Title

Expectations, Challenges, and Strategies for Developing Global Competence: Experiences of Chinese International Graduate Students in the United States

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Publication Date

2022

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Expectations, Challenges, and Strategies for Developing Global Competence: Experiences of Chinese International Graduate Students in the United States

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

by

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2022

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Expectations, Challenges, and Strategies for Developing Global Competence:
Experiences of Chinese International Graduate Students in the United States

by

Linli Zhou

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2022

Professor Richard Desjardins, Chair

Global competence is a combination of openness attitudes and mutual understanding skills that facilitate social interaction behaviors among students from different backgrounds (Colvin & Edwards, 2018). Global competence has been promoted as the key to reduce inter-group conflicts and increase student satisfaction, retention, and campus climate at universities. Although global competence has been studied extensively within the US context, there are few studies that focus on international students. As individuals from foreign cultures, international students encounter cultural shocks and challenges. Their cultural negotiation strategies and experiences offer important insights to build global competence for all students in diverse and globalized societies.

Drawing from a series of semi-structured in-depth interviews, this dissertation explores the relationship between cultural negotiation and global competence development for twenty-two Chinese International Graduate Students (CIGS) at a major research university in the United States. This study is based on an adapted bi-cultural model (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009) which outlines individual and institutional factors for career- and civic-oriented global competence development. The study contextualizes non-linear processes of how CIGS develop global competence in a negotiation with the multicultural environments provided by the educational programs in the US. The findings suggest that many CIGS' diverse career and civic expectations are related to their learning-about or learning-with approaches to global learning (De Wit et al., 2013). However, institutional challenges including American centered knowledge in classrooms, and limited social and career resources at the university, have negatively affected many CIGS' abilities to cope with cultural differences, worsened their cultural shocks, confusions and disorientation in their behaviors and thinking when they experience and negotiate cultural differences. Based on strategies mentioned by CIGS that helped them to develop global competence in academic and social lives, this study provides tangible recommendations to improve US higher education promoting global competence. Recommendations include to develop cultural relevant pedagogy and holistic supports for international students in career, cultural, and civic aspects.

The dissertation of Linli Zhou is approved.

Min Zhou

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University of California, Los Angeles

2022

To my father . . .

who always encourages me and teach me to be optimistic

To my mother . . .

who has been my role model on independence and diligence

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank Professor Richard Desjardins for the constant support in preparing this dissertation and throughout my academic trajectory, including ceaselessly being my reader and reviewer of this dissertation and my mentor who inspire me and guide me with insights and experiences in exploring the field of international and comparative education. I own an intellectual debt to Professor Carlos Torres on issues around global citizenship and democratic education. Many thanks to Professor Ozan Jaquette whose classes have importantly introduced me to theories and research methods in higher education. I am grateful to Professor Min Zhou whose work on the process of cultural identity negotiation for Asian students have inspired me along with the writing of this dissertation.

Many thanks to those who have contributed in various ways to the enhancement of this project: the UCLA Graduate Writing Center Consultants for their constructive feedback and expertise in refining my writing; and my peer doctoral students and intellectual partners for their critical discussions, generous endorsement, and ongoing support on this research.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This project began during my cultural transition from China to the United States (US) several years ago. In 2017, I left China for the first time, and arrived in the US to pursue my graduate degree. During that time, I was fortunate to become acquainted with a few other Chinese International Graduate Students (CIGS) who were studying in research universities in the US. We engaged in informal support groups where we shared our experiences and feelings regarding our cultural and academic transitions. We reflected on our cultural confrontations, confusions, struggles, and surprises. From those reflections, I gained insights into those CIGS' challenges of balancing various needs, including their academic, social, cultural, and civic demands. I also recognized the complexities of negotiating cultural differences, including distinct values, knowledge, and cultural norms in academic and social settings for CIGS. Those conversations have been the initial inspirations for my dissertation project.

My continuing conversations with those CIGS piqued my interest in understanding CIGS' experiences with cultural shocks and negotiations against the backdrop of US-China cultural differences. I started off my research by reviewing literature around CIGS' experi-

ences of cultural shocks and the negotiation of US-China differences. Yet, through my initial research, I found little academic literature that captures the process of cultural negotiation (the process of negotiating and balancing distinct cultures) and CIGS, including their experiences and strategies related to cultural negotiations. With that as a background, this study explores the experiences of cultural negotiation among CIGS. An emphasis is placed on the resources needed to support CIGS' global competence to navigate cultural differences at American institutions.

In preparing for the fieldwork, an adapted conceptual framework was developed from the perspective of global competence and associated variants (see Chapter 4). The empirical analysis is based on twenty-two interviews with CIGS who are studying and living at a major research university in the US. I collected stories and anecdotes to identify how and in what ways these students have been attempting to negotiate, understand, resist, or transform their knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards US-China cultural differences. The following discusses the problem statement and outlines research questions, methods, and concepts and theories used to address the research questions. It also discusses the significance of the study and the organization of the dissertation.

1.1 Benefits and Challenges of International Students Mobility

Internationalization of Higher Education (IHE) is a process of integrating international dimensions into the purpose and function of higher education (Knight, 2007). IHE has been important for organizational changes, as the quality of an institution's internationalization

strategy determined "the survival of an independent educational system" (Nekrassova & Solarte-Vásques, 2010). Research around IHE has exponentially increased in the last couple of decades, and among them, International Student Mobility (ISM) has been a priority (Gümüş et al., 2020). ISM is an umbrella term describing the mobility of students crossing borders to study (Knight, 2007). There are two types of ISM: credit or voluntary mobility (short term exchanges) and degree mobility (taking an entire degree at a university outside one's country of usual residence) (Knight, 2012). Although credit mobility has been explored extensively, students' experiences in degree mobility have been underdeveloped (Knight, 2012). This study focuses on degree-seeking mobility by exploring the experiences of CIGS in the US.

The United States (US) has long been the top receiving country for ISM (Israel & Batalova, 2021). The number of international students enrolled in the US has increased steadily since the 1950s. Although enrollment dropped during the COVID pandemic, IHE practitioners and researchers are optimistic about future international student enrollments in degree-seeking programs in the US (Moody, 2021) (see Chapter 2). US institutions remain top choices for international students due to several "push and pull" factors (Chen, 2017). On the one hand, from the perspective of international students, motivations, and expectations from their families (i.e., seeking individual skills and employability) and home government (i.e., seeking national technology development and international cooperation) have been "pushing" them to study in the US. On the other hand, from the perspective of the host country, attracting international students brings multiple financial, intellectual, and cultural

benefits (discussed further in Chapter 2). These benefits have incentivized US institutions to attract international student enrollment.

Despite ISM's benefits, international students meet challenges from various aspects, such as academic difficulties, social conflicts, interpersonal loneliness, and poor mental health (Dailey-Strand et al., 2021). Although ISM challenges are generally explored, few studies focus on specific cultural challenges – i.e., the cultural shocks, the confusions and disorientations of ISM students in their behaviors and thinking when they experience and negotiate cultural differences. This study focuses on the experiences of twenty-two CIGS in the US related to cultural shocks and related negotiations. The starkly different US-China cultural and social differences have made CIGS' experiences in the US uniquely challenging (Yan & Berliner, 2011) (discussed further in Chapters 2 and 7). The study explores how the twenty-two CIGS negotiate their cultural habits in communication and thinking in academic and social lives. It also examines those CIGS' strategies to achieve academic, career and civic goals and to develop career- and civic-oriented global competence related to cultural negotiation processes (discussed further in Chapters 6 and 8).

1.2 Perspectives and Limitations of Cultural Competence Models

From a theoretical perspective, this study draws perspectives from cultural and global competence models to explore experiences of cultural shocks and negotiation for CIGS. The following introduces the concept of global competence, including its definition, importance, and limitations. A special focus is on the importance and challenges of building global

competence for CIGS.

Concepts of cultural competence, and associated components and variants (i.e., global competence), are used to capture the capabilities necessary for one to become successful laborers and responsible citizens in an increasingly internationalized society (Fantini, 2018). In this study, cultural competence and global competence were used interchangeably. Global competence is essential for individuals to deal with social-cultural challenges in an era of unprecedented human connectivity (Banks & Banks, 2019). Table 1.1 outlines components of global competence (discussed further in Chapter 3).

Table 1.1: Components of Cultural Competence

Aspects	Elements	Content
Attitude	Motivational	Being confident and curious, to recognize and respect differences
	Foundational	Being patient, tolerant, self-aware, and empathetic
Knowledge	Informational	Language, knowledge on local/global issues
	Contextual	knowledge of complexity and interdependence
Skill	Cognitive	Perspective-taking and skills of reflecting and investigating
	Behavioral	Share and encourage, communicate and collaborate.

Source: Author's summary from Colvin and Edwards (2018) and Zhou and Green (2022a, 2022b)

Global competence has been a key concern for policymakers and practitioners (Auld & Morris, 2019), due to its importance in reducing inter-group attrition and building peace and diversity in society (Banks & Banks, 2019). Universities cultivate the global competence of their staff and students to support the cultural mission of higher education institutions (Nekrassova & Solarte-Vásques, 2010). Global competence has also been seen as particularly

important for students in ISM (Popov et al., 2017). Global competence is especially relevant to ISM students' cultural negotiations that requires relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes of global competence, such as cross-cultural curiosity, understanding, and communication skills (Popov et al., 2017).

Several pedagogical models related to the development of cultural and global competence (as shown in Table 1.2) have been put forth to support practices at higher education institutions (see chapter 4). I critique assimilation models and linear or multidimensional development models in terms of being based on western-centered and reductionist ideology (Engel et al., 2019). Instead, the bi-cultural model is useful to capture both the outcomes and the processes of cultural negotiation (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). This study focuses on what and how different events and critical incidents influence CIGS' global competence development, including their challenges and coping strategies in relation to global competence. To do this, this study adapts a bi-cultural model with specific personal and institutional level factors outlined, which reflect both the processes and outcomes of cultural negotiation (see chapter 4).

Table 1.2: Models of cultural competence Development

Models	Description
Assimilation	Focus on assimilation from self to other culture
Bi-cultural	Negotiate cultural differences towards biculturalism
Stepwise	Develop through linear changes from low to high level of cultural competence
Developmental	Develop through multidimensional changes of maturity of merely internal qualities across time.

Source: Author's Summary from Spitzberg and Changnon (2009)

Apart from limitations in existing pedagogical models as mentioned, there are limitations in the way we understand and assess global competence. US universities have tended to follow an understanding of global competence with a career versus civic orientation (Zhou & Green, 2022a), which are two competing visions that have been imbalanced in US institutions since the mid-1980s (Council on International Educational Exchange, 1988, e.g.). The career orientation of global competence reflects a neoliberal canon of pursuits in higher education, almost exclusively focusing on students' human capital development relevant to academic or career interests (Zhou & Green, 2022b). This study critiques the career-civic binary and advocates for emphasis on social support and civic responsibility in institutions. As such, it proposes a unified approach to career and civic visions in global competence, especially in the process of cultural negotiation (see chapter 3).

Another problem with existing understandings of global competence is based on westernized cultural norms that remain de-contextualized for students' diverse experiences (Engel

et al., 2019). Moreover, the prevalent quantitative assessment of global competence is limited to merely focus on outcomes and is de-contextualized (Conolly et al., 2019). To critically reflect on current global competence practices, we need to recognize the cultural agency of non-western learners and respect their unique experiences and processes (Prison, 2019). This study investigates twenty-two CIGS' complex negotiation processes over time and across different settings on the basis of qualitative and in-depth interviews. The method used can help to contextualize the non-linear processes of how students develop global competence internally in an interaction with the multicultural environments provided by the educational programs in the US.

1.3 Statement of the Problem and Research Questions

Global competence has been widely promoted as a tool for better flexibility, adjustment, and cross-cultural transitions (Rathje, 2007). Yet, scant attention is given to how students use global competence to cope with cultural shocks, negotiate cultural differences, and thereby develop their global competence (Shen & Chen, 2020; Xia, 2020). As mentioned, assessment of global competence has been predominantly quantitative. However, understanding the complexity of cultural negotiation and global competence development stands to benefit from in-depth qualitative inquiry. The latter is more consistent with studying competence development from a perspective that not only respects the agency of CIGS and their context of living and studying, but also has the potential to inform pedagogy and institutional practices in ways that integrate education and social change to promote peace and global

cooperation not only between the US and China, but also internationally.

Reflecting on these unique challenges in ISM, cultural negotiation, and global competence, I situated the design of this study using a critical lens. Aiming to deconstruct the westernized and de-contextualized approach to global competence, this study identifies alternative and subaltern knowledge of student supports by focusing on the complicated processes of cultural negotiation experiences of the twenty-two CIGS I interviewed. I sought to identify the nature of those CIGS' experiences of cultural shocks, as well as the processes, strategies, and other factors involved in the cultural negotiation process. Through this research, I hope to identify ways to improve the diversity and inclusion movement, and to reveal practical and policy implications for US higher education institutions hosting international students in the US.

The research questions for this dissertation are: 1) How do Chinese International Graduate Students (CIGS) in the US expect, experience, and cope with cultural differences between the US and China in their academic and social lives? 2) How do CIGS' expectations, experiences, and strategies of cultural negotiation relate to opportunities and challenges of developing career- and civic-oriented global competence?

1.4 Method

To address the above research questions, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the personal experiences of CIGS, their meanings of international mobility, and

the processes and complexities of cultural negotiation. Purposeful sampling and snowball sampling was used for recruiting participants. The study participants included CIGS representing various personal characteristics, as shown in Table 1.3. A total of twenty-two semi-structured individual interviews were conducted face-to-face in 2019. The interviews were all 60-120 minutes long, and the interviews were conducted in Chinese (Mandarin). All interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed and translated from Mandarin to English.

Table 1.3: Diverse Characteristics of Study Participants (22 CIGS)

Characteristics	Amount of CIGS
Gender	12 Female and 10 male
Fields of study	11 STEM and 11 Social Sciences/ Humanities
Years of studying abroad	11 less than one year and 11 more than one year
Level of study	11 master's and 11 doctoral

I asked participants about their expectations, experiences, and strategies related to their studying abroad, including in their daily lives in classrooms or other academic and social settings. A list of interview questions can be found in Appendix E. All these twenty-two interview data sources combined provided several perspectives related to the diverse expectations and experiences of the twenty-two CIGS interviewed, and enables insights for addressing the two research questions about their cultural negotiation and global competence development.

1.5 Concepts and Theories Used to Approach Research Questions

A conceptual framework is adapted based on the bi-cultural model of global competence (that reveals the personal and institutional factors for global competence development with respect to both the host culture and sojourners' cultures). The adapted version of the bicultural model reveals personal and institutional resources and challenges for global competence development, which are further discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. The bicultural model enables qualitative inquiry towards the multidimensional processes of cultural negotiation. It highlights the complex processes of CIGS negotiating cultural differences with respect to the agents' (students') power and the dynamics of the surroundings (institutions). The model also helped with the construction of interview questions and interpretations of research findings.

According to the bi-cultural model, I coded the transcripts and annotated each transcript using RQDA (an open-source qualitative data analysis software using R language). From the annotated transcripts, I created a summary sheet in Microsoft Excel to record the codes (e.g., expectations, challenges, opportunities, strategies, personal and institutional factors). Based on the codes, I created categories (e.g., the internal and external qualities, strategies for negotiating cultural shocks, and the impacts of different personal and institutional factors). After coding and categorizing, thematic analysis was used to present CIGS' global competence development journeys in terms of their expectations, needs, gains, and strategies for negotiating cultural differences. The research methodology and procedure are described more comprehensively in Chapter 5.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study suggests that the field of IHE in the US suffers from American exceptionalism. As a result, many CIGS in the US experience exclusion from diversity discussions (see Chapter 7). Acknowledging and learning from the continued marginalization of what constitutes the twenty-two CIGS interviewee' experiences, and their related processes of cultural negotiation, could be helpful for global competence cultivation and student support for international students. Thus, greater attention is needed in the academic literature on international students' experiences in cultural negotiations. The stories of the twenty-two CIGS also provide unique insights into the specific challenges of developing global competence. For example, combating neo-racism during the current prevalent negative view of China in the US and acquiring and maintaining genuine diversity at US universities. Learning from the experiences of CIGS who participated in this study, I hope that academics and IHE policy experts in the US will take much more seriously the marginalization of CIGS, the challenges of their day-to-day lives, as well as how to better promote and support cross-cultural learning and global competence for both domestic and international students.

Although the discussion of issues related to international students has become more prominent given the increase in ISM, few studies have critically examined the experiences of CIGS participants in relation to cultural negotiation that focuses on the China-US social and cultural differences. Moreover, global competence studies remain largely quantitative, which fail to reveal the complex processes and influence of different dynamics of developing cross-cultural communication and understanding skills and global competence. This project

seeks to contribute to the academic literature and understanding of how and in what ways CIGS experience cultural negotiation, including their expectations, challenges, strategies, and global competence related outcomes based on influences from various personal, interpersonal, and institutional factors.

This study also makes conceptual contributions to the field of higher education and international education. The critical perspective embedded in the adapted bi-cultural model that helps to inform this study dissects the ideologies and power dynamics in the current understanding of global competence and cultural adjustment. The adapted bi-cultural model provides an explanatory model for global competence practices at internationalized higher education institutions. A holistic understanding of global competence illustrates the interaction and unification of global competence's career and civic orientations. The adapted framework based on the bi-cultural model could inform universities' policies, practices, plans, and strategies for facilitating not only students' career prospects, but also better cross-cultural communications, collaborations, and negotiations at diverse university campuses.

Practically, this study empowers CIGS by taking a bi-cultural perspective to view the global competence transformation process. CIGS could be empowered by referring to the study participants' challenges and opportunities of acquiring global competence and navigating cultural differences. CIGS can learn strategies to collaborate with a diverse community, to take, understand, and negotiate diverse perspectives, and to communicate with others who have different opinions. This study may help other international students like CIGS experience transformative learning and cultivate global competence that will help

them thrive in this globalized society. Recommendations for professors and administrators at international universities are also provided. With the in-depth inquiries of the twenty-two CIGS' experiences and research-based findings, suggestions are given around how to design culturally relevant pedagogy in curriculum and services, to facilitate global knowledge and cross-cultural understanding in international classrooms, and to implement best practices that can boost cross-cultural communication among diverse groups of students for problem-solving collaborations and academic inclusion. Practices of global competence at universities can thus be improved to support students' career- and civic-oriented global competence acquisition holistically.

Methodologically, the qualitative interviews also challenge the normative definition of global competence adopted by quantitative studies. With a bottom-up qualitative approach, this study integrates CIGS' perspectives in the conceptualization of global competence and reveals the processes of global competence development in contexts of cultural negotiation. Furthermore, this project demonstrates the problems in the top-down quantitative approaches to global competence developments, as well as in the neoliberal pursuits that ignore civic orientations of global competence (see Chapters 3 and 4). I seek to strengthen the alternative paradigm theorizing on the complex and conflicting role of international student mobility. The stories shared by participants in this study lend insights into organizational challenges that exist among educational systems in China and the US. These challenges extend to problems associated with political discourse and influences on many CIGS' personal navigation of the foreign environment. Such problems are further deepened by a growing

level of personal distrust and nervousness among many CIGS and a neoliberal career-oriented human capital model, with an unwillingness to develop and explore civic meanings based on experiences. By exposing the effects of these relationships on the opportunities and experiences of the twenty-two CIGS participants, this study serves to inform both international higher education policy and general practices of higher education institutions in the US.

1.7 Overview of the Chapters

This dissertation is organized into nine chapters. The chief goal of this project is to reveal the complex processes and factors related to cultural negotiation, offer alternative perspectives on global competence, and explore the potential of critical pedagogy in international education. While it is not a new argument that international students have been excluded from the general diversity conversation in the US and face serious neo-racism (Lee, 2020), CIGS' experiences continue to be marginalized and under-supported. CIGS' needs and backgrounds have been excluded from American exceptionalism in both classrooms and non-formal education programs. I seek to provide an alternative way to consider the challenges and limitations of graduate programs in the US by prioritizing the multivariate and multilayered experiences of CIGS from various backgrounds and with different expectations.

Chapters 2-4 provide an overview of the research literature on international students' mobility and cultural learning models. The models can be used to analyze under-explored cultural negotiation processes. Chapter 2 explores what is known in the research literature about international students' experiences, including their expectations, challenges, and

opportunities related to cross-cultural learning. I propose a critical theory of space and knowledge production to examine the ways in which international students are treated and marginalized within the larger discourse related to diversity in higher education in the US. Chapter 3 traces the historical background and research approaches of global competence popularity and argues for a holistic understanding of global competence that unifies career and civic orientations. I reviewed the definitions of cross-cultural communication and understanding skills, global competence, and other similar concepts to global competence, which are used interchangeably in that they are all emphasized in similar ways for the peace and inclusive campus climate in higher education institutions. After defining global competence, Chapter 4 contains the conceptual framework for this study. In this chapter, I examine factors and processes for the development of global competence. After a review of different models (assimilation model, linear-developmental model, bi-cultural model), bi-cultural model is applied to depict the cultural negotiation and global competence development processes. Bi-cultural model is chosen due to the model's suitability in exploring the processes of cultural negotiation while respecting the student agency. An adapted bi-cultural model is the conceptual framework I use for the research design and data analysis in this dissertation.

Chapter 5 outlines the specific qualitative methods and interview design that are based on the adapted bi-cultural model (conceptual framework). The research design guided the analysis and discussion of findings in Chapters 6-9. The data collected not only informed the construction of the overview of international students' experiences, but also the themes for the qualitative research design of this project. The specific methods employed in this

study are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

Chapters 6-9 provide the analysis and discussion of the findings and concluding remarks of the current study. Chapter 6 explores the twenty-two CIGS' academic-related and sociocultural motivations to study in the US. I use approaches of global learning (learning-about versus learning-with) to analyze the implications of CIGS' motivations for their career- and civic-oriented global competence development. Chapter 7 provides discussion and analysis of participants' experiences of challenges due to US-China cultural differences, including linguistic difficulty, contextual unfamiliarity, and cultural distance between some CIGS and domestic students. These challenges are discussed to provide implications for developing career- and civic-oriented global competence among CIGS. Chapter 8 examines both the individual and institutional strategies that have been used to cope with challenges posed by US-China cultural differences for many CIGS. I discuss those strategies with regard to opportunities and the potential for supporting certain personal, interpersonal, or institutional resources to help CIGS counter the boundaries, limitations, and challenges in negotiating cultural differences. Chapter 9, "Conclusions and Discussions," provides concluding remarks on the study, limitations, as well as areas, or possibilities for future research. This last chapter also addresses the shortcomings pointed out in the problem statement. It then explains how the findings in the dissertation can be used to inform possibilities for future research and education practices in international higher education.

1.8 Terminology

Throughout this study, several key terms were used. I explain them in the list below:

- International students: those who left their country of origin and moved to another country for the purpose of study (for Economic Co-operation & Development, 2021).
- Sojourner: a person who temporarily relocates to another country, generally for a specific time and purpose (e.g., education or work) with the intention of returning to his/her home country (for Economic Co-operation & Development, 2021).
- Host country: a country that accepts (and hosts) international students (for Economic Co-operation & Development, 2021).
- Domestic students: individuals who are nationals of a country that accepts (and hosts) international students (for Economic Co-operation & Development, 2021). Domestic students in this study specifically refer to local students in the US.
- International Student Mobility, Studying Abroad, Cross-cultural Learning, International Education: these terms are used interchangeably to describe the phenomenon that students studying in another country or culture that internalized the education of the host country (for Economic Co-operation & Development, 2021).
- Cross-cultural: involving more than one culture (Glass et al., 2021).
- Cultural relevance: the degree to which students' campus environments are relevant to their cultural backgrounds and identities (Glass et al., 2021).

- Cultural responsiveness: the extent to which campus programs and practices effectively respond to the needs of culturally diverse student populations (Glass et al., 2021).

- Cultural shock: feelings of uncertainty, confusion, or anxiety that people may experience when one is suddenly subjected to an unfamiliar culture, way of life, or set of attitudes (Investopedia, n.d.).

- Xenophobia: dislike of or prejudice against people from other countries (Wikipedia, n.d.-c).

- American Exceptionalism and Americanism: the idea that the United States is inherently different from other nations, with a set of United States patriotic values aimed at creating a collective American identity and ideals. These ideals include, but are not limited to, self-government, equal standing in the court, freedom of speech, and a belief in progress (Wikipedia, n.d.-a).

- Neo-racism: prejudices and discrimination based on cultural differences between ethnic or racial groups, and especially towards immigrants, who are seen as distinct social groups separate from the majority based on their cultural traits (Wikipedia, n.d.-b).

- Cultural competence, cross-cultural communication and understanding skills, and global competence (GC): these terms are used interchangeably to describe one's cross-cultural capabilities to be successful laborers and responsible citizens in an increasingly internationalized society (Glass et al., 2021).

- Competence(s): competence is an accountable noun when expressing the meaning of "the quality or state of being able or suitable for a particular task" (Wiktionary, n.d.). Competence is more frequently used than "competency" (Dictionary, n.d.).

CHAPTER 2

A Review of CIGS in the United States

This chapter reviews the experiences of Chinese International Graduate Students (CIGS) in the US. It first introduces the status of International Student Mobility (ISM) in the US and explores scholarly discussions around the benefits of ISM for the US and students themselves. This chapter then reviews current literature discussion around challenges of ISM, with a focus on the main challenges for CIGS in the US.

2.1 International Students Mobility in the United States

International Student Mobility (ISM) refers to the mobility of students crossing borders to study (Gümüş et al., 2020). ISM involves countries receiving (host countries) and sending (countries of origin) students, often referred to as "exporters" and "importers" of students respectively (Gümüş et al., 2020). This study focuses on one of the largest importers (US) and exporters (China) of international students. The following section introduces the trends in ISM in the US, especially those ISM students from China.

The US has been an "importer" of international students, with more students coming

into the country than leaving to study abroad (Knight, 2012). The US has had steady growth in the enrollment of international students since the 1950s, with an average increase rate of 5% each year (of International Education, 2021). About 1.1 million international students were enrolled in US institutions in the school year 2018-2019 (of International Education, 2021). However, the enrollment of CIGS has been stagnant since 2017, due to constraints on immigration visas during the Trump administration (Wong & Barnes, 2020). International students' enrollment in the US dropped 15% in 2019 (of International Education, 2021), due to the transportation and travel limitations during the pandemic (Wong & Barnes, 2020).

Although international student enrollment in the US has suffered harsh decreases in recent years, experts and practitioners offer optimism. Applications from prospective international students to US institutions remain high (Moody, 2021). Given the large population of international students, and especially the prospect of enrolling more international students after the pandemic (Moody, 2021), it is urgent to do research to support the experiences of international students in the US.

China has been the largest "exporter" of students, with more students traveling abroad to study than those coming in (Knight, 2012). The Chinese government has encouraged students to study abroad, especially in higher education, since the 1990s (Wang, 2014). The China Scholarship Council (CSC) was established in 2003 to facilitate international exchanges and cooperation for promoting technology and education development (Wang, 2014). Students and families also expect to study in the US (Chen et al., 2000). Foreign higher education degrees are perceived to distinguish one from the Chinese mass and

improve one's position in competitions for high-salaried employment (Wang, 2014). Motivations and expectations from their families and home governments have been "pushing" them to study in the US, as summarized in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Expectations of Families and the Home Government for Studying in the US

Role	Motivations and Expectations
Family	Expand knowledge of other societies, develop cultural understanding and communication skills to improve one's employability in a globalized labor market (Chen et al., 2000).
Government	Governments gain tacit knowledge and formulate an international scientific cooperation network to enable their home country's technological development (Wang, 2014)

Furthermore, the US is one of the most popular destinations for Chinese international students. Those international students expect the US to be diverse, with people from different ethnic, racial, cultural, and political backgrounds living together (Gurin et al., 2002). International students also deem the US as where it has the most advanced technology and platform to learn and develop career-wise (Le & Gardner, 2010). As a result, in the US, Chinese international students comprise the largest population (30%) of the total international student enrollment (of International Education, 2021). Graduate degrees from a US institution are among one of the most popular options for Chinese families (Srivastava et al., 2010). Internationally, masters and doctoral degrees are the most common for ISM in tertiary education (for Economic Co-operation & Development, 2021). Given that a large

proportion are Chinese International Graduate Students (CIGS), this is an important group to study.

2.2 Benefits and Challenges of International Students Mobility

ISM generates various economic, intellectual, and cultural opportunities for the host country. For example, international students' registration fees and living expenses are an important source of income (38.7 billion in 2019) for US institutions and the local economy (of Foreign Student Advisers, 2021). International students graduating from degree programs have supported the domestic labor market (458 thousand jobs in 2018), which also mitigates the impact of an aging population on future skills supply (of Foreign Student Advisers, 2021). As a high quality of labor, international students, especially those obtaining graduate degrees from the US, contribute to the research output of the knowledge economy (Rovito et al., 2021), which further promotes the host country's competitiveness (Rovito et al., 2021). In fact, international students contribute to research outputs (17.9% of all research output in 2015) (Council, 2017), and innovation and developments in the US (Rovito et al., 2021).

Motivation refers to goals set by individuals and processes to stimulate and sustain goal-oriented behaviors (Mostafa & Lim, 2020). In the context of international education, motivation has been discussed as the reasons and drivers for international students to pursue higher education in other countries (Trujillo et al., 2020; Wong et al., 2013). The push-pull theory focuses on country-level factors of the host and home country as the reasons and motivations for ISM. Cowley and Hyams-Ssekasi (2018) explained that push factors refer

to political, economic, and social aspects in the home country, such as the lack of education capacity and career opportunity in their home country, as well as political or economic problems in their home society. These push factors are usually negatively perceived by international students, and thus push them to pursue higher education in other countries. On the contrary, pull factors are the economic, political, and social benefits in the destination country, such as higher quality, reputation, and ranking of education in the destination country, and better employment prospects, and expectations in learning the linguistic skills and cultural experiences (Cowley & Hyams-Ssekasi, 2018). These pull factors attract international students to study in the destination country. The push-pull theory not only analyzes motivation through the lens of opportunity differences, but it also adopts the perspectives of cost avoidance, such as personal escape and avoidance of social limitations, to be important push factors (Wong et al., 2013). However, it only discusses country-level factors, without considering individual and institutional level reasons and motivations for ISM (Yan & Berliner, 2011).

However, even though international students in US higher education are attracted by the quality of the academic program, a series of struggles and dissatisfaction have challenged them (Ma, 2020). A comprehensive national-wide survey of almost 2000 international students in the US (with 76% being graduate students) revealed their social, cultural barriers and life adjustment challenges (Skinner et al., 2019). The survey reveals that the difference between expectations and experiences has been difficult, and the cultural and social barriers are also challenging, as illustrated in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: International Students' Experiences in Higher Education Institutions in the US

Aspects	%	Issue
Social	41	It is difficult to form close friendships with domestic students
	29	They do not have a strong social network at their school
	60	They are not actively involved in activities and events at their institution
	30	Cultural barriers in the US are more challenging than they anticipated.
Academic	59	They spend more time outside class on academics than they anticipated
	34	The stress of schoolwork negatively affects their mental health
	20	Language barrier in the US is more challenging than they thought it would be.
Life	26	They are dissatisfied with the information their school provides
	38	Living away from home/family is more challenging than they expected

Source: Author's Summary from Skinner et al. (2019)

From the literature, language barriers have been a major problem that is relevant to their academic, social, and personal adaptation and integration (Ma, 2020). Another challenge that international students face has been cultural differences, which pose tremendous challenges for international students to engage in social and academic discourses that are out of their cultural routine of discussion contents (Will, 2019).

Graduate students have been particularly lacking institutional support since university services have also been mainly focused on undergraduate students (Oramas et al., 2018). A particular challenge for graduate-level ISM students is psychological stress. Pursuing advanced degrees usually means obtaining high expectations, high stress, and having independent and isolating learning experiences (Oramas et al., 2018). In fact, graduate stu-

dents have more than twice the chance to develop a psychiatric disorder, compared to the general population in higher education in the US (Levecque et al., 2017), as shown in Table 2.3. The study results also reveal the factors that are important for Ph.D. students' mental health: work-life balance, professional aspirations, expectations, and inspiration.

Table 2.3: General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) Results

Mental health issues	PhD students (%)	Higher education students (%)
Felt under constant strain	40.81	30.21
Unhappy and depressed	30.3	18.48
Lost sleep over worry	28.33	18.13
Could not overcome difficulties	26.11	12.69
Not enjoying day-to-day activities	25.41	10.88
Lost confidence in self	24.35	10.24
Not playing a useful role	22.46	10.88
Could not concentrate	21.74	10.57
Not feeling happy, all things considered,	21.15	11.45
Felt worthless	16.17	4.22
Could not make decisions	14.95	6.04
Could not face problems	13.36	4.24
GHQ2+	51.11	30.61
GHQ3+	39.53	22.21
GHQ4+	31.84	14.55

Source: Levecque et al. (2017) Note: GHQ2+ requires that a person experience at least two General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) symptoms, the GHQ3+ requires the presence of at least 3 symptoms, and the GHQ4+ requires the presence of at least 4 symptoms

Apart from the psychological challenges, the research literature discussed suggests that cultural challenges may be a bigger problem for CIGS in the US. Firstly, CIGS are a unique group of students who have a distinctive background and confront various challenges in the US. Chinese students at the graduate level are usually from a wider range of backgrounds, such as socioeconomic status, place of origin, family backgrounds (Shen & Chen, 2020). For example, fellowships and scholarships in graduate education especially make it more possible to expand access to students from diverse backgrounds. Secondly, as mentioned, before studying abroad, CIGS in the US shared strong collective identities in China, especially those who experienced the "GaoKao" and came to the US after a Chinese undergraduate degree (Liu, n.d.; Ma, 2020; Shen & Chen, 2020).

While the home country influences CIGS' actions and conceptions of themselves, once they come to the US, their observation and learning are institutionalized in an unpredictable way (Li et al., 2012), both through direct personal experiences and practices in the new culture, and indirect observations of how knowledge traditions are institutionalized and implemented in practices (Li et al., 2012). Since context often represents and legitimizes certain identities, worldviews, and realities with social, cultural, and political meanings and implications, identities may be dynamically challenged by the context and social situations (Berry et al., 2006), which may lead to further difficulties, loneliness, and stresses (Zhou & Green, 2019). It is important to understand the experiences, factors, and processes of CIGS' academic and cultural adjustment to the US.

Focusing on the current generations of individual Chinese students in the US, Yang

and MacCallum (2021) pointed out that current Chinese doctoral students were born under the one-child policy, grew up in a rapidly developing economic environment, and could experience cultural collisions between traditional and radical values as they grow up. Although the characteristics of the current generation of Chinese students are discussed in Yang and MacCallum (2021), more detailed discussion needs to be developed around how cultural beliefs of Chinese students influence their motivations and experiences. Separately, Jiang (2021) pointed out that the experiences of the current generation of CIGS abroad have been largely structured by China's goal of human capital accumulation and political national rejuvenation. With the Chinese political involvement overseas and with use of China-based social media, nationalist sentiments among Chinese students do not decrease for those who have international experiences (Jiang, 2021).

Although research has revealed general challenges for international students (Knight, 2007), US higher education falls short of capturing the multiplicity of students, and can be seen to be complicit in the construction of the students' experiences of marginalization and stereotypes (Ma, 2020). Table 2.4 summarizes research on US-China cultural differences. Given those differences, CIGS in the US can have unique hardship in cultural adjustments. For example, US-China differences can cause stresses and anxieties and pose significant challenges to negotiate different ways of thinking and behaviors among CIGS studying in the US (Shen & Chen, 2020). For example, the contradiction between social systems – collectivism (emphasizing community, obedience, and harmony) and individualism (the culture of autonomy, independence, and creativity) – has been disturbing for CIGS' acculturation in

the US (Keller et al., 1998). Confrontations were caused due to CIGS' nationalistic, patriotic standpoints and misunderstandings of American criticisms (Jiang, 2021). Inter-group conflicts between domestic and Chinese students have occurred (Fish, 2020; Prison, 2019).

Table 2.4: US-China Cultural Differences

Aspect	US	China	Source
Values	Democracy	Inequalities acceptable	Hofstede (n.d.)
Society	Diversity	Homogeneity	Hofstede (n.d.)
Pursuits	Individualism	Collectivism	Xia (2020)
Classroom	Collaborative and initiative	Effortful and respectful	Yue (2016)
Communication	Direct	Indirect	Sun and Chen (1997)
Friendship	Independent	Intimate	Sun and Chen (1997)
Institution	Open flexibility	Structured stability	Tang (2011)
Knowledge	For application	For accumulation	Liu (n.d.)

Moreover, "neo-racism" has been increasingly discussed to describe racist violence against Chinese students in the US. Neo-racism describes the national order that justifies the filtering and differential treatment of immigrants and international students (Lee, 2020). As illustrated in Table 2.5, neo-racism for CIGS can be reflected in various forms, including phenomena like the exclusion of rights, protections, and entitlement of Chinese students, and CIGS being systematically channeled to insecure, short-term contracts compared to White nationals (Lee, 2020).

Table 2.5: Microaggressions of Asian International Students

Microaggression	Description
Excluded and avoided	Feelings of exclusion on campus
Rendered invisible	contribution to the classroom was unwanted or disregarded
Disregarded values and needs	White peers were insensitive to cultural perspectives and needs
Ascription of intelligence	personal characteristics ascribed to racial and cultural stereotypes
Structural barriers	Concerns about a lack of funding and barriers to obtaining visas or permits.

Source: Author's Summary from Houshmand et al. (2014)

For a possible explanation for the reasons why Chinese students face a hostile social environment, it is useful to consider "China-US rivalry" discourses, which were propagated during the Trump administration. The social climate was exacerbated with discrimination, biases, hostilities, abuses, and prejudices towards Chinese students. According to Lee (2019), although several universities have openly denounced discrimination against Chinese students, the national discourse remains that Chinese students, especially those at the graduate level, are spies posing a threat to the US national security. This study explores the experiences of Chinese students in the US and how they cope with the social rivalry discourses in the US (Lee, 2020), which may pose unique challenges for Chinese students. Chinese students must develop competence to tackle confusion, ambivalence, and tensions around cultural differences (Ma, 2020).

2.3 Strategies to Support International Student Mobility

To assist international students in the US, student centers are often made to provide linguistic, academic, social, cultural, and professional support for international students. Table 2.6 lists the main international student services provided by major US universities.

Table 2.6: International Students Support Services Offered by Universities

Theme	Support Services
Language	English classes, practical English tutorials, accent reduction sessions, language exchange, English conversation hours
Academic	New Student orientation, advising and counseling, workshops on US academic life, supplemental instruction, writing centers
Cultural	Global festivals, world fair, culture celebrations, international education week, sightseeing trips, global siblings program, global student mentors program
Professional	Job search strategies, finance management, tax preparation

Source: Author's Summary from Martirosyan et al. (2019)

However, scholars have pointed out that university practices were created based on staff consensus rather than rigorous research (Hunter, 2004). Moreover, international students' support systems fail to address the various challenges that international students face on campus at US universities (Oliver et al., 1999). There are a number of reasons. Firstly, international students have not fully utilized the services at the international student centers. A study of 60 international students in a Midwestern university in the US found that 72% of international students reported never using the career service, 78% never used the counseling service, 72% never heard of the employment service center, 45% never went to the

health center, and 52% never participated in student organizations (Abe et al., 1998). The findings echo results from other studies on how international students rarely accept referrals to counselors (Hwang et al., 2014). Apart from the lack of utilization, the international students center also suffers from low impact or power due to constrained resources (Hwang et al., 2014).

To guide international centers' services and collaboration across campus, Glass et al. (2021) reveals key elements for effective inclusion and success of international students in classrooms, on and beyond campus (see Table 2.7).

Table 2.7: Elements of Inclusion and Success for International Students

Elements	Actions of multiple actors across campus
On-campus Network	Staff, faculty, and peers' support for social and academic struggles and needs
Community Network	Meaning making from the local and academic community, alumni and employers.
Soft belonging	students connect within and beyond the institution for multifaceted identity.
Hard belonging	administrators enable international students to voice, participate in campus life.
Cultural relevant	Integrate international students' cultural backgrounds into educational practices
Culturally responsive	Faculty design learning outcomes as building social capital, knowledge, skills, and sensibilities that are aligned with students' pursuits.

Source: Author's Summary from Glass et al. (2021)

Although the table could be helpful, the gaps between international students' expectations and experiences have been widely observed (Atar et al., 2017). The gaps have harmed institutional reputation, and international student satisfaction (Beneke, 2011; Ward, 2001). Yet there have not been adequate understandings of the expectation versus experience gaps,

nor effective strategies to narrow the gaps. This study also examines the roots and reasons that caused gaps between CIGS' expectations and experiences.

2.4 Summary of Experiences of CIGS

This chapter discussed the growing enrollment of CIGS and the financial, cultural, and intellectual benefits it brings to US institutions and students themselves. It also revealed the fact that cross-cultural differences between the US and China have been a remaining challenge for CIGS. Although challenges are discussed in the research literature, few focus on the coping strategies and the impact of those strategies on CIGS' learning and competence development. Meanwhile, although the literature provides us an informative overview of CIGS experiences, there has not been a study focusing on the patterns of expectations for ISM and how those expectations relate to outcomes of competence development. Thus, this study focuses on the global competence development of CIGS and discusses the relationships among CIGS' global competence development in relation to their motivations, experiences, and coping strategies.

With a particular interest in cultural negotiation, this study examines various personal or institutional factors for CIGS' global competence development and their cultural negotiations, including developing perceptions and understandings of one's own culture and/or country in relation to the impressions, images, as well as critically reviewing information of another culture/country and making sense of the complex tensions and interactions of different cultures (Shen & Chen, 2020). To do this, this study reviews concepts and theories

around global competence and builds a conceptual framework for cultural negotiation, which are presented in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER 3

Concepts of Cultural and Global Competence in Higher Education

This chapter defines and discusses different concepts related to cultural and global competence. Global competence is a concept recently put forth in the research literature, as well as by the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Global competence broadly captures the importance associated with cross-cultural communication and understanding. After clarifying the definitions and components of global competence and its variants (i.e. cultural competence), I develop a holistic perspective to approach the global competence concept. I use both career- and civic-oriented global competence as an unified approach to define global competence in this dissertation.

3.1 Significance of Cultural and Global Competence

Cultural competence and related variants like global competence have been promoted by many educational policymakers and institutions, like the Organization for Economic and Cooperation Development (OECD) (2018), The Asia Society (2017), Harvard University

(2009), and World Savvy (2019). These organizations deem global competence as necessary to be laborers and citizens in an increasingly internationalized society. Global competence education is an initiative for cultivating globally ready students that enables them to thrive in a multicultural society both in careers (how to work with) and civic settings (how to be responsible). Global competence has become an educational goal across different educational institutions and has become increasingly discussed and practiced across different levels of education.

Research literature has identified the importance of cultural competence and its variants. Global competence, for example, has been an important concept in the field of international education, referring to the necessary cross-cultural knowledge, attitude, and skills that support one's development as a successful international employee and a responsible global citizen (Colvin & Edwards, 2018). Global competence is helpful for promoting cross-cultural communication and understanding, reducing inter-group conflicts and cross-racial attrition, and protecting inter-group support and diverse campus climate (Flammia et al., 2019). Cross-cultural communication with sufficient language skills has proven to be essential to relationship-building and networking, as well as opportunities for perspectives expansion and cross-cultural learning (Flammia et al., 2019). As shown in Table 3.1, global competence has been suggested to be urgently needed for the benefits of individual students to confront challenges in this volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world in globalized societies that are fast-changing, information-overloaded, interconnected, and easily misunderstood (Matei et al., 2019). Global competence supports people to become

successful laborers, residents, and citizens who are not only capable of living harmoniously in multicultural communities; but also can thrive in a changing labor market; can use media platforms effectively and responsibly, and can support sustainable development goals.

Table 3.1: Rationales of Developing Global Competence

Rationale	Demands
Changing nature of labor in a globalized knowledge economy	laborers with global competence to manage cross-cultural issues, communicate and work with colleagues from diverse cultures
Progressively diverse societies culturally and linguistically	people with global competence to interact and live with groups of diverse cultural identities and perspectives.
Difficult sustainable development (social inequity and climate change)	Citizen with global competence to understand inter-dependency and responsibility for sustainable development goals

Source: Author's Summary from Colvin and Edwards (2018)

Global competence may be seen to have become a buzzword in international higher education but with consequences. For example, global education rankings have considered global competence and similar concepts (multicultural education, intercultural education, global education, transnational education) as a tool for measuring institutional excellence (e.g., QS World University Ranking). Apart from rankings, college coalitions and organizations explicitly promote global competence education. The American Community Colleges Conference (1996; 1998) advocated for a "globally aware and competent citizenry" in the 1990s. The Association of American Colleges and Universities promoted global competence as an educational goal for American universities (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2011). As a result, universities practiced global competence with various inter-

national education initiatives. For example, Boston College, the University of Pittsburgh, and Lehigh University promote global proficiency and global citizen certificates and programs in their university curriculum initiatives. The popularity of global competence can also be reflected in universities' mission statements, which often claim to create a supportive environment that cultivates globally competent students. For instance, Harvard University stated that their responsibility was to "educate its students to be knowledgeable and responsible as they go out into the world – to know languages, to know the culture, the economics and policies of the countries they will visit, to interact in a knowledgeable way" (Reimers, 2009). Project Zero at Harvard University turned its focus on global competence in 2007 in its project "Interdisciplinary and Global Studies." Georgia Institute of Technology also claims to be devoted to fostering global-ready graduates who can "work knowledgeably and live comfortably in a global society" (Georgia Institute of Technology, n.d.).

3.2 Interchangeability in Cultural and Global Competence

Global competence has been discussed with other similar concepts in a wide range of disciplines (agriculture, architecture, arts, business, education, finance, government, health, law, science and technology, transportation). Courses around global competence teach about the global market, culture, and the interconnected society, with the aim to enhance students' knowledge and inspire their curiosity for understanding global issues, such as cross-cultural frictions (Matei et al., 2019). Therefore, terminologies related to global competence are thus prevalent. For example, the following has been used to describe competencies rele-

vant to cultural inclusion and diversity: cross-cultural communication skills or competence, global competence, intercultural competence, international competence, global citizenship, intercultural intelligence, cultural competence and transcultural competence, intercultural sensitivity (Muller et al., 2020; Müller et al., 2020). Also, the definitions and components of global competence have been published by American and European scholars for over 50 years (Deardorff, 2017). A rich conceptual and theoretical model has emerged, including more than 30 models and more than 300 related constructs (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). Many scholars contend that global competence has a "concept conflations" problem (normally some example of references here). This section discusses the commonalities across those concepts in their definitions (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Comparing cultural competence and Similar Concept

Concept	Definition
Cultural competence	integration of knowledge, attitude, and action (techniques and strategies) to solve problems of cultural differences.
Cross Cultural Communication	Communication skills based on attitudes, knowledge, and understandings in diversity and cross-cultural issues
Global Competence	Commitment and participation in global issues and knowledge, attitudes, and skills to function effectively in an international context.

Author's summary from Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) and Müller et al. (2020)

Although nuances across different terms exist, I echo what Deardorff (2017) argued – global competence and lots of different similar terminologies all have similar meanings, but only obtain non-essential variances due to user preferences in different disciplines and

contexts. For example, while engineers and educators use "global competence" and "global learning," healthcare professionals and social workers use "cultural competence," and business professionals use "cultural intelligence" and "intercultural effectiveness". Also, global competence often transpires across national borders, and intercultural competence occurs at a micro-level within a state, a company, or an institution (Griffith et al., 2016). Although used in different contexts, they can be seen to express the same meaning. Auld and Morris (2019) argue that "when translated into the language of assessment, global citizenship becomes global competencies or skills." Global competence was also regarded as an important perceptional and actionable component (perceived the global as interconnected, and volunteering and participation) of global citizenship (Auld & Morris, 2019). It is also not rare to treat global competence as like other concepts of cultural competence. OECD's global competence framework uses global and intercultural competence together frequently, saying 'global and intercultural issues, problems, outlooks' and citing much of the research on intercultural competence for the global competence framework (Engel et al., 2019). Therefore, this study chose not to make significant distinctions between cultural competence and other similar terms (cross-cultural communication and understanding skills, intercultural competence, global competence).

I choose to use global competence as the key term in this study, rather than any other term, because global competence is most often used in recent educational policies and practices. I use global competence as an interchangeable concept as other cultural competence concepts, denoting the ability to manage cultural diversity, including adapting

to new cultural environments and collaborating with people from diverse cultures. This study is based on the belief that, since global competence and other similar terms have been used interchangeably, paradigms from other similar concepts can be used to develop global competence models.

3.3 Holistic Definition of Global Competence

To understand better global competence, we should first ask what is meant by competence. Table 3.3 suggests that competence is defined as a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes to meet complex cultural demands in societies.

Table 3.3: Components of Competence

Components	Details
Knowledge	Declarative and procedural
Skill	Goal/performance-oriented motor and cognitive
Attitudes	Affective (emotion, ways of thinking) and behavioral (motivation, personality)

Source: Author's Summary from Butler (1978)

To explore the concrete components (knowledge, skill, attitudes) of global competence, we need to further examine the most widely accepted global competence framework. The OECD global competence framework was designed for the OECD Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), an assessment for 15-year-old students, without university students in the scope. Similarly, the Global Competence Matrix (Ledger et al., 2019) is built for supporting in-service teachers (who are pursuing the Global Competence Certifi-

cate program at Columbia University). Even though several universities have come up with their own framework, there is no consensus on what global competence should mean for university students. Table 3.4 summarizes the definitions of global competence from different organizations and scholars.

Table 3.4: Review of Global Competence Definition in Literature

Source	Definition of global competence
Lambert (1994)	three general categories: (1) knowledge (knowledge of current events, foreign language), (2) attitude (empathy, approval and positive attitude), and (3) skills (task performance with understanding and valuing something foreign).
Li (2017)	Four conceptual dimensions: (1) knowledge (obtain and able to learn from information about international issues), (2) skills (problem-solving), (3) attitudes (positive vs negative about an international campus), and (4) habits of mind (critical and creative thinking).
Colvin and Edwards (2018)	Four interconnected dimensions or domains: (1) knowledge: examine local and global knowledge, (2) values: recognize perspectives and appreciate differences, (3) attitudes: communicate thoughtfully and respectfully across cultural barriers, and (4) skills: take action (collaborate and participate) in problem solving for social conditions.
Savvy (2019)	The Global Competence Matrix consists of (1) knowledge of core concepts (know the complexity and interdependence of global issues, and the influence of one's own culture on the self-other relationships), (2) values and attitudes (open, value, and desire to engage with others' idea and interaction; aware differences, and obtain humanity and empathy; comfort with ambiguity; adaptive and flexible; question assumptions), (3) skills (research-based investigation, collaborate effectively and strategically, active listen and engage), and (4) behaviors (apply multiple perspective for decision-making; evidence-based opinion; reflect and learn; take responsibility and collaborate; share and encourage) that prepare one to thrive in a more diverse, interconnected world.
Tsinghua University (2018)	Three aspects: (1) cognitive (language, world culture, and global issues), (2) interpersonal (ethics and responsibility, self-awareness and self-confidence), and (3) intrapersonal (openness and respect, communication, and collaboration) that enable one to learn, work and live with others from different cultural origins (Fang et al., 2018).
Resnik (2009)	Multicultural competence as (1) Cognitive (diverse innovative thinking), (2) Emotional (psychological predisposition like flexibility, adaptability, sensitivity and empathy), and (3) Social (communicate and cooperate) dimensions.

As shown in Table 3.4, global competence has widely been seen as a behavioral and performance-based construct (e.g., communication, collaboration). On this basis, scholars have critiqued the lack of physiological and emotional aspects of interactants with global competence (Müller et al., 2020). Even with studies focusing on culture shock or anxieties and motivations (Ma, 2020, e.g.), internal and external qualities have seldom been considered together. On the other hand, however, in the 1950s, the cognitive (intuitive and Kantian) approach dominated models of human competence which consisted of motivation (affective, emotion), knowledge (cognitive), and skills (behavioral, action) (Havighurst, 1957, e.g.). The cognitive perspective of global competence has only revealed the internal part of the picture, while ignoring its interaction with external qualities. To address this issue, this section elaborates on the details of a holistic global competence model that will be used as a basis in this study.

A holistic view of global competence is illustrated with Deardorff (2006)'s Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence (PMIC). In this model, global competence is understood as two categories: (1) attitudes/ values being the internal qualities, while (2) skills/knowledge being the external qualities (Deardorff, 2006). This model emphasizes that, only with both qualities combined, can one achieve the optimal effectiveness and appropriateness of communication.

Inspired by PMIC, I devised and adapted components of global competence for analytical purposes that correspond to achieving the internal/ appropriateness and external/ effectiveness qualities of global competence as shown in Table 3.5. These components are

useful for analyzing the different definitions of GC, and for deriving some key components of GC to approach a sojourn's experiences as in this study.

Table 3.5: Components Required for Internal and External qualities of Global Competence

Goal	Components of global competence
Internal quality	Motivational Attitudes (open, confident, curious, appreciate, responsible)
(appropriateness)	Foundational Attitudes (patient, tolerant, self-aware, modest, empathetic)
	Cognitive skills (perspective-taking, reflecting)
External quality	Informational knowledge (language, local and global issues)
(effectiveness)	Contextual knowledge (complexity and interdependence)
	Behavioral skill (share, encourage, communicate, collaborate, investigate)

Source: Author's adaption based on the PMIC model (Deardorff, 2006)

The adapted components of global competence in Table 3.5 contains the most used descriptions about knowledge, attitude, and skill of global competence that align with the components of competence: 1) Knowledge: Culture-specific information (world history, sociopolitics, etc.) and context knowledge (interconnectedness, communication, cultural self-awareness, and cultural humility). 2) Attitude: Basic attitudes (patience, tolerance, acceptance, politeness, and friendliness) and motivational attitude (respect, interest/desire, openness, and curiosity/discovery). 3) Skill: Cognitive skills (cultural self-awareness, perspective-taking, empathy) and behavioral skills (relationship building, collaboration).

3.4 Career-Civic Orientations of Cultural Competence

Global competence tends to be discussed in higher education alongside two goals: (1) to build career readiness – cultivating global competence for improving capabilities of employees to collaborate and facilitate cross-border business; (2) to cultivate civic attitudes – cultivating global citizenship and actions for sustainability and social justice. The career and civic orientations of global competence can be seen as two distinct trends in higher education (Zhou & Green, 2022a).

The career and civic orientations have been approached separately in many discussions historically across time. In the 1970s and the 1980s, American higher education moved toward diversity and civic orientation, while multicultural education spread in western countries. Global competence emphasized a "civic orientation" for cultivating a tolerant and democratic citizen who could work with and through difference, and who could find harmonious solutions to form social-national cohesion (Banks & Banks, 2019). From this perspective, global competence was regarded as a way to integrate immigrants into their states and to cultivate reconciliation and social understanding. With the social transition from "ethnocentrism" to "ethnorelativism," universities were encouraged to engage with viewpoints from different countries, (Council on International Educational Exchange, 1988). A neoliberal agenda interrupted the diversity agenda and the career orientations of global competence in the mid-1980s (Resnik, 2009). Global competence was from this perspective described with pragmatic qualities (e.g., foreign language competence and task performance) for economic purposes, and emphasized assessment, effectiveness, productivity, and other achievements

of individuals (Liu-Farrer et al., 2021). These became the dominant definitions of global competence (Lambert, 1994). On this basis, colleges and universities have created programs aiming to prepare individuals with a "competitive edge" to complete productive working tasks cross-culturally. Within a neoliberal framework, global competence in universities became a marketable indicator for students' success and a sign of institutional success (Engel et al., 2019). Claiming global competence has successfully helped universities compete in a global competition, including increased revenue from international students, students' recruitment, brand recognition, and achieved a "world-class status" by attracting foreign students and faculty, adding English-medium instruction courses, and curriculum related to global competence (Srivastava et al., 2010).

While career discourses of global competence became prevalent, there is also an approach to global competence that stresses the civic orientations. With a rise of humanistic projects and citizenship education around the 2010s, highlighted global competence not only to "boost the US economy" but also "adapt to increasingly diverse demographic shifts," and "solve problems of global significance" (Banks & Banks, 2019). More recently, several scholars in higher education conceptualize global competence beyond the individual sphere and argue that global competence is a pressing necessity for solving problems of global common goods like social inequity and climate change that are threatening living conditions (Gurin et al., 2002). The global competence framework in higher education nowadays has started to be constructed to aim, not merely provide a formula for individuals to confront challenging situations, but also to activate their reflective thinking, learning, and critical reaction to

experiences in diverse contexts so that they can collaboratively and creatively solve social, political, economic, and environmental challenges. Although civic orientations have emerged in higher education policies and discussions since the 2010s, neoliberalism continues to play a role in the context of more universities joining the competition discourses in education nowadays. Under neo-liberal regimes, the aims of global education movements, such as PISA, Education for All, and global competency development, have skewed toward human capital development for the global market (Engel et al., 2019). Universities view students as future workers who are about to join the skill competition in the global labor market (Liu-Farrer et al., 2021). This market-driven approach sidelined the democratic mission of universities as providers of upward social mobility (Slaughter et al., 2004). Within higher education nowadays, specifically in the US, popular discourses about the development of global competence during graduate-level studies mobility have remained mainly around increasing employment eligibility.

From a critical perspective and a historical review about orientations of global competence orientations, it appears that career orientation has been frequently in neo-liberalism branding discourses, aiming to prepare students with career readiness. On the contrary, the civic orientation of global competence, driven by sustainability values, aims to prepare students on issues of social well-being and to provide an inclusive value system.

Apart from the historical review, the next few paragraphs review global competence as appeared in different fields with different names: one is described as "global leadership, professional, management competence" in business literature, and the other as "global cit-

izenship and intercultural competence" in educational fields. The different fields of study mentioned global competence for different goals: career global competence prepares students as capable employees for cross-border business and cross-cultural teamwork, while civic global competence fosters students' civic attitudes, including values in diversity and responsibility for the global common good like sustainability and social justice, as illustrated in the Figure 3.1.

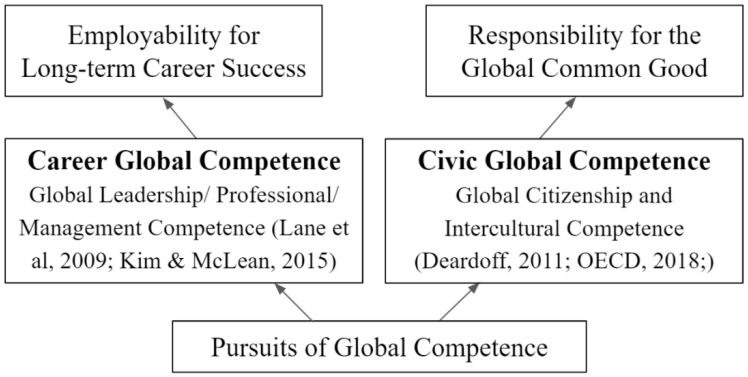

Figure 3.1: Career and Civic Global Competence

Source: Author's Summary based on Zhou and Green (2022a)

Career global competence often emerges from the field of management discussions, including the development of concepts such as global leadership, global professional competency, and global business competency (Holt & Seki, 2012). The career orientations of global competence are discussed with human resources development theory, aiming to foster an adaptive and qualified labor force that has job productivity and career prosperity. Career global competence focuses on individual career interests and is straightforward, task-oriented, and pragmatic. Using corporate managerial language, career global competence

has the purpose of profit-seeking in a globalizing world. In contrast, civic orientations are found to be developed largely in the fields of education, sociology, and philosophy. This field uses global citizenship and intercultural competency and emphasizes humanistic, ethical, and "soft-competencies." Civic global competence stresses social responsibility and is often presented as an antidote to this capitalist neo-liberalism way of thinking about competency. The pursuit has been promoting "global common goods," such as facilitating social cohesion and justice, human rights and autonomy, better health, and increased political engagement. To summarize the differences and isolation between career and civic orientations. Table 3.6 compares careers with civic global competence in terms of their definitions, descriptions, and pursuits.

Table 3.6: Comparing Career and Civic Orientation of Global Competence

	Career Orientation	Civic Orientation
Fields	Education of Management	International Education Projects
Describer	Competitive Edge	Soft-Competencies
Feature	Instrumental, Task-oriented	Intrinsic, Relational Humanistic, Critical
Approach	Solve problem individually	Solve problems collaboratively
Highlight	External qualities and performance	Internal transformation and citizenship

Source: Author's Summary based on Zhou and Green (2022b)

Organizations that have both business/ economic and education functions need to integrate both the career and civic orientation of global competence. For example, the organization for economic and cooperative development (OECD) (2018) readdressed global competence's importance for individuals, as it is "a multidimensional, life-long learning goal"

(p.166) to become "informed, thoughtful, and effective workers" with management and adaptations of one's own work for ongoing improvement (Colvin & Edwards, 2018). While it also highlights the civic recognition of environmental consequences, such as understanding how the global market works, what are the demands and problems in career and cultural development, and how to take advantage of different perspectives and positions of different countries in the global economy.

After reviewing the different orientations across time and fields of study, this study argues that the career and civic orientations of global competence at individual universities are inseparable and have important overlaps embedded within these perspectives. The discussion has focused on curriculum and formal education for academic and career skill development (Flammia et al., 2019) while ignoring the social settings of students' lives for competence relevant to civic goals. Instead of two in-commensurable visions, career and civic orientations are the two sides of the same coin to comprise the full image of student lives. In combination with interaction of the career and civic sides of global competence, this study adopted a unified view serving global competence conceptualization, shown in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7: Orientations of Global Competence and Cultural Competence

Orientation	Description
Career	to prepare students' cross-cultural employability and long-term career success with knowledge and skills as neoliberal human capital
Civic	to foster students' understanding and social participation in social cohesion and justice with inclusive values and attitudes
Unified	to connect individual benefits (e.g., cross-cultural employability) with collective development (e.g., understanding of the social responsibilities for global common goods like environmental changes)

Source: Author's Summary based on Zhou and Green (2022a)

This study defines career global competence as the instrumental competence that facilitates cross-cultural employability and long-term career success. The aim of career global competency is to equip individuals with a competitive edge in working productively in cross-cultural settings. Career global competencies help laborers to understand matters of global significance, such as how the global market works, the demands and problems in career and cultural development, and how to take advantage of different perspectives and positions proposed by different countries in the global economy.

By contrast, civic global competence is an intrinsic and relational competence that promotes an understanding of the social responsibilities for global common goods (e.g., environmental changes). This reflects the civic orientation of higher education, which takes a social perspective, believing that individual competency plays a key role in benefiting the social well-being of individuals as well as society. Civic global competence is an important

contributor to society's common good, such as facilitating social cohesion and justice, human rights and autonomy, and individual participation in democratic institutions.

Unified global competence is proposed as a concept to mitigate conflicts between neoliberal and substantive orientations. The unified orientations connect individual benefits (e.g., cross-cultural employability) with collective development (e.g., understanding of the social responsibilities for global common goods like environmental changes). It also helps to reunite the two competing orientations in US universities and provided helpful conceptualization to understand global competence.

3.5 Summary of Concepts of Global Competence

Global competence, the ability to manage, adapt, and collaborate with cultural diversity, is important for student success in this interconnected and globalized society (Aguirre & Martinez, 2003). Although global competence has interchangeability with other cultural competence concepts (Deardorff, 2017), I choose to use global competence as the key term in this study due to its frequency in use by recent educational policies and practices.

As a summary, this chapter defines global competence with a unified perspective from career and civic orientations of global competence. It clarifies the career and civic orientations of global competence, which can be seen to have emerged from different focal points at different times and fields of study. To unify the career and civic orientations of global competence, this chapter explains conceptualizations of global competence that

highlight not only career orientations that enable one to thrive in a multicultural society in a career (how to work with others) but also civic abilities (how to be responsible).

Based on the definition of global competence clarified in this chapter, the following chapter focuses on key processes and factors for the development of global competence. The conceptual framework will be introduced in the next chapter to enable this study to examine the individual, interpersonal, and institutional factors for cultural negotiation and global competence development.

CHAPTER 4

Theories Related to Global Competence Development

After introducing the definitions of global competence in chapter 3, this chapter focuses on key factors and processes to develop global competence. To do so, I examine several pedagogical models related to the development of cultural and global competence. Specifically, three types of pedagogical models are discussed (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009) – the assimilation models, the linear or multidimensional developmental models, and the bi-cultural models. I critique the first two models and apply the bi-cultural model.

The conceptual framework (i.e. perspective and framing used in this dissertation) is introduced in this chapter, which is an adapted version of the bi-cultural model. I used the adapted bi-cultural model to approach and analyze factors and processes of global competence development for Chinese International Graduate Students (CIGS) in this dissertation.

4.1 Assimilation Models of Cultural Competence

4.1.1 Definition of Assimilation Models

Assimilation models, also called adaptational models, are based on the idea that cultural adjustment is a process of assimilation of actions, attitudes, and understandings from one culture to the other culture. A representative example of the assimilation model is the Worldview Converge Model, as shown in Figure 4.1, where one would merge their worldview into a cultural "melting pot" (Fantini, 2007).

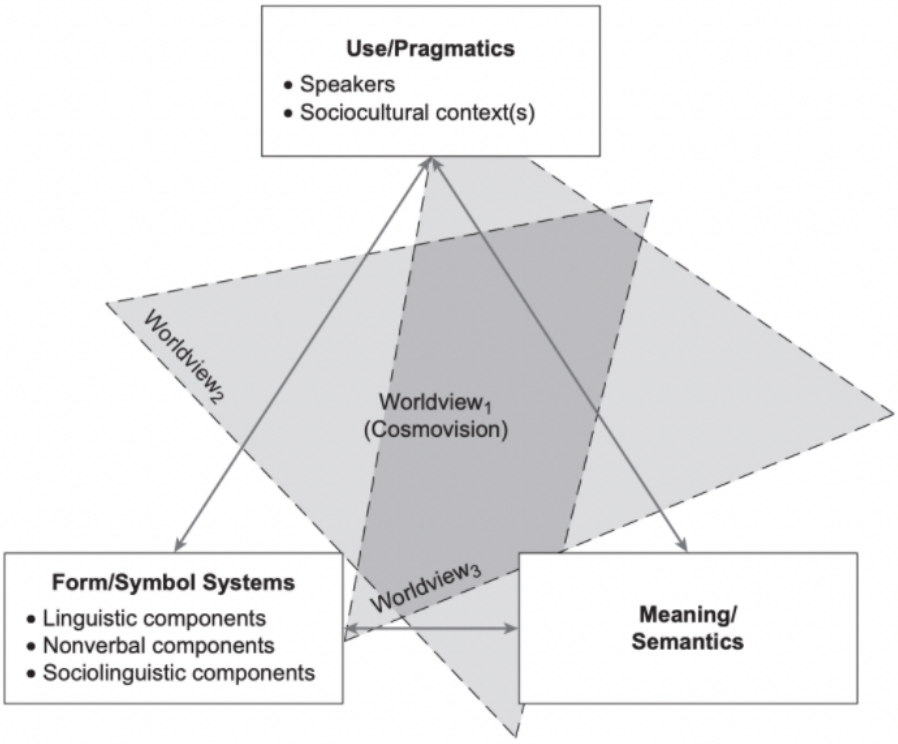

Figure 4.1: Worldview Converge Model

Source: Fantini (2007)

Assimilation models of global competence have been adopted by western organizations, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and various European and North American educational institutions (Muller et al., 2020). However, despite international organizations like the OECD claiming to define global competence on the basis of multiple perspectives, a closer examination of the OECD's document shows a limited range of scholars, publication types, backgrounds, and viewpoints (Ledger et al., 2019). These practices of adopting assimilation models are likely to impose western ideologies, values, and standards of living (Nye Jr, 2004). For example, the OECD's standards for global competence assessment in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) impose a normative perspective that contains certain beliefs, agendas, and values that non-western learners may reject. In other words, a high score in PISA can only reflect an acutely privileged western 15-year-old (Ledger et al., 2019). However, pictures of globally competent students exclude lives and standards of other forms that do not fit the western profile (Ledger et al., 2019). It has been argued that under the guidance of the assimilation model or perspective, the OECD tends to enforce students, regardless of their background, to "change" themselves to "meet the requirements of the economic and social needs of the society," rather than being an actor to change reality (Prison, 2019).

4.1.2 Critiques of Assimilation Models

The assimilation model has been critiqued as being based on colonization and western cultural privilege that disrespects maintenance of one's cultural heritage, culture, and identity

(Engel et al., 2019, e.g.). The "normalization and assimilation process" promoted in the assimilation model implies that a person discards their own culture to normalize themselves into the host's culture (Fantini, 2007). Also, assimilation models divide culture into a self-other binary (Blell & Doff, 2014). The closed clear-cut category of the self-other culture is problematic due to the following reasons. Focusing on "others" raises the risk of reproducing "solid and illusory conceptions of culture" and "stereotypes" (Blell & Doff, 2014). It could also lead to prejudiced expectations of the "other", essentialism (limiting a person to a single identity), othering, isolation, chauvinism, and discrimination (Blell & Doff, 2014). Moreover, the "self-other binary" hinders students' contextual reactions to cultures that are, in nature, flexible and constructed in context (Abt-Perkins et al., 2010). Furthermore, in its early forms, the concept of global competence has been suggested to be influenced by assimilation models. Representing white European colonial traditions, global competence on this basis can be seen to have been referring to the kind of knowledge, aptitudes, and behaviors needed to successfully negotiate colonial interests with local or native populations (Engel et al., 2019). Even nowadays, discourses of "cultural power" are still regarded as soft power (the values, ideas, habits, and politics inherent in the system) aiming to assimilate people from other cultures and sustain a US and European hegemonic global systems (Nye Jr, 2004). The assimilation models mistakenly describe a universally applicable global competence for different learners and education institutions. Correspondingly, definitions of global competence at individual universities have failed to explain why the components are selected and how the description is contextualized (Engel et al., 2019).

As discussed, assimilation models are based on westernized cultural norms that remain decontextualized for specific non-western students and under-theorized for the diverse experiences of students from different backgrounds. The specific needs and experiences of CIGS, for example, are important to recognize so that we can reveal a more comprehensive understanding of global competence development as well as design services that support diverse populations of students. We thus need to critically reflect on our current global competence practices under assimilation models and build a global competence development model that recognizes the cultural agency of non-western learners and respects their unique experiences and processes. The bi-cultural models introduces later in this chapter can be seen to help address these gaps in assimilation models.

4.2 Linear and Multidimensional Developmental Models of Cultural Competence

4.2.1 Definition of Stepwise Models

Linear development models (also called stepwise models) are based on the belief that global competence develops through distinct stages (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). For example, focusing on the attitudinal aspect of global competence development, the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) describes global competence as shifting from ethnocentrism to ethno-relativism when experiences of cultural differences become more complex and sophisticated, as shown in Figure 4.2.

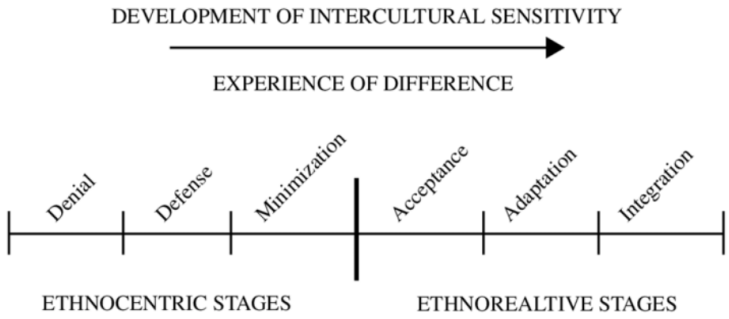

Figure 4.2: Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

Source: Bennett and Bennett (1993) and Bennett and Hammer (2011)

As one form of stepwise models, the multidimensional developmental model recognizes the complexity in achieving the goal of being culturally competent. According to the multidimensional developmental model, global competence will never be fully or ultimately "achieved" and does not have a static state at any point of the developmental process (Bennett & Hammer, 2011). Instead, global competence develops through different levels (i.e., initial, intermediate, and mature levels) of intercultural awareness and sensitivity, depending on one's interpersonal ability under different circumstances (Bennett & Hammer, 2011). The model reflects an ever-changing journey of global competence development. A popular example of multidimensional developmental models is the "U-curve Model for Cultural Shock and Intercultural Adjustment" (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 2017). The U-Curve model depicts a sojourn's experience with a "honeymoon-cultural shock- adjustment" process of acculturation (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 2017), as shown in Figure 4.3.

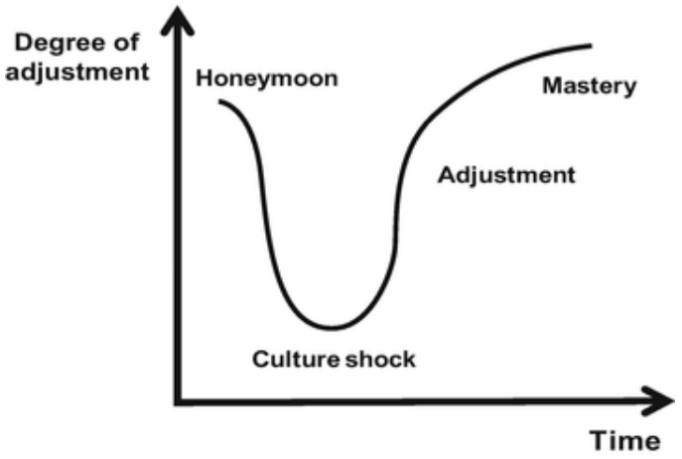

Figure 4.3: the U Curve Model for Cultural Shock and Intercultural Adjustment

Source: Gullahorn and Gullahorn (2017)

4.2.2 Critiques of Stepwise Models

Although considering the different stages of competence development, stepwise developmental models are criticized in that a "linear" model disregards the complex, sometimes overlapping, stages of competence development across time and settings (Gu et al., 2010). Also, the seemingly universal linear development of global competence needs to be reconsidered. Competence is a context-specific concept. For example, perceptions of what is considered to be competent can vary across different contexts (Liu-Farrer et al., 2021). Competences may thus be based on various shaping factors such as people, practices, and context based social, historical, economic, political, cultural, and religious norms (Brown, 2015; Liu-Farrer et al., 2021).

Similarly, although multidimensional developmental models (e.g. the U-Curve Model

of Intercultural Adjustment) address the simplistic, reductionist problem in linear development models (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009), they merely focus on the cognitive challenges and adjustments, while ignoring external qualities of global competence like skills and behaviors. Also, although time is considered in the journey associated with the development of global competence, influences of different settings (academic, social, career, personal) and the agency of students in the learning processes are ignored.

4.3 Bi-cultural Model and Cultural Negotiation

4.3.1 Definition of Bi-cultural model

Bi-cultural models regard culture as ever-changing (rather than "monolithic or static") and focus on mutuality (e.g., empathy, perspective taking). Accordingly, bi-cultural models acknowledge multiple and fluid affiliations among cultural groups. They address the interconnected, interdependent, and intersected nature of different cultures (Blell & Doff, 2014), and point to the complexities associated with cultural negotiations.

For example, Berry et al. (2006) four quadrants, as shown in Figure 4.4, reflect a representative bi-cultural model. The model endorses one's agencies in negotiating cultural differences and explains the different consequences of tensions that arise between a person's values/identity in one culture versus the other culture. Mediation of conflicts requires one to negotiate and understand the relationships between one's own culture and the cultures of a different social group (Gu et al., 2010).

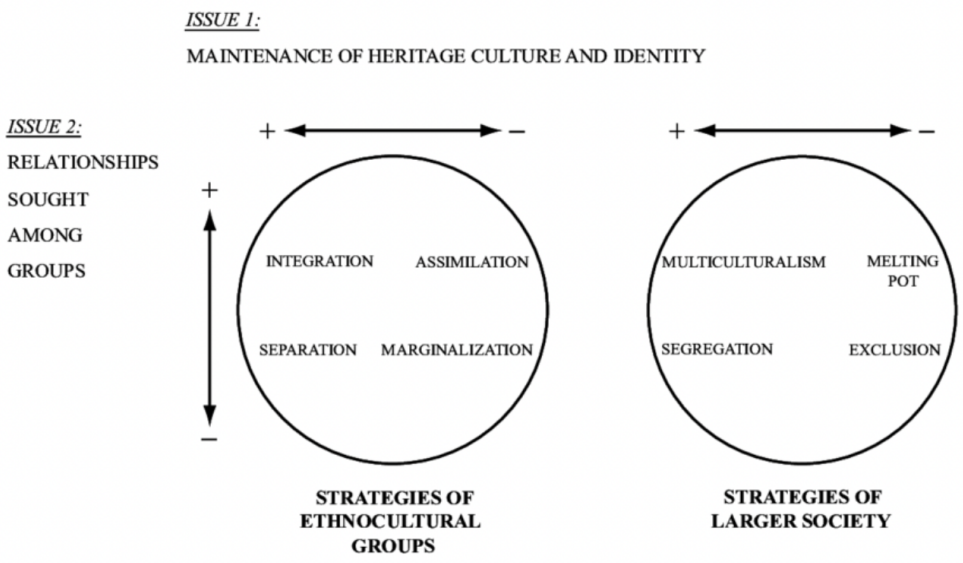

Figure 4.4: Different Outcomes of Acculturation

Berry et al. (2006)

Bi-cultural models also captures interactions between personal and institutional factors in terms of their influence on global competence development. For example, the Face-work-Based Model of Intercultural Competence, as shown in Table 4.1, defines several personal qualities that could help one's cultural negotiation. Focusing on interpersonal level factors, the Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Model of Intercultural Competence (Hammer et al., 1998) also suggests that one's intimacy and interest in engaging in cross-cultural interpersonal relationships can increase the confidence of the person to understand others, thereby reducing anxiety and enhancing satisfaction.

Table 4.1: Competence Components for Cultural Negotiation

Aspects	Details
Attitudes	Openness to change
Skills	Cognitive: reflexivity, perspectives-taking, empathy, relating self and valuing others.
	Behavioral: listen, observe, interpret and relate, collaborate, and face management
Knowledge	Awareness and understandings of cultural differences

Source: Author's Summary from Alred et al. (2003), Byram (1997), and Ting-Toomey and Kurogi (1998)

Apart from understanding the components and personal qualities of competence necessary for negotiation, studies based on bi-cultural models have also discussed institutional and systematic factors that can play a role in mediating difficulties associated with the process of cultural negotiation. For example, Mikhaylov (2014) revealed aspects of the institutional environment that are important to facilitate cultural negotiation, including diverse and safe social spaces, encouragements in networking activities, and access to cultural expert mentors. A summary of previous studies discussing factors for cultural negotiations is shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Aspects of Experiences of Cultural Negotiation

Aspects	Personal	Interpersonal	Systematic
Expectation	Motivations/interests	Confidence	Anxiety or certainty
Challenge	Knowledge, language, adaptive skills	institutional network support, ethnic media	cultural similarity, socioeconomic stance
Strategy	Managing cultural shock and identity change	Managing relationship satisfaction and uncertainty	Managing surrounding environment
Outcome	Attitude/ value change	Relationship building	Establish strategy

Source: Author's Summary from Hammer et al. (1998) and Mikhaylov (2014)

4.3.2 Applications of Bi-cultural model

Bi-cultural models (also called co-oriental models) can be seen to address problems in traditional global competence models (i.e., assimilation and developmental models). First, Bi-cultural models oppose the assimilation model in that the development of global competence is not directed towards one single direction, but two mutually compatible directions involving a process of negotiation. Based on that, bi-cultural models critique the action of devising a "universal" definition of culture. They respect a constructive norm from a specific group when discussing what it means to be culturally competent (Brown, 2015).Bi-cultural models like the one Berry (2006) offers, can be used to help reveal voices from students, including their understanding, expectations, and experiences associated with the development of global competence, and thus to challenge a westernized and ethnocentric point of view on global competence (Engel et al., 2019). Bi-cultural models thus endorse the cultural agency

of people involved. It recognizes and respects one's own culture by encouraging students' cultural agency during the confrontation with other cultures.

Second, bi-cultural models are based on the idea that people have divergent "affective, cognitive, and behavioral orientations to the world", which are structurally created and maintained by people's ongoing actions (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). Bi-cultural models challenge a simplistic self-other binary view of culture and beliefs and are instead based on the idea that cultures are socially constructed and can also be deconstructed (Banks & Banks, 2019). For this study, this approach can help to recognize hybridity in CIGS' identity, language, and living. The bi-cultural model encourages one to learn from the other culture while sustaining ones' own culture (Guishard, 2009). Instead of conceptualizing the development of global competence as assimilating to the dominant culture, bi-cultural models examine intercultural dialog and cultural negotiations to reflect "betweenness and intersection" (Dailey-Strand et al., 2021; Gu et al., 2010; Shen & Chen, 2020).

Third, the bi-cultural models also provide an underlying basis to investigate the personal and institutional factors that are related to processes of cultural negotiations from a bi-cultural perspective. Bi-cultural models reveal a series of personal, interpersonal, and systematic factors influencing cultural negotiation in terms of its antecedent, process, and outcomes. As alluded to, bi-cultural models fit the aim of this dissertation: how can US higher education institutions support international students' needs. I adapt the bi-cultural model into a conceptual framework to approach Chinese International Graduate Students (CIGS)' global competence development in this dissertation.

As mentioned, the bi-cultural perspective is used to guide this dissertation so as to view cultural adjustment as a two-way street where both the US environment and CIGS themselves have control over the processes. Unlike a melting pot that denotes US control of the directions and outcomes of the cultural adjustment (as discussed in the assimilation model), this study is based on respect of CIGS' agency over their negotiation of cultural differences. As discussed, a bi-cultural perspective also allows for considering the role of interpersonal and institutional factors in cultural negotiation processes. The adapted bi-cultural model is shown in Figure 4.5.

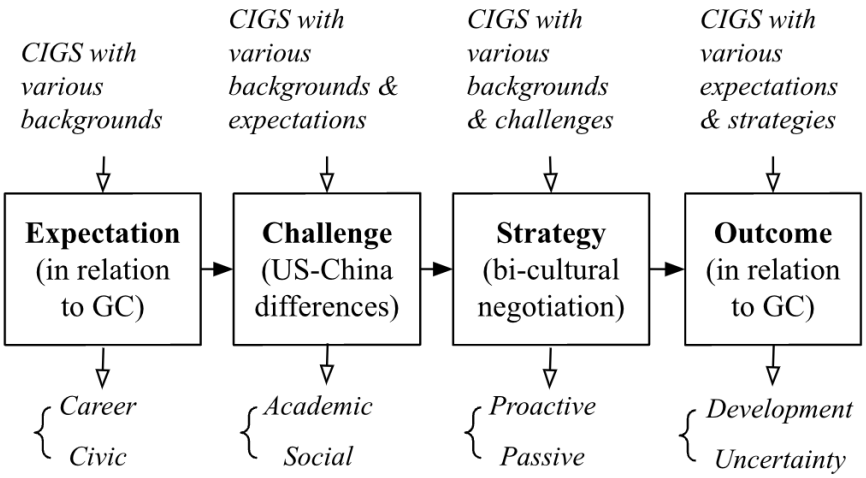

Figure 4.5: An Adapted Model for Global Competence and Cultural Negotiation

This adapted bi-cultural model enables this study to examine the complex processes of CIGS negotiating cultural differences. The model respects the agents' (students') power and the dynamics of the surroundings (institutions). I use this model to construct interview questions and interpret research findings, which will be introduced in the next Chapter.

4.4 Summary of Theories Related to the Development of Global Competence

To summarize, this chapter introduces an adapted bi-cultural model as the conceptual framework of this dissertation. To do so, I first critiqued assimilation and developmental models of global competence in terms of westernized scheme for cultural assimilation and assessment that are quantitative, outcome-focused, and de-contextualized. To address those problems, I then applied bi-cultural models, which stresses the equal status of self and other cultures. The adapted bi-cultural models reveal factors for cultural transitions and negotiating cultural shocks at different stages and settings. The model also explains the importance of cultural negotiations for producing holistic knowledge and internationalized and diversified experiences (Dailey-Strand et al., 2021).

I use an adapted version of the bi-cultural model as the conceptual framework to approach CIGS' cultural negotiation, including factors (personal, interpersonal, and systematic) and multidimensional processes that may be involved. Based on the bi-cultural conceptual framework, I selected qualitative exploration as an appropriate method to contextualize the processes and factors for CIGS' cultural negotiation and global competence development. This investigation can provide important illumination for supporting international students and developing diversity and inclusion on campus. The qualitative methodology is introduced in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

Methodology and Research Questions

Qualitative research can reveal various in-depth experiences of the study participants (Ravitch & Carl, 2019). This study is a highly exploratory qualitative study, which enables me to obtain rich details and enough flexibility when exploring CIGS' global competence development. The following outlines the specific qualitative methods and interview design, which were informed by the empirical, conceptual, and theoretical reviews in Chapter 2-4.

5.1 Research Setting and Participants

The study participants were twenty-two Chinese International Graduate Students (CIGS) at a research university on the west coast of the US. This study site was chosen for the following reasons. First, the isolation of career and civic global competence is widely recognized in US higher education (Engel et al., 2019). Also, the purposes and means of promoting global competence for international students in the US remain unclear (Ledger et al., 2019). This study provides a conceptualization analysis as a tool for addressing this complexity in US higher education. Second, US universities have a history of hosting a great number of diverse

student bodies, including international students. With universities obtaining diverse racial and ethnic groups on campus, US universities theoretically have a diverse atmosphere for participants' cultural negotiation and competence development (Aguirre & Martinez, 2003).

In preparation for participant recruitment, I sought the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approvals to gain access to the study sites and recruit participants. The study procedures implemented throughout the research were in accordance with IRB approval. I recruited participants through both purposeful and snowball sampling (Babbie & Mouton, 2007). In terms of purposeful sampling, I contacted international student organizations to send posts of participant recruitment announcements (see Appendix A) on social media and on campus bulletin boards. I sent an individual call-for-participants, fliers, and posters on social media and on-campus announcement bulletin boards across campus departments (e.g., hallway, elevator, announcement blackboard). To increase the response rate, the recruitment announcements included an attractive visual poster (see Appendix B) and a gift card incentive – for the interview. A $15 e-gift-card were sent to interviewees when they completed their interview and reviewed the interview transcript. Apart from the purposeful sampling shown above, I also incorporated snowball sampling. I asked participants if they knew other CIGS that might be interested in participating in the study. Through snowball sampling, I was able to create a pool of CIGS who were interested in participating. I sent CIGS who showed interest an introductory description of the project, and an interview sign-up survey (see Appendix C).

The interview sign-up survey asks interested participants about their background

(years, field, degree, university of study, citizenship, age, gender, etc.). This was used to determine their eligibility to participate in the study. Eligibility was determined based on the following criterion. Firstly, the student must obtain Chinese citizenship and obtain an F-1 visa in the US for studying at higher education institutions. Secondly, the student must be enrolled in a degree program across different disciplines (including STEM, social science, or humanities). I tried to recruit students with different self-identities (i.e., personal, family, educational background) and cultural identities (i.e., value systems, worldviews) to examine different personal characteristics as factors that influence global competence development. Furthermore, to have a wide range of representativeness of CIGS, I considered different years of study as an important variable that may influence international students' expectations and experiences of global competence development.

In the end, I was able to obtain twenty-two CIGS as an ideal sample for this study. Those students represent diverse demographic and personal characteristics. As an overview, participants includes 13 female and 10 male participants, and 12 master and 11 doctoral students across multiple disciplines and years of study. They are aged 21-30 years old, and from across low, lower-middle, and upper-middle class (self-reported social-economic status). Table 5.1 presents some characteristics of the research participants, including their first name (pseudonym), gender, the length that they have been staying in the US, their graduate program, and field of study.

Table 5.1: Study Participants

Name	Gender	Level	Field
Mua	F	Master's	SS/H
Mui	F	Master's	SS/H
Mu	F	Master's	SS/H
Muo	F	Master's	SS/H
Murdock	M	Master's	SS/H
Mussina	F	Master's	SS/H
Dua	F	Doctoral	SS/H
Duc	M	Doctoral	SS/H
Dumbledore	M	Doctoral	SS/H
Dulciana	F	Doctoral	SS/H
Dustine	F	Doctoral	SS/H
Mae	F	Master's	STEM
Mag	F	Master's	STEM
May	F	Master's	STEM
Macdowell	M	Master's	STEM
Manchester	M	Master's	STEM
Dax	M	Doctoral	STEM
Dan	M	Doctoral	STEM
Damarcus	M	Doctoral	STEM
Daphene	F	Doctoral	STEM
Daymond	M	Doctoral	STEM
Davidson	M	Doctoral	STEM

5.2 Research Question

As discussed in Chapter 3, this study approaches global competence from a holistic (internal and external) and unified (career-civic interactions) perspective. It categorizes different levels (individual, interpersonal, institutional) of factors to be "critical events" for CIGS' challenges and opportunities in experiencing cultural negotiation and global competence development.

The overarching questions for my project were: 1) How do Chinese International Graduate Students (CIGS) in the US expect, experience, and cope with cultural differences between the US and China in their academic and social lives? 2) How do CIGS' expectations, experiences, and strategies of cultural negotiation relate to opportunities and challenges of developing career- and civic-oriented global competence?

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the study utilizes the approach underlying the bicultural developmental model to examine CIGS cultural negotiation process and effective strategies that support the process in academic and social settings. Experiences of CIGS' global competence development brings a non-western, bottom-up perspective to understanding global competence. The research can offer important implications for supporting CIGS' negotiations between different cultural differences and their development of global competence.

5.3 Data Collection

The following section introduces the study design of the data collection procedures, including the qualitative interview question designs and processes of the interview that are used to

examine each CIGS' journey of cultural negotiation and global competence acquisition.

On the basis of the theoretical approach to bi-cultural models (discussed in Chapter 4), I designed questions for the in-depth, semi-structured interviews. As shown in Figure 5.1, Interview questions (see appendix E) asked participants' expectations of international student mobility; experiences of cultural differences in the classrooms and social settings; and how they deal with challenges and opportunities of cultural differences. Those interview questions included descriptive, structural, and contrast questions to ensure enough cultural knowledge and understanding in ethnographic studies (Reeves et al., 2008). The interview questions also included open-ended questions and simultaneous probing and follow-ups. Open-ended questions avoided imposing literature and frameworks on students and helped to capture opinions (Reeves et al., 2008). I re-confirmed and triangulated the initial research results with different follow-up questions, with different participants, and compared them with quantitative data results. The triangulation strategy not only informs convergent lines of inquiry, but also allows this study to explore differing perceptions (instead of seeking a universal truth) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

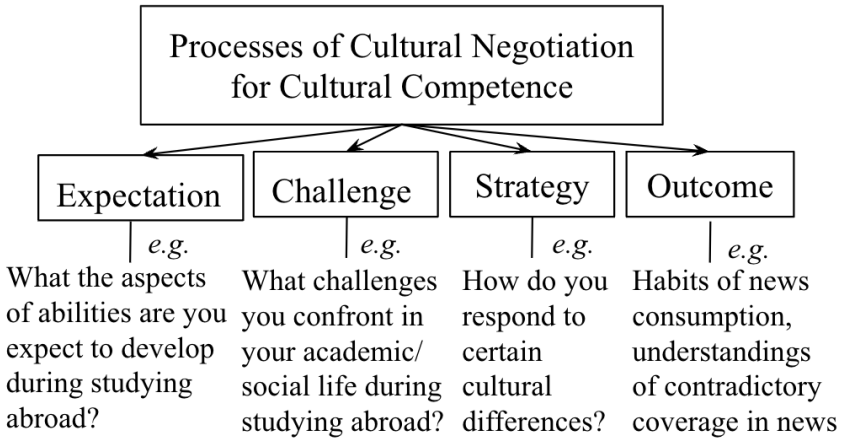

Figure 5.1: Interview Question Examples

In the interview questions and when communicating with participants, I avoided using "global competence", which could impose assumptions from the researcher to the participants. I agreed that the understanding of global competence can be collaboratively generated with the participants (Mikhaylov, 2014). Thus, I used the phrase, "study abroad", to facilitate my interactions with CIGS. In Chinese, "study abroad" typically refers to the phenomenon of degree-seeking international student mobility. Participants are familiar with that expression of "study abroad". Using this term eased my communications with study participants. Specifically, "study abroad expectations" are used to investigate CIGS' expectations on global competence. "Study abroad experiences" are framed to refer to CIGS' experiences in global competence development. Though these questions seem to not directly inquire about CIGS' global competence, plentiful (implicit) references to their experiences of global competence development were generated when CIGS shared their stories about their experience in the US. Therefore, CIGS' responses and their stories can be closely related to

global competence and can be analyzed to address my research questions.

In terms of the processes of conducting the qualitative research, I started the interviews with the participants reading and signing the consent form (see appendix D). I attempted to be transparent about the research procedures (including study design, data collection, and analysis). I provided detailed descriptions of the study site, criteria of selecting research participants, characteristics of research participants (but without directly identifiable descriptions of individuals to ensure confidentiality) (Creswell & Miller, 2000). I followed the same procedures and protocols throughout this study to ensure reliability – a chain of evidence and relevance during data collection.

Interviews were conducted from October to December in 2019. Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted for 60-120 minutes between me and the participant. Interviews were conducted at a private study room on the campus of the study site, except one (with Manchester) was conducted via video conferencing over WeChat (a Chinese social media app). All interviews were audio-recorded, in which participants were informed and consented. The language of all interviews was in Chinese, since both the interviewer and interviewee are Chinese native speakers. The Chinese language also made participants feel more comfortable to build rapport. After each interview, I reflected on the interview by listening to the interview audio-recordings. The reflection also helped me to adjust the interview questions to improve my facilitation of the interviews.

After the 20th interview, it was apparent to me that I had reached a point of saturation in the data collection, as similar answers to the interview questions were reported (such

as what their expectations of international student mobility and what challenges they are met). The remaining two interviews were conducted as scheduled. With all these twenty-two interview data sources combined, I was able to develop perspectives about the diverse expectations, experiences, and strategies of CIGS to negotiate cultural differences in the US. I was able to relate those insight into answering the research questions about CIGS' cultural negotiation experiences and their global competence development.

5.4 Data Analysis

Since interviews were conducted in Chinese (Mandarin), I transcribed the interviews in Chinese (and then translated them into English). twenty-two transcripts were created, with one transcript for each interview and for each participant. The transcripts were sent to the participants for proofreading. After participants' verification, interview transcripts were translated from Mandarin to English. I read multiple times in preparation for coding for data analysis. I re-read the participants' interview transcriptions and spent many hours organizing and re-organizing each participant's stories and experiences related to the research questions. I reorganized the interview transcripts either by putting related narrations, critical events, or issues (i.e., factors) related to the theoretical framework together. To create a database from the interview data, I organized the participants' answers based on similarities, differences, critical events, chronologically and theoretically.

To dive into the qualitative database, I used "thematic analysis," also known as "paradigmatic type narrative inquiry" (Clandinin & Caine, 2013). The thematic analysis

identifies, analyzes, and reports patterns or themes within and across data. A "theme" is what captures the important patterns in the data in relation to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis can present data with rich detail, and particularly interpret the reality of participants in relation to the various aspects of the research topic (Clandinin & Caine, 2013).

The thematic analysis in this study is framed by the research questions, including the different types of expectations of CIGS towards international mobility, their real experiences in terms of themed challenges and opportunities, and some common strategies, as well as the corresponding university support recommendations. The thematic analysis focuses on themes corresponding to each of the research questions, and highlights similarities and differences among participants. Table 5.2 presents the taxonomies and categories sorted out of the common data across the database. The taxonomies and categories were used to produce a "thematically unified goal-directed" thread to lay out a specified outcome and "knowledge of concepts". "Pattern" was identified based on both the frequency it emerged across participants and the value of the pattern per-se in relation to the research questions. Those codes, categories, and themes were created echoing the bi-cultural framework.

Table 5.2: Themes and Categories from the Data

Themes	Categories
Expectations	Career, Civic, Academic, and Personal abilities CIGS expect to develop
Challenges	Academic, Social, and Mental lack of resources
Strategy	Active and Passive Behaviors towards cultural differences
Outcomes	Transformation of knowledge, understandings, attitudes, values, and skills of CIGS

While thematic analysis is used to show the common threads that emerged in individual participants' interviews, I also present stories and direct quotes of selected participants. Presenting direct quotes of participants helps me re-tell a participant's story in that person's voice (Walters, 2001), and enables readers to engage directly with the qualitative data and "revisit extracts of collected stories, to facilitate their own conclusions and understanding of the research data" (Webster & Mertova, 2007). For example, before the researcher makes their interpretations, presenting direct quotes from study participants enables readers to directly listen, engage, and analyze the stories of participants and understand CIGS' experiences directly. Quotes from participants can be an authentic reflection of the interview data. Therefore, like many qualitative researchers, I cite participants quotes directly throughout the findings chapters to retell the participants' stories and present participants' lives vicariously through their words.

I used a vignette to present different types of experiences of CIGS, and their overarching challenges and strategies to deal with cultural differences across academic/social settings. I made efforts to represent all the dimensions of the data by making sure that all

possibilities are discussed in my interpretation of participants quotes. I then reviewed the analysis by each participant for accuracy and clarity (more discussions on strategies I took to ensure data quality are presented in the next section). Through a thematic analysis combined and presenting participants' quotes, this research reveals CIGS' stories and analyzes critical factors that are important for CIGS' cultural negotiation and global competence development.

5.5 Research Quality

To ensure the research trustworthiness, including the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), I used several strategies, including being transparent and consistent on the research method, member-checking, peer review, and reflections on my positionality. Those strategies aim to reflect participants' views, values, actions, and experiences accurately.

I applied member checking strategy after analyzing data. I shared with CIGS participants their interview transcripts, as well as my interpretations, analysis, and study findings. I reiterated the data with the respondent – "whom the data were derived" (Merriam, 1998). I offered them opportunities to comment and suggest the accuracy of my data analysis. The aim of "member checking" is to make sure I understand their thoughts, feelings, and ideas correctly, so that I could reduce the subjectivity bias of the researcher. On my end, I also constantly compared my analysis and findings with the raw data in the interviews, transcripts, and field notes to ensure my interpretations of the data closely aligned with the

participant's words.

Meanwhile, I utilized "peer debriefing" as a technique to enhance the accuracy of the interpretation and analysis (Creswell, 2003). I enrolled in a qualitative course with a group of 3-4 graduate students. We worked together throughout the data collection and analysis processes. I invited my group mates to read a selection of my analysis and coding schemes. We discussed our interpretations to make sure mine resonates with others and thus have appropriate analysis (Creswell, 2003).

Besides, rigorous and trustworthy research demands systematic and methodological discussions on the researcher's social location and positionality (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2015). Positionality shapes the research through constant interactions and inseparable relationship between the researcher and the research participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2015). The research is thus bounded by the values of the researcher, and the context of this study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Thus, I have systematically reflected on my positionality – the researcher's roles – and ties my role to the research context, which is inseparable from this study's data collection, analysis, and findings. Instead of being a "detached voyeur" (Guishard, 2009), I have been actively constructing the research context and the researcher-participant relationship to shape and facilitate the research findings. I reflected on my choices made in study design to be transparent about my assumptions and possible biases. Reflections enable me to acknowledge, aware, engage, and be sensitive to the cultural and social embeddedness of research questions, theories, and methods (Creswell, 2003).

To explain further, this study is proposed with my own experiences of being a Chinese

international graduate student studying in the US myself since September 2017. I proactively think about my career plans and hope to develop my civic global competencies as well. While the civic atmosphere in the US to me is starkly different from what I experienced for 17 years in China. Given that we (i.e., CIGS) are newcomers and outsiders to the US, some of our experience in cross-cultural interactions with peers, in social media, all lead us to rethink our own national, cultural, and personal identities, which may influence our knowledge, attitudes, and skills related to global competence. Consequently, I expect CIGS in this study to voice some of their reconsiderations relating to their sense of self and others confronting US-China cultural differences, their changes in perception of their culture and nation, and their negotiations and transformations on their global competence in a cross-cultural context. I am curious about how competence is developed in a cross-cultural context among CIGS like me. I care about the learning process and future development of my peers and other CIGS studying in the US. I wonder how to support the development of global competence development with culturally relevant pedagogies for CIGS. These have been partly my primary motivations for conducting this study.

Besides, I feel an impetus to examine global competence, especially the cross-cultural communication skills that are particularly important to my generation, where cross-cultural conflicts/misunderstandings seem to strongly interrupt our learning. According to recent studies (Jiang, 2021), international students still meet hardships in understanding people with different opinions or struggle to collaborate with people from other cultures. Cross-culturalism and diversity are topics prevalent in the 21st century, and immigrants and de-

mographics have been a major force of social change. Thus, I attempt to figure out how to cultivate global competencies in terms of not only one's chances of employment, but also one's citizenship and social responsibility, which I believe are interrelated in the pursuits of studying abroad and international working.

Though motivated, I have been reminding myself that my personal study abroad experience and opinions may have guided the development of the interview instruments and filtered my interpretations of the research findings. These may lead to biased perceptions and judgments from me. Also, there is a possibility that my identity of being a CIGS may lead participants to give some answers that they think are desirable, but different from what they might have given. To overcome the biases, I "bracket" my own thoughts to help me be aware and separate my thoughts/feelings from the research participants' (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Also, I stressed at the beginning of the interview that "I would like to learn about their story in which you are the expert in it. There are no right or wrong answers or desirable or undesirable answers."

5.6 Introducing Finding Chapters

Chapters 6-9 offer the discussion and analysis and concluding remarks of the current study. I devoted the analysis chapters to the specific issues CIGS experience in the processes of cultural negotiations. Chapter 6 focuses on CIGS' expectations and motivations of studying abroad. CIGS' different types of motivations (academic-related and socio-cultural motivations) and learning approaches (learning-with and learning-about approaches) are related to

their global competence development. Chapter 7 focuses on CIGS' challenges to negotiate cultural differences in academic and social lives. These challenges include linguistic difficulty, contextual unfamiliarity, and cultural distances. These challenges are discussed in related to their implications for CIGS' career- and civic-oriented global competence development . Chapter 8 discusses individual strategies (e.g., CIGS' recognition of cultural differences) and institutional strategies (e.g., culturally relevant pedagogy) that can facilitate CIGS' cultural negotiations in classrooms and social lives. Those strategies are demonstrated to be helpful for CIGS' career- and civic-oriented global competence development. Chapter 9 further discusses the significance and implications of this project and points out directions for future research.

CHAPTER 6

CIGS' Motivations to Study in the US

As defined at the outset in Chapter 1, global competence is a combination of attitudes, values, knowledge, and skills applied to work successfully with others from different cultural backgrounds (career-oriented global competence) and live inclusively and peacefully with heterogeneous groups of people (civic-oriented global competence) (Colvin & Edwards, 2018). This chapter analyzes the development of global competence from a perspective of motivations and expectations of Chinese International Graduate Students (CIGS) for studying in the US. It addresses the following questions: 1) What are CIGS' motivations to study in the US? 2) How do CIGS' motivations to study in the US relate to the development of global competence?

This chapter is organized as follows. First, it overviews different types of motivations for studying in the US mentioned by the twenty-two CIGS participants during semi-structured interviews. This first section distinguishes two major types, namely academic-related and socio-cultural motivations. Second, the chapter summarizes CIGS participants' learning goals in career development versus socio-cultural development. CIGS' academic backgrounds in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) versus Social

Sciences and Humanities (SSH) are also included in the discussion. Third, the chapter discusses CIGS participants' motivations with implications for global competence development. This third section analyzes how and why academic-related motivations could help the development of career-oriented global competence. This section also applies approaches to global learning (learning-about versus learning-with) (De Wit et al., 2013) to illustrate how socio-cultural motivations could benefit the development of civic-oriented global competence.

6.1 CIGS' Motivations to Study in the US

This section discusses several types of motivations to study in the US mentioned by CIGS participants. A major distinction is whether the motivation is academic versus socio-cultural. Academic related motivations are mainly focused on educational resources, including advanced technology and labs, comprehensive training in academic programs, and the overall leading position of American higher education. In contrast, socio-cultural motivations are focused on CIGS' interests in American society and culture, which include learning knowledge about the American social systems, exploring American popular culture, and making domestic friends.

6.1.1 Academic-related Motivations: Educational Resources

The first academic-related motivation is many CIGS' expectation of advanced technology and research labs in the US. For example, Davidson, a doctoral student in immunology, said, "My primary motivation to come to the US has been its progress and developed technology

in conducting research." Similarly, Daymond, a doctoral student in aerospace engineering, talked about his belief that "the US has better educational resources, including research labs." Both Davidson and Daymond anticipated access to advanced technology for research at American institutions.

Some CIGS also discusses educational resources in technology and labs from the perspective of a global ranking of resources. For example, Dax, a doctoral student in material engineering, mentioned that he was motivated by the "world-leading" American research labs. Dax said, "The US has the highest-quality materials and world-leading research labs. Those are the driving reasons for me to pursue my doctoral degree in the US." Same as what Dax described as "world-leading," Macdowell, a master's student in computer science, expressed his motivations to learn from the "number one" country:

> The US is the number one place for research in my field. I wanted to be there to learn and to improve myself... We all know that the US is more developed than China, and I'd like to come to a better place to pursue my academic dreams.

Quotations from Dax and Macdowell show that the leading position of American education could have become an important academic-related motivation for many CIGS to come to the US. Another interesting observation is that Davidson, Daymond, Dax, and Macdowell are all from the field of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). This phenomenon could be due to how research labs and technology are the foundation and key

for studies in the STEM field (Hodson, 2014).

Apart from a focus on research labs and advanced technologies, another aspect of academic related motivation is the comprehensive academic training in American programs. This motivation is mainly mentioned by CIGS participants in the social sciences and humanities (SSH) field. The comprehensive American education programs were compared with the limitations of academic programs in China. For example, Mui, a master's student in public policy, shared her concerns about Chinese education. She said, "I wanted to come to the US, because what I learned in the past [in my Chinese academic program] is not enough." To elaborate on how Chinese education is regarded as inadequate for one's development. Murdock, another master's student in the communication program, complained about a lack of academic resources in China which could "limit and narrow" one's development. In contrast, both Murdock and Mui thought American universities were "more comprehensive." Murdock explained that comprehensibility means "interdisciplinary studies" and "theoretical discussions" that he can explore:

> My interests in academic and research could not be achieved in China, while it can be achieved in the US [in master's level programs] ... Resources about interdisciplinary studies and theoretical discussions are very few [in China]

Like Mui and Murdock's opinion on educational resources in China and the US, Dulciana, a doctoral student in the education program, described her understanding of comprehensive American education: "The US would have higher quality training for critical

thinking, ways of doing research, and advanced theories." This quote defines comprehensive American education as training in critical thinking, research, and theories. Focusing on academic training in their field of study in the US, comprehensive (interdisciplinary, theoretical, and training in critical thinking) American education was cited as an important motivation for the CIGS participants in the SSH field, such as Mui, Murdock, and Dulciana.

Although the leading position of American education and its comprehensibility motivated many CIGS to study in the US, these academic-related motivations can be interpreted more critically. Students can have a critical take on why American academic resources are more substantial than those in China. One of them is Muo, a master's student in the social sciences program, who realized how western knowledge dominated her field. Muo explained: "Currently, major academic theories in our field are all originated and studied in Western contexts." Muo pointed out a potential "knowledge hegemony" behind the scenes and brought insights to critically reflect on the rich educational resources in the US.

Discussions of "the hegemony of knowledge production" could be applicable here to help us critically understand the US' leading position and advantages in academic resources. As scholars like Conway argued, the US has been the "center" of knowledge production, and other developing countries like China have stayed on the "periphery" (Conway, 2013). Examining positions of knowledge production helps to explain the phenomenon of many CIGS' strong academic-related motivations in American education resources. We can understand a few CIGS' strong expectations in education resources and learn from the center of knowledge production.

6.1.2 Socio-cultural Motivations: Social Knowledge and Popular Culture

Besides academic-related motivations, some CIGS also mentioned socio-cultural motivations, including their interests in exploring American popular culture and social systems. For example, Mua, a master's student in public policy, provided a detailed description of her socio-cultural motivation to explore popular culture:

> I got to know US culture through TV shows in high school, and I am particularly interested in popular culture and American societies described in movies. I have liked American popular culture and I have been interested in society and curious about new experiences.

CIGS like Mua were attracted to the US not merely for academic-related motivations, but also due to their interests in American culture. American popular culture has been widely discussed by scholars of international education as a form of "soft power" attracting international students (Otmazgin, 2008).

Apart from interests in exploring American popular culture, some CIGS participants also mentioned a motivation to learn about US society. For example, Mae, a master's student in biostatistics, shared that she came to the US for an immersive experience in American society. She said, "I'm curious about the American system and society, its social and civic issues. I want to feel it, experience it, and figure out how the US handles it." This quotation shows that Mae was motivated to learn and think about social and civic issues in American society. Similarly, Duncan, a doctoral student in education, also expressed his desire to learn

more about American society:

> To be honest, I know little about either China or US society. In my education, I did not learn much contextual knowledge or understanding about [the US] society. I have limited knowledge and only have personal experiences. I hoped to learn more about [American] society and culture.

From the quotations above, we can see that learning social knowledge systematically and exploring and experiencing American social systems were important socio-cultural motivations for CIGS like Mae and Duncan.

xfThe above-mentioned section shows many CIGS' academic-related motivations tied to educational resources, as well as their various socio-cultural motivations (e.g., exploring popular culture and American society). Based on those motivations, the next section will identify different response patterns of CIGS participants' learning goals and motivations, to distinguish different types of CIGS that I interviewed.

6.2 Patterns of Motivations and Types of CIGS

Current studies around international student motivations have demonstrated that motivations are distinctive among groups of students with different academic, personal, and cultural backgrounds (Haisley et al., 2021). However, few studies have focused on comparing students with different academic backgrounds, learning interests, goals, and motivations. This section explores how CIGS can be categorized by comparing patterns of CIGS' major learn-

ing goals (career and socio-cultural development). The section is organized into two parts. The first part discusses an often-mentioned learning goal for CIGS, namely career development. Two different patterns of responses around career development were found (primary versus secondary interest in career development), which can be used to distinguish CIGS into two different types. CIGS' academic backgrounds (STEM versus SSH fields) were also found to be relevant in this discussion for showing patterns in CIGS' understanding of and aspirations related to career development. The second part discusses another major learning goal stated by CIGS, namely socio-cultural motivations. Based on different attitudes toward socio-cultural development, two distinctions can be made. One group of CIGS highly values socio-cultural development, while the other disregards its importance.

6.2.1 CIGS who focused on career development

It was common in interviews to hear from CIGS in doctoral studies in the STEM field that they had very well defined career goals. For example, Daymond, a doctoral student in the aerospace engineering program, and Davidson, a doctoral student in the immunology program, both aimed to become professors. Daymond described, "I aim to publish more papers to prepare me to become a professor in the future." Davidson's description goes a step further, relating his degree to his career goals. He said, "a doctoral degree in the US could be vital for me in achieving my career goals of becoming a professor, either in the US or China." Davidson added that "this career goal is the most important and meaningful goal for my studying abroad." These quotations align with previous studies which revealed that

career motivations have historically been a major learning goal for generations of Chinese students in the US (Chao et al., 2019).

The intensity of competition in their lives (including family life) was regularly mentioned in CIGS' responses. This competition may partly explain why these CIGS have well-defined goals and are eager to achieve specific advantages (e.g., superior knowledge, more publications, more networks of the right kind) to ensure career success. Firstly, several CIGS mentioned career-related pressure from their families. An illustrative example is from May, a master's student in the epidemiology program. She shared competitions and stresses coming from her parents: "My parents often compared me with peers in my neighborhood [in terms of future careers], bringing me lots of social pressures."

May complained about family pressure on her career development. Other studies on Chinese international students also demonstrate a strong familial pressure that expects them to succeed career-wise (Tsong & Liu, 2008). Focusing on Chinese students' unique cultural backgrounds in terms of family and social pressure, scholars also pointed out that the current generation of Chinese students faces more career competition than ever (Tsong & Liu, 2008). They were born under the one-child policy, and grew up in a rapidly developing economic environment, both of which have led to family expectations to compete for "better jobs" in the future (Chen et al., 2000). With this background, May's family expectations and pressures motivated her to be able to compete and achieve highly in her career.

Relevant to family expectations and pressures, another potential reason for many CIGS' eagerness for career development is those CIGS' hope to live independently. Sev-

eral CIGS understood career development to realizing independence. For example, Mae, a master's student in the bio-statistics program, reflected on her strong reliance on family: "I have stayed in my hometown (Beijing) since my birth." She explained her motivation for exploring her future career and living independently:

> I wanted to experience independence. Living in the US is a chance [for me] to find out who I am and what I can and want to do [career-wise] without family support or control if I may say. ... My primary goal [to study abroad] was simply to survive in the US and to improve skills that could prepare me to live an independent life in the future.

Mae's experience showed a strong motivation to develop independence, both during her time studying abroad and, in the future, by having a successful career. Mae's eagerness to escape interdependent family life motivated her to develop her career and live an economically independent life in the US.

To sum, this section illustrates that, apart from purely wanting career success, as illustrated by Daymond and Davidson, family-related reasons (pressure and independence) could help explain their strong career development goals among CIGS like May and Mae. However, career development is not always a primary learning goal for all CIGS. The following section discusses alternative views on career development, specifically when one's career goals conflict with one's field of study.

6.2.2 CIGS who put career as secondary to their field of study

Instead of career development, a few CIGS focused more on developing knowledge and understanding of their field of study, especially when those academic-related goals conflict with career development. This point can be illustrated in the case of Muo, a master's student in the social sciences program. Muo's specialization in her program was journalism, which, as Muo pointed out, could be contradictory to her future career. Muo elaborated on this complication: "Learning journalism in the US is not positive for my career development in China, because the US and China have very different ways and norms of conducting journalism." Chinese students studying in the US encountered "reverse cultural shocks" in their career lives in China (Gaw, 2000). The reason is Chinese and US have very different philosophies and approaches to theorizing and practicing certain social science fields. Even though Muo recognized this challenge, she still chose to follow her learning desire to come to the US to study. Muo said:

> I pursue this master's degree [in journalism] purely for my academic interest ... I may not develop [career-wise] as well as my peers who stayed in China practicing Chinese style of journalism. I still chose to come [to the US] because I appreciate how journalism is taught [with critical thinking] and I want to learn more [about the field of study in journalism].

Muo made her decision to pursue academic development, recognizing career complications. Career development to Muo seemed to be secondary, while critical thinking and

exploring her academic field had been a more important goal. Duc, a doctoral student in the education program, encountered a similar situation. He came to the US realizing that "the knowledge I learned in the US might not be directly applicable [to my aspiration in solving Chinese educational issues]." Both Duc and Muo study in the field of SSH, which, as studies have revealed, are more likely to have career complications. The SSH field usually rests on critical thinking and intellectual philosophies taught in courses that could lead to reverse cultural shocks when international students return home (Gaw, 2000). Duc was willing to sacrifice a direct applicability of the knowledge in solving "Chinese issues" in his future career. Duc described his motivation:

> I deemed the knowledge taught in the US still valuable... I'm still willing to come to the US because I want to learn from leaders, to learn general knowledge and skills.

From this quote, we can see that Duc had strong academic expectations in his field of study. Duc's academic motivation override his inspiration for solving "Chinese issues" in his future career. In other words, CIGS like Duc and Muo chose to study in the US with interests in their field of study overriding their career development.

To sum up, the analysis focused on how two different groups of CIGS vary in how they navigate the importance of career development. Interestingly, the first group seemed to be mainly students in the STEM field. They had clear career goals and focused on career development during studying aboard, which could potentially be due to family pressure

and their hope to develop independence. The second group seemed to be mainly students in the SSH field, who recognize that although their field of study could potentially cause reverse cultural shock and complications for their career development, they still pursued their academic-related goals and therefore regarded career development as secondary. Apart from the perspective of career development, other CIGS also had widely different perspectives on their socio-cultural motivations, which will be illustrated in the following sections.

6.2.3 CIGS who disregarded socio-cultural development

CIGS in the above-mentioned sections had a strong interest in career development or their field of study. However, those strong career or academic goals sometimes made socio-cultural development (the cultural or social aspects of our lives) less interesting. Several CIGS did not regard social relationships and cultural discussions as beneficial for their academic or career development, which was their primary goal for studying in the US. For example, May, a master's student in the epidemiology program, said, "I only wanted to improve my professional knowledge and academic development. I'm not interested in cultural or social stuff." Similarly, Dan described how he deemed discussions of socio-cultural issues unhelpful for his academic goals. He said, "I sincerely am not interested in discussions around politics. That interest is not something people in my major would be interested in. My focus is on academics." Similarly, in these quotations, Dan and May separate sociocultural discussions from academic and career development. Thus, even though having a high career and academic motivation, Dan and May were still not interested in social

relationship development or cultural discussions. As a result, CIGS like Daymond, a doctoral student in aerospace engineering, avoided and disengaged from social or cultural discussions. Daymond described:

> I have no interest in cultural stuff. I do not think that communications on other topics [than academic topics] are important... I focus on academic issues and only discuss academic topics with friends, who are all from my [research] lab or classes... When I'm involved in discussions [around social or cultural issues], I will always bring discussion topics back to academic discussions.

In Daymond's quotation, socio-cultural discussions were avoided. The avoidance indicated that Daymond might have understood socio-cultural development as something separate from or even contradictory to his academic or career goals. This binary separation echoes a division between career versus civic orientations of global competence discussed in Chapter 3.

The following examples illustrate further how this career-civic division in literature was also reflected in several CIGS' discussions of their motivations and interests. Not only discussions around social or cultural issues, but many CIGS also noted being disinterested in social relationships. For example, Dan mentioned that he did not make friends with domestic students because it was not beneficial career-wise:

> I plan to go back to China after graduation, and there is no need for me to make friends here ... Even though in the end, I will stay in the US for my job,

it will only be a job. I don't see a need to build social friendships.

Because he regarded social relationships as irrelevant to career development, Dan found no "need" to engage in any communications, interactions, or friendships with domestic students. As another example, Murdock, a master's student in communication, explained how social activities were superficial and misaligned with his interests in learning and thinking:

> Partying is a waste of time. I don't think social activities are meaningful, while rather energy-costing. I do not have time to communicate or make friends with domestic students. I think it is not necessary, and I don't learn from having small talks with them. I can have no deep conversations, but small talks and superficial discussions. I prefer to take the time to think about other problems or refine my homework.

Murdock set academic development as his primary goal, and he perceived that social friendship with domestic students yielded few benefits. He complained about social activities as energy-consuming. From the examples above, we can see that, for some CIGS, socio-cultural development (discussions around social or cultural issues and social relationships with domestic students) was regarded as separate from or even contradictory to academic and career development. However, there are alternative perspectives on socio-cultural development, as presented in the following section.

6.2.4 CIGS who developed socio-cultural interests

Among the dissertation's interviews, a few CIGS had reported that while they disregarded socio-cultural development at the beginning of their studies abroad, they later developed some interests in it. This phenomenon seems to be true for CIGS, who were in the later years of their program that had gained some experience in the US. Dan, a doctoral student in engineering, explained a process of developing socio-cultural interests:

> I came to the US for academics with no interest in culture. [Later I thought] I already came, and why not learn some about the American social system? I'm open to looking at the news and observing and thinking about society.

From Dan's experience, it seems that socio-cultural interest can be developed, even if it is not something that Dan has thought about in the beginning. Academic and socio-cultural interests co-exist also for Dax, a doctoral student in material engineering. He said, "My priority is academic development, while social lives are still of interest to me [as time goes by]. I hope to expand my vision to see what other societies look like." Similarly, Mu elaborated on how the US environment is important for developing socio-cultural interests:

> When I was in China, I also pondered societal differences between China and the US, but my thoughts only stayed on thinking... After I came to the US, I encountered, observed, and experienced societal differences in my real life. That experience brought confusion to me. They motivated me to reflect deeper on cultural differences.

Mu's experience illustrates how CIGS like her could be immersed in an American environment that produces confusion, but meanwhile, thinking opportunities (Ma, 2020). Mu attributed her development in socio-cultural understanding to her US experiences: "I believe coming to the US made me understand deeper about societal differences. This understanding was far more critical than those who only stayed in China and pondered about society differences." The development of socio-cultural interests in CIGS, like Dan, Dax, and Mu, can be explained by a theory of how an immersive environment can improve student motivation (Blumenfeld et al., 2006). Initially, many CIGS were likely to focus on career or academic development because they were early in their program and had not immersed themselves in the US. However, immersed in the US in the later years of their program, they could develop more interest in socio-cultural activities.

Apart from those who developed socio-cultural interests, some CIGS have highly valued socio-cultural development from the beginning. For example, Mu, a master's student in public policy, shared that her faith in "cross-cultural understandings" is an important part of her motivation. She said, "it would be a problem if people do not have cross-cultural understanding." She elaborated,

> Cultural understanding is often ignored because it is not as obvious as external goals like career and academics... [For example] Many of us do not deeply understand the other culture. Limited understanding is why we have so many conflicts, gaps, and misunderstandings... [But] a lack of knowledge about another culture is like having a part of one's mind blank or missing.

Mu pointed out the importance of cross-cultural understanding for mediating conflicts and misunderstandings among different groups of students, which aligns with previous studies' findings (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998). She further explained how it has become her motivation to study in the US:

> I appreciate not only professional abilities to do good jobs, but also abilities to understand different cultures and to collaborate with different people... I expect to develop comprehensive abilities. I hope to become a whole person. A person who is inclusive, tolerant, and can understand all differences and similarities among diverse groups of people.

From this quotation, we can see that Mu has a high motivation in developing socio-cultural abilities, including cross-cultural understanding and collaboration. Those abilities are closely connected to global competence. Mu believed that these socio-cultural abilities could benefit her to have more comprehensive abilities and to become a "whole person." This finding echo previous studies that discussed socio-cultural development as an important indicator of student success and comprehensive development (Zhou & Green, 2022b).

This section distinguished CIGS who value the importance of socio-cultural development versus those who do not. With previous discussions around career development, a total of four groups of CIGS can be identified, which are helpful for the dissertation analysis: 1) CIGS who focused on career development, 2) CIGS who put career as secondary, 3) CIGS who disregarded socio-cultural interests, and 4) CIGS who developed socio-cultural

interests. These categorizations will help this study to better analyze and compare nuances of different subgroups of CIGS. Before analyzing group differences, the following section will discuss relationships between motivation and the development of relevant competences.

6.3 Motivations and Global Competence Development of CIGS

As mentioned earlier, career- and civic-oriented global competence refers to a set of abilities for one to work successfully in the globalized economy and live peacefully with heterogeneous groups of people (Colvin & Edwards, 2018). As outlined in Chapter 3, global competence has various components. Career-oriented global competence consists of career knowledge, skills, and capital. Civic-oriented global competence consists of cultural literacy, social support, and cross-cultural understanding. Although global competence development has been generally discussed (Ye et al., 2021), discussions around the development of each specific component of global competence have been underdeveloped.

This section analyzes approaches to develop various components of career- and civic-oriented global competence from the perspectives of CIGS' academic and socio-cultural motivations to study in the US. To illustrate how CIGS' motivations relate to various components of global competence, this section draws on literature about global competence development and approaches to global learning (De Wit et al., 2013; Nygren et al., 2020). This section is organized into two parts. The first part discusses implications of some CIGS' academic-related motivations for the development of career-oriented global competence (including career knowledge, career skills, and career capital). The second part discusses the implica-

tions of those CIGS' socio-cultural motivations (in terms of two approaches: learning-about knowledge versus learning-with relationships and experiences) for the development of civic-oriented global competence (including cultural literacy, social support, and cross-cultural understanding).

6.3.1 Academic-related Motivations and Career-oriented Global Competence

Career-oriented global competence refers to competences that facilitate one's cross-cultural employability, productivity, and career success in cross-cultural settings (Arthur et al., 2005). Based on twenty-two interviews with CIGS, I found that academic-related motivations tied to educational resources (research labs, academic programs, learning opportunities) could benefit the development of career-oriented global competence. The first example was from Dax, a doctoral student in the material engineering program, who highlighted his motivation in accessing research equipment and platforms for professional opportunities:

> I was motivated by the highest-quality research materials and the world-leading research labs in the US. ... Its leading position in higher education could bring me to a better platform to access more opportunities for professional development.

Dax seemed to appreciate research-related resources, equipment, and labs in the US as potential career development opportunities. Another example is Daymond, a doctoral student in the aerospace engineering program. Daymond has a strong career development

goal:

> The most important and meaningful goal for my study abroad is my career goal... Studying in the US could help me to publish more papers to prepare me to become a professor in the future.

Here, educational resources in the US seem to be helpful for Daymond to achieve this career goal. Educational resources were as rewarding for their development of career-oriented global competence (i.e., their ability to achieve career goals in a cross-cultural context). Another example that brings educational resources and career-oriented global competence together was Macdowell, a master's CIGS in the computer science program. He perceived educational resources in the US as helpful for actualizing his "academic dream":

> The US is the number one place for research in my field. I wanted to be there to learn and improve myself... I'd like to come to a better place [than China] to pursue my academic dreams.

This comment implied that a lack of educational resources in China was potentially limiting Mac's career-oriented global competence development. From Mac's experience, along with Dax and Daymond's insights, we can conclude that opportunities for developing career-oriented global competence seem to be based on different kinds of educational resources (research equipment, labs, platforms, comprehensive programs, etc.). Educational resources, along with experiences in the US, are important for career-oriented global compe-

tence. This point can be seen in the case of Darmarcus, a doctoral student in the bioinformatics program. He expected that:

> New experiences in the US will facilitate my growth and future development. ... New experiences would be helpful for me. It practices my survival skills and will be helpful for my well-being in the future. ... Not only just for general growth, but it [living in a new environment in the US] also pushes me to build connections in a new environment to handle different issues.

Darmarcus seemed to regard studying abroad as an opportunity to improve his ability to live independently, as well as abilities to build his network. Both abilities are believed to be necessary to achieve one's future development in career-related goals (Mohajeri Norris & Gillespie, 2009).

Apart from being beneficial to one's independence and networking skill development, studying abroad can also benefit career success by adding one's career capital (the stock of resources that increase the future impact of a person's career). In other words, cross-cultural learning in the US has been a symbolic capital that will help their future careers (Schmidt & Pardo, 2017). Manchester, a master's student in mechanical engineering, described studying in the US as a sign of success:

> Apart from many promising resources and opportunities, I observed how studying abroad could bring career opportunities. I know many alumni in my program and my classmates [in China] have successful careers after they study

abroad. I decided to seek a graduate degree in the US to just follow a trend to success.

The meaning of educational experiences in the US for Manchester was a social status recognition that would help his career success. Career and social capital could be relevant in this discussion. Studies have discussed career-related benefits of studying abroad, including adding symbolic career capital (the stock of resources that increase the future impact of a person's career) for international students' future development (Mohajeri Norris & Gillespie, 2009).

Combining CIGS' experiences above, we can conclude that academic-related motivations are of paramount importance for career-oriented global competence. This importance can be seen from three perspectives, illustrated in examples above: 1) Studying in the US can be rewarding, as those CIGS can access research resources that will help them achieve career goals (in the case of Daymond), 2) managing life in a new environment can improve one's ability to live independently and build networks of social support (in the case of Darmarcus), and 3) Studying in the US itself has become a recognition of success, which adds one's career and social capital (in the case of Manchester). While the above-mentioned section discussed academic-related motivations in relation to career-oriented global competence, we still miss discussions of socio-cultural motivations of CIGS to study in the US, as well as their civic-oriented global competence. As set out in Chapter 3, both career and civic orientations of global competence are important. To unify career and civic orientations of global competence, the following section focuses on socio-cultural aspects of CIGS' lives and

analyzes its implications for civic-oriented global competence.

6.3.2 Socio-cultural Motivations and Civic-oriented Global Competence

This section turns from academic-related to socio-cultural motivations to discuss their implications for career- and civic-oriented global competence. While career-oriented global competence facilitates one's long-term career development, civic-oriented global competence encourages individuals to contribute to their social well-being as well as society by taking up social responsibilities (such as social cohesion and justice, human rights and autonomy, and individual participation in democratic institutions) (Banks & Banks, 2019).

To cultivate career- and civic-oriented global competence, it is helpful to acknowledge two approaches to global learning: 1) The "learning-about" approach focuses on knowledge about American society; and 2) The "learning-with" approach focuses on learning through community experiences and learning with relationships and interactions (De Wit et al., 2013; Nygren et al., 2020). The two different approaches to global learning are utilized because they focus on content related to socio-cultural motivations (e.g., knowledge about American society, community experiences, and social relationships). The following paragraphs discuss how the two approaches can relate to socio-cultural motivations and potential benefits for career- and civic-oriented global competence.

Before going into details about the development of global competence, it would be helpful to first introduce how the two different approaches to global learning were understood by different CIGS. Firstly, it seems that the "learning-about approach" is preferred for

CIGS in the STEM field. For example, Dax, a doctoral student in the material engineering program, pointed out that "learning-with cultural engagement in Hollywood or Disney is not what attracts me [to the US]." On the contrary, he expressed a preference for learning about American society:

> I'm more interested in the social system, the operations and administration [of American society]. I hope to expand my vision to see what other societies look like. [Because] the US is the most developed country in terms of GDP. I hope to see what exactly has been developed and hope to see why. I'm interested in reasons and mechanisms of American society and ponder what could be some of the problems.

This quotation showed Dax making a distinction between learning about knowledge around American society and learning with cultural engagements. Dax's preference was given to the learning-about approach. Although the two approaches are distinguished by both Dax and researchers like De Wit et al. (2013) and Nygren et al. (2020), elaborations are needed on how the two different approaches are related to developing global competence.

The first learning-about approach could benefit career-oriented global competence, because learning about cultural knowledge can help many CIGS expand visions and cultural literacy that are important for one's career development. Cultural literacy refers to knowledge around matters of another culture (Halinen et al., 2015). For example, Mui, a master's student in the public policy program, shared her desire to "learn new things and fresh social

knowledge in the US." Mui's curiosity in seeking new knowledge could help her development of cultural literacy, an important component of career-oriented global competence (Wong et al., 2013). Another example of the learning-about approach benefiting career-oriented global competence was from Duncan, a doctoral student in the education program. He expressed his desire in learning knowledge about American society:

> To be honest, I have limited knowledge and only have personal experiences about either China or US society. I wanted to develop my knowledge in those areas where I didn't know.

This quotation from Duncan reflected an urge to learn cultural knowledge about how American society operates, which is beyond their discipline and academic knowledge. This finding aligns with what other studies have demonstrated: more students of this generation develop a comprehensive interest in learning about society (Wong et al., 2013). Mui and Duncan's interests in learning about American society were also frequently mentioned in socio-cultural motivations for international students (Trujillo et al., 2020; Yan & Berliner, 2011). These curiosities about global knowledge could be a direct attitudinal component that benefits career-oriented global competence (Wong et al., 2013).

As for the learning-with approach, a relevant socio-cultural motivation is some CIGS' desire in interacting with domestic students. The following examples illustrate how social interactions could benefit the development of civic-oriented global competence. Mug, a master's student in the Asian Studies program, shared her expectations in developing social

relationships with domestic students:

> I hope to build close relationships [with domestic students] to gain a deeper understanding of culture from interactions with people. Close relationships with them [domestic students] could bring me unique opportunities to learn about cultural differences day by day and to understand the roots of different cultural shocks.

Mug's insights showed a high motivation to gain cultural insights by building friendships with domestic students. Echoing other studies, CIGS participants in this study expect highly about making friends and communicating with local students, in which they can learn and develop cultural understandings and cultural communication skills (Fantini, 2018), both of which are key components of civic-oriented global competence.

Social friendships could help many CIGS' civic-oriented global competence development in a few different ways. For some CIGS like Mussina, social relationships are related to one's feeling of belonging. Mussina, a master's student in the social sciences program, shared:

> I felt a need to have domestic friends and have places to go to if I needed help. ... Without having social support and the network I needed, I felt lonely and did not have a sense of belonging anywhere.

Mussina understands making friends as a means of social support. Social support can create a positive environment for international students' civic-oriented global compe-

tence development (Zhu, 2017). Friendships can also help several CIGS' acculturation. For example, Muo, a master's student in the social sciences program, shared her understanding of the importance of social relationships for her cultural integration in the US:

> To integrate into the US, I need to make local friends. I need to know domestic students. [In the US] I looked forward to experiencing the culture, knowing domestic students, and talking to them. I hope to experience life fully here, to feel the culture and lifestyle, and to go to more places.

Muo's experience reveals how one can integrate into the US with the learning-with approach by engaging in cultural experiences and relationships with friends. This observation aligns with studies that find social relationships and cultural engagement as a key factor for successful acculturation for international students (Zhu, 2017).

Learning through community experiences was another part of the learning-with approach that could help to develop civic-oriented global competence. Mu mentioned an interest in engaging with community and culture was mentioned by Mu, a master's student in the public policy program:

> In China, topics like cultural differences do come to me sometimes, but I won't take the time to seriously think about it because it does not feel urgent or very close. ... When I came and lived in the US, the new environment pushed me to constantly encounter and feel American society and culture. I cannot resist

having a strong motivation to figure out the environment I live in and solve all my lingering questions about comparing China and the US.

Mu demonstrated socio-cultural motivations generated by feelings of cultural shock and an urgent need to ponder cultural differences. Existing research showed that immersing in a foreign environment can help one develop an understanding of cultural differences (Dailey-Strand et al., 2021). From Mu's experience, it seems that civic-oriented global competence can be developed in a process of immersing in the US, which involved opportunities for many CIGS to understand cultural differences.

The above-mentioned sections discuss two sets of relationships. Firstly, it illustrates the potential benefits of academic-related motivations for career-oriented global competence. For example, it was discussed how educational resources in the US can improve one's career opportunities, skills, and capital. Those opportunities are components of career-oriented global competence. Secondly, the two approaches (learning-about and learning-with) relevant to socio-cultural activities are demonstrated as helpful for some CIGS' development of career- and civic-oriented global competence. On the one hand, learning about knowledge of American society could improve those CIGS' cultural literacy, an important component of career-oriented global competence. On the other hand, learning with domestic friends and through community experiences could facilitate those CIGS' cultural understandings and social support, another two important components of civic-oriented global competence.

6.4 Conclusion

The chapter presented various groups of CIGS with their motivations to study in the US. It also analyzed relationships between CIGS' motivations and their development of global competence. A summary of those findings is illustrated in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1: Motivations and Global Competence for CIGS

The chapter first described academic-related motivations and socio-cultural motivations of CIGS for studying in the US. On the one hand, CIGS with academic-related motivations expect rich educational resources in the US. These resources include both advanced research labs for CIGS in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) field, and comprehensive (interdisciplinary, theoretical, and training in critical thinking) academic training for CIGS in the social sciences and humanities (SSH) field. This section also included a discussion about "the hegemony of knowledge production" (Conway, 2013) reflecting critically on the leading position of American higher education. On the other hand,

CIGS with socio-cultural motivations have three types of interests: learning knowledge about American social systems and exploring American popular culture.

Secondly, based on response patterns of CIGS participants' goals (i.e., career development versus sociocultural motivations), four groups of CIGS are categorized in this chapter. The first group of CIGS, usually from the STEM field, has a primary goal of career development. Reasons could include CIGS' clear objectives of career success, family pressures, and eagerness for independence. In contrast, the second group of CIGS, usually from the SSH field, put career development as secondary. This group of CIGS chose their field of study, even though their training may lead to career complications and "reverse cultural shocks" (Gaw, 2000). The third group of CIGS, usually those who have strong interests in career development or a field of study, disregarded socio-cultural development. Those CIGS found socio-cultural activities not necessary, or sometimes misaligned with their major focus in academic or career development. In contrast, the last group highly values socio-cultural development. For some, they developed socio-cultural motivations after spending time and immersing themselves in the US. For others, they understood the importance of cultural understanding and highly valued socio-cultural development from the beginning.

Lastly, this chapter discussed a potential relationship between some CIGS' motivations and their development of global competence. On the one hand, several CIGS' academic-related motivations seem to benefit the development of career-oriented global competence. Access to rich educational resources in the US brings career opportunities and recognition as career capital. Training and living in the US also improve those CIGS' independence

and networking skills, which can help them achieve future career goals. On the other hand, socio-cultural motivations seem to contribute to the development of career- and civic-oriented global competence through two approaches to global learning. On the one hand, learning about American society could cultivate many CIGS' cultural literacy, and it also reflects those CIGS' curiosity about global knowledge that are necessary for career-oriented global competence development. On the other hand, learning with domestic students and learning through community engagements improve many CIGS' cultural insights and communication skills in an environment full of social support that are important for civic-oriented global competence development.

In terms of the implications of these findings, presenting the twenty-two CIGS participants' motivations and identifying subgroups of CIGS can yield important distinctions and offer insights for customized student support. These distinctions also support this dissertation's effort to provide a more nuanced analysis based on those CIGS' diverse characteristics. Relationships built between some CIGS' motivations and various components of global competence can also extend our understanding of global competence development.

CHAPTER 7

CIGS' Challenges to Develop Global Competence in the US

This chapter focuses on challenges to developing global competence for the twenty-two Chinese International Graduate Students (CIGS) I interviewed. As discussed in Chapter 3, global competence refers to a combination of attitudes, knowledge, and skills that, in theory, allow students to navigate both career and civic goals on a global stage (Colvin & Edwards, 2018). Career-oriented global competence enables students to work successfully with others from diverse cultural backgrounds (Zhou & Green, 2019). Civic-oriented global competence enables students to live inclusively and peacefully with heterogeneous groups of people (Zhu, 2017). The discussion and analysis of findings in this chapter focuses on three challenges of developing global competence for CIGS: 1) linguistic difficulty; 2) contextual unfamiliarity; and 3) cultural distance between some CIGS and domestic students. All three challenges emerge from the thematic analysis of interviews conducted for this study. Ultimately, the chapter addresses the following research questions: What challenges do CIGS meet during studying in the US? How do those challenges relate to CIGS' development of global competence?

The chapter has three sections as follows. The first section discusses the linguistic difficulties in cross-cultural communication for CIGS who have limited basic linguistic skills (i.e., English listening, speaking, reading, and writing). These linguistic skills in classrooms are important for developing career-oriented global competence (Byram, 1997). The section helps to reveal several CIGS' confusion about certain cultural connotations of English words (i.e., the word "drama", and undocumented immigrant versus illegal immigrant) when interacting with domestic students. However, understanding cultural connotations in English is important for developing civic-oriented global competence (Shen & Chen, 2020). Additionally, I discuss a few CIGS' challenges in communicating cross-culturally (in both academic and social settings). The challenge impairs CIGS' self-confidence, a fundamental attitude for cross-cultural explorations, and for the development of both career- and civic-oriented global competence (Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2018). The second section of this chapter analyzes the challenge of unfamiliarity with American contextual knowledge for CIGS who have limited understanding of American experiences (e.g., discussion topics on "race") in classrooms. These CIGS find it difficult to adjust to American-style (i.e., interactive and personal) learning. That difficulty can be because those CIGS a more familiar with standards from Chinese classrooms which value formal and direct problem-solving rather than interactive discussions. A lack of familiarity and understanding of American knowledge and classroom styles limits those CIGS' academic performance, which further challenges their development of career-oriented global competence. The third section discusses cultural distances between a few CIGS and domestic students. In social settings, several CIGS find it hard to understand

social conversation norms in the US (e.g., activism). That hardship can be due to these CIGS' biases and misconceptions about American culture. Those CIGS also lack "common languages" (i.e., interests and backgrounds) to interact and connect with domestic students. However, social interactions are necessary for their development of career-oriented and civic-oriented global competence (Zhu, 2017). To develop the necessary social support, those CIGS need to understand cultural distance and negotiate cultural divides between them and domestic students. This is because cultural understanding and negotiation is important for developing civic-oriented global competence.

7.1 Challenges of Communicating Cross-culturally

7.1.1 Basic Cross-cultural Communication Skills for Career-oriented Global Competence

The following illustrates a few CIGS' difficulty with basic linguistic skills, including English listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These linguistic skills are foundations for the development of career-oriented global competence (Arthur et al., 2005). On the one hand, limited English listening and reading skills challenge some CIGS' understanding of course contents and therefore their performance in academic and professional settings. On the other hand, inadequate English speaking and writing skills limits those CIGS' opportunity to express their opinions, which makes them hard to be recognized in classrooms or working settings. However, performance and recognition are a form of career capital which are

necessary for the development of career-oriented global competence (Arthur et al., 2005). The following paragraphs discuss details of each linguistic difficulty that were brought up by CIGS I interviewed, starting with English listening. Davidson, a doctoral student in immunology shared his experience:

> When I took class, my American classmates spoke fast. It's hard to catch up to understand them... [Due to lack of understanding of the discussion, I cannot participate in class.] It [the lack of participation in class] may affect how other students think of me. They may think I know nothing.

Davidson indicates his difficulties with English listening and speaking, which he believes will negatively influence how his classmates perceive him. Davidson's experience reveals a potential limitation for his academic recognition and performances, which are important qualities for developing CIGS' career-oriented global competence (Mohajeri Norris & Gillespie, 2009). Davidson further illustrates the influence of English listening skills on career-oriented global competence by sharing his experience as a teaching assistant:

> I have no problem with any knowledge or disciplinary expertise [when teaching undergraduate students], but the challenge for me [as a teaching assistant] is English [listening skills]. I find it difficult to understand my students' questions. I have all the field-related knowledge [necessary to answer their questions], but I cannot answer their questions [due to not understanding what students are asking].

Although having adequate field knowledge, Davidson finds it hard to answer students' questions due to difficulty in understanding his students. Here, poor listening skills in English limit Davidson's career performance while working as a teaching assistant. Linguistic skills have been put forth as a popular reason for explaining why international employees are regarded as performing poorly (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994, e.g.). Davidson's experience helps to reveal how English listening, as part of basic cross-cultural communication skills, can influence one's career success, which is a major indicator for career-oriented global competence (Fantini, 2018; Golubeva, 2017).

Apart from English listening, English speaking ability and the opportunity to express themselves also challenge a few CIGS' development of career-oriented global competence. Focusing on the opportunity to speak, Mui, a master's student in public policy, shared:

> They [domestic students] are always active in speaking, expressing themselves... I don't have opportunities to engage. I'm invisible in the 'corner' while western students are in the center. If I don't grab the opportunity, we [CIGS] have no chance to speak usually. We [Chinese students] don't like asking questions in class. We become invisible in the classroom. We cannot be heard or seen.

Mui describes herself as invisible in classes without an opportunity to speak. Davidson has a similar observation:

> I don't have energies or opportunities to speak or reply [to what has been

said in class]. Domestic students are too active [leaving me no opportunity to speak].

Mui and Davidson's experiences show a lack of opportunities to express themselves. That lack of classroom participation can influence one's career-oriented global competence, which can be further illustrated by the experiences of Murdock, a master's student in communication:

> Domestic students speak very fast. It's difficult to understand them [the discussion] well. However, class participation is an important element in classroom evaluation. I'm always rated lower than other [domestic] students [due to limited participation in class].

Murdock implies that his limited class participation may harm his academic performances. Without opinions expressed, some CIGS, like Murdock, cannot build their career capital or any peer recognition that will benefit one's career development in the future, an important indicator for the development of career-oriented global competence (Williams & Baláž, 2005). Apart from English listening and speaking, English reading also challenges several CIGS. Duc, a doctoral student in education, describes:

> I passed English language tests to get admitted into my program, but that does not mean I gained skills or a habit of reading and writing in English... For example, [when I shop for food in American markets], reading ingredients

> could take me 10 min. Reading would only be 1 min if it was in Chinese. This [difference in reading time] is also true for reading academic papers when I must translate English to Chinese, which takes a lot of time.

To Duc, English-reading is a time-consuming process. Although Chinese students intensely prepare for the English requirements test for studying abroad (Fang et al., 2018), everyday life and academic linguistic interactions remain difficult for CIGS like Duc. Duc further shared his concerns about writing in English:

> English writing has been a major academic challenge for me. I'm confident in writing in Chinese, but I'm not satisfied with my English writing at all. English vocabulary and grammar limit my ability to express myself.

Duc feels limited in his ability to express himself. Similarly, Dustine, another doctoral student in education, shares her challenges in writing: "I spent a lot of time and energy revising my writing. In the end, others still cannot understand [my writing]." For Duc and Dustine, English writing has been uneasy, a blocker for future career success and the development of career-oriented global competence. To further illustrate English expression skills, the following paragraphs focus on several CIGS unaware of subtle meanings of different English words, which causes miscommunications for those CIGS. For example, Macdowell, a master's student in computer science, shares:

> My instructor criticized me when I used "illegal immigrants" in my course writing assignment. [I use it because] it's a direct translation from Chinese

> to English. I didn't realize it had negative connotations [until my instructor pointed it out] ... [Although I can understand the critique on my word usage,] I think my instructor is too sensitive.

Macdowell used an inappropriate word to describe "undocumented immigrants". After correction by his instructor, Macdowell described his instructor as "sensitive". That confusion about certain English words with political correctness connotations is common among Chinese international students (Jiang, 2021). CIGS like Macdowell are not as familiar with topics like "immigrants". That cultural-specific word usage adds complexity to English writing and expression for those CIGS. However, communicating effectively and appropriately (i.e., understanding and respecting local culture) cross-culturally is important for one's future cross-cultural career success and developing career-oriented global competence (Arthur et al., 2005) as well as civic-oriented competence which is discussed further in the section.

The above-mentioned examples revealed some of the difficulties in cross-cultural communication in four aspects that many CIGS can experience. The first challenge is English listening. A fast speed of class discussion made it hard for a lot CIGS to follow class discussion and understand students' questions when working as a teaching assistant. The second challenge is English speaking ability and the opportunity to speak. Limited participation in classroom discussions can challenge some CIGS' ability to build career capital and their development of career-oriented global competence. The third challenge is English reading, which is time-consuming and challenges a few CIGS' daily lives. The last challenge is En-

glish writing, including using the right word with the right connotations to communicate. All challenges can harm those CIGS' development of career-oriented global competence, which relies on academic performances and recognition (Arthur et al., 2005). Linguistic barriers can also indeed impair the development of civic-oriented competence since it is directly associated with understanding local context and meaning in terms of social, cultural and political issues.

7.1.2 Subtle Meanings of Words and Challenges for Civic-oriented Global Competence

The above-mentioned paragraphs discuss basic linguistic skills (English listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in academic settings with an emphasis on implications for career-oriented global competence. The following emphasizes several CIGS' social interactions challenges that are more directly related to civic-oriented global competence development.

Building social relationships is challenging due to a combination of English listening and speaking skills for CIGS like Dua, a doctoral student in education, who shares:

> It's hard to make friends with Americans. The reason may be language barriers. I can't catch subtle meanings and signals in my conversations with Americans... I also can't express myself in English well. Thus, I don't enjoy the conversation. [I believe] The other side [domestic students] also doesn't enjoy talking to me. This [lack of joy from both sides] is why I have very few American friends.

Dua explains potential reasons for her difficulties in making close friends with Americans: unable to express and understand subtle meaning and signals. To illustrate further her challenge in social interactions with domestic students, Dua compares her communication with peer CIGS and domestic students:

> They (domestic students) are enthusiastic and welcoming to you, but that's the surface. If you want to develop a relationship with them, it's hard. There is a huge barrier between each other's hearts... Chinese students are usually more introverted. They usually won't be as open and enthusiastic as Americans at the beginning, but they are easier to build a relationship with [for me]. I find it easy to communicate and disclose my inner thoughts with them. We can have a deeper conversation.

In Dua's experiences, Chinese and Americans have different styles of communication, leading to "superficial" versus "meaningful" conversations. Duc, a doctoral student in education, has a similar experience:

> I have been networking and attending activities [in the US], but it's hard to have deep conversations or build close relationships [with domestic students]. For example, I and my roommate from Kenya talked for one hour, but it still did not go deep. We cannot express ourselves as well as in our native language.

Both Dua and Duc were unable to have deep conversations with students from another culture due to English speaking skills. However, deep conversation is an important part of

developing close friendships (Gareis, 2012), and cultivating cultural understandings (Zhu, 2017). As a result, CIGS like Dua and Duc find it hard to explore and exchange perspectives with domestic students, an important action to develop civic-oriented global competence (Zhu, 2017).

Not only due to linguistic skills, a lack of opportunities to interact with domestic students also plays a role in some CIGS' social challenges in interactions with domestic students. Mu, a master's student in public policy, shared:

> I think studying abroad will help me make American friends, but I still stay [live and make friends] with Chinese students. I have limited interaction with American peers. We only have classroom conversations.

Although Mu has expectations in exploring social relationships with domestic students, she has not been able to do so. Mu indicates a lack of opportunities to interact with domestic students. She has no connections to domestic students except in the classroom. In contrast, opportunities to contact Chinese people have been plentiful for Mu who lived in a Chinese community.

Beyond the basic linguistic skills for social lives, other CIGS' social difficulty is relevant to their unawareness of subtle meanings of English words and inability to use appropriate language to interact with domestic students in social lives. Duncan, a doctoral student in education, shares his experiences:

> A course I take asks for students' presentations. We [students] must sign up

> for a presentation date. One day, a classmate approached me and asked if I could switch my presentation date with her. I did not say yes. I remember what I said was: 'If I can finish my presentation slides before your presentation date, I can consider switching presentations. [Duncan highlighted here with tone raised] That means a hold, leaning towards a no, not a yes, right?

Duncan indicates that he intended to refuse his classmates, but he did so in an indirect way. In China, it is common to find people refuse others in an indirect and tactful way, so that the other person does not feel offended or "lose face" (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998). That indirect refusal can be seen in Duncan's response. However, that connotation may be specific to Chinese culture, which are misunderstood by his classmate, who does not know how people converse and refuse in China. As a result, Duncan faced an awkward situation:

> I felt confused when [on presentation day] I received an email from my classmate [cc'd, my course professor] saying we had switched our order of presentation. I felt so confused. I replied to the email, which worsened the situation even more. [In that email,] I said: 'there must be some miscommunication. Sorry our little drama troubled you. My email was a bomb, triggered another round of miscommunication... I received a very long email full of complaints from my classmates. I clearly upset my classmate ... [I wasn't aware at that time that] I had made a mistake in word usage [in my response email]. I used 'drama' to mean the incident, but the word is not an appropriate word to express what I intended to express... Later, from another domestic friend, I

> learned that drama has heavy negative connotations. I was not aware of that [at the time of interacting with my American classmate].

Duncan explained his word choice for the 'drama':

> In China, we use the Chinese translation of 'drama' all the time. ['drama' is a common word to me]. ['Drama' appeared] on TV shows, [and] celebrities talk about it when creating plots. We [people in China] also hear the English word 'drama' all the time. I think it is a usual neutral word.

Duncan's reflection echoes previous studies: the connotation of language is context based and different based on where it is used (Mikhaylov, 2014). Duncan experiences a series of incidents of miscommunication due to language styles (i.e., rejection) and the unawareness of cultural connotations (e.g., the 'drama' word). After those incidents, Duncan declared English language as his number one difficulty in the US.

Duncan's story centers around miscommunication due to domestic students' misinterpretations of the Chinese style of communication. Duncan's experiences also illustrate the importance of appropriate English words to avoid interpersonal troubles. Duncan's experiences remind us how cultural connotations can complicate the interaction between CIGS like him and domestic students, which is an important for developing social relationship and in turn for developing civic-oriented global competence (Zhu, 2017).

The above-mentioned paragraphs present experiences of those CIGS who meet challenges in social interactions with domestic students. Some CIGS find it hard to create deep

conversations or close relationships with domestic students due to language barriers and limited opportunities for interactions. Other CIGS have miscommunications with domestic students due to different communication styles and unawareness of the cultural connotations of certain words. Those CIGS' difficulty in creating deep conversations and friendships with domestic students can limit their opportunities to develop mutual cultural understanding and thus exchange perspectives across different cultures which are crucial components for developing civic-oriented global competence (Semaan & Yamazaki, 2015; Thongprayoon et al., 2020).

7.1.3 Interactions between Cross-cultural Communication Skills and Self-confidence Attitude

The section above presents some CIGS' difficulties in cross-cultural communication in classrooms and social lives. The following connects those CIGS' cross-cultural communication skills with their self-confidence, which is an important attitude that can facilitate one's global competence development (Bochner & Hesketh, 1994; Wong et al., 2013). Specifically, this section demonstrates how difficulties in cross-cultural communication can harm some CIGS' self-confidence. In other words, when CIGS find it difficult to engage in class, they may develop even less confidence to engage in discussions.

The experiences from Mu, a master's student in public policy, can show us how limited cross-cultural communication skills influence one's self-confidence:

> [In my team project,] other teammates [who are native speakers] are proficient

> in English. I need them to help me all the time. [I'm afraid] One day they [American teammates] will be tired of helping me... My feeling of being 'useless' grows every day, especially after each meeting with clients [in a teamwork for a course project].

Mu feels "useless" in her group, especially after several failed attempts to contribute to the team's project. Her confidence decreases compared with other native speakers. She says: "[my] poor English language may confuse others and embarrass myself." Similarly, Mae, a master's student in biostatistics, feels herself a "burden" for her group after several "failures" in classes:

> I became even less confident after working in groups. I feel like I'm dragging the group to move slowly, because I have too many questions and I seek help a lot from others. Whenever I ask for help, I feel inferior and exhausted mentally. I care about how others would think of me. I do not want others to know how bad I am at my studies.

Both Mu and Mae experienced a decrease in their self-confidence due to their inability to contribute to their group project. As Mae pointed out, self-confidence decreased after every failure or what they regarded as inefficient work in their group.

Many CIGS blame themselves for not being able to engage in team projects or classroom discussions well. For example, Mu, a master's student in the public policy program, shares:

> I'm hesitant to engage [in classroom discussions] because of my poor English speaking. [From my experience,] I can't express myself well. I speak slowly. I often use unclear phrases and wrong words. [I'm afraid that] people may laugh at my English... It's better to let domestic students speak. They can finish speaking in five sentences, while I need 10 [sentences] to express the same point. That [letting me speak in class] is a waste of others' time... [At the end of the day,] I doubt myself and criticize myself for not trying enough, not making enough efforts to engage in the classroom, interact with US culture, and have more US friends.

Mu wants to speak and express herself in classrooms, but she is not confident in speaking English in class. Mu blames herself for being slow, unclear, and not courageous. The "self-blaming" appears frequently for those who are unaware of structural discrimination (Lee, 2020). The phenomenon of "self-blaming" becomes even worse for some CIGS when they hear discussions around how international students are deficient in their abilities (Ma, 2020).

Self-blame adds pressure to many CIGS and leads to a series of self-doubts and negative perceptions of self-worthiness for those CIGS. CIGS like Mu and Mae revealed that they became even more introverted and isolated after coming to the US. However, positive attitudes (e.g., curiosity, confidence, open-mindedness) are essential to developing global competence (Wong et al., 2013).

The above-mentioned presented challenges in language and communication skills in

academic and social settings. This section also analyzed the interaction between cross-cultural skills and self-confidence in many CIGS. These challenges are important to discuss, since academic performance (which is built based on basic linguistic skills), social relationships, and self-confidence are important for developing career- and civic- oriented global competence (Iskhakova, 2018).

7.2 Challenging Academic Content and Styles

This section discusses some CIGS' challenges in understanding American contextual knowledge in academic and social settings. The discussion is important because learning contextual knowledge in the host country and negotiating them with knowledge of one's own is vital for global competence (Shen & Chen, 2020). This section uses two parts to illustrate the challenge in contextual knowledge for some CIGS. The first part discusses a few CIGS' limited knowledge of local issues (e.g., California bills and laws, and American people's experiences), and their unfamiliarity with the importance of American specific topics (e.g., race). Both challenges have limited those CIGS' engagement in classroom discussions in American classrooms, an important process for the development of career-oriented global competence. The second part focuses on several CIGS' difficulty in engaging in American style classrooms. As reflected in several CIGS' quotations, that difficulty can be due to those CIGS' experiences in Chinese classrooms, which have different standards from American classroom styles. This finding offers implications for CIGS overall to balance home knowledge, experiences, and standards with the new ones in the US. That balance of different cultures is important for

developing civic-oriented global competence (Zhou & Green, 2019).

7.2.1 Local Topics in Classroom Discussions

Unfamiliarity with local discussion topics has been a major challenge for many CIGS, especially those in the social science and humanities (SSH) field, which often involves discussions around local social issues (e.g., American people's experiences) and context-specific concepts (e.g., race). Many CIGS find it hard to engage in team projects and classroom discussions due to their unfamiliarity with the local topics at hand. For example, Mu, a master's student in public policy, shared:

> Our team projects are about California bills and lawsuits. I can't [and am afraid to] say anything when we [our group] meet our clients. I hide [myself] because I don't want our client to know that one group member [myself] has little knowledge about California... I'm concerned that if I speak slowly and unclearly, we'll sound unprofessional. Our clients will distrust us. [Our clients may wonder] Why would an international student be involved in this? [My group-mates may find out about a problem and ask] How can our clients trust us when sharing something confidential? I'm afraid I'll ruin our team's project.

Mu is involved in a group project focusing on local topics (i.e., California bills) that she is unfamiliar with. Mu hesitates to join team discussions, worrying about harming her team meetings. Similarly, Mui, a master's student, also complains about an American

specific topic in classroom discussions:

> I didn't speak in the classroom, because I cannot find any point to say when discussing a foreign topic [about American experiences that I don't know much about].

Quotations from Mu and Mui show disadvantages of CIGS like them in American specific team projects and classroom discussions due to unfamiliarity with local topics in the US. Mua, a master's student in social science, further elaborates on the issue of lacking contextual knowledge and pointed out problems in course design:

> Programs here [in the US] are not internationalized, but local-focused. Professors designed classes assuming students had local knowledge. We [international students] do not even have basic knowledge! ... Professors raise local examples in America using phrases that I don't know. I have no background [in American specific experiences], and that new knowledge blows my mind. I don't know what has been discussed in classrooms. Courses are hard to follow [for those] without local knowledge.

Mua feels excluded from western-focused course materials and discussions. Local topics become barriers to Mua's understanding and participation in classroom discussions. Previous studies also find that the US curriculum sometimes disregards international students' backgrounds when focusing on American specific contextual knowledge (Abt-Perkins

et al., 2010). These findings reveal problems in course design and explain structural disadvantages for international students' academic disengagement. Instead of individual skill deficiency (Ma, 2020), Mua's experience shows how local-focused course design has made it difficult structurally for CIGS like Mua to engage in class. Experiences from Mua also offer implications for institutional course designs. For example, to engage CIGS like Mu and Mua, class team projects can have options for international-based content. Class discussions can offer examples from international cases. Those actions can improve the relevance of course materials for many CIGS.

Apart from the above CIGS' unfamiliarity with local topics, a few CIGS also lack understanding of the relevance of course materials or classroom discussions in the US. Firstly, some CIGS can be confused on why the topic of "race" is so frequently discussed in class. Muo, a master's student in the social sciences program, shares her observations:

> We discuss "race" every day. Although I understand race is an important topic, I find it strange how often the same content is repeatedly taught. [For example,] One of my courses dedicated eight weeks of a ten-week class to "race" ... [I agree that] research findings illustrate how "race" is important for causing social injustice, but it [race] can't be the one thing as the root of everything... Classrooms have too much discussion around the same topic. I feel I lose opportunities to learn and discuss other things. Sociology and social sciences are such a big field. There need to be other things [for me] to learn and discuss.

For Muo, discussion around race is over-emphasized in American classrooms. Muo finds it hard to understand the importance of frequently discussing "race", and she hopes to hear a wider range of topics in classes. A few other CIGS also find "race" of low relevance. Dua, a doctoral student in education, shared:

> Contents of my course materials [such as details about American history and their significance] are not of any relevance to me. I only take them [American-centered course materials and discussions] as practices of English. I cannot internally engage or talk with the materials. I find no relevance in the contents of the texts themselves.

Dua perceived her course materials on American-centered materials as "irrelevant" to her life. To further illustrate CIGS' perception of low-relevance topics in American classrooms, the following paragraphs focus on a specific example of a local topic (i.e., race), which is a popular class discussion especially in the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) field. "Race" can be an abstract topic that many CIGS felt of little relevance coming from a Chinese context. Dua shares her understanding of "race":

> It's [discussing race is] like watching TV news for me. Someone experienced this. Okay. Someone experienced that. Okay. ... I listen to heated discussions around race [but cannot engage]. ... The stories and experiences being reported are new to me, like in the news. I feel excluded from the whole conversation. I am confused and I feel struggled to relate race to my experiences and life.

> [From a homogeneous society like China] I don't see [or understand] myself in their stories. ... [Ultimately,] I disengaged myself from classroom discussions and became an outsider and observer.

As the only international student in class, Dua hears domestic students share American stories, but she finds it hard to understand their experiences and relate to herself to those experiences. Dua describes herself as an outsider, finding it hard to engage in American classmates' experiences with "race." Dua's experience aligns with a few recent study findings (Lee, 2020, e.g.): "race" usually refers to minority groups of Americans. How American society defines race has not included international students (Lee, 2020, e.g.). Scholars have advocated for including international students in discussions about "race." Experiences from CIGS like Dua illustrate that classroom practices still need to improve by including international students into defining and discussing "race".

As for implications for global competence, without engaging with course materials, Dua's academic performance can be negatively impacted (Iskhakova, 2018). However, academic engagement and performance are important for developing career-oriented global competence (Iskhakova, 2018). Comments from several CIGS (from different parts of China) can help to explain the wide existence of CIGS' lack of understanding on topics like "race". Duncan, a doctoral student in education and from a small city in central China, said:

> [In China] there aren't many differences between different ethnicities. We have similar appearances, and our lifestyles have long blended... I understand the

> importance of discussing "race." The US has a diverse population, but I still cannot relate to what they are feeling... Race sounds like a reasonable and important variable in the US to consider in my analysis, but that's it. 'Race' is a variable that I must consider in my research, but not so much about other meanings that I can understand.

Duncan points out his perception that Chinese society is homogeneous. This perception is widespread among most Chinese students due to the power relation in curriculum, which tends to ignore minorities (Lee, 2020), of which there are over 100 million in China. Without recognizing minority groups and the diverse composition of Chinese society, CIGS like Duncan can only understand "race" as a foreign topic specific to American context. Muo, a master's student in social science and from a small city in the southern part of China, brings up a similar perception: "China is a homogeneous society, and I have not been aware of race topics and diversity issues." Experiences from Duncan and Muo illustrate that "race" can be a hard topic to understand for many CIGS, coming from an education system where curriculum fail to point out diversity in society. Dulciana, a doctoral student in education and from a large city in northern China, also shares:

> In China, we only discuss ethnicity, which [I think] is different from 'race'. Most of the different ethnicities in China look similar, and we live in similar lifestyles...I don't have enough knowledge of background in histories around race [in the US]. I cannot relate [to discussions around race] based on Chinese contexts.

Dulciana explains how "ethnicity" in China is different from "race". While American race is popularly discussed in society, most Chinese ethnicity is less recognized due to most of them have appearances and adopting lifestyles like the majority Han ethnicity groups (Dikotter, 2013). This finding echoes other studies where "race" is something specific to the US that many Chinese students find hard to relate to (Cowley & Hyams-Ssekasi, 2018; Yan & Berliner, 2011).

The above-mentioned paragraphs provide examples of several context-specific topics in classrooms (i.e., California bill, American experiences, and "race") that many CIGS feel challenged. That challenge is due to many CIGS' lack of knowledge about those topics (i.e., American experiences) and their lack of understanding of the importance of those discussions (i.e., discussion around "race").

This finding offers important implications for course design to be more inclusive. On the one hand, US university courses have not made much effort to contextualize race in a global context (Lee, 2020). Therefore, many CIGS found themselves in a disadvantaged position to discuss local topics. Courses need to offer international-based content, examples, and topics for CIGS. Even for local topics, it will facilitate CIGS' engagement if international students' standpoints are included. These institutional improvements can have important implications for CIGS' career-oriented global competence development, since high relevance of course materials can help their academic engagement and performance (Abt-Perkins et al., 2010). On the other hand, many CIGS often perceive American specific topics as being of low relevance. Those CIGS felt alienated by conversations without an understanding of the

importance of discussing certain local topics like "race." As a result, those perceptions of low relevance further distanced those CIGS from American classroom discussions and harmed their academic engagement. To address that challenge, CIGS mentioned above may need to reflect and realize if they have a bias in perceiving conversations as irrelevant or disconnected from topics (like race and ethnicity) in non-US contexts. That bias could be due to those CIGS' approaches and perceptions to American-specific topics, which is influenced by existing cultural divides between the US and China (Jiang, 2021; Silver, Devlin, et al., 2021). It is thus important for CIGS like the above to learn contextual knowledge, explore its relevance, and understand the importance of discussing local topics from diverse perspectives. Such learning is important for those CIGS' academic adjustment and particularly their development of civic-oriented global competence (Aguirre & Martinez, 2003; Ogbu, 1992).

7.2.2 Styles of Class Discussions and Problem-Solving Approaches

Besides the content focusing on local topics, many CIGS also find class styles in the US hard to adjust to, including how domestic students ask questions and take part in discussions. Murdock, a master's student in communication, shares:

> American students like to talk [in classroom discussions] whenever they have a thought, and they ask questions immediately. [While] Chinese students tend to only speak when they have essential opinions or points worth expressing or asking.

Murdock points out Chinese students take more time and thinking before expressing opinions or asking questions than American students. Moreover, several CIGS regard the questions asked by domestic students as inadequate in quality. Duncan recalls his time as a teaching assistant and how his American students asked him questions:

> I find American students to be demanding. They seek help whenever they get stuck. They ask questions with no thoughts to themselves at first... The questions-asked] are random ideas and non-essential questions that make a real point. Although it might be good if students ask questions, they are not thinking enough and exploring on their own first, before seeking help from me [as the teaching assistant for the course].

Duncan describes American students' habit of asking questions as not thoughtful. Duncan is not satisfied with their questions' qualities. Apart from the bad quality of questions asked, Mug, a master's student in Asian studies, focuses on "superficial" opinions expressed by domestic students:

> Americans take part in classroom discussions superficially, without the necessary reading preparation. They don't read much about assigned readings, while they can still talk a lot and talk well. ... American students can have fancy opinions, while nothing concrete [is in their opinions] if you carefully listen to their opinions... Their opinions are usually lengthy, which do not equal an in-depth conversation. Instead, their opinions often lack essential

> and concrete inputs. [Americans] spend so much time talking about trivial things that have no concrete opinions... I expect opinions to be insightful in classroom discussions. I hope to hear more systematic and comprehensive thinking in class.

Mug regards domestic students based on her experiences as having superficial unhelpful interpretations of reading materials. To explain why CIGS like Mug feel confused and lack appreciation of participation styles in American classrooms (i.e., unthoughtful question-asking habits, and superficial opinions expressed by domestic students), the following paragraphs analyze several reasons. First, self-confidence and limited linguistic skills can be a reason for many CIGS' hesitance in participating in class, but this has been discussed in the first section of this chapter (section 7.1). A second reason for the difficult academic engagement for some CIGS can be their different attitudes towards class discussions compared to domestic students. Muo, a master's student in social science, shares:

> American students express themselves and ask questions immediately. We [CIGS] will take some serious thought before asking questions. I take the chance to speak in classrooms seriously. I speak with extra caution. I'll plan for a while and only speak when my point has not been mentioned or my question is insightful.

CIGS like Muo regard the chance to speak in a classroom seriously. They hold ambitious standards and expect highly from the quality of the questions they ask. In contrast,

those CIGS indicate that domestic students seemed less serious or sensitive about time and boundaries in classrooms. CIGS like Dua and Muo do not understand the meaning of asking basic questions. For many domestic students, asking basic questions is a way to clarify and set a baseline in the discussion (Cho et al., 2021). Those CIGS' misunderstanding to basic questions asked in classrooms may reflect a bias on education being "high-standard", a widespread habit among Chinese people in a society full of competition (Mulvey & Wright, 2022). American universities may consider helping CIGS like Dua and Muo to better understand different styles of participation in classrooms including the significance of asking basic questions.

Another perspective to explain those CIGS' hardship in adjusting to American classroom styles can be the different ways to solve problems in classrooms in China and the US. Dua, a doctoral student in education, reflects:

> We (CIGS) have questions, and we tend to solve them by reading and searching for answers [on our own first]. [At that time, I remained silent.] We only ask for help when we cannot solve problems by ourselves, and when we indeed need the necessary help. We ask more complex questions, which take time to generate.

Dua points out the length of time taken for the problem-solving process as the reason for Americans and Chinese' different ways to ask questions in classroom discussions. Chinese take more time and try to research on their own before asking for help, compared with

domestic students who may ask basic questions. Although Dua perceives domestic students' problem-solving quick and basic, she still sees the benefits in domestic students' opinions expressed in classrooms:

> Americans usually can have long conversations [by connecting different points with each other and connecting course materials to their personal lives]. [When it's my turn to express my opinions,] My answer often is only one or a few words. I find it hard to express herself extensively and connect one point to another, as domestic students can do.

Dua appreciates domestic students' ability to express themselves. That ability can be cultivated due to American education's learner-centered pedagogy. That pedagogy adopts a bottom-up approach that respects and encourages students to express their opinions and share their experiences (Schweisfurth, 2011). In contrast, Chinese education, although trying to innovate its pedagogy, is still dominated by a traditional top-down approach. Traditional Chinese pedagogy, sometimes refers to as "bank education", regards teachers rather than students as the center of the classroom (Schweisfurth, 2011). Although appreciating domestic students to express themselves, Dua also discusses her opinions on the problems with this lengthy and diffuse style of classroom discussions:

> Classroom discussion [in China] is more bounded, which I'm used to engaging. [In China] we view research as a process to find a certain answer to scientific questions... [In American classrooms] discussion has been too diffuse. [It does]

> not focus on the main concepts. Oftentimes, it [class discussion] spreads to any relevant topics that can be connected... [I think] personal and diffuse discussions are irrelevant and too uncontrollable. They can't be quantified or clarified. I usually don't speak in class, because I don't find its meaning if we are discussing something that has no answer.

Dua reflects that China and the US have different definitions of problems in classrooms. Chinese classrooms usually focus on hard science and instrumental rationality (Wei, 2019), which aims to find solutions or answers to solve a problem. In contrast, American classrooms usually emphasize social rationality (Wei, 2019), which encourages discussions based on students' opinions and experiences that derive from their specific positionality such as socioeconomic status, ethnic group or race. Besides, standpoint theory can also be relevant to explain the distinctions between American and Chinese classrooms. Standpoint theory is a critical method to reflect and achieve social justice in the US (Rolin, 2009), which is widely taught in the US, especially in higher education (Schweisfurth, 2011). However, CIGS, like Dua, are not familiar with understandings around "standpoint based" discussions. As a result, the American approach seems unfamiliar and uncontrollable for CIGS like Dua, and they have a hard time adapting to this "standpoint based" way of defining research and learning. Dua further shares her concerns:

> Classroom discussions were far away from the central topic. Everyone has different experiences, while I hope we can discuss something more logical.

> [Thus] I can learn more efficiently... I can't maintain my attention. I detach myself from classroom conversations.

Dua believes that there can be problems with only discussing subjective experiences in class. Studies also show that Chinese approaches to problem-solving and research tend to be based on "scientific epistemological beliefs". Quantitative and empirical studies have been heavily emphasized as a more popular way to solve problems and conduct studies in China (Wei, 2019). Therefore, many CIGS usually do not appreciate lengthy conversations that are "conversational and personal-focused" by domestic students. Another student, Mui, a master's student in public policy, shares her complaints:

> Everyone is sharing subjective experiences in classroom discussions. [As a result,] For something that can be solved in half an hour, I must stay there for 2 hours. People are checking in and discussing unrelated personal issues... They [American group-mates] liked to speak and extend on a topic to somewhere unrelated. They speak one hundred sentences, while nothing is on track to solve the problems at hand.

Mui's quotes reveal a distinction between a problem-solving approach versus a critical approach to classroom discussions. Mui is used to the problem-solving approach that is "quicker" and "directly related to the issue at hand". In contrast, what domestic students present is a critical approach which is regarded as central for cultivating critical thinking skills, an important skill to deal with social issues and achieve democracy in the US (Gross-

man et al., 2015; Wasner, 2016). Based on her standard of "solving problems efficiently", Mui regarded the American personal focused classroom style as inefficient. Holding standards (i.e., efficiency) from her Chinese experiences and training (i.e., scientific approach), Dua finds it hard to adjust to a personal focused and conversational style of classroom discussions.

Other studies (Schweisfurth, 2011; Zhong et al., 2019) also show differences in class discussion styles between the US and China. As revealed in the above, Chinese education does not emphasize standpoints and diffuse thinking that highlights students' reflections of their subjective experiences and the connection and application of knowledge in their lives. Rather, Chinese education is usually scientific and straightforward in solving problems. The focuses of Chinese education are on instrumental rationality and problem solving, rather than incorporating social rationality and critical thinking skills like the American classrooms (especially in the social sciences and humanities fields). Efficiency, rather than comprehensiveness or applicability, is the emphasis in Chinese education.

The above-mentioned paragraphs present a few CIGS' confusions on question-asking and expressing opinions of domestic students. These challenges can be attributed to those CIGS' holding standards from Chinese classrooms (i.e., efficiency and solving problems). As a result, many CIGS have limited understandings and narrow-mindedness that stop them from embracing a more personal, free, and interactive classroom. Civic-oriented global competence can be relevant here, because being flexible with diverse cultural styles of behavior (i.e., different atmospheres and behaviors in classrooms) is a key step to cultivating cul-

tural understanding (Cho et al., 2021; Yan & Berliner, 2011). It can be important for the above-mentioned CIGS to critically reflect on their experiences in their home culture and realize the potential problems and cultural divides between American and Chinese classroom standards. That reflection and realization may also help facilitate those CIGS' cross-cultural understandings and civic-oriented global competence.

7.3 Confusing Social Norms and Dissimilar Backgrounds

This section further discusses CIGS' cultural distances between Chinese and American students. The discussion has two parts. The first part focuses on some CIGS' worries about American conversation norms in social settings in the US. For example, a few CIGS are confused with American activism and what they describe as "progressive conversations." Without an understanding of discussions of cultures and norms, those CIGS have limited engagement in social conversations with domestic students. Learning contextual knowledge about social interaction norms can thus be important for CIGS to inclusively engage in social activities and develop civic-oriented global competence. The second part discusses several CIGS' lack of common language with domestic students due to different interests, experiences, and cultural backgrounds. Without shared interests and background knowledge, social interactions with domestic students have been difficult for those CIGS. However, social interaction with people from dissimilar backgrounds is important for developing career-oriented global competence.

7.3.1 Social Norms in Interactions

This section illustrates how cultural norms can be related to some CIGS' difficulty in social interactions around sensitive topics. It also discusses those CIGS' confusion with progressive culture and activism in the US. Many CIGS believe political correctness is a norm that people in the US must obey. With this perception, social interactions involving political correctness are regarded as highly risky for those CIGS. For example, Mae, a master's student in public policy, shared:

> [According to a Chinese saying] Speak more, risk more. [You may offend others or touch controversial issues if they involve too many discussions] ... I'm extra careful with words I use. For example, I know that undocumented students could not be called illegal students.

CIGS like Mui want to make sure that they are not being offensive in their language or behaviors to other groups of people, especially those cultures that they are not familiar with. A few CIGS disclose that they have been extra careful with political correctness studies in the US. Dan, a first-year doctoral student in material engineering, shares that he hears many rumors about how strict American politically correct culture is:

> I hear rules here [in the US] are strict. I hear dire consequences when breaching political correctness. [Therefore,] Laws and morality norms have intimidated me. [I hear stories where] international students, even professors, can be expelled from the US if they mess up with sensitive issues. I must be careful not

> to mess up with issues relevant to political correctness. [For example,] I have been very wary about not commenting on another group of people.

Dan hears examples of international students expelled from the US due to offending social norms. With those stories he heard, Dan is cautious about any discussions around social issues:

> When I talk to Asian students, I know the boundaries and how to speak based on cultural norms. However, when talking to American students, it's hard for me to make sure I can understand their facial expressions, to sense their attitude, and thus figure out their meaning underneath... I tend to avoid discussing sensitive topics like politics. I may offend other people and get myself into trouble.

Not knowing all the rules and consequences, CIGS, like Dan, are uncomfortable providing their opinions and ideas publicly, and they feel safer protecting themselves when hiding their opinions. As another example, Mui, a master's student in public policy, shared: "Regarding opinion-based discussions, it is common for me to follow the mainstream and stay silent for their own opinions." Mui had a habit of remaining silent when her opinion was different from the mainstream. Mui hides her opinion because she is afraid of being in a minority group. This can be related to a lack of feeling of safety, which Dua, a doctoral student in education, elaborated:

> For safety reasons, if most people take the other side, I will question my own

> position. Most of the time I change my position, believing maybe I am wrong... For times that I am sure that I have the right answer, I still won't speak out because of not daring to take the opposing side [with the rest majority of classmates] .... I am afraid that I may not be able to explain myself, and then that will cause misunderstanding. Hiding my opinions is safer and more comfortable for me.

Dua believes that hiding her opinions is a safer option, even when hearing something she does not agree with. To explain Dua's unwillingness to express opposing opinions, it may be helpful to mention that Chinese education training tend to focus on discipline and Chinese society emphasizes harmony (Zhong et al., 2019). Coming from cultural traditions focusing on "discipline" and "harmony", it can be common for CIGS like Dua to intentionally choose to be in the majority group by agreeing with the mainstream. However, cautiousness with social norms of CIGS like Dan and Dax limits their communication with domestic students. Their fear about not knowing American social norms limited their social learning (i.e., discussing social issues) for civic-oriented global competence.

To further illustrate several CIGS' difficulty with engaging with American social norms, the following section focuses on a specific confusion of those CIGS around progressivism and activism in the US. Progressivism and activism in this study refer to a culture that emphasizes personal rights and individual preferences. Dealing with progressive opinions and reactions from domestic students has confused many CIGS in their social lives. A few CIGS are confused about the strong positions that domestic students often take when

dealing with controversial issues. For example, Mussina, a master's student in social sciences, expresses her concern about her classmates having extreme positions:

> I saw extremists in classes who blamed everything on colonization or racism. It's limited to taking sides. Taking sides blocks one's eyes from seeing and hearing the other side's reasoning. A neutral position can be best, since people can take visions from both sides.

Mussina points out limitations in taking sides, since having a narrow perspective to explain social problems only considers factors of race and colonization. Mussina's concerns can be influenced by the Chinese traditional style of thinking in a balanced way. Coming from a culture that emphasizes harmony (Keller & Loewenstein, 2011), CIGS like Mussina, usually are trained to have neutral and balanced positions towards social issues. It thus becomes a cultural shock to many CIGS when observing American peers taking strong positions and taking sides. Mui, a master's student in public policy, shares similar concerns. She worries about perspectives derived only from one's own standpoint:

> American students focus on their group's benefits. They [American students] do not consider other aspects or other groups' benefits. That lack of consideration may limit their perspectives.

Mui deems analyzing from one's own standpoint as inadequate. CIGS like Mui are used to organizing their thoughts, considering multiple perspectives, aiming to make their

opinion comprehensive and harmonious, instead of transformative. Taoism, a traditional philosophy that is still impactful for modern Chinese education, can be relevant here. Taoism regards positions "in-the-middle" to be the most comprehensive, especially in its function to keep a harmonious society (Keller & Loewenstein, 2011).

Apart from those CIGS' confusions around domestic students' extreme positions focusing on the standpoint of one's social group, other CIGS also cannot understand domestic students' reactions and opinions to sensitive circumstances. For example, Davidson, a doctoral student in immunology, shares an incident where he finds his American lab-mate to be "too progressive or sensitive":

> It was a Halloween party with friends in my lab. I encouraged everyone to wear a funny wig. Without thinking much, I put it in one of my colleagues' heads – he is my good friend.... When I put this wig on my friend's head, my American colleagues stood up and accused me of harassment. He said I forced my friend to wear the wig without asking for his permission in the first place. I think, as good friends, I do not need to ask for his permission – it's too polite and close friends don't do that. ... On the contrary, I think my American lab-mate is too serious and sensitive [on this issue].

In this anecdote, Davidson deems his action (putting a funny wig on his college's head) as normal interaction between close friends. However, his action can be "inappropriate and forceful" as interpreted by his American lab-mates. Davidson's lack of understanding of

his lab-mate's reaction can be due to a lack of access to training and experiences around protecting one's personal rights in his education. Training focusing on personal rights is not common in China, while it is a must-have standard in American education (Rolin, 2009).

This section discusses many CIGS' cautiousness around political correctness and confusions about progressivism and activism in the US. Being cautious about social norms (i.e., political correctness) and lacking understandings of progressivism and activism in the US, those CIGS find it hard to express their opinions bravely and freely. Consequently, those CIGS has limited discussion and learning of social issues in classrooms, which are of essence for developing civic-oriented global competence (Wall-Bassett et al., 2018). Those CIGS also limit themselves in expressing their opinions in social settings, which is an important part of facilitating cross-cultural understanding that is an important component of civic-oriented global competence (Zhai, 2002). In terms of implications for higher education institutions, lessons around social norms, political correctness, and American activism can be helpful for CIGS to understand the culture and overcome their limitations in social discussions. The following section further explores CIGS' difficulty in building social relationships due to cultural distances between some CIGS and domestic students.

7.3.2 Dissimilar Background in Social Interactions

This section discusses a lack of shared contextual knowledge in social settings between some CIGS and domestic students, including dissimilar interests and backgrounds. An important aspect of developing global competence is adequate social support (Zhai, 2002; Zhu, 2017).

However, those CIGS who are socially challenged do not have enough social support. The lack of social support is especially serious for several CIGS during their first few months arriving in the US. Dua, a doctoral student in education, shared:

> I had a tough transition during those first few months [coming to the US]. [During those days,] my family, friends, and all my personal relationships were fading away at a very fast speed. [In contrast,] I have no new relationships built up [in the US]. I feel a sense of failure and a lack of belonging lingering around me all the time.

Dua does not have any social relationships during the first several months of transitioning into the US. These feelings of loneliness and lack of a sense of belonging are shared by Darmarcus:

> For the first few months in the US, [I feel] I was living on a lonely island. My new friendship has not been built up, while my old friendships are fainting away [because of distance between me and them]. ... I felt lonely.

Dua and Darmarcus describe their struggles maintaining friendships in the first several months of coming to the US. Lacking friendship negatively influences the development of CIGS like Dua and Darmarcus, in that they have no support when they need help. Mua shared:

> I feel upset about not being able to build new relationships in the US.... When I had a question in class, I used to simply ask a friend to confirm if something

was right. However, this is different when I do not have any friends. Friends who I feel comfortable asking questions.

Mua' experiences show how a lack of close friends in the classroom not only hurts her sense of belonging, but also her academic development, which is important for developing career-oriented global competence (Zhu, 2017). Institutions may offer institutional services to help CIGS transition in the first few months. Having program events, such as networking events, ice-breakers, and kickoff events at the beginning of their program, can help the above-mentioned CIGS build the necessary social relationships they need.

Examples above discussed several CIGS' lack of social relationships, especially during the first few months. The following analyzes reasons for those challenges, including those CIGS' cultural distance with domestic students, and their unfamiliarity with contextual knowledge about American culture in social settings. The cultural distance between China and the US can be illustrated by Mua, a master's student in public policy, who tries to explain this distant relationship:

> American students are not interested in being friends with me because of our dissimilar backgrounds. It's hard for us to relate to and understand what is being discussed in each other's context... Others, like Japanese students, can be relatable more easily for domestic students. Maybe because they have similar social systems, but Chinese students do not have the same relevance.

Mua describes her distant relationship with domestic students, and she compares it

with American classmates' closer relationship with Japanese students. She attributed this phenomenon to different distances between cultures. Cultural distance is a concept used to describe how two cultures are alike (Bochner & Hesketh, 1994). International students from different cultural backgrounds have different cultural distances between their home and host country (Shen & Chen, 2020). For many CIGS, they have a distant relationship with domestic students due to the cultural divides between the US and China (Silver, Devlin, et al., 2021). In the time when the twenty-two CIGS in this study were interviewed (i.e., 2019), US-China rivalry could lead to more distant relationships between those CIGS and domestic students (Lee, 2020). Dissimilar backgrounds and interests also challenge a few CIGS' interaction with domestic students. Mui shared:

> The strangeness of American culture and conversation topics makes me hard to find close friends. ... I like those communications with American students, but I feel tired – I cannot relate as much and can't be one of their friend circles... I felt fake, just like pretending an awful food is delicious in front of a cook.

Dua points out her having different interests and preferences with domestic students. Those differences make social interactions energy-consuming, especially when conversing or eating together about topics they were not interested in. That finding aligns with previous studies where cross-cultural communication can be hard due to conversant's different interests and lifestyles (Fantini, 2018). A lack of shared interest also challenges the exchange of ideas and deep conversation between some CIGS and domestic students. Macdowell reflects:

> It is not English language, but backgrounds and experiences [that challenged my relationship with domestic students]. Deep conversations or close friends happen only between those with similar backgrounds and experiences. ... I don't understand why they laugh or why they are so excited about discussing certain things.

Muo shares a similar experience:

> I wanted to integrate and engage with my American friends, while I could not because of cultural barriers. We have different interests and basic knowledge of American culture. ... We don't share the same cultural knowledge, such as which movie star we like, which TV show we watch. We don't share a common cultural language.

Examples of Macdowell and Muo show a lack of cultural knowledge that makes CIGS like them unable to fully engage in conversations with domestic students and build close relationships with them. Apart from cultural backgrounds differences, a few CIGS mention experiences and lifestyles as another feature they do not share. Mu shares:

> American students return to graduate school after years of working, and they are usually older than me by at least 3 years. We don't usually have a common language or experiences to talk about. I and my peers have few things in common regarding age or life experiences.

Experiences of Mu demonstrate some CIGS' challenge on social interactions due to different life experiences compared with domestic students. Other differences illustrated by other CIGS include different defining of personal intimacy between those CIGS and domestic students, and dissimilar interests between those CIGS and domestic students. As a result, those CIGS have limited opportunities to explore US culture via social interactions. That limitation further challenged some CIGS' professional network and thus their development of career-oriented global competence (Ngai et al., 2020). Those social challenges also reflected those CIGS' lack of sense of belonging and social support that are important environmental factors for developing career- and civic-oriented global competence (Martirosyan et al., 2019).

This section discussed the lack of shared cultural backgrounds that blocked many CIGS' opportunity for building close social relationships with domestic students. That challenge also led to those CIGS' lack of social support, especially during the first few months of transitioning to the US. However, social support and interactions are important for developing social support for those CIGS' career- and civic-oriented global competence (Martirosyan et al., 2019).

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter discussed three challenges in relation to CIGS' global competence development, as shown in Figure 7.1. The first is linguistic skills that challenge many CIGS' cross-cultural communication and interactions in both classrooms and social settings. The second is contextual knowledge that challenged several CIGS in understanding American topics in class-

rooms and engaging in American classroom styles. The last is cultural distances between CIGS and domestic students that challenged a few CIGS to understand social norms and build friendships with domestic students.

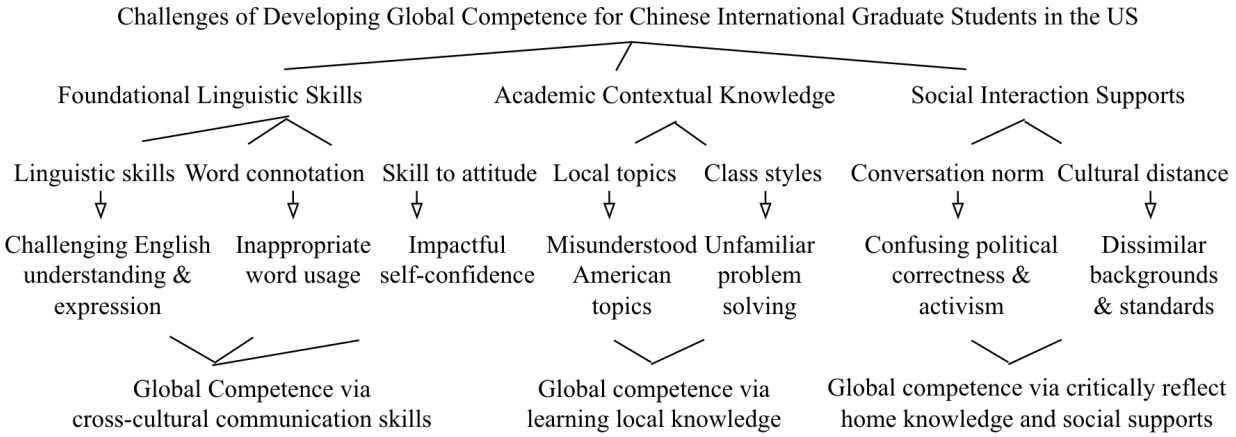

Figure 7.1: Challenges of CIGS in Developing Global Competence

The above-mentioned findings demonstrate a need for many CIGS to negotiate different academic, political, and social experiences. As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, cultural negotiation is a balance between learning and reflecting, and negotiation is an important process for developing global competence (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). Informed by the adapted bi-cultural model, I find that CIGS who are challenged on a social level during their study abroad need to learn about new local cultures (i.e., linguistic skills, American contextual knowledge, and social interests). In the meantime, they need to reflect on their home cultures (i.e., Chinese classroom culture and social philosophies), to realize the potential cultural divide between China and the US, and to balance their local (i.e., US) and home (i.e., China) experiences.

Guided by the individual-institutional interactions from the adapted bi-cultural model, this chapter also helped to reveal specific structural barriers that many CIGS encounter. Those challenges may limit CIGS' opportunity to develop global competence. For example, a few CIGS face differential growth opportunities given their linguistic skills, contextual knowledge, and cultural distances and divides. The absence of culturally relevant pedagogy in class content (e.g., American specific topics) has limited those CIGS' development of career-oriented global competence due to emphasis on the learning of local knowledge. The missing connection for understanding social norms and cultural backgrounds has limited those CIGS' development of civic-oriented global competence which depends on critical reflection on home knowledge. Those structural limitations need to be addressed in US higher education.

Regarding the implications of these findings, revealing CIGS' academic and social challenges can provide insights into international students' support and help CIGS to develop global competence. Specifically, understanding difficulties experienced by CIGS participants in this study, from perspectives of both individual skills deficiency and institutional and structural barriers, can encourage faculty and staff to design more diverse academic and social activities. These findings can help higher education administrators create a more inclusive campus climate. To cope with challenges discussed above, the next chapter will analyze different strategies from individuals and institutions that have transformed many CIGS' challenges into opportunities to develop global competence in classroom discussions, teamwork, as well as social relationships.

CHAPTER 8

CIGS' Strategies to Develop Global Competence in the US

This chapter discusses and analyzes strategies to support Chinese International Graduate Students (CIGS) to cope with cultural negotiation challenges in their academic and social lives in the US. The chapter addresses the following questions: 1) What strategies have helped CIGS cope with academic and social challenges (including discussions and group-work in classrooms and cross-cultural interactions with American peers in daily lives)? 2) How might those strategies relate to CIGS' career- and civic- oriented global competence development? As discussed in Chapter 3, career global competence refers to a combination of attitudes, values, knowledge, and skills applied to work successfully with others from different cultural backgrounds. Civic-oriented global competence refers to abilities to live inclusively and peacefully with heterogeneous groups of people (Zhou & Green, 2022b).

I organized this chapter into three sections. The first section discusses strategies for engaging CIGS in classrooms and academic lives. On the one hand, recognition of cultural differences in academic settings (i.e., communication, teaching, and advising) can be the

first step for some CIGS to cope with the challenges in negotiating those cultural differences. On the other hand, institutional strategy, such as professors' healthy advising styles (i.e., respect CIGS' independence and maintain healthy working relationships with students), also helps some CIGS to engage academically. Academic engagement in the classroom is important for improving those CIGS' academic performance and cultivating knowledge and skills that are important for future career success and their career-oriented global competence development (Liu-Farrer et al., 2021; Mohajeri Norris & Gillespie, 2009). Second, this study discusses strategies for engaging CIGS in discussions and collaborations with domestic students. Strategies that work for some CIGS include: developing discussion topics of high-relevance and building trust in American classrooms. These strategies of facilitating CIGS' academic discussions and collaborations are important, because discussion and group-work have been important instructional activities for career- and civic-oriented global competence development (Hong, 2010). Third, this project discusses a few CIGS' strategies to build social support in the US. Besides seeking friendship from Chinese students, some CIGS also make friends with domestic students. The following strategies are used for those CIGS. They reach out in social, academic, and career settings to gain cultural knowledge and experiences of the US. They also engage in cross-cultural interactions with understandings of opinion differences and after practices of English language skills. With the above-mentioned strategies, those CIGS build social support in the US, and create an environment beneficial for their civic-oriented global competence development (Cho et al., 2021; Moskal & Schweisfurth, 2018, e.g.).

8.1 Strategies for Engaging Classrooms and Advising Styles

This section discusses the process of recognizing cultural differences (in teaching and communication styles between Chinese and American classrooms) and supports (healthy working relationship and advising styles) from professors as two strategies for some CIGS to understand, adjust, and engage in classrooms in the US.

8.1.1 Recognizing Cultural Differences in Interactive and Progressive Classrooms

There are several cultural differences in American classrooms recognized by CIGS. That recognition have helped some CIGS develop flexibility and positive attitudes for their transition to American classrooms, as well as cultivate cross-cultural sensitivity, which can facilitate one's career- and civic- oriented global competence (Bennett & Hammer, 2011; Cheung et al., 2011). The discussion in this section focuses more on the implications for career-oriented competence while the following section emphasizes more on the implications for civic-oriented competence.

A first cultural difference recognized by several CIGS in American classrooms is the interactive teaching style. For instance, Mae, a master's student in biostatistics, shares an incident she encountered about teaching style differences in American classrooms. The incident happened when Mae was working as a teaching assistant:

> Changing [from lecture-based to discussion-based teaching] is uneasy. [I didn't

> expect] students to raise up their hands [during my lecture to ask me questions]. I didn't know how to react.

In the incident above, Mae recognizes that her lecture-based teaching style, which she learnt in China, seems to not work well in American classrooms. Recognizing cultural differences in teaching style, Mae generated a motivation for change. Mae developed flexibility and transformation after her recognition of cultural differences in teaching styles. The strategy of recognizing cultural differences is thus important for generating one's qualities (e.g., flexibility and motivation) which are important for one's career success in cross-cultural settings. The strategy of recognizing cultural differences brings learning opportunities for some CIGS in developing relevant qualities for career-oriented global competence. Duncan, a doctoral student in education, shares the benefits and progress he gained from the interactive style of American classrooms:

> [After recognizing the interactive nature of the classroom,] I share ideas and suggestions [in American classrooms]. Those interactions help my research improvement... I feel my ideas are being heard, and I can make progress effectively after an open interaction with teachers and peers.

Duncan attributes his research progress to interactive- and discussion- based classrooms. He appreciates his American peers' team support and the smooth communication among them. Duncan's experiences illustrate how recognizing cultural differences contributes to his academic engagement in interactive classrooms. Duncan's engagement then facilitates

his knowledge production and benefited his academic progress. With improvement in his academic performance, Duncan's recognition of cultural differences in American classrooms becomes an effective strategy for the development of his career-oriented global competence.

Apart from recognizing differences in teaching styles, another important cultural difference in the classroom is the open and direct way of communicating and advocating. The recognition is important for some CIGS' academic engagement and their cross-cultural interactions. To illustrate this point, let's look at how Muo, a master's student in the social sciences, recognizes the cultural difference in communication styles between herself and her classmates in the US:

> I express my opinion in an indirect [tactful, gentle] way [to show politeness when confronting opposing opinions in public spaces] ... In US classrooms, opposing views are openly expressed... I need to retrain myself for a more explicit way of communication.

Muo realizes that the ways she communicates are indirect, which can be a habit cultivated due to her training and education in China. Harmony and humility are emphasized in the Chinese society and education, in which students are trained to be polite and considerate instead of openly advocating for their opinions (Schweisfurth, 2011). Muo recognizes that her indirectness does not fit in the open discussion classroom atmosphere in the US. With the recognition of cultural differences in relation to different educational systems, Muo decides to "retrain" herself to be more courageous and embrace an open discussion in US

classrooms. Here, the strategy of recognizing cultural differences encourages Muo to discover and reflect on her lived experiences in different cultural contexts. The processes of critically reflecting on one's cultural habits have also been regarded as an important process for developing career-oriented global competence (Hirschauer et al., 2019; Wasner, 2016). Meanwhile, observing domestic students advocating for their beliefs in classrooms inspires a few CIGS in their own advocacy. For example, Mua, a master's student in public policy, shares:

> My [American] classmates always actively advocate for their group of people. I feel touched. [From observing their advocacy,] I learned to take opportunities to advocate for myself and international student groups.

Mua observes domestic students' advocacy in American classrooms and finds advocacy to be a touching and learning moment. This can be because advocacy and open communication are uncommon in traditional Chinese classrooms (Vansteenkiste et al., 2005). For example, professors in Chinese universities approach teaching by lecturing rather than open discussions (Vansteenkiste et al., 2005). With the strategy of actively reflecting and recognizing the cultural differences in communication advocacy, Mua develops the courage to advocate for herself and for the CIGS group. The strategy of recognizing cultural differences improved Mua's cultural understanding of advocacy. The strategy also helped CIGS like Mua to integrate into American classroom culture, where activism is commonly observed (Service, 2019). Cultural understanding, the ability to integrate in American classrooms, and

the critical reflections towards one's own culture, are all important skills for the development of career-oriented global competence (Su & Harrison, 2016).

The above illustrated strategies for some CIGS to engage in classrooms. Those strategies include recognizing classroom differences in interactive teaching and activism in communications. From the experiences of those CIGS, it can be seen that recognizing cultural differences can be a strategy to help some CIGS adjust to interactive academic settings in the US, facilitate their academic progress, their cultural understanding of activism, and improve their skills and outcomes for developing career-oriented global competence.

8.1.2 Professors Advising Style and Working Relationship

The previous section discussed some CIGS' recognition of cultural differences as a potential strategy for their academic engagement and career-oriented global competence development. However, while the strategy (i.e., recognizing cultural differences) is individual-based, the field also needs institutional-based perspectives to comprehensively support CIGS' global competence development (English, 2012). The following paragraphs illustrate the importance of having supportive professors who can provide respectful, healthy, and beneficial environments for CIGS' academic, personal, and career development. This section will show how professors' support is an effective institutional-based strategy for supporting many CIGS' global competence development.

To explain this institutional-based strategy, this section starts with professors' advising styles that focus on the student. This advising style can be explained well in cases

where several CIGS compare professors' advising styles in China versus the US. Damarcus, a doctoral student in bioinformatics, describes his perceptions of different advising styles in China versus in the US:

> In China, doctoral students' research is more about listening to what the professor says, and completing tasks assigned. In the US, [during research], I'm the one who initiated the research. I come up with my own ideas and plans and figure out how to achieve it.

Damarcus reveals a commonly observed experience that's shared by many CIGS, which is different levels of independence in doing research in the US and China. Although not applying to all, professors in China can have more control over research projects (Vansteenkiste et al., 2005). That phenomenon can be due to the competitive higher education environment in China. The academic competition pressures professors in China in doing research and producing publications (Vansteenkiste et al., 2005). As a result, professors in China ask their students to implement research plans, rather than explore the research with independence. The former approach is believed to be more efficient to complete a research project. In contrast, from this study, a few CIGS reflect that their professors in the US usually allow them to explore research projects on their own. That approach can reflect an independent advising style. As Darmarcus indicates, a flexible, self-initiated, and relaxed process of doing research benefits his personal development.

To illustrate the benefit of professors' advising style that respects independence, Dax,

a doctoral student in materials engineering, shares: "Not relying on anyone but my own way to solve problems or counter challenges. I gained a lot from this process [of learning to work independently]." Having independence can facilitate personal development for CIGS like Dax. Here is another example from May, a master's student in epidemiology, who shares:

> I feel my ideas are being respected. My advisor will ask for my inputs and invest time to discuss them [my inputs] ... I feel treated as a colleague to my professors who can contribute to the discussion [not merely students that only have to listen].

Dax and May appreciate being treated as independent researchers and having their ideas respected and trusted. Those appreciations contribute to those CIGS' positive attitudes towards academic engagement. As studies (Blumenfeld et al., 2006; Mikhaylov, 2014) have revealed, independent research and working experiences, along with adequate support from professors, can effectively facilitate the development of one's self-efficacy. A high level of self-efficacy enables students to make more contributions to research and benefit their future career success in terms of career-oriented global competence. Independent problem-solving skills and personal development developed under this type of advising style are important parts of career-oriented global competence (Vance et al., 2011; Wasner, 2016).

Apart from professors' advising styles, another aspect of the institutional based strategy is a healthy student-professor working relationship. The importance of a respectful and healthy working relationship can be seen in the experiences of Damarcus, a doctoral student

in bioinformatics. Dax compares the differences in working relationships in China versus in the US:

> In China, the lab's major professor is the boss. Our boss [professor] rules how students contribute to the lab [like determining a student's working hours and assigned tasks]. [In contrast,] professors here [in the US] give students' independence, and respect students' time and efforts.

Damarcus feels he has more rights, respect, and care from professors in the US regarding his time of work. That differs from the student-professor working relationship in China, since professors have more control over students' work time and tasks. As mentioned, professors' control of students in China can be firstly because of intensive competition in research outputs in Chinese universities (Mulvey & Wright, 2022), which speeds up the working process and intensifies the student-professor working relationship. Students' lack of control over their work can also be due to the less developed labor work environment in China (Burke & Cooper, 2008). University regulations have not been specific about protecting students' working time and workload. Neither do universities in China detail principles for professors to work with students. Thus, a strategy that may support CIGS' working environment is to have institutional regulations protecting students' rights in working and to have institutional principles for healthy professors-students' working relationships. In terms of how regulations in the US protect working relationships between students and professors. Dua, a doctoral student in education, shares:

> It's amazing to have my [working] time and rate negotiable with my advisor [in the US]. If there's anything that needs to be done out of our working hours, we may refuse. Rules and regulations protect students [workers].

Dua attributes the healthy working environment to rules and regulations around labor rights. With institutional regulatory support, CIGS like Dua feel protected. That feeling of safety gives those CIGS more power and courage to explore a balanced life, an important factor for comprehensive development of global competence (Bochner & Hesketh, 1994; Levecque et al., 2017). A respected working relationship with professors also creates a mentally healthy environment for those CIGS to mediate their stresses in academic lives. This can be further exemplified by what Dax shares:

> My current advisor is not pushy and is very nice. I feel more relaxed, less fast paced, and more respectful in relationships with [my current] professors [in the US]. [Independence and flexibility] will help my personal development.

Dax appreciates a flexible, respected, and relaxing working relationship with professors. Echoing Dax's experiences, other studies also show that moderate levels of stress can help students' academic achievements (Yan & Berliner, 2009), and thus the development of career-oriented global competence.

The paragraphs above illustrate professors' support that can facilitate CIGS' development of global competence. Many CIGS in this study share positive experiences about their student-professor working relationships and their professors' advising styles. Those sup-

port from professors facilitate those CIGS' personal abilities, mediate their stress in academic lives, which can lead to better academic performances and a balanced life. Those benefits contribute to those CIGS' comprehensive development and the development of career-oriented global competence (Li et al., 2012; Oliver et al., 1999).

8.2 Strategies for Engaging Conversations with Domestic Students

As discussed in Chapter 7, many CIGS have experienced challenges to engage in classroom discussions with domestic students. To cope with this challenge, I discuss several potential strategies, including cultivating CIGS' positive attitudes towards group work, building trust relationships in classrooms, and developing CIGS' internal responsibility with highly relevant discussion topics. Those strategies, as illustrated below, help many CIGS' cross-cultural interactions with domestic students, which can facilitate the development of civic-oriented global competence (Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2013).

8.2.1 Positive Attitudes Toward Group-work

This study found an effective strategy that may cultivate CIGS' positive attitudes towards group-work, namely to encourage CIGS to reflect and compare American versus Chinese classroom collaboration approaches. We can see this point illustrated by Mua, a master's student in public policy. After comparing the US and American approaches to group work,

Mua develops an appreciation towards group work in the US:

> [In Chinese classrooms] we avoid having any [academically] weak students in groups. [For example] we don't want international students because they speak slowly, which may decrease our group's work quality. [In contrast,] groups here [in the US] appreciate diversity. I [as an international student] feel welcomed [by my group members]. We each have different strengths to learn from each other.

From Dua's experiences, grouping in China seems selective and result-oriented, while US teams are more about inclusiveness and the process. This can be due to the different cultural environments in China versus US that cultivate distinctive awareness of the value in diversity. In the US, diversity is highly advocated due to the diverse nature of its population and the society's massive education of post-structuralism (Aguirre & Martinez, 2003; Gurin et al., 2002; Silver, Fetterolf, et al., 2021). In China, more emphasis is put on the traditional collectivism philosophy of harmony, while unique characteristics of individuals (or diversity) are less discussed (English, 2012). Neoliberalism also exacerbates the situation, including elitism and the intensive competitions at universities (Olssen, 2021). With neoliberal elitism, students in China are likely to take a result-oriented approach to collaboration and consisting of groups with selectivity rather than diversity.

From this cultural background, Dua encounters starkly different experiences in the US. Dua indicates that she seems to expand her learning by working with diverse group

mates in US classrooms. Studies also show that an inclusive group containing students from different backgrounds creates opportunities for students to expand visions and learn from multiple perspectives (Bochner & Hesketh, 1994). Davidson, a doctoral student in immunology, also develops a sense of appreciation after comparing the Chinese versus American group work approaches:

> [Rather than focusing on grades;] American students care about discussions and the progress of the learning. Collaborations are less result-oriented, but more about helping each other expand our views to understand the problem.

Davidson distinguishes the process-oriented versus outcome-oriented characteristics of US and Chinese collaboration groups. Davidson indicates his appreciation of the learning processes in American groups. Studies also show that a process-oriented approach towards learning is more effective than merely outcome-oriented learning (Wei, 2019). Students are usually better able to understand the knowledge and retain and apply their knowledge in their future lives (Wei, 2019). With a positive attitude and appreciation towards group work in the US, CIGS, like Dua and Davidson, experience positive changes and learning opportunities from collaboration experiences in US classrooms. The benefits of group collaboration in American classrooms can be seen in experiences from May, a master's student in epidemiology. May shares:

> My attitude towards homework changed [after working in a process-oriented group]. I no longer hustle for the answer, but learn to be patient with the

> progress... I used to think myself a burden to the group, while due to the collaboration process and encouragement from peers, I feel more confident.

May learned patience and positive attitudes towards collaboration from the process of working with groups in US classrooms. The feedback and endorsement provided by American peers also makes May feel respected, from which she gains self-confidence. Those benefits from process-oriented group work echo what other studies find. A healthy, collaborative, and process-oriented learning environment can help students increase motivation, enthusiasm, and confidence towards learning (Mikhaylov, 2014; Wei, 2019). Literature has also discussed how having a positive attitude towards group work can help students' engagement and better group collaboration (Barczak et al., 2010). Comparing cultural differences collaboration approaches and gaining positive learning attitudes towards collaboration in the US, is thus helpful for developing civic-oriented global competence (Barczak et al., 2010; Dzionek-Kozlowska & Rehman, 2017).

The section above illustrates how positive attitudes towards group work are developed when some CIGS compare American versus Chinese grouping and collaboration approaches. Working in groups has brought learning opportunities for CIGS above and has been effective in helping those CIGS to develop confidence, patience, and appreciation towards diversity. Working with peers from diverse backgrounds also helps those CIGS' comprehensive learning, an important part of developing civic-oriented global competence (Barczak et al., 2010; Dzionek-Kozlowska & Rehman, 2017).

8.2.2 Trusts Relationship for Conversations

As mentioned in Chapter 8, many CIGS are unwilling or feeling unsafe to engage in discussions of sensitive social issues. The following paragraphs discuss strategies for those CIGS to engage in cross-cultural interactions in classrooms. The first strategy is building trust between CIGS and domestic students. Trust is important for many CIGS, as they tend to be more willing to disclose complex opinions in a close and trusted relationship. For example, Damarcus, a doctoral student in bioinformatics, shares:

> I have a clear boundary [of sharing ideas]. I [only] talk [about contradictory issues, such as political comments] to close friends. I feel safe and I trust them. [I suppose] they will understand my opinions and where my opinions come from.

Damarcus only discloses opinions on contradictory issues in front of friends he trusts. Similar findings are shown in studies that people tend to better express their opinions more extensively in front of a small group of people that they have a close relationship with (Gareis, 2012; Keller et al., 1998). Classroom discussions under trust relationships can therefore encourage CIGS like Damarcus to discuss issues that they regard as contradictory or sensitive (like political and civic issues). Those discussions are important to facilitate the depth and complexity of the conversation, which are important to cultivate critical thinking for the development of CIGS' civic-oriented global competence (Zhu, 2017).

To further discuss the benefits of in-depth conversations between CIGS with domestic

students, let's look at how sharing complex opinions brings learning opportunities for several CIGS to diversify their ways of thinking. Dulciana, a doctoral student in education, brings an illustrative example. Dulciana shares:

> I was initially shocked to accept [and understand progressivism when discussing with domestic students], [but] I trust them, and we are close [which helps me] to engage in discussions of race. [In discussions of race,] I'm inspired to think about my position and the position of international students in American society. Discussions about minority groups help me understand unique identities, labels, and positionalities in society.

Based on a trust relationship, Dulciana finds opportunities to discuss a diverse range of issues (e.g., "race"). She learns from the different opinions that domestic students have towards those issue. For example, discussions of race from diverse perspectives inspire Dulciana to critically reflect about positionalities in society. A trust relationship thus helps CIGS, like Dualciana, to engage in discussions of complex issues to develop necessary cross-cultural understanding and critical thinking, that are important components of civic-oriented global competence (Zhu, 2017). It is important to reveal ways to build trust relationships in classrooms for CIGS. Mua, a master's student in public policy, reflects that her trust with her American group mates is built over time in group projects:

> [In a quarter-long project group], I have a long-term working relationship with domestic students. We have time to get to know and understand each other's

backgrounds. I feel safe confronting different opinions [expressed by my group mates] in such a small group of people that I know [well of].

Mua describes how her trust in group mates developed over time by knowing and understanding her group mates' backgrounds. Experiences of Mua show both the length of the project, and the small size of the group, can make it easier to build trust and relationships among group members. Other scholars also indicate the importance of a long-term close relationship. These scholars believe long-term group projects can help build trust among group members, as the project ask the same students of a small group size to meet frequently throughout a semester (Barczak et al., 2010, e.g.). Besides, Mua also points out that knowledge of one's life experiences can help build trust in relationships. With knowledge of her group mates' backgrounds, Mua can have a better understanding of the origin of her group mates' opinions. A trust relationship can thus be established based on group mates knowing each other's background, which also encourages less bias and more mutual understanding.

The paragraphs above show that trust relationships are important to engage several CIGS in an in-depth, open classroom discussion with domestic students, especially with topics on complex issues. The discussions benefit those CIGS' critical thinking, mutual understanding, and the development of civic-oriented global competence. As this study presents, trust can be built over time in small groups, and with group members knowing each other's backgrounds and experiences.

8.2.3 Internal Motivations with A Sense of Responsibility

Besides a trust relationship that makes many CIGS feel safe to express themselves, there are a few other strategies that may generate internal motivations of some CIGS to engage in conversations with domestic students. For example, some CIGS obtain a sense of responsibility and motivation to engage in discussions when they regard the discussion as highly relevant. Damarcus, a doctoral student in bioinformatics, shares:

> Most of the time, it's unnecessary to engage in discussions [around ordinary issues]. However, [I engage in the discussion] if the opinion is too wrong or the issue is too important [to me]. [For example,] I feel it is important that I engage in discussion around China.

Damarcus perceives the importance of discussion topics with criteria of relevance. He regards discussions around China as highly relevant, which motivates him to engage in discussions with domestic students. From Damarcus' experiences, generating one's sense of responsibility and internal motivation can be an important strategy for engaging more CIGS into discussions.

Another way to generate CIGS' motivation to engage in discussion can be by revealing why silence in discussions would not work for some CIGS. Duncan reflects:

> [When I encountered discussion around China for the first time], I was silent [to avoid the stresses of confronting others]. [As a consequence,] others [domestic

> students] think my silence means I agree with them. [After recognizing that,] I know I need to make an explicit statement [to avoid misunderstanding of my opinion].

Duncan recognizes potential misunderstandings caused by his silence. With that recognition, Duncan feels the need to make his opinion clear and explicit. Reflecting on the consequences of a behavior, like silence in discussion, is important to develop critical thinking, which is an important skill as discussed for civic-oriented global competence (Khazem, 2018). Many CIGS have an internal motivation to engage in discussions around China. Those CIGS aims to present an accurate image of China to domestic students. Duncan, a doctoral student in education, shares:

> We are cultural ambassadors who represent China. We need to be the window for Americans to see what the full image and accurate image is of current China.

Duncan feels responsible and is motivated to represent China and advocate for China. That advocacy is a common response by Chinese students when "inaccurate" image of China is presented by domestic students (Jiang, 2021; Zhou, 2014). Duncan's motivation for being a cultural ambassador helps him engage in social discussions that can facilitate Americans' understanding of China. That cultural advocacy and agency of facilitating cultural understanding are important for developing civic-oriented global competence (Cho et al., 2021).

Besides, close relationships make many CIGS feel even more responsible to disclose

their opinions on topics they perceive as important. Damarcus, a doctoral student in bioinformatics, shares:

> I disclose my thoughts to my [domestic] friends just to be responsible for them. [For example,] If I heard wrong perceptions [about China], I would correct them so that they won't be wrong again in the future.

Damarcus feels responsible for correcting his friends' misunderstandings about China. This motivation and sense of responsibility is based on a close relationship between him and his domestic peers. Meanwhile, the sense of responsibility of Damarcus indicates his cultural confidence towards his home culture. This study finds that cultural confidence helps CIGS like Damarcus negotiate cultural biases and correct mistaken perceptions about China that exist in the US. Those conversations with domestic students create opportunities to reduce biases around China among domestic students, as shown in experiences of Mua:

> American students may not have chances to talk directly to a Chinese person about issues [about China]. If no one [Chinese students] shares their opinions or experiences, biases may keep existing.... A close group relationship [with group mates] encourages me to put my opinion out there. I hope what I say may inspire them [my group mates] to think.

Mua's sharing reduced biases and misunderstandings about China among domestic students. Studies also show that confronting and discussing opinion differences can be an

important opportunity to overcome biases and stereotypes towards an unfamiliar culture or society (Ogbu, 1992; Zhu, 2017). The open discussion also generated mutual understanding between those CIGS and domestic students, which facilitates their development of civic-oriented global competence (Golubeva, 2017). Those CIGS' engagement in discussions around China also shows their agency in facilitating transformations in the US by expanding domestic students' cultural visions. Duncan shares:

> I hope Americans can have normal attitudes and perspectives to view China. Sometimes I also bring a lot of cultural shock to Americans in terms of my perspectives and experiences about China.

Duncan's engagement in discussion brings learning opportunities for domestic students. CIGS like Duncan can facilitate domestic students' cultural understanding when they engage in conversations and disclose their experiences and opinions.

This section presents strategies that generate some CIGS' motivations to engage in cross-cultural discussions. That engagement is driven by trust in classrooms, close relationships with domestic students, and a high internal motivation based on high relevance of the discussion topics. As a result, many CIGS facilitated mutual understanding between them and domestic students. Those CIGS also reduced cultural biases, and developed critical thinking and cultural confidence, which are important for developing civic-oriented global competence (Wasner, 2016).

8.3 Strategies of Seeking Social Support

As illustrated in Chapter 7, building social support is an important but challenging part for many CIGS in the US. The following paragraphs show strategies some CIGS used to seek social support, including making friends with Chinese students and seeking opportunities to interact with domestic peers. The following illustrates how these strategies can contribute to CIGS' sense of belonging and diversify their thinking styles and life pursuits.

8.3.1 Making Chinese Friends

The first and most common strategy for many CIGS to seek social support is to make friends with Chinese friends. According to many CIGS, making friends with students from the same background is the easiest. Duc, a doctoral student in education, shares:

> The easiest ways [to make friends] are with those who are international students, especially those who share the same struggle or need as me. The hardest group to make friends with are domestic students [who do not share any backgrounds or struggles with me] ... Similar topics of interest and familiarity with certain experiences create more resonance among us [Chinese students] and enable us to understand each other.

Duc points out sharing backgrounds and needs as an important principle in making friends. Many CIGS seem to emphasize mutual understanding and common topics and interests in their friend-making. Other studies also find that an easy and comfortable social

relationship is built based on similar senses of belonging. Since social support creates a necessary environment for developing global competence (Zhai, 2002), we examine what specific factors can help some CIGS' friend-making. According to participants in the study, one of the factor is the language-speaking habits. Daphene, a doctoral student in architecture, shares:

> I find it easier to make international friends [including Chinese friends], as we speak slower and have similar accents when speaking in English. I'm more comfortable exposing my accents and grammar mistakes there [in a circle of international students].

Daphene feels more comfortable talking with international students because of similar accents and linguistic backgrounds. She becomes more confident to speak, not worrying about grammar mistakes. The phenomenon of feeling more comfortable, talking, and making friends with similar groups of people (e.g., similar lifestyle and language backgrounds) can be applied to the proximity principle. The theory argues that the more social characteristics people share, the more likely they are to be close friends (Verbrugge, 1977).

This section discussed some CIGS' strategy to seek social support from Chinese students. The strategy is popular for many CIGS because of their shared cultural backgrounds (i.e., lifestyle, interests, experiences, and language). However, apart from making Chinese friends, many CIGS explored making friends with domestic peers, as discussed in the following section.

8.3.2 Making Friends with Domestic Students by Understanding Opinion Differences

As discussed in Chapter 7, barriers to CIGS' friendship-building with domestic students include opinion differences and different cultural backgrounds. While some CIGS suffer from a lack of social support, others turn the challenges into opportunities with positive attitudes towards rebuilding social relationships in the US. A positive attitude is helpful for some CIGS to interact with domestic students. Mae, a master's student in biostatistics, shares:

> I feel lonely when I find I have no old or new friends [when I arrived in the US]. [But] I take it as an opportunity to rebuild my social support networks. Embracing change and re-building an order of life are the meaning of study abroad [from my perspective].

Rather than regarding it as a challenge, Mae finds that seeking new social support is meaningful. Mae believes that rebuilding her social support in the US is an opportunity for developing her independence and life-skills. The positive attitude that Mae has generates a high level of motivation and facilitates her social relationships with domestic students. For example, Mae has an American roommate and seeks to build relationships in their daily lives. We can see a similar case from Muo, a master's student in the social sciences. Muo shares:

> I remind myself that I should not stay in my comfortable zone [i.e., only

> make Chinese friends]. I consciously try to reach out and communicate with Americans.

Muo reminds herself to make friends with domestic students. With that motivation, she reaches out for more communication opportunities with domestic students. Muo's high motivation facilitates opportunities for cross-cultural interactions. Many other CIGS like Mae and Muo reached out in different settings for more opportunities to establish social relationships with domestic students. Apart from reaching out, another strategy to build relationship with domestic students for many CIGS has been to understand opinion differences. Daymond, a doctoral student in aerospace engineering, illustrates this strategy:

> I understand and tolerate people's opinions. [I understand because I know] opinions are made based on one's position and national or personal benefits.

Daymond tolerates different opinions, as he understands different people's positions. Tolerance, perspective-taking, and mutual understanding are important parts of civic-oriented global competence that can mediate disagreements and have people remain in peace (Nekrassova & Solarte-Vásques, 2010). Apart from positionality, comparing the different cultural environments is another perspective to facilitate understanding of opinion differences. Mua, a master's student in public policy, shares:

> Their [domestic students'] biases are not personal, but because of the cultural environment they lived in. Social bias exists and sometimes is hard to overcome [for individuals].

Rather than personal faults, Mua relates opinion differences to the general cultural environment in the US. Other studies also find that the cultural environment is a structural factor that shapes people's positions, benefits, and opinions they hold (Mikhaylov, 2014). With the understanding of structural factors, CIGS like Mua see beyond individual disagreement with domestic students. An environmental and systematic level of thinking for understanding cultural differences is an important part for civic-oriented global competence (Zhu, 2017).

As another strategy, seeking historical facts and searching for relevant information has helped some CIGS to understand domestic students' different opinions. Dulciana, a doctoral student in education, shares:

> Initially, [in the first year when I came to the US], [American] political opinions make me uncomfortable [because] they're different from what I'm familiar with [based on experiences in China]. [Now,] I try to learn historical facts and different information presented to understand their opinions.

Dulciana understands contradictory issues by searching and learning about historical information. That information helps her to acknowledge different reasoning behind the opinions and positions presented. This strategy of searching for information is important, as knowledge about the other culture has been discussed as an important part to gain civic-oriented global competence (Halinen et al., 2015; Zhou et al., 2005).

Understanding opinion differences has brought many learning opportunities for a few

CIGS. Mui, a master's student in public policy, shares: "Opinion differences [between me and domestic students] help me to develop visions and experiences in cultural differences." Understanding opinion differences encourages CIGS like Mui to reflect on structural factors like positionality and cultural environment, and learn knowledge about the host culture. All the knowledge and skills learned by those CIGS serve as foundations for their better engagement in social interactions, necessary processes for the development of career, and civic-oriented global competence (Halinen et al., 2015).

The above discussed strategies for making friends with domestic students by reaching out and understanding different opinions. The understanding has helped many CIGS to develop critical thinking and visions towards cultural differences. To further explore strategies for seeking social support from domestic students, the following paragraphs focus on specific strategies some CIGS used to build relationships with domestic students in different settings.

8.3.3 Observing and Reflecting on the Diverse Lifestyles in the US

Engaging in social lives in the US and communicating with people from diverse backgrounds in the US have helped CIGS to develop many personal skills and qualities, such as tolerance and acceptance. Let's look at experiences from Damarcus, a doctoral student in bioinformatics, to understand how getting to know diverse life pursuits can inspire one's life pursuits. Damarcus shares:

> [At the beginning,] I'm impressed by the diverse life trajectories that domestic students have. I gradually understand people have diverse lifestyles. I

appreciate the tolerance [in the US] to each other's way of living.

Damarcus appreciates the freedom of judgement in society that enables people to pursue diverse lifestyles. Damarcus' appreciation comes from a critical reflection of the one-size-fits-all style of standard for successful lives in China. Dustine, a doctoral student in education, describes single-standard life pursuits in China:

> In China, we are constantly compared with others [by parents and teachers]. We must accomplish certain things at a certain age because most people do that.

Like many other CIGS, Dustine feels constantly compared with others using the same success standard. The lack of diverse standards of one's life can be due to a homogeneity in the measurement of success in Chinese society. Most family and school education teach students to have good grades, to have a good career, and to make good money (Li & Bray, 2007; Tsong & Liu, 2008). When these become the only pursuits for all people in China, the measurement of success becomes a problematic one-size-fit-all standard. Experiencing and reflecting on the Chinese versus Americans diverse lifestyles generates critical thinking for some CIGS regarding their home culture and cultivates their appreciation which benefits their engagement in the host culture. Dua, a doctoral student in education, shares:

> Americans usually respect personal choices, rather than requiring everyone to follow the same successful path [of the mainstream]. Americans are less

> judgmental about what others are doing. I can live at my own pace, not worrying about speeding up to catch up [for a successful life].

Dustine recognizes the different levels of personal choices in lifestyles in China versus the US. Dustine's critical reflection of her home culture expands visions for CIGS like her, which is necessary for developing civic-oriented global competence (Tung, 2016; Wasner, 2016). The diverse lifestyles in the US also inspire a few CIGS to follow their interests, rather than social standards. As an illustrative example, Mussina, a master's student in the social sciences, who describes her changes in her own life pursuits:

> I free myself from comparing myself with others [after observing all kinds of lifestyles and possibilities in the US]. Everyone is different. I don't have to pursue lives according to social standards of success.

Observing diverse lifestyles in the US helps Mussina free herself from comparing herself with other students. Without comparison and social pressures, CIGS like Mussina can have a clearer vision towards their own interests, abilities, and preferences. Life pursuits based on one's own choice can benefit one's long-term career development, and they can have better engagement with career-oriented global competence (Liu-Farrer et al., 2021). To illustrate this point further, let's hear experiences from Muo, a master's student in the social sciences, whose visions towards life are expanded after observing diversity in the US:

> Different possibilities [in the US] inspire me to consider more options for my

> future careers. My ideas are enriched about what kind of life one can pursue, and I have a wider vision of different options available.

Muo gains open and flexible life pursuits with a mind no longer limited by social norms. Knowing more options of life also facilitates the way of thinking and planning for CIGS like Muo. With a wider vision of different life options, those CIGS can have more opportunities to explore and develop skills that will benefit their global competence. Observing diverse lifestyles also benefits some CIGS' self-confidence, self-efficacy, and flexibility, which are all essential attitudes and skills to facilitate one's global competence development (Thongprayoon et al., 2020)). This can be seen in experiences from Mua, a master's student in public policy. Mua shared:

> I learn to love the uniqueness in myself. No one needs to pursue the same successful life... Building standards of my own makes me stronger, since I no longer worry about being accepted. I'm more independent and less constrained by what my peers are doing or what others think.

The diverse lifestyles in the US inspire Mua to recognize her uniqueness. She has more confidence in making decisions and pursuing a life that suits her, rather than being accepted by others. Confidences in life pursuits encourage CIGS like Mua to investigate their own potentials and dig out their real interests and specialties. The confidence and self-efficacy to explore life pursuits are an important attitudinal foundation to develop career-oriented global competence (Cho et al., 2021; Liao et al., 2012).

This section illustrated strategies for some CIGS to interact and build relationships with domestic students. Those strategies include positive attitudes, prime motivation, and reaching out in different settings. Observing and experiencing diverse lifestyles in the US, many CIGS gained opportunities for more cross-cultural interactions to learn diverse perspectives that are important for civic-oriented global competence development (Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2013). The benefits of self-paced, flexible, and free-of-judge culture in the US have empowered many CIGS to be more confidently pursue their interests, expand their vision, appreciate their uniqueness, and live a life that maximizes their potential for both career- and civic-oriented global competence.

8.4 Conclusion

This chapter discussed CIGS' various strategies to cope with academic and sociocultural challenges from both individual and institutional perspectives, as guided by the adapted bicultural model. As shown in Figure 8.1, many CIGS develop global competence by adjusting to classrooms, interacting with domestic students, and engaging in social lives. CIGS' successful adjustments, interactions, and engagements in the US are based on both personal endeavors and professors and institutional support.

Figure 8.1: Strategies for Developing Global Competence among CIGS

Based on the individual factors from the adapted bi-cultural model, this study reveals some individual-based strategies for CIGS to adjust to classrooms and social lives in the US and develop relevant career- and civic-oriented global competence. First, a few CIGS recognize the interactive and progressive culture to adjust to teaching and discussions in classrooms flexibly. Second, to interact with domestic students in academic settings, an effective strategy among some of the CIGS participants is to experience and discover an inclusive and process-oriented collaboration approach in US groups. Working in such inclusive groups in the US, CIGS in some cases developed patience, confidence, and motivation to further conversations with domestic students. Besides, a few CIGS' sense of responsibility effectively motivated them to engage in contradictory discussions. Those discussions present those CIGS with cultural confidence that mitigates their cultural biases and facilitates their critical and systemic thinking towards cultural differences. To seek social support, some CIGS first made Chinese friends. An easy and comfortable friend making strategy is

within the Chinese community which facilitates some CIGS' social networks. Some CIGS also reached out to domestic students with a strategy of understanding different opinions. Social interactions with domestic students help a few CIGS to build tolerance and expand their social networks.

Based on the structural/institutional factors from the adapted bi-cultural model, this dissertation also reveals several institution-based strategies. Those strategies can support CIGS to engage academic and social lives in the US and facilitate their career- and civic-oriented global competence development. For example, a group of CIGS' global competence in some cases was supported by professors' advising and working styles that highlight independence and respect. Those CIGS thus improve their personal skills in a healthy environment for their global competence development. Another important strategy that facilitated many CIGS' cross-cultural conversations is a pedagogical approach that can create a trusting relationship among group members. Trust relationships help several CIGS lead in-depth conversations that inspire more mutual understanding between those CIGS and domestic students. Moreover, observing and experiencing diverse lifestyles in the US helped several CIGS to cultivate vision towards the future, their long-term development, and their career-oriented global competence.

Strategies presented above bring about important implications for American higher education institutions and CIGS themselves. Acknowledging and providing support corresponding to those strategies mentioned above can generate more learning opportunities for cross-cultural interactions between CIGS and domestic students, as well as improve CIGS

satisfaction and enrollment to US higher education.

CHAPTER 9

Conclusion

This chapter offers concluding remarks about the study and discusses some of the implications of the findings. It starts with a summary of findings and discussion in relation to the research questions. On the basis of some findings, I then discuss the theoretical implications of this project based on the unified perspective of global competence and the conceptual framework of an adapted bi-cultural model. The chapter also discusses practical implications of the findings to inform practices and policies of international higher education, especially for the purpose of supporting students' global competence development. Some implications and possibilities for future research in international higher education are also discussed. Finally, I discuss the potential limitations of this project from the perspective of internal and external validity.

9.1 Summary of Findings

9.1.1 Expectations, Experiences, and Strategies of Cultural Negotiations

The first research question (i.e., how do CIGS in the US expect, experience, and cope with cultural differences between the US and China in their academic and social lives?) can be divided into three sub-questions (i.e., expectations, experiences, and strategies of cultural negotiations). I address each of the sub-questions based on findings from the twenty-two interviews with study participants.

In terms of expectations, I find that many CIGS in this study reported broader motivations than what has been revealed in previous studies. Apart from expecting advanced technology and high-quality programs (Li & Bray, 2007), some CIGS are also motivated by a diverse environment in the US (i.e., people from different ethnic, racial, cultural, and political backgrounds living together). I suggest that instrumental motives (e.g., gaining prestige, career capital, and personal life prospects) (Trujillo et al., 2020) does not depict the full picture of many CIGS' motivations for studying abroad. Instead, I distinguish those CIGS who take a "learning-about" approach (i.e., focusing on career and academic progress) from those who adopt a "learning-with" approach (i.e., focusing on sociocultural development by engaging in social relationships). Also, rather than take a static approach to CIGS' motivations and expectations as others have done (Gümüş et al., 2020), I view CIGS' expectations and motivations dynamically. Findings in this study suggest that some CIGS' social expectations can change over time. On the one hand, social expectations can increase

for those CIGS who realized the importance of social relationships or when they have the chance to be exposed to interesting and meaningful discussions related to social issues. On the other hand, social expectations may decrease for CIGS who experience negative events and struggle in their social lives.

In terms of experiences, the findings suggest that apart from personal linguistic deficiencies, contextual knowledge (e.g., local topics, discussion styles in academic settings, dissimilar interests, and cultural norms in approach to discussions and defining relationships) also limit many CIGS' opportunities to engage in cross-cultural academic and social interactions in the US. Many of the CIGS' difficult academic and social transitions are due to the distinctive educational system in US versus China. For example, echoing previous studies about the unique background of CIGS of this generation (Jiang, 2021, e.g.), Chinese classrooms are usually homogeneous, and many CIGS do not have access to discussions of diversity. Similarly, for the large population of CIGS enrolling in STEM programs, they seldom encounter discussions related to social and cultural issues (Service, 2019). Those findings align with my observations of many CIGS' difficulty to engage in discussions around diversity and social justice in classes or in the social discourse more generally. Further, due to the hierarchical relationship between teachers and students in China (Zhou et al., 2005), it can be difficult for many CIGS to build up an open, collaborative, and communicative relationship with their peers.

In terms of strategies, many CIGS find they can better negotiate cultural difference when they develop a recognition of, and appreciation towards, those cultural differences and

obtain understandings of cultural traditions and meanings around American contexts and styles. Also, several CIGS who actively reach out to make friends with domestic students usually learn cross-cultural knowledge and awareness that help their cultural understanding, adaptability, and flexibility. Apart from those individual efforts, I find the following institutional strategies to be important. Professor's advising style that respects CIGS independence can improve many CIGS' long term career success. A healthy working environment enables may CIGS to engage in academic settings with sense of security. Trust relationships in classrooms can boost both cross-cultural collaborations between many CIGS and domestic students. Curricular, co-curricular, and interpersonal activities that are culturally relevant for CIGS can increase many CIGS' motivation and interests to engage in academic discussions.

9.1.2 Opportunities and Challenges of Global Competence Development

I address the second research question (i.e., how do CIGS' expectations, experiences, and strategies of cultural negotiation relate to opportunities and challenges of developing career- and civic- oriented global competence?) with findings around challenges and opportunities to develop global competence.

In terms of challenges for global competence development, many CIGS experienced low confidence and lack of social support. Those CIGS tend to disengage from classroom discussions and social interactions, which hinder their global competence development. Another major issue that impairs many CIGS' opportunities to develop global competence have been

inadequate institutional support related to career development (e.g., networking, and international opportunities), and lack of courses designed with culturally relevant pedagogies. A few CIGS suggest that international students have been marginalized and under-supported in US higher education institutions. The US-China cultural differences also pose challenges to many CIGS in their academic and social adjustments, as discussed in the previous section.

Focusing on opportunities for global competence development, findings from this project suggested that diversity related activities can promote many CIGS' career- and civic- oriented global competence by enabling them to recognize and understand diverse viewpoints, and to develop social competence to interact inclusively and relate well with others. Cultural interactions with domestic students were found to be significantly helpful for developing cross-cultural sensitivity and global competence development for many CIGS. Moreover, continuous cross-cultural communications may help to reduce stereotypes and in return may decrease prejudices among domestic students. Thus, the development of mutual understandings can help to establish constructive inter-group relationships and international collaborations between some CIGS and domestic students. CIGS who reached out for cross-cultural interactions with domestic students were found to gain an open contact framework and expand their social networks and support resources for their global competence development. Many CIGS adjust to US culture while they maintain a balance with their Chinese cultural beliefs and practices. That process of acculturation and negotiation may trigger opportunities for many CIGS to embrace inclusion of different identities, which further broadens their perspectives, enlightens them to embrace the diversity of perspectives

and social positions, and may spur empathy toward people with less power.

9.2 Implications

9.2.1 Practical Recommendations from Individual and Institutional Perspectives

Findings from the twenty-two CIGS' experiences can be used to infer practical recommendations for different stakeholders in internationalized higher education institutions. Firstly, from an individual perspective, many CIGS experience challenges of cultural shocks in academic, social settings, and daily lives, which have been centered around language, western-centered knowledge, social support, and friendship-building difficulties. Findings on those experiences and the strategies that were used to navigate cultural differences can help other CIGS to improve their engagement in diverse communities while studying abroad and thus improve their opportunities for transformative learning and global competence development. The findings in this study can encourage CIGS to develop alternative views, understandings, and an appreciation of US-China cultural differences. Building off the experiences of the study participants' challenges in developing global competence, I suggest greater attention is needed on cultural negotiation processes in the academic literature on international students' experiences. For example, international higher education research and practice should consider the challenges experienced by CIGS in their day-to-day lives to better support their cross-cultural learning.

From an institutional perspective, the findings imply challenges for educational systems in both China and the US. Many CIGS hope to experience and learn about US culture. In this regard, programs should provide enough resources to enable discussions and opportunities to learn about social and cultural issues. Institutions can support learning opportunities better, such as through courses and activities that are community-based to assist CIGS to understand the social and cultural contexts of both their home and host country. Institutions can offer courses and activities that would help many CIGS to better engage in the social activities available on campus. Moreover, a problem that several CIGS found was that the academic program design was quite centered around US domestic students only. For professors and administrators at universities with many international students, they may learn to design culturally relevant pedagogy in curriculum and services, with more basic local knowledge training through community-learning, and more emphasis on CIGS needs and interests. Programs may consider international students' needs in their career events and research project topics. Career resources may include employers like international NGOs and private sector, rather than merely local and governmental businesses that are exclusively aimed at domestic students. An internationalized and diversified paradigm is needed to inform the work on diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives and critical pedagogy in universities that host many international students.

9.2.2 Theoretical Implication from Unified Global Competence and Bi-cultural Perspectives

This study was approached on the basis of a holistic conceptualization of global competence by putting forth a unified perspective of both career- and civic- orientations of global competence. The career- and civic- orientations of global competence have long been isolated in the research literature in higher education, which tend to either focus on career- or civic- orientations. A more holistic understanding of global competence helps to counter a neoliberal view of the purpose of learning and higher education (i.e., assessing external outcomes and performances) which is arguably a dominating perspective in international higher education as discussed in Chapters 3. Instead of focusing on external outcomes, this study emphasized a focus on students' internal qualities (i.e., attitudes and motivations) and the processes of growth (i.e., process of cultural negotiation). In unifying the career- and civic- orientations of global competence, the perspective used in this study was based on a more comprehensive view of CIGS' lives and their competence development. For example, some of the findings helped to reveal that career related motivations are intertwined with civic, social and cultural motivations in complex ways.

Separately, the study adopted a bi-cultural model (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009) as the conceptual framework to reveal key processes and factors of global competence and cultural negotiation. The model emphasizes a contextually based and socially situated nature of cultural negotiation, which involve both personal and institutional factors. This framework helped to recognize CIGS agency in negotiating US-China cultural differences. Specifically,

that cultural negotiation involves a multidimensional and dynamic process with agents situated within their environment, and where one needs to recognize, understand and process US-China cultural differences to react strategically and to achieve a value-creating solution that respects and balances both cultures. The adapted bi-cultural model, used as a conceptual framework in this study, helped generate findings that add to the research literature on CIGS' perception of US-China cultural differences. It does so by taking into account factors for CIGS' challenges more systematically. It considers educational systems and sociopolitical dynamics between the US and China. It importantly recognizes the need to understand cultural, educational, and environmental differences as factors for CIGS to develop global competence. Further research may continue this exploration of the experiences of Chinese students in the US, especially how students like CIGS cope with the social rivalry discourses between China and the US.

9.3 Limitations

One possible limitation of this study is the translation from Chinese to English, which may cause several minor losses of exact meanings. Another limitation is the coverage of the discussions. On the one hand, I acknowledge that cultural differences could generate a variety of gains and learning that have not been fully covered in this study. On the other hand, as Daymond reminded us: "the development could not be from studying abroad experiences, but rather a natural growth based on age and time." Although cultural differences can be a key incident in cultivating CIGS' global competence development, other aspects of

CIGS, such as their learning at an advanced level, can be equally important as factors to facilitate their personal development. Besides, this study focuses on Chinese and American differences, since this is the focus of the study and specifically the adapted bi-cultural model used to study the development of global competence. However, what this dissertation has not described in detail is that many similarities between the US and China are also found and experienced by many CIGS.

Another limitation was the small sample size of this study. One could argue that this study has a small sample size and has an external validity problem, because I conducted the research at only one higher education institution, which might not be representative of most colleges and universities. Because of my small sample size, I am very cautious in my interpretations of the data. I do not claim that the findings are generalizable to larger and more diverse populations of students (such as international students from other countries) at different types of institutions of higher education (such as non-selective universities, law schools, or business schools). Given the study is conducted at a top-tier research university, the twenty-two CIGS interviewed, and their "American peers" could be non-representative of the whole population of CIGS and American students. As Damarcus said: "It's more of personal and individual differences, rather than something that could be generalized to the whole culture." Damarcus reminds us to attribute the cultural differences observed by many CIGS in this study as personal differences, instead of generalizing to the whole cultural background that these individuals came from.

There are hundreds and thousands of CIGS I was unable to interview while conduct-

ing fieldwork, and whose stories may thus not be represented in this study. However, in reflecting on the insights offered by the twenty-two CIGS who shared their experiences in this dissertation, the quality of internal validity is assured by the transparent discussions of methodology and rigorous data collection and interpretation of the interviews. I contend that having a small sample size does not hinder the project from utilizing rigorous methods to capture and analyze the richness and "authentic perspectives" of the students' global competence development. This research design allows me to intimately examine and understand the complex interactions among CIGS' knowledge, attitude, and skill domains of global competence development, while negotiating through cultural differences. Furthermore, this study provides enough of the respondents' exact words to allow readers to see that my interpretations are a fair representation of their voices. Thus, the overall strength and significance of the descriptive and interpretive study could still provide fresh and deeper insights into the research question of how CIGS develop their global competence.

Moreover, since the field has predominantly evaluated global competence using quantitative methods, this study depicts the complexity of the cultural negotiation process. It reveals different opportunities for CIGS' global competence development based on in-depth qualitative inquiries. The qualitative method contextualizes a non-linear development of global competence while CIGS engages in multicultural environments. Those inquiries respect CIGS' agency, as well as the US-China context that they live in. Those in-depth inquiries show the complexities in integrating education and social change. Those inquiries also demonstrate the necessity in promoting peace and global cooperation, not only between

the US and China, but also internationally. Future research using qualitative and mixed methods around international student experiences can be helpful to depict a fuller image of the field of international higher education.

APPENDICES

A Interview Request Letter

University of California, Los Angeles

Department of Social Sciences and Comparative Education

Dear [Name],

My name is Linli Zhou. I am currently a doctoral student in the department of Comparative Education at the University of California, Los Angeles. I am writing this e-mail to invite you to participate in a new education project.

For my doctoral dissertation, I am conducting interviews on the experiences of Chinese International Graduate Students (CIGS) at U.S. universities. You are selected as a potential participant because of you are one of CIGS. This study aims to learn your study abroad experience and contribute to the literature and practices for supporting international students.

If you agree to participate in this project, you will be asked to answer a set of open-ended questions on your study abroad experiences. The interview will take approximately 60-90 minutes. A $15 gift card will be offered when you complete the interview and review the interview transcript. Your answers will be held in the strictest confidence and will not

be identified with you individually. I truly hope that you will be interested in participating in this project and will want to share your experiences.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher at [X]. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Linli Zhou

B Recruitment Poster

C Interview Sign-up and Eligibility Survey

Recruiting Interview Participants

This research is focused on Chinese international students studying in the U.S. in terms of their studying abroad expectations, experiences, and developments of competencies. You are invited to participate in a 60-min interview (in English or Chinese) to share your cross-cultural learning experiences.

It may take 2-3min to complete this short survey asking about your basic information and educational background. Your answers will be used for research ONLY and will be kept confidential at all times.

If you have any questions or have any suggestions for this survey, please don't hesitate to contact the researcher Linli, Ph.D. Candidate, at llz1722@ucla.edu

* Required

Citizenship Eligibility of Interviewees

1. Are you an international student from China (i.e. a Chinese citizen studying/working in the US)? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes *Skip to question 2*
- ◯ No *Skip to section 3 (May Not Be Eligible for Participation)*
- ◯ Not Sure *Skip to section 3 (May Not Be Eligible for Participation)*
- ◯ Other: _____

May Not Be Eligible for Participation

Thank you for your interest in this study. We are sorry that your answers to the questions indicate that you may not be eligible to participate in this study. Since this project focuses on international graduate students from China studying in the United States, we would recruit interviewees who are Chinese citizens, hold an F-1/J-1 visa, and completed at least part of their undergraduate education in China.

If you believe there is any problem or have any questions, please contact the researcher Linli, PhD Candidate, at llz1722@ucla.edu

Congratulations!

Congratulations, you are eligible to participate in this study!

We want to know some more about your background to help the researcher identify and select appropriate study samples and to ensure the diverse backgrounds of our interviewees.

Background - Basic

2. Name *

_____

3. Wechat/Email *

_____

4. Gender *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Female
- ◯ Male
- ◯ I prefer not to answer

5. Age *

_____

6. Where are you from (City, Province) *

_____

7. How do you evaluate the social-economical status of your family? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Poor
- ◯ Low
- ◯ Lower-Middle
- ◯ Upper-Middle
- ◯ Wealthy

8. How many years have you been in the US? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Less than 1 year
- ◯ 1 year
- ◯ 2 years
- ◯ 3 years
- ◯ 4 years
- ◯ 5 years
- ◯ more than 5 years

9. I am CURRENTLY a *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Doctoral student *Skip to question 10*
- ◯ Master's student *Skip to question 17*
- ◯ Recent graduate - doctoral degree *Skip to question 10*
- ◯ Recent graduate - master degree *Skip to question 17*
- ◯ Postdocs *Skip to question 10*
- ◯ Undergraduate student *Skip to question 23*
- ◯ Community College student *Skip to question 29*
- ◯ Certificate student *Skip to question 35*
- ◯ Other: _____

Doctorate Education

10. Where do you study for your doctoral degree? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ China
- ◯ US
- ◯ European Countries
- ◯ East Asian Countries (not China)
- ◯ Other countries
- ◯ Other: _____

11. What is the full name of your doctoral degree university? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ University of California Los Angeles
- ◯ University of Southern California
- ◯ Other: _____

12. How many years have you been in your doctoral program? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Less than 1 year
- ◯ 1 year
- ◯ 2 years
- ◯ 3 years
- ◯ 4 years
- ◯ 5 years
- ◯ more than 5 years

13. What type of doctoral program do you study? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Social Sciences/ Humanities
- ◯ Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)
- ◯ Both Social Sciences/Humanities and STEM
- ◯ Other: _____

14. What is the full name of your doctoral major/ program? *

_____

15. If you have another DOCTORATE degree, please list the location of the university and the name of the program:

_____

16. Do you have a master's degree? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes *Skip to question 17*
- ◯ No *Skip to question 23*
- ◯ Other: _____

Master's Education

17. Where do you study for your master's degree? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ China
- ◯ US
- ◯ European Countries
- ◯ East Asian Countries (not China)
- ◯ Other countries
- ◯ Other: _____

18. What is the full name of your master's degree university? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ University of California Los Angeles
- ◯ University of Southern California
- ◯ Other: _____

19. How many years have you been in your master's program? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Less than 1 year
- ◯ 1 year
- ◯ 2 years
- ◯ 3 years
- ◯ 4 years
- ◯ 5 years
- ◯ more than 5 years

20. What type of master's program do you study? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Social Sciences/ Humanities
- ◯ Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)
- ◯ Both Social Sciences/Humanities and STEM
- ◯ Other: _____

21. What is the full name of your master's major/ program? *

_____

22. If you have another graduate (master/doctoral) degree, please list the location of the university and the name of the program

_____

Skip to question 23

Undergraduate Education

23. Where do you study for your undergraduate degree? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ China
- ◯ US
- ◯ European Countries
- ◯ East Asian Countries (not China)
- ◯ Other countries
- ◯ Other: _____

24. What is the full name of your undergraduate degree university? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ University of California Los Angeles
- ◯ University of Southern California
- ◯ Other: _____

25. What type of program you studied during undergraduate degree? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Social Sciences/ Humanities
- ◯ Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)
- ◯ Both Social Sciences/Humanities and STEM
- ◯ Other: _____

26. What is the full name of your undergraduate major/ program? *

_____

27. If you have another undergraduate degree, please list the location of the university and the name of the program:

_____

28. Do you have a community college/certificate degree? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ No *Skip to question 41*
- ◯ Yes, I'm currently a community college student *Skip to question 41*
- ◯ Yes, I'm currently a certificate program student *Skip to question 41*
- ◯ Yes, I earned a community college degree & certificates previously *Skip to question 35*
- ◯ Yes, I earned a community college degree previously *Skip to question 29*
- ◯ Yes, I earned a certificate previously *Skip to question 35*
- ◯ Other: _____

Skip to question 41

Community College Education

29. Where do you study for your community college degree? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ China
- ◯ US
- ◯ European Countries
- ◯ East Asian Countries (not China)
- ◯ Other countries
- ◯ Other: _____

30. What is the full name of your community college? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Santa Monica College
- ◯ Other: _____

31. What type of program do you study in community college? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Social Sciences/ Humanities
- ◯ Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)
- ◯ Both Social Sciences/Humanities and STEM
- ◯ Other: _____

32. What is the full name of your community college major/ program? *

_____

33. If you have other community college experiences, please list the location of the university and the name of the program:

_____

34. If you have another degree, please indicate the highest degree you have: *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ I have a doctoral degree *Skip to question 10*
- ◯ I have a master's degree *Skip to question 17*
- ◯ I have an undergraduate degree *Skip to question 23*
- ◯ No, I do not have another degree in higher education *Skip to question 41*
- ◯ Other: _____

Skip to question 41

Certificate Education

35. Where do you study for your certificate? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ China
- ◯ US
- ◯ European Countries
- ◯ East Asian Countries (not China)
- ◯ Other countries
- ◯ Online
- ◯ Other: _____

36. What is the full name of the educational institution that offers you the certificate? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ UCLA Extension
- ◯ Other: _____

37. What type of program do you study for the certificate? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Social Sciences/ Humanities
- ◯ Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)
- ◯ Both Social Sciences/Humanities and STEM
- ◯ Other: _____

38. What is the full name of your certificate major/ program? *

_____

39. If you have other certificates and/or community college experiences, please list the location of the university/college and the name of the program:

_____

40. If you have another degree, please indicate the highest degree you have: *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ I have a doctoral degree *Skip to question 10*
- ◯ I have a master's degree *Skip to question 17*
- ◯ I have an undergraduate degree *Skip to question 23*
- ◯ No, I do not have another degree in higher education *Skip to question 41*
- ◯ Other: _____

Study Abroad Previously?

41. DID you study abroad IN THE PAST (before your current degree)? Like seeking an undergraduate/master/doctoral degree abroad previously OR being an exchange student or visiting scholar abroad previously. *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes *Skip to question 42*
- ◯ No *Skip to section 13 (Thank you!)*
- ◯ Other: _____

Previous Study Abroad Experiences

42. When you study abroad, you were a/an *

Check all that apply.

- [ ] Doctoral student
- [ ] Master's student
- [ ] Undergraduate - Senior year
- [ ] Undergraduate - Junior year
- [ ] Undergraduate - Sophomore year
- [ ] Undergraduate - Freshmen year
- [ ] Certificate Program student
- [ ] Community College student
- [ ] Kindergarten/ Primary/ Junior/ High School student
- [ ] I didn't study abroad previously

Other: [ ] _____

43. For what reason do you study abroad previously? *

Check all that apply.

- [ ] I was an exchange student/ a visiting scholar/ a summer school student
- [ ] Field Trip/ Intern
- [ ] To seek an undergraduate degree
- [ ] To seek a master degree
- [ ] To seek a doctorate degree
- [ ] To seek a certificate (e.g. UCLA extension)
- [ ] To seek an associate degree (community college)
- [ ] I didn't study abroad previously

Other: [ ] _____

44. What major/ program did you study abroad for previously? *

_____

45. What countries did you study abroad previously? *

_____

46. How long did you stay in total for your previous studying abroad experiences? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ less than 1 month
- ◯ 1-3month
- ◯ 3-6month
- ◯ 6-9month
- ◯ 9-12 month
- ◯ 1-2 years
- ◯ 2-3 years
- ◯ 3-4 years
- ◯ 4-5 years
- ◯ Over 5 years
- ◯ Other: _____

47. What influence did the previous study abroad experiences brought to you? (optional)

48. Please let the researcher know why are you interested in participating in this study. (optional)

Thank you!

Thank you for indicating your interest in being an interviewee and contributing to this study.

The researcher will contact you and provide more information about the study if you are selected as an interviewee. If you have any questions, please contact the researcher at llz1722@ucla.edu.

Please feel free to invite your friends (who are also Chinese students studying in the US) to participate in this study by simply sending them this survey link!

D Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LOS ANGELES

STUDY INFORMATION SHEET

Cultural Negotiation Processes and Factors

for Chinese International Graduate Students in the United States

Linli Zhou, Ph.D. student, from the Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Los Angeles is conducting a research study. Apart from being conducted as part of my doctoral dissertation research. This project will be supervised by my dissertation committee Dr. Richard Desjardins, Dr. Carlos Torres, Dr. Ozan Jaquette, and Dr. Min Zhou.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are an international student from China and are studying a graduate program at a U.S. university. Your participation in this research study is voluntary.

Why is this study being done?

This study will facilitate contextualized supports to Chinese international graduate students who are seeking degrees in the United States.

What will happen if I take part in this research study?

If you volunteer to participate in this study, the researcher will interview you in a private room with open-ended questions about your study abroad expectations and experiences,

and your backgrounds and cultural worldviews.

How long will I be in the research study?

Participation will take a total of about 60-90 min at a time that is convenient for you.

Are there any potential risks or discomforts that I can expect from this study?

There might be some scenes that you will recall the difficult times of your experiences.

There are no other anticipated risks or discomforts.

Are there any potential benefits if I participate?

Reflecting and discussing your study abroad experiences could help you to identify factors that may influence your cultural skill development.

The research may contribute to the literature about cross-cultural education.

Will I be paid for participating?

As an interviewee, you will receive a $15 e-gift-card via email when you complete the interview and review the interview transcript.

Will information about me and my participation be kept confidential?

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of coding procedures and plans to safeguard data, and only authorized researchers can access the data.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?

You can choose whether or not to be in this study. You may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time. Whatever decision you make, there will be no penalty to you, and no loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled. You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

Who can I contact if I have questions about this study?

The research team: If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research, you can talk to the one of the researchers. Please contact: Linli Zhou at linli.zhou@ucla.edu

Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP): If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers, you may contact the OHRPP by phone: (310) 206-2040; by email: participants@research.ucla.edu or by mail: Box 951406, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1406.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

SIGNATURE OF STUDY PARTICIPANT

_____

Name of Participant

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

SIGNATURE OF PERSON OBTAINING CONSENT

Name of Person Obtaining Consent	Contact Number
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent	Date

E Interview Questions

Study Title: Cultural Negotiation Processes and Factors for Chinese International Graduate Students (CIGS) in the United States

This project identities the nature of CIGS cultural negotiation as well as the challenges, strategies, and opportunities involved in the process. The overarching question for this project is: *What are the processes, strategies, and factors for Chinese International Graduate Students (CIGS) in the United States (US) to negotiate cultural differences?* To answer this overarching question, I investigated the following research questions:

1. What are the expectations, needs, and gains of CIGS studying in the US?
2. What are CIGS' different strategies of reacting to cultural differences?
3. How have different institutional, personal, and interpersonal factors influence CIGS' cultural negotiation processes?

Subjects: Chinese international graduate students (master's and doctoral) studying at a research university in the west cost of United States. Subjects vary in their personal backgrounds (i.e. social-economic backgrounds, gender, age, place of origin, parent occupation)

Place of Interview: A private classroom or study room on the university campus. Or video conferencing via Skype, Zoom, Google Hangout, or Wechat.

My role: Asking open-ended semi-structured questions during the interview

Type of interview: Semi-structured interviews

Beginning script: Hi, thank you for participating in this study and coming to this interview. Let me introduce myself and my research and then I will ask you several questions. Are you okay if I audio-record the whole process?

My name is Linli. I am a doctoral student at the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies. I am conducting my dissertation study with Chinese international graduate students about their study abroad experiences and expectations and whether they feel prepared for future goals.

There are no right or wrong answers, or desirable or undesirable answers. I want to learn your study abroad experiences and you are an expert on your story and all information is valuable and the useful and aims to understand your story. I would like you to feel comfortable enough to say what you really think and how you really feel. My aim is to learn from your study abroad experience and contribute to the literature and practices for supporting international students' development of global competencies. Your answers to my questions will be kept confidential. Though I will record our interview, you have the right to ask me to stop or delete the recording if you want. Whenever you want, you can quit this study. You don't have to answer the question that you don't want to answer. Even after you respond, you can ask me to delete the records and my notes. I will share with you the transcript of our interview and my findings. If there is anything that disturbs you about your answers, I can rewrite it with your new answers.

This interview will take about 60 min to finish. There might be some follow-up interviews but it's your decision whether to attend. If you have any questions, please contact me at

linli.zhou@ucla.edu

BACKGROUND

- Could you talk about your education and family backgrounds?

STUDY ABROAD EXPECTATIONS

- When you made the decision of studying abroad, what were your goals and expectations?
- Why do you have such goals and expectations?
- Anybody or anything influenced your study abroad decisions?
- Do they also influence your expectations about studying abroad?
- You just mentioned your career/ cultural/ academic/ personal/... expectations, are there any other aspects that you expect?
- Since you have become an international graduate student, has your primary goal changed? If yes, how and why?

STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCES

- How do you feel about reaching your goals?
- So far have your expectations been met?
- What challenges have you met in pursuing your goals?

- What strategies, if any, have you used to cope with challenges?

ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL

- Could you explain to me what you regular day looks like?
- How has your academic life been?
- Where do you usually study?
- Who do you usually get support from for academic issues?
- In your off-time, what do you do?
- How has your social life been?
- Where do you usually socialize? Who do you usually socialize with? How do you meet new people? What kind of social events have you engaged with?
- Who do you usually get support from for life issues?
- Since you became an international graduate student, has your academic or social life changed? If yes, how and why?

INFORMATION-SEEKING EXPERIENCE

- How do you usually get your news / information in the US?
- What do you notice about US-China cultural relationship of any countries recently?

- What do you think about the coverage of China/ US?
- Since you became an international graduate student, have your perspectives on those cultural news stories changed? If yes how and why?

TAKING-ACTION EXPERIENCE

- From your study abroad experience, what do you think has been the biggest challenge for you to develop your goal or goals?
- How do you think we should address them?

Is there anything else that would be helpful for me to know that we haven't discussed?

Interview Question in Chinese

开场白：

嗨，谢谢你参加这次采访。首先我会介绍一下自己和我的研究，然后我会问你几个问题。我可以对整个过程进行录音吗?

我的名字是周林莉。我是教育和信息研究学院的博士生。我正在对正在美国攻读研究生课程的中国留学生的职业和公民全球能力发展进行论文研究。我想问一下你在国外攻读研究生课程的职业生涯和公民期望，你对全球能力的理解，以及你培养全球能力的经验（挑战和策略）。

此次访谈的所有问题都没有正确或错误的答案，或者不可取的或不合需要的答案。我想了解你的经历和你的你故事，所以你提供的所有的信息都将是是有价值和有用的，我的最终目标是从您的经验中学习，并为支持国际学生全球能力发展的文献和实践做出贡献。

请放心，这是一个安全的环境，您可以说出你的真实想法以及你的真实感受。您对我的问题的答案将保密。虽然我会录制我们的采访，但如果您愿意，您有权要求我停止或删除录音。无论何时，您都可以退出研究。您不必回答您不想回答的问题。即使在您回复之后，您也可以要求我删除记录和我的笔记。我将与您分享我们的访谈记录和调查结果。如果有任何事情让你对你的答案感到不安，我可以用你的新答案重写它。这次采访大约需要60分钟才能结束。可能会有一些后续访谈，但您决定是否参加。

个人背景信息

- 能讲讲你的教育背景和你的家庭背景吗?

留学期待

- 当你决定要出国留学的时候，你有任何目标或者期待吗?
- 你为什么有这样的目标?
- 有什么人或事情影响到了你对留学的决定吗?
- 他们也影响了你对留学的期望吗
- 你刚刚提到了你的职业/文化/学术/个人...的期望，你有其他的方面的目标吗?
- 在你作为国际研究生留学生这段期间内，你的目标有所改变吗? 如果有，发生
- 了什么改变，为什么而改变?

留学经历

- 你对达成目标/实现期望的感觉怎么样?
- 你觉得这些目标和期望实现得怎么样
- 当你追求目标的时候你遇到了哪些困难?
- 你用了什么策略来解决这些困难吗?

学术与社交经历

- 你能画出你平常的一天是怎么样的吗?
- 你的学术生活过得怎么样?
- 你一般在哪儿学习?

- 对于学术问题，你一般向谁求助?
- 你的娱乐时间你都做什么?
- 你的社交生活如何?
- 你一般在哪里进行社交活动? 你一般和谁社交? 你怎么认识新朋友?
- 你参加那些活动?
- 对于生活中的问题，你一般向谁求助?
- 在你作为一名国际研究生留学生的这段期间内，你的学术和社交生活习惯有什么改变吗? 如果有，发生了什么改变，为什么而改变?

寻求信息的经历

- 你平常在美国如何获取新闻和信息?
- 你有注意到任何关于文化方面的问题吗?
- 你对中国和美国在媒体上的形象有什么看法?
- 在你作为国际研究生留学生的这段期间，你对于一些文化新闻的看法和理解发生过改变吗? 如果有，发生了什么改变，为什么而改变?
- 从你的留学经验出发，你觉得对于你实现你的目标最大的困难是什么?
- 你觉得我们应该如何解决这些困难?

有任何我们还没有讨论但事你觉得可能会有用的话题或事情吗?

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