresses my rationale for selecting methodologies and participants, as well as illustrates participant profiles to allow for more understanding of the findings elaborated on in the following chapter. In Chapter 4, I present my findings, giving excerpts from my interviews with participants. In Chapter 5, I discuss my themes and analyse the data from my participants. I then contextualize the data within the current literature, as well as Bourdieu's (1984; 1992) *habitus and field* and *social* and *cultural capital.* Finally, Chapter 6 concludes my thesis by relating my findings to Education and suggests implications for further study and practice.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The following literature review addresses the key concepts of *naming, identity,* and *agency* as they pertain to the current literature on name choice. I begin by addressing the naming practices of both (Han) Chinese and English, followed by the concepts of *identity* and identity formation in the *third space*, and address how *agency* is influenced by Bourdieu's (1984; 1992) concepts of *social* and *cultural capital,* and *habitus and field.*

Naming-Onomastics

What's in a name? In order to explore the reasons and significance for or against name change, it is imperative to understand the origins of the naming practices involved in my study. Onomastics, the study of naming practices and origins, has allowed researchers to address the history and meaning behind names, as well as historically address the connection between names and community, individuality, and therefore, identity (Finch, 2008; Merriam-Webster's online dictionary, n.d.; Wang & Micklin, 1996). As mentioned previously, I am exploring the name change (or maintenance) of Chinese names to names of Anglophone origins. For the purposes of this study, I identify *a name of Anglophone origin* (hereafter referred to as an English name) as either an English name or the Anglicization of a Chinese name, which carries meaning within the English language. Although David Li (1997) claimed an Anglicized name to be "based on one's own Chinese name but pronounced as in English, e.g., "Hing, Kit, Mankit, Maysum, Ming" (p. 496), I would agree with Pan Wang's (2009) assertion that those names are Romanized, rather than Anglicized, since the names do not carry *meaning* in English, rather are written using the Roman alphabet (known as "pinyin") and carry meaning only in Chinese.

In addressing what it means to change to an English name, it is also necessary to address the onomastics of the two groups involved in this study: the Chinese, on whom this

study is focused, and the English, whose names may influence the choices of the Chinese participants. Considering the primary objective of this study is to address change or maintenance of the forename/first name/given name of participants, the following sections on naming practices consequently focus on the aforementioned, rather than the surname/last name/family name (hereafter referred to as "family name"). Furthermore, Louie (2007) opted to use the term "given name" as opposed to "first name", since the "first name" follows the Anglo-Saxon naming practice of "first name-then-last name", and would serve to "other" the Chinese naming practice since use of the terms "first/last" would prove out of place in Chinese naming, which follows the practice of "last name-then-first name" (Finch, 2008; Wang and Micklin, 1996). Although "given name" suggests that a name is "bestowed" rather than "chosen", I too have elected to use to term "given name" as it remains neutral within the two naming practices and applies to the name(s) "given" to my participants, as well as the names they "give" to themselves.

Chinese Naming Practices

As mentioned in Chapter One, the Chinese culture is complex and unable to be generalized into a homogenous group, rather it is a complex group with multiple distinct languages/dialects and cultural beliefs (Edwards, 2006; Marshall, 2010). For the purpose of narrowing the scope of this study, I have focused on the naming practices of the Han Chinese, as they are the dominant ethnic group in China.

Historically, the surname has been handed down on the father's side as a way to represent the ancestry and bloodline of the male's family since the Qing dynasty (221-207 BC) as part of a patriarchal tradition and comes first in address; for example, if my name were Chinese, it would be written as Gellatly Katherine (Edwards, 2006; Wang & Micklin, 1996). The given name is more complex and consists of a *xiao ming* or "pet name" given as a

blessing or well-wish by the family and a *ming,* which is the official name and is typically given when the individual begins school (Wang & Micklin, 1996, p. 195). Names are very thoughtfully chosen to be both prescriptive and descriptive of the individual, a naming practice that will be discussed further in the next section. Although infrequently used in modern China, a *zi,* or "style name" would have been given when individuals became adults (usually when ready to marry) since it was considered more respectful to refrain from using a person's given name and use the style name instead (Wang, 2009, p. 104; Wang & Micklin, 1996, p. 195). To augment Wang and Micklin's (1996) description of naming practices, Alleton (1993) found that the *ming* was chosen between age 7 and 9 by the parents (as cited in Edwards, 2006, p. 92); however, unmentioned in Wang and Micklin (1996) was the *hao,* an additional name usually chosen by the individual him/herself between the age of 16 and 25 to mark the transition to adulthood (Alleton, 1993 as cited in Edwards, 2006, p. 92; Li, 1997, p. 500). Five participants described having something similar to a "zi" or "hao" in their naming practice and explained the history behind it, showing that even older naming practices are still discussed and used. The use of nicknames or alternative names are discussed further in Chapter Five. Both the importance of refraining from using a given name in Chinese address, as well as the tradition of giving a *hao,* or additional name, are examples of Chinese *habitus.* Both practices are already embedded within Chinese naming practices and customs, and are discussed further in the section on *Influence, Agency and Name Change*.

Most Chinese names are comprised of one or two characters and can be any (or a combination) of the 50 000 Chinese characters available (Edwards, 2006, p. 91; Wang, 2009, p. 30); however, within Confucianism, names should be relational to "a given time, a given society and a given family" (Wang & Micklin, 1996, p.199-200). In making a name relational, that name is limited by the influence of the time and place, therefore limiting the

number of characters used in a given generation. Zheng's (1985) study of the 1982 Chinese census indicated that 90% of all given names come from only 409 characters (as cited in Wang and Micklin, 1996, p. 200). Interestingly, it is here where Edwards' (2006) study contradicts the research found in Wang and Micklin (1996) in stating that "There are an infinite number of Chinese personal names" (p. 92)—a true statement—however, she then suggests that names are not often duplicated given that in her study of 80 Chinese students, no one name was used twice. Although Edwards (2006) was signifying the importance of the naming process in China—the desire for unique names—her generalization about the uniqueness of Chinese names is refuted by Zhang's (1985) findings, and compounded by the decline in two character names following the Cultural Revolution, leaving many one character names and, therefore, less possibilities for character combinations than previously available (Wang & Micklin, 1996). It is important to note, however, that one character may have multiple meanings and although the same character is used, the meaning behind the name could be different.

The importance of name selection in Chinese naming practice is apparent in both Wang's (2009) and Edwards' (2008) studies where participants gave in-depth descriptions of the meaning of their Chinese names, as well as some participants' English names. Participants' *habitus* surrounding the value of meaningful and unique names is evident in their transfer of name selection importance to their English names. In Wang's (2009) study, participants stated that the English name's meaning and uniqueness was the highest criteria in name choice and only one participant noted that meaning was irrelevant. It is important to understand the history of Chinese naming practices in order to understand how such practices are applied to English name selection or reasons for Chinese name maintenance.

Chinese Naming Practice and Identity

The concept of relational names connects names to identity formation since social, cultural and ethnic identities rely on the interaction between people, cultures and communities to construct meaning (Wang, 2009, p. 24-25). Edwards (2006), Wang and Micklin (1996) and Wang (2009) addressed the purpose of Chinese given names to indicate (1) personal identity, (2) gender, (3) generational markers, and (4) a reflection of social change.

As previously mentioned, Chinese given names are prescriptive and descriptive, meaning that the name is chosen to represent that individual and has meaning related to qualities or attributes the family wants that individual to possess, such as "wisdom", "bravery" or "strength" (Wang & Micklin, 1996). In this regard, the given name is an example of personal identity since it has been specifically and uniquely chosen for that individual. In selecting a meaningful name with qualities and attributes describing the individual, such names often reflect gender. For instance, male names centre on strength, intellect, and bravery; female names centre on beauty, compassion, and kindness (Wang & Micklin, 1996). While selecting a given name is unique, gender is a social construction, whereby using gender-specific names, that individual is positioned a certain way within society, suggesting that naming influences social identity. Generational markers also influence social identity since they differentiate generations within a family. For instance, all siblings in one generation would have one character of their name the same, such as in Yingbo, Laibo, and Jaibo, where the character for "bo" is the same and identifies those with that character as siblings and of the same generation. Such distinction is useful when addressing individuals since the name tells the interlocutor how to address the individual—as one of the same generation or older/younger, which would require different addresses. Finally, naming for social change appears controversial in nature as it has been viewed as a

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choice by Wang and Micklin (1996) in support of social and historical movements, such as *Jianhua* (meaning "Build China"), popularized at the rise of the People's Republic of China (PRC), or *Yuanchao* (meaning "Aid Korea") during the Korean War (p. 196). Edwards (2008) acknowledged naming for social change; however, she identified it as a *necessity* to change, rather than a *choice*, based on the politics of communist China. Regardless of the motivation for such naming practices, names associated with social and historical movements could be tied to social identity since those names would also be representative of a specific social climate and a generation, as well as cultural identity since the meaning of names may be tied to culturally unique events, such as *Jianhua* (Build China) which could only be related to the People's Republic of China.

Rationale for English Naming Practices

The literature on name change and maintenance goes into varying depths on the naming practices of the participants' cultures (Korean and Chinese); however, none of the literature has addressed the naming practices of the target (often Western) culture, with the exception of a brief, uncited reference in Edwards (2006, p. 93) that assumed knowledge of English naming practices. Granted, it is difficult to establish naming practices within such culturally heterogeneous countries, such as the United States, England, and Canada; however, as in Finch's (2008) study on English naming practices, legal documents in England follow the formula of "first name-then-last name", a naming practice common to the Anglo-Saxons, as well as other cultures, which contradicts both the Chinese and Korean naming practices of "last name-then-first name". Although Anglo-Saxon naming practices may not represent the current demographics of the target country, their influence is still present, either legally, as stated in Finch (2008), or within the perceived *symbolic, social* and *cultural capital* immigrants place on English language and English names. Norton's (2010) statement of a commonly held belief that "[for those] in development contexts, a community that is literate

and skilled in English is also a community that has social, economic, and political power." (p. 9) served to reinforce the importance of perceived capital.

While much of the literature on name change to English names took place in English-speaking areas—Toronto, Canada (Kim, 2007), North East England (Edwards, 2008), and a metropolitan area on the Western Coast of the United States (Thompson, 2006), Wang's (2009) comparative study on Chinese name change (or maintenance) in Taiyuan, China and Montreal, Quebec indicated that even within the French-speaking province of Quebec, there is a need to study the English name change phenomenon. Although not in the purview of Wang's (2009) study, it would have been interesting to explore the difference in name change between Chinese participants' desires to select either English names or French names in a French-speaking province. As with the other studies on name choice, the option of selecting a non-English name was not acknowledged, which I believe caters to the ethnocentrism in name change being only an English naming phenomenon, which is not necessarily the case. While my study focused on the Anglicization of Chinese names, I explored alternative language name choices as they presented themselves within my interviews. I discuss alternative name choice further in Chapter Four as it pertains to my participants.

English Naming Practices

English names stem from Anglo-Saxon (people of English and German heritage) naming practices dating back to between 500-1066CE. Anglo-Saxon names used one or two words, for instance *Edith*, which comprised of the words "rich" and "war", and represent one complete name, similar to the Chinese naming practice of one or two character names, where two characters is still considered one name, not two separate names (Louie, 2007, p. 22). Family names were not used until after the Norman Conquest when the French brought in the tradition, centuries after China began using family names; however, similar to Chinese

traditions, family names were handed down though the patriarchal side, although the order of names was reversed (as stated previously). While maintaining the family name through generations, it was also customary to use the same given name generation after generation as a sign of respect to elders (Finch, 2008; Louie, 2007). Biblical names became more common when the population exceeded the Norman names available (Louie, 2007); hence the presence of Biblical names in the lexicon of English names.

Similar to the changes happening in Chinese naming practices due to the People's Republic of China (moving from two characters to one), the onset of the Industrial Revolution began gradual shifts in English naming practices. Finch (2008) indicated that as England became more secular, Biblical names declined and as children were thought of more as individuals, the variety of given names expanded from the majority of boys' names being John, Thomas and William and girls' names being Ann, Mary and Elizabeth in the start of the 18th century to 50 boys names and 30 girls names comprising the majority of names in the latter 20th century (p. 718). I would argue that the increase in given names could also be attributed to the increased population and urban living following the Industrial Revolution. Within closer living conditions, the inevitability of confusion due to repeated given names would likely lead to an increase in given name choices. As mentioned previous, 409 Chinese characters make up 90% of the names in China. As China moves toward Industrialization, the increase in repeated names has prompted many parents to use more distinctive names, similar to the name boom following the British Industrial Revolution (Wang and Micklin, 1996). Names were given both to develop an individual identity, as well as a social identity within the community by positioning the individual within a family, a generation—similar to the Chinese naming practice—and possibly a religion.

The naming practices of the Chinese and English illustrate a part of the *habitus* of each culture, highly relevant to the study of name change and maintenance. It is through the

similarities and differences in the naming practices that one is able to see the overlap or separation in *habitus* between the two *fields* (home culture and target culture), it is the influence of *habitus* on one's agency to change or maintain a name that may influence one's identity; therefore, it is important to understand naming practices for *both* cultures being examined. Interestingly, as stated previously, with the exception one indirect statement in Edwards' (2006) study regarding English naming practices, none of the other studies on name choice explore the naming practices of the target, in this case English, culture. By exploring the target culture's naming practices, name choice may be linked through the similarities and differences in each culture's habitus, which until now has been overlooked. The impact of *habitus* as it applies to *agency* will be addressed further; however, in order to address *agency* in identity formation, the concept of *identity* must be explored.

Identity

Stuart Hall's (1996) concept of *identity* as constructed *within* a discourse and, therefore, a relational term, evolves as discourse changes—a never-ending process for which the definition of identity is not static. Bonnie Norton's (2010) post-structural definition of *identity* as socially constructed and constantly in a state of flux augments Hall's (1996) definition; however, others, such as Korostelina (2007), suggest that *identity* can only be actualized through the process of comparison with the other, which, while relational, is limited to a dichotomous definition (as cited in Wang, 2009, p. 23), similar to the "us vs. them" mentality discussed in Edward Said's (1978) notion of *orientalism* (Talreja & Jhally, 1998).

As Wang (2009) stated, four types of identity apply strongly to the study of name change and maintenance: social identity, personal identity, ethnic identity, and cultural identity (p. 24-25). Social identity is a structure of power which affirms itself through both

repressing opposition towards it and affirming solidarity within the group, such as schools, workplaces and families (Hall, 1996; Wang, 2009). Personal identity is the formation of characteristics and behaviours that are unique to the individual; however, Korostelina (2007), questions the authenticity of personal identity as one increases social identity by striving to become an archetype of the social group (as cited in Wang, 2009, p. 25). Ethnic identity refers to one's ancestry while cultural identity is having a common language, history and understanding of the world (Norton, 1997).

Hall (1996) argued that cultural identity "accepts that identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions" (p. 3-4). Given the globalizing world in which we live, it is becoming more common to find people with multiple variations to their identity such that someone can have an ethnic identity that differs from their cultural identity that differs from their social identity. Is it fair to say that one identity is more accurate at describing an individual than another? Take for example an individual of Indian heritage, growing up in Hong Kong and attending a Canadian school with mostly Canadian friends; without considering other factors, that person would have an ethnic identity of Indian, a cultural identity of Chinese and a social identity of Canadian; however, those identities may change as situations change. It is my contention that identity is dynamic and situationally dependent, given, as Hall (1996) and Norton (2010) indicated, identity shifts across time and space.

In order to assist me in dispelling the ethnocentrist definitions of cultural identity, I have compiled a definition of cultural identity based on my participants' responses to the question "What does cultural identity mean to you?" In this way, I use a combination of the definitions by theorists, such as Hall (1996) and Norton (2010), while also respecting how participants perceive the concept so that my analysis of their interviews better represent their

intended meaning (Spradley, 1979). According to my participants, *cultural identity* is both broad and expansive due to China's size (Ye) and 5000 years of history (Nicholas and Wendy). Because of this breadth, Nicholas believes that the meaning of cultural identity continues to change and old traditions cannot fully describe current cultural identity. Both Tony and Nicholas suggest the importance of geographic region in establishing cultural identity since China is so large and what may be part of Chinese culture in the North could be vastly different than culture in the South. Yvonne stated that Chinese identity is "like the root of the Chinese. We learn it from the culture and the education and we use it, I think it's the part of my life". When asked what made up cultural identity, my participants responded with: sports (badminton and ping pong), festivals (Spring festival), clothing styles, language, food and even skin colour. According to Bella, there is a duty behind possessing Chinese cultural identity—a sense of pride for her—which is to learn about China and if you explore the world, to come back and use your knowledge to make China better.

Identity and Bhabha's (1994) *third space*.

Homi Bhabha's (1994) concept of *third space* follows a post-structural definition of culture stating that cultures are not homogeneous forces and there is no "primordial unity" (p. 55) in a culture, therefore there cannot be any claim to cultural purity. The *third space* dissolves the notion of cultural binary, such as Said's (1978) *orientalism*, and instead adopts the notion of *hybridity*, where there is no distinct transition from one culture to another, rather a hybridization of those cultures in which each aspect of the hybrid identity lends itself to every other aspect. The example of complex identities stated above would serve to illustrate Homi Bhabha's (1994) *third space* since the individual's sense of Indian ethnic identity, Chinese cultural identity and Canadian social identity would each be influenced by the other identities where the resulting identity would be a hybridization of all three.

Such an example of *third space* is seen in the literature on name change and maintenance (Edwards, 2008; Kim, 2007; Thompson, 2006; Wang, 2009) as the participants either hybridize their social and cultural identities in a transition from their home culture into a target culture or actively attempted not to hybridize their identities in order to preserve their cultural identities. Participants identified with name change as a way of developing an identity that situates them as part of the target culture. For instance, one participant in Kim's (2007) study chose an English name as a way to distance herself from the Korean culture due to negative associations she had, opting to use her English name to align herself with the Western culture. She will always possess an ethnic identity that is Korean; however, she may choose to shift her cultural and social identity towards Canadian culture. In contrast, an older participant in Kim's (2007) study who chose not to change his name since he only participated within the Korean community in Toronto and stated that since he would not live much longer, he wanted to preserve his Korean identity. Although stated above that post-structural concepts of identities are fluid and non-binary, the Korean man's *perception* of identity as a concrete concept influenced his decision to keep his given name. Even though the above two examples of shifting identities appear binary, they are representative of both sides of the spectrum and even though both appear set on completing the shift toward being representative of only one identity, neither can fully achieve that goal since the hybrid identity is not the replacement of one culture by another, rather a fluidity between cultures. Such fluidity is evident within my study as participants negotiate their place along the Chinese to Canadian cultural spectrum, as discussed in Chapter Four.

Identity and agency.

Given the importance of name selection in Chinese naming practices, I would argue that the role of agent in selecting a name is important to identity formation. As indicated by Yvonne, allowing her father to name her future children would be an honour since she

believes her name was very aptly chosen to be descriptive of her and she would want the same for her future children. Further, Steven's family had an expert in name selection come to choose his name. Based on the importance placed on the agent in selecting Chinese names, I would argue that the role of agent would influence participants' perception of their English names, and by extension, their identities. While participants' identities are being negotiated within the *third space*, the act of changing or maintaining a name falls to the *agency* of the individual (or others). It is through the agency of the individual that identities are (re)constructed. Agency refers to the free will of an individual to make his/her own choices; however, the notion of choices being made completely of one's own will has been debated. Marx (1852) argued that:

> Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. (p. 277)

Marx (1852) addressed the issue that choice is made by an individual; however, there are many factors that influence those choices, such as traditions, values or, I would argue, *habitus*. Further, Bourdieu (1992) contended that no one can exercise full agency since everyone is regulated by their *habitus,* among other things (such as their perceived value of cultural, social and symbolic capital). While I concede that agency is *influenced* by the habitus and notions of social, cultural and symbolic capital—although the influence of these concepts on name change and maintenance vary depending on the individual and his/her situation—as Marx (1952) stated, "Men make their own history" (p. 177). Influences aside, the individual believes that he or she either takes agency (to varying degrees) or has agency over name change and maintenance taken by another. It is this perception that indicates

explicit agency, whereas underlying influences are addressed as implicit agency since they are unknown to participants as influences.

In the following sections, I address how agency in name change and name maintenance has appeared within the literature, as well as how participants have been influenced by *habitus* and *forms of capital*.

Influence, agency and name change.

As mentioned above, an individual's agency in name choice depends on whether he or she takes agency over the decision to keep or change a name or allows others to make the decision for him/her. Unlike the participant in Kim's (2007) study who kept his name believing he would better be able to preserve his cultural identity, among other undisclosed reasons, both Wang (2009) and Li (1997) indicated participants' strong ties to Chinese culture that would not be influenced by merely changing their names. Furthermore, Wang (2009) and Edwards (2008) highlighted the Chinese Open Up policy, which promoted the need to learn English in order to work with those outside of China, as subsequently transforming the English name into symbolic capital by its association with the English-speaking economy of the world.

In Li's (1997) study on name change among Hong Kong business people, his qualitative survey of 542 participants found that 469 opted to change their names and, of those, a majority felt little or no concern in changing his/her name. As mentioned in the section on Chinese naming practice, the *habitus* of the Chinese to adopt a few names (*xiao ming, hao, and ming)* in their lifetimes may have made the choice to adopt an English name more natural. Further, considering Hong Kong's history as a former British colony (until 1997), the *habitus* of Hong Kongers may be to adopt an English name, which Li (1997) suggested would be treated like a *hao* (courtesy name chosen as a young adult) and used

among friends and peers in a more egalitarian manner than is normally permitted in Chinese address (p. 509).

Li (1997) identified the social capital associated with having an English name as a way to bridge the gap between English and Chinese business address. Chinese manners of address are more formal than English in that the Chinese take a long time to transition from use of formal address to use of a given name, whereas in English business address, the process from family name to given name moves much faster and it is often customary for someone to initially address a colleague using the formal "Mr./Ms X" and be invited to use the given name, "Please, call me Sue". Social capital is tied into naming and social identity as it influences the speed with which a Hong Kong business person makes connections with Western business people. In this regard, the social capital is tied to economic capital since the social network is directly tied to a person's income. Therefore, the decision to keep or change a name, according to Li (1997), has high stakes.

Individuals used the influences of social and symbolic capital and habitus to change their names; however, some participants changed their names as a way to (1) preserve the Chinese naming practice of address or (2) avoid embarrassment (Li, 1997). Participants chose an English name, used like a *hao* or courtesy name, so that when they would increase their social capital by following Western introduction courtesies, their *ming* would not be used, maintaining their cultural identity by upholding the Chinese tradition of refraining from using the *ming* unless quite familar. Similar to this exercise of agency, Edwards (2008) interviewed lecturers who attempted to use the students' Chinese given names in a misguided attempt at showing respect for the culture and were met with opposition. Students accepted the "first name" policy of the school by using their English names; however, the Chinese name was viewed as more personal and was not accepted as a proper way of address according to

Chinese naming practices, where the *ming* is rarely used. Here students insisted on use of their English names as a means to preserve Chinese cultural identity.

Studies indicated that participants would change their names on the presumption that it would be difficult to pronounce their names and cultural names would not be remembered, which would negatively impact their social identity within the community (Kim, 2007; Li, 1997; Wang, 2009). Edward's (2008) interview of lecturers in an English program in England validated some of the participants' presumptions, stating that 8 out of 10 lecturers had an easier time remembering English names and did have difficulty pronouncing cultural names. The degree of individual agency based on these assumptions varied since some participants were recommended a name by friends and teachers, while others chose their own names, and still others had names chosen and used by friends, classmates and teachers without the approval of the individual him/herself (Wang, 2009).

In places where there is limited individual agency, for instance, due to regulations by the school or teacher to have an English name (Edwards, 2008; Wang, 2009), students may have been afforded an English name or chose one without much thought. Kim (2007) addressed Anglicizing a Korean name as a way to adapt to the English naming custom, while still maintaining cultural ties to the name. In Anglicizing, Kim (2007) is referring to Korean names that sound like English words, such as "Sun-hee" (Thompson, 2006), which sounds like "Sunny". While some participants change their names, others, as a form of resistance, would choose an Anglicized name that would be humorous rather than an English name as a way of passive aggressively mocking the naming process under a veil of compliance and ignorance (Edwards, 2008).

Participants in several studies use both their cultural and English given names in different contexts to optimize the perceived social and symbolic capital (Li, 1997; Thompson,

2006). By alternating between names, participants were able to adapt themselves to suit a variety of situations, while maintaining the cultural capital of the home culture. Within the literature, degrees of agency were presented in name change; however, as evident below, the literature on agency and name maintenance is not as extensive.

Influence, agency and name maintenance.

Kim's (2007) study found that of the 6 participants, 4 opted to maintain their names, which he attributed to their connections with their Korean social and cultural identity and a lack of desire or opportunity to explore the non-Korean community in Toronto. Participants claimed that there was no need to adopt an English name given their lack of interactions with the non-Korean community considering that two participants were retired and another was a stay-at-home-wife. The symbolic and social capital of their names were tied to their Korean roots since they only communicated with other Koreans outside of their English class.

Although Edwards (2008) identified that 15 of her 80 students surveyed retained their Chinese names, she did not explain their choices. As mentioned above, she addressed how students passive aggressively complied to change their names although they did not want the English names; however, her study did not extrapolate on why students opted to maintain their names, as her research question suggested. Wang (2009) on the other hand, not only addressed name maintenance, she also acknowledged the ability of participants to change their English names or discontinue use of an English name. While the other studies addressed agency in the discussion sections of the studies, Wang's (2009) data collection indicated the duration each participant had his/her English name, those who influenced the name choice, as well as who ultimately made the name change decision. It would have been interesting to see who may have influenced the decision for name *maintenance*, as well as who made the ultimate decision to keep a name. As the research stands, there is significantly less

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information on agency and name maintenance considering the focus of these studies appeared to be swayed, if only slightly, toward name change.

Conclusion

Considering that the name change and maintenance phenomenon is a relatively newer field of study, the limited body of research on the topic indicates the need for further investigation. Additionally, as stated above, the topic of name maintenance is often overshadowed in favour of name change; however, the information on name maintenance would provide a balanced understanding of cultural and social identity formation for immigrants using the name change (or maintenance) process. In order to understand the values of both cultures as they pertain to naming and the impact of *habitus* on naming choices, it is important to explore the naming practices of *both* cultures. The interrelation of *naming, identity,* and *agency* provide an opportunity to observe the phenomenon within my study, as well as within the current body of research on the topic. Although my literature review is limited by my reliance on English research and English translations, the research available to me has been rich with qualitative findings that serve to ground my study within a burgeoning field, while calling attention to the need for exploration of Chinese name change and maintenance within the growing Chinese community in Southern Ontario.

<center>**Chapter Three: Methodology**</center>

In this chapter, I expand on the methodology used in my study, the steps taken to complete my research and the rationale for my choices so that my study may be replicated in future. I then address relevant participant demographics in order to allow for greater depth of understanding in the next chapter on Findings.

Methods and Data Analysis

My study utilizes Patton's (2002) concept of social constructivism as its theoretical orientation. As stated in the Introduction, by adopting the notion of individually constructed social realities, I conducted semi-structured interviews, which optimized time with participants, ensured that the study questions were addressed, and allowed for conversations to veer into personal and unique responses. In light of the lack of information on name change and maintenance, it was in the interest of research to keep the interview as open to variable responses as possible; however, it is equally important to be able to seek commonalities in all participant interviews to draw out themes across participant experiences during data analysis (Patton, 2002, p. 346). In conducting semi-structured interviews, I referred to both Michael Patton's (2002) work on standardized open-ended interviews, as well as James Spradley's (1979) *Ethnographic Interview*.

Addressing cultural barriers.

As stated in Spradley (1979), "Language is more than a means of communicating about reality: it is a tool for constructing reality. Different languages create and express different realities" (p.17). Given that I am not Chinese, do not speak Mandarin or Cantonese and conducted my research in a predominantly English speaking part of the country, I needed to be aware of the influence of my lack of Chinese identity while conducting my interviews. Although, according to Spradley (1979), there are benefits to an outsider exploring

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participants' cultures, for instance, participants not assuming knowledge and giving more information to accommodate for the cultural differences, there are drawbacks, such as participants needing to explain their culture in another language and in terms that they may use, but which may not fully convey their intended meanings. It was due to these drawbacks that I opted to have participants define what *cultural identity* meant to them, as well as situate themselves along the 'Chinese to Canadian' identity spectrum. Although many cultural identifiers are used colloquially in Southern Ontario, for instance, Chinese-Canadian or CBC (Canadian-born-Chinese), how individuals place themselves on the spectrum is quite personal and should not be assumed knowledge based on commonly held beliefs about cultural labels. In asking participants where they felt they belonged along the spectrum, most participants did not identify concretely with a cultural identifier, rather, vaguely placed themselves between two identifiers that they brought up themselves using their own rationale. For example, Ye defined her place as between international students and CBCs using time spent in Canada as a qualifier, saying that, "I'm the one who's kind of stuck in the middle […] I came here when I was 12 so it was [a] kind of awkward stage. I wish I could come here earlier, just a few years earlier, it would be much better". Participant placement along the cultural identity spectrum is discussed further in Chapter Four.

According to Spradley (1979), many theories are culture-bound to western cultural "norms", so it is important to try not to allow my tacit cultural knowledge to impose itself on my participants and their experiences. In attempting to limit my influence on participant responses, my questions regarding culture and cultural identity were vague and often required several attempts to elicit responses from participants without imposing my own meaning. Participants, however, were able to explain their definitions in their own words (albeit in English) regarding culture and belonging along the cultural identity spectrum. Moreover, given my desire for participants to define *cultural identity* and due to my "outsider" status,

many of the participants opted to explain their understandings of Chinese naming practices to me, allowing me to augment my reading of the literature with participants' currently-held cultural understandings and beliefs, which was reflected in the literature review in Chapter Two, as well as the discussion in Chapter Five.

Data Gathering Procedures

As mentioned previously, I contacted the Chinese associations at two Ontario universities and participants were recruited through the associations' tables set up for Chinese New Year event ticket sales. Initially, I attempted to recruit through email and through each association's media outlets; however, one Chinese association posted my information and I was told by participants after recruitment (in person) that they received the email but there was too much writing and it was intimidating. The other association ceased responding to my emails and phone calls once they agreed to allow me to recruit through them. In order to continue, I contacted the university's Students' Union and asked where the association would be set up to sell tickets for Chinese New Year. I then went to the table on the allotted days and recruited participants in person. All recruitment included an introduction to me and my research, explaining my interest in Chinese naming practices, followed by participants reading through consent forms, asking for clarifications when needed and signing. Participants provided me with contact information, as well as dates and times of availability. Participants were informed that interviews may last from one to one and a half hours, although in reality interviews lasted between 20 minutes and an hour and 10 minutes. Participants were offered the opportunity to use a translator, either of their choosing or one I selected; however, none of the participants opted for a translator. Participants were informed that I would contact them with further questions or clarifications as needed and they indicated which forum would be best for future communications (email, phone, text). After the initial meeting, I emailed or texted (as per participant request) the participants to thank them for

their interest and set up a confirmation time for the interview. In the case of participants who were interviewed immediately following recruitment, I thanked them for their participation and either asked follow up questions or gave answers to questions that arose during the interviews, such as Steven and Alex who asked what their names meant in English.

Data was collected using a hand-held voice recording device, transcribed into Word documents and saved on my laptop and Dropbox within a password protected file. Voice recordings were deleted from the recording device once they had been transcribed and documents will be held for 3 years then be permanently deleted. During transcriptions, I emailed participants to ask for clarifications and received feedback from several participants; however, not all participants responded to emails and some were difficult to contact further. In one instance, Alex believed he had additional information relevant to the study and a clarification regarding English name meanings, so he emailed me. Following transcriptions, I then organized the interviews into several themed charts in order to visualize connections between the interviews and begin coding the data according to those themes using the grounded theory approach.

Data Analysis

Given the novelty of the field of name choice and in order to respect the data gathered, I employed the grounded theory approach to data analysis. Grounded theory deduces themes from the raw data that would allow for a newer topic, such as name choice, to be explored without the parameters of specified frameworks (Patton, 2002). As stated previously, many theories are culture-bound to western cultural "norms" and as a cross-cultural study, it is important to limit the influence of ethnocentric theories and concepts by allowing the data to speak for itself (Spradley, 1979).

Following the collection of interview data and transcriptions, I coded the data according to relevant and apparent themes using open coding. Although open coding requires all of the data be collected and read to draw out themes, it was difficult to not think of themes while I conducted my interviews since themes between participants became apparent within the first few interviews; however, I did my best to limit the influence of those apparent themes. Through the themes that emerged from a grounded theory analysis, it became apparent that Bourdieu's (1984; 1992) *habitus and field* and *social* and *cultural capital* would give great insight into the data, as discussed in Chapter Five.

Setting

The settings and times for the interviews were selected by the participants. Due to the personal nature of the interview, allowing participants to select their location allowed for a more natural and less intimidating atmosphere. While I recommended quiet, comfortable locations out of ear shot to allow participants to maintain comfort, while minimizing the opportunity for them to be overheard, the goal was to have participants feeling at ease. Six interviews took place almost directly following recruitment as participants had free time, so the interview settings were in hallways or common areas near where I was recruiting. Although there was less privacy than other settings, I attempted to move away from the general noise and ensured that my voice recorder was able to hear our voices over the background noise through several voice checks. One interview took place in a coffee shop on campus, which was a rather noisy, yet familiar setting for the participant; two interviews took place in the library of the respective universities; and two interviews took place at the residence of the participants and as a group discussion. Nicholas asked to be interviewed at his campus residence with his roommate, Tony, who also wanted to participate. Although there may have been potential limitations to having a joint interview, such as participants closing up in a group setting, this interview allowed for moments of language barriers to be

translated away by one participant or another so that questions and responses were more easily understood. Further, one participant's responses would encourage the other participant to augment his answers to more fully address my questions. Overall, it was a very positive experience and might be in the interest of future researchers to consider group discussions for data gathering in cross-cultural studies.

Participants

Edwards' (2006) and Marshall's (2010) assert the complexity of the Chinese culture, stating respectively that there is no such thing as "Chinese identity" and that the Chinese are not a homogeneous group, rather a complex group with multiple distinct languages/dialects and cultural beliefs. While I concede this assertion, for the purpose of narrowing the scope of this study, I focused on the naming practices of the Han Chinese. It is with respect to the differences among the Chinese population that I limited my study participants, both in accordance with the Tri-Council's ethical policy on justice, and so as not to overgeneralize the Chinese and Chinese Canadian population. Furthermore, such a limitation would allow for more accurate understanding of Chinese naming practices since the practices of Chinese populations in other counties may have changed over time to reflect the naming practices of the host country and may skew the Chinese naming practices needed for my study, specifically, regarding Chinese naming *habitus*. Therefore, my study was limited to include only those whom identify as Han Chinese, which is the dominant ethnic community in China.

I recruited participants from Chinese student associations in two universities within Southern Ontario. My rationale for recruiting through these associations was twofold: (1) for easier and more direct access to participants meeting my criteria; and (2) finding participants within a Chinese student association suggests participant interest or investment in the Chinese culture while in Canada. As stated previously, I conducted my recruitment by going to each

respective university and meeting participants through the tables each association had set up to sell Chinese New Year event tickets. In my initial study proposal, I wanted to interview participants' family members in order to create rich participant profiles; however, my random selection of participants resulted in 9 of 11 participants coming to Canada as international students with family members back in China who did not speak English. Of the remaining two participants, one participant's parents did not speak English well, according to the participant, and even though there was a translator available, the participant did not wish to have his/her family interviewed. The other participant's family members live in Canada; however, were on vacation in China when interviews took place. Due to the limitations placed on this component of my study, I opted to ask participants additional questions on how they believe they will address naming practices in their hypothetical future families and why they would make those choices. The results of these questions are presented in Chapter Four.

Participant profiles.

Participants varied in age from 19-27, varied in their time in Canada from two months to seven years, programs of study, and gender (five female; six male). The universities had nearly equal participant recruitment with one university having five participants and the other having six participants. Since participants' given names are used in the study, specific geographic information or any information that could compromise their anonymity was omitted. Table 1 addresses general demographics for the participants, as well as their use of English names and ages for each name usage, if there was more than one.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participants (Introduced as/ Chinese name)	Gender	Age	Program/ Year of Study	Time in Canada	English Name #1	English Name #2	English Name #3
Alex/Yu An*	M	20	Economics and Finance/2nd year	3 years	Potter: 5 years old until 7 years old	Peter: 7 years old until 13 or 14 years old	Alex: 17 years old to present
Bella/Mi*	F	19	Mathematics/1st year	5 months	Bella: 15 or 16 years old to present	--	--
Carol/ Qiuyue**	F	20	Applied Linguistics/2 year	2 years	Jade: kindergarten to unknown (only in English class)	Carol: 18 years old to present	--
Desmond/ Li Xiong**	M	27	MBA	1 year, 5 months	Black: unknown	Desmond: unknown to present	--
Fisher/Han**	M	22	Currently in English language program.	4 months	Fish: 17 or 18 years old to 21 or 22 years old	Fisher: 21 or 22 years old (4 months ago)	--
Nicholas/ Yang Xian *	M	21	Financial business economics/ 1st year	6 months	Nicholas: 13-15 years old (uncertain) to present	--	--
Steven/ Dong Shan**	M	19	Film/1st year	4 years	Steven: 6 years old to present	--	--
Tony/Tian Yi*	M	24	Currently in English language program.	3 months	Tony: had for many years, used from 23 years old to present	--	--
Wendy/ Qianwen**	F	23	Applied Linguistics/2 year	3 years	Wendy: 10 years old to present	--	--
Ye*	F	19	Communications /2nd year	7 years	--	--	--
Yvonne/Zi Ye*	F	18	Finance/1st year	2 months	Yvonne: 17 or 18 (2 months ago) to present	--	--

Demographics surrounding respective universities:
*Culturally diverse, urban, large population
** Student populated, limited cultural diversity, suburban/rural

As indicated in the chart above, 10 out of 11 participants utilized English names; three participants had an additional English name, and one participant has had three English names in total. Ye, the only participant opting for name maintenance, explained that "[she] actually want[ed] an English name, but [she] couldn't think about it. That's why [she] kept it simple [by keeping her Chinese name]". She further stated that she wanted a unique English name

and was waiting to find one that she deemed distinctive enough for her. Although not documented as a name choice in the chart above, Steven has a Japanese name that his Japanese friends gave him at age 15, which he could not remember. Further, as shown in Figure 1, Tony's Chinese name has meaning in Korean, which his mother chose since she works in South Korea and his province in China is relatively close to South Korea, leading to social importance for his Chinese name being used in the Korean culture. This brings light to the fact that not all name change needs to be to English origins; however, for the purpose of my study, English name change is my focus.

Geographic origins.

As shown in Figure 1, the 11 participants all came from mainland China, although widely dispersed among the provinces. Other than Desmond, who lived in Japan for one year and Bella who moved to Beijing for three years for boarding school, all of the participants have lived solely in their province of origin until moving to Canada.
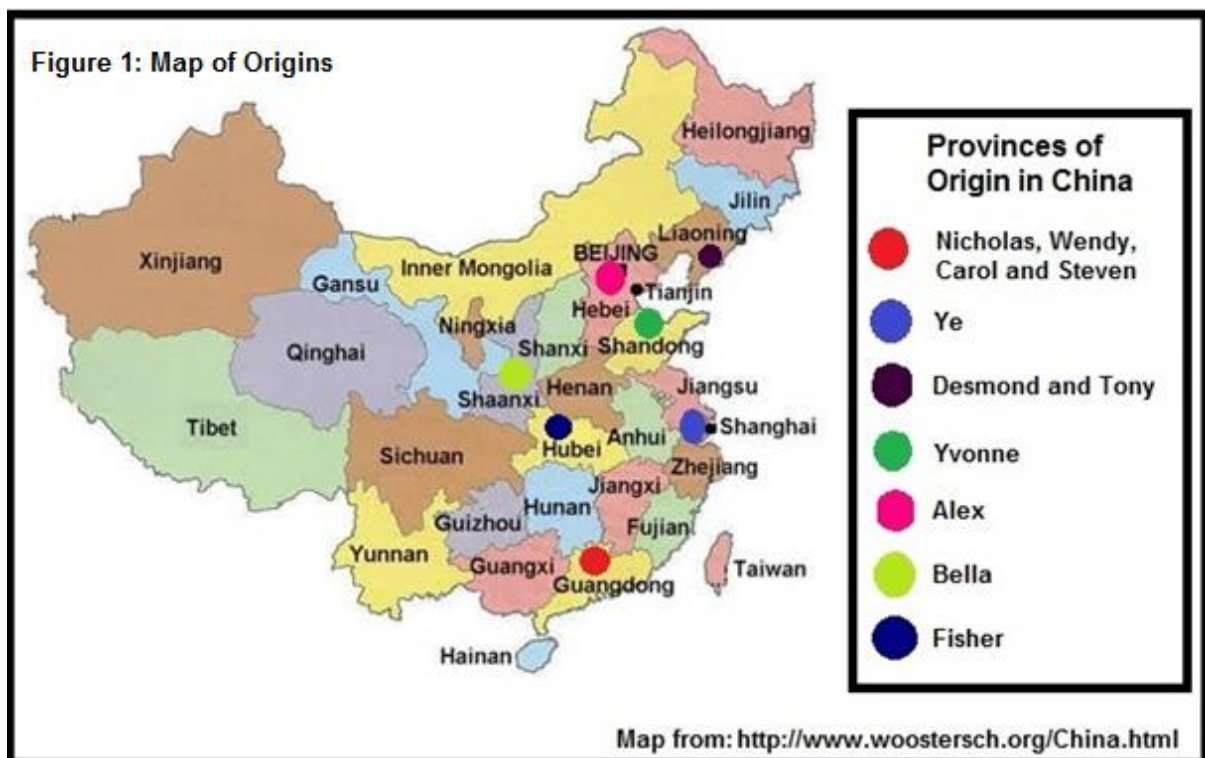

Figure 1: Map of Origins

Provinces of Origin in China

Map from: http://www.woostersch.org/China.html

Figure 1: Map of Participant Origins. This figure illustrates the birthplaces of participants throughout China.

Given the size of my qualitative study, I was unable to uncover any patterns regarding naming choice and geographic location within China; however, it may prove an interesting area of future study with regards to urban vs. rural naming traditions.

For the purpose of simplification in the next few chapters, I refer to participants by the name with which they introduced themselves to me. Ten out of eleven participants introduced themselves to me using their English names and Ye used her only name.

Conclusion

My approach to data analysis focused on grounded theory and showed great concern for respecting the different culture with which I was interacting. Aside from my own desire to maintain the spirit of my participants' stories and allow participants to define concepts in their own terms, several of my participants commented that they felt my study and/or questions were respecting their history and the Chinese culture, which hopefully allowed them to feel comfortable enough to open up. In the next chapter, I discuss my findings based on my research questions.

Chapter Four: Findings

In this chapter, I explain my findings according to my research questions: (1) does Chinese identity perception in a predominantly English culture (Southern Ontario) influence the decision to maintain or change cultural names for young adults? (2) Who exercises agency in the decision to keep or change a name – the agent him/herself or the agent's family, community (religious or otherwise), or other agents? What other factors (like religious affiliation) might explain this decision? (3) Finally, what role does agency in changing or maintaining a Chinese name in Canada play in developing an individual's identity and how does this affect his/her experience as an immigrant or Chinese Canadian?

How Chinese Identity Perception in Southern Ontario Influences Name Choice

In approaching this question, there were several subtopics that needed to be addressed. First, I needed to establish what participants thought of their Chinese identities within Canada. I did this through asking (1) where they felt they belonged on a Chinese to Canadian identity spectrum and (2) how both Chinese and Canadian cultures were represented in their everyday lives. In some instances, participants made comments regarding their beliefs on how Canadians viewed them or how they viewed Canada. Secondly, in addressing participants' name choice, I needed to discover naming stories and name meanings for participants' names in Chinese, as well as English, where applicable. In some cases, participants explained their beliefs regarding why others either keep or change their names.

Since participant recruitment was based on voluntary response and used random participant selection, and given that 10 out of 11 participants opted for English name change and the one participant maintaining her name, Ye, would like to adopt an English name, my findings were geared toward how Chinese identity perception in Southern Ontario influences

name *change*. It should be noted that future research may wish to focus on name maintenance in order to fully address the question of how Chinese identity perception influences name choice (both change and maintenance).

The Chinese to Canadian identity spectrum.

As addressed in Chapter Three, when participants were asked where they felt they belonged along the cultural identity spectrum, most participants did not identify concretely with a cultural identifier, rather, they vaguely placed themselves between two identifiers using their own rationale. I did not use any prompts other that saying Canadian, Chinese-Canadian and Chinese as examples of cultural identifiers (when needed) so the responses from participants come from their experiences and labels they themselves use or hear. For example, Ye defined her place as between Chinese international students and Canadian-born-Chinese (CBCs) using time spent in Canada as a qualifier, saying that, "I'm the one who's kind of stuck in the middle […] I came here when I was 12 so it was [a] kind of awkward stage. I wish I could come here earlier, just a few years earlier, it would be much better". Similar to Ye, Carol used the length of time in Canada as an indicator of where she fits along the spectrum, stating,

> If I was born here or if I immigrate here […] when I was a little girl, maybe I would
> be mixed. Maybe I will accept most of the western culture, but I still remain
> somewhat the Chinese thing, but in our age, we come here after high school. Our
> values and our culture are already built up so we are Chinese, but I don't think we will
> change completely. No we won't. […] If the kids were born here, they might be born
> completely…they will be Canadian-Canadian in their mind. They will be so much
> different from us.

Tony identified his place along the spectrum using mother tongue language, suggesting, much like Carol, that certain qualities are already set by the time these participants came to Canada. Tony stated that Chinese Canadians' mother tongue language is English and Chinese immigrants' mother tongue language is Mandarin or Cantonese and regardless of his English proficiency, he will never be able to speak like a Chinese-Canadian. He further stated that his "name meaning has Chinese meaning so now I feel I am Chinese". Furthermore, other participants identified themselves as Chinese, while citing certain Canadian elements of influence on their identities, such as Wendy wearing 'Canadian clothes' and Fisher being "Chinese with some Canadian elements", such as eating cereal for breakfast. Nicolas replied that he felt "Chinese Canadian, maybe Chinese Canadian, but I prefer Chinese" then made a comparison to his cousin stating that "my [cousin] is a CBC […] she is a Chinese Canadian. I feel really strange about this because she looks like a Chinese but she really doesn't know anything about China, she just don't know anything […] about Chinese culture, Chinese festival, Chinese [pause] In her head she is Canadian. I think that's weird because you look like a Chinese so you must have some knowledge about your hometown". Steven identified with the "Chinese culture for sure" and said that he appreciated McDonalds and other foods and events typical of western culture back in China so that did not make him more Canadian. Participants' responses varied based on what they used to determine their cultural identifier, but all participants identified with belonging to the Chinese culture to some extent.

How participants identify themselves along the culture spectrum may indicate how they feel about themselves culturally, how they feel they belong in the Canadian culture, and may be useful in addressing Homi Bhabha's (1992) *third space* in Chapter Five. Concomitantly, participants' experiences of both Chinese and Canadian culture in their daily lives may influence their belonging within each culture respectively.

Daily representations of Chinese and Canadian culture.

In asking how Chinese and Canadian culture was represented in everyday life, I intended to see the influence of each culture on the participants. The living arrangements for each participant influenced their daily cultural interactions and these living arrangements impact name and language use. Figure 2 displays the living arrangements of participants. Half of the participants live with roommates in their university residences, two participants are in a homestay program where they live with a Canadian host family, one participant lives with her parents, another with her boyfriend and one lives by himself. Bella's living arrangements are unknown.
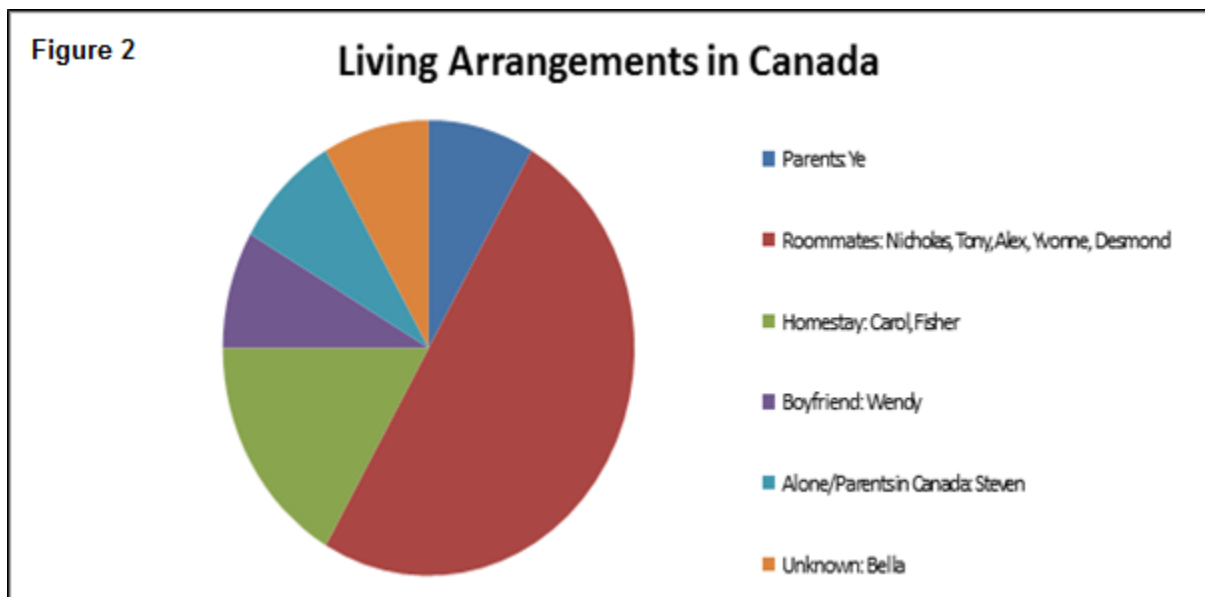
Figure 2: Participants living arrangements in Canada. This figure illustrates the variety of living accommodations participants experienced.

The connection between living arrangements and cultural representation is expanded on in Chapter Five. In this section, I address how the Chinese culture is represented in participants lives, followed by how the Canadian culture is represented. Within both sections are participants' opinions on how these representations impact them.

Representation of Chinese culture.

The Chinese culture is represented within the participants' daily lives in numerous ways. In the following subsections, I elaborate on how participants view the Chinese culture as a daily presence by addressing language use, cuisine and the Chinese community at large.

Language use.

Nicholas, Tony and Fisher identified Chinese culture within their daily lives through language use. When asked how the Chinese culture was present in his everyday life, Nicholas replied, "I try to speak English, but sometimes we live in home in our apartment so we speak in Chinese." He further stated that the Chinese culture was present through his and others' "accent[s], so you can identify others easily out of [their] accent[s]. Maybe too [they] look like they are Chinese." Nicholas made reference to both how he looked and his accent as his way of representing his culture in everyday life, as well as a way to identify other members of the Chinese community.

Similar to Nicholas, Tony explained how the Chinese culture was present when trying to understand one another and Chinese (Mandarin in this case) was needed to clarify denser topics that would otherwise be lost in translation: "Sometimes we can't explain in English we just can describe it […] we can't understand in English, but use Chinese […] We can't talk about all, for example politics or culture, traditional Chinese culture things. We can just use Chinese." He further elaborates that "with Chinese friends [we] always use Chinese because it's [how we] can understand each other."

Similarly, Fisher's experience with Chinese culture in Canada related to language use. He stated, "Of course I speak Chinese because there are so many Chinese here so with my friends we […] speak Chinese very often but when we're at school so we speak English, but

it's over after school we speak Chinese". Unlike Tony who uses Chinese to communicate more difficult topics, Fisher uses Chinese in any situation that does not require English; however, given that he lives with a Canadian homestay family, his Chinese language use is limited to his Chinese friends.

Cuisine.

Several participants gave examples of how Chinese food was present in their daily lives as an answer to the question of how the Chinese culture was evident daily. Yvonne stated, "in my residence, most people are Chinese so we cook every day and the Chinese culture is use chopsticks […] and eat dumplings". Yvonne lives in the university residence with other Chinese students and is able to eat Chinese food every day. Nicholas commented that although when he first arrived in Canada, he would only eat western food, he eats Chinese food more frequently now. Fisher, who lives in a homestay with a Canadian family, explained that his host family "cook[s] Chinese food every day" for him, and even though it's not exactly what he is used to, he says that it's better than his friend's host family.

Chinese communities at large.

Participants also experienced Chinese culture within the larger Chinese communities in various ways. Fisher discussed how excited he was when he went into a restaurant and saw Chinese writing on the menu: he said, "the first time I went out to the restaurant, I had no idea but when I came in the menu was in Chinese. I was so surprised". Bella commented that there was no real "loss" of Chinese culture because, as she stated, "I think there is lots of Chinese person also in here so I can go to Chinese restaurant and shopping mall like that. I think I will not separate from my culture." When asked if she felt more or less connect to her Chinese roots in Canada, Wendy echoed Bella's sentiment in saying, "I think same. Yea. Because I have so many Chinese friends". The presence of Chinese culture and people in

Canada has made participants feel that there is not a loss of cultural identity. The maintenance of cultural identity may prove useful in understanding naming choices for my participants while in Canada. The presence of Canadian culture in the next section provides insight into how participants identify with Canadian culture, as well as explore how participants are adapting to this culture in their daily lives.

Representation of Canadian culture.

The Canadian culture is represented within the participants' daily lives in numerous ways. In the following subsections, I elaborate on how participants view the Canadian culture being present in their daily lives by addressing its presence in cuisine, language use and Canadian customs.

Cuisine.

When asked about how Canadian culture is present in their daily lives, Steven, Fisher and Desmond used food to indicate culture. Fisher explained that he experienced Canadian culture from his homestay family in the form of food when he stated, "in the morning [my host mother] always gives me cereal" and "on Sunday they eat roast beef". For Steven, he claimed that his cultural identity has not been influenced by things like McDonalds, he had those things in China, but they are evidently equated with Canadian or Western culture in order for him to address its lack of cultural influence. Desmond, much like Steven, explained that it was easy to adapt to Canadian culture since he "ha[s] eaten bread for breakfast for more than 10 years" and "prefer[s] soft[drinks], coffee, rather than tea even before I arrived here". Cuisine has clear ties to Canadian culture for these participants, regardless of the *influence* of cuisine on participants' cultural identities.

English language use.

Two participants, Yvonne and Wendy, identified English language use as a representation of Canadian culture in their daily lives; however, the experiences of these women are quite different. While Wendy speaks English on a daily basis due to the number of native English speakers in her program and is comfortable with English, Yvonne uses English to talk with professors and other people in English, "but actually when I talk to my professor[s], they always have no patience […] and I don't know what they're talking about". Although both participants identify English language use in their daily lives, the responses they receive from those with whom they speak are vastly different.

Customs.

Canadian customs can vary from clothing to parenting, pleasantries to partying, but they all have one thing in common—they represent the Canadian culture in the lives of the participants. Wendy explained that Canadian culture was present in her daily life through her clothing, which she stated is "Canadian style". She also explains that there are different rules, such as traffic crossing rules that are different than in China. Carol commented on her host family's childrearing practices as her experience of Canadian culture in her daily life. She explained,

> I love how the parents say I love you to the kids because usually in China we don't, we, of course parents love us, but they don't really express the loving, they don't say that, but I live in homestay for 2 years and I've seen how the parents and the family show the loving to the kids and the kids hug them and I really love that. It's such a loving family atmosphere. That really, it's a great impact on me.

Both Yvonne and Desmond commented on bus etiquette as "Canadian". Yvonne explained

that on the shuttle bus home, "every time we say "thank you, enjoy your night" it's like the

greetings. The greetings are very polite here". Desmond similarly stated, "after I arrived here

I could point out many difference between the social life and people's customs, for example

in China people will not say "hello" or "thank you" to bus driver but here it is very common".

Not only was bus etiquette noted as Canadian culture, so too was eye contact, "every time we

see each other's eyes, so we are strangers, we like to say "hello"" (Yvonne) and holding

doors open, "in Canada you can hold the door for people next to you because there are not

too many people, but in China if you hold the door, you will never enter the door. Many

people go out." Regarding the difference in partying, Steven and Alex had similar

experiences with partying; however, very different responses to it. According to Steven,

Canadian parties are more "crazy" than Chinese parties where you talk and play table games

and he enjoyed Canadian parties more. Alex believed that Canadians party all the time and

did not enjoy that type of entertainment. He said, "Chinese people don't hold party a lot, so

sometime you might mean to party and I just, how do you say, I just don't want to go, like

every time you know. I just don't know why they just party all the time." Overall, whether

the experiences discussed above are indicative of Canadian or Chinese culture, the

participants have used these experiences to explain how culture is present in their everyday

lives.

Participant comments on how they are viewed.

Throughout the interviews, comments were made regarding how participants felt they

were viewed by the general Canadian public and how they feel as part of Canada. For

instance, Bella explained that there were misunderstandings surrounding Chinese people in

Canada, specifically the misunderstanding that, "Chinese people […] really have some bad

behaviours when they are traveling to other country or something like that. It's a

misunderstanding, but now Chinese people are better". When asked where she had heard about these misunderstandings, she said, "I think I get more information from our class, yea, from my teacher". She further stated that these misunderstandings were not just focused in Canada, but also in England. Yvonne commented on how "Canada is a multicultural country so there are many different cultures and I think culture here is very similar because assimilate […] so group of people will have similar culture and we can understand each other". I asked Yvonne if she meant that Chinese culture and Canadian culture were similar, to which she replied, "I think we're all similar" and when asked if she felt that the Chinese culture was respected in Canada, Yvonne replied "yup". Desmond responded similarly, saying, "It is said that Canada is a country to embrace all kinds of culture so actually I feel less culture shock after I arrive here." How participants feel they are perceived is just as valuable for name choice as the experiences they have and will be useful in addressing how participants negotiate the *third space*.

Meanings, stories and views on Chinese and English names.

After exploring how participants situate themselves culturally within Canada, I explored participants' views on name choice by elaborating on their Chinese name meanings, naming stories and beliefs regarding Chinese naming practices. For comparison in Chapter Five, I have similarly addressed participants' English name meanings and their beliefs on name choice and how it applies to cultural identity.

Ye explained that her Chinese name means "energetic [and] outgoing". When asked if her name had a story behind it, she replied "it doesn't really have a story [… my parents] searched the dictionary, I guess. Yea. My name was supposed to be three letters, three words, Chinese words, but they wanted to keep it simple". She further stated that her name "suits my personality", although she did admit to not liking her name at first given that it is viewed as a

male name, used by 60% men to 40% women. Although she does not currently have an English name, Ye claimed that she has wanted an English name since junior high school because whenever her name is pronounced wrong it makes her feel "awkward inside". She "wants to have one English name that other people don't have […] so like not the same as other people." The reason that Ye does not currently have an English name is that she could not find one perfectly suited to her.

Nicholas was given his Chinese name by his parents based on Wu Xing (the five elements). His name was selected from a book based on the year he was born, which reflected one of the five elements, since "parents want to feel this element so they will design your name with water or fire or land or wood or something like these elements. So we just define my name Yang Xian because my name has the water, [it means] ocean of water". Nicholas is "proud" when others say his name and according to him, his name is unique: "I googled it, so I'm the only one. The one and only". Nicholas chose his English name based on his idol, Nicholas Tse, a Hong Kong movie star, because he liked his spirit. He also looked up his name, which was Greek and meant Victor of the People. In terms of his English name change beliefs, he said, "If I would stay here in Canada and I really want to get along with the society I might change my name to the English name". Additionally, in selecting an English name, Nicholas wanted a name that would allow others to remember him.

Tony's Chinese name, Tian Yi, has dual meanings. The first is Mandarin with Tian meaning "sky" and Yi meaning "one" (the Mandarin character for "one" is represented by a horizontal line) that Tony explained meant that his "mother holds [him] like the line, if you grow up like the line [*he held his finger up horizontally*] don't be the best [*he indicated above the line*], don't be the worst [*he indicated blow the line*], just like that. Balance". Since his mother works in Korea, the second meaning of his name is Korean, meaning: "thousands of suns, always have sunny skies, always warm, happy, it's sunshine". Tony selected his English

name for its similarity to his Chinese name since "Tony" sounds like "Tian Yi", so it would be easy for others to make the connection in class. His beliefs regarding name change to English names were: "When in Rome, as Romans do […] when in Canada, as Canadians do" and since he stated that by pronouncing a Chinese name wrong, it may have no meaning, he opted for an English name to avoid mispronunciation.

Alex's Chinese name, Yu An, like many Chinese names is comprised of two meanings that come together to make the overall meaning of the name. "Yu" means "to give" and "An" means "safe", and Alex explained that "my dad gave me this name. It's because he think[s] he and my mom gave me my life […and] they wish me to be safe and happy". When asked how he felt about his Chinese name, Alex replied that it was hard to pronounce and remember, stating, "it's pretty complicated for [English speakers] to remember Chinese name[s]. It's also complicated for Chinese to remember Chinese names". In selecting an English name, Alex chose the name Potter when he was five due to his love of Harry Potter, then changed it to Peter from age 7-14 because he thought the name Potter was "dumb". Finally, after a gap due to not having an English class taught by an English speaker, he chose Alex since he said, "it's easy for me to read. Before I came to Canada I just have to give me an English name so I just look to the internet and checked what name is easy for me to read and this name is easy A-Z so I just checked A for Alex". Alex pointed out his belief that Chinese names are not changed as frequently as English names, stating, "we don't change [names] like you do. I've heard that in Canada it's always changing names […] like if your name [is] Peter maybe [when] you're young, they call you Pete not Peter, when you're old you change your name to Peter […] But Chinese name, your parents must give you a Chinese name like unless the name is really have negative meaning of the name, usually they don't change the name". It is interesting to note Alex's perception about name choice and the

disconnect between the literature on Chinese naming practices (*ming, hao, zi*) and his currently-held beliefs.

Bella explained that in ancient China, names came from a name list, but not anymore since there are so many people with similar family names that it would be difficult to create a unique name based on the list. Her Chinese name, Mi, was selected by her father and means "mouse" or "rice" so that Bella would eat more and be healthy. She likes her Chinese name, calling it "cute" and enjoys how it connects to cats since it sounds like "meow". Bella's English name was based on her love of the Twilight movies and the character, Bella. She chose her English name back in high school since she was told to choose an English name, and she "used to watch some movies about America so I just think I should have one". When asked how she felt about having an English name in China with her international school teachers, she said, "I think it's fine, it's ok. Because they come from America so I think an English name is more convenient for them".

When Yvonne was born, it had not rained for 6 months and her parents hoped that she would not be thirsty in the dry weather, so they named her Ziye. Part of the character for "Zi" means "fire", which represented that her parents did not want her to be thirsty. The same character is also part of her mother's name, connecting her with her mother. The "Ye" character of her name was selected for the overall pronunciation of her name. Yvonne explained that "the reason why my parents added this Chinese character was for good pronunciation, like if there's only one word in my name, it's very short or something like that, but if add this word it's more beautiful". The sound of her Chinese name was important to her parents. Yvonne likes her Chinese name because it is unique for a girl to have since her name is typical of a male name. When selecting an English name, Yvonne chose a name that sounded like a combination of her given and family name in order for her to make a

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connection to her Chinese culture. As shown in Figure 3, when her name is written, the double N can be underlined and looks like a smiley face, which was another reason why Yvonne chose and likes her name. Yvonne explained that she wanted an English name because it was difficult for her to hear when she was being called, but also thought it would be more "comfortable" for foreigners to use an English name.

Figure 3

Figure 3: Yvonne's written name. This figure illustrates how Yvonne's name looks like a smiley face when the double "n" is underlined—a reason for her name choice.

Wendy's Chinese name, Qianwen, means both "girl looks pretty" ("Qian") and "culture/gaining knowledge" ("Wen"). Although her mother wanted her to have only one character, which is more modern, her father wanted her to have "knowledge" in her name. Wendy likes her Chinese name, but feels that it is too common; for instance, when she was in high school "2 or 3 girls have the same name". Although the name is the same, and "it's pronounced the same, […] the words are different […]different meanings". Her name "Wendy" was given to her by her English teacher in China, and although she considers it "so common", she likes it very much because it connects with her Chinese name since "my name Wen is W-E-N, so my English name is Wendy, spelled W-E-N-D-Y". She says that she had to choose an English name and stated that "Qianwen is hard to pronounce".

Carol was born in Autumn and her mother wanted her to be a happy girl, so her Chinese name, Quiyue, reflected these things: "Qui" means autumn and "Yue" means happiness. She did not indicate how she felt about her Chinese name; however, she did state that her name is unique since her mother made it up and "in China, names mean a lot". Her

first English name, Jade, was given to her by her kindergarten teacher at random, but she liked it since it meant 'gentle' and jade is supposed to protect you. Similar to Yvonne's parents, who wanted a 2 syllable Chinese name, Carol selected a 2 syllable English name since she "like[s] words that got 2 or 3 syllables that you can say it more". "Carol" also meant "happiness" and matched her personality since people singing Christmas carols are generally happy. When asked if she would use her Chinese name in Canada, Carol stated, "of course if anyone asks me about my Chinese name I will tell them what my Chinese name, what the meaning is, but if it's too hard for them to pronounce it, it's too hard, it's different so in Canada I will just say 'I'm Carol'". I asked her to explain why it was so different, to which she replied,

> In home towns where you come from your name means something to your parents and to your friends too […] they know the meaning of the name [….] Most of my professors or my classmate […] don't understand what [my Chinese name] means […] It doesn't mean anything to them. It's just a name "oh the girl wearing the glasses, she is Carol" just that.

Carol iterated that her English name is "just a name for Canadians to recognize me, to talk to me, to make everything go easier". To Carol, an English name is a tool for communication.

Fisher's Chinese name, Han, means "just before sunrise" since he was born just before sunrise; he looked up his name online to know its meaning. Fisher also said that his father named him after Wu Han, a great man in China over 100 years ago. As a child, Fisher did not like his name since many girls had the same name, but thinks that it is "ok" as an adult. He chose his English name "Fish" because one of his favourite movie characters loved eating fish. After he was told it was silly by a teacher, he changed his name to Fisher, but he

still prefers people to call him Fish. He did not have any preference in using his Chinese name over his English name or vice versa and said that "it's just a name […] doesn't matter".

Desmond's parents named him Li Xiong because "Li" means "powerful" and Xiong means "hero", which was their hope for him. Although he did not mention how he felt regarding his Chinese name,   his English names had very different stories behind them. Desmond's first English name, Black, was selected because black "represents the lawful and maybe some judge[s] and follow[ing] order", while also being "easy to pronounce and remember". He changed his name to Desmond because of a misunderstanding that happened in Canada, which he explained:

> My classmate sits in front of me and beside her is another classmate we don't know, he's a black male and my classmate wants to ask me to lend my [inaudible] to her but she just called "Black, Black" and before I could realize, that black male [makes a shocked and upset face]. Yea, a big misunderstanding.

He selected Desmond because in his group of friends, the leader of the group chose a name that started with an 'A' so Desmond did not want to, as he said, "challenge" him, but a name starting with a B would not work since, as Desmond stated, "B's in Chinese culture means something very stupid […] and C, there are so many words I don't like, for example Chaos, Calamity, Communism start with C so I decide to use D as the first letter". He wanted a unique name, so he chose Desmond.

Steven's Chinese name, Dong Shan, was selected with the help of a feng shui man who connected his name to his father's name, (surname) Dong, which means "the east sun rises on the mountains" and since "Shan" means "mountains", their names are connected. Steven was given his English name in grade 1 because his school was associated with the Sesame Street program and all the students needed English names. He stated that his English

name means "nothing, it's just a name […but] it's all fun". Further, when asked about the meaning of his English name, he replied, "I didn't know English names have meaning[s]".

Although the abovementioned participant naming stories indicate some agency, the next two research questions elaborate on the exact agents responsible for name choice, according to the participants.

Who Exercises Agency in the Decision to Keep or Change a name? What Other Factors Might Explain this Decision?

In addressing the topic of agency, there are three types of agency that emerged from my interviews: *self-agency, mixed agency* and *no agency*. Each type of agency will be explained and these distinctions elaborated on in Chapter Five. The breakdown of participants within each type of agency is as follows: 4 participants under *self-agency;* 5 participants under *mixed agency*; and 2 participants under *no agency*.

Self-agency.

The term *self-agency* encompasses participants who fully attribute any decision regarding name change or maintenance to themselves, citing their own rationale. Although some of their rationale may later be addressed as an influence on their self-agency, such as social factors, for this section, participants found to believe their name choice was solely decided by themselves is addressed herein. In this section, 4 participants indicated self-agency: Ye, Alex, Yvonne and Desmond.

When Ye was entering junior high, her guidance councillor asked her name and Ye explained that she could not think of a name on the spot that was unique and represented her well.

I wanted to have an English name, but I thought all of them aren't special enough so I thought about maybe having [an English] name later on so I just [used] my Chinese name […] then people got used to calling me Ye, so I didn't bother.

Although her friends were used to calling her by her Chinese name, she expressed frustration in her name being constantly mispronounced in university, stating,

Every time when the new prof or new [teaching assistant] asks you what's your name, they pronounce my name wrong […] if my name's Julia, it's J-U-L-I-A […] it's really obvious it's pronounced Julia, right […] but my name is Y-E and some people pronounce it like "Yea".

Changing to an English name appears to be a strong consideration for Ye stating that she would want to change it within the year or when she graduates. Whether or not Ye changes her name, the choice will be hers based on her abovementioned reasons.

Alex chose his English name before he came to Canada, and as he said, "I just came up with it myself." He explained that he did not need an English name while he was in China since his English teachers were "Chinese teachers [and] they can spell a [Chinese] name"; however, he believed that English speakers would have difficulty spelling his name and may easily be confused with someone who had a similar name. Specifically, he said, "I think my Chinese name is hard for Canadians to read […] I don't think Canadians […] can spell my name correctly so maybe there's some other Chinese guy whose name is similar, which means we get confused". Alex further stated that an English name is also useful for Chinese people to use with one another "because some Chinese letters really complicated, you know, like it's much simpler to use English name than Chinese name". Although Alex asked his friends for help with a name, he did not get much help so he looked in a dictionary and came up with "Alex" on his own.

When professors could not say Yvonne's Chinese name properly and she could not tell when she was being addressed, Yvonne chose an English name to use with English speakers, stating, "I'm not adjusted to hear[ing] my Chinese name because you know the pronunciation [from] people like you is hard for me to recognize". She elaborated saying, "Chinese characters [are] always a difficult part for foreigners to pronounce it and when I first come to my course the professor called my first name and she wait a few second, she read my name again and again but I don't know. I [did] not realize that she is calling me […] so that's the reason why I choose my English name". She also acknowledged that "Chinese characters are difficult to read or write. I think it's more comfortable for foreigners." Although she chose an English name, she wanted to maintain her Chinese name with Chinese friends, since they all share the same culture, but her friends all use their English names and use hers too. She explained this, as well as how she felt, saying, "I always introduce myself in Chinese first, but [my friends] always told me that everyone has an English name here so they would like to call my English name, not Chinese name […] I feel bad". Yvonne makes the connection between her identity here and how she will communicate with her friends from Canada back in China, which will be addressed further in relation to agency.

Desmond has had two English names and stated that he selected his English names because he had "read many articles" and "had some classes taught by the foreign professors and at that moment I can realize that a Chinese name is very difficult to pronounce by them and the pronunciation is a different way and even makes people laugh". As stated in the first research question, Desmond opted to change his name from Black to Desmond because of a social misunderstanding with a black man in his university class. He chose his second name so that he did not challenge the leader of his group and ended up selecting Desmond because he needed a name starting with a 'D' and "Desmond is a little bit unique". His naming

hierarchy demonstrated respect for the social order within his group of friends and his name choice reflected his desire for a unique name.

As will be discussed in Chapter Five, participants within the *self-agency* category may overlap into the *mixed agency* category due to factors unbeknownst to the participants at the time of the interview. Currently, participant placement in each category reflects what I was explicitly told during interviews.

Mixed agency.

Mixed Agency comprises participants who were influenced by another party with regards to their name choices, in these instances, changing to English names. While they were influenced or even forced to choose English names, the participants had some degree of agency over the name that was selected. Five participants fall under the category of *mixed agency*: Nicholas, Tony, Bella, Fisher and Carol.

Nicholas's English class in China was told by their English teacher that they "must have an English name for each other so you want to make others remember you". Although he was told to have a name by his teacher, who acted as the agent in this regard, he was able to control the name he chose, as evident with the rationale for his English name choice in the previous section. Nicholas wanted a name that was easy, well-suited to him and based on his idol, Nicholas Tse. Nicholas demonstrated concern with selecting his English name; however, when asked if choosing an English name was a necessity and how he felt about it, he said "I have to, but not so strong, maybe 50/50", indicating that he was obligated to choose an English name, but he did not care one way or another.

Although Tony cited "people, my family" as potential influences on his name choice, when asked if the selection of his English name was his own, he replied, "yea, sure". Tony

further stated that "Tianyi sometimes people can't pronunciation right so I chose Tony because it's easy to remember, easy to pronounce, easy to write". Tony continued by explaining that his name means "fashion and beautiful", which is another reason why he chose it; however, the overarching reason was so that his Canadian university English language program "teacher can know Tianyi since Tony sounds similar [….An] easy connection. I chose an English name. My English class is a big class. Big class. So many people so we can't communication with teacher [if] didn't chose English name." Similar to Nicholas, Tony wanted a name that was 'easy', but his name choice directly related to his current educational environment.

Bella selected her English name when she was at an international school in Beijing, China. Bella was told by her English teacher to choose English name. Much like Nicholas, while she did not have the agency in selecting between name change and name maintenance, she did select her own English name. As mentioned above, Bella selected her name because of her love of the movie Twilight.

Fisher explained how in China he was required to choose an English name because it was easier for his English speaking teacher to remember. Fisher explained, "my foreign teacher asked us to pick an English name for us because it's easier for him to memorize so I have no idea which name I should choose and Fish just came across". Fisher explained why he changed from Fish to Fisher, stating, "My English teacher told me that it's kind of silly, you have to change it when you come to Canada, so I choose Fisher here". When asked how he felt about being told to change his name, he replied, "it's ok. And even here most of my Chinese friends call me Fish and I prefer that name", so he is able to exercise his agency in using the name he prefers with his friends in Canada regardless of what his teacher suggested. Although the teacher's role in having him change from Fish to Fisher did not necessarily

suggest active agency in name choice, the influential role of the teacher made the comment "it's kind of silly" an important reason for Fisher to change his name.

Carol's first English name, Jade, was given to her in kindergarten. She explained, "I had a teacher, she's from the States and she was teaching us English and one day she got a backpack and there were many name tags in it and we just picked one, so I picked Jade." When I asked whether she had a choice with the names in the backpack, Carol replied, "Just random. You can't see it. I just pick it from the backpack and Jade came up so I am Jade". As mentioned previously, Carol liked the name Jade since it meant 'gentle' and jade is believed to protect its owner; however, she told me, "I changed it because it only had one syllable, "Jade", I like words that got 2 or 3 syllables that you can say it more, I don't know, so I picked Carol". Although she had no agency with her first name, Carol demonstrated agency in selecting her second name from a dictionary because it matched her Chinese name, meaning 'happiness', since people who sing Christmas carols are happy. Further, Carol cited her reason for an English name to ease communication with English-speakers, saying,

> I was about to come to Canada and my English name is better for people here to communicate, like they can just call me Carol and it will be easier to talk with. If I tell them my Chinese name, it will be so hard to pronounce it and that will be maybe make some communication difficulties.

Her key concern in selecting an English name for coming to Canada was making sure that she was able to communicate well with others.

The participants in this section demonstrated some agency in the use or selection of their English names, although not with the decision to maintain or change their names. In the following section, participants demonstrated no agency in name choice, use or selection.

No agency.

No Agency encompasses participants who have been told to change their names and were given an English name. For whatever reason, the participant did not have any say in his or her name choice or the name that was selected. *No agency* does not indicate force, rather a decision made without participant voice or opinion. Wendy and Steven demonstrated *no agency* in name choice or the English names they were given.

Wendy explained that she was given her English name by her Chinese English teacher while she was in China. I mention that Wendy's teacher was Chinese since her teacher would speak Mandarin and would likely not have the same difficulty pronouncing and remembering Chinese names as Carol, Fisher and Bella's English-speaking English teachers. It is interesting that while both Wendy and Alex's English teachers in China were Chinese, Alex explained that he did not need an English name since his teacher could understand and pronounce his Chinese name. When I asked Wendy about her English name selection, she explained, "my English teacher gave it to me" and when I asked if it was optional or mandatory, she replied, "I think we had to because Qianwen is hard to pronounce". Although she had no say in name change or name selection, Wendy does like her name due to its connection to her Chinese name, Qianwen, since both contain "W-E-N", so she is reminded of her Chinese name.

Steven's English name does not connect to his Chinese name at all. In fact, his name selection is similar to Carol's first English name, Jade, since it too was selected at random. Steven explained that he received his English name in grade one as part of the Sesame Street program. Steven explained how he came to receive the name, Steven, saying,

> You know Sesame Street? They came over to China and they have like program and stuff like that. I was in the program […] yea. My school have a partnership with them

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so they have actual American teaching us English […] like the teacher gave us the name. We don't pick. We don't get to pick names.

I then asked him if he had any choice, with which he replied: "No, not at all […] because we were in the program, we must have an English name." He went on to clarify that he could change his name if he wanted to, stating, "Well if, for example, if I want to change it, I can change it anytime, but I got used to it so it doesn't matter". Although Steven did not possess any agency in selecting his name, he realizes that he has the opportunity to change his name anytime he wants, which is addressed in more detail in Chapter Five.

Regardless of which category (*self-agency, mixed agency,* or *no agency*) participants find themselves, the manner in which participants received or selected their names may influence how they perceive the agency of name choice on cultural identity. Participant perceptions of this influence is explored in the third research question:

What Role does Agency Play in Developing an Individual's Cultural Identity?

The role of agency on individual's cultural identity is addressed in much greater depth in Chapter Five; however, within this section, I address participants' views of name change on cultural identity. Participants gave both general opinions on names and name choice, as well as personal beliefs relevant to their situations in relation to cultural identity. The following section addresses those beliefs generally and personally, as well as address how those beliefs may be put into practice with hypothetical questions regarding the naming practices for future children.

Name change and cultural identity.

Participants were asked how they felt their name choices impacted their cultural identities. With all of the interviews, there was a disconnect between name choice and an

impact on cultural identity, where participants did not believe that there was a connection between their English names and their Chinese identities. For instance, Fisher stated that "It's just a name […] doesn't matter". While Nicholas claimed that he would legally change his name to English if he lived in Canada, he explained that "it doesn't make a difference […] it doesn't affect our Chinese or Korean [identity], it's just a name. It's a name. What others call you". Overwhelmingly, participants explained that their name choice did not impact their cultural identities, but was a tool for communication above all else. Bella explaining that "in college and university in China now, everyone or almost everyone has an English name or […] just an English name. It's more convenient" and helped her "to make more friends", indicating that it is part of normal Chinese culture in her mind and, again, is seen as a social tool.

Carol responded that her name does not impact her cultural identity because her culture is apparent in her appearance. Specifically, when asked if her name choice impacted her cultural identity, she said,

> I don't think so, no. I don't think cultural identity because my figure tells you everything. That I'm not from here; that I'm from China. Carol is just a name. Just a name of who I am but that doesn't mean who I really am, where I'm from, what my culture is. It's just a name for Canadians to recognize me, to talk to me, to make everything go easier.

Much like Bella, Carol viewed her English name as a communication tool.

Steven has had both an English name and a Japanese name, given to him by Japanese friends, and views his English name as "nothing, it's just a name" and views alternate names as "all fun". His belief is that his English name is just a name to be used for communication and, in contrast to the story behind his Chinese name, Steven did not know the meaning of his

English name or that English names had meanings. He stated, "I didn't know English names have meaning. What does Steven even mean?" Although I did not know the meaning at the time, as a follow-up to our interview, I emailed Steven with the meaning of his English name.

Although Steven had no agency and Tony displayed self-agency in name choice, both participants felt that selecting an English name did not affect cultural identity. Tony's rationale for his stance was based on his agency to select his name, saying, "we choose it, not my father, […] it's mine. But I can choose Tony, I can choose Nicholas, so it doesn't matter". He further clarified that since his English name is not his legal name, it does not have the same meanings, since "legal name has many meanings." and, to him, an English name is something to be called "instead of you".

Similar to Steven, when asked about his English name meaning, Alex replied, "I don't know. Does it have any meaning of the name?" Although I did not know the meaning at the time, I emailed Alex to explain the meaning of his name. He replied with a clarification that he did indeed know that English names had meanings; he just did not know his own name meaning. He further commented that he may be unique in knowing that English names have meanings, evident when he said, "I don't think that most Chinese people know that every English name has a meaning". Alex did not believe that there was any connection between his English name choice and his Chinese cultural identity since he chose his name at random. He went on to indicate that those who choose English names that reflect their Chinese names may have a connection to their cultural identity, using his friend as his example. Alex explained the connection to cultural identity, stating, "Maybe for some of the people, like I have a friend, a Chinese friend, her name is Timber, actually the full name is Timberland [….] Her last name is "Forest" in Chinese so she just named herself Timberland". He suggested that since she thought deeply when selecting an English name, and her name

reflected her Chinese name, that it might impact her cultural identity, although he did not indicate *how* it might impact identity.

Participants, like Yvonne, selected their English names with care, much like Alex's friend Timberland. When asked whether her name choice had any impact on her cultural identity, Yvonne's replied that "an English name isn't considered a nickname since nicknames are reserved for friends and family to show closeness to people", indicating that English names do not hold the same value to her and do not have the same impact on her as a nickname. Yvonne explained the nicknames she had with her family with great detail and obvious sentimentality, for instance, when she explained the story behind her *xiao ming*, "'Xiao Ye', like 'the little leaf'", which represented how she was the youngest in her family. Yvonne, although she selected her name very purposefully, did not appear to give it the same importance as her Chinese names and nicknames, leaving it as solely functional for living in Canada. The *use* of her English and Chinese names, on the other hand, did indicate some impact on her cultural identity since she felt that using her English name with Chinese friends distanced her from China. She stated,

> I feel bad because you know we are all Chinese. Why we don't speak Chinese here? We have our own culture, why speak English here? And you know we just for study here and we come back to China soon, not soon, after a few years and we so what do you think we call each other in China, Chinese, right? So what if we come back China and we touch together, what can I call for you? […] I would like to call them Chinese name, but if when we meet together and "hi" in English and we call him or her English names and the Chinese, what do you think the Chinese think about it?

Yvonne is very concerned with how the *use* of English names within the Chinese community in Canada will reflect on the Chinese culture, as well as how she and others from Canada will

be received when they return to China if they only use English to identify one another. It is interesting that the name choice itself was functional and did not appear to influence Yvonne's perception of her cultural identity; however, *use* of her English name did. Wendy echoed Yvonne's desire for her Chinese friends to use her Chinese name, citing that it would make her feel "soft" or give her a warm feeling.

Desmond, like Yvonne, selected his name with care and believed his name served a functional purpose and was not an influence on his cultural identity. He encouraged me to think about name change as a marker or indicator within the target language by saying, "If we think in a different way, maybe a name doesn't contain too much, just a mark or signal for individuals […] Why do I just choose a mark? To be remembered is good enough". Similar to Yvonne, it was not the English name that influenced his cultural identity, rather the use of Chinese language. In Desmond's case, wanting to use English with his Chinese friends negatively impacted his interactions with the Chinese community at his university. He explained, "when I arrived here I speak English to everyone in order to improve my English skill, but I noticed that it's very weird to most Chinese classmates, they feel it's not necessary and actually it damaged my network." When I asked him to elaborate on how speaking English damaged his network, he explained that "Chinese people prefer to speak Chinese to anyone else if he or she can speak Chinese. So if I am Chinese and I insist to speak English with them they [would think] "ok, but makes me tired so it makes me not want to keep talking"". By choosing to speak English with the Chinese community, Desmond was negatively affecting his social identity within the Chinese community; however, like Yvonne, this impact was not directly related to his name choice. Moreover, Desmond equated selecting an English name to choosing an online name, which "is the same as traditional Chinese people [who] will [choose] their own name after they become adult[s], maybe the ID [computer name] will contain the people's hope, maybe ego and self-imagination". Desmond

is referring to the Chinese naming practice of choosing a "zi" or *style name* (as described in Chapter Two), suggesting that an English name is like a "zi" for him.

Chinese name change for English speakers.

As a way to address the unidirectionality of name change (from Chinese names to English names), I asked several participants whether they had experienced English speakers adopting Chinese names and whether such a practice should take place. I received responses from Ye, Bella, Steven and Desmond.

Ye and Bella commented on how those who adopt a Chinese name are trying to learn more about China and they responded saying "it's very nice" (Ye) and "[it] felt really heartwarming" (Bella). Ye explained that adopting a Chinese name in China would "help you to step into the culture, step into the country, and people will be more friendly and it feels like "oh, you like China so that's why you have a Chinese name"". She explained that it would be easier for people to talk to someone with a Chinese name. At Bella's international school, her English-speaking teachers adopted Chinese names because, as Bella explained, "They love Chinese. They want to learn about China. I think it's very nice". When Steven was asked about Chinese name change, he replied, "it's cool", indicating that he liked the idea of English speakers adopting Chinese names, which coincides with his belief that name change is "all fun". Desmond, on the other hand, believed that keeping an English name was best since "the Chinese name is very difficult to pronounce, but English, I think most Chinese, especially those in business, can pronounce the English name. Very easy." The sentiment of English speakers selecting a Chinese name demonstrated respect (for the Chinese culture, names, people), which is a predominant theme that emerged from the interviews; however, Desmond's comment on using an English name for functionality over a Chinese name for

cultural similitude drew on the notion that name change is a tool for communication above all else.

Although asking how name change influences cultural identity revealed that most participants did not believe there was any impact, asking the hypothetical question "what naming practices would you use on your future children?" revealed underlying beliefs, which are explored further in Chapter Five.

How does this Affect his/her Experience as an Immigrant or Chinese Canadian?

As a follow-up to asking participants how name choice impacted their identities, I also asked participants what naming practice they would use on their future children, if they were to have any. Table 2 illustrates preferences for participants' name choices, as well as brief summaries of their name choice rationales. In asking participants about future name choice, I wanted to explore where participants believe they will be in the future (China, Canada, other), as well as whether location would influence name choice. Further, participants may have different or augmenting answers to questions, such as "what would the benefit be to having an English or Chinese name?"

Table 2

Participant Name Choice for Future Children

Participant	Chinese Name	English Name	Both	Location Dependent	Rationale
Alex			√		• As a Canadian, she should have an English name "because it's easy for her to introduce herself to others, for her friends". • Alex would use a Chinese name when talking to his children. • For jobs, an English name would help her get an English job, but if the company was Chinese, using her Chinese name would help.
Bella	√				• Bella wants to move back to China, so she will use a Chinese name because "I think a good [Chinese] name will help people to remember my daughter" • Her child can choose an English name if she wishes but Bella wants her child to live in China with her.
Carol				√	• "If I go back to China and have children there, of course I would pick Chinese names. If I had

				√	children here and I think I would name them a Chinese name for at home that our family members know, but to other people outside of the family of course I would name them an English name because that is easier […] to talk to and to fit into Canadian community. Because if they are born here, they would be Canadian. They need to adapt to the Canadian culture"
Desmond			√		• "Maybe [a Chinese name], but since I want to live here and have my children here so I think my children's names will be, official name will be English name [… since a] Chinese name is difficult to pronounce for their native classmates and professor"
Fisher				√	• If he has children in China, they will have Chinese names. • If he has children in Canada, they will have both because an English name "would be easier for their friends [and] my children [would] be part of Canad[a]", and Chinese name because if they don't have a Chinese name "it's hard for my parents, my family, to call them"
Nicholas			√		• Chinese name to maintain the culture and teach children Cantonese • English name because "they need to survive here". Children can choose their own name or he can give them one if they want.
Steven			√		• "I'd give them both for sure […] because I'm Chinese, my kids must have a Chinese name […] because they are Chinese too. But maybe I marry a Canadian. Wow. Well it would still be cool to have a Chinese name, right?"
Tony				√	• "My children should know about things about China, but if you grow up in Canada, you must be […] Canadian. So I will give them for here an English name, in China give them a Chinese name"
Wendy				√	• "If I lived here, I would give both because if I live in Canada, I have […] give them an English name, but I don't want them to just give up the Chinese culture"
Ye			√		• Chinese name to use with her family • English name for friends and meeting people. Also for social reasons "because in Canada there does have some racism", although she has not encountered any herself.
Yvonne	√				• Since her father chose such a good name for her, Yvonne wants her father to give her child a Chinese name. She will give only a Chinese name since she plans to live in China.

Table 2 shows that the two participants who opted for Chinese names only, Yvonne and Bella, intend to return to China when they finish their schooling, so their children would have only Chinese names. Bella indicated that her children would have the opportunity to

choose an English name, if they liked. No participants opted to give their children only English names; however, Desmond was uncertain of whether he would give a Chinese name, but the possibility leaves him in the "Both" category. All participants commented on the need for their children to have a Chinese name to (1) preserve culture and language, (2) allow for employment benefits, or (3) communicate with family. Five participants (Ye, Nicholas, Alex, Desmond and Steven) chose to give their children both names, while four participants (Tony, Carol, Wendy and Fisher) stated that their future children's naming practices would be dependent upon whether they live in China or in Canada. Those who would give both names or would live in Canada opted for English names for (1) ease of communication with peers and teachers, (2) employment benefits, (3) to avoid racism, or (4) because the children would be Canadian and it was fitting to give them a Canadian name.

By addressing the hypothetical question of future naming practices for children, I was able to explore factors influencing name choices that may not have directly affected participants and therefore would not have been addressed. Although selecting an English name did not directly impact cultural identity, as addressed in the first part of this question, the hypothetical children question brought forth the importance of maintaining a Chinese name within the naming practice as an important part of preserving Chinese cultural identity.

Conclusion

In addressing the three main research questions, I have explored both name choice and agency for my participants. It was through these questions and my semi-structured interviews that I was able to draw out the themes addressed in the next chapter. The value of names and the influences of agency on name choice and use are used to frame the discussion of the apparent themes in the next chapter.

Chapter Five: Discussion

In this chapter, I address the two themes that emerged from a grounded theory approach to my study: the value of names and the influence of agency on name choice. The term *value* in the first theme has meanings that are both based on (1) tradition, for instance, following traditional values, as well as (2) an indicator of worth or importance, such as how a name's value influences *social* or *cultural capital* (Bourdieu, 1992). Within the first theme, I explore name choice, overwhelmingly changing to English names, as it relates to Bourdieu's (1984; 1992) concept of *habitus and field* by drawing on the relationship between Chinese naming practices and my participants' experiences selecting and using English names. Further, I address the value of a name by connecting my participants' experiences with the current literature on name choice, specifically as it pertains to Bourdieu's (1992) *social* and *cultural capital*. Both the traditional value placed on naming and the *social* and *cultural capital* tied to name choice illuminate participants' negotiations of Homi Bhabha's (1994) *third space.* The second theme, the influence of agency on name choice, addresses explicit and implicit agency and their influences on name choice. *Explicit agency* encompasses people or institutions that possess agency in name choice; *implicit agency* refers to factors which contributed to the participant's name choice, but were not identified as possible agents by the participant. Using Marx' (1852) definition of agency, I address how participants, who identified under the concept of *self-agency*, may have overlooked how external factors influenced their decisions to maintain or change their names.

The Value of Names

Respect for the Chinese culture was a common thread throughout every interview. As mentioned in Chapter Four, Bella and Ye were moved by any indication that the Chinese culture was valued by non-Chinese people; throughout my interviews, several participants

were pleased by the mere fact that I wanted to study the Chinese culture. Chinese naming traditions have been around for centuries and many of those traditions are taught to the next generation. This was made evident through the collective naming history that participants shared with me. For instance, Alex and Bella explained the ancient tradition of using a family's name list for naming children. While this explained how Alex received his name, "like my grandparents' name is named by the name list and my dad should also be named by the name list", Bella explained the tradition of the name list, but suggested that it is no longer used: "in ancient China every family has a list for their names and they can name their children […] according to this list. But now I think they don't use the list anymore, just my father gave my name". Chinese naming practices have influenced participants' decision to keep or change a name, as well as their name selection process. In the following section, I situate my findings among the current literature, as well as address how the *habitus* of Chinese naming practices has been adapted to selecting English names for Chinese Canadians and Chinese immigrants.

Name choice and Bourdieu's (1984; 1992) *habitus and field.*

Habitus is defined as "a structuring structure, which organizes practices and the perception of practices" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 166). In this sense, Chinese naming practices defined by my participants (either perceived or legitimate) are equally as valid in developing *habitus* as those defined through records of Chinese naming traditions. Both naming practices and the perception of naming practices influence participants' naming experiences and therefore reflect on their English name choices, as discussed below. In attempting to compare English naming habitus with Chinese naming habitus, I overlooked the fact that regardless of the commonalities (or indeed, differences) that these naming habiti share, it is the participants' *perceptions* of these commonalities (or differences) that make them real. For Steven, who did not know that his English names had meaning, the fact that Anglo-Saxon

names are comprised of positive attributes that parents wish for their children and bears striking similarity to Chinese parents' hopes and wishes for their children, is irrelevant since Steven *perceived* English names to be meaningless. Although the English naming habitus loses relevancy when participants do not know the habitus of the foreign field, in this case, Canada, it is interesting to draw connections between the two cultures' habiti in order to understand how similarities in naming practices can ease the transition of immigrants in the future.

Although the differences in naming practices may only be *perceived* by participants, the lack of knowledge regarding English naming practices in the Canadian *field* and their comprehensive knowledge of and connection to their home *field,* prompted participants to connect strongly to their own naming practice *habitus*. Had participants known of the similarities between naming habiti, perhaps their negotiation of a name would strengthen their connection with the target culture. Instead, participants negotiated their position within the *third space* by amalgamating English name use with Chinese traditions and producing a hybridized naming practice that reflects their culture, as well as the social conventions of the target *field*—Canadian society. The *habitus* of Chinese naming practice involves selecting names based on hopes and desires for the individual, producing unique and memorable names, and using zi (style name) and hao (courtesy name) to mark transitions. In the section below, I explore how these qualities of Chinese naming habitus are mirrored in the experiences of my participants' selection and use of English names.

Qualities of hope, desire, destiny.

In Chinese naming practice, parents select names according to their hopes and desires for their children at the time of their births (Wang & Micklin, 1996). The desire for a meaningful name was evident in Wang's (2009) and Edwards' (2008) studies where

participants gave in-depth descriptions of the meaning of their Chinese names. The hopes and desires can be situational, such as Yvonne, who was born in a drought and her parents wished that she would never be thirsty, or it could be character-related, like Carol, whose name reflected her parents' desire for her to be happy. Seven out of the eleven participants (Desmond, Yvonne, Alex, Carol, Wendy, Bella and Tony) explicitly addressed how their parents selected their names to bestow either a "hope", a "wish", or a "want" upon them.

The naming practices stated by Wang and Micklin (1996) were reflected in participants' Chinese naming stories and were also reflected in their English name selection. Carol selected her English name based on having the same meaning as her Chinese name, "happiness", since she wanted her name to reflect her character. Through selecting her English name to reflect her personality, Carol is using Chinese naming habitus, given that Chinese names are selected to be both prescriptive and descriptive (Wang, 2009). Much like the gendered names reflect the desire for males to possess names of strength, intellect and bravery, Nicholas name means Victor of the People, indicating power and strength. When he chose his name, Nicholas was naming himself after his idol, Nicholas Tse, whose spirit he wanted to emulate. His name choice is a reflection of his desire to possess the qualities of his idol and possibly live up to the meaning of his name—a victor of the people. Although Desmond never gave the meaning of his second English name, his first English name, Black, was selected very carefully to reflect his appreciation for justice and lawfulness. Desmond explained that to him "black" was synonymous with judges and law—possibly a hope he had for himself within society or as a career option. In selecting English names to be reflective of characteristics participants want to embody, the participants are applying Chinese naming habitus within the English-speaking field.

Uniqueness.

Similar to the desire for selecting names with meaning, the desire for a unique name has been a theme throughout the literature, as evident in Wang's (2009) study where uniqueness was deemed the highest criteria in selecting English names. Zheng's (1985) study of the 1982 Chinese census indicated that 90% of all given names come from only 409 characters (as cited in Wang and Micklin, 1996, p. 200), suggesting a high likelihood of name repetition and therefore decreased uniqueness. It is now becoming more common for families, at least in larger cities, to dispense with family name lists due to the likelihood of names being duplicated. Instead, some parents are creating names based on characters or meanings that they like, much like Carol's mother who put two characters she liked together to form "Qiuyue". When asked if his Chinese name was unique, Nicholas lit up and answered, "I googled it, so I'm the only one. The one and only". Steven also commented on the uniqueness of his Chinese name, saying, "when people ask my name they will all [be] surprised. That's how unique my name is". For someone who believed that English names do not matter, Steven definitely showed pride in the uniqueness of his Chinese name. It is in translating the desire for unique names to English name selection that there is an intertwining of Chinese habitus within the field of English-speakers. Both Ye and Desmond demonstrated a desire for unique names, which I argue is a reflection of the habitus. Ye has not chosen an English name because she "wants to have one English name that other people don't have"; she has not found a name that she deems "special enough". Desmond selected his name from a list of names starting with D and found that "David [is] too common. Desmond, ok Desmond is a little bit unique". The desire for a unique name is not exclusively found within Chinese naming practices. As stated in Chapter Two, with the onset of the Industrial Revolution and booming populations came the desire for unique names; however, this similarity in habiti was contradicted by an observation made by Carol who explained that,

"parents here [in Canada] pick the same names like everybody else because that name is popular and they say "oh that's a popular name and that fits in the current trend"". According to Carol, the uniqueness of English names is not as important as its popularity and the social benefit to children fitting into society—indicating a disconnect between English naming literature and currently-held beliefs by participants.

Generational.

Although none of the participants had any siblings, and therefore generational names were not present in my study, the habitus of naming hierarchy was still apparent in Desmond's English name selection. According to the Chinese naming tradition, siblings in the same family are often given one similar character that is used as a generational identifier. This allows families to easily identify generations and be able to apply the proper rules of address to afford each individual the proper respect. As mentioned, this type of naming hierarchy was not apparent in the participants; however, Desmond displayed a similar logic in selecting his second English name. He explained that the leader of his group had a name starting with "A" so he could not select a name starting with an "A" or it may be seen as a "challenge" to the leader's position. Due to reasons explained in the previous chapter, names starting with "B" and "C" were not desirable, so Desmond chose the next letter "D". Desmond's naming choice shows a great deal of respect to the group of friends he keeps and is similar to the reason why generational indicators are used. By this logic, I would suggest that Desmond is finding his position within his group of friends in Canada using Chinese naming habitus—balancing the Chinese cultural knowledge of his peers with the English language of his surroundings.

Nickname and alternate name usage—zi, hao and xiao ming.

Historically, alternate names are very much a part of Chinese naming habitus. Although Alex believed that English speakers change their names more frequently than Chinese, evident when he said, "we usually take what name the parents give you, we don't change it like you do. I've heard that in Canada it's always changing names", he was referring to nicknames or short forms of names, such as Peter to Pete. Contrary to Alex's statement, Chinese naming practice has several types of common alternative names, which I argue, make the naming practice of adopting an English name more natural. Below I address participants' Chinese nicknames or alternative names, as well as their understanding of English names as another form of alternative naming.

The "xiao ming" or "pet name" was given by the parents as another way to bestow a blessing on their children (Wang & Micklin, 1996). In my study, four participants discussed their *xiao ming*: Tony, whose parents called him "Yiyi"; Bella, whose parents call her "Mimi"; Steven, whose parents call him "Yang Yang"; and Yvonne, whose parents and extended family call her "Xiao Ye". Participants regarded their *xiao ming* as "cute" (Tony and Bella) ways for their parents or families to refer to them. The first 3 participants' *xiao ming* come from a repetition of one of the characters of their Chinese names, and Yvonne's *xiao ming* means "little leaf" and used the character "ye" from her Chinese name. Aside from the pet names, a few of the participants experienced other types of nicknames, such as Yvonne, whose friends called "wanzi", meaning "food made into [a] ball" because she had short hair and a round face. Both Alex and Tony explained that as a form of respect, siblings would refer to each other as "Brother Yi" for Tony and "Brother Ji" for Alex, based on using one of the characters in their names. Although none of the participants had siblings, the participants' references to several different types of the nicknames and alternative names

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exemplify how adopting nicknames reflects Chinese naming habitus and makes it a more natural decision within the Canadian field.

I would argue that adopting an English name would be much like adopting a "hao" or courtesy name, or even a "zi" or style name, since adopting additional names is very much a part of Chinese culture. The "hao" in particular is a name that individuals select themselves between the age of 16 and 25 to mark the transition to adulthood. Li's (1997) study of Hong Kong business people indicated that several of his participants regarded their English names as "hao" or courtesy names. Given that none of the participants in my study had a Chinese "hao" or "zi", although they were discussed by participants, I would suggest that the English name selected by participants hold a similar value as a "hao" or "zi".

Both Bella and Desmond explained the use of alternative names in Chinese tradition. Bella explained that "[i]n China, we normally have two names. One is just a normal name and another one is [...] a name for the book or in school, everyone can pick their second name by themselves", which is similar to how Bella chose her name—in school and by herself. Desmond explained that "it's very traditional based on the Chinese culture, parents make a name for their kid and after the kid become[s] adult, he can choose another name [...] He can use both, either of them as he or she wants", which is similar to how most participants use their Chinese names in some circumstances and their English names in others. Further, since all of the participants have come from China and none are Canadian-born, selecting an English "hao" or "zi" would serve to bridge the cultural gaps, allowing for traditional naming practice (adopting alternative names) to take place, while serving the benefit of helping participants integrate into Canadian culture—an attempt to find balance within the *third space*.

Social capital.

Another way of balancing the *third space* for Chinese immigrants is to use English names as tools for *social capital*. According to Tony, his English name was chosen because it was "easy to remember, easy to pronounce, easy to write". A common theme within the literature on name choice is that participants would change their names on the *presumption* that it would be difficult to pronounce their names and cultural names would not be remembered, which would negatively impact their social identities within the community (Kim, 2007; Li, 1997; Wang, 2009). In Edward's (2008) study of lecturers in an English language program, 8 out of 10 lecturers had an easier time remembering English names and did have difficulty pronouncing cultural names, which appears to validate some of the participants' presumptions and concerns. My findings support Edwards' (2008) study since several participants indicated that they were told by their foreign teachers that an English name would be easier for their foreign teachers to remember. For instance, Fisher was asked by his English-speaking English teacher "to pick an English name [...] because it's easier for him to memorize" and Nicholas' teacher told students that they "must have an English name for each other [...] to make others remember you". Although Fisher and Nicholas were overtly told why they should choose an English name, others, including Bella, Wendy and Carol drew on their own beliefs for why they should choose English names, such as "an English name is more convenient for [American teachers in China]" (Bella) or "Qianwen is hard to pronounce" (Wendy) or "If I tell them my Chinese name, it will be so hard to pronounce it and that will be maybe make some communication difficulties" (Carol). An English name, like in Li's (1997) study is a means to an end, or as Carol said, "just a name for Canadians to recognize me, to talk to me, to make everything go easier". Whether the beliefs regarding English names stem from direct experiences or are based on participants' presumptions, the fact remains that participants are opting for English names to improve their

social capital among English speakers, either in English classes in China or on the streets in Southern Ontario.

Social capital was not only tied to being remembered and to ease communication with English speakers, it was also tied to the meaning of the name. For most participants, the meanings of their names were not important influences on social capital; however, for Fisher and Desmond, their original name choices had the potential to create awkward, or even negative, social interactions. Fisher's original English name, Fish, was deemed "kind of silly" by his English teacher in China. He opted to change his name based on his teacher's comment; although he still uses the name "Fish" with his friends, the comment made by his teacher suggests that his name had the potential to be viewed negatively. Desmond's original name, Black, led to confusion as he explained: "when I introduce myself, "I am Black", people feel very weird and I finally understand when I say "I'm Black" they won't think about my name is Black instead my race and that makes them feel confused". Further, his name created some tension in class with his friend and a black male, as explained in Chapter Four, which prompted a reassessment of his English name. In opting to select alternative English names based on feedback from teachers and their own experiences, Fisher and Desmond were attempting to optimize their social capital in Canada—Desmond, especially, since his original English name could cause racial discomfort. Overall, the main goal for many of my participants was to ebb communication difficulties and allow themselves to be remembered favourable, thus improving their social capital within Southern Ontario.

Both social and cultural capital.

Unlike the participant in Kim's (2007) study who kept his name, believing he would better be able to preserve his cultural identity, both Wang (2009) and Li (1997) indicated participants' strong ties to Chinese culture that would not be influenced by merely changing

their names. In my study, participants appeared to negotiate the *third space* by attempting to balance the need for *social capital* with that of *cultural capital*. Li's (1997) study of Hong Kong business people's name choices revealed the impacts of name choice on both social and cultural capital. He discovered that participants use their English names as a way to refrain from using their *ming* (Chinese given names), which supports the Chinese practice of formality in business, while appearing to follow Western business practices of using first names to show familiarity. In this regard, the English name is used as a tool for communication with English speakers—a way to build social capital and strengthen business relations—as well as a way to preserve Chinese naming culture. Although none of my participants selected their name with the same purpose as those in Li's (1997) study, there was a common theme of selecting an English name to serve both social capital, as well as cultural capital. Tony, for instance, selected his name to blend in with the Canadian culture, claiming, "When in Rome, as Romans do […] when in Canada, as Canadians do", but also since the wrong pronunciation of his name would render it meaningless, and given his belief that English speakers have difficulties pronouncing his name, he selected Tony, which sounds very similar to Tianyi, but would be easier to pronounce, while respecting the meaning of his Chinese name.

Tony's choice to Anglicize his name echoed naming choices in both Kim's (2007) and Thompson's (2006) studies, where participants Anglicized their Korean names as a way to adapt to the English naming custom, while still maintaining cultural ties to the Korean culture, thus increasing the "cultural multiplicity [the] name connotes" (Thompson, 2006, p. 193). Although Wendy was given her name by her teacher, her reason for liking it was due to its relation to her Chinese name, Qianwen, but was easier for others to pronounce, as indicated previously. Similarly, Yvonne chose her English name because it sounded like her Chinese given and family names and Carol selected her name because it possessed the same

meaning, "happiness", as her Chinese name, therefore, connecting the participants with their families and culture. Arguably, anywhere where Chinese naming habitus was demonstrated in selecting an English name could be construed as building cultural capital, if it was done so purposefully since the act of consciously selecting a name based on Chinese traditions would connect the participant with their cultural roots.

Participants in several studies use both their cultural and English given names in different contexts to optimize the perceived social and cultural capital (Li, 1997; Thompson, 2006). By alternating between names, participants were able to adapt themselves to suit a variety of situations, while maintaining the cultural capital within their home culture. My findings mirror these studies since nine participants explained that in English-speaking contexts, they would use their English name, while with family or back in China, they would use their Chinese names. It is interesting that several participants opted to use their English names with their Chinese friends in Canada. Bella explained that "We call [our friends] by their English name because it's easier" and Yvonne explained that it was socially appropriate to use English names with Chinese speakers in Canada, even though she did not approve.

All of the participants commented on how use of an English name would help them be remembered and ease communication with native English speakers, resulting in positive social capital within their new environment, both in their universities and in public. While there was a strong desire to improve social capital through the use of an English name, several participants tied their names in with (1) their families, (2) Chinese naming traditions, or (3) alternated use of their Chinese and English names, to build on their cultural capital by hybridizing the Chinese naming habitus to fit within the Canadian field. The value behind a name was a major theme throughout my study, both in terms of cultural importance and social worth; however, the second theme, the influence of agency on name choices, influenced how my participants interacted with their name choices and their selected names.

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The Influence of Agency on Name Choice

Agency refers to an individual's ability to make his or her own choices. In my study, there were examples of both *explicit* and *implicit agency*—explicit agency referring to more concrete agents, such as people or institutions; implicit agency referring to non-tangible influences, such as beliefs and presumptions. Although participants were categorized into *self-agency, mixed agency* and *no agency* based on their responses to interview questions (refer to Chapter Four), I would contend that many participants, especially from within the *self-agency* category, experienced forms of implicit agency, leading to their decisions to maintain or change their names. Within this theme, I address specific examples of both *explicit* and *implicit agency* and identify the impact, if any, that agency played on cultural identity.

Explicit agency.

In addressing *explicit agency,* I refer to any person or institute exercising power over an individual with regard to name choice. Though participants who decided to maintain or change their names without external agents would themselves be viewed as explicit agents, I argue that such choices would fall under *implicit agency* since no one can demonstrate complete self-agency in name choice, as explained in the next section. With regard to explicit agency in both name choice and name selection, Steven and Wendy experienced no agency in the decision to adopt or choose their English names since names were given by school programming for Steven and a teacher for Wendy. Similar to the current literature, namely Edwards (2008) and Wang (2009), six out of seven participants in the no agency and mixed agency groups attributed their name choice selection to teachers or the education system in China. Nicholas, Fisher and Carol were told to select English names by their English-speaking English teachers in China; Bella, similarly, had a native English-speaking English

teacher, however, her experience was singular because her school was international and the lingua franca of the school was English. Wendy's English teacher was Chinese, and as stated previously, had no reason for students to choose an English name, unlike the 4 participants above whose English-speaking teachers benefited from the ease of memorizing English names. Steven required an English name due to Sesame Street filming at his school.

Although there was no self-agency apparent for Wendy or Steven, Steven acknowledged that he could change his name anytime he wanted, stating, "if I want to change it, I can change it anytime, but I got used to it so it doesn't matter". Wendy's name, although not her choice, was a reflection of her Chinese name, which she liked very much. Therefore, the lack of agency did not appear to negatively impact participants' sense of self or overall agency. Moreover, it is clear through the findings that the decision to maintain or change a name did not appear to impact any participant's cultural identity, with participants indicating that an English name is "just a name" (Nicholas, Steven and Carol). As indicated in the previous section, within my study, five participants' names reflected a connection to the Chinese culture: Yvonne, Tony and Wendy had English names with similar pronunciations to their Chinese names; Carol's name reflect the same meaning as her Chinese name; and Desmond's name was selected based on the same principals as generational indicators, suggesting that Chinese culture is very much a part of English name selection and agency in name choice did not appear to influence participants' cultural identities.

Implicit agency.

While there are several clear agents responsible for the name choices of participants within the *no agency* and *mixed agency* categories, *implicit agency* is more difficult to observe. It is the underlying belief and imbedded presumptions of individuals that lead to their decision to maintain or change a name. In this section, I explain how social

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constructions, such as *habitus and field,* and *social* and *cultural capital* are influences on participants' agency in name choice and may, themselves, act as agents. While I agree that participants exercised their agency in the decision to maintain or change a name, I believe that external factors may be partially responsible for their choices and need to be addressed or risk being overlooked as important factors in name change agency.

Marx (1952) suggested that history influences agency such that "[m]en make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past" (p. 277). Bourdieu (1992) similarly contends that everyone is regulated by his or her *habitus*. As indicated in the first theme, Chinese naming *habitus* is present in many participants' name choices. Given the fact that my study took place across two universities and with participants from all over China (refer to Figure 1), the presence of Chinese naming habitus in almost all of my participants' name choices supports Bourdieu's assertion that people are regulated by their habitus, making its influence an implicit agent on name choice.

Living arrangements and social and cultural capital.

Further, I would argue that individuals are influenced by the opportunity to gain social and cultural capital, and as such, these forms of capital serve as implicit agents. Kim's (2007) study found that 4 of the 6 participants opted to maintain their names, which he attributed to their connections with their Korean social and cultural identity and a lack of desire or opportunity to explore the non-Korean community in Toronto. Participants claimed that there was no need to adopt an English name given their lack of interaction with the non-Korean community. I would argue that an individual's surroundings may impact his or her name choice and as such would act as an implicit agent. Korean participants used the Korean

community as a reason to maintain a Korean name, preserve cultural identity and use the Korean name as social capital within the Korean community.

In my study, the strong cultural ties within the Chinese community, demonstrated through language, food and population, and the overall feeling that participants' culture was respected by Canadians, evident through Carol and Fisher's homestay experiences, may have influenced name change. It could be due to this respect and the large Chinese presence that participants felt comfortable adopting an English name since many of them did not believe their cultural identity was being negatively impacted. In this regard, participants could optimize on cultural capital outside of Chinese environments by using English names and by speaking in English with Canadians, while using language, food and customs to maintain strong ties to the Chinese community in China and in Canada, thus strengthening their social and cultural capital.

Future children and the influence of social and cultural capital.

In both Li's (1997) and Thompson's (2006) studies, participants used both their Chinese and English names in different contexts to optimize the perceived social and cultural capital. By alternating between names, participants were able to adapt themselves to suit a variety of situations, improving their social capital in new environments, while maintaining the cultural and social capital of their names in their home country. Much like the current literature, many of my participants alternated name use based on the situation, optimizing their social capital among English speakers or Chinese friends within an English field, and their social and cultural capital back in China, among family and friends. The influence of social and cultural capital on participants was made apparent in their answers to questions regarding the name choice they would use on future children. Nine out of eleven participants would give both an English name and a Chinese name or select a name based on the country

in which the child lived. Fisher explained the decision well, stating, an English name "would be easier for [my children's] friends [and] my children [would] be part of Canad[a]", while a Chinese name would be needed because without one "it's hard for my parents, my family, to call them". Fisher references the ease of communication and adapting to Canadian culture as a reason for name change, while allowing for a Chinese name to maintain cultural roots and familial ties. Interestingly, Ye and Alex, who would both fit into the *self-agency* category opted to give their children both English and Chinese names, citing similar reasons as Fisher to optimize social capital. Ye would give her child a Chinese name to communicate with family and an English name to reduce the likelihood of racism. Although she has not experienced any racism herself, Ye believes that "There are people who dislike Chinese people. They dislike the Chinese culture even though it's multicultural in Canada. I know there are people in Canada so I would give my child an English name". Alex opted for both names to help with employability since "an English name would help her get an English job, but if the company was Chinese, using her Chinese name would help". Alex further stated that he would use Chinese names since he would teach his children Cantonese, which would increase their cultural capital. Although Ye, Alex, Yvonne and Desmond have made their own decision regarding name choice and selection, the influence of social and cultural capital appear to be large contributing factors to their naming decisions for their future children; therefore, with the impact of implicit agents, such as *social* and *cultural capital* and *habitus*, it seems fair to suggest that *self-agency* should be described as *mixed agency* since agency can never truly be one's own.

Conclusion

While participants stated that their name choices did not impact their cultural identities, I would argue that their English name choices, in some cases, reflected their cultural identity through the use of Chinese naming habitus. Although some participants had

a neutral experience regarding their name selection, such as Steven, whose name did not matter, other participants constructed a positive experience from their name change due to its ties to their Chinese naming traditions, families or Chinese names. As a way of negotiating their position in the *third space,* participants hybridized their English names to reflect Chinese naming traditions, while improving their social capital by using English names as tools for communication within an English-speaking field. The concept of agency on name choice did not appear to influence cultural identity for participants, even those experiencing no agency in their name choice or name selection. Both explicit and implicit agency played roles in participants' name choices, and I would argue that in cases where participants believed themselves to be fully in charge of their name choice, a deeper look into underlying influences behind English name change would be beneficial. In the next chapter, I address the implications of my study, both theoretically and practically.

Chapter Six: Implications

The findings of my study of name choice among Chinese and Chinese Canadian university students in Ontario hold practical implications, as well as indications for future research.

Practical Implications

As Canadians, proudly multicultural, it is important to research aspects of cultures that may influence or be influenced by society. Schools and classrooms are facilities where great influence over vulnerable populations take place, so it is imperative for teachers and administrators to respect naming choices, as well as the cultures of our students. There is more to name choice than simply using a cultural name to show respect. As Edwards' (2008) discovered in her study, sometimes using cultural names can offend the name choices and naming practices of the individual. A greater understanding of the reasons behind name choice, as well as enabling students to make their own choices based on informed decisions will show students the respect they need and deserve regarding name choice.

Moreover, names are often used as tools of communication and the use of a cultural name in an attempt to be "culturally sensitive" may serve to disrespect the individual's name choice and culture, as evident in Li's (1997) study where participants used an English name to increase social capital among English speaking business people, while protecting the cultural naming practice of avoiding use of a *ming* in unfamiliar situations. The best of intentions, if uninformed, can be detrimental to both cultural traditions, as well as the relationship between teacher and student. Allowing a name to be a name and simply used for communication may prove more beneficial than viewing an English name as an oppressive label which needs to be 'addressed'.

An increase in respect and knowledge of cultural onomastics would decrease the likelihood of misunderstandings or embarrassments over mispronouncing name, gender confusion associated with names, or the multiple meaning of names. Name choice is not limited to a university setting, or even adults; children's name choices should also be respected. Although it is important to show support and respect for naming choices, it is also the responsibility of educators (and parents) to address names which may cause social or cultural issues for the student.

In as much as I argue against the idea that anyone has full agency in name choice due to implicit agents, it is still vital to respect the name choices and ownership over those name choices among our students. As children and teenagers, several of my participants experienced situations where their names and name choices were devalued, such as Fisher's name, Fish, being called silly. It is the responsibility of teachers (and administration) to respect the names given by students. As both a teacher and researcher, I would recommend that teachers accept any name that a child offers because the responses to name choice may impact how students feel about their names and their identities. In cases where names may cause social or cultural issues, teachers need to be sensitive when addressing and explaining the reasons for a name change. Educators are strong influences on students and need to be well-informed and culturally sensitive in order to give name choice the same high value allotted it by every one of my participants.

Future Research

My study focused on the name change(s) of 10 participants and the name change desire for the remaining participant. A large scale study across a number of different sectors would allow for greater depth and breadth of research, as well as potentially more insight into name maintenance. Exploring the reasons behind name maintenance may shed light on

immigrant's social and cultural beliefs surrounding the use of their cultural names within different fields, and specifically within Canada.

Many of my participants were able to explain why they believe English names were beneficial to them; however, there was little indication of where these beliefs originated. Surprisingly, most of my participants selected English names while they were living in China. Further study of where English naming change originated within China, as well as when and why English name change became important in a non-English speaking country might explain why English name change is becoming more popular for Chinese students in Canada. If, like my participants' responses suggest, there are many beliefs based on presumptions and hypotheticals, it could be argued that English name change may become a growing phenomenon within the Chinese population in and of itself, rather than a simple mutation of traditional naming practices, such a selecting a "hao" or "zi", within an English-speaking context. Further research into the global and/or political factors that influence the "push" for English names in schools in China may provide insight into the growing name change phenomenon.

Although I focused on Chinese naming practices, our multicultural population would benefit from exploring naming choices of other cultures to see if name change is as prominent in other cultures within Canada as the Chinese population, as well as explore the implications of such a study on social and cultural identity.

Finally, given participants' responses regarding how Chinese names may be perceived as difficult to pronounce and remember, exploring how educators or even the general population, respond to name maintenance and name change would act to either support or refute the many perceptions participants shared regarding why English names were needed in

Canada. This knowledge could then be used to educate teachers on how to best respect

naming practices within their classrooms.

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Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Demographic Questions

- What is (are) your name(s)?

- How old are you?

- What is your occupation? What is your field of study?

- Where were you born?
    - If born outside of Canada: How long have you lived in Canada?
    - Have you lived anywhere else? If so, where?

- What was your family structure like growing up? Who did you live with? How many siblings do you have?

- How did/does your culture play into your day to day life?

Topic Specific Questions

- Have you thought about your name choice before? If so, how? If not, why do you think you have not?

- Do you use the name(s) you were given, have you changed your name, do you alternate the names that you use? Please elaborate. How does context influence your name choice, if at all?

- How would you classify your name? For instance, is your name a traditional Chinese name? A unique Chinese name? An Anglicized name? A name from a different culture? A family name? Etc.

- What's the story behind your name(s): Why were you given your name(s)? Who or what influenced that decision? How old were you? Where were you?

- For the sake of us being on the same page, cultural identity refers to your connection to a specific culture based on having a common language, traditions, customs and/or history. Has your cultural identity influenced your name choice? If so, how? If not, do you feel it should be a factor in name choice? Why or why not?

- How has living in Canada influenced your perception of yourself as Chinese? As Canadian? As an immigrant? As Chinese Canadian? You may identify as more than one or something not listed. Can you reflect on why you identify as such. Has it influenced your name choice? If so, how? If not, why not?

- Do you have children? If so, how did you decide on their names? [If not] Hypothetically, if you were to have children later, how will you name them? What factors might influence your name choice?
- Is there anything more you wish to share regarding your name choice, your cultural identity or anything you believe relates to the topic?
- Do you have any questions for me or my research interests?

Appendix B: Ethical Clearance

YORK U

UNIVERSITÉ
UNIVERSITY

To: Katherine Gellatly, Education – Graduate Program,

katherine_gellatly@edu.yorku.ca

From: Alison M. Collins-Mrakas, Sr. Manager and Policy Advisor,
Research Ethics
(on behalf of Duff Waring, Chair, Human Participants Review Committee)

Date**: Thursday, November 28, 2013**

Re: Ethics Approval

What's in a Name? Name Change and Maintenance as it pertains to Chinese
Immigrant and Chinese Canadian Identity in Southern Ontario

_____

I am writing to inform you that the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee has reviewed
and approved the above project.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at: 416-736-5914 or via email
at: acollins@yorku.ca.

Yours sincerely,

Alison M. Collins-Mrakas M.Sc., LLM

Sr. Manager and Policy Advisor,

Office of Research Ethics