ENTREPRENEURIALIZATION OF ETHNICITY: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH ON CHINESE NEWCOMER ENTREPRENEURS IN TOKYO

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Herewith I certify that I have prepared and written this dissertation independently and that I have not used any sources and aids other than those indicated by me. Intellectual property of other authors has been marked accordingly. I hereby confirm that I have only submitted the dissertation to the Department of Political and Social Sciences of Freie Universität Berlin and that I have not applied for an examination procedure at any other institution.

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Abstract

Since the 1970s, research on middlemen, ethnic enclaves, and ethnic economies has contributed to the understanding of immigrants' entrepreneurship. The entrepreneurial activities of migrants in East Asia are only occasionally mentioned in the entrepreneurship literature. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in Ikebukuro, Tokyo, in 2018 and 2019, the dissertation brings to the forefront the entrepreneurship of Chinese newcomer immigrants arriving in Japan from mainland China after the 1980s, investigating how the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs in Japan negotiated and recreated ethnicity in their entrepreneurial practices. The dissertation embraces three aims. Drawing on the anthropological approach to entrepreneurship, the dissertation presents how Chinese entrepreneurs' perceptions of ethnicity changed with the formation and development of their entrepreneurial values, mindsets, lifestyles, and preferences. Second, rather than portraying immigrant entrepreneurs as purely "Homo economicus," it highlights the emotional ups and downs in their daily lives and the changes in their sense of belonging. Lastly, the dissertation reexamines the integration strategies of Chinese immigrants in Japan and conveys that embarking on an entrepreneurial career was not only an economic integration strategy but also significantly influenced the immigrants' social circles and imagination of future life in Japan. The dissertation emphasizes the entrepreneurialization of ethnicity, a process in which Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs integrated ethnicity with their entrepreneurial mindsets and practices.

Introduction

Kenji,

The most Japanese-like Chinese and the most Chinese-like Japanese.

I wrote this strange sentence on my fieldwork notes when I heard the name and story of Kenji from one of my informants. In his opinion, if I wanted to understand the different sides of Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs in Japan, I must speak with Kenji. Therefore, although I had little information about Kenji, I looked forward to meeting him. After checking with Kenji, my informant sent me Kenji's WeChat account. After conducting my fieldwork for two months and meeting a few Chinese entrepreneurs, I had become more cautious. Rather than approaching the potential research participant myself, I followed the informal rule of "giving notice" (*da zhao hu* in Chinese) among entrepreneurs' circles and waited patiently for a reply.

I received Kenji's reply via WeChat two days later, and we arranged a meeting time for the following week. Before the meeting, I searched for information about Kenji and his company. I did not doubt that Kenji was a successful and prestigious young Chinese entrepreneur in Japan. However, from the online information, his entrepreneurial career and business content did not seem exceptional compared to other Chinese entrepreneurs I had met. Therefore, prior to our face-to-face meeting, I did not understand why my informant strongly recommended talking with Kenji.

On the meeting day, I arrived at Kenji's office early in the morning. His office was on the street that connects Ikebukuro's residential and commercial areas with a high concentration of businesses of Chinese newcomer immigrants. When I arrived, Kenji was gathering his employees for a "morning assembly" (*chōrei* in Japanese), a typical Japanese morning ritual in schools or

workplaces to motivate students or employees. After I told them the purpose of my visit, an employee guided me to Kenji's office, which looked more like a traditional Chinese tearoom than a business office. Kenji greeted me and handed me his name card with his Japanese name, job titles in the company, and membership in five overseas Chinese associations. Many exquisite Chinese tea sets were on the table. While he brewed tea for us, I looked at the Chinese paintings and calligraphies hung on the wall. Kenji told me that he collected these works from his friends, who were also Chinese artists and entrepreneurs in Japan.

Kenji soon came to the point, asking me what I needed from him. Since I had just started my fieldwork at the time and had not become accustomed to many entrepreneurs' habits of guiding discussions directly to supply-demand relationships, I was taken aback by Kenji's straightforward question. Although my research concerns the Chinese newcomers' entrepreneurship, I did not intend to pose questions about their business activities exclusively but rather expected to hear about their entire pre- and post-migration lives. I, therefore, asked if he could first explain why he came to Japan. At a subsequent "drinking party" (*nomikai* in Japanese) with Kenji and his friends, he told me that he was surprised at our first meeting because he thought I was like other journalists from local commercial newspapers who only wanted him to share his business know-how.

Born in Qing Dao, Shandong province, like many Chinese newcomers in Japan, he came to Japan as an international student in 2010. With the dream of running a business independently, Kenji started his entrepreneurial career after receiving his Master's degree in Japan. With the boom of Chinese tourists to Japan after the 2010s, Kenji opened a drug store for Chinese tourists in a building next to Ikebukuro station in Tokyo. Since the building is a landmark in the history of Chinese newcomer immigrants in Ikebukuro after the1980s, the opening of Kenji's store received much attention among the local Chinese immigrants. Kenji eventually started to develop

international trade between China and Japan.

As Kenji started warming up to our conversation, one of his employees came to tell him that he had a business visit from a Japanese business partner. Our discussion had lasted longer than he expected, and he had to attend his next business meeting. When I prepared to leave, he asked me to wait and told me we could continue later. Moreover, he permitted me to walk around the office and observe his daily business life. After Kenji put on his business suit, I followed him to the central office, where the visitor waited for him. From bowing to name card exchanges, Kenji displayed a textbook example of greetings business associates in the Japanese commercial world.

I had time to walk around the central office while Kenji was in the meeting room. Most of the employees were Chinese. As Kenji told me later, they were all young Chinese newcomers who moved to Japan after 2010 to finish their studies. The style of the central office area was not decorated to Kenji's personal preferences, with the exception of the books on the bookshelf. An employee told me that because Kenji was a devoted fan of Kazuo Inamori, an influential Japanese entrepreneur, he placed many of the entrepreneurs' autobiographies and business books on the bookshelf and encouraged his employees to read them.

When Kenji's meeting ended, he bowed to the visitor courteously. Afterward, we returned to his private office and continued our conversations. Referring to the visit of the Japanese business partner as a chance, I asked Kenji if his Japanese nationality made it easier to deal with Japanese business partners. Since my informant called him Kenji, a typical Japanese first name, and there was only his Japanese name on the name card, I took it for granted that he had already changed his nationality. He laughed, telling me he was still Chinese (Kenji received Japanese citizenship a year later). Kenji was his "name for business," but his Chinese friends and employees mainly used his Chinese name. He explained that obtaining Japanese nationality would bring advantages and

enhance Japanese business partners' trust in commercial discussions. However, due to the historical issues between China and Japan and the patriotism education he received in China, he still felt uncomfortable changing his nationality. In his words, "repackaging" himself as a Japanese entrepreneur was necessary, yet it would not weaken his connections and attachment to China. Kenji was also active in many domestic and overseas Chinese associations and media, and he was a council member of People's Daily (Overseas Edition), the largest newspaper group in China.

After discussing his migration and entrepreneurial experiences for two hours, Kenji spoke about his family and plans. He met his wife and got married in Japan. After his first child was born, they purchased a house in Tokyo. In his words, he has established roots here. Despite various connections to China, Kenji stated that he and his family would continue living in Japan in the future. His mother still lived in his hometown, but Kenji also thought of bringing her to Japan.

This first contact provided me with more chances to communicate with Kenji outside the workplace. When analyzing my fieldwork data, I found that Kenji's values of entrepreneurial activities and migration life seemed to be ambivalent. For instance, while he firmly identified himself as Chinese and was enthusiastic about traditional Chinese cultures and arts, he also made efforts to turn himself into a "perfect" model of a Japanese businessman. Although he claimed that he had irreplaceable connections and attachments to China, he preferred establishing roots in Japan. Kenji's case was not exceptional. As I met more Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs during my fieldwork, I realized that many lived with similar ambivalence. More importantly, constantly reconciling the ambivalence was a characteristic feature of their daily entrepreneurial activities.

Chinese migration to Japan has a long history. Since Japan's Tokugawa shogunate opened Nagasaki port for foreign trades in the seventeenth century, Chinese traders and merchants have settled in the country (Uchida 1963). In 1689, the first Chinese quarter, *Tojin yashiki*, was

established. Chinese traders were then permitted to enter other Japanese cities with the Tokugawa government's "opening of the country" in 1858. As a result, more Chinese residential areas appeared in Japan (Uchida 1963). Chinese migrants living in Japan are called "*kakyō*" (overseas Chinese). The Chinese migrants who moved from mainland China, Macau, Hongkong, and Taiwan to Japan prior to the 1970s are called "*rōkakyō*" (the older generations) (Tan and Liu 2008). The older generations were known for their engagement in the "three knives" (restaurants, barbershops, and tailor stores) and comprador business, which relied heavily on co-ethnic dialect groups or fellow-townsmen associations (Uchida 1963; Guo 1999; Tan and Liu 2008). In addition, Guo (1999) identified that the older generations had a "primordial attachment" (*genshoteki aichaku* in Japanese) to their hometowns until the Anti-Japanese War. The War of Resistance against Japan (1937-1945) constructed the older generations' national identity as Chinese (Guo 1999).

Chinese who migrated to Japan after China's reform in 1978 are called "*shinkakyō*" (the newcomers) (Tan and Liu 2008). One apparent feature of Chinese newcomers' migration to Japan is the institutionalized education-based migration channel (Liu-Farrer 2011; 2013a). For many Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs I encountered during my fieldwork, studying in Japanese language schools and entering private or public universities as international students was their first step after migration. Except for international students, with the extension of residence status in Japan, technical interns, high-skilled professionals, and researchers from China also comprise a significant component of the Chinese newcomers (Zhu 2003). The various residence statuses indicate that "Chinese newcomer" is not a homogeneous ethnic group in Japan. Many researchers, therefore, draw attention to subgroups of Chinese newcomers in Japan, including international students, highly skilled professionals, technical intern trainees, and illegal migrants (Liu-Farrer 2009; 2011; Coates 2015; Achenbach 2017; Kaneshiro 2018; Li 2018). The literature enriched the

understanding of the diversity of Chinese newcomers in Japan and, more importantly, illustrated that varied livelihood and survival strategies resulted from their socioeconomic status. Meanwhile, the diversification of business content (Yamashita 2010), transnational business scales (Liu-Farrer 2007), and unfixed relationships with co-ethnic groups (Ito 1995) differentiated Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs from the older generation.

The newcomers' different business engagement compared to the older generations, the stratification of Chinese newcomers in Japan, and the Chinese entrepreneurs' ambivalent thoughts and behaviors led me to reconsider the relationships between ethnicity and entrepreneurship. Hutchinson and Smith (1996) argue that ethnicity is a grouping of people who identify and express the "essence" of the community. Specifically, they share a myth of common ancestry or historical memory, maintain a link with a homeland, share common religion, customs, or language, and form a sense of ingroup solidarity (Hutchinson and Smith 1996). However, the approaches to ethnicity vary. Geertz's view on the "overpowering" and "ineffable" individual attachment to ethnic features (Geertz 1963b) and the sociobiological views of ethnicity (Maleševic 2004) highlighted the primordialism approach to ethnicity. In contrast, instrumentalists believe that ethnicity is one kind of social, cultural, and political resource for relevant interests (Hutchinson and Smith 1996). Beyond the two approaches, Barth's "transactional" approach emphasizes the dynamics of ethnicity, highlighting that social and cultural interactions ensure the persistence of ethnic boundaries and groups (Barth 1969).

Similarly, the interpretations of entrepreneurs also remain open. Schumpeter (1983) saw the dynamic task of exploration and innovation as a distinctly entrepreneurial feature differentiating entrepreneurs from capitalists or skilled managers. Geertz (1963) emphasized the contextualization of entrepreneurship, arguing that entrepreneurship develops following local

cultural patterns and social norms. Barth (1963) viewed an "entrepreneur" not as a "person" but as a "role" that mobilizes resources and negotiates different social values. However, in ethnic entrepreneurship research, being an entrepreneur is generally regarded as interchangeable with immigrants' self-employment. Light and Rosenstein noted that due to the difficulties of measuring innovation, it was "useless to distinguish entrepreneurs from the self-employed on the ground that only entrepreneurs innovate"(Light and Rosenstein 1996, 3). Researchers (den Butter, Masurel, and Mosch 2004) have argued that there seems to be no principal distinction between general and ethnic entrepreneurs except for the ethnic-cultural origins that provide them with identifiable market niches and cultural predispositions in favor of business activities.

Overall, the relationship between ethnicity and entrepreneurship is open to interpretation, as there is no consensual agreement on the two key concepts (Basu 2008). "Ethnic entrepreneur" is a widely used concept that refers to all immigrants whose businesses rely on ethnic involvement (Pires and Stanton 2019). However, this concept is too broad and blurs the focus. Scholars have identified various entrepreneur types related to ethnicity, such as "enclave entrepreneurs" bounded in co-ethnic social structures and locations (Portes and Manning 2012); "diaspora entrepreneurs" whose entrepreneurial initiatives, motives, and intentions to start businesses are homeland-oriented (Nkongolo-Bakenda and Chrysostome 2013); and "immigrant entrepreneurs," first-generation immigrants who have settled in the receiving country over the past few decades (Volery 2007).

In the dissertation, I use the term "Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs in Japan." The first reason is to highlight the "newcomer" status due to the differences in entrepreneurial motivations, business prospects, business scales, and perceptions of ethnicity in businesses between the newcomers and the older generations. The second reason is that the aforementioned concepts cannot sufficiently describe the newcomer entrepreneurs' perceptions and behaviors in different

phases of their entrepreneurial careers. As Kenji's story illustrated, Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs' behaviors, self-presentation, and self-identity are flexible and ambivalent in certain situations. For instance, although many Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs, such as Kenji, have strong attachments to the homeland, they do not view themselves as diasporas or sojourners. Moreover, although many Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs made an entrepreneurial career in the "new Chinatown" in Ikebukuro (Yamashita 2013), they do not identify as enclave entrepreneurs. For a comprehensive understanding of the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs in Japan, I, therefore, do not conceptualize them exclusively as any of the abovementioned types. It is important to note that the term "Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs in Japan" in the dissertation does not include transnational investors or managers operating branch offices of Chinese companies and institutions. It refers to Chinese newcomer immigrants who migrated to Japan from mainland China after China's opening in 1978, had long migration experiences, and established businesses of their own in Japan.

The dissertation aims to determine **how Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs in Japan negotiated and recreated ethnicity in their entrepreneurial practices**. To answer the research question, I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Tokyo for nine months. The fieldwork was divided into two stages: September to October 2018 and April to October 2019. The field research centered geographically on northwestern Ikebukuro, Toshima Ward, Tokyo. I chose northwestern Ikebukuro as the primary research site because of its concentration of businesses owned and operated by Chinese newcomers (Yamashita 2010; 2013). Moreover, it was also the place where many of my research participants started their first businesses, although some relocated as their businesses expanded. Finally, compared to Japan's traditional Chinatowns in Yokohama, Kobe, and Nagasaki, which are predominated by Chinese elements and Chinese commercial associations,

Ikebukuro is a commercial area in the center of Tokyo. It is famous for its civil culture, which developed before the arrival of Chinese newcomers, and for the thriving of local Japanese businesses and shopping street associations. It is, therefore, an ideal place to investigate how Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs coexist with local Japanese business owners. However, due to the high fluidity and broad expansion of the Chinese newcomers' businesses, the research scope also covered Tokyo's other wards (e.g., Shinjuku Ward), where many of the Chinese entrepreneurs expanded their businesses.

I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews and informal conversations with 30 Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs during the fieldwork. Moreover, I conducted (non-) participant observations as essential parts of ethnographical research at private parties, volunteer and social events, and the research participants' workplaces. Their business types varied, ranging from traditional business sectors (e.g., Chinese restaurants and acupuncture clinics) to burgeoning language schools, real estate agencies, new media, and transnational trade companies. The data analysis includes transcribing recorded materials, open coding, building initial categories, focused coding, integration, and identifying conceptual patterns. After the data analysis, I identified three conceptual patterns that comprise three empirical chapters of the dissertation: **dynamic ethnic networks, (in)visible ethnic expressions, and a bifocal sense of belonging**.

This dissertation proposes the core concept of "entrepreneurilization of ethnicity" and highlights the importance of combining immigrant entrepreneurs' ethnicity and socioeconomic status. The ways Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs in Japan perceived ethnicity changed with daily entrepreneurial practices. Entrepreneurilization of ethnicity is a process in which Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs integrate the roles of "Chinese immigrants" and "entrepreneurs" by mobilizing separate resources, balancing different values, and overcoming restrictions. While their

actions may seem ambivalent in the process, this was how they identified the role of the "Chinese newcomer entrepreneur."

The dissertation aims to contribute to entrepreneurship research in anthropology. Entrepreneurship in political and economic dimensions has drawn the attention of many anthropologists (Geertz 1963a; Barth 1963; Stewart 1991; Douglas 1992). Barth advocated not seeing "entrepreneurs" as "roles," highlighting that entrepreneurship should be actions and activities and "a chain of transactions between the entrepreneur and his environment" (Barth 1963,7). Geertz (1963a) also identified that as economic innovators, entrepreneurs were devoted to balancing the traditions of local societies and new elements in favor of their entrepreneurial activities. Pfeilstetter (2022) summarized the previous views and conceptualized "entrepreneurialization," emphasizing the "agency-driven" changes in values, norms, and identities. However, the prior literature illustrated the role of an "entrepreneur," paying less attention to the overlap of the entrepreneur's role and other social statuses, such as migrants and ethnic group members. Although Barth (1963;1969) wrote significant works on both ethnicity and entrepreneurship, he did not explicitly highlight the mutual relationships. In line with the previous studies, the dissertation integrates ethnicity into the analysis of entrepreneurialization.

Second, the dissertation aims to contribute to overseas Chinese business studies. Overseas Chinese economic achievements have received increasing attention since the 1990s. The culturalist approach attributes the economic success of overseas Chinese entrepreneurs to the Confucianism social structures and the rules of familism, filial piety, loyalty, enforceable trust, and strict social hierarchy (Redding 1993). The rise of Chinatowns worldwide draws researchers' attention to protected niches and internal social structures in favor of the development of ethnic businesses (Zhou 1992; Yamashita 2002). When the "interactive model" and "mixed embeddedness" of

integrating ethnic and cultural characteristics and opportunity structures became the mainstream theoretical framework in ethnic entrepreneurship research (Waldinger, Aldrich, and Ward 1990; Aldrich and Waldinger 1990; Kloosterman, van der Leun, and Rath 1999; Kloosterman and Rath 2001; Kloosterman 2010), researchers tended to analyze overseas Chinese businesses from these two aspects (Ceccagno 2015; Y. Wang and Warn 2018) and the entrepreneurs' transnational embeddedness (Ren and Liu 2015; Zhou and Liu 2015).

This dissertation adds two perspectives on overseas Chinese business research to the existing literature. First, the prior literature overlooked the dynamic process in which entrepreneurs perceive and approach ethnicity in entrepreneurial practices. Entrepreneurialization of ethnicity is not the manifestation of a fixed cultural model of entrepreneurial practices. It does not see ethnicity only as one type of supplementary resource in opportunity structures. It highlights how entrepreneurs perceive ethnicity changes depending on business development stages, individual emotional attachments, and social discourses about the ethnic group in receiving societies. This perspective provides a more precise understanding of the decision making and rationales for negotiating and recreating ethnicity in their entrepreneurial practices. Second, the exsisting literature lacks a discussion of the "entrepreneurial dimension" (Volery 2007) of overseas Chinese. Volery (2007) noted that the current theoretical frameworks in ethnic entrepreneurship did not consider the "entrepreneurship dimension" of individual entrepreneurs' cognition, emotion, and identity (Shepherd and Patzelt 2018). This point of view indicates that entrepreneurs must process ethnic strategies, ethnic resources, and opportunities in the "entrepreneurship dimension." However, I do not conform to Volery's view that the entrepreneurial dimension exists independently of an entrepreneur's ethnic and cultural background (Volery 2007, 36). Considering the multiple social statuses of an ethnic entrepreneur, I provide an empirical contribution to

understanding the intertwining of the "entrepreneurial dimension" and the Chinese entrepreneurs' ethnicity in the dissertation. In this sense, entrepreneurialization of ethnicity highlights the process in which the Chinese entrepreneurs merged their ethnicity with the "entrepreneurship dimension."

Finally, this dissertation aims to contribute to Japan's migration and ethnic business studies. Ethnic businesses have received increasing attention since the 1980s because of the increase in immigrants to Japan (Higuchi 2012). Among them, Chinese ethnic businesses played an important role due to their large number, diversified business contents, broad distributions, and transnational business scales (Ito 1995; Higuchi 2010; Yamashita 2010; Liu-Farrer 2007). Previous studies have mainly focused on entrepreneurs' economic integration and specific business strategies. However, the literature on the Chinese immigrants' status transformation and the changes in social circles, values, identities, and habits after becoming entrepreneurs is scarce. This dissertation demonstrates that becoming an entrepreneur refers not only to daily business practices and management, but also to a lifestyle aligned with the specific socioeconomic status. Combining their immigrant and entrepreneurs' statuses, my empirical study thereby aims to provide an alternative perspective to understanding immigrant entrepreneurs' integration strategies.

The dissertation consists of seven chapters. Chapter 1 reviews entrepreneurship research in anthropology and discusses how the anthropological approach helps develop an understanding of entrepreneurs' actions and roles. It covers three mainstream approaches to overseas Chinese businesses worldwide. Lastly, the chapter summarizes the research development concerning ethnic businesses in Japan. Chapter 1 aims to connect the empirical study to the broader knowledge in this field and to present the study's contributions.

Chapter 2 justifies the feasibility and necessity of applying an ethnographical methodology to answer the research question. I introduce my cyclical research design, as well as the details of

my fieldwork, including research site selection, access to the field, sample selections, my roles during the fieldwork, and specific on- and offline data collection methods. I then detail the data analysis and explain how I conducted open coding and identified three conceptual patterns. Finally, I present the ethical issues of conducting the research.

Chapter 3 elaborates on Chinese immigrants' history and socio-cultural contexts in Japan. The chapter first concentrates on the migration of the older generations from a historical lens, followed by the introduction of Chinese newcomers' arrival and settlement in Japan. This chapter aims to differentiate the Chinese newcomers in Japan from the older generations by highlighting the newcomers' immigration channels, geographical distributions, and residence status. It introduces why northwestern Ikebukuro became a new "Chinatown" with Chinese newcomers. The chapter also provides an overview of the entrepreneurship environment immigrants confront and Chinese ethnic businesses' current situations of in Japan.

The three subsequent empirical chapters focus respectively on the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs' ethnic networks, ethnic expressions, and belonging. Chapter 4 illustrates the relationship between the Chinese newcomers' ethnic networks and entrepreneurial activities. I identify seven types of ethnic networks related to their daily entrepreneurial practices and elaborate on the dynamic process of building, maintaining, and reconstructing the social networks. The chapter challenges the view that ethnic networks are constantly favorable resources for overseas Chinese entrepreneurs. It reveals how Chinese newcomers proactively adjust their relationships with other Chinese immigrants and overseas Chinese associations in Japan in response to their business development stages and prospects.

After discussing intra-ethnic networks in their entrepreneurial practices, in Chapter 5, I cover the relationships between the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs and Ikebukuro's local

society and elaborate on their ethnic expressions in the specific historical and social context. I first introduce the entanglements and antagonistic relationship between Chinese newcomers and locals. Against this backdrop, the Chinese entrepreneurs explored multiple ways to balance "visibility" and "invisibility" in presenting themselves in the local Japanese society. The chapter illustrates the commercial purposes and social meanings of Chinese entrepreneurs' active self-presentation as "Chinese." Meanwhile, Chinese entrepreneurs avoided highlighting their Chinese status and intentionally kept themselves "invisible" in neighborhood social life. The history and social contexts of Ikebukuro, in contrast to the other Chinatowns in Japan, largely influenced Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs' integration strategies and how they present themselves in the local society. Balancing "visibility" and "invisibility" ensured that Chinese immigrants and the locals could reach a stable state with fewer unnegotiable disputes.

How the Chinese entrepreneurs considered intra- and inter-ethnic relationships did not necessarily directly relate to how they identified themselves. Chapter 6, therefore, focuses on the Chinese entrepreneurs' dual role as Chinese immigrants and entrepreneurs, discussing how individual belonging and commercial decisions influenced each other. The first section explores the interactions between their commercial success and the formation of national belonging. I then concentrate on a frequently mentioned topic among Chinese entrepreneurs in Japan: naturalization (*kika* in Japanese), as it manifests their inner struggles between emotional belonging and rationality in entrepreneurial activities. Finally, I discuss their bifocal insights on subsiding their internal conflicts.

Chapter 7 summarizes the main findings of the dissertation and notes that the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs negotiated and recreated ethnicity in daily entrepreneurial practices by dynamically coupling and decoupling with different types of ethnic networks, balancing inviable

and invisible ethnic expressions, and taking a bifocal insight to relieve inner conflicts. Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs in Japan perceived their ethnic status differently depending on their daily entrepreneurial activities and self-identification as entrepreneurs. Such changes in perceptions of ethnicity and actions reflected the entrepreneurialization of ethnicity.

Chapter One

Entrepreneurship and Overseas Chinese Businesses

This chapter introduces the anthropological perspective of entrepreneurship and its specific contributions to entrepreneurship research. The second section reviews the prior literature on overseas Chinese business and discusses three mainstream approaches. The last section concentrates on ethnic business studies in Japan. The chapter aims to help readers gain an understanding of the existing studies and debates relevant to entrepreneurship and overseas Chinese businesses. It also addresses the gaps in the prior literature and presents the contributions of this dissertation.

1.1 Entrepreneurship Research in Anthropology

Polanyi aroused a heated discussion regarding formal and substantive meanings of economic activities in the 1960s and 1970s (Polanyi 2001). For substantivists, humans are embedded in social relations, values, and cultural systems that construct unique rationales for economic activities rather than identical microeconomic models. In contrast, for formalists, as *Homo economicus*, humans intend to maximize and optimize individual desires and profits (Isaac 2005).

With the global expansion of capitalism, few non-Western societies have not been influenced by capitalist economy. Economic anthropologists' main concerns consequently shifted from searching for an alternative to Western capitalist economy to investigating how underdeveloped societies can achieve economic modernization and what advantages and disadvantages local societies have. Against this backdrop, entrepreneurship studies have received more attention from anthropologists (Geertz 1963a; Barth 1963; 1967; Douglas and Wildavsky

1982; Stewart 1991; Heap and Ross 1992; Gudeman 2001). For anthropologists, entrepreneurship is both an economic and a sociocultural topic (Stewart 1991).

In the book, *Peddlers and Princes*, Geertz (1963a) showed the unique contributions of the anthropological approach to research on economic transitions by introducing two entrepreneurship patterns emerging from the Indonesian villages of Modjokuto and Tabanan. In Modjokuto, the local entrepreneurial group was derived from the traditional bazaar-trader fellows characterized by individualism and had "socially well-demarcated" (76) boundaries. In contrast, the entrepreneurial group of displaced aristocrats in Tabanan was concerned with not only business interests but also cultural prestige and loyalties. The entrepreneurial groups and economic institutions determined the two villages' effectiveness in organizational forms, ideological dynamics, and the degree of urbanization.

In line with the native and holistic perspectives in anthropology, Geertz's book presented multiple single entrepreneurial patterns. It stressed that entrepreneurial practices were rooted in local historical and sociocultural contexts. His book does not seek to determine which developmental pattern is superior. Instead, Geertz argued that both had potential problems. The Modjokuto model faced ethical issues since it was inadequate for collective and systematic regulations and norms. The Tabanan model, in contrast, had difficulties related to effectiveness and innovation. Geertz identified that although the two entrepreneurial patterns emerged from the local sociocultural contexts, the entrepreneurs played roles as actors and innovators to solve each village's potential problems. He highlighted that the economic innovators from the two villages found themselves in a similar position. On the one hand, they maintained the elements of each local society that facilitate entrepreneurship and, on the other hand, they drove themselves forward to create and develop new features that favor local economic modernization and to eliminate

obstacles.

Barth's edited volume in 1963, *The Role of the Entrepreneur in Social Change in Northern Norway*, is another seminal work that brought entrepreneurship into the anthropology view. Barth (1963) highlighted that an "entrepreneur" was neither a "person" in a sociological sense nor a fixed and routinized status. Instead, entrepreneurs should be understood as a "role": "it relates to actions and activities, and not rights and duties"(6). In this sense, "the entrepreneur" is not whom a person can become but how they act. He noted environmental factors "to which the entrepreneur, through his relations with other people, is subject, but which he by his very activity may modify and change" (7). Barth also stressed the social and moral costs of entrepreneurial activities, which existed in both primitive and modern Western economies. Social cost and restriction may occur when entrepreneurs bring goods and services from one sector or community to another with different values. Barth's arguments concerning entrepreneurship differ from sociologists' mainstream views regarding the nature of entrepreneurship. He argues that entrepreneurs' role is not to fit within existing opportunity structures or given social contexts but rather to actively interact with the contexts by (re)constructing and negotiating the values and assets on their own. Barth's views on entrepreneurship corresponded to his views on ethnicity (Barth 1969) in terms of the dynamic perspective. Whether entrepreneurs or ethnic groups, the status maintenance depends on how the actors "behave" rather than on predisposed internal constitutions.

The anthropological approach contributed to understanding the accumulation of knowledge and skills, informal methods in gaining access to resources, and interactions between opportunity structure and individual entrepreneurs (Stewart 1991). Drawing on prior anthropological discussions on entrepreneurship, Schumpeter's economic view (1994), and Bourdieu's practice theory (1990), Pfeilstetter, in his recent book *The Anthropology of*

Entrepreneurship (2022), claims that entrepreneurs proactively interpret, destabilize, and reconstruct supposedly fixed social patterns (e.g., institutions, social networks, heritage, and values). He conceptualizes the dynamic process as "entrepreneurialization" (93).

Compared to the economic (Knight 1921; Schumpeter 1954; 1983; 1994) and sociological approaches (Aldrich and Zimmer 1986; Ruef and Lounsbury 2007; Dana and Light 2012) to entrepreneurship, the anthropological literature on entrepreneurship has two distinct characteristics. First, ethnographical works mainly focus on the everyday practices of entrepreneurs and how they interact in social contexts. Entrepreneurship research in anthropology thus draws attention to individual actors more than institutions and regulations. The study of entrepreneurship "permitted the anthropologists to focus on individual intentionality, agency, and willful goal-seeking and strategic behaviors" (Steward 1991, 73). However, despite the focus on individual actors, entrepreneurship research in anthropology does not view individual entrepreneurs as under-socialized. As shown in Geertz and Barth's early works (Geertz 1963a; Barth 1963; 1967) and in Pfeilstetter's latest theorization of entrepreneurialization (Pfeilstetter 2022), the relationships between social contexts and entrepreneurial activities are interactive, and more importantly, entrepreneurship is a dynamic process of creating and negotiating resources and values.

The second characteristic is that most anthropological literature takes an ethnographic approach to exploring various entrepreneurship models (Broehl 1978; Bruun 1993; Caulkins 2008; Lalonde 2013; Pant 2015; Fredin and Jogmark 2017). As Gudeman (2001) identified, economic anthropologists focus on community-based economic activities. The local-based perspective echoes Barth's view that entrepreneurial activities should align with the local community's values, ethics, and morals (Barth 1963). Entrepreneurship research in sociology tends to explore generalized sociocultural mechanisms and institutional environments that favor the emergence and

development of entrepreneurship. In contrast, the local-based ethnographical literature identified distinct entrepreneurial models based on the local sociocultural contexts, which provided potential strategies for sustainable local development (Peredo and Chrisman 2006). The empirical studies inspired further discussions to extend beyond a standardized Silicon Valley model and focus more on the heterogeneity of entrepreneurship (Baker and Welter 2020).

The two characteristics of an anthropological approach to entrepreneurship provide the fundamental perspective for the dissertation to explore the entrepreneurship of Chinese newcomers in Japan. Rather than focusing exclusively on institutions and opportunity structures, this study emphasizes Chinese entrepreneurs' specific entrepreneurial "roles" and "actions," as highlighted by Barth (1963). Meanwhile, my locally based ethnographical study contextualizes the Chinese newcomers' entrepreneurship and conveys how their entrepreneurship development relates to the broad social contexts in both China and Japan.

This dissertation provides an empirical contribution to entrepreneurship research in anthropology. As mentioned previously, the anthropological approach highlights that entrepreneurship generates agency-driven changes. This view is reflected in Barth's works on ethnicity and entrepreneurship (Barth 1963; 1969), although he did not explicitly identify the relationship between the two topics. One important commonality is that Barth argued against possessions (i.e., ethnic membership or entrepreneurship) and drew attention to the dynamics of social interactions. The connection leaves space for discussions on how entrepreneurs "entrepreneurialize" ethnicity. However, few studies followed this perspective (Verver, Roessingh, and Passenier 2020). Pfeilstetter argued that "ethnic or immigrant entrepreneurship is not necessarily or most importantly an anthropological domain" as they are economists' and sociologists' concerns, and anthropological research "shows much more imagination than just

quantifying business creation from outsiders and minorities" (Pfeilstetter 2022,127).

However, as the prosperities of ethnic economies in industrialized countries indicate the substantive meaning of economic activities, ethnic entrepreneurship is consistent with economic anthropologists' concerns. The economic successes of ethnic entrepreneurs cannot be detached from social norms and values, such as co-ethnic social networks and ingroup solidarity (Eriksen 2005). In this respect, how ethnic or immigrant entrepreneurs change their attitudes toward ethnicity as their entrepreneurial careers develop is a representation of the agency-driven entrepreneurialization with which anthropologists are concerned. A significant number of studies have attributed the success of overseas Chinese businesses to specific social patterns and values, including Confucianism principles, *guanxi* networks, and familism predisposed in the ethnic group (Redding 1993; Granovetter 1995; Chan and Chiang 1995; B. Wong 1998; Chen 2001; Kuhn 2009; Chuah et al. 2016). Compared to the existing literature, this dissertation focuses on how Chinese newcomers in Japan negotiate and recreate ethnicity with the growth of their businesses and provides an empirical contribution to developing the anthropological approach to ethnic entrepreneurship studies.

1.2 Overseas Chinese Businesses

The term "overseas Chinese" refers to Chinese emigrants who live overseas, specifically after China's emergence as a national state during the 1911 revolution (G. Wang 1993). This section reviews three mainstream approaches to overseas Chinese businesses and presents two additional perspectives in this research field.

1.2.1 Culturalist Approach and *Chineseness*

The root of the culturalist approach originates from the thought that ethnic group members have

culturally determined features that favor self-employment and entrepreneurial activities (Craig 2015). These cultural predispositions include "dedication to work, membership of a strong social network, acceptance of risk, compliance with social value pattern, solidarity and loyalty, and orientation toward self-employment"(Masurel, Nijkamp, and Vindigni 2004).

In his book *The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism* (Weber 1959), Weber discusses why rational capitalism did not arise in ancient China, noting that the reasons lie in the "Confucian rationalism" that features discipline and obedience, patrimonial bureaucracy, and a value that literati should stay away from pursuing fortune. Nevertheless, at odds with Weber's opinions, many researchers proved how Confucian ethics and values contributed to the development of Chinses capitalism and to the rapid economic growth of certain East Asian countries where Confucian thoughts had a profound influence (Yao 2002; Lam 2003; Luo 2007; C. Wang 2010). Likewise, in a study on overseas Chinese entrepreneurship, researchers also found evidence to prove how Confucian values favor overseas entrepreneurial activities. In his seminal book, *The Spirit of Chinese Capitalism*, Redding (1993) identifies that the fundamental beliefs and values of diasporic Chinese migrants in business were based on Confucianism. The Confucian values determined their social structures and relationship rules characterized by familism, filial piety, and enforceable trust. Moreover, Redding mentions Taoism and Buddhism as fundamental values of Chinese society. However, compared to Confucian traditionalism, Taoism and Buddhism have less influence on how economic activity is organized. Redding attempts to identify a particular pattern of overseas Chinese capitalism and views it as an "economic culture" rooted in China's cultural and historical legacies.

Similarly, in the analysis of ethnic Chinese business in Asia, Yen (2013) argues that Confucianism, as a key ideology of ethnic Chinese businesses, imparted the business philosophy

characterized by harmony, reciprocity, paternalism, and progress and provided ethnic Chinese societies with a comparative edge in economic performance.[1] Moreover, an ethnographic study of Chinese entrepreneurs in Singapore (Chan and Chiang 1995) showed that "Confucian entrepreneurs" living in kinship-centered *Gemeinschaft* (community) (Tönnies 2002) tended to adopt a family managing mode and combine it with central Confucian values characterized by five values: "self-control, frugality, hard work, trustworthiness and positive attitudes toward learning" (Chan and Chiang 1995, 649). Wong, in his ethnographic work, argued that for Chinese immigrant entrepreneurs in the San Francisco Bay area, Confucian values were indispensable because Chinese business owners used their kinship ties, traditional social etiquettes, and ethnic resources to pursue economic goals in both ethnic and non-ethnic markets (B. Wong 1998).

A detailed inquiry into the connections between the cultural advantages of overseas Chinese entrepreneurs and their day-to-day entrepreneurial activities is necessary. Certain ethnic values that favor ethnic entrepreneurship (e.g., familism and enforceable trust) do not act directly on entrepreneurial practices but rather translate into particular social interaction forms. Ethnic networks play such a significant role for ethnic entrepreneurs because co-ethnic networks ensure in-group solidarity, loyalty, and enforceable trust. Such attributes emerge from "a well-defined collection of people who identify one another as belonging to the same collectivity by ethnic or even more specific markers such as place of origin" (Granovetter 1995,142). The ethnic values and co-ethnic social networks of overseas Chinese entrepreneurs are therefore inseparable.

[1] Yen exemplified his view with the high-speed modernization and industrialization of the *Four Asian Little Dragons* (Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and South Korea). All of the countries are profoundly influenced by Confucian values.

In his book *From the Soil: The Fundamental of Chinese Society,* the prominent Chinese sociologist and anthropologist Fei Xiaotong, proposed the theory of "*cha xu ge ju*" (i.e., differential mode of association and stratified closeness). Fei made an analogy between concentric water ripples and Chinese rural societal structures, explaining that Chinese social networks centered on the "self" and spread outward to kinship networks and spatial relationships, like fellows from the same village (Fei 1992). While coined under the social contexts of contemporary Chinese rural society, the theory has fundamentally influenced the discussions regarding overseas Chinese social networks. For instance, Chen (2001) examined how overseas Chinese entrepreneurs' social networks reflect their multiple ethnic identities by addressing the stratified closeness in the network structure emerging step by step from "self" to "kinship," "classmate," "hometown friends," "industrial peers," "ethnic Chinese," "national Chinese," and "religion and hobby groups." The stratified closeness reflects that the strength of comembership decreases progressively with the increasing distance to the central "self."

In his far-reaching work about overseas Chinese in the early times, Kuhn (2009) stressed the transplant of such social structure in other countries as follows:

> Social practices embedded in the emigrant homelands were notably adaptable to the needs of sojourners abroad, particularly the flexible use of orthodox kinship symbols as cover for unorthodox practices: small groups of villages or weak lineages could band together under a common surname or even a multi-surname alliance for defense against powerful lineage neighbors. The aura of patrilineal orthodoxy could cover the aggregation of non-kin to achieve a common interest. Or a group of surnames could band together under an utterly fictitious surname (Kuhn 2009, 42).

According to Kuhn (2009), overseas Chinese transplanted social structures (i.e., lineage and surname associations, as well as associations based on common regions and dialect groups) into the receiving countries. The cultural feature of transplanting the homeland's social structure abroad significantly influenced ethnic entrepreneurship. For instance, Light (1972) highlighted the importance of "rotating credit association"[2] in the ethnic business creation of overseas Chinese, particularly the early Cantonese immigrants to the United States. The institution is based on *Hui*, the organization emerging from kinsmen groups and requiring members to be highly solitary to avoid defaulting on their obligations to contribute regularly. Likewise, through the investigation of the Chinese economic organizations (*Bang*) in Malaya and Singapore, Landa (2016) addressed the "particularism" (i.e., compared to Western economic organizations) in their economic relationship, which manifested through reciprocity and mutual aid based on Confucian ethics.

Another prominent economic model that owes much to China's cultural features is the "bamboo networks"(Redding 1993; Weidenbaum and Hughes 1996; Gambe 2000). For instance, Weidenbaum and Hughes (1996) recognized the power of bamboo networks of ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs dispersed in Southeast Asia, indicating that the force "possessed tremendous financial wealth and has repeatedly demonstrated the ability to capture large profits from emerging markets, despite political fragmentation and economic uncertainty " (8). The driving force was credited to solid family control and mutual trust in transactions based on kinship, dialect group, or a common origin.

[2] The concept was first proposed by anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1962) in his study on eastern Java. According to Geertz, "rotating credit associations" exist in various social contexts but follow a general principle: "a lump sum fund composed of fixed contributions from each member of the association is distributed, at fixed intervals and as a whole, to each member of the association in turn" (243). In this paper, Geertz mentioned cases in China, Japan and Vietnam.

The combinations of cultural characteristics and social networks of overseas Chinese capitalism manifest the *Chineseness* in entrepreneurship. It was appealing when overseas Chinese capitalism rose and became a formidable competitor of the Western business model, particularly in the 1990s. Nevertheless, criticisms and skepticism also arose. This perspective, with a sense of essentialism and emphasis on the homogeneity of overseas Chinese, considers cultural factors a primordial entity, obscuring the dynamics and diversity of cultural and ethnic factors (Chuah et al. 2016). Some ethnographic works have noted the problem and attempted to break the deadlock between culturalists and critics by introducing historical and generational lenses (Nonini 2003; Koning 2007; Verver 2012; Koning and Verver 2013). Nonini criticized the view that overseas Chinese businesses have the same characteristics at all times and places and identified the variability and flexibility of the business in response to different social contexts (Nonini 2003). Koning (2007) emphasized that it was significant to consider generational differences because, as her study on Chinese Indonesian business conveyed, people's attitudes toward and discourse on traditional Chinese values aligned with the migrant history and younger generations born in the host country stressed the *Chineseness* in business practice with different contents. Another critique of *Chineseness* in entrepreneurship is that the perspective fails to consider immigrant entrepreneurs as economic actors, which "has resulted in a neglect of underlying economic process and a narrow focus on (real or alleged) ethnic factors" (Rath and Kloosterman 2000). Craig (2015) criticized the culturalist perspective's failure to acknowledge firm growth and lack of sufficient theoretical foundations. The critiques did not entirely negate the contributions of the culturalist approach but highlighted its inefficiency in analyzing immigrant entrepreneurship. Despite the critiques, the perspective still carries weight in the current studies on overseas Chinese entrepreneurship. However, further discussions should not focus on whether *Chineseness* matters but on how it

comes into play.

1.2.2 Structuralist Approaches: Ethnic Enclaves and Chinatowns

Compared to the culturalist approach, the structuralist approach centers upon the structural disadvantages immigrants confront in host societies and the formation of ethnic enclaves. Admittedly, the structuralist approach is not entirely independent of immigrants' cultural attributes because, as explained in the previous section, the social structures of immigrants in the host societies are primarily based on ethnic values and norms. In contrast, however, the structuralist approach to ethnic entrepreneurship pays more attention to the economic opportunities and resources that ethnic entrepreneurs can access in the host societies (Pires and Stanton 2019).

The disadvantage theory in ethnic entrepreneurship stresses that newly arrived immigrants have significant disadvantages compared to locals, constraining their career pathways in the host countries (Fregetto 2004). Due to the lack of language skills, competitive advantage in education and working experience, and discrimination in the employment market, the newly arrived immigrants have no choice but self-employment. However, this theory did not resonate in ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurship studies because it did not see entrepreneurship as a sign of success but rather as an alternative survival strategy to unemployment (Pires and Stanton 2019). Discrimination or the lack of human capital may "push" immigrants to become self-employed, but they are not decisive factors for entrepreneurial success.

In contrast, there are a large number of studies has drawn attention to ethnic enclaves, the origin places of enclave entrepreneurs (Wilson and Portes 1980; Zhou and Logan 1989; Waldinger 1993; Light et al. 1994; Portes 1995; Zhou and Lin 2005; Ndofor and Priem 2011; Portes and Manning 2012). Ethnic enclaves are clusters of ethnic businesses owned and operated by members of the same ethnic group (Portes 1995). The emergency of ethnic enclaves needs a considerable

number of co-ethnic members, social resources exclusively for in-group members, and co-ethnic laborers with solidarity and enforceable trust (Portes and Manning 2012). Such conditions created ethnic niches where enclave entrepreneurs predominantly occupy the markets and employ co-ethnic laborers with low salaries. Moreover, since highly self-closed niches serve every aspect of migrants' lives, ethnic enclaves are "institutionally complete" (Zhou 2007).

Chinatowns worldwide exemplify the facilitative roles of ethnic enclaves in developing overseas Chinese entrepreneurship (Zhou 1992; Yamashita 2002; Mayer 2012; Guest 2013). In her far-reaching book about New York City's Chinatown, Zhou (1992) argued that Chinatown was essentially a socioeconomic institution that "provides immigrant Chinese with advantages and opportunities that are not easily accessible in the larger society and helps them to make headway in society without losing ethnic identity and solidarity" (Zhou 1992,10). The New York Chinatown consisted of two structures, the "protected sector" (i.e., exclusive capital, labor, and consumer markets) and the "export sector" (i.e., to sell products and services in larger consumer markets); as well as two social classes, the Chinese entrepreneurs and the Chinese immigrant laborers (Zhou 1992, 110-114). The rise of Chinatown is credited to the Chinese enclave entrepreneurs who rely on the dual structures in the self-enclosed ethnic enclave.

Similarly, three traditional Chinatowns developed in abandoned places in Japan. The earliest Nagasaki Chinatown can be traced back sixteen centuries (Jansen 1992; Yamashita 2002). The driving forces of the establishments of Chinatowns were commercial and entrepreneurial activities (Uchida 1963), among which the "three knives" businesses (i.e., restaurants, barbershops, and tailors) were predominant. The emergence of the enclave entrepreneurs was bound to *Bang* (kinsmen associations) in the enclaves, which provided self-enclosed markets and resources that favor the Chinese merchants (Uchida 1963).

According to the ethnic enclave theory, Chinatowns and the Chinese enclave entrepreneurs were mutually reinforcing. The gathering of co-ethnic members and the co-ethnic solidarity in the ethnic enclaves give enclave entrepreneurs privileges to benefit from the self-enclosed socioeconomic institution. However, viewing overseas Chinese entrepreneurs merely as enclave entrepreneurs has become outdated because many Chinatowns, whether traditional or new, are no longer "enclaves." With the evolution of traditional Chinatowns and the establishment of new Chinatowns in recent decades, the boundaries between Chinatowns and mainstream societies in countries of the settlement have blurred (B. Wong 2013). Moreover, modern Chinatowns have become heterogeneous. For instance, Luk and Phan (2005) found that Toronto's Chinatown was experiencing a process of Vietnamization. Consequently, losing the "enclave" feature means the weakening of socially and economically secure footings for enclave entrepreneurs. New Chinatowns worldwide and relevant overseas Chinese organizations can still benefit Chinese entrepreneurs, particularly in social capital accumulation (B. Wong 2013). However, their functions as "protected sectors" have weakened. Presently, it is important for Chinese entrepreneurs in Chinatowns to build stronger connections in larger societies. Light and his colleagues suggested that the ethnic enclave theory only explains a few cases of ethnic economies because many ethnic firms do not cluster in a neighborhood or derive benefits from locational aggregation (Light et al. 1994; Light and Gold 2000).

The Ikebukuro Chinatown in Tokyo is also a representative of "new Chinatowns" (Yamashita 2013). Although many Chinese newcomers in Japan started their entrepreneurial careers in northwestern Ikebukuro due to the high concentration of Chinese immigrants, the development of their businesses is not limited to the new Chinatown. Moreover, the Ikebukuro Chinatown is essentially not an ethnic enclave. Despite being the most visible ethnic group,

Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs and their businesses coexist with other ethnic groups, local Japanese firms, and Japanese shopping street associations. Therefore, in addition to balancing the advantages and disadvantages the ethnic concentration can bring to their businesses, the Chinese entrepreneurs in Ikebukuro also must seek the possibility of coexistence with the locals.

1.2.3 Embeddedness Approach

Since the 1990s, scholars have realized that discussions about ethnic entrepreneurs should not only revolve around ethnic and cultural factors but also consider the receiving societies' marketing and political-institutional environments. The new thought promoted the interactional approach to ethnic entrepreneurship with the interactive model (Waldinger, Aldrich, and Ward 1990; Aldrich and Waldinger 1990) and the mixed embeddedness (Kloosterman, van der Leun, and Rath 1999; Kloosterman and Rath 2001).

In their pioneering work, Waldinger, Aldrich, and Ward (1990) built up an analytical framework of ethnic entrepreneurs' strategies based on two dimensions: *opportunity structures* and *group characteristics*. Opportunity structures encompass ethnic or non-ethnic market conditions, inter-ethnic competition, and state policies affecting immigrants' access to ownership and visa application for self-employed businesses. Group characteristics explain why some ethnic groups are successful in business such as ethnic group members' cultural endowment and their ability to build solid social networks (Waldinger, Aldrich, and Ward 1990).

Despite significant contributions to creating an integrative and comprehensive framework, the interactive model has been criticized for its excessive inclusiveness. Rath argued that the interactive model is "more of a classification than an explanatory model" (Rath 2002, 9). The all-encompassing feature hampers further application of the analytical model in empirical studies. Moreover, it is criticized for its greater emphasis on ethnic cultures than political-institutional

situations in receiving societies. Rath and Kloosterman suggested that ethnocultural factors were "not given *a priori* an independent role but are integrated into a great whole"(Rath and Kloosterman 2000, 669).

Instead, the two scholars proposed the theoretical framework of mixed embeddedness (Kloosterman, van der Leun, and Rath 1999; Rath and Kloosterman 2000; Rath 2002; Kloosterman 2010; Kloosterman and Rath 2018). It indicates that

> the rise of immigrant entrepreneurship is, theoretically, primarily located at the intersection of changes in socio-cultural frameworks on the one side and transformation process in (urban) economies on the other. The interplay … takes place within a larger, dynamic framework of institutions on the neighborhood, city, national or economic sector level" (Kloosterman, van Leun, and Rath 1999, 257).

Moreover, it presents an analytical framework linking the micro-level of the individual entrepreneur and personal resources with the meso-level of the local opportunity structures and the macro-institutional frameworks (Kloosterman 2010).

Further studies have proven that mixed embeddedness has feasibility in analyzing empirical cases (Kloosterman, van der Leun, and Rath 1999; Barrett, Jones, and McEvoy 2001; Price and Chacko 2009; Jones et al. 2014; Barberis and Solano 2018; Y. Wang and Warn 2018; Zhu, Feng, and Pan 2019). For instance, drawing on the mixed embeddedness concept, Wang and Warn investigated the different business patterns of three types of Chinese entrepreneurs (i.e., business immigrant, skilled immigrant, and Tiananmen square group) in Australia. They highlighted that that the opportunity structure the entrepreneurs could access emerged from "a dynamic and complex interaction of factors in the local business environment, institutional factors, and various ethnic and class resources" (Y. Wang and Warn 2018, 142). The two authors further

developed the theory by introducing gender, class, and race factors into their analytical framework. In her study on Chinese migrants in Italian industrial districts, Ceccagno (2015) combined mixed embeddedness theory with the economic emplacement approach and contended that the growing numbers of Chinese entrepreneurs in Italy were credited with the demands for labor originating in China and Italian immigration and labor laws.

Since the 2000s, discussions of overseas Chinese entrepreneurs in transnational contexts have received unprecedented attention (L. Wong and Ng 2002; B. Wong 2006; Liu-Farrer 2011; Nyíri 2011; Lin and Tao 2012; Liu 2012; Zhou and Liu 2015; Ren and Liu 2015; 2019). Drori and coauthors defined transnational entrepreneurs as "entrepreneurs that migrate from one country to another, concurrently maintaining business-related linkages with their former country of origin and currently adopted countries and communities" [3] (Drori, Honig, and Wright 2009, 2001).

The transnational perspective expands the mixed embeddedness framework by considering multiple countries' opportunity structures. For instance, in a study of Chinese entrepreneurs in Singapore, Ren and Liu (2015) found that the Chinese entrepreneurs' transnationalism and dual embeddedness were conducive to accumulating economic and social resources in both the settlement society and the homeland. Moreover, dual embeddedness further promoted the Chinese immigrants' social and economic integrations in Singapore. The authors used dual embeddedness to highlight that the Chinese immigrant entrepreneurs' transnational businesses are embedded in social relations and institutions in multiple countries. Similarly, in the comparative study, Zhou

[3] In terms of the definition of transnational entrepreneur, Harima and Baron (2020) observed that the notion of transnational entrepreneurship had not reached the status of an independent research field. Their case study showed that the transnational practices of immigrant entrepreneurs presented more variants than the prior definitions. In the internet age, the notion of "transnational" seems fuzzier since it happens in the real world and in cyberspace.

and Liu (2015) noted that while the transnationalism patterns of Chinese entrepreneurs in Singapore and the United States varied due to the differences in migration history and structural circumstances, transnational entrepreneurship promoted deeper localization of the immigrants' economies. Nyíri (2007) found that the transnationalism of Chinese entrepreneurs in Hungary was similar to "middleman minorities" who occupy an intermediate position in trade and commerce between receiving societies and homelands (Bonacich 1973). Due to their alienness in the host society, many Chinese newcomers relied on extensive transnational connections to provide products from China to satisfy the local markets and afford to overcome their peripheral situations in Hungary (Nyíri 2007).

Developing from the interactive model to mixed or dual embeddedness, the embeddedness approach remains a widely accepted analytical framework applied to investigate immigrant entrepreneurship. Compared to the culturalist approach and the ethnic enclave theory focusing on ethnic factors, the embeddedness approach considers a broader societal context, thereby providing the possibility of integrating immigrant entrepreneurship into generous entrepreneurship. Another remarkable contribution of the embeddedness approach is its emphasis on different spaces. Kloosterman and Rath (2001) suggest analyzing the embeddedness from three-level spatial levels: national, regional or urban, and neighborhood. Dual embeddedness (Ren and Liu 2015) concentrates on the transnational level. The embeddedness approach helps to turn the focus from specific cultural or ethnic characteristics of an ethnic group or enclave to broader social contexts. It highlights that immigrant entrepreneurship is a product of the intertwining of diverse social relations, political and institutional environments, and market situations at various spatial levels.

However, the embeddedness approach has been criticized for being "too structuralist in nature" (Craig 2015) and "remaining limited for the analysis of a more precise understanding of

the origin and development context of entrepreneurship decision making or action" (Pütz 2003). It regards immigrant entrepreneurs as rational actors who mobilize available and favorable ethnic resources efficiently and accurately to pursue business opportunities in domestic or global markets. However, in reality, the extent to which immigrant entrepreneurs rely on ethnic resources and how they recognize and identify opportunities in the market vary from person to person, depending on their past experiences and perceptions of entrepreneurship. That is, although the immigrants' entrepreneurial activities seem embedded, they may reach that state in substantially different ways. Razin (2002) issued a warning about the fuzziness of mixed embeddedness and the idealistic image of intra-ethnic relationships the theorists presented.

Secondly, ethnicity is downplayed in the embeddedness approach since it is depicted merely as one of the available human capitals. Rezaei contended that immigrant entrepreneurs "are usually heavily infused with cultural-ethnic elements influencing what they produce, how they are managed, the composition of the staff, how they relate to other businesses, and how they build their international relationships" (Rezaei 2007). Ethnic-cultural factors received unequal treatment because they did not position immigrants' entrepreneurial activities into longer and broader immigrant experiences. Unlike transnational investors, many immigrant entrepreneurs study as international students or work as long-term employees in receiving societies. Pre-entrepreneur migration experiences, which are closely associated with cultural preferences, inter- and intra-ethnic networks, and a sense of belonging, play a role not merely as "resources" but rather as essential considerations running through their entrepreneurial careers.

1.2.4 Implications for Overseas Chinese Business Research

In the previous section, I introduced three main paradigms of overseas Chinese business research. The culturalist approach stresses the advantageous cultural characteristics and the corresponding

social network forms. The ethnic enclave theory draws attention to the ethnic niches with self-enclosed social structures in settlement societies. Though with different focuses, the first two approaches emphasize the ethnic factors favoring immigrants' entrepreneurship. The embeddedness approach which includes the interactive model, mixed embeddedness theory, and dual embeddedness theory integrates the ethnocultural factors with opportunity structures and political and institutional environments at various spatial levels.

I summarized two trends in this research field based on the aforementioned literature. First, the significance of ethnic and cultural factors in ethnic entrepreneurship has diminished. While the culturalist approach was prevalent and influential when researchers began to draw attention to overseas Chinese businesses, the current trend is to focus on (transnational) opportunity structures and to view ethnicity as a supplement in the analytical frameworks. However, a problem arises from the epistemology of ethnicity. The interpretations of ethnicity in ethnic or immigrant entrepreneurship research mainly follow the views of primordialism and instrumentalism, neglecting the fact that ethnicity is interactive, dynamic, and associated with subjective cognition (Jenkins 2008). The second trend is that prior literature depicted overseas Chinese entrepreneurs as rational economic individuals who must constantly behave appropriately to fit into the idealistic entrepreneurial model. This view is problematic because it fragments entrepreneurial activities from individuals' life courses and idealizes their economic activities without considering emotional and "irrational" anecdotes in entrepreneurial practices.

This dissertation provides two additional perspectives to the research of overseas Chinese business. First, it contributes to the epistemology of overseas Chinese entrepreneurs' ethnicity. Drawing on the interactionalism perspective in ethnicity studies (Barth 1969; Jenkins 2008), the dissertation focuses on the changes in overseas Chinese entrepreneurs' perceptions of ethnicity in

their entrepreneurial careers.

Barth (1969) argued that the critical point of investigation on ethnic groups was the formation and maintenance of ethnic boundaries rather than "culture-bearing units." Barth's view is apparently distinct from the primordialism perspective, as he did not focus on ethnic groups' cultural characteristics but rather on the formation and maintenance processes. Although both the interactionism and instrumentalist perspectives emphasize the malleability and flexibility of ethnicity, Barth did not highlight whether there should be an ultimate and one-dimensional goal, that is, from the perspective of rational choice theory, to maximize economic gains. Instead, he emphasized the dynamic process of "articulation" between different groups in daily practices. In this respect, Barth's view on ethnicity echoes his arguments concerning entrepreneurship (Barth 1963). Similarly, Jenkins (2008) viewed ethnicity as a cultural phenomenon based on in-group shared meanings and actors' self-identifications under specific situations. Moreover, its formation depends on social interactions and owes a great deal to social categorization (Jenkins 2008). Although a few scholars turned their attention to the dynamics of ethnicity in entrepreneurial activities (Pütz 2003; Pécoud 2010; Verver, Roessingh, and Passenier 2020), the perspective did not reverberate in the research on overseas Chinese businesses.

This study also looks beyond the culturalist approach in the studies of overseas Chinese business. As mentioned previously, the culturalist approach was criticized for an overemphasis on the universality of cultural characteristics of overseas Chinese businesses and the lack of consideration of economic rationality. This dissertation contextualizes the Chinese newcomers' entrepreneurial experiences by integrating them into the social contexts of both China and Japan and showing the situational dynamics of their ethnicity. Moreover, to explore what facilitates the dynamics, I consider both ethnic-cultural and economic factors (and the potential conflicts between

them). Therefore, while the dissertation focuses on ethnicity in entrepreneurship, it does not regard ethnicity as the single decisive factor or exclude economic rationality in entrepreneurial practices. The dissertation also critically reappraises the ethnic enclave theory and embeddedness approach prevalent in the research of overseas Chinese businesses. They both emphasize ethnic niches and favorable external conditions from which Chinese immigrants' entrepreneurship emerges. However, returning to Barth's view on entrepreneurs (Barth 1963), entrepreneurship does not arise from endowed favorable resources or opportunities but from individual entrepreneurs' actions of mobilizing and negotiating seemingly unrelated or contradictory resources and values. The dissertation discards the view that pre-existing ethnic resources exist that favor overseas Chinese entrepreneurship constantly. Instead, it shifts the focus from the external advantages to entrepreneurial individuals and their role as positive facilitators of "entrepreneurializing" ethnicity.

Secondly, the dissertation aims to contribute to the research on overseas Chinese businesses by allowing for discussions on cognitive and emotional changes in their lives. Entrepreneurship is commonly labeled as capitalist economic activity. In certain situations, however, it is necessary to look beyond entrepreneurs as *Homo economicus* who have the ability to make rational economic choices. The cognitive approach to entrepreneurship concerns entrepreneurs' motivations, identities, emotions, and attention (Shepherd and Patzelt 2018). From this perspective, entrepreneurship can be interpreted from a subjectivist perspective, and entrepreneurial actions are correspondingly highly emotional endeavors. The joy, anger, sorrow, passion, excitement, and distress of entrepreneurial individuals can lead to emotional displays that affect commitments and evaluation in entrepreneurial practices (Wadeson 2008; Baron 2008; Cardon et al. 2009; Shepherd, Patzelt, and Wolfe 2011; Treffers et al. 2017). Moreover, entrepreneurial identities are constructed through socialization, storytelling, strategic positioning, and visual and oral symbols(Shepherd and

Haynie 2009; Celuch, Bourdeau, and Winkel 2017; Z. Zhang and Chun 2018; Shepherd and Patzelt 2018). Volery (2007) ascribed the cognitive and emotional factors to the "entrepreneurship dimension," highlighting that it exists independently of immigrants' ethnic and cultural backgrounds. However, I disagree with separating ethnicity from the "entrepreneurial dimension" because the role of ethnicity in entrepreneurship is not to merely provide social capital. Values, emotions, and belonging related to ethnicity also affect individuals' entrepreneurial career motivations, identity changes, and business prospects (Shepherd and Patzelt 2018).

Concentrating on the cognitive and emotional dimensions allows for an examination of ethnicity in entrepreneurship beyond the instrumentalist perspective. The research on overseas Chinese businesses has long recognized ethnicity as a "tool kit" (Granovetter 1995), from which overseas Chinese entrepreneurs access resources, values, and legitimacies that favor entrepreneurial activities. However, considering ethnicity's roles in entrepreneurship exclusively as pragmatic tools failed to explain the entrepreneurs' practices deviating from economic rationality. As the following chapters convey, a Chinese entrepreneur whose business formerly benefitted from family and ethnic members would be reluctant to marginalize the family and ethnic members, although it seemed to be an economically rational choice in the business development stage. Moreover, their initial connections with other Chinese immigrants in Japan were not necessarily pro-entrepreneurship but emerged from the need for emotional solace. Meanwhile, they could not effortlessly synchronize the conflicts between ethnicity and entrepreneurship in the emotional realm. For the Chinese entrepreneurs, some taken-for-granted entrepreneurial decisions and behaviors may conceal their overwhelming feelings. Paying attention to the emotional and cognitive changes in their entrepreneurial lives can therefore offer a more comprehensive understanding of overseas Chinese entrepreneurs, not only as economically rational commercial

persons but also as being on an “emotional rollercoaster” (Shepherd and Patzelt 2018) with many ups and downs.

1.3 Ethnic Businesses in Japan

Studies of ethnic businesses in Japanese scholarship appeared later than in the West. The emergence of empirical studies started in the 1990s with the inflow of foreign laborers and international students into Japan’s urban areas. The studies described various ethnic groups in Japan, not only Korean and Chinese immigrants, who numerically account for the majority of the foreign population in Japan (Ito 1995; Kobayashi 2012; Gim 2015; J. Han 2020), but also business owners of other ethnic groups such as Brazilian (Kataoka 2012), Sri Lankans (Karunaratne 2017), and Vietnamese (Hirazawa 2012).

Higuchi (2012) found that most ethnic business types in Japan (i.e., except for restaurants and grocery stores) are predominated by different immigrant groups. For instance, Chinese immigrants concentrated on opening acupuncture stores, internet cafés, driving schools, and IT-related businesses; Korean immigrants engaged in *Pachinko* stores (i.e., a type of Japanese gambling game) and beauty salons; Thai immigrants concentrated on massage stores; and immigrants from the Middle East and Southeast Asia on second-hand trades. Higuchi attributed the differences to three factors: human capital, social capital, and opportunity structures. He viewed educational background as the key indicator to measure human capital, arguing that immigrants, whose high human capital was underestimated in the general employment market of the host country, were prone to self-employment (Higuchi 2012, 16). Social capital, according to Higuchi, refers to ethnic (i.e., family ties or fellow-townsman associations or specific religious associations) and non-ethnic social networks (e.g., via marriage to a Japanese spouse). He argued that the more immigrants were embedded in social networks, the more easily they established

businesses. Finally, he identified that opportunity structures depended on the potential of ethnic markets and the acceptability of ethnic services and products in the mainstream market. Higuchi's arguments followed the interactive model (Waldinger, Aldrich, and Ward 1990) and paid attention to ethnic entrepreneurs' adaptation strategies to Japan's social structures and mainstream markets.

While Higuchi's arguments have contributed significantly to ethnic business studies in Japanese scholarship, some empirical studies enriched our understanding by considering the historical framework (J. Han 2020), the influences of local Japanese communities (Lu 2019), and entrepreneurs' identities (Takahashi 2008; Gim 2015). Gim's dissertation on Korean immigrant entrepreneurs in Japan focuses on the correlations between ethnic identity and ethnic network (Gim 2015). She investigated entrepreneurs' identity changes and emotional fluctuations in the course of business and how they proactively maintained ethnic networks. Rather than employing Higuchi's static analytical framework, these empirical studies highlighted the dynamic relationships between ethnicity, local social and historical contexts, and immigrants' entrepreneurship.

1.3.1 Chinese Ethnic Businesses in Japan

In 1995, a few years after the inflow of Chinese newcomers to Japan accelerated (Okuda and Tajima 1993), Ito (1995) published an article that brought Chinese newcomers' businesses into view for the first time. The article identified five ethnic strategies of newcomers in Japan based on two critical analytical factors: opportunity structures and capital mobilizations. The first was the "independent entrepreneurs" (*kojin keiei* in Japanese), who relied on individual economic capital and mainly engaged in industries requiring few financial investments. This type of Chinese entrepreneur was relatively rare at that time. Most Chinese newcomer businesses in Japan relied on "external support" (*gaibu shien* in Japanese), "ethnic group support" (*esunikku shūdan* in

Japanese), "ingroup cooperation" (*kyōdō keiei* in Japanese), as well as "de-ethnization" (*datsu esunikku* in Japanese), depending on the degree of dependence on ethnicity and the method of accumulating resources. While Ito categorized the strategies of Chinese newcomers in Japan, the boundaries were not necessarily as clear-cut as he proposed.

In a comparative study of the ethnic business of ethnic groups in Japan, Higuchi (2010) argued that Chinese newcomers had advantageous human capital due to their international education backgrounds and strong language skills. Moreover, in light of the high acceptability of Chinese traditional ethnic business in Japan's society, particularly *chūka* cuisine (Chinese dishes modified to suit Japanese taste) and the close economic connections between China and Japan, the potential markets and business opportunity structures were also advantageous for the newcomers. However, due to the weakening of traditional migration channels and the evident stratification[4] in the Chinese community in Japan, the social capitals of the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs were relatively unstable and unpredictable. Based on Higuchi's analytical framework, Kobayashi (2012) focused on Chinese newcomers' businesses in non-ethnic fields, particularly in the IT industry. Compared to traditional townsman associations and general ethnic networks, fellow-student associations and personal connections based on shared working experiences were more favorable in their entrepreneurial activities.

In recent years, Chinese entrepreneurs' active roles in the transnational economies between China and Japan have received attention. Liu-Farrer (2007; 2011) attributed the increase of Chinese transnational entrepreneurs in Japan to several factors. First, the strengthening of

[4] In his paper, Higuchi mentioned the indifferent relationships between the old generations and the newcomers, which hindered the solidarity of the Chinese community in Japan.

economic interactions between the two countries has provided varying business opportunities for Chinese newcomers. Second, labor market constraints in Japan also drove many Chinese newcomers to choose self-employment. Finally, their familiarity with Japanese business culture and individual transnational networks is also conducive to building transnational businesses.

1.3.2 Implications for Migrant Integration Studies in Japan

Combining Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs' migrant and socioeconomic statuses, the dissertation aims to enrich migrant integration research in Japan by providing a comprehensive description of the special group. Immigrant integration includes economic, social, and cultural integration into the countries of settlement (Neuwirth 1999), and the integration strategies vary based on the immigrants' life stages (Wingens et al. 2011). The existing literature concerning immigrant integration into Japanese society conveys that ethnic and minority groups, such as *burakumin* (Neary 2009), *Nikkeijin* (Tsuda 2008), and *Zainichi* (Weiner and Chapman 2009), confronted different obstacles in social and economic integration. Takezawa (2008) found that special events and accidents, such as the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995, could facilitate immigrants' social integration into local communities. Following a chronological order of immigrants' life in Japan, Liu-Farrer (2020) noted that work and socioeconomic outcomes, as the central part of adult immigrants, determined the extent to which they could socially and economically integrate into Japanese society. These studies indicate that the integration strategies of migrants in Japan vary depending on migrants' socioeconomic status, occupations, significant events, and life stages.

However, the existing literature regarding immigrant entrepreneurs in Japan has focused primarily on immigrants' economic integration into Japanese society or transnational opportunity structures, capturing only one aspect of immigrants' integration. However, discussions about their

integration in societal and emotional aspects after becoming entrepreneurs are scarce. For immigrants, becoming entrepreneurs signifies changes not only in residential status and employment relationships but also, more importantly, indicates changes in individual cognition, mindset (Shepherd and Patzelt 2018), social circle, lifestyle, and *habitus* (Drori, Honig, and Ginsberg 2016).[5] Meanwhile, the changes in migrants' lives also affect their desires and strategies in the country of settlement. In this sense, discussions of immigrant entrepreneurs' integration should not be confined to the economic dimension.

Compared to the prior ethnic business studies in Japanese scholarship, this dissertation contributes by shifting the research subjects from opportunity structures to entrepreneurial individuals. It focuses on how Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs in Japan reconstruct social networks, reconsider their relationships with local society, and rediscover themselves after becoming entrepreneurs. This perspective helps deepen the understanding of Chinese entrepreneurs' integration into Japan from multiple dimensions beyond the economic. Moreover, it illustrates the distinct integration strategies of Chinese entrepreneurs compared to other subgroups of Chinese newcomers in Japan.

Summary of Chapter 1

This chapter traced the development of entrepreneurship studies in anthropology, studies on overseas Chinese businesses, and ethnic business studies in Japan. The review connected this study to a broader field of knowledge, and the concepts the chapter explained are indispensable for the

[5] Drawing on Bourdieu's concepts of "*habitus*" (Bourdieu 1990; 2013), Drori and coauthors suggested that immigrants' entrepreneurs' habitus represents individual and collective experiences, perceptions, and social norms of the countries of both departure and settlement.

dissertation's arguments. My dissertation focuses on how Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs in Japan negotiated and recreated ethnicity in their entrepreneurial practices to mobilize resources and transcend existing social values. The contributions of the dissertation are trifold. First, the dissertation aims to contribute to entrepreneurship studies in anthropology by integrating discussions about ethnicity and entrepreneurialization. It also provides new insights for overseas Chinese business studies. Looking beyond the culturalist approach, ethnic enclave theory, and the embeddedness theories that are predominant in the existing literature, the dissertation investigates the dynamics of ethnicity and Chinese newcomers' entrepreneurial "roles" in daily life. It critically reappraises the instrumentalism of ethnicity in overseas Chinese entrepreneurship and considers the Chinese entrepreneurs' emotional and cognitive changes in their entrepreneurial careers. Last, the dissertation provides an additional perspective to understanding migrant integration in Japan by emphasizing the particularity of Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs' socioeconomic status and the corresponding integration strategies.

Chapter Two

Research Design and Methodology

This chapter introduces the study's research design, data collection methods, and data analysis. I will first justify the significance and availability of ethnographic methodology in entrepreneurship research, followed by the introduction of my research design. I then elaborate on my fieldwork, explaining how I accessed the field and established rapport with my research participants. I also describe the study's data collection methods and data analysis. Finally, I outline the ethical considerations of my research.

2.1 Entrepreneurship Study and Ethnographic Methodology

Both quantitative and qualitative methodologies have been applied in entrepreneurship research. Quantitative studies with statistical data provide generalized and representative descriptions of entrepreneurship and are conducive to building entrepreneurial behavior models. In contrast, qualitative research guarantees richness and diversity in understanding entrepreneurial practices (Neergaard and Ulhøi 2007). Among the qualitative methodologies, ethnography, albeit still less used in this field, has received increasing attention. Ethnographic research highlights that people's behaviors should be observed and studied in day-to-day life. Moreover, its data collection relies on various methods, including participant observation and casual conversations, and data analysis primarily involves interpreting the meanings and functions of human actions in local contexts, accompanied by quantitative analysis (Hammersley 1991, 2).

Malinowski highlighted the need for ethnographic research to "deal with the totality of all social, cultural and psychological aspects of the community because they are so interwoven that

no one can be understood without taking into account all the others" (Malinowski 1922, xvi). O'Reilly proposed that ethnography should be approached from Bourdieu's concept of "practice" (Bourdieu 1990;1998). Specifically, ethnographers should "understand social life as the outcome of the interaction of structure and agency through the practice of everyday life" and "examine social life as it unfolds, including looking at how people feel, in the context of their communities, and with some analysis of wider structures, over time" (O'Reilly 2012,6).

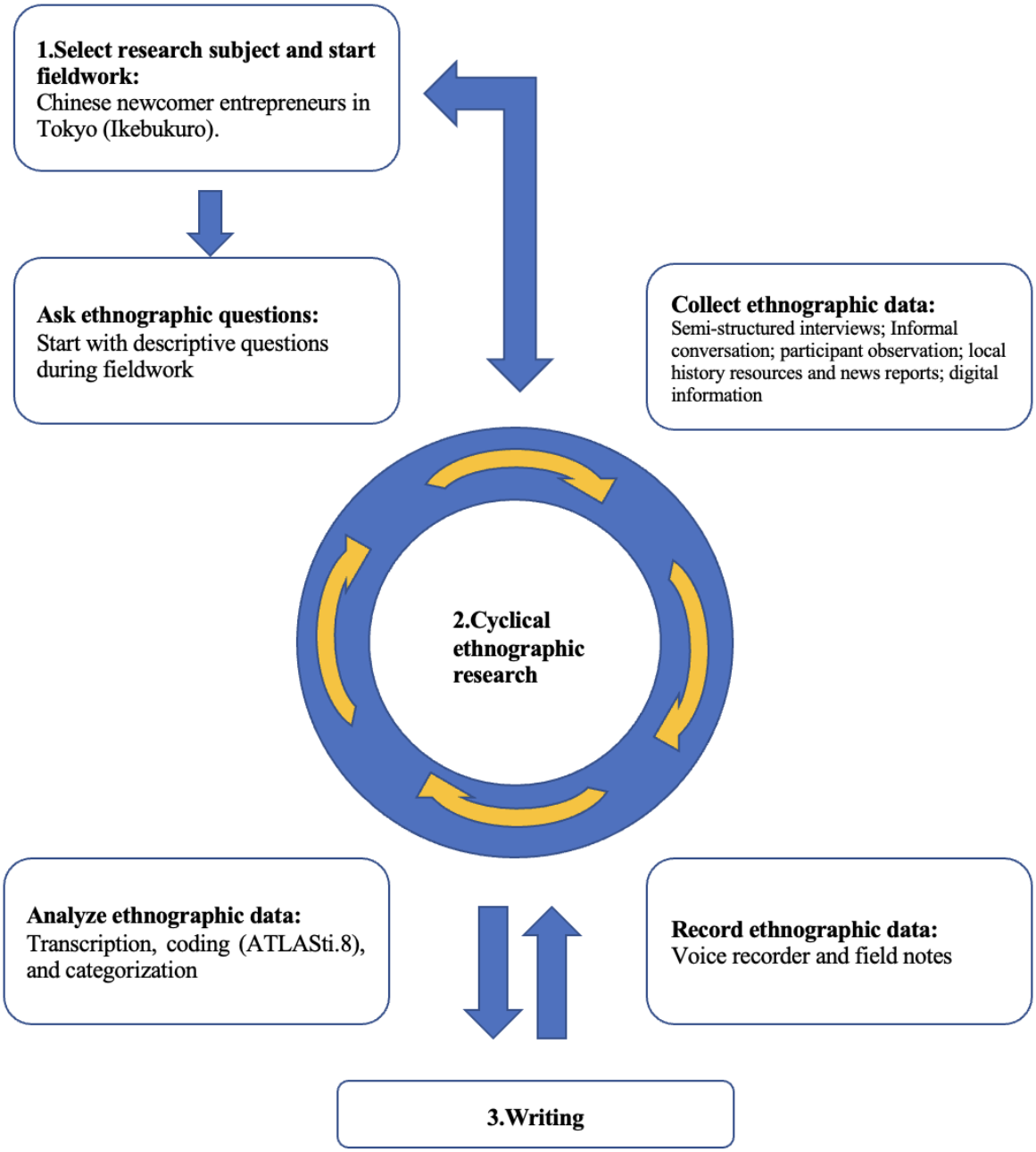
However, ethnographic methods are less applied than quantitative methods in mainstream entrepreneurship research. Entrepreneurship research is one sort of "studying up" research focusing on societies' middle and upper classes. In the view of anthropologist Laura Nader, it faces obstacles in terms of access and methods (Nader 1972). Ethnographers may confront difficulties in establishing rapport and conducting participant observation, which plays a critical role in ethnographic methods because they have fewer opportunities to "live with natives" (Nader 1972). However, she also advocates that anthropologists should not avoid "studying up" topics but rather reinvent ethnographic methods for the need for "flexibility and eclecticism" (Nader 1972, 23). Despite the obstacles, several entrepreneurship researchers, particularly those interested in entrepreneurial identity, small firms, ethnic businesses, and enterprise culture, have explicitly included ethnography in their methodologies (B. Wong 1998; 2006; Ram et al. 2000; Down and Reveley 2004; Verver 2012; Verver, Roessingh, and Passenier 2020). Johnstone (2007) notes that an ethnographic methodology with a holistic perspective helps to look beyond entrepreneurship as economic actions exclusively and presents the interactions between business strategies, individual cognition and emotion, and specific social contexts. It, therefore, helps to identify the varieties that often remain invisible in quantitative research. In light of the advantages, ethnography should not be excluded from entrepreneurship research. As Nader (1972) suggested, it is important to begin

with a flexible research design suitable for the research topic.

2.2 Research Design: Who, What, and Where

In terms of research designs of ethnographic works, ethnographers tend to eschew the widely used linear approach in entrepreneurship research in favor of a cyclical approach (Johnstone 2007), which guarantees ethnography's flexibility in data collection. My research process (see Figure 2.1) draws on Spradley's "ethnographic research cycle" (Spradley 1980, 29).

Figure 2.1 Cyclical Research Design



As Figure 2.1 illustrates, this study's research design includes three stages. The first stage involved my early-stage preparations and considerations of the investigation scope and how I entered and explored the field. The second stage, repeated throughout the research period, includes four steps: preparing ethnographic questions, data collection, data transcription, and data analysis. The writing stage is not wholly separate from the second stage but partly overlaps with the cyclical ethnographic research.

First, I introduce how I selected the scope of my investigation and how I entered and explored the field during my two ethnographic fieldworks. Three primary elements concerning the investigation scope are "actor," "place," and "activity" (Spradley 1980). While Chinese immigrants who moved to Japan after 1978 are conceptually defined as "Chinese newcomers" (Tan and Liu 2008), the immigrant group varies in pre-immigration social backgrounds and post-immigration economic and social status in Japan. During my Master's study (Li 2018), my research focused on the technical trainees (*gino jisshusei* in Japanese) from China to Japan and the hardships in their daily life. Although my research interest was on labor migrations from China to Japan at the time, I encountered Chinese entrepreneurs involved in labor dispatch businesses. Their lifestyles, values, and self-identities left me with deep impressions of the significant social and economic stratifications among the community of Chinese newcomers in Japan. To further explore the diversity of Chinese newcomers' economic life in Japan, I chose Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs as the primary research subject before my fieldwork.

The "activity" and "place" were finalized after my first short-term explorative fieldwork in Tokyo, which was conducted in August and September 2018. At that time, I had casual conversations with four Chinese entrepreneurs and one Chinese association leader about the history of Chinese newcomers in Japan and their individual migration experiences. In this tentative

exploration, our talks about their daily entrepreneurial activities aroused my research interest in the relationships between ethnicity and entrepreneurship when I discovered that their statuses as immigrants, Chinese, and entrepreneurs were intertwined. The topic-oriented research does not weaken the richness of the ethnographic approach because the relationships between ethnicity and entrepreneurship are multi-dimensional in form and emerge from not only business practices but also the lived experiences of the entrepreneurs. Therefore, the interactions between ethnicity and entrepreneurship reveal the bigger picture of the immigrant entrepreneurs' social and economic life.

Regarding the "place," I had been closely watching the development of the Chinese community in Ikebukuro, Tokyo. However, during my first fieldwork, I realized that my original plan to limit my research field to one neighborhood in Tokyo underestimated the fluidity of the Chinese entrepreneurs and overestimated their dependence on the ethnic concentration area. It is true that Ikebukuro, particularly northwestern Ikebukuro, is known for its concentration of many Chinese newcomers' businesses and the formation of a new "Chinatown" (Yamashita 2008). In this respect, it should be an ideal place to conduct my research. During my first fieldwork, however, I also noticed that many Chinese entrepreneurs were not entirely dependent on the new Chinatown but tended to expand their businesses beyond this district or move elsewhere to integrate into the mainstream market. Nevertheless, one of my informants stated that many Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs became "Ikebukuro's diasporas," not only because they had maintained close connections with Chinese business partners and social groups in Ikebukuro but also because many still had a strong attachment to their first foothold in Japan. In terms of the selection of "place," I, therefore, decided to conduct neighborhood-centered fieldwork. On the one hand, I lived and started my fieldwork in northwestern Ikebukuro, and on the other hand, I approached Chinese

entrepreneurs in Tokyo's other districts who have regular connections with Ikebukuro's local society.

2.3 Long-term Fieldwork

After collecting and analyzing the primitive data from the first fieldwork in 2018, I revised my research design for a more precise research focus. I returned to the field on March 24, 2019, and returned to Germany on November 9, 2019. To conduct more fruitful ethnographic fieldwork, I selected various methods. The second long-term field stay in Japan provided the primary materials applied in the dissertation.

Before introducing the specific methods and techniques, I explain how I accessed and presented myself in the field. Positionality reflects researchers' values and the positions they adopt during the research (Holmes 2020). While certain aspects of positionality, such as gender and race, are fixed, others, such as individual life history, are fluid, depending on how researchers narrate (Chiseri-Strater 1996). Moreover, positionality is relative, and its identification must associate with the research subject, research participants, and research contexts (Savin-Baden and Major 2013). Positionality is important in fieldwork because it affects how research is conducted and the outcomes (Rowe 2014). In this sense, the first task to consider was my role in the field.

Although there are debates about whether ethnographers should conduct covert or overt research, in my case, it is more important to decide to what extent I should be overt while developing contact with the research participants. Since I aimed to maintain long-term relationships with the research participants rather than conduct one-time interviews, it was unreasonable to hide my status and intention at our first meeting. I, therefore, typically introduced

myself as a Ph.D. student at a German university and a research fellow at Waseda University.[6] The status helped me to build initial connections with my research participants. The entrepreneurs preferred to talk with people who either had academic backgrounds or worked in the media. My status as a research fellow at a renowned Japanese university implied that I would take our talks seriously rather than conduct interviews on the spur of the moment. Moreover, it conveyed that I did not belong to the social circle of entrepreneurs, only having "naive" points about their entrepreneurial practices. My conversation partners hence often explained many details that they took for granted which were new to me. Moreover, my research fellow status helped me to contact experts in professional fields.

Two more personal attributes had effects on the fieldwork. The first was my Japanese language ability and my former study experiences in Japan. Although we mainly spoke Chinese during the interviews and casual conversations, the informants usually slipped Japanese words and sentences into their talks to describe their experiences and feelings more accurately. In such a situation, my proficiency in Japanese and knowledge of Japan helped me to precisely understand their expressions and meaning. Additionally, since most Chinese entrepreneurs I met had studied in Japanese universities, our partly shared experiences provided us with common topics (particularly with the entrepreneurs in their thirties and forties) in casual talks and drew our connections closer.

Another personal attribute was gender. Gender typically has two effects on ethnographic fieldwork: it limits information access and affects how researchers perceive others (Bernard 2002).In my fieldwork, I did not encounter any case or activity that had gender limitations.

[6] I registered at Waseda University as a research fellow during my second fieldwork.

However, my gender initially limited the possibility of building further connections with female entrepreneurs. The first few entrepreneurs I met were male, so they usually took me to their "boys night out" (*danshikai* in Japanese), where we had many casual conversations. However, after the first contact with female entrepreneurs in arranged interviews, I had difficulty finding occasions to have more informal talks. Many female entrepreneurs I met regularly joined parties for females and mothers. Although I thought it was an excellent chance to observe their private lives, as a male Chinese student, I could not immediately join them. I, therefore, chose to get to know them first through other social activities and to convey that I was interested in their topics at the private parties and could contribute to their discussions (e.g., on children's education). The female entrepreneurs started bringing me to the "mothers' parties" (*mamatomokai* in Japanese), where I collected fruitful information about female Chinese entrepreneurs' social lives.

In sum, in terms of positionality in the fieldwork, I followed the "golden rule" that researchers should "always be ready to introduce themselves in a way that suits your interlocutor" (Mclaughlin 2020, 161). Equally important in the preparation stage was the research participant selection. The selection of my research participants started with "snowball sampling," which is effective in researching a small population of people who maintain contact with each other (Bernard 2002, 184-185). After determining that many Chinese entrepreneurs joined specific social groups for entrepreneurs in Japan, I initially relied on the key informants to name other Chinese entrepreneurs who could be research participants. Despite being an effective way to expand my connections in the field, snowball sampling had an apparent disadvantage because the Chinese entrepreneurs I contacted tended to be engaged in the same or similar business sectors and to belong to the same age group.

To ensure the diversity of my research participants, I also applied purposive sampling, a

strategy to access research participants representative of certain criteria for researchers' specific interests (O'Reilly 2012). The first criterion was the migration time for collecting narratives regarding Chinese society in Japan and the development of their businesses from different age groups. Among the main research participants, one arrived in Japan in the 1980s, 9 in the 1990s, 12 in the 2000s, and 8 in the 2010s. The second criterion was gender. Gender in entrepreneurship and female entrepreneurs have become an increasingly important branch of entrepreneurship research (Sullivan and Meek 2012). Although it is not the study's primary aim to underline gender differences in entrepreneurship, I expected to hear about the entrepreneurial experiences of both male and female entrepreneurs. During the fieldwork, I had in-depth communication with nine successful and influential Chinese female entrepreneurs. The last selection criterion was their business content. While the research focuses on the discussions regarding ethnicity in entrepreneurship, I did not limit the selection of research participants to entrepreneurs who engaged exclusively in traditional ethnic businesses (e.g., Chinese restaurants and grocers). I supposed that the interactions between ethnicity and entrepreneurship exist in both traditional ethnic businesses and emerging industries. I, therefore, purposely approached entrepreneurs active in the IT industry, new media, and transnational trades. It is important to note that many entrepreneurs straddled more than one industry. Table 2.1 displays the basic information about the 30 entrepreneurs. Appendix 1 describes the details of their life stories.

Table 2.1 Basic Information about the Chinese Entrepreneurs

Nr.	Pseudonym	Gender	Time of Arrival	Nationality	Educational Backgrounds	Migration Channels	Start up time	Business Types
1	Chen Sen	Male	1992	Japan	Bechelor's (China)	Study	2000	Laber dispatch agency
2	Cindy	Female	2012	China	Master's (China)	Dependent	2018	New media
3	Duan	Male	1991	China	PhD (Japan)	Study	1999	Publishing company
4	Gao Ge	Male	2009	China	Vocational school (Japan)	Study	2014	Acupuncture and Massage
5	Guan Jie	Female	2005	China	Bechelor's (China)	Dependent	2015	Real estate agency
6	Hori	Male	1998	Japan	Master's (Japan)	Study	2006	Software development
7	Jia Ying	Male	2004	China	Bechelor's (Japan)	Study	2010	Education
8	Jian Wei	Male	2009	Japan	Master's (Japan)	Study	2013	Transnational trade/cosmetic store
9	Jing Wei	Male	2012	China	Master's (China)	Study	2015	Real estate agency
10	Kaneda	Male	1997	Japan	-	Skilled Labor	2015	Restaurant
11	Kenji	Male	2010	Japan	Master's (Japan)	Study	2014	Transnational trade/cosmetic store
12	Lao Liu	Male	2012	China	Master's (Japan)	Study	2015	Restaurant
13	Li Qing	Male	2009	China	Vocational school (Japan)	Study	2016	New media
14	Lin Fang	Male	2011	Japan	-	Skilled Labor	2015	Restaurant
15	Ma	Female	1987	Japan	Vocational school (Japan)	Study	2000	Snack bar
16	Miyasaki	Female	1999	Japan	Bechelor's (China)	Dependent	2005	Education
17	Nishikawa	Female	1995	Japan	Master's (Japan)	Study	2007	Restaurant/entertainment
18	Oda	Female	1991	Japan	Master's (Japan)	Study	1998	Restaurant/real estate agency
19	Qiu	Male	2011	China	Master's (Japan)	Study	2013	Education
20	Sato	Male	2005	Japan	Bechelor's (Japan)	Study	2016	Labor dispatch agency/restaurant
21	Sayuri	Female	2003	Japan	Bechelor's (China)	Dependent	2014	IT Consultant /labor dispatch agency
22	Shizuko	Female	1996	Japan	Bechelor's (Japan)	Study	2002	Transnational trade /manufacture
23	Sugiyama	Male	1998	Japan	Bechelor's (China)	Study	2002	Food procrssing
24	Sun	Male	2013	China	Vocationl School (Korea)	Skilled Labor	2015	Beauty salon
25	Sun Jian	Male	2009	China	Master's (Japan)	Study	2012	Hotel/real estate agency
26	Xin	Male	1997	China	Bechelor's (Japan)	Study	2006	Software development
27	Yu Bing	Female	2007	China	Bechelor's (Japan)	Study	2012	Transnational trade
28	Yu Long	Male	2004	Japan	Vocational school (Japan)	Skilled Labor	2010	Restaurant
29	Zhou	Male	2014	China	Bechelor's (China)	Study	2016	Real estate agency
30	Zi Xiao	Male	2008	Japan	Master's (Japan)	Study	2015	Trade

2.4 Data Collection

Semi-structured and unstructured, informal conversations were the main methods for collecting data during the fieldwork. Unlike the ethnographic strategies starting with informal conversations to build rapport, I arranged the first meeting with the Chinese entrepreneurs to be semi-structured interviews, not only because they usually "hid" their status as entrepreneurs but also because it was seldom possible to make an appointment only for a casual conversation initially. I applied an interview guide in the semi-structured interviews, in which I included a list of written questions and topics to cover. The guiding question list was not designed as a questionnaire with answer choices but rather referred to varying aspects of their migration life, including pre-immigration experiences, career trajectories, entrepreneurial motivations, and daily business management. It thus left my research participants adequate space to narrate their own stories.

Building first connections through semi-structured interviews was a useful route for further investigations. Being aware that many Chinese entrepreneurs were keen on social activities in the local society, I expressed interest in joining and helping to organize the activities. This gave me more opportunities to have casual conversations with them. In addition, many young Chinese entrepreneurs invited me to their private parties and introduced me to their social circles. Unstructured interviews and informal conversations were mainly conducted during the activities I joined. In relaxing conversation situations, my research partners shared details about their life experiences and even sensitive issues concerning their individual histories and businesses.

I conducted repeated interviews with the same entrepreneurs during the fieldwork. Repeating similar questions at every meeting was a strategy to ensure the accuracy of their narratives as much as possible. Considering that people may be inaccurate in reporting their behaviors at the first meeting due to personal concerns or fragile memory, I was able to check

the consistencies and inconsistencies in their narratives by conducting repeated interviews. In sum, although I arranged the first meetings with the Chinese entrepreneurs through semi-structured interviews in most cases, the later interviews and conversations were ethnographic, based on mutually trusting relationships.

In addition, I conducted interviews with two leaders of Chinese associations in Ikebukuro; two Chinese administrative scriveners[7] (*gyōsei shoshi* in Japanese) in Ikebukuro; two members of local shopping street associations (*shōtengai*); an officer of Ikebukuro's local government; and Professor Mizukami at Rikkyo University, who has long studied immigrants in Ikebukuro. The interviewees had expertise in the history of Chinese newcomers, Ikebukuro's urban planning, and entrepreneurial policies in Japan. Compared to the ethnographic interviews, these interviews were problem-centered, semi-structured, and non-repetitive.

Ethnographic research involves not only talking to people and asking questions but also learning within the context of their lived experiences by participating in their lives and observing them (O'Reilly 2012). Participant observation has long been regarded as the essence of ethnographic research (Spradley 1980). However, as Nader identified in her paper on methodological obstacles in conducting "studying up" ethnographies (Nader 1972), I confronted similar difficulties in conducting participant observations. The intractable part was to participate in and observe every aspect of Chinese entrepreneurs' private life. Many ethnographers engaged in entrepreneurship studies tended to use interview-centered methodologies with a combination of participant observations at companies and in entrepreneurs' public lives, which the researchers could more readily access. In addition, I attended several of my research participants' private parties, where I could have a closer view of their life. I believe that method selections in ethnographic fieldwork should remain elastic

[7] Their works referred mainly to helping immigrants manage legal issues when establishing a business in Japan.

and fit the living conditions of the research participants.

It is first necessary to specify different types of participant observations. According to Bernard, researchers may play one of three roles during ethnographic fieldwork: complete participant, participant observer, or complete observer (Bernard 2002). I was a non-participant observer only in a few activities, such as their regular business meetings and the operations meetings of some overseas Chinese commercial associations. In most cases, the business activities had exclusive access to employees, although some of my key informants allowed me to sit aside and make observations. It was ethically inappropriate to "participate" or intervene in their meetings. I was, therefore, an observer in these situations, recording their behaviors, attitudes, and opinions in my field notes.

During my fieldwork, a more familiar role was to be a participant observer in activities and events that the Chinese entrepreneurs joined and organized in their leisure time. Regular activities included a local China-Japan cultural and language exchange activity taking place weekly in Ikebukuro, voluntary activities within and outside of Ikebukuro organized by an overseas Chinese voluntary association, traditional Chinese culture interest groups, and workshops organized by Chinese entrepreneurs. In addition, activities taking place in specific situations included employee excursions guided by Chinese entrepreneurs and Ikebukuro's local events, such as the annual *Fukuro* festival in October.

I planned follow-up fieldwork in 2020 before the coronavirus pandemic swept the globe. Facing the long-term limitation to free mobility and physical contact, I adjusted my follow-up fieldwork plan and began to focus on my research participants' social media posts. Conducting digital fieldwork is no easier than offline fieldwork. The information in the texts and images my research participants posted, wrote, or re-shared was overwhelming in number and content. Nevertheless, executing digital fieldwork was worthwhile as an efficient research method during the pandemic. More importantly, it retained the holistic commitment to people's lives.

People's lives can be observed, narrated, and recorded from offline fieldwork. They can also extend into the online world through social media (Miller and Horst 2012). Specifically, the digital materials consisted of individual vlogs, live video streaming, and Wechat Moments. Vlogging is a new way in which many young Chinese entrepreneurs record their daily lives, and live video streaming has become a trend for promoting their products. Wechat is the most common social media platform on which my research participants post images and texts, and it is also a space that reflects the overlaps of their personal lives and businesses. I recorded the contents of the video materials and images they posted on social media with their permission.

The dissertation also employed online resources, including official statistics from Japan's Immigration Services Agency (ISA) and the Ministry of Justice (MOJ). The statistics refer to the Chinese newcomers' population, places of origin, residential status, residential distributions in Japan, and the number of Chinese entrepreneurs in Japan. In addition, the dissertation cites online news reports from China, overseas Chinese, and Japan to assess the social discourses on Chinese immigrants in Japan.

2.5 Data Analysis

The data analysis of this dissertation was based primarily on qualitative analysis of the qualitative data, complemented by qualitative analysis of the quantitative data. Qualitative analysis of qualitative data is conducive to presenting how the research participants' characteristics account for specific themes and deeper or multiple meanings in their narrations (Bernard 2002). It is applied in studies to interpret how the entrepreneurs' actions and perceptions reflected the interactions between ethnicity and entrepreneurship. Qualitative analysis of quantitative data aims to investigate the meanings and indications in the data that present the current situations of Chinese newcomer immigrants and Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs in Japan.

My cyclical and iterative research plan determined that data classification and analysis must align with data collection. The primary data I transcribed and analyzed is based on my interview records and field notes during the fieldwork. I started to organize the primitive data after the first explorative fieldwork with the ATLAS ti.8 software. The systematic data analysis started during and after the second fieldwork, employing the following key processes:

- Transcription of recorded materials (in Chinese and Japanese)
- Open coding with ATLAS ti.8 and build initial categories
- Focused coding
- Integration of memos, codes, and theory notes; identification of conceptual patterns and explanatory models.

The initial step in the data analysis process is to transcribe the recording of my interviews and field notes into written texts. Qualitative analysis transcriptions should be as detailed and exact as the research focus requires (Chiavacci 2020). I transcribed the raw data word-for-word with comprehensive annotations because the primary qualitative data came from unstructured interviews and informal conversations where the research participants were given space to express their thoughts. Word-for-word transcription, therefore, helps find the relevance between my research concerns and their narratives. Moreover, since Chinese entrepreneurs' behaviors and emotional experiences are also my research concerns, detailed and accurate transcriptions provided a basis for further analysis. The languages used in the transcriptions are Chinese and Japanese.

The second step was to apply an open coding strategy. Coding is a process of turning "free-flowing texts into a set of nominal variables" (Bernard 2002,463). By coding, researchers identify, categorize and delimit ideas (Meagher 2020). Open coding ensures that the theorization is grounded in the data and emerges from a close study of the transcriptions (Bernard 2002). I selected ATLAS ti.8 as an appropriate qualitative analysis software.

Following Spradley's advice (Spradley 1980), I gave special attention to evidence concerning social conflicts, cultural contradictions, individuals' social relationships, and changes in social status. I identified 27 second-order code items, categorized into 6 first-order categories: daily management, daily life in Japan, social networks, connections to China, sense of belonging, and Chinese immigrants in Ikebukuro (see Table 2.2).

Table 2.2 Categorization in Open Coding

First-order category	Second-order category	Numeric code
Daily managements (1)	Business prospects	1.1
	Considerations about business locations	1.2
	Customer relationships	1.3
	Employer-employee relationships	1.4
	Ethnic markets in Japan	1.5
	Family involvement in the businesses	1.6
	Self-definitions of "entrepreneurial spirits"	1.7
	Initial financial support	1.8
Daily life in Japan (2)	Migration channels	2.1
	Education experiences in Japan	2.2
	Working experiences in Japan	2.3
	Residential status	2.4
Social networks (3)	Participation in the overseas Chinese activities (grassroots)	3.1
	Cliques	3.2
	Participation in government-led associations	3.3
	Townsmen associations	3.4
Connections to China (4)	Connections with hometowns	4.1
	Family backgrounds	4.2
	Transnational trades	4.3
Sense of belongings (5)	Attitudes toward naturalization	5.1
	National identity and emotional attachments	5.2
	Daily practices from traditional Chinese culture	5.3
Chinese immigrants in Ikebukuro (6)	Discourses on Chinese immigrants in Ikebukuro	6.1
	Types, focuses, reputation, and history of Chinese businesses in Ikebukuro	6.2

Social integration into Ikebukuro's local society	6.3
Shopping street associations	6.4
Tokyo Chinatown Project	6.5

Opening coding focuses on categorization but does not indicate the interrelationship of codes. The next step is focused coding, which is generally applied after open coding to add new incidents to existing codes and explore the links between codes (Meagher 2020). At this stage, I paid specific attention to the contents repeatedly highlighted by the research participants and the relationships between the code item, including relevance, contradiction, consistency, and supplement. Based on this, I improved the theory notes. Moreover, I added news reports reflecting public discourses on Chinese newcomers and entrepreneurs in Japanese society in the focused coding. Ultimately, except for the 27 codes, no fresh data generated new insights.

The final step is to identify conceptual patterns and explanatory models based on texts, code notes, and theory notes. I identified three conceptual patterns that are closely associated with the entrepreneurial activities of the Chinese newcomers: **dynamic ethnic networks, (in)visible ethnic expressions, and a bifocal sense of belonging**. The empirical chapters of this dissertation will center on these three key concepts.

2.6 Ethical Consideration

During the fieldwork, I received the research participants' oral permission to record and analyze the interview data. However, gaining consent for data collection and analysis can be difficult in long-term ethnographic fieldwork, where the research participants may not remember that researchers are conducting research and have been granted prior consent to record the narratives (O'Reilly 2012). I did not record informal conversations or asked if I was allowed to transcribe and analyze our conversation contents because I tended to diminish my role as a researcher to avoid being seen as an "outsider." I wrote down the information collected from the informal conversations in my field notes.

I referred to the Chinese entrepreneurs with pseudonyms in the dissertation for privacy. To ensure that this information would not cause harm or inconvenience to the research participants, I reconfirmed consent when addressing sensitive content (e.g., about their family members and political issues). One difficulty is that given the finite number, high concentration, and high-density social circles of Chinese entrepreneurs, pseudonymity cannot fully protect personal privacy. While changing more identifiers of the research participants is a safer way to guarantee privacy, identifiable personal attributes such as business types and locations play an irreplaceable role in the research results. Therefore, except for pseudonymity, the aforementioned personal attributes remain unchanged in this dissertation. The research participants have acknowledged and agreed with the information disclosure.

The participants confirmed the accuracy of the direct quotations, the content released on their social media, and the English translations applied in this dissertation. The participants acknowledged the disclosure of the dissertation for my doctorate. Those who requested the individual interview transcripts have access to them (not including my field notes).

The last ethical consideration refers to Nader's concern regarding political pressure and benefit-based relationships between researchers and participants in "study up" research (Nader 1972). In a few cases, I participated in Chinese entrepreneurs' daily business activities to build rapport (e.g., introducing candidates when they needed new employees). However, no financial responsibility or commercial transactions existed between the research participants and myself.

I declare that no political pressure from any social and political institutions influenced the research results. The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) funded the research from October 2017 to September 2021 for the 2017 "Graduate School Scholarship Program" and granted the fieldwork in 2019.

Chapter Three

Chinese Immigrants and the Newcomer Entrepreneurs in Japan

During the rapid economic growth after WWII, Japan's economic achievements and social stability were attributed to its ethnic and racial homogeneity, fueling the ideology that Japan had neither tradition nor the need to accept foreigners (Sugimoto 2014). Until the beginning of the 2000s, the mainstream thought in Japanese society was that Japan was a racially and ethnically homogenous country (Befu 2001; Oguma 2002). However, since the ratification of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees in 1981 and the 100,000 International Student Plan launched in 1983, international immigrants to Japan have increased on an unprecedented scale. According to the statistics from the Immigration Services Agency of Japan, from 1974 to 1984, the number of foreigners with long-term residence permission increased from 750,000 to 840,000. In contrast, from 1984 to 1994, the number increased to 1.4 million (Immigration Services Agency of Japan 1974; 1984; 1994).

With the increasing number of immigrants in Japan, Japanese society is undergoing a process of globalization on a grassroots level (Graburn and Ertl 2008; Sugimoto 2014). The social change prompted many scholars to discard the *Nihonjinron* (i.e., studies focusing on the "myth" of Japanese uniqueness) and turned their focus to multiculturalism in contemporary Japan (Komai 2001; Graburn and Ertl 2008; Weiner 2009). These studies have drawn attention not only to Japan's domestic ethnic groups, such as the Ainu (Siddle 2009) and Okinawan (Allen 2009), but also to Zainichi Koreans, Japanese-Brazilian, and Chinese newcomers arriving in Japan after the 1980s (Tsuda 2008; Hester 2008; Liu-Farrer 2011). However, despite the social change, the discourse on ethnocentrism did not disappear in Japanese society. As Sugimoto noted, "contemporary Japanese society is caught between the contradictory forces of

narrow ethnocentrism and open internationalization" (Sugimoto 2014,19). Liu-Farrer's latest book describes Japan as "an ethno-nationalist immigrant society" characterized by "anachronistic institutional practices," "pragmatism in immigration and the settlement process," and "possible (but difficult) national belonging and impossible national identity" (Liu-Farrer 2020).

Japan's foreign policies and social discourses on immigrants significantly impact immigrants' entrepreneurial careers since entrepreneurship emerges from a series of (non)business practices (Baker and Welter 2020). In this respect, to comprehensively understand Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs as an ethnic subgroup, it is necessary to contextualize their entrepreneurial careers in specific social and historical backgrounds. This chapter first concentrates on the history of the older generations of Chinese immigrants to Japan and the current situation of Chinese newcomers who arrived in Japan after the reform and opening-up of China (1978) by combining several critical historical events and statistics. I then introduce the historical background of Chinese immigrants to northwestern Ikebukuro, the new Chinatown in Tokyo (Yamashita 2010). Finally, I cover the administrative procedures, business niches, and business characteristics of Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs in Japan. This chapter aims to provide the historical and social contexts for the subsequent chapters' discussions.

3.1 The History of *Rōkakyō* (the Older Generations)

In the fifteenth century, the government-led tally trades (*kangō* in Japanese) were predominant in Sino-Japanese commercial contacts (Vogel 2019). In Japan, before the *Sakoku* period (i.e., lockdown of the country), Chinese concentration quarters existed along the Japanese coast, and many Chinese artisans chose to reside in Japan, changed their names, and consequently disappeared from the registers of Chinese residents (Jansen 1992). The Tokugawa Shogunate enacted the *Sakoku* policies through a series of edicts from 1633 to 1639. However, Japan was not completely isolated from other countries during this period. Commercial contacts with

Chinese, Dutch, and Koreans in different prefectures still occurred despite strict regulations. Notably, extensive trade with China took place in the port of Nagasaki (Jansen 1992). When the Tokugawa government directed all the foreign ships to Nagasaki in 1616, it became the only port open for foreign trade and the place where most Chinese traders and merchants went. Chinese were dispersed in Nagasaki until the Chinese quarter, *Tojin yashiki*,[8] was established in 1689 (Jansen 1992). The establishment of a controlled residence center aimed to prevent smuggling and control over the Chinese community in Nagasaki (Vogel 2019).

Under the agreement of the *Ansei* Treaties (*Ansei Jōyaku* in Japanese) in 1858, Nagasaki ceased to be the only city open for foreign trade. Additional cities such as Yokohama and Niigata opened ports and started trading with foreign merchants (Auslin 2006). After the Sino-Japanese Friendship and Trade Treaty in 1871, Chinese nationals were legally allowed to reside in Japan. With excellent commercial acumen, the enterprising overseas Chinese rapidly spread throughout the new trading cities and settled in the *zakkyōchi*, the isolated residential areas where foreign merchants were admitted to reside and run businesses (Yamashita 2002).

At the end of the nineteenth century, government-led education became an important immigration channel from China to Japan. Defeat in the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) forced the Qing courtiers to admit Japan's emergence as a significant power. Impressed by the achievements of Japan's Meiji Restoration starting in 1868, the Qing courtiers and intellectuals turned to Japan for remedies by sending international students (Liu-Farrer 2013b). One distinct characteristic of Chinese students in the twentieth century was their deep involvement in China's political and social movements (Kuhn 2009). Chinese revolution pioneers (e.g., Sun Yat-sen) initially conducted their political activities in Japan. After Japan invaded northeast

[8] According to the historical materials at the Nagasaki Museum of History and Culture, the Chinese quarter occupied an area larger than 9,400 *tsubo* (approximately 30,000 ㎡), including more than 10 longhouses (i.e., a type of amalgamated dwellings) and housing for a maximum 2000 people.

China on September 18, 1931, protests erupted in China. Consequently, student migration was temporarily thwarted. After the Marco Polo Bridge Incident (*Lugouqiao* incident in Chinese) in 1937, the Nationalist government terminated the diplomatic relationship with Japan and ceased to send Chinese international students (Liu-Farrer 2013b). From 1949 to 1972, China severed formal government-to-government relations because China belonged to the Communist bloc and Japan was allied with the Western capitalist countries (Vogel 2019). Against this backdrop, student migration from mainland China to Japan ceased for almost 30 years until the normalization of diplomatic relations in 1972 (Liu-Farrer 2013b).

While many Chinese student migrants returned to China before and during the war, some remained and promoted the development of Chinatowns in Japan (Han 2014). Chinatowns in Yokohama, Nagasaki, and Kobe took shape on the premises of the Chinese residential concentrations (Yamashita 2002). As the footholds where Chinese merchants established their roots, the three Chinatowns witnessed the older generations' entrepreneurial achievements.

For instance, the Yokohama Chinatown took shape in 1859 on a piece of reclaimed land (*umedate kyoryūchi* in Japanese) shunned by locals in the late nineteenth century and became a vibrant commercial area (Han 2014). However, nearly a third of the residents died during the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 (Yamashita 2002). Though revitalized after the earthquake, it suffered serious damage again during the Yokohama bombing in 1945 (Yamashita 2002). After WWII, due to the political divide, Chinese society in Yokohama was segmented into two groups, one representing the People's Republic of China (PRC) and another the Republic of China (ROC). Political conflicts caused severe fragmentation in the local Chinese society. The contradiction was alleviated in 1990 when the two sides cooperated to rebuild temples (Tan and Liu 2008). In 1971, the Collaborative Development Association of Yokohama Chinatown was established to strengthen collaboration with locals and promote a tourist attraction spot,

indicating that Yokohama Chinatown has shed its earlier image as an ethnic enclave (Yamashita 2002).

According to Yamashita, the Yokohama Chinatown resembles the other two Chinatowns in Japan in terms of the formation process. First, the three cities' early Chinese concentration areas were all established in peripheral districts. The Kobe Chinatown took shape in a mixed residential quarter, and the Nagasaki Chinatown developed from the aforementioned *Tojin yashiki*. Second, the local commercial associations were all established under the joint efforts of Chinese migrants and the local Japanese. In Kobe, the *Nankin Machi* Shopping Street Promotion Association was founded in 1977. In 1984, the Nagasaki Shinchi Chinatown Shopping Street Promotion Association was founded.

Compared to Chinese coolies and unskilled laborers in Latin America and the United States in the nineteenth century (Kuhn 2009), the base of Chinese society in Japan was the immigrants' engagement in business activities (Uchida 1963). In the early stages, compradors and traders in the Guangdong group were the main Chinese commercial activities in the "Chinatowns," followed by the clustering of ethnic service and product suppliers as the Chinese residents grew (Uchida 1963). The older generations' entrepreneurial cultures are called "three knives," which symbolizes their business engagements in cuisine, tailoring, and hairdressing (Tan and Liu 2008).

Figure 3.1 "Three Knives"

Photo taken in 2015 at Kobe Overseas Chinese History Museum

The three types of knives symbolize the engagements of the older generations in three business sectors.

One essential settlement principle in the Chinese quarters in Japan, similar to their counterparts in Southeastern Asia, was regionalism (Uchida 1963). Many local commercial associations in the form of chambers (*Bang* in Chinese) were established with regional characteristics and developed based on consanguinity and compatriotism, serving not only as commercial chambers but also as townsman associations where public events (e.g., ceremonies to ancestor worship, funerals, and festival celebrations) took place (Tan and Liu 2008). High-level Chinese associations, such as the Chinese consolidated commercial association, emerged in Kobe, Yokohama, Nagasaki, and Osaka (Cui 2010). These "consolidated lodges" represented the ethnic Chinese as a whole in each receiving country and "spoke for them where a legal and economic buffer was needed to defend Chinese interests against the majority in which they were embedded" (Kuhn 2009,174). The twofold social structure was typical in overseas

Chinese societies worldwide. Kuhn pointed out that the combination of primary and secondary communities

> has enabled timely responses to environmental demands: the narrower identity of the primary community defines and divides dialect groups in ways that preserve occupational specialists, and the broader secondary identity of 'Chinese' serves the interests of the majority populations within which it lives. The interaction of such nested identities has long provided a flexible framework for sojourner society (Kuhn 2009,171).

While the social structure still exists today, as to be introduced in the following chapter, its functions have changed essentially.

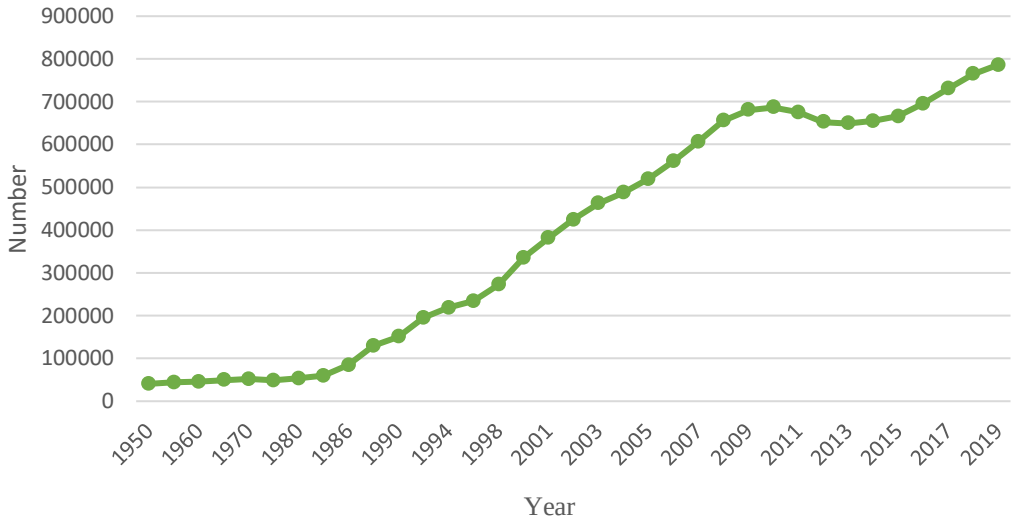
3.2 Chinese Newcomers in Japan

In 1978, The People's Republic of China and Japan signed the Treaty of Peace and Friendship and restarted official educational exchange programs the following year. While Chinese student migration to Japan has over a century of history, the number of Chinese migrants through an "educationally channeled migrant trajectory" has increased dramatically since the late of 1980s (Liu-Farrer 2011). Entering the local employment market after international education has become "a pronounced phenomenon" for Chinese students (Liu- Farrer 2011). In truth, for most Chinese newcomers, "entrepreneur" was not the initial status they obtained in Japan. Instead, they were international students, company employees, or family migrants, such as spouses or dependents. To have a comprehensive understanding of their migration experiences, career development, and life courses in Japan, it is necessary to first examine the history and current situation of Chinese newcomers in Japan.

3.2.1 The Arrival of Chinese Newcomers

Table 3.1 displays the Chinese population in Japan after WWII. From 1950 to 1980, no apparent increase occurred due to the political turmoil in China. The number has accelerated since the 1980s with the relaxation of government regulations in both countries.

Table 3.1 Registration Number of Chinese Nationals(1950-2019)



Resource: Immigration Services Agency of Japan

The arrival of Chinese newcomers resulted from the combined effects of the policy changes in both Japan and China. On the Japanese side, in 1982, then prime minister Yasuhiro Nakasone proposed the 100,000 International Student Plan in response to Japan's internationalization strategy since the 1980s. The application procedure was further simplified in 1983 for pre-university language students. One consequence of the favorable student policy was the increase in language schools recruiting students from mainland China (Liu-Farrer 2011). On the Chinese side, the government gradually removed restrictions on self-funded students studying abroad after China's economic reform. Deng Xiaoping gave a speech in 1978, emphasizing, "We will send thousands, 10.000 students to receive overseas education"(GOV 2009). The government subsequently enacted the Temporary Decision about Self-funded

Education Abroad in 1984. The number of Chinese emigrants grew further when the Exit and Entry Administration Law of the People's Republic of China was issued in 1986.

International education has become the most common migration channel. During the 1990s and 2000s, students accounted for a quarter of the total Chinese population with long-term residence in Japan (Liu-Farrer 2011). Liu-Farrer noted that recruiting students into Japanese universities and language schools has become more institutionalized in China. As a result, hundreds of study abroad service centers (*liuxue fuwu zhongxin* in Chinese) have emerged in major cities and provincial towns. Similarly, international recruitment agencies (e.g., RGF) provide opportunities for labor migrants to obtain jobs in Japan.

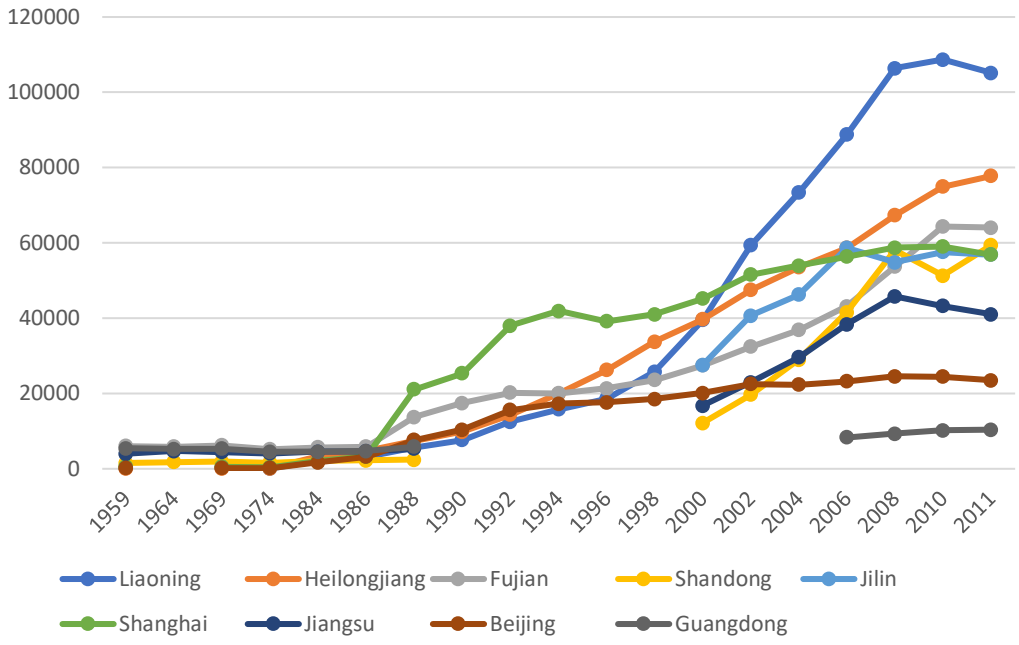
After the ratification of the Revised Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Law in 1990, the types of residence status increased to 28, which offered more opportunities for Chinese newcomer immigrants in Japan (Zhu 2003). However, the growth came to a standstill due to the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami (see Table 3.1). The unprecedented disaster and nuclear crisis not only prevented the inflow of Chinese immigrants to Japan, but also became an unexpected external trigger for Chinese residents in Japan to reconsider their locational decision (Achenbach 2017). After the enthusiasm receded temporarily, the inflow of Chinese newcomers to Japan has risen again since 2016. While it is only a small fraction of Japan's 125.8 million population (2020), the number of foreign residents of Chinese nationals in Japan increased rapidly and reached 780,000 in 2019 (not including Taiwan), accounting for 28% of the overall foreign residents in Japan.

Table 3.2 Major Events of Chinese Immigration to Japan

Major Events of Chinese Immigration to Japan		
Years	**Events**	**Effects**
1689	*Tojin yashiki* was established in Nagasaki	First Chinese quarter in Japan formed.
1871	Sino-Japanese Friendship and Trade Treaty	Qing dynasty nationals obtained legal permission to reside in Japan
1894-1895	The First Sino-Japanese War	Qing courtiers started sending students to Japan.
1937-1945	China's anti-Japanese War	China's Nationalist government terminated the diplomatic relationship with Japan, and the student migration stopped.
1949-1972	Decades of stagnation	The PRC China and Japan had no diplomatic relations, and migration stagnated.
1971	Collaborative Development Association of Yokohama Chinatown established	Chinatowns started to cooperate with local Japanese institutions.
1972	Normalization of the diplomatic relations between China and Japan	Chinese government restarted sending students to Japan.
1979	China and Japan started official educational exchange programs	The Chinese migration to Japan entered a growth period.
1989	Japan's Revised Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Law	The residence permission types increased.
2011	Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami	The number of Chinese immigrants temporary decreased.

The geographic variation in the Chinese newcomers' sending regions is significantly different from the older generations. Sending regions of the Chinese newcomers have become more geographically varied (see Table 3.3). Though the leading province or region has changed in recent decades, according to the statistics published in 2011 by the Immigrant Services Agency of Japan, the top three sending regions were Liaoning, Heilongjiang, and Fujian provinces. The number of Chinese newcomers from the top eight provinces (not including Guangdong province) and cities accounted for 72% of the Chinese population in Japan. Chinese immigrants from Guangdong, who were the precursors and influencers in the era of the older generations, have not been the leading group. The geographic variation indicates that the growth of Chinese newcomers cannot be attributed to policy changes alone (Liu-Farrer 2011). The historical backgrounds of each region grant legitimacy to local emigration. For instance, the colonial history of Manchuria plays an important role in the contemporary migrant phenomenon (Yamashita 2013). Japanese researchers demonstrated that the historical connections between Japan and northeast China (i.e., Heilongjiang, Jilin, Liaoning provinces) created social and cultural proximities, further strengthened by flows of individuals, including war orphans, international marriage, and labor migrants (Yamashita 2013). Similarly, in Fujian, particularly in Fuqing, which has a long history of migrating to Japan, people consider going abroad as the only way to prove to be "successful," although some had to live in Japan as illegal immigrants (Kaneshiro 2018). The successful returnees became role models, motivating more youth to move to Japan.

Table 3.3 Provinces of Origins of the Chinese Newcomers in Japan



Resource: Immigration Services Agency of Japan

My research participants' narratives reflected the regional characteristics. Li Qing, an entrepreneur from Putian, Fujian province, stated that he was repeating his parents' life trajectory in his youth. His parents went to Southeast Asia for work in their twenties, and when they returned to their hometown, it was time for Li Qing to go abroad. For early Fujianese immigrants with limited language ability, the typical way to find a job quickly was to work for a firm owned by family members or fellow villagers (*lao xiang* in Chinese). As Li Qing noted, the migration rotation is a "tradition of Fujian." The tradition and the subsequent survival strategies function not only in their settlement in Japan but also in their entrepreneurial practices. When discussing his motivation to start the first business, Li Qing noted that many entrepreneurs from Fujian did not rely on any theory but rather "traditions." Once employed in a restaurant or massage parlor, they would learn relevant management skills while working as apprentices. Starting businesses independently would become one of their aims after they have accumulated sufficient experience. However, Li Qing also admitted that the typical local model has changed and many younger migrants from Fujian have no intention of reproducing it. With

the institutionalization of student migration (Liu-Farrer 2011) and highly skilled Chinese migrants to Japan from the early 2000s, the regional difference in migration channels has narrowed.

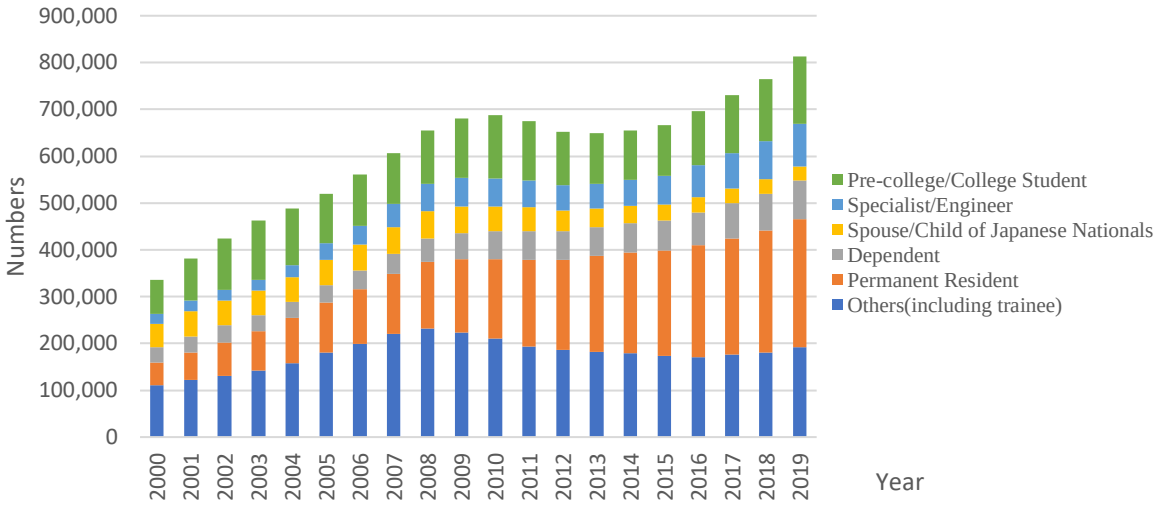
3.2.2 Residential Status of Chinese Newcomers

The implementation of the Revised Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Law in 1990 expanded the types of residential status from 18 to 28, within which the residence statuses permitted to work increased from 7 to 14. Since then, international students have been permitted to work part-time during their studies[9] and enter the local job market after graduation (Zhu 2003). The revision indicated that Japan's foreign policy has changed from "exclusion, discrimination, and assimilation" to "equality and internationalization" (Kondo 2002).

Table 3.4 presents the residential statuses of Chinese nationals in Japan. Within the 28 types, five residential statuses (i.e., permanent resident, pre-college/college student, dependent, specialist/engineer, and spouse/child of Japanese nationals) accounted for the majority. The others have maintained stability or increased during the past decades, except for the spouse/child of Japanese nationals. The number of Chinese nationals with permanent residence status has been increasing significantly. Since China and Japan do not recognize dual nationality, permanent residency has become an optimal choice to satisfy Chinese newcomers' social and economic needs, albeit with the limited political participation in Japan.

[9] In the 1980s, medium- and small Japanese firms lobbied to allow foreign labor since their survival relied heavily on the supply of cheap labors. However, conservative politicians were unwilling to grant permission for the inflow of many low-skilled foreign laborers (Liu-Farrer 2011).

Table 3.4 Residential Status of Chinese Nationals in Japan (2000-2019)



Resource: Immigration Services Agency of Japan

Following the trajectory of language school to university to employment, Chinese newcomers in Japan must change their residential statuses several times. Different residential statuses determine the activities in which immigrants could engage, but immigrants' roles in Japanese society go beyond the stipulated activities. For example, the double roles as both students and low-wage laborers characterized Chinese students' early life in Japan (Liu-Farrer 2011). Specifically, despite physical and emotional bitterness, working experiences during their school days gave them opportunities to learn about Japanese work culture and expand their social networks (mainly co-ethnic networks). These cultural and social capitals might also shape their career trajectories after graduation. After the Chinese students gain experience in business, starting a business independently, though not the only option, becomes an aspiration.

However, some Chinese entrepreneurs I met admitted that they started their businesses during their school days. Although international students with a study visa are permitted to

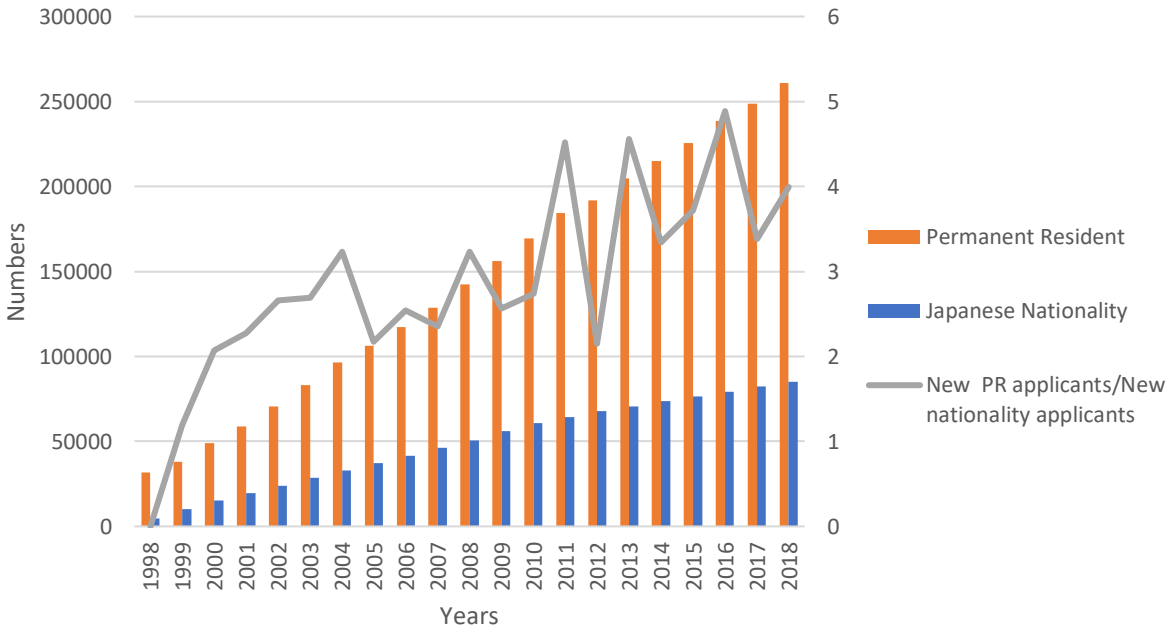
work part-time jobs, they must apply for a special permit that regulates weekly working hours.[10] With a study visa, one is not permitted to officially register as a cooperate juridical person. Many Chinese entrepreneurs who believed in the golden rule, "everything is an opportunity, and opportunity is everything," did not follow the prescribed process at the beginning of their entrepreneurial career. A typical strategy was to "cooperate" with a Japanese Chinese or a Chinese holding permanent residency. Their companies would thus be registered under the name of a juridical person whose residential status permitted them to start a business, although the Chinese newcomers who were students at that time were the actual operators. The cooperation typically lasted until they graduated. Some Chinese newcomers who were wage earners with work visas also applied a similar strategy, starting a business with their friends. Once they decided to do business independently and once their businesses were on track, some Chinese entrepreneurs would apply for the residential status of investor/business manager. However, due to the complicated procedures, many business owners tend to apply for permanent residence or Japanese nationality. Although most of the entrepreneurs I interviewed generally followed the trajectory of study-employment-entrepreneur, their entrepreneurial careers occasionally started much earlier than they legally and practically started to run businesses independently.

Tan and Liu (2008) suggested that Chinese newcomers in Japan were less resistant to naturalization than the older generations. However, the actual situation is more complicated, as opposed to the perspective that the Chinese newcomers tend to take a more flexible and pragmatic attitude to nationality. Table 3.5 displays the number of Chinese newcomers with

[10] Newcomers with student visas should additionally apply for the "Permission to Engage in Activity Other Than That Permitted by the Status of Residence Previously Granted" if they intend to work part-time jobs in Japan. According to the regulation, they are not permitted to work more than 28 hours per week or to be involved in amusement and entertainment businesses (*fūzoku* in Japanese).

permanent resident status and those who denounced Chinese citizenship and obtained Japanese citizenship. Although the two groups grew in the past two decades, the annually increasing number of permanent residency holders is much higher than applicants for Japanese nationality (four times in 2018). Tsuboya (2008) argued that Chinese newcomers in Japan preferred permanent residency to Japanese nationality because they identified themselves as "permanent sojourners" in Japan and hoped to retain the possibility of returning to China someday. Despite its more demanding requirements than applying for Japanese nationality (particularly the requirements in applicants' number of years in Japan), permanent residency is still the preferred choice for most Chinese newcomers. However, as to be discussed in chapter 6, Japanese nationality can benefit Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs in certain situations.

Table 3.5 Number of Chinese Nationals with PR and Japanese Nationality (1998-2018)



Resource: Immigration Services Agency of Japan

3.2.3 Ikebukuro and a New Chinatown

Ikebukuro literally consists of *ike* (pond) and *fukuro* (bag). According to the record in Toshima Historical Museum (2004), it is named for the water source of the Tsurumaki River, Maruike, a bag-like pond. Presently, although the river and the water source are nowhere in sight, the name "Ikebukuro" has become a symbol of Tokyo's prosperity. The initial development of Ikebukuro started at the end of the Meiji period (1868-1912), particularly after the opening of the Ikebukuro station in 1903. After the 1923 Great Kantō earthquake, the government started to urbanize Tokyo's suburbs. As a busy connecting area, Ikebukuro's urbanization improved rapidly.

In addition to developing basic infrastructures, many theaters emerged in Ikebukuro. The culture and art atmosphere laid the foundation for the emergence of "Ikebukuro Montparnasse" (Akiyama 2010). The inexpensive studios for commercial and residential use in Ikebukuro were the strongholds of many artists from the late Taisho era (1912-1926) until WWII. However, due to the devastating damage in Tokyo's urban areas and the arrests of artists regarded as subversives during WWII (Havens 2006), "Ikebukuro Montparnasse" fell apart. Afterward, Ikebukuro as a stronghold for artists was nearly forgotten until Ikebukuro's local cultures rejuvenated in the past few years.

After the war, Ikebukuro became famous as one of Tokyo's largest black markets (Hashimoto and Hatsuda 2013).[11] With the large number of Japanese soldiers and repatriates returning to Japan after WWII, the population in Japan's urban areas had dramatically increased. Still, due to the destruction of the economic structure during the war and the deprivation of food

[11] Japan's black markets took shape under the material and economic controls during and after WWII due to the prohibition of commodity circulation. The famous black markets in Tokyo were located in Tokyo's Ikebukuro, Shinjuku, Ueno and Shinbashi. After the 1950s, such black markets in Japanese cities have gradually disappeared (Hshimoto and Hatsuda 2013).

imports from former colonies, Japan had a severe shortage of necessities during the post-war period. Except for rations and distributions, food transactions were illegal at the time. To address the food shortage, many Tokyo residents became involved in the black-market transactions (Hashimoto and Hatsuda 2013).

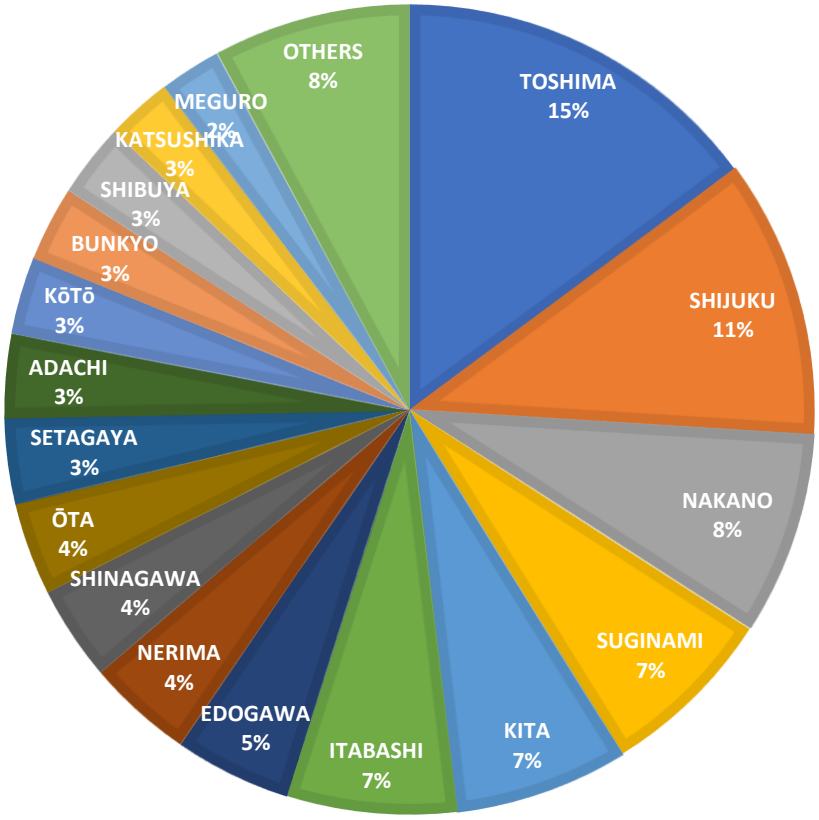
In 1946, black markets appeared in Ikebukuro station's east and west sides. As presented in the book, *Business Areas are Born from Black Markets* (2013), Hashimoto and Hatsuda argued that the black markets trained many business talents and laid the foundation for developing Japan's current commercial areas. Many of Tokyo's renowned commercial areas (e.g., Shinjuku, Ikebukuro, and Ueno) were once famous for black-market businesses. With the establishment of shopping malls in the 1950s, the black markets in Ikebukuro gradually disappeared. However, the emergence of black markets brought a commercial atmosphere to the local history and facilitated the formation of the local shopping streets (Hashimoto and Hatsuda 2013). Nonetheless, the black markets were full of factors causing social instabilities, such as gangsters and violent groups. Such social insecurities left a stain on Ikebukuro's local cultures and history. Moreover, the negative impressions were repeatedly mentioned and reproduced in discussions on the inflow of Chinese newcomers to Ikebukuro.

Due to the coexistence of residential, commercial, and industrial zones in Tokyo's inner cities, districts like Ikebukuro and Shinjuku became rundown areas and witnessed the outflow of affluent urban residents (Okuda 2000). Meanwhile, a significant number of domestic immigrants flocked to the areas in the 1960s, followed by the inflow of international (mainly Asian) immigrants into Tokyo's local neighborhoods in the late 1980s. Tokyo has hence progressively become a global city (Okuda 2000).

Figure 3.2 illustrates the residence distribution of Chinese immigrants in the 23 Tokyo wards in 1990. When the number of Chinese newcomers from mainland China grew considerably, more than half of the newcomers living in Tokyo settled in the northwestern inner

cities. Ikebukuro in the Toshima ward and Shin-Ōkubo district in the Shinjuku ward, the two most internationalized areas in Tokyo, were the initial footholds of the newcomers (Okuda 2000).

Figure 3.2 The Distribution of Chinese Newcomers in Tokyo in 1990



Resource: Immigration Services Agency of Japan (1990)

After 1988, the Ikebukuro district of Toshima ward witnessed a dramatic increase in foreign residents and a rapid decrease in Japanese residents (Tajima 2000). Numerically, there was an increase of roughly 6,000 foreign residents per year, whereas a simultaneous decrease of 5,000 Japanese residents was documented (Tajima 2000, 357). A 10-year (1988-1998) sociological survey of Asian immigrants in Ikebukuro and Shinjuku found several characteristics of international immigrants in these districts (Okuda 2000). First, in terms of

their socioeconomic backgrounds, they were middle and lower-middle class, lived in urban areas of their home countries, and migrated to Japan for self-actualization and self-improvement. Second, for newcomers moving to Japan at the end of the 1980s, the rundown areas were not their final destinations. Only a quarter of the newcomers lived in their first residential area in Shinjuku or Ikebukuro for more than ten years. The rest either moved to other districts for better living environments, left for other advanced countries, or returned to their homeland. Moreover, the influx of international immigrants into Tokyo's inner cities was not a one-time phenomenon since the gaps left by the 1988 newcomers who moved out were sequentially filled up by their followers who migrated from a wide range of countries in East and Southeast Asia. Finally, most newcomers "attained a level of social stability" (Okuda 2000, 345) in the local societies approximately three years after their arrival. Their children growing up in Japan have multiple national belonging to both China and Japan.

The sociological survey conveyed that Ikebukuro and Shinjuku were the springboards for a significant number of Asian immigrants in the 1990s. Many of them hence spread geographically over Tokyo and across Japan and raised their social and economic status in Japanese society. The growing number of immigrants in these areas, particularly Chinese newcomers, provided large ethnic markets, spawning various ethnic businesses such as restaurants, beauty salons, and migrant-oriented cram schools. Many of my interviewees started their immigration life from Ikebukuro and were the first batch of Chinese entrepreneurs in these areas. When living in Ikebukuro in 2019, I also met Chinese students living in the neighborhood and preparing for the Japanese university examinations. They told me it was convenient to live in Ikebukuro because there were many Chinese grocers, and more importantly, it was close to cram schools they attended every day. Even now, Ikebukuro is still a place where the migration life of many Chinese newcomers begins.

As a Chinese newcomer concentration area, Yamashita (2010) identified Ikebukuro's

northwest as a "new Chinatown" visually noticeable but geographically ungraspable. He described that "Ikebukuro's Chinatown is full of atmosphere of Chinese-ness, but while wandering inside, you cannot clearly grasp the Chinatown's scale and the geographic boundary" (Yamashita 2010,19). Unlike the three traditional Chinatowns, the Ikebukuro Chinatown lacks symbolic landscapes and influential local Chinese associations. In his opinion, the increasing number of Chinese newcomers and relevant ethnic businesses caused many conflicts in Ikebukuro's local society. The fiercest conflict was caused by the Tokyo Chinatown proposal by a group of local Chinese business owners in 2008 (Yamashita 2010). The project to rename and redefine the northern quarter of the Ikebukuro station was vehemently opposed by some local shopping street associations. It also triggered demonstrations by far-right political groups in 2010 (Yamashita 2010). According to Yamashita's interviews with the Japanese leaders of the local shopping street associations, the conflict revolved around Ikebukuro's identity and history. To this point, Coates argued that "the rejection of the Chinatown proposal was fueled by anxieties over Ikebukuro's heterotopic past and its influence on Ikebukuro's identity struggles today" (Coates 2018,178). That is, although Chinese immigrants have become the largest identifiable group in Ikebukuro, both the ethnic group and the local society are still seeking a way to integrate the emergence and increasing influences of Chinese immigrants (particularly the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs) into Ikebukuro's present and future. In the past decade, the government of Toshima ward launched a series of urban regeneration projects to revitalize local cultural heritages (Mizukami 2016). However, as Mizukami identified, "the government's policies are not directly related to the other side of urban change, namely developments of ethnic businesses and even to the issues that arise from these precincts being attractive to overseas arrivals" (Mizukami 2016,17).

In 2006, Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications published the Report of the Workshop Concerning Promotion of Multicultural Coexistence, officially recognizing

"multicultural coexistence" (*tabunka kyōsei* in Japanese) as a value-laden prescription. Based on the report, Japan's local governments have established their own local multicultural policies. Toshima ward's local government has included "multicultural coexistence" in the Toshima City Basic Plan 2016-2025 (Toshima City Government 2016) and issued a Basic Policy for the Promotion of Multicultural Coexistence in 2019 (Toshima City Government 2019).

The newest policies exhibit a positive attitude toward foreign residents. However, coexistence is not a comprehensive effort made by administrative institutions. Instead, it should be approached from the interactive activities between concerned individuals (Graburn and Ertl 2008). The government's efforts to integrate immigrants into the local society do not mean that hostility to foreignness at the individual level could be eliminated easily. In chapter 5, I focus on the locals' attitudes toward Chinese newcomer immigrants and how the Chinese immigrants and newcomer entrepreneurs presented themselves.

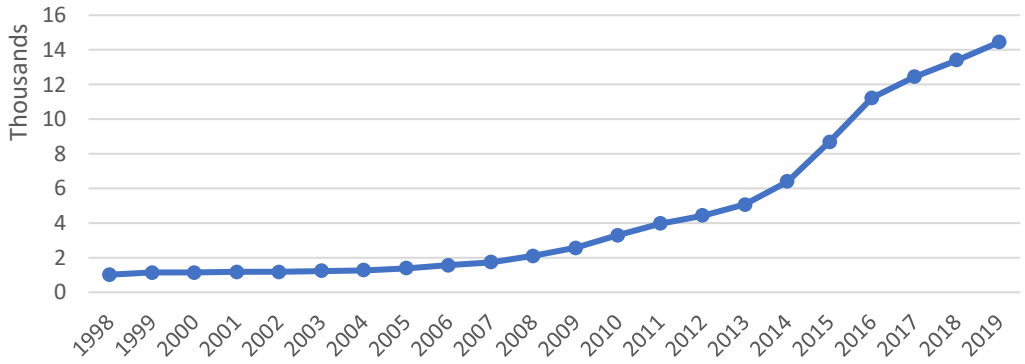
Figure 3.3 A Corner of Northwest Ikebukuro

The author took the photo in 2019.Despite the lack of a landmark in the “new Chinatown,” the Chinese grocery (“Sunshine city,” the same name as the famous shopping mall in east Ikebukuro) is regarded as the symbol of the local Chinese society.

3.3 Becoming Entrepreneurs

The last two sections focused on the historical background of Chinese immigrants in Japan, the general situation of Chinese newcomers, and the concentration of the newcomers in Ikebukuro. This section draws attention to the particularities of the small group of Chinese newcomers who became entrepreneurs. Although the immigrants' entrepreneurial careers may start earlier, obtaining an investor/business manager visa is officially indicative of their entrepreneur status. Unlike many countries that issue self-employment visas, Japan only issues investor/business manager visas[12] to foreign residents who prepare to invest or start businesses in Japan. Table 3.6 presents the number of Chinese nationals in Japan who held the investor/manager visa from 1998 to 2019. Despite the dramatically increasing number since 2010, compared to the total number of Chinese nationals in Japan, only a small portion were investor/business manager visa holders.

Table 3.6 Number of Chinese Nationals in Japan with Investor/Business Manager Visa (1998-2019)



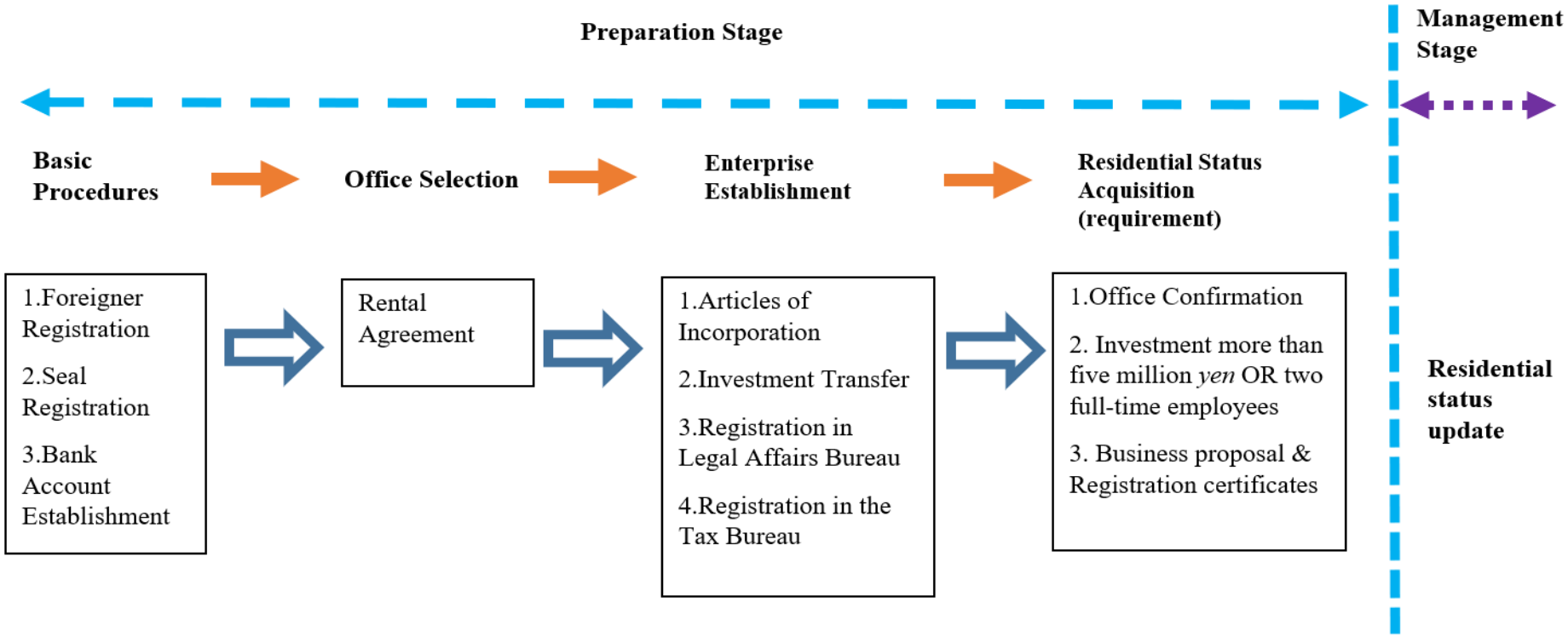
Resource: Immigration Services Agency of Japan

[12] In 2015, the "investor/business manager Visa" was renamed "business manager visa." Compared to the old visa type, the new one ceased to emphasize "foreign investment." Since most of the research participants established their businesses before 2015, the dissertation uses the name of "investor/business manager visa."

However, in reality, there are far more Chinese entrepreneurs in Japan than the numbers reflected in the official statistics with the criteria of visa type. Apart from the investor/manager visa holders, foreign residents who hold visas with no employment restrictions[13] are also permitted to start businesses independently. People who obtained the Investor/Business Manager visa in the first place perceived the residential status merely as a transitional phrase and tended to apply for either Japanese citizenship or permanent residence in the future.

[13] According to the regulations of the Immigration Services Agency of Japan, visa types with no restriction in employment include permanent resident, spouse or child of Japanese nationals/permanent resident. Besides, in 2015, the government has begun to issue four types of 'Highly-skilled Professional' visa. The holders of such visas can also become self-employed.

Figure 3.4 Application Procedure for Investor/Business Manager Visa[14]



Resource: The Japan Research Institute (2012)

[14] This figure shows the general application procedures in Tokyo. There may be slight differences between cities.

Figure 3.4 displays the required procedures to acquire the investor/business manager residential status. The visa application requirements stipulated a series of procedures in which the would-be foreign entrepreneurs must interact with various agencies. However, despite the seemingly well-planned and thorough application procedures, according to the interviews carried out by The Japan Research Institute (2012), foreign entrepreneurs had to face many difficulties in practice in the preparation stage.

For example, finding a proper office was more complicated than it seemed. In the survey, one interviewee claimed, "even though I could prove I had enough money for the deposit, the real estate owner would not trust me because I had the student residential status at that point" (The Japan Research Institute Limited 2012, 18). Similar problems emerged when they sought initial financial support. Some would-be entrepreneurs could not raise the required money at the beginning stage and had few possibilities of being financed by local financing institutions. The most common solution, shown in the survey from the research institute, was to rely on informal networks, particularly kinship and co-ethnic ties. Many of my research participants also confronted such difficulties. To find a satisfying office to register a company in Tokyo, they had to compete with others in personal networks (*pin guan xi* in Chinese), not only due to the limited places for renting but also because much information would only be circulated through closed-door channels, though not exclusively in the co-ethnic networks. These particular personal networks generally included kinship ties, which are thought to be the most reliable social ties; co-ethnic networks functioning as a double-edged sword; and personal recommendations or assurances from Japanese friends. The first two are common strategies among Chinese entrepreneurs in Japan. The third is the most appreciated channel, but it has a high barrier to obtain.

The involvement of co-ethnic networks in immigrants' entrepreneurial activities is

generally a consequence of limited available resources or institutional dysfunction of the host society (Kloosterman, van der Leun, and Rath 1999). Nevertheless, co-ethnic networks are not a one-size-fits-all solution. The entrepreneurs steer their businesses, depending, primarily but not exclusively, on the entrepreneurs' personal characteristics and the solidarity of the ethnic group. I discuss this point in detail in the next chapter.

Obtaining a legal residential status and finding a suitable location are only the first steps. More critical for Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs is to find promising and suitable business niches. Ethnic niches, as noted in the previous chapter, by contrast, generally relate to urban neighborhoods where businesses are disproportionately owned and/or staffed by ethnic minorities (Zhou 2013). However, the concept can also go beyond a geographic location, referring to the business opportunities to serve national or ethnic members with special desires underserved by the mainstream market (Waldinger, Aldrich, and Ward 1990). An ethnic niche is, therefore, a geographic and market concept in one. While Ikebukuro, Tokyo is characteristically a niche for many Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs, it would be inaccurate to identify the newcomers as "ethnic enclave entrepreneurs." All the Chinese entrepreneurs I spoke to have or had business connections with Ikebukuro, either possessing and operating businesses there or starting their entrepreneurial career in Ikebukuro and then move to other areas. However, the truth is that their commercial layouts were, without exception, beyond Ikebukuro. Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs recognized the potential business opportunities in the immigrants' residential concentrations, but they were not constrained by a single geographical niche.

Regarding business sectors, Chinese newcomers' businesses are characterized by diversification. A typical model of the Chinese newcomers' businesses in Ikebukuro, according to Yamashita (2010), is their expansion to diversified business sectors (*takaku keiei* in

Japanese). Similarly, after reviewing the Chinese entrepreneurs' profiles, it is evident that many of them operated businesses in different fields. Their commercial goal was to establish business ecosystems, though most were still at the primary stage. For example, Nishikawa was a well-known female entrepreneur I met during fieldwork in Ikebukuro. Her businesses spanned various fields. Starting with a karaoke store, she realized that she needed to offer snacks and beverages to customers constantly. The great expenditure motivated her to start a Chinese restaurant. After opening three more restaurants in Ikebukuro, she set her sights on non-ethnic businesses and opened a motor garage. In addition to general management knowledge, accurate and detailed information and skills in various business sectors are imperative for entrepreneurs who intend to stretch into other fields.

Summary

The immigration of Chinese people to Japan has a century-long history. The older generations of Chinese immigrants, mainly from the southeast coastal regions, settled in the isolated ethnic quarters. Due to the limited opportunities, compradors, traders, and the "three knives" businesses were the main business engagements of the older generations. The newcomers moving to Japan after 1978 are quantitively and qualitatively different from the older generations. The majority of Chinese newcomers were international students from various regions of China at the beginning of their immigration life. Although many Chinese newcomers dispersed in the metropolis, a few Chinese residential concentrations appeared in Tokyo, among which Ikebukuro is one of the most eye-catching new Chinatown.

The Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs are an influential subgroup among the Chinese newcomers, albeit not the numerical majority. Evolving from international students or high-skilled professionals, they have similar migration experiences to other Chinese newcomers at the beginning. However, in their entrepreneurial careers, Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs may

experience multiple changes in their social/legal status, build (non)ethnic networks, and integrate themselves into both Chinese and Japanese communities.

Although most Chinese entrepreneurs I encountered during fieldwork run or used to run their businesses in northwestern Ikebukuro, the new Chinatown in Tokyo, they do not fully conform to the "enclave entrepreneurs" (Portes and Manning 2012) due to their outward-oriented business prospects. Similarly, in terms of the relationships between ethnicity and the Chinese newcomers' entrepreneurship, Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs should not be identified as "ethnic entrepreneurs" (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990) who can necessarily fall back on specific cultural and ethnic predispositions. The next three chapters concentrate on the changes in the Chinese newcomers' perceptions of ethnicity in their entrepreneurial careers.

Chapter 4

Diversity and Dynamics of Co-Ethnic Networks

An "Unsuccessful" Meeting

Lin Fang was a Chinese restaurant owner. His two restaurants in Ikebukuro specialized in Shanxi cuisine and were very popular among Chinese immigrants because of the authentic flavors. Arriving in Japan in 2011, Lin Fang became a successful businessman at the age of 30. He was viewed as an inspirational entrepreneur among the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs in Ikebukuro. Because we had one mutual friend, Lin Fang warmly welcomed my visit and showed a willingness to talk about his migration stories and entrepreneurial career.

One of his restaurants was located on the shopping street north of the Ikebukuro station, known for its concentration of Chinese firms, stores, and restaurants. Although it was on the street that I needed to pass almost every day, I did not find an appropriate chance to step in and introduce myself because I always saw him bustle around customers streaming into his restaurant. Our first meeting was on a workday afternoon with relatively fewer customers. Like other Chinese restaurants in Japan, the front door was covered with inviting food photos, and the Chinese characters "Zhong Guo Wei Dao" ("Chinese flavors") were especially eye-catching. The inside was clean and tidy. In addition to food photos, Lin Fang placed photos of numerous Japanese celebrities in a prominent place and stuck leaflets from many Chinese firms nearby on the wall.

Lin Fang greeted me warmly and told me that I could ask any questions without hesitation and he would share anything without reservation. His kindness dissipated my anxiety.

Instead of going straight to his individual entrepreneurial stories, we talked a lot about his pre-migration lives and immigration experiences. He showed great interest in sharing his stories. However, the atmosphere changed from harmonious to slightly tense when I guided the conversation to the ethnic networks in his business. When I asked how his business was related to other Chinese newcomers and if such co-ethnic networks still played a critical role in his business, I could sense that he lost interest in telling me more about his business stories. "We are not a business confined to the ethnic niche. It sounds outdated and abnormal. We are doing business in the principle of professionalism," he answered in stark terms.

To avoid misunderstandings, I explained that the connections I mentioned referred not only to the "guanxi networks" based on traditional Confucianism principles but also to general ethnic networks. Nevertheless, Lin Fang highlighted that his business did not rely heavily on ethnic networks. He pointed to the photos hanging on the wall that he had taken with many Japanese celebrities, telling me that his restaurant was not an ethnic business because it had made a giant step out of the Chinese community. I was surprised by his reluctance to talk more about ethnic networks. Afterward, I switched the focus to the leaflets of many local Chinese firms he placed in the restaurant. He responded by saying, "These are business cooperations." "The priority is different," he added, "we placed the leaflets in each other's restaurant. It is because we both can benefit from it in business, not because we are compatriots." After his explanations, I realized that my questions had turned him off.

The first meeting with Lin Fang began happily and ended with discord. While I left his restaurant in low spirits, I found two critical indications in his narratives. First, Lin Fang's negative attitude towards co-ethnic ties indicated that he tended to avoid connections that might raise doubts about his professionalism. Nevertheless, he admitted that the social networks in the Chinese community were conducive to business development. Second, his case showed

that the formation of co-ethnic networks was not necessarily associated with predisposed cultural values. Instead, they might appear in different forms depending on individuals' self-ascriptions. In this sense, the theories regarding overseas Chinese entrepreneurs' cultural embeddedness may not sufficiently explain how Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs in Japan recognize ethnic networks. My "unsuccessful" meeting with Lin Fang inspired me to see the relationships between Chinese entrepreneurs and co-ethnic networks from a different perspective. This chapter will further explicate the diversity and dynamics of co-ethnic networks in the Chinese newcomers' daily entrepreneurial practices.

4.1 The Involvement of Family Members and Fellow Provincials

The first section will start with two typical co-ethnic networks in the businesses of overseas Chinese: family members and fellow provincials. According to the Chinese anthropologist Fei Xiaotong, in a traditional Confucian society, people's social networks spread out like water ripples that center on ego and nuclear family members and expand to fellow townsmen and fellow provincials (Fei 1992). This perspective indicates that the different expanding layers do not have clear boundaries. In Chinese migrant studies, Kuhn also pointed out that because of the relatedness, overseas Chinese displaced from their homes and families would project family values and logic to the associations of fellow townsmen in receiving societies (Kuhn 2009). However, in this section, I will show that Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs' perceptions of family members and fellow provincials are not always logically consistent. Although it appears that Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs in Japan tended to weaken the involvement of both family members and fellow provincials in their businesses, their rationales for doing so were different.

4.1.1 Family Involvement

Family ties are critical in the formation and development of overseas Chinese businesses

because of the ease of training and gathering finance, control of secrets, willingness to work overtime, and constitution of a co-ethnic labor pool (B. Wong 1998). Many Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs benefited similarly from family involvement. On the other hand, they also had to consider balancing intensive family involvement and long-term business prospects.

Nishikawa was an influential female entrepreneur within the circle of Chinese entrepreneurs in Ikebukuro. In 1995, she gave up her "iron rice bowl" (a secure job) in China and traveled to Japan to study. After receiving her master's degree in western economic history at a Japanese university, she passed Japan's accounting qualification examination and was employed as an accountant at a Chinese company in Japan. Her entrepreneurial career started at Ikebukuro. With a longstanding dream of running a business independently, Nishikawa made up her mind to take over a karaoke store in 2007 when she heard that the former owner intended to transfer ownership. Because the store is in the center of the Ikebukuro commercial area, the former owner asked for a considerable amount of transfer fee. Although she had some savings after working in Japan for a few years, it was far from enough. The initial financial support came from her parents, her husband's parents, and friends whom she got to know through some local Chinese associations.

Her husband, a Chinese immigrant working in a vehicle repair plant at the time, quit his job and joined her business. With Nishikawa's words, they had "cut off all means to retreat" for the business. Nishikawa's first business did not start entirely from scratch because the karaoke store already had a stable customer group (mainly Chinese students living in nearby Ikebukuro) before she took it over. One of her most efficient ideas for increasing profits was to make an employment adjustment. Specifically, to keep the store open 24/7, she arranged the shifts of the part-time workers in the daytime. She and her husband took charge of the night shift because, according to Japanese regulations, the minimum hourly pay for the night shift

should be higher than that of the daytime shift. Nishikawa half-jokingly said, “I had no choice but to ‘exploit’ my husband.” Nishikawa also pointed out her mental pressure in the initial phase, stating that

> Compared with financial strain, mental stress is more torturing. I couldn’t sleep well for half a year after doing business independently. It was not easy to change (in mentality) from an employee to an entrepreneur. I had many things to worry about, and it made me stressed. My husband was the only listener who really understood me. He always said he was my private psychiatrist. That is true. I’m very grateful for his support, and I think it is a wise choice to start (the business) together with him (Interviewed in June 2019).

As the karaoke store gradually got on track, Nishikawa expanded her business further. Instead of opening another karaoke store, she opened a Chinese restaurant close to the karaoke store in 2010 because Nishikawa found that many customers preferred food and drinks while singing karaoke. Therefore, she planned to set up a small business ecosystem by providing food from her restaurant to the karaoke store. When her husband started taking over the new business, Nishikawa intended to employ a new manager for the karaoke store. After multiple communications with the job applicants, she realized it was time to seriously reconsider the business prospect seriously. She stated, “one thing I understood at that point was that for further development, the business should belong to not only my family but also more collaborators.” A Chinese applicant once highlighted that she left her last Chinese firm because it was a mom-and-pop store where she felt like an “outsider.” From then on, Nishikawa set two main principles for her business. The first was to promote localized management structures by employing both Chinese and Japanese managers. Among her four restaurants and two karaoke stores, the managers of the Japanese-oriented restaurants were all Japanese, whereas Chinese

managers operated the Chinese-oriented karaoke stores. Nishikawa's second goal was to keep the family members "invisible" in her business. To this point, she explained as follows:

> I had one niece and one nephew who worked in my restaurants when they studied in Japan. If they wanted to do a part-time job after class, I would like to offer some help. As their aunt, I was supposed to provide support while they were studying in Japan. But I also asked them not to mention our familial relationships with other employees. I do not want to leave the impression that my niece and nephew could have some privileges here and even get a good position (in the company) in the future only because they are my relatives. After finishing their studies, my nephew started working in a Japanese company, and my niece returned to China…I feel I have two obligations. As the eldest in my family, I should take care of the younger ones. However, on the other hand, as the company's owner, I'm supposed to guarantee fairness in the working environment. Sometimes I have to make a balance. That's also something I need to learn as an entrepreneur (Interviewed in July 2019).

Nishikawa's company currently employs more than one hundred employees, including administrative staff, store/restaurant managers, chefs, and part-time workers (waiters and servers). Nishikawa also absorbed a few new investors into the management team for further business expansion. However, her husband, the co-founder of her business, was not among them. Nishikawa recalled that she and her husband had an agreement that their business should get rid of the image of a "mom-and-pop store." To do so, they decided to, in her words, "exile" her husband.

Although it might sound relentless, their decision had another meaning. Nishikawa's main businesses (karaoke stores and Chinese restaurants) rely heavily on ethnic markets.

However, as the ethnic market has become saturated, there are fewer and fewer spaces left for traditional ethnic businesses, particularly Chinese restaurants. Therefore, she began to search for new opportunities beyond ethnic-centered business. Nishikawa's new business was a garage, which had less to do with her other business sections and the ethnic market. Detached from her main business, the garage, under the full charge of her husband, indicated her business's new direction. Nishikawa stated that the garage was a new step in an unfamiliar field. With her husband's support in the new business, Nishikawa admitted that she had less mental pressure and did not fear failure. Therefore, although her husband seemed marginalized from her main businesses, his involvement was no less important in the long run.

The family involvement in Nishikawa's businesses is representative of the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs in Japan. First, the family involvement provided financial support for the business initiations. As introduced in the previous chapter, Chinese newcomers had difficulty obtaining loans from Japanese financial institutes. Therefore, self-financing is a common strategy for Chinese entrepreneurs (Liu-Farrer 2007). Apart from pooling money with friends, receiving financial support from family members is preferred because the entrepreneurs have less pressure to repay in most cases.

Similar to Nishikawa, Oda started her first small restaurant with her brother. The siblings employed one chef and had to work in the restaurant as both managers and servers. Even so, they did not make any profit for the first few months. Working together with family members was the only choice, considering Oda's struggles in the initial phase of her business. "Once the employer-employment relationships changed to the family relationship like brother and sister, everything would be negotiable," Oda said, "without the mutual support of my brother and me, particularly the emotional and spiritual support, I would probably not be able to get through the most suffering times." Oda's words also indicated the importance of family

members in employment. Most of the Chinese entrepreneurs I met started their businesses from scratch. Initially, their firms were not very competitive in the employment markets since they could only pay relatively lower salaries. Therefore, family members were necessary because they could tolerate the most challenging times in most cases. Family involvement was not always related to practical survival strategies. As Oda and Nishikawa pointed out, the support could also be emotional. For Chinese entrepreneurs whose businesses were bonded with family support, family members were people they could trust unconditionally.

Close connections with family members imply "family logic" in business, which features generalized reciprocity, generosity, and moral orders at odds with the logic of the markets (Stewart 2003). By applying anthropological kinship theories to family business analysis, Stewart found that intensive family involvement in business was a double-edged sword. Family involvement can help prospective entrepreneurs to access the resources required for enterprising activities. However, due to the priority of kinship logic over market logic, they may also be subject to nepotism, generating an "authoritarian family system" in the firm (Stewart 2003, 385). While not developing into an "authoritarian family system" in daily management, the Chinese entrepreneurs expressed concerns about the negative impressions that intensive family involvement may generate. Nishikawa was not the only entrepreneur who worried about the image of a mom-and-pop store.

Moreover, such concern is apparent not only in traditional ethnic businesses. Sayuri was a female entrepreneur running an IT professionals dispatch company. While Sayuri set up the business with her husband, few employees knew about their relationship. To this point, she said:

> My husband is not involved in the daily management, and he is the nominal technical consultant. Many of my employees don't even know (we are married).

> I think that is good. I don't want other people, including my employees and business partners, to see the company as a 'mom-and-papa store.' I hope to leave an impression of fairness and professionalism (*zhuan ye xing* in Chinese)(Interviewed in October 2019).

While family involvement was favorable in the initial phases, Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs needed to consider the side effects of "family voice" and "the discourse of kinship, relationship, unity, marriage, children, gender and rivalry" (Budge and Janoff 1991,368) on the non-family Chinese employees who make up the primary members of the companies. In ethnic entrepreneurship studies, family ties are generally viewed as not different from generous ethnic networks in the sense that ethnic entrepreneurs can benefit from the trust and loyalty of the communities. In other words, family and ethnic ties are both manifestations of kinship relatedness, although they differ in the composition of the social ties and degrees of reliability and reciprocity (Verver and Koning 2018). However, the changes in Chinese newcomers' migration channels from China to Japan have weakened the relatedness. Many Chinese entrepreneurs realized that intensive family involvement conveyed a sense of backwardness and unfairness, while non-family Chinese employees welcomed the market logic in the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs' businesses.

Nevertheless, decoupling from family involvement requires careful consideration. Because of the familial relationships, Chinese entrepreneurs could not simply dismiss family members. Instead, they tended to "hide" or "marginalize" them, as Nishikawa and Sayuri did. The Chinese entrepreneurs needed to handle the involvement of extended family members more tactfully than that of the nuclear family members. Aside from Sayuri's husband, her husband's niece was also in the company. While she found that the niece was not competent at her job in most cases, Sayuri stated that it was impossible to dismiss her. She said worriedly,

"if I dismissed her, how would my husband and I face her mother? Anyhow, we are family. So, when we eat together at the table, how would other family members see us?" The common strategy was to find a suitable time to rearrange family members when both sides thought that the employment adjustment in the company would "make sense" and was acceptable. For instance, many Chinese newcomers preferred to return to China after studying and working in Japan for a few years. Some female Chinese immigrants tended to quit their jobs after marriage. Different life choices of the family members and the internal family changes provided the Chinese entrepreneurs with an appropriate opportunity to rearrange family involvement in daily management without hurting the family relationships. In this sense, Chinese entrepreneurs cannot be viewed as entirely detached from the "family logic."

4.1.2 Fellow Provincials (*lao xiang*)

In his work regarding Chinese migrants in the early times, Kuhn (2009) viewed the cohesion within dialect groups of overseas Chinese (particularly the coastal provinces of the South and Southeast) as imperative for the older generations to survive and conduct commercial activities in receiving countries. The history of the older generations of Chinese migrants to Japan also confirmed this point. For the older generations, shared dialect is critical in forming community cohesion. However, in the narratives of the Chinese newcomers I interviewed during my fieldwork, *lao xiang* (fellow townsman or fellow provincials), in their narratives, referred not to the group of people sharing the same dialects but to those from the same provinces and regions. More importantly, in contrast to the "impenetrable" natures of the dialect groups, the boundaries of the fellow provincial groups of the Chinese newcomers were more flexible.

Xin is a Chinese entrepreneur from Fujian province who runs a media firm in Ikebukuro specializing in internet communication. Under the influences of many kinds of literature, films, and other informants' narratives about the overseas Fujianese, I had a stereotypical assumption

about Xin's migration story and entrepreneurial career, thinking that he and his business must be closely associated with the Fujian groups in Japan. However, surprisingly, this was not the case. While studying at a Japanese university, he started his career in Japan by trial and error. After his first business, a Chinese grocery store, ended in failure, he opened a video rental shop. However, because of the development of streaming media, the shop did not bring him much profit and was closed after two years. Afterward, he ended his self-employment career and found a job in a Chinese telecommunication company in Japan. It was not until 2006 that he restarted his entrepreneurial career and founded his current media firm.

Xin must get along with all kinds of Chinese newcomers in his career, particularly those living and working in Ikebukuro, no matter where their hometowns are and what dialects they speak. He admitted that such experiences partly removed his sense of belonging to a specific dialect group. Xin maintained closer relationships with the newcomers from northeast China than with other Fujian immigrants. He believed that professional skills and daily interactions were the basis of mutual trust instead of shared dialects or places of origin. Xin's business has developed transnationally in recent years. He chose not to set up the branch office in his hometown, Fuzhou, but in Dalian, a northeastern city known for investments from Japan. Although he has begun to build closer connections with other Fujian immigrants by acting as a council member in some Fujianese commerce chambers in Japan, he did not view the connections with fellow provincials as an indispensable part of his entrepreneurial career.

In contrast with Xin, a Fujian migrant with fewer connections with his dialect group, Chen Sen, a Chinese entrepreneur from Shanghai, managed to fit into the Fujian community. Chen Sen, who arrived in Japan in 1992, was one of the earliest Chinese newcomer immigrants I met during my fieldwork. He was involved in several shadow economies in which Fujianese migrants predominated during his early migration life. Although most of the participants were

Fujianese, Chen Sen became "one of their own" (*zi ji ren* in Chinese) because of his steadfast loyalty and devotion. Although detaching his own business from the shadow economies after two years, he did not cut off his connections with the Fujian group. Chen Sen's first business was a small massage store, and it expanded rapidly to seven stores along Tokyo's Yamanote line[15] in only a few years with the aid of the Fujian group. "The in-group cohesion undoubtedly exists, but the criteria of becoming the in-group members are not only the shared dialects or the same hometowns but also the common values and the styles of doing things," Chen Sen said. Nowadays, although he has mostly retreated from the business world, it is still his annual routine to get together with other Fujian entrepreneurs during the Spring festival.

As Chen Sen said, in-group cohesion based on shared compatriot affinities still exists. Some Chinese entrepreneurs indeed obtained help from their *lao xiang* during the initial phase of their entrepreneurial careers, especially in business opportunity identifications, because the associations of fellow provincials are important information exchange places. However, Xin and Chen Sen's cases showed that the newcomers' social networks based on shared compatriot affinities were not as exclusive as the older generations' dialect groups that resisted penetration by outsiders.

Interestingly, a few entrepreneurs expressed their resentment against *lao xiang.* For instance, Sun, a Chinese entrepreneur who owned two beauty salons in Okubo, Tokyo, held negative attitudes toward *lao xiang*. Sun used to work in a hair salon in Ikebukuro. He told me that while the former Chinese owner was very enthusiastic about associating with *lao xiang,* but they were the very people who betrayed him in the end. During a *nomikai* (drinking party)

[15] Yamanote Line is a circular train line operated by East Japan Railway Company. It connects most of Tokyo's major stations, such as Ikebukuro, Shinjuku, Shibuya, and Shinagawa. It is also one of Tokyo's busiest train lines.

with several *lao xiang*, he inadvertently blurted out that he did not renew the Invest/Manager visa and employed one illegal worker. A few months later, the hair salon was investigated and shut down. “I still remember how regretful he was not for his illegal behaviors but for his credulity with the *lao xiang*. It also gave me a lesson,” Sun continued, “the old Chinese saying ‘when *lao xiang* meets *lao xiang*, tears fall from eyes’ may have a different meaning nowadays. Tears may fall from their eyes not because of the happiness of running into *lao xiang* somewhere away from their hometown but the hurt of being stabbed in the back.” Because Sun studied hairstyle design in Korea and can speak Korean fluently, he was also close with many Korean immigrants and entrepreneurs in Japan. After losing his job, Sun decided to open a beauty salon on his own, not in Ikebukuro but in Okubo, which is famous for its concentration of Korean stores and restaurants. Unlike many other Chinese entrepreneurs who prefer to cooperate with compatriots, he runs the new salon with one Korean and two Vietnamese staff members. Sun highlighted that there was always “moral abduction” (*dao de bang jia* in Chinese) in relation to *lao xiang*, from which he tended to stay away.

So far, we have found that the *lao xiang* groups of Chinese newcomers in Japan are not impenetrable nor always preferred. The reasons for the changes in the perception of fellow provincials can be approached from different perspectives. First, due to the strengthening of China’s “culturally essentialist line” (Kuhn 2009), an imagined national identity that takes hold of the Chinese newcomers overseas and transcends regional and local identities has formed. Regardless of their hometowns, Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs in Japan tended to use the term “compatriot” (*tong bao* in Chinese) for all Chinese, whether in or out of China. Consequently, compared with the older generations, they have stronger national belonging, seeing themselves as “Chinese” instead of dialect group members or people from specific places of origin. On the one hand, such a change expanded the possibilities of more extensive

connections within the ethnic group, but on the other hand, it also weakened the dialect group cohesion.

Second, the change in Chinese newcomers' migration channels also plays an important role. Similar to family involvement, the institutionalization of migration channels and the increase of study abroad service centers (Liu-Farrar 2011) have weakened the functions of social connections within the dialect groups. In contrast to the older generations, many Chinese newcomers said they migrated to Japan without recourse to the bridgeheads built up by their fellow provincials. Therefore, they felt no obligation to their fellow provincials left in China or living in Japan.

The third reason is that the newcomers' fellow provincial associations do not always generate stable and robust interpersonal social ties as built by older generations. The later subsection will detail the social groups and associations of Chinese entrepreneurs in Japan. For newcomer entrepreneurs, membership in associations of fellow provincials is more important than the social connections generated from participation in such associations.

In sum, this section showed that the involvement of both family members and fellow provincials in the businesses of Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs was not changeless. The dynamics resulted from their desires for professionalism, the side effects of "family logics" in their companies, and the weakening of belonging toward specific dialect groups or fellow provincials with the emergence of new immigration channels.

4.2 Co-ethnic Customers and Employments

In the second section, I will discuss the ethnic networks in the daily management of Chinese entrepreneurs' businesses. I will first focus on customer relations and explain how "clientalization" is formed. The second part of this section will discuss the co-ethnic employment that brought both gains and pains for the entrepreneurs.

4.2.1 Chinese Customers and Clientalization

"Clientalization" is a concept that anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1978) put forward to describe the relationships between buyers and sellers in bazaar economies. Clientalization is "a tendency for repetitive purchasers of particular goods and services to establish a continuing relationship with particular purveyors of them, rather than search widely through the market at each occasion of need…The use of repetitive exchange between acquainted partners to limit the costs of search is a practical consequence of the overall institutional structure of the bazaar and an element with that structure" (Geertz 1978,30). Moreover, clientalization is commonly accompanied by "ethnic specialization." The nature of clientalization is to build up relationships beyond the purely competitive market of economics. In this sense, the relations between Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs and Chinese customers in Japan are similar.

Although inactive in socializing with fellow provincials, Sun, the entrepreneur I introduced in the last section, valued his frequent Chinese customers as friends. In Sun's beauty salon, most of his customers were Chinese, and his Vietnamese and Korean colleagues took care of the customers from each ethnic group because they all had stable client ties with their co-ethnic customers. In his opinion, hairdressing and beauty is a business field where service providers and customers can quickly build private and continuing connections because of casual conversations during treatments. Such client relationships were also crucial for the Chinese entrepreneurs running massage stores.

Gao Ge, for example, operated an acupuncture and massage store and his business relied on regular customers with whom he had been acquainted since his apprenticeship. He said he could remember almost all of his customers' names, and their relations went far beyond that of buyers and sellers. Because acupuncture and massage are professional and private treatments, Gao Ge places value on maintaining long-term relationships with his clients.

Despite not belonging to any bazaar economies, the formation of clientalization in the Chinese newcomers' business practices shares common points. The customer relationship helps customers spare uncertain and complex information searches. Take beauty salons and massage stores, for example. They are both popular businesses for Chinese professionals who intend to be self-employed and have spread over Tokyo's commercial and residential areas. Customers may have difficulty finding which store fits them because the services or treatments are bonded with individual service givers. In Gao Ge's acupuncture and massage store, he would give different treatments depending on customers' demands. Apart from the professional and customized services, the owners' personalities and conversation styles were also critical for building stable client ties with customers. Moreover, the client relationship is a reciprocal matter. In other words, the services and treatment givers are tied to the regular customers in the same way as the customers are tied to them.

The client ties are not limited to the two industries. While studying at Keio University, one of the most prominent Japanese private universities, Qiu had a part-time job in a large language and cram school targeting international students from China. He found that the teachers in the school were asked to maintain distance from the students, and almost all interpersonal interactions were institutionalized. Not enjoying such an atmosphere, Qiu and two other friends set up a small classroom independently after graduation.

> The market competition was fierce. We only had a few students at the beginning, and we couldn't afford to rent an office. So, I found another full-time job (in an IT company) and taught students in my apartment at night. The situation at that time was miserable, but I miss it a lot … we are more like a small community than a purely commercial relationship between service providers and consumers. We helped each other to achieve our dreams. Quite often, some students stayed

overnight in my apartments if it was too late. The tuition fees were also not specified. (Interviewed in July 2019)

Despite different business contents, the client ties in Qiu's initial business were similar to that of the other two cases in terms of blending monetary and non-monetary dimensions. However, Qiu's case has more indications. When I met Qiu, he ran two cram schools (*juku* in Japanese)[16] in Ikebukuro and Okubo, and made a name for himself in the circle of local Chinese entrepreneurs. Swamped with countless daily business issues, Qiu was unlikely to maintain the clientship ties as he did in the past. Because of the business expansion and the increase of business participants and investors, Qiu needed to turn to a different management and operation model that generates more economically efficient customer relations. In fact, compared with Gao Ge's massage store, the development model of Qiu's company is more representative of Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs. While building client ties with Chinese customers was pervasive, especially during the initial phase of the Chinese newcomers' businesses, the developmentalism business prospect also gained consensus. Most of the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs tended to expand their businesses by opening branch stores, attracting broad investments, and setting up complex organization systems. Consequently, close relationships with customers have become a nostalgic memory for many entrepreneurs.

4.2.2 Co-Ethnic Employment: Pain or Gain?

From an economic perspective, it is a rational choice for ethnic entrepreneurs to hire co-ethnic employees since co-ethnic employment characterized by solid attachment and intra-group trust can, to a large extent, reduce information and coordination costs (den Butter, Masurel, and

[16] They are private cram schools that offer supplementary courses for students who prepare for high school or university entrance exams.

Mosch 2004). However, such an argument may face challenges if we take into consideration individual migration experiences and entrepreneurs' long-term business prospects. In my research, I found that while the interviewees had an agreement that the contributions of Chinese employees were significant, their perceptions of the Chinese employees appeared to be vastly different. Some Chinese entrepreneurs used the term "quasi-family" to describe the employer-employee relationships in the workplace, whereas some stressed the dark side of hiring co-ethnic employees.

On my first visit to Guan Jie's firm, a real estate agency in Ikebukuro, I got the impression that she was like a big sister in taking care of other employees rather than merely a professional business manager. Guan Jie moved to Japan in 2005, in her words, "all for my husband," because her husband accepted a job in a large Japanese IT company in Shizuoka prefecture, Japan. After being a housewife for five years, she was eager for more challenges. Therefore, she opened a small izakaya. Two years later, her marriage came to an end. Although her business began to blossom, she decided to close the store and move to Tokyo. In Tokyo, Guan Jie first worked in a real estate agency, and during that time, she got acquainted with many other single mothers and housewives from China. She found that although many of them had good educational backgrounds and were able to perform many skills, they were stuck performing menial housework. Guan Jie decided to open a real estate agency on her own in 2012 when the housing prices in Japan rebounded after the Tohoku earthquake. When searching for employees, Guan Jie preferred to hire housewives who dreamed of developing their careers in Japan. "*Shigoto to kazoku no ryōritsu*" (balance work and family) has become a crucial principle in Guan Jie's firm. She stated:

> To be honest, I failed to balance my work and family when I was running the izakaya restaurant. I gave much more attention to my business than my family.

> But I don't want my employees to repeat the mistakes. So, I try my best to create a working environment suitable to the housewives in my company. In my firm, we have a big 'housewife team' in which all employees are housewives living in Tokyo. They only work from 10 am to 4 pm with a very flexible schedule to transport children to and from school and prepare dinner for their families. I always joked, saying my company's work system is oriented towards the housewives' schedule. We could barely get together all of my employees at the weekly meeting together because some of them always needed to deal with family demands. But I don't blame them. I was a housewife, and I am also a single mother, so I understand how helpless they can sometimes be if they want to make career achievements in Japan. They also appreciated the work opportunities I provided for them. Our relationships are quite harmonious, like a big family (Interviewed in June 2019).

The affinity between Guan Jie and her employees came not only from the status of Chinese immigrants but also from their shared experiences as housewives in Japan. A few Japanese female employees in her company had similar experiences to the Chinese employees. Guan Jie treated them alike. The "quasi-family" employer and employee relationships in Guan Jie's firm were characterized by her personal preferences. However, not all co-ethnic employments in Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs' companies are harmonious.

Sugiyama was one of the earliest Chinese newcomers to Japan. Like many newcomers at that time, he started his entrepreneurial career with a Chinese restaurant. With the expansion of his business, Sugiyama opened the second restaurant in a few years. After leaving the two restaurants under the charge of two Chinese managers who followed him at the very beginning, he gave more energy to search for new business opportunities in other fields. Everything

seemed to go well until he fortuitously found that one Chinese manager, ganging up with some other Chinese stuff, had been stealing money from the restaurant. This traumatized Sugiyama for a long time, not because of the loss of money but because he trusted the co-ethnic members unconditionally. After he switched his core business to the food processing factory, almost all employees in his company were Japanese because, as Sugiyama said, he did not trust Chinese employees anymore. It was common that the entrepreneurs I interviewed tended to give a stereotypical and oversimplified description of the co-ethnic employees once they had negative experiences with the Chinese workers.

Oda was another entrepreneur who struggled with co-ethnic employment. Oda opened her first restaurant with her brother. Aside from the two siblings, there were only two Chinese chefs at the beginning. When I asked her what the biggest challenge was on her way to becoming an entrepreneur, she answered that getting along with some Chinese employees was very nerve-racking.

> I suffered a lot from dealing with the Chinese chefs employed in my first restaurant. I didn't know any management skills at the beginning, and they sometimes poked fun at me with sarcastic remarks, such as "a graduate student also has to work as a waitress." Their words irritated me (Interviewed in June 2019).

The personal experiences left Oda with a repugnant impression of her co-ethnic employees. Oda said that she was naïve, thinking it could be easy to get along with her compatriots. Like Oda, many Chinese newcomers expressed that the essential difference between the older generations and the newcomers was that there are fewer affinities between Chinese newcomers. This lack of affinities consequently weakened the strong attachments and in-group trust expected in co-ethnic employment. The diversity of newcomers' socioeconomic backgrounds

and the institutionalization of migration channels made many Chinese newcomers perceive the other co-ethnic members in Japan as "familiar strangers." In other words, although other co-ethnic members recognized them as compatriots, this recognition and identification do not naturally generate stable and intimate connections. Guan Jie's case is exceptional because this solidarity is based not only on the status of co-ethnic members but also on the shared migration experiences.

In terms of daily management, Xin's perception of the Chinese newcomer employees in his firms provides a different perspective on co-ethnic employment. Xin had rich working experiences in Chinese newcomers' companies after his grocery store closed. In his opinion, many Chinese newcomers' companies were loosely structured like "sandpiles." "It is easier to get together a group of compatriots. They could also further introduce more Chinese employees. But the structures are more like 'sandpiles,' not 'pyramids' because it lacks institutionalized organizational models," said Xin. Although admitting that his current IT firm was also a "sandpile" at the initial phase, Xin tended to reform the employer and employee relations in terms of employment channels, vertical management, and promotion systems, which led to a more structured organization. After going through many frustrations and failures in his entrepreneurial career, Xin believed that a "co-ethnic relationship is the lubrication, but the institutionalized employer-employee relations are the cornerstones for long-term development."

Besides the positive and negative attitudes toward co-ethnic employment, some Chinese entrepreneurs tended to take a neutral and pragmatic view. For instance, Jia Ying believed that business owners should be concerned with facts, not with individuals, in terms of co-ethnic employment. Like most Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs, Jia Ying came to Japan as an international student. After graduation, he started a small cram school with a few Chinese employees. However, compared with other Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs, he was born into

a well-to-do family in China, and his parents were well-connected in Japan's political and commercial circles. In light of these advantages, he encountered fewer obstacles in his entrepreneurial path, including bad memories with Chinese employees. For Jia Ying, Chinese employees were indispensable to his company mainly because the cram school targeted Chinese international students in Japan. However, as the company grew to one of the largest training institutions and started providing services for various customer groups, more and more employees from mainland China, Taiwan, and Japan joined his company. Therefore, he attempted to eliminate the image of Chinese employees as "one exclusive ethnic group" and the others as "outsiders" in a company with more than one hundred employees. "Of importance is not 'whom' we employed but 'why' we employed them," said the experienced entrepreneur.

While the Chinese entrepreneurs introduced in the section seem to have different perceptions of co-ethnic employment, they share several common qualities. First, when looking back on their past entrepreneurial careers, we find that no entrepreneur could be entirely independent of co-ethnic employees. Despite fewer affinities among the newcomers, as Xin indicated, co-ethnic employment was still a common way to bring employees together at the beginning. However, it is necessary to emphasize that the reliance on co-ethnic employment differs from the relations between co-ethnic entrepreneurs and workers in self-enclosed ethnic niches. In such ethnic niches, ethnic workers had limited opportunities in the employment markets of the host societies. Therefore, they had to have recourse to co-ethnic entrepreneurs who may exploit them by giving them 3D (dirty, dangerous, demeaning) jobs. In contrast, co-ethnic exploitations are less likely to happen in Chinese newcomers' companies mainly because of the competitive human capital of the newcomer employees. Many Chinese entrepreneurs stated that the main reasons for co-ethnic employment were shared language and convenient employment channels.

Secondly, in some cases, co-ethnic employment goes beyond merely co-ethnic and employment relationships. Guan Jie's case is a representative example. Her individual preference for providing work opportunities to Chinese housewives indicated that shared living experiences and individual preferences could also be vital factors in co-ethnic employment. Finally, co-ethnic employment cannot meet the entrepreneurs' needs once and for all. The rearrangements of employment must be in line with the business prospects. It was a fact that most Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs were ambitious for the future of their businesses and developed long-term business expansion plans. The cases of Xin and Jia Ying showed that the entrepreneurs' perceptions of co-ethnic employment were accordant with business development stages. Even Guan Jie expressed that she needed to reconsider the employment relationships in her company because business growth was hindered by the loosely structured organization, but she was struggling with making a balance.

In short, this section focused on the co-ethnic customer and employment relationships in the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs' daily business activities. For many who had long-term and developmental-first business plans, it would be unrealistic to stick to one type of customer or employment relationship. Thus, similar to the involvement of family members and fellow provincials, the co-ethnic customer and employment relationship must also be approached from a dynamic perspective.

4.3 Formal and Informal Chinese Associations and Cliques

Overseas Chinese associations based on shared surnames and dialects played an essential role in the Chinese diaspora's social and economic lives in the early migration days. Nowadays, overseas Chinese associations have become diversified with various functions. The third section will concentrate on the associations and groups of Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs in Japan. I will introduce the different principles of their formations and how they are conducive

to Chinese newcomers' entrepreneurial activities.

4.3.1 Formal Overseas Chinese Associations

One day in May 2019, my informant, Xin, brought me to the launching ceremony of a mini-movie "Dreaming in Ikebukuro" (*meng xi chi dai* in Chinese), which presented a series of stories about Chinese entrepreneurs in Ikebukuro. The host had invited Xin, one of the executives of the program, to give an opening remark. The host called Xin on stage, introducing him as "the council member of Tokyo Chinatown Promotion Association, the leader of Fujian Economy and Culture Promotion Association in Japan, and the vice-director of Japan-Chinese Friendship Association." After the ceremony, I made a joke to Xin about the fanfare he received. He laughed, waving his hands, saying they were just "nominal duties."

I was always surprised at the titles my interviewees held in varying Chinese associations in Japan. Table 4.1 presents a part of Chinese associations in Japan established by newcomers. They are institutionalized not only because some of them have been officially registered as a "General Incorporated Association" (*ippan shadan hōjin* in Japanese), "Public Interest Incorporated Association" (*kōeki shadan hōjin* in Japanese), or "General Incorporated Foundation" (*ippan zaidan hōjin* in Japanese), but also because of their formalized organizational structures and regulations. Among the various associations, the most common and influential are the commerce associations of fellow provincials. With the term "commerce" in their association names, many overseas Chinese associations highlight the business-centered aims to strengthen the Chinese business networks in Japan and facilitate economic connections with China's domestic provinces. Considering the economic benefits, it is no wonder that these associations appealed to many of my interviewees. Interestingly, the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs were also welcomed by those Chinese associations established for cultural exchanges, and many of my interviewees printed the titles on their business cards. While the

relationships between the individual Chinese entrepreneurs and the overseas Chinese associations were seemingly close, many of my interviewees referred to these prestigious titles as “nominal duties” when we talked in private. They thought that the symbolic meanings of the titles were more valuable than the social capital.

Jing Wei, a young entrepreneur running a real estate agency, is a council member of the Jilin Chamber of Commerce in Japan, the Japan-China Economic Association, and the Fellowship of Chinese Overseas Students in Japan. Looking at his name card imprinted with so many titles, I asked him how he managed to move effortlessly around different Chinese associations. Regarding my observations during my fieldwork, many Chinese newcomer associations in Japan had no close cooperation, and some in similar fields were even in competition. Jing Wei told me that he had not attended any activity among these associations for a few years and barely built any “*ren mai*” (interpersonal networks) after becoming an association member. Nevertheless, he kept renewing his membership by paying the annual fees because, for Jing Wei, the membership status of different associations could largely dispel distrust among his clients (most of them were Chinese). He actively joined different associations, whether related to his business or not and obtained various titles because, as he said, the titles enabled him to show that he was a reliable and trustworthy business partner.

Table 4.1 Chinese associations and foundations in Japan[17]

Attribute	Name	Dates of Establishment	Location	Membership Target
General Chinese Associations	The Union of Overseas Chinese in Japan	2003	Taito, Tokyo	Local Chinese associations
	Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Japan	1999	Shibuya, Tokyo	Chinese entrepreneurs/investors
Shared Provenance	GIA, Japanese Heilongjian People Association	2010	Ikebukuro, Tokyo	Fellow provincials
	GIA, Inner Mongolia Commerce in Japan	2018	Itabashi, Tokyo	Fellow provincials
	GIA, Sichuan Chongqing Commerce in Japan	2015	Taito, Tokyo	Fellow provincials
	GIA, Zhejiang Chamber of Commerce in Japan	2013	Chuo, Tokyo	Fellow provincials
	GIA, Jilin Chamber of Commerce in Japan	2014	Taito, Tokyo	Fellow provincials
	GIA, Changchun Chamber of Commerce in Japan	2016	Adachi, Tokyo	Fellow provincials (particularly from Changchun)
	Fujian Economy and Culture Promotion Association in Japan	2011	Ikebukuro, Tokyo	Fellow provincials
	Japanese Shanghai Association	2012	Ikebukuro, Tokyo	Fellow provincials
Shared Profession/ Knowledge	The Association of Chinese Scientists and Engineers in Japan	1993	Chiyoda, Tokyo	Scientists, engineers, and hi-tech entrepreneurs
	Chinese IT Companies Credit Association	Not known	Chuo, Tokyo	IT entrepreneurs
	Chinese Academy of Science and Engineering in Japan	1996	Ikebukuro, Tokyo	Scholars
	The Society of Chinese Professors in Japan	2003	Chiyoda, Tokyo	Scholars
Cultural Exchange	PIIA, Japan-Chinese Friendship Association	1950 (incorporated in 2000)	Taito, Tokyo	Chinese and Japanese
	GIF, Japan-China Economic Association	1972	Chiyoda, Tokyo	Entrepreneurs
Shared Hobby and Characteristics	China-Japan Volunteer Organization	2006	Ikebukuro, Tokyo	Chinese and Japanese
	The Union of Chinese Females in Japan	2014	Shinagawa, Tokyo	Female Chinese migrants

[17] Representative associations selected for each attribute come from the website "China-related Associations in Japan" (https://spc.jst.go.jp/cdb/pages/home). For the "specialized" Chinese association, I chose the "Tokyo Chinatown Promotion Association," with which I closely interacted during the long-term fieldwork.

	GIA, Fellowship of Chinese Overseas Students in Japan	2016	Shinjuku, Tokyo	Chinese international students, Chinese entrepreneurs
Specialized	Tokyo Chinatown Promotion Association (NPO, Tokyo International Exchange Association)	2017	Ikebukuro, Tokyo	Entrepreneurs, social activists

Given that mere co-ethnicity cannot guarantee trustworthy relationships, trust must be gained in other ways. Membership in the same group and network can provide a solid source of trust (Granovetter 2017). The membership of overseas Chinese associations in Japan partly echoes but does not entirely fit the argument. The Chinese entrepreneurs are members of some Chinese associations, but the potential customers and business cooperators do not necessarily have the same membership. In other words, mutual trusts are not always based on shared membership in the same Chinese association. Hence, in Jing Wei's case, his membership in different Chinese associations mainly represented one sort of symbolic power (sometimes emerging from misrecognition) rather than a reasoned source of trust. According to Bourdieu, symbolic power legitimates economic activities, and "symbolic capital" in the form of prestige can be accumulated and converted to other sorts of capital (economic, social, and cultural) under certain conditions (Bourdieu 1986). In this sense, many Chinese entrepreneurs cared deeply about their reputations in the Chinese community and the titles obtained through activities in social and cultural life because they considered their businesses to transcend beyond pure economic transactions.

Even though joining formalized Chinese associations might make the entrepreneurs seem distinguished, few maintain a long-term close relationship with the associations once they obtain the representative titles. According to their narratives, one reason was that these associations were not "down-to-earth" (*jie di qi* in Chinese). Unlike the early associations of the older generations, these new associations, though having well-organized organizational

structures and detailed regulations, could hardly bring a sense of belonging or solid social ties to the Chinese entrepreneurs due to their overly formalistic nature. According to my interviewees, despite the ethnically exclusive membership of most associations, members in such associations hardly had close contact with each other. As Xin said, “most of them are just friends in the Wechat list.”

In addition, stories about scandals of such associations incessantly lingered in my ear during fieldwork. Despite different protagonists, these stories always had similar plots and endings: a few founders collected funding from members in the name of association promotion, followed by break-ups due to uneven profit distributions or being reported by other members (mainly because they did not have accurately recorded account balances). Consequently, it is not uncommon to find that many Chinese associations in Japan concentrate on almost the same business with slightly distinct names. Some association founders aimed to obtain economic gains under the guise of public interest promotions, which is common in in-group economic practices due to “the taboo of making things explicit” (Bourdieu 1998,96). Of importance is that such shared silence must be conditioned upon shared interests and values. However, many Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs did not emotionally connect with the associations but interacted with them instrumentally. Such an interaction gradually pushed them away from the associations once they found out that some associations were deeply prejudiced.

The second reason for maintaining distance from the formal associations was the political atmosphere in some overseas Chinese associations. The connections between the Chinese government, overseas Chinese, and overseas Chinese associations include political implications after 1978 (Nyíri 2010). The Chinese newcomers and relevant associations in Japan are no exception. A few weeks before President Xi Jinping attended the G20 conference in Osaka in June 2019, I joined an activity organized by the local “Tokyo Chinatown Promotion

Association." A CPPCC (Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference) member from China gave a speech and addressed how important President Xi Jinping's attendance at G20 was for the Chinese in Japan. For many Chinese entrepreneurs, the entanglement between overseas Chinese associations and China's central and local governments is a two-edged sword. First, the associations function as platforms connecting overseas Chinese entrepreneurs in Japan and domestic government officers, on which the entrepreneurs, especially those engaged in transnational business between China and Japan, could find more investment and business opportunities. On the other hand, some Chinese entrepreneurs kept the associations at a distance due to their inextricable relationships with Chinese government authorities. One group that tended to shy away from political issues was the entrepreneurs who grew up in the 1970s and 1980s and experienced political turbulence in China.

Ma, for instance, one of my research participants who was running an izakaya in Ikebukuro, mentioned that her childhood life was miserable because her father, a journalist and intellectual during the Cultural Revolution, was listed as a "Rightist." Her childhood experiences traumatized her for a long time, and even now, she has made it one of her business principles to "not to get involved in politics" (*bu peng zheng zhi* in Chinese). Therefore, being aware of the overwhelming political atmosphere in many overseas Chinese associations, she tended to avoid intensive involvement.

In sum, maintaining an arm's length from the formalized Chinese associations was common among my research participants. Considering the commercial and symbolic meanings, their participation in the associations was in favor of entrepreneurial developments. However, many formal associations failed to foster closeness and solidarity among the members.

4.3.2 Informal Groups

For the Chinese entrepreneurs, the self-organized groups and associations were more "down-

to-earth." In the study regarding the strong and weak ties in a Chinese football group in Japan, Ba (2012) addressed that, unlike the older generations, Chinese newcomers mainly build individual social ties through interest groups. The researcher sees these interest groups as information exchange hubs and places where people can release stress. Likewise, my fieldwork findings also indicate that self-organized co-ethnic groups established from the bottom up can afford not only the social resources required for enterprising activities but also mental solace for Chinese entrepreneurs.

One example that left a deep impression during my fieldwork was a dating-oriented Chinese group based in Ikebukuro, Tokyo. Guan Jie, the female entrepreneur I introduced previously, was the founder and organizer of the group. What motivated her to set up such a group was that many of her clients were Chinese IT engineers who were still single in their thirties (most of them were male). Some of her clients complained that they were too busy to have a chance to find girlfriends. On the other side, many of her female Chinese employees and friends also grumbled about how hard to find the right partner, and some of them seemed pretty desperate. To help her clients and friends, she initiated a dating activity every month in her office. During our talks, the professional estate agent always made fun of herself, saying, "maybe I'm just talented at matchmaking."

On the one hand, she admitted that the group helped her build a community where she obtained more opportunities to get in touch with potential customers. On the other hand, however, her motivation to set up the group was not entirely for practical reasons. Sometimes, as a member of one local commercial association, Guan Jie would play golf with some Japanese *shachō* (business owners) so that she could seek advice from these successful entrepreneurs. She considered these activities "missions," which she was compelled to carry out for her own business, although she was not keen on such activities. By contrast, she found that spending

time with these group members was enjoyable and mentally relaxing, even though she was required to invest money and time in these efforts (in most cases, the participation is for free). Starting with organizing dating activities, the self-organized grassroots group has gradually changed to a networking party in which a group of Chinese participants, generally with around fifteen to twenty participants every time, communicated with each other about their feelings about living in Japan and exchanged information. There was no regulated membership for the group members, and the only principle of participating in the group was to "integrate into us," said Guan Jie.

Sayuri, the owner of an IT dispatching firm, was also a regular attendee of the group. Her role in the group was as a "matchmaker" (*hong niang* in Chinese), helping to transfer the affections of someone who is too shy to express their feelings on the spot to another person. During our talks, Sayuri expressed a great deal of passion and commitment to her "missions." Another factor attracting Sayuri to the group was that many of the group members were IT engineers. As a professional in the IT field, she was willing to provide helpful career counseling for young Chinese IT workers in Japan and learn the most updated industry information from them.

Whenever I joined their activities, as Guan Jie's "little brother" (as she called me) and a researcher, the other members were surprisingly willing to talk with me at length and offered their help because they believed Guan Jie's friend must be trustworthy. Despite different occupations and places of origin, the self-organized group members tended to build a sort of harmonious community relationship. Admittedly, it would be overly romantic and idealistic to ignore Guan Jie's business considerations for such a self-organized group. However, for most of the members I talked to, commercial intentions were secondary in joining or organizing the informal group meetings. Instead, having a group of like-minded people to communicate and

share worries with in daily life was precious. Different from Ba's study (2012), which considers the social networks emerging from informal groups of Chinese newcomers in Japan as relatively weak social ties, the research findings show that such co-ethnic networks could evolve into "strong ties" with the increasing " amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy, and the reciprocal services" (Granovetter 1973,1361). In fact, for the older generations, Chinese associations or guilds based on solid compatriot ties functioned as "social gatherings where common interests were discussed, and hometown gossip was exchanged" (Kuhn 2009, 44). However, with the alienation of the formalized Chinese associations from individual Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs, they have tended to resort to informal grassroots groups for daily emotional demands.

Guan Jie and Sayuri's informal group were not limited to dating activities. They also held lectures and workshops on weekends that helped the group members to work out the problems they confronted in Japan. Though without a formal name, their group has gathered many regular participants. One time, Guan Jie mentioned that she considered applying for a "General Incorporated Association" and asked if I could help her collect the documents required for the application. When I brought the documents to her office one week later, she told me she had changed her mind. If she registered the group as an official overseas Chinese association in Japan, it would be easier to build connections with other official associations and the Chinese embassy, which would probably bring her more commercial opportunities. However, if she did so, she worried that it would be against her original intention of creating a non-commercial platform on which the members could freely talk about their lives. In the end, she decided to keep the group active without any official name.

4.3.3 Entrepreneur Cliques (*Quan Zi*)

In addition to the informal Chinese associations, "*quan zi*" (clique) was also a term frequently

mentioned by the Chinese entrepreneurs when talking about their personal social circles. In Chinese, people called it "*quan zi*," or sometimes "*xiao*" (small) to emphasize the specific social groups with limited members. In this section, I will introduce the *quan zi* of three research participants and explain the principles of the specific social groups and how they relate to the Chinese newcomers' entrepreneurial activities.

Chen Sen, a legendary entrepreneur in the Chinese community in Japan, has the most dramatic migration and entrepreneurial stories. As mentioned previously, due to his active participation in the Tiananmen Incident, he failed to find a satisfying job in China after graduation and decided to migrate to Japan. At the beginning of his overseas life, he was involved in the business of illegal immigration and people smuggling, picking up the smugglers from the coasts. Realizing how dangerous it was, he quit and started his first business, a massage store, where he employed an illegal immigrant who used to be a combat engineer in China but escaped from an exchange group while visiting Japan. He described the Chinese society in Japan in the 1990s as "disorderly, unruled and lawless" (*wu fa wu tian* in Chinese). He named four members of his clique, including the previous illegal migrant who now has become the owner of several massage stores in Tokyo, saying they were "life friends" who experienced the turbulent time together. Chen Sen addressed the uniqueness of the clique in the sense that it was almost impossible to take in new members because their "life friendship" emerged from particular times, and they shared common interests and recognition of doing business. Another common point in the clique was that they were all successful entrepreneurs, though in different business sectors. The members' status of being entrepreneurs did not indicate that they were intensively associated with each other in business but that they have similar lifestyles and philosophies of doing business. This can be exemplified by their attitudes toward some new industries, such as IT-relevant businesses. Chen Sen and his "life friends"

arriving in Japan in the 1990s all engaged in traditional ethnic businesses, such as massage stores and Chinese restaurants. According to Chen Sen, the IT industry seemed full of opportunities but also speculation. During our talks, he mentioned more than once that he and his clique had a consensus that the traditional businesses they were familiar with were trustworthy and secure. Because of Chen Sen's big name in the Chinese community in Japan and his successful career as an entrepreneur, he was always invited to give speeches for his business partners and endorse their products. However, he said, "we always call each other 'good friends' because 'friendship' is always a good cover for other essential meanings. But if you ask me my personal *quan zi,* I think just four of us."

Another clique includes three of my key informants, Oda, Sayuri, and Guan Jie. They called the small clique a "sister group" because they were all female entrepreneurs moving to and starting businesses in Japan in the 2000s. They were acquainted in a Chinese civil association ten years ago and now organized a Chinese dating activity in Ikebukuro together. When I asked Guan Jie to detail their connections, she blurted out, "as to whatever we are thinking about, we have a tacit understanding." Such tacit understandings were the principle of the "sister group," rooted in their shared past experiences and current mentality. While gender is critical, it is not the only uniting factor in the group. What brought them together was their similar journeys from being female migrants with spouse-dependent visas to independent, successful female entrepreneurs. Such experiences shaped similar mentalities in the kinds of lifestyles and businesses they pursued. Oda stated:

> I would love to make friends with different people, no matter what kind of job they do. But the clique (*xiao quan zi* in Chinese) is unique. With the clique members, we talked about kids, businesses, and previous interesting or suffering experiences. We played golf together … If we were not in the field (of

> entrepreneurs), our lives would probably not overlap. I think that stratification comes into being naturally. Similarly, I cannot integrate into (the cliques of) people 'higher' than me either. (Interviewed in July 2019)

Despite no malicious intent, the clique members frequently used "stratification" (*ceng ci* in Chinese) during our talks. From their point of view, Chinese newcomers in Japan are heterogeneous and differentiated by various social and economic statuses. The emergence of "stratification" and differentiation is not only the result of the gathering of people with the same occupation (in this case, they are all overseas Chinese entrepreneurs) but also shared social class reflected from and emerging out of their common interests and pursuits.

The third clique is Lao Liu's group, consisting of three young overseas Chinese entrepreneurs. Lao Liu was the owner of two Chinese restaurants in Tokyo, and the clique members all ran businesses in Japan. Compared with the last two cliques, the fellows of Lao Liu's group are Chinese migrants arriving in Japan at the beginning of the 2010s who were acquainted with each other in a Japanese language school. Lao Liu said the common attribute of the group fellows was the "new cohort of overseas Chinese" (*xin yi dai hai wai hua ren* in Chinese). They called themselves the "new cohort" because they had similar pro-migration experiences and lifestyles. According to Lao Liu, receiving graduate education in Japan, working in large Japanese companies, and living a transnational life were the features of the so-called "new cohort." Lao Liu's narratives about "the old cohort" are not "the older generations" (*Rōkakyō* in Japanese) introduced in the preceding chapter. Liu considered the Chinese immigrants arriving in Japan in the 1990s as the "old cohort," conceptually defined as "Chinese newcomers." Lao Liu explicitly differentiated himself and his peers from the "old cohort of overseas Chinese" to stress that compared to the "old cohort," their businesses rely more on online marketing and new media in terms of their business management styles. In

addition, the joint status of being entrepreneurs is also crucial for Lao Liu's clique because similar to Oda's explanations, their interests and focuses have changed significantly since they became entrepreneurs. As he always recounted, "people without such experiences cannot understand us."

Shared Lifestyles and Tastes: The Bases of the Cliques

Chinese entrepreneurs' *quan zi* is similar to the concept of "clique" defined by Boissevain (1974). In his work, *Friends of Friends*, Boissevain identified "clique" as a special type of social network that "is a coalition whose members regularly associate with each other on the basis of affection and common interest and possess a marked sense of common identity" (Boissevain 1974,174). The main principle of clique membership is mutual affection and shared characteristics regarding age, gender, social class, and occupation. It is not a goal-oriented group with precise internal specifications or definite leaders (Boissevain 1974, 174-181). Unlike blood or kinship-oriented communal relationships, cliques formed on the premise of friendship do not explicitly express the fundamental principles of the social group[18].

The three cliques introduced previously should be more precisely called co-ethnic cliques since all fellows of the cliques are Chinese newcomers in Japan, though arriving at different times. The Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs interviewed during the fieldwork usually expressed their willingness to partner with interethnic members and the Japanese in business. However, at the mention of *quan zi*, the membership was always exclusive to co-ethnic members. Nevertheless, it is important to underline that predisposed co-ethnicity, namely, the shared status of being Chinese, is not the only principle in the formation of such cliques because ethnic commonness is not enough to generate the solid emotional attachments required for

[18] The example of "clique" Boissevain applied in his book is comrade-in-arms.

clique membership.

Instead, I argue that the consolidation of the Chinese entrepreneurs' *quan zi* is based on their shared preferences and lifestyles derived from individual *habitus*. From the point of view of Bourdieu, "lifestyle" is a "system of classified and classifying practices" resulting from *habitus* determined by pertinent of individual economic and social positions (Bourdieu 1984, 170-175).

First, the Chinese newcomers' social and economic situations in the migrant trajectories determined the differences between cliques. It seems impossible to see a young Chinese entrepreneur moving to Japan in the 2010s as a "life friend" in Chen Sen's clique. Likewise, it is also rare to find that a Chinese entrepreneur arriving in Japan in the 1990s fits the standard of Lao Liu's "new cohort." Some "new cohorts," such as Liu and his clique fellows who grew up in relatively wealthy families and were portrayed as elite immigrants, may have no resonation with the immigrants arriving in the 1990s who had to grapple with serious structural discrimination. Although they have all been conceptualized as Japan's *Shinkakyō* (Chinese newcomers) over the almost thirty-year timespan, the distinct migration periods have separated the *shinkakyō* into subethnic groups with different perceptions of life quality and pursuit. Likewise, the newcomers' varying social statuses in the past subdivided the distinctions. The "sister group" members thought that their similar experiences from being housewives to female entrepreneurs were the main reason for holding them together and distinguishing them from others. Such differences lead to varying "subjective existences" (Boissevain1974,174) in the cliques emerging from the consciously constructed homogeneity and commonality among the members. However, these "subjective existences" did not emerge out of thin air but were based on objective differentiable conditions confronted by the immigrants.

The clique consolidation also resulted from a shared structuring *habitus*, specifically, the entrepreneurs' lifestyles. Recall the term "stratification" used by Oda when discussing the uniqueness of her clique. Even though the members of the three cliques mentioned previously did not directly address that the gap in economic capital between the entrepreneurs and other Chinese immigrants resulted in such homogeneity of the clique fellows, Guan Jie and her clique members indicated the differences between the clique members and other Chinese immigrants (such as employees and students) in lifestyle. Based on our talks during the fieldwork and the photos of their daily lives that they uploaded on Wechat, I found that my interviewees' lifestyles were largely homogenous, such as playing golf, sending their children to international schools, remaining attuned to updated economic and financial information, and eagerness to organize workshops and obtain various titles. Many of my research participants agreed that their interests and lifestyles had fundamentally changed since they started running businesses independently.

The changes in taste and lifestyle are accompanied by changes in individuals' social and economic conditions, or from a Bourdieusian perspective, by changes in capital volume and composition (Bourdieu 1984). These tastes shared by the entrepreneurs and based on social status blurred the boundary between ethnic and Japanese entrepreneurs yet reinforced the distinctions between Chinese entrepreneurs and other Chinese immigrants who are not in such socio-economic conditions. This does not mean that such lifestyles only belong to entrepreneurs. People who are not entrepreneurs but have similar habitus may also be capable of appreciating such lifestyles. Nevertheless, Bourdieu's thoughts about structuring habitus are helpful in the understanding of the homogeneity among the clique members, explicitly speaking, why the clique members are all entrepreneurs with similar socioeconomic status. As Oda and Liu indicated, people without such social and economic conditions could not

appreciate their lifestyles, just as they could not integrate with others at a "higher" level.

Since the clique members regularly socialized with each other on the basis of mutual affection, shared interests and lifestyles were crucial for the clique's consolidation. Co-ethnicity provides a general commonness in value orientation and cultural preference that facilitate clique formation. Although questioning the culturalist approach to ethnic entrepreneurship, I do not entirely negate the commonness of co-ethnic members. However, I argue against the one-size-fits-all perspective that Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs, endowed with certain cultural dispositions, such as Confucius's spirit, only construct social networks in a fixed way. Nevertheless, mere co-ethnicity is not sufficient. What made each clique unique was the outward distinct and inward convergent features among the clique members. On the one hand, the clique members distinguish themselves in shared migrant contexts. On the other hand, the convergent tastes and lifestyles resulting from the shared status of being entrepreneurs provide common interests, thereby facilitating the solidarity and intimacy of the clique members.

Cliques and Entrepreneurship

Ethnic markets are limited. For further business development, ethnic entrepreneurs need to either carve out new opportunities and niches in the limited market or compete with aboriginal entrepreneurs in the mainstream market. Before the entrepreneurs take any action, the first step is opportunity identification. McMullen and Shepherd (2006) identified two dimensions of the entrepreneur opportunity-identification process: recognition of opportunity and assessment of the opportunity. However, opportunity identification depends not only on individual capacities/skills and experiences but also on prior knowledge and reliable and accurate information, which can only be obtained through social interactions with professionals in the fields. In the context of ethnic niches, within which both potential opportunities and customers

are limited, co-ethnic entrepreneurs are not only compatriots but also competitors who are not willing to share valuable information on their business sectors.

Despite the cut-throat competition among the co-ethnic entrepreneurs, many of my interviewees developed businesses in various business sectors. Yamashita's work (2010) regarding Chinese newcomers in Ikebukuro also showed that the newcomers' businesses were characterized by "diversified business participation" (*tagaku keiei* in Japanese). How did the newcomers manage to surmount the obstacles and diversify their businesses in a competitive market?

I found that the Chinese entrepreneurs' diversified business participation was primarily attributed to the individual cliques formed in non-market logic. It is a fact that the business sectors in which the clique members engaged largely overlapped, even though there were barely direct business dealings among them. Chen Sen and his clique fellows' businesses mainly developed into labor dispatching, restaurant, and massage stores. Similarly, Oda's clique worked in the sectors of restaurants and real estate agencies, while Lao Liu's clique was active in the fields of new media, tapioca stores, and restaurants. Such convergence came into existence because the clique members that engaged in different business sectors were willing to share tacit knowledge, information, and resources, which helped the entrepreneurs identify diverse opportunities in the ethnic markets. Interestingly, none of them made direct investments or joined the clique members' businesses as franchisees because, as Lao Liu said, they did not want commercial relations to "corrupt" their friendship.

In an ethnic market with limited resources and customers, business expansions and diversifications seem to be a zero-sum game based on market logic. The more ethnic entrepreneurs strive to maximize benefits by stepping into other business sectors, the more competitive the ethnic market environment becomes. However, during my fieldwork, I found

that the clique members, in contrast, expressed a fair degree of "brotherhood" with each other. This was mainly because the clique members' relationships were based on non-market logic, specifically, mutual affections, shared interests, and emotional attachments. It was a matter of course that such behaviors were not unidirectional. Every clique member was supposed to share their information, knowledge, and experiences, but such reciprocity excluded the rational market principle of price determination (such as receiving advice from consultants).

Social capital in ethnic entrepreneurship has always been framed in economic considerations (Galbraith, Rodriguez, and Stiles 2007). It is a "collective asset" supplied at the co-ethnic network level, characterized by the calculation of benefits and cost, co-ethnic members' characteristics, and "quasi-public ethnic good."[19] Indeed, the cliques I studied were exclusive because they were "closed relationships." However, unlike the economic approach towards social capital, the principle of clique formation is not premised on individuals' economic calculations but on affections. The clique members did not accurately calculate how much they would lose or gain before passing on their knowledge and information. Clique membership with mutual emotional attachment was the prerequisite for their willingness to do so. In addition, the economic approach takes co-ethnicity as the only criterion distinguishing members from outsiders. However, for the cliques, co-ethnicity only represents a part of commonness in lifestyles and tastes, which is insufficient for clique formation. In short, the cliques contributed to the Chinese entrepreneurs' opportunity identification and business diversification in terms of information and knowledge exchange. In this sense, they represent

[19] They highlight that such social capitals are more of "quasi-public goods" (including materialistic goods, services, and other benefits) that are exclusively provided to a particular segment of the community (the ethnic population) that the outsiders are unable to access because of the different ethnicity (Galbraith, Rodriguez, and Stiles 2007,23).

social capital but are not based on economic calculation.

Finally, it is necessary to point out that the cliques and the previously introduced Chinese newcomer entrepreneur informal groups have several similarities. First, the formation of the two types of social networks is based on the community" principle, which is characterized by shared experiences, beliefs, interests, and mutual understandings. Second, although both are conducive to the Chinese newcomers' entrepreneurial activities, the original intentions are not to establish business-oriented groups. Third, because of the emotional attachments among the members, for the entrepreneurs, both function as emotional units largely detached from the commercial world.

However, the two types of social networks also have differences. The most obvious difference lies in group members' number and socio-economic status. The cliques generally had several regular members in business circles, whereas the informal associations included many more Chinese newcomer immigrants in Japan with different social and economic statuses. The difference in member compositions brought different contributions to the Chinese newcomers' entrepreneurship. As discussed in the last section, small entrepreneurial circles helped the entrepreneurs identify business opportunities and expand their businesses in various fields. The informal associations, in contrast, helped the entrepreneurs reach out to potential customers.

Summary

The first empirical chapter discussed how newcomer Chinese entrepreneurs in Japan perceived and constructed co-ethnic social networks. The chapter introduced seven types of co-ethnic ties that played significant roles in their entrepreneurial activities. I started with the involvement of family members and *lao xiang* (fellow provincials). While family employees concentrated on the initial state of their businesses, the Chinese entrepreneurs tended to detach from the

intensive involvement of such social ties with the growth of their businesses. The concerns about family involvement did not stem from the lack of solidarity or trust but the worry about the potential problem of prioritizing "family voice" over "market logic" in daily management. In contrast, the institutionalized migration channel and personal experiences made many Chinese entrepreneurs doubt the solidarity among *lao xiang*s. As a result, the compatriot affinities based on dialects and hometowns weakened. It is reasonable to say that *lao xiang*s, which played critical roles for the older generations of Chinese traders and merchants in Japan, are no longer indispensable for newcomer entrepreneurs.

The chapter then discussed two sorts of co-ethnic ties critical in Chinese entrepreneurs' daily management: client ties and co-ethnic employment. Despite the differences in the business fields, maintaining long-term client ties with ethnic customers was a common strategy. In contrast, the co-ethnic employments in their businesses were more complicated because they brought the Chinese entrepreneurs both gains and pains. On the one hand, Chinese entrepreneurs relied on co-ethnic employment because of their in-group employment channels and business focuses. However, on the other hand, they also need to adjust employment strategies in accordance with their business prospects. Therefore, co-ethnic employment does not benefit their entrepreneurial careers once and for all.

Next, I introduced the affiliation networks between the individual entrepreneurs and (in)formal overseas Chinese associations. While the formalized overseas Chinese associations were still a critical component of Chinese society in Japan, the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs tended to deal with the relationships with such associations selectively. On the one hand, membership in such associations could, to a large degree, bring them prestige and "symbolic" advantages. On the other hand, the associations were not the "pool" generating strong co-ethnic social networks because mere co-ethnic membership without shared collective

values and principles could not bring ethnic cohesiveness into existence. Moreover, for some entrepreneurs, particularly those who experienced China's political turbulence in the past, the entanglement of the Chinese government and the overseas associations made them keep such associations at arm's length. In contrast to the formalized Chinese associations, the findings indicated that the informal and grassroots associations established on the basis of common interests and hobbies were more likely to generate strong ties.

Finally, I moved to the "cliques" (*quan zi*) of the Chinese entrepreneurs. *Quan zi* are small social groups consisting of only a few members with relationships of mutual affection. Indicative of the clique members' homogeneity was that they formed based on their shared migration experiences and status as Chinese newcomer immigrants in Japan. Their enthusiasm for business activities and largely homogenous lifestyle epitomized their shared socioeconomic status as entrepreneurs and became the critical factor for *quan zi* formation. In other words, *quan zi* represents one specific co-ethnic group that formed on the premise of both shared co-ethnic attributes and the entrepreneurial status of the Chinese newcomers. The chapter also revealed that *quan zi*, albeit on the basis of non-market logic, also contributed to the newcomers' entrepreneurship in opportunity identifications and business expansions.

The chapter contributes to providing a different perspective on the relationships between co-ethnic networks and the entrepreneurship of overseas Chinese. The view of highlighting Chineseness in entrepreneurship considers co-ethnic social networks tightly bonded with the cultural predispositions of Chinese migrants (Redding 1993). The social networks of overseas Chinese entrepreneurs are characterized by stratified closeness expanding from "self" to kinship, hometown friends, and further to general ethnic compatriots and hobby groups (Chen 2001). In this sense, the further the peripheral groups are from the center, the more alienated the co-ethnic members become. However, the findings in this chapter are not

entirely consistent with the pattern. Particularly highlighted in the chapter were the informal groups and cliques based on both shared migration experiences and socioeconomic status. They were described as peripheral co-ethnic groups in the traditional patterns in which members in these groups shared fewer affinities than those in the same dialect groups or from the same hometowns. My findings showed that these groups were not peripheral but critical for Chinese entrepreneurs' commercial and emotional needs. On the contrary, many Chinese entrepreneurs alienated hometown friends or *lao xiang*s who were thought to be at the core of the co-ethnic networks.

This chapter aims to elaborate on the entrepreneurialization of co-ethnic networks, highlighting the diversity and dynamics of co-ethnic networks resulting from daily entrepreneurial practices. On the one hand, the findings indicated that the co-ethnic networks still played indispensable roles for the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs in Japan. From the commercial perspective, the co-ethnic social ties helped the entrepreneurs to overcome the lack of initial financial support, reduce employment costs, maintain client relationships, and obtain specific symbolic capital. In addition, some co-ethnic groups also provided the entrepreneurs with emotional support in daily life. On the other hand, however, the co-ethnic networks are not manifestations of fixed cultural and social patterns but are characterized by diversity and dynamism. This diversity and dynamism are the result of the entrepreneurs' reinterpretation and reconstruction of the co-ethnic networks. Chinese newcomers' new immigration channels and the weakening of ingroup cohesion, to some extent, have triggered the changes. However, more importantly, whether or how the entrepreneurs perceived the co-ethnic networks as valuable resources for entrepreneurial activities depended on the growth of their companies and business prospects.

Chapter 5

Visible or Invisible? Chinese Newcomer Entrepreneurs and Ikebukuro

This chapter concentrates on ethnic expressions, explicating another way the Chinese entrepreneurs negotiated ethnicity in their entrepreneurial activities. It covers the interactions between the Chinese entrepreneurs and Ikebukuro's Japanese residents and associations, followed by a further discussion on Chinese entrepreneurs' visibility in the local society.

To understand why visibility has become an issue between Chinese entrepreneurs and Ikebukuro's Japanese society, one should first look at the continuous interactions on a long-time scale. In Chapter 3, I introduced the background of the inflow of Chinese newcomers to Ikebukuro. In the first part of this chapter, I review the entanglements and show how decades of enmities influenced the Chinese entrepreneurs' perceptions of their positions in the local society. The Chinese entrepreneurs establishing roots in the neighborhood are not only the new participants in the local economies but also the "challengers" of local culture as they have brought new cultural expressions and connections around the world. Conflicts occurred when the local Japanese residents and associations began to resist the "disruption." The focus of the conflicts ultimately fell upon the dispute about visibility, specifically whether or to what extent Chinese newcomers represent the local society of Ikebukuro.

Against the background, I demonstrate how the Chinese entrepreneurs sought a boundary that enables them to express their desires and uniqueness while avoiding conflicts. The chapter conveys that while many local Chinese entrepreneurs were willing to boost their visibility in social and economic activities, they also tended to hide their Chinese status and remain invisible in their participation in local shopping street associations, festivals, and

political issues. Despite decades of judgments and negative discourses on them, the Chinese entrepreneurs did not ultimately concede nor fiercely resisted but rather explored an eclectic way to position themselves in the local society of Ikebukuro by staying visible and invisible in different sectors. The history of Chinese newcomers in Ikebukuro and their entrepreneurial status shaped their ethnic expressions and social integration strategies into the local society.

5.1 Chinese Newcomers as "Troublemakers"

I heard the voice from a distance. Megaphones amplified the voice of hatred.

"Chinese! Get out of Ikebukuro!"

Undisguised voices rise and fall.

"Get out!"

A female voice. People understand the hatred from the voice swearing as an act of revenge.

"*Shina*[20] people! Go die!"

(Translated by the author from Ishida Ira's novel, *Ikebukuro Westgate Park*)[21]

In his best-selling novel, Ishida Ira baldly described the hatred of Ikebukuro's locals toward Chinese immigrants. As an artistic work, it may exaggerate but also partly reflects the truth. Unlike the joint development of the traditional Chinatowns and the local societies of Yokohama, Nagasaki, and Kobe, the development of Ikebukuro and the inflow of Chinese newcomers did not happen concurrently at first. As detailed in chapter 3, Ikebukuro became one of Tokyo's

[20] "*Shina*" is an archaic word in Japanese for "China." It was mainly used during the colonial period. It is now a politically sensitive term and has an insulting and aggressive tone from the Chinese perspective.

[21] Cited and translated from Ishida Ira's novel *Ikebukuro Westgate Park* published in 2014 on page 173.

transportation hubs during the Meiji era, later developing its own culture famous for the settlement of young artists during the Taisho era (1912-1926) and the thriving of black markets after WWII. As a place witnessing the growth of many Japanese artists, the post-war Japanese economic acceleration, and social instability, Ikebukuro developed its own local cultures before the inflow of immigrants (Coates 2018).

The entanglements between the Chinese newcomers and Ikebukuro's local society started in the 1980s (Okuda 2000). The social structure transformation in Tokyo's inner cities resulted in the formation of many rundown areas during that period. As residents in the rundown areas left, empty apartments appeared that accommodated the first flow of immigrants from East Asia. Among the Asian immigrants, according to Okuda and Tajima's statistical data in 1989, Chinese immigrants from mainland China accounted for 61% of the total foreign population registered in the Toshima ward (Okuda and Tajima 1993). However, the large amounts of Chinese newcomers alone cannot explain why the hatred from the locals arose. Although the dispute revolving around the Tokyo Chinatown Project is commonly viewed as the emergence of the local society's hostility toward Chinese newcomers and their businesses (Yamashita 2010), the negative attitude toward Chinese newcomers escalated gradually in a long process.

The first reason for the disrepute was the large number of illegal Chinese immigrants in the 1990s. Kaneshiro's ethnographic research in a Fujian village depicted that the stowaways, in contrast to other Chinese newcomers, lacked social connections and sufficient financial support to study in Japan (Kaneshiro 2018). For the illegal immigrants, it was almost impossible to find a job in the mainstream economies of the host society. Chen Sen, one of my informants who was temporarily involved in a human smuggling business, told me that many illegal immigrants settled in Ikebukuro because of the large number of ethnic businesses run

by Chinese newcomers who offered them undesired jobs. Moving to Japan in 1992, Chen Sen was one of the first group of settlers in Ikebukuro. He described the Chinese society in Ikebukuro at the time as "lawless and out of control" (*wu fa wu tian* in Chinese). While Ikebukuro was the stronghold of many human smugglers with close connections to local Chinese businesses, it also became a critical area for fighting against human trafficking and illegal immigration. Chinese ethnic media recorded the situation. For instance, a special report in the newspaper *Zhong Hua Qiao Wang* (2007) entitled "The Hardship of Changing from 'Black' to 'White'" detailed the origin of the Chinese illegal immigrants (*hei hu kou* in Chinese) and noted that it was not uncommon at the time for Japanese polices to arrest illegal Chinese immigrants directly at their workplaces. Such chaos caused by the illegal immigrants and the involvement of local Chinese business owners resulted in a poor reputation not only in Ikebukuro but also across Japanese society.

Shadow economies are typically associated with informal and criminal organizations in Japan. In the 1990s, Ikebukuro was also famous for Chinese mafias. One of the most active groups was *Doragon*. According to the autobiography of the criminal organization' founder, its members comprised mainly Japanese war orphans[22] in China who had problems with integration into Japanese society after returning (Asai and Kawamitsu 2020). The businesses they meddled in included not only illegal migration but also adult entertainment. The entanglements between Ikebukuro and informal businesses run by foreigners did not emerge from the inflow of Chinese newcomers but the black-market period. Coates highlighted that

[22] The integration of Japanese war orphans has become a hotly debated social problem in Japan in recent decades. The main problems haunting the returning war orphans are social discriminations, maladaptation, and insufficient government support, which caused many war orphans and the second generations to join gangster groups and become *yakuza* (Asai and Kawamitsu 2020).

the Chinese and Korean migrants after WWII played critical roles in running black markets in Yokohama, Shinjuku, and Ikebukuro, which deepened the impressions of the connections between black markets and non-Japanese spaces (Coates 2018,170). The emergence of Chinese mafias reawakened the imagination about Ikebukuro's dark history in the past.

However, the nexus of Chinese mafias, social insecurity, the prosperity of the *fūzoku* industry (sexual-related industry), and the black-market history haunted not only the local Japanese residents but also the community of Chinese immigrants who set up businesses in Ikebukuro. At the meeting with Mr. Hu, the initiator of Ikebukuro's Tokyo Chinatown Project, he viewed the tricky situations many Chinese entrepreneurs confronted as follows:

> The history of Ikebukuro revealed a shady side of post-war Japan… With the inflow of Chinese immigrants, some indeed caused some social problems. However, Japanese media generally called them "Chinese." I think it is inaccurate and unfair. Most of the mafias were Japanese orphans who were left and grew up in China after the war. I always told the media that they are not Chinese but Japanese. Ikebukuro should not be depicted as a dangerous area controlled by Chinese mafias (Interviewed in May 2019).

The leaders of Chinese associations in Ikebukuro, like Mr. Hu, had a consensus that the critical point of image building for the local Chinese entrepreneurs lies in changing the image associated with mafias, corrupt businesses, and criminal activities. Despite Hu's efforts to reform the image of Chinese immigrants in the local society, the impression did not change fast, particularly when popular novels, such as the *Ikebukuro Westgate Park,* set in Ikebukuro depict an atypical place in Japan characterized by violence, chaos, and foreigners. During my fieldwork, I helped an informant organize a language exchange activity. When I asked some young Japanese participants about their impressions of northwest Ikebukuro, they typically

mentioned a set of interrelated things such as “a lot of Chinese,” “famous mafias,” “a bit dangerous,” and “exotic atmosphere.”

The stigmas did not apply exclusively to the war orphans. The third element forging the negative image of Chinese newcomers in the local society was the prevalence of pirated copyright goods and inappropriate use of rented workplaces. For Chinese migrants living and running businesses in Ikebukuro, the store, *Zhiyin*, was a landmark in the 1990s. Its business scope included food, books, and video rental, covering most Chinese migrants’ daily necessities of the day. However, for the Japanese governments and the relevant associations, *Zhiyin* was the stronghold for producing pirated copies of books and videos for commercial profits. In 2004, police searched the store and its branches. The parent company went bankrupt in 2010. According to Yamashita, north Ikebukuro was a “fracture surface” of modern China (Yamashita 2010, 45). Particularly in the 1990s and 2000s, what happened in Ikebukuro was typically projected to the whole Chinese ethnic group in Japan or linked to how people imagined China.

Moreover, the inappropriate use of rented workplaces also caused many complaints in the local society. As mentioned in previously, many Chinese entrepreneurs had difficulty finding appropriate offices because Japanese owners were unwilling to rent to them. Unlike the public discourses on Chinese smugglers, mafias, and pirated products widely reported on social media, complaints about the offices’ inappropriate use typically circulated only in local Japanese commercial associations and shopping street associations. One local shopping street association member I interviewed even regarded it as a “reasonable discrimination” (*jijō ga a ru sabetsu* in Japanese).

2008 was a sensitive year for Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs in Japan because, on the one hand, the Beijing Olympics boosted their national pride to a great extent. On the other

hand, in the same year, the poisoned frozen dumpling incident became a scandal throughout Japan. It was widely reported in Japanese media and raised people's concerns about food security issues (Reiher 2017). As a consequence, the incident caused extensive damage to Chinese entrepreneurs in Japan running food trade and catering businesses and fomented anti-China resentment in society (Nihon Keizai Shinbun 2010).

Against this background, the "Tokyo Chinatown Project" was officially announced in the same year. According to Yamashita's records, the project's initial plan was to cooperate with Chinese business owners and establish a network-based Chinatown within 500 meters of Ikebukuro station (Yamashita 2010). The project raised vociferous opposition from right-wing political associations. The members of such political associations launched demonstrations on the streets of Ikebukuro, holding banners that said, "*Shina* people get out of Ikebukuro!". In addition to the right-wing political associations, the project also bred nervousness and anger from the local shopping street associations. For example, Kidani, the leader of the north Ikebukuro shopping street association, declared in an interview as follows (J-Cast 2008):

> I believe some people would say that the establishment of a Chinatown could revitalize the local shopping street. I think it is nonsense. The Chinese store owners who peddle their products on the streets have a bad manner. Besides, they have never paid the streetlamp fees they were supposed to share. We are having a lot of troubles (Translated from Japanese by the author. Source: J-Cast News 2008.09.08).

However, at the meeting with the project's initiator, Mr. Hu stated that all complaints and negative judgments arose from a misunderstanding that the Chinese in Ikebukuro would establish a Chinatown with conspicuous national and cultural elements. Instead, he stressed that the intention of the project was to establish a "network-based digital Chinatown" that aims

to provide an information exchange platform for Chinese business owners dispersed in Ikebukuro. Although thwarted at first, the Tokyo Chinatown Project continued to develop, but mainly through digital means. The official website of "Tokyo Chinatown" has more than 700 members who are Chinese business owners from Ikebukuro and Tokyo's other districts.

Thus far, I have introduced the entanglements over decades between Chinese entrepreneurs and Japanese social and political associations in Ikebukuro and how the Chinese immigrants were depicted as "troublemakers" and "challengers" to the local society. The Tokyo Chinatown Project in 2008 was brought to the forefront of the conflicts (Yamashita 2010). However, how should we understand the critical incident that affected the interactions between Chinese entrepreneurs and the local Japanese society?

Mr. Hu, the project's initiator, repeatedly stressed that it was not the project's aim to establish an ethnically exclusive niche in Ikebukuro. However, considering Ikebukuro's historical context and social discourses about the inflow of Chinese newcomers, the term "Chinatown" in public seems provok conflict. Regarding the characteristics and meanings of Japan's three traditional Chinatowns in Yokohama, Kobe, and Nagasaki, they were all initially established in areas shunned by Japanese residents. The inflow of Chinese migrants, whether the older generations or newcomers, forged the local images and exotic cultures known for traditional Chinese architecture, festival celebrations, and stores offering authentic Chinese food and services (Yamashita 2002; Y. Zhang 2007; Tan and Liu 2008). In the Chinatowns, few disputes occurred regarding local identity because these features successfully integrated into the local economies and institutions with the establishment of commercial organizations founded by both Chinese and Japanese (Yamashita 2002).

However, the case of the Tokyo Chinatown Project is different. Before the inflow of Chinese newcomers, Ikebukuro was known for the gathering of artists during the Taisho period,

flourishing commercial activities after WWII, local festivals, and Japanese youth cultures such as comics and anime. In short, in addition to the Chinese newcomers, Ikebukuro has a rich civil culture characterized by its "heterotopic nature" (Coates 2018). The inflow of immigrants from the 1980s has reforged Ikebukuro's civil society and local identity, changed the local landscapes, and has become an indispensable part of local economies. However, as mentioned previously, the Chinese newcomers, the most identifiable ethnic group in Ikebukuro, left few positive impressions and were thought to be connected to criminal behaviors and informal economies when the Chinatown project was announced.

The project added fuel to the fire because the term "Chinatown" had an implication of building an exclusively ethnic niche that would form solid boundaries, whether geographically or symbolically, and redefine the local society with features highlighting the leading position of Chinese newcomers. The focus of the dispute did not revolve around whether the two communities could coexist or if the Chinese businesses benefit the development of local economies. It has been proved that Chinese business owners had established roots in Ikebukuro and that the development of ethnic businesses was a critical part in Ikebukuro's future city regeneration (Mizukami 2016). The dispute, instead, centers on visibility, or how the Chinese entrepreneurs publicly present themselves in the local society. In Yamashita's book (2010), he identified that the relationships between the Chinese entrepreneurs and the local Japanese residents and associations turned out to be "indifferent coexistence" (*hiyayakana kyōzon* in Japanese) after the long-term disputes. There was neither acceptance of the Chinese entrepreneurs as one part of the local society, nor sharp opposition between the two sides. They coexisted with a tacit understanding of not stepping into each other's fields (Yamashita 2010,156).

However, while conducting fieldwork in 2019, I determined that the Chinese newcomer

entrepreneurs did not want their relationship with the local Japanese business owners and business associations to be one of "indifferent coexistence." Although the "Tokyo Chinatown Project" did not make significant progress after receiving strong opposition, it did not disappear but developed online. More importantly, the Chinese entrepreneurs expressed their willingness to stand out as "Chinese" in the local society for economic and social reasons. Despite the previous setback, they hoped to exert more influence by socially and economically integrating into the local society. However, they had to seek a different way to present themselves without causing the locals' resentment. Specifically, they participated in the local Japanese social life and presented themselves as locals without highlighting their immigrant status. In the following two sections, I elaborate on how Chinese entrepreneurs balance their visible and invisible Chinese statuses in the local society of Ikebukuro.

5.2 Stay Visible as "Chinese" in Ikebukuro

During my fieldwork, I repeatedly heard that many Chinese entrepreneurs who set up their first firms in Ikebukuro later moved to Tokyo's other commercial areas. My informants called them "Ikebukuro's diasporas." For instance, Li Qing moved his business out of Ikebukuro but still maintained strong attachments there, particularly with the Chinese community. Li Qing has been living in Japan for 11 years, and for almost seven years, he lived and worked in Ikebukuro. Despite a personal emotional attachment to Ikebukuro, Li Qing realized that the social discourse about Ikebukuro, particularly northwestern Ikebukuro, had become unfavorable for his new media firm's promotion due to the increasing "Chinalization" there. For his new media firm tailored mainly to Japanese clients, he preferred a "fashionable and stylish" location such as Tokyo's Ebisu and Meguro rather than an ethnic concentration area. "Chinalization" in Li Qing's narratives indicates that local Chinese business owners intended to proactively express their Chinese status to thicken the ethnic atmosphere in the local society and reform

northwestern Ikebukuro. To understand the reasons, they must be approached from both economic and societal perspectives.

5.2.1 Ethnic Expression as a Marketing Strategy

In *Shopping for Identity: The Marketing of Ethnicity*, Halter (2000,73) reveals the similarities between anthropologists and ethnic marketing specialists: both must be conscious of cultural nuances and attempt to confirm the relatedness between their cultural backgrounds and current projects. My personal background provides many advantages in approaching my research participants. While discussing marketing strategies, my research participants also stressed their efforts to match the consumers' expectations with their cultural backgrounds. The Chinese entrepreneurs' ethnic status and businesses with authentic Chinese products and services have added to the "Chinese atmosphere" (Yamashita 2010) in Ikebukuro and formed a magnet that attracts both Chinese and Japanese visitors and consumers.

People walking on the streets of northwestern Ikebukuro are attracted to the ethnic landscapes. The following four figures present the exterior of several Chinese businesses in north Ikebukuro.[23] In most cases, Japanese and Chinese visitors to Ikebukuro can easily recognize the Chinese ethnic businesses from the decoration styles and promotion strategies, although some are in the same buildings as Japanese shops or restaurants (see Figure 5.1). One of my informants, Oda, indicated that her skill in running her restaurants in Ikebukuro was to present "authenticity." She explained that Chinese business owners in northwestern Ikebukuro were similar to Korean in Shin-Okubo, Tokyo, in that the ethnic groups have been inextricably bonded with the places and become a part of the local symbols. "If you ask the Chinese living in Tokyo where they can find the most authentic Chinese flavors, 99% of them would say the

[23] My research participants' businesses are not included in the pictures for ethical reasons.

northwestern Ikebukuro. Not only the Chinese food but also the atmosphere. People (the Chinese migrants) need a place to feel at home," Oda stated.

Facing such a marketing opportunity, she opened two authentic Chinese restaurants in north Ikebukuro known for the food flavor, interior decorations, and even the restaurant names. Similarly, another restaurant owner, Yulong, insisted on calling the food in his restaurant *chūgoku ryōri* (Chinese cuisine) rather than *chūka ryōri* (localized Chinese cuisine for Japanese taste preferences) to highlight the authenticity, and he always corrected the Japanese customers in a playful tone if they mixed up the names. The Chinese entrepreneurs' emphasis on authenticity also represents a social affordance for Chinese customers in the sense that it ameliorates the negative connotation of Chineseness in the local society and connects culinary experiences of food to ethnic identity and pride (Coates 2020)

In sharp contrast, Oda's third restaurant in Ueno, Tokyo, an area famous for Japanese popular culture under the influences of Western fashion, has a different style. To promote the *yōfū ryōri* (Western cuisine with Japanese style), Oda named it *morimori* ("*having a good appetite"* in Japanese). According to Oda, the key to promoting her restaurants is to match the appearances, atmosphere, services, and food to the local society's images.

Figure 5.1 Billboards of Chinese Businesses in Northwest Ikebukuro

A Chinese malatang (spicy hot pot) restaurant uses the image of Sichuan opera in an advertisement.

A building known for the gathering of Chinese companies. The companies' billboards only use Chinese characters.

Advertisements for a mix of Chinese and Japanese restaurants. It is easy for customers to tell which provides authentic Chinese food from the names and descriptions on the advertisements.

A huge billboard of a Chinese karaoke store only with Chinese slogans.

Restaurants, groceries, and karaoke stores use displayable elements to attract customers. However, many Chinese businesses, such as real estate agencies and language schools, have difficulty catching the co-ethnic customers' eyes in ethnic landscapes. They showed their existence by constructing a digital ethnic community for Chinese customers. The most typical way of establishing such an online space is to create "official accounts" on *WeChat*, the most widely used social media network in China. Among the five accounts I followed, the *Meng Xi Chi Dai* ("Dreams Come True in Ikebukuro") account, founded and operated by the Tokyo Chinatown Project initiators, was actively engaged in strengthening the connections between the Chinese business owners and the local society.

The content of the official account includes two categories. First, it is a digital sharing platform for Chinese entrepreneurs to advertise their products and services. Second, it introduces the everyday life of the Chinese migrants in Ikebukuro, particularly the individual stories of Chinese entrepreneurs. Xin, an administrator of the official account and a Chinese entrepreneur in Ikebukuro, told me that they aimed to present the Chinese immigrants in Ikebukuro more actively and positively and to build closer connections between Ikebukuro and local Chinese businesses. The influences of digital communities are transnational. Ikebukuro attracts not only Chinese living in Japan but also Chinese tourists. The entrepreneurs running trade firms and cosmetic stores have a deep impression of their influences. My informant, Jian Wei, ran a cosmetic store in north Ikebukuro and most of the customers were tourists from China before the COVID-19 pandemic.

> Ikebukuro has become widely known among Chinese tourists because of our promotion on Wechat official accounts. The Chinese entrepreneurs in this area, including myself, benefit a lot from it. Many tourists are attracted here because they can find whatever products they expect from the stores owned by Chinese

> business owners. They can also get discounts if paying with Alipay or Wechat…. Indeed, many Japanese media do not take positive attitudes toward the increasing number of Chinese businesses. However, we have to heighten the sense of being present (*zheng ming cun zai gan* in Chinese). It does not matter in what form. It does not have to be a "Chinatown," but it is important to show our competitiveness by presenting ourselves actively (Interviewed in May 2019).

Promoting visible and perceptible ethnic authenticity conforms to the business orientations of many Chinese entrepreneurs. In ethnic marketing, there is no general principle to guide ethnic minority business growth. Marketing strategies that boost or eliminate ethnic connotations should correspond to potential business opportunities (Pires and Stanton, 2019). Despite the conflicts between Chinese and Japanese business owners in Ikebukuro, the fact that northwestern Ikebukuro is an area in Tokyo where people can find authentic Chinese food and services has become widely known in both Japan and China. "Chinatown" has thus appeared in discourse. Meanwhile, the increasing number of Chinese immigrants and tourists to Japan in recent decades has ensured a large market demand. Promoting visible ethnic authenticity in Ikebukuro has become the mainstream marketing strategy for Chinese entrepreneurs in Ikebukuro.

5.2.2 Seeking Positive Exposure in Social Life

Not only in business activities but in social life have, many Chinese entrepreneurs have made efforts to change the negative images of Chinese newcomers. For instance, the overseas Chinese Voluntary Association (pseudonym) was an informal organization in Ikebukuro with thousands of members across the country. Although the members mostly maintained contacts online, a regular offline activity was to collect litter along the streets (see Figure 5.2). The

activity attracted some local Chinese business owners to join. I became acquainted with two of my informants, Gao Ge and Guan Jie, at the activities. Every time it took place, the participants gathered in a park first, took group photographs, and displayed a bold red banner with the words "Overseas Chinese Volunteers in Japan" in both Chinese and Japanese. After the ritualistic displays, the organizers distributed red armbands with the same words to every participant.

I then spoke to the two informants and asked how they felt about the volunteer activity. From my perspective, it was not productive due to inefficient organization. However, my two informants held different opinions, thinking the activity had its effects. Guan Jie thought the activity was necessary because the Chinese immigrants needed a channel to present themselves positively in Japanese society. Similarly, Gao Ge stated, "we need some image management, don't we? The meaning of the activity is to show that the Chinese in the local society are not troublemakers. We can contribute to the local society. It is also important to let them know that Chinese immigrants are doing this. So, we must be somehow showy."

Another activity I joined regularly was a Chinese and Japanese language exchange activity (see Figure 5.3) founded in 2007 by one of my research participants, Mr. Duan. The activity took place weekly at the Ikebukuro Westgate Park. During my fieldwork, I helped host the meeting several times. The number of participants each time changed considerably from 20 to 60 depending on the number of new participants each time. Before it started, the host and several volunteers would display posters explaining the history of the activity and the current hotly debated topics in China. Ikebukuro Westgate Park is a small street park to the west of Ikebukuro station with a high flow of passersby. The gathering of dozens of Chinese and Japanese participants who practiced Chinese and talked about China loudly and energetically typically attracted many Japanese passersby to stop and take a look. When I talked with Mr.

Duan, the founder of a publishing firm in west Ikebukuro, he expressed his concerns: “The locals did not like the Chinese immigrants because we usually kept ourselves invisible and did something under the table. It is necessary to stand out and to be open and aboveboard.” In his workplace, he showed me his “Toshima cultural ambassador” appointment certificate from the local government for his contributions to facilitating cultural exchange activities in the local society. He mentioned that the local government also would like to see the Chinese residents and business owners express themselves actively and positively because it is consistent with the local government’s aim to build an international and multicultural city.

Figure 5.2 Voluntary Activity

Chinese volunteers were picking up litter along the road.

Figure 5.3 "Nihao Linghe" (*Hello Reiwa*)

A group photo at the first meeting of the language exchange activity after the new era name (*Reiwa*).

Although the Tokyo Chinatown Project ceased to be a massive undertaking, the organizing teams (consisting mainly of local Chinese entrepreneurs) continued to promote the positive image of Chinese immigrants in Ikebukuro. They produced three episodes for the short films "*Dreams Come True in Ikebukuro*," which revolves around the individual stories of three Chinese students living in Ikebukuro. One episode was adapted from the experiences of my research participant, Jing Wei, a young entrepreneur who lived, studied, and started his entrepreneurial career in Ikebukuro. My informant Xin, one of the producers of the movie project, stated that the films aimed to portray harmonious relationships between Chinese newcomers and locals. Moreover, the movies have received substantial support from local Chinese entrepreneurs. They held a premiere in 2018 and invited Japanese news media and Toshima's government officers to attend when the movies were released to the public. During my fieldwork in 2019, they were preparing for the second season, which would focus on the individual entrepreneurial stories of Chinese immigrants in Ikebukuro. During the COVID-19

pandemic, they temporarily halted filming. The project team hoped to restart it promptly and believed that the second season would draw a larger public response.

Despite the strained relationships with the locals in Ikebukuro after 2009, Chinese immigrants did not stay out of the limelight. Instead, they expressed themselves more actively and positively in the two connected aspects of business and social activities. The transformation of an ethnic enclave to a place of leisure and consumption targeting the mainstream market of the receiving society does not happen naturally. It must be continuously facilitated by the immigrant group, particularly immigrant entrepreneurs (Rath 2017). The desire to expand their businesses into the mainstream market impelled local Chinese entrepreneurs in Ikebukuro to change the negative connotations and discourses about Chinese newcomers in the local society. The critical step was to eliminate the image as an "enclave" isolated from mainstream society and full of mystery. However, this does not mean that the entrepreneurs must restrain their expressions as an "ethnic group" in Japan. In fact, providing ethnic products and services is appreciated by both co-ethnic group members and Japanese customers. As many Chinese entrepreneurs indicated, of importance is therefore not whether they should stand out but the way they present themselves in the local society.

5.3 Stay Invisible and Become "Locals"

On a Friday afternoon, Yu Bing invited me to her office for an employee's birthday party. The party was interrupted by a knock at the door. It was the president of the shopping street association Yu Bing had joined. Yu Bing's trade company is not located on the main streets famous for Chinese companies in northwestern Ikebukuro but on a side street. She was, therefore, the only Chinese member of this association. After a greeting, the Japanese elder asked if Yu Bing would like to contribute 5000 *yen* (approximately 30 USD) for street cleaning as a member of the shopping street association. He then explained that it was common for

Japanese shopping street associations to organize street cleaning activities, but it was voluntary. Afterward, he also asked if such associations also existed in China and carefully observed Yu Bing's reactions. Beyond his expectation, Yu Bing agreed without the slightest hesitation.

After the association president left, Yu Bing and I spoke of the street shopping associations in Ikebukuro. She told me that the associations would also collect contributions from the members for street cleaning or disaster donations in addition to the annual membership fee. Although all the contributions were voluntary, Yu Bing never refused to give the money. She stated that "it is not a situation to present that a Chinese member or a foreigner in the association should be different. I don't want to be treated differently in the local society … Sometimes we should stand out, but sometimes not. It depends on individual situations."

The previous section covered the reasons and ways in which Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs strive to keep themselves "visible." However, it only conveyed one aspect because we drew attention to the visible side and might overlook that in certain situations, they tended to avoid highlighting their Chinese status and to intentionally keep themselves invisible.

5.3.1 Chinese Entrepreneurs in *Shōtenkai*s (Shopping Street Associations)

How Yu Bing dealt with the local shopping street associations was not an exception. It was in stark contrast to the mutually exclusive relationships between the local Chinese entrepreneurs and shopping street associations a decade ago. According to Yamashita's accounts (2010), around 2008 and 2009, the local shopping street associations were a leading group that protested against the Tokyo Chinatown Project, holding a hostile attitude toward Chinese immigrants and business owners. As the project slowed, the tense relationships between the Chinese entrepreneurs and the local shopping street associations also eased. Many of my research participants thought that the initial project plan was too radical to reshape the image

of Chinese newcomers in Ikebukuro due to the long-term disrepute and stigma. After the protest against the establishment of the Tokyo Chinatown, many Chinese entrepreneurs in northwestern Ikebukuro began to contact local Japanese shopping street associations more frequently.

The local shopping street associations in northwestern Ikebukuro are essentially different from those in Japan's three institutionalized Chinatowns, although they all include many Chinese members running businesses inside. For example, the Yokohama Chinatown Development Cooperative Association, founded in 1956 and expanded in 1971, facilitated the development of Yokohama Chinatown and raised its prestige by uniting local business owners and (re)building symbolic landscapes embodying a style of traditional Chinese architecture. In 1993, the association, along with 24 overseas Chinese associations in Yokohama, established the Tokyo Chinatown Street Development Council (Yamashita 2002). They also issued a symbolic "charter" written with several Chinese idioms and proverbs to describe the association's vision and philosophy (Yokohama Chinatown Cooperative Association 1995). As it continued to expand, many Japanese started businesses in Yokohama Chinatown and joined the association. The Yokohama Chinatown Urban Planning Agreement in 2006 marked the companionship and cooperation between Chinese business owners, Japanese business owners, and Yokohama's local government (Yokohama Chinatown Cooperative Association 2006). Nevertheless, the association and its members have a clear and shared target: to tailor a Chinatown known for its authentic Chinese atmosphere and products. In short, anything related to China is the selling point for attracting visitors. Notably, there are a few conflicts around

whether Chinese elements should represent the neighborhood.[24]

In contrast, local shopping street associations in Ikebukuro were founded much earlier than the inflow of Chinese newcomers. The history traces back to the early twentieth century (Arata 2012). According to Arata, the self-employed increased significantly in Japan's urban areas with urbanization and the growing social ability, fueling the emergence and institutionalization of shopping street associations. While shopping streets (*shōtengai* in Japanese) played significant roles in the post-war urban renewal, they fell into recession due to the advent of large shopping malls and the motorization of people's lives from the 1960s. As a result, the influence of shopping street associations (*shōtenkai* in Japanese) in local societies has also weakened. In recent years, the booming of "community development" (*machizukuri* in Japanese) has greatly revitalized the shopping streets and relevant associations in local societies. Presently, Japan's local shopping street associations also play a critical role in strengthening community cooperation and cultural regeneration (Arata 2012). For example, the shopping street Ikebukuro Heiwadōri ("peaceful street") took shape in 1946, and and its association came into being in 1968. Like many other Japanese shopping streets, it has experienced a rise and a decline over the past several decades and has become a busy street famous for business prosperity in north Ikebukuro. Among my research participants, five Chinese entrepreneurs located their companies on this street and joined the local association.

One research participant, Jian Wei, moved his trading company and drug store to Heiwadōri a few years ago and became an active member of the local association. From his

[24] In fact, after WWII, there were conflicts around who could represent China in Yokohama Chinatown between immigrants from mainland China and Taiwan (Tan and Liu 2008). The committee solved the conflicts in an eclectic way. Today, in addition to the folk festivals celebrated by people from greater China, such as the Spring festival, the Chinatown committee also organizes celebrations separately for the National Day of the People's Republic of China (October 1) and the National Day of the Republic of China (October 10).

perspective, the association has roots in the local society:

> It (the Heiwadōri shopping street association) is not an association in which the members are very closely connected. But I think it is necessary to join in. First, it is a business tradition in Japanese society. If we want to settle in, we should adapt to the local conditions (*ru xiang sui su* in Chinese). Besides, I think what they (the Japanese members) are doing is very meaningful. It provides a platform bridging the Chinese or Japanese business owners along the street without excessive interference. They also draw closer connections between the business owners and the residents. What they are doing is not something grandiose but daily trivial matters around us. Being a member makes me feel I'm also a local…. It doesn't matter if the members are Japanese or Chinese. I think it is not necessary or meaningful to highlight the particularities of Chinese business owners in these associations. Here, we don't represent the whole Chinese immigrant group in Japan, and we do want to make some contributions to the daily trivial things around us (Interviewed in June 2019).

Compared to the Chinese business owners in the traditional Chinatowns who founded and defined their local associations, the Chinese entrepreneurs in Ikebukuro are latecomers to the local shopping streets and new participants in the associations. Today, the local shopping street associations and the Chinese business owners in Ikebukuro are no longer antagonistic. The Chinese entrepreneurs realized that shopping streets and shopping street associations were fields where local Japanese business owners played a leading role. Therefore, they tended to remain low-profile and integrate into the associations socially. Most Chinese entrepreneurs identified themselves in the associations as "inactive participants" who were willing to take part in them but had no interest in becoming decision makers or proactively expressing their

status as Chinese migrants. “Being seen as same as other Japanese business owners and not being too much outstanding,” according to Yu Bing, was a representative opinion among the Chinese entrepreneurs when they addressed the local shopping street associations.

5.3.2 Chinese Entrepreneurs in Local Festival

Another example illustrating the Chinese entrepreneurs’ reserved expressions in the local society is the *fukuro matsuri* (festival). Four shopping street associations held the festival for the first time in 1968 for local culture revitalization. After merging with the ritual festival of the tutelary deity in the Ikebukuro Mitake Shrine in 1970, the prototype of the *fukuro* festival took shape (Fukuro Matsuri Council 2021). In 1984, it was certified by the Toshima government as an “inhabitant festival (*kumin sai* in Japanese)” (Toshima Culture Policy Promotion Committee 2010). Afterward, the annual festival attracted more and more participants, including local businesses, universities, and social groups.

In the *fukuro* festival, the parade consists of three parts, and the climax is the *mikoshi* (sacred religion palanquins)[25] parades. The first is the “shrine *mikoshi* parade.” During this part, only one *mikoshi*, the one from Ikebukuro Mitake Shrine, is in the parade. The parade sets out from the local shrine, marching around west Ikebukuro and returning to the shrine. The second part is the “coalition parade,” taking place on the next day. It comprises approximately 15 large groups with 30 large *mikoshi*s in the parade. For the main attraction, the streets in west

[25] *Mikoshi* is a miniature replica of a local shrine mounted on pedestals and carrying poles (the numbers of the poles may be two, four, or six, depending on the size of the main body). *Mikoshi* weighs dozens to hundreds of kilograms, and a large mikoshi usually needs dozens of bearers. During the festivals, participants bear the *mikoshi* on their shoulders. They set out from local shrines, march around the areas under the deity’s control and back to the shrines. In the Shinto religion, *mikoshi* symbolizes the deity’s vehicles and are under the deity’s control instead of the bearers. It is thus common for the bearers to pitch and shake intentionally during the parade (Misumi 2020).

Ikebukuro are packed with bearers and visitors. These groups set out from the west Ikebukuro station and move to Mitake Shrine. The parade groups mainly consist of *shotenkai* and *chonaikai* (neighborhood associations), individual firms, or independent social groups. The participants typically wave flags or hold lanterns labeled with their marks.

The final part, the "night *mikoshi* parade," has fewer connections to the shine's rituals but has more openness for entertainment, particularly for foreigners interested in such cultural experiences (see Figure 5.4 and Figure 5.5). The groups in the last part do not necessarily start from the shrine but ultimately gather in front of the west Ikebukuro station where the ritual stage shows occur. The international cultural exchange group that I joined during the festival belonged to the last part, and the members were mainly international students. In short, the two-day *fukuro* festival is generally a secular ritual and an entertaining festival. Presently, Japan's neighborhood festivals have less religious meaning but perform functions in people's mundane social life in terms of integrating hierarchical structures, communal solidarity, and neighborhood identity (Bestor 1989). However, in Bestor's book, immigrants and foreigners were not a critical part of neighborhood festivals. With the internationalization and the inflow of immigrants to Japan's large cities after the 1980s, more and more immigrant residents have joined in urban neighborhood events.

All the Chinese entrepreneurs I encountered during fieldwork knew or participated in the most bustling and exciting festival in Ikebukuro. However, their willingness participate varied. Many restaurant owners conveyed little interest in participating in the festival for a simple reason. One of my research participants, Kaneda, mentioned that his business would be so busy during the festival due to the large number of visitors that he could not take a break and join the festival. In contrast, a few Chinese entrepreneurs actively participated in the festival. One of them was Ma, who joined the same international exchange group as I did. Her

engagements in local activities were also closely linked with her business, a snack bar in west Ikebukuro. On the day the group members gathered to prepare for the parade at night, she also brought three staff working in the snack bar. Ma's snack bar did not target Chinese but Japanese customers. She thought it was a Japanese drinking culture, particularly among elderly males, that many businesspeople and local inhabitants would like to come to snack bars, chat over a cup of alcohol and sing karaoke with young female bartenders. In her snack bar, Ma also served customers herself most of the time. For her, the *fukuro* festival was a golden opportunity to draw closer connections with her frequent customers. Rather than enjoying the festive atmosphere, she spent more time greeting "old acquaintances" during the festival.

Figure 5.4 International Exchange Mikoshi Group

Figure 5.5 The Night Mikoshi Parade

Most local Chinese entrepreneurs were in-between, neither staying entirely out of the festival nor becoming active participants like Ma. They enjoyed the festival as individuals and socialized with other local entrepreneurs and residents. Chinese entrepreneurs regarded the *fukuro* festival as a grand local event in the local society that they should not miss. However, most participated in the festival like other visitors, and few joined the event organizations or the ritual parts. In their view, the *fukuro* festival originating from the local history and Japan's traditional *Shinto* religions has its own rules, institutions, and ritual processes the locals have laid down.

The Chinese newcomers had no intention of being deeply involved in the local festivals' organizations and management. When I asked the leaders of the local Chinese associations if they were interested in participating as an independent *mikoshi* group in the *fukuro* festival in the future, they stated with certainty that it was unlikely. From their perspective, a group of Chinese immigrants waving flags and carrying *mikoshi* seem to have *iwakan* (a feeling of

wrongness and unharmoniousness). Many local Chinese entrepreneurs were also willing to take part in the festival for the sake of obtaining new cultural experiences. However, setting up a parade team to highlight the local Chinese immigrants in the festival characterized by Japanese folk religions would make many Chinese entrepreneurs concerned about potential conflicts regarding the neighborhood's local identity. Although the Chinese entrepreneurs and the local overseas Chinese associations in Ikebukuro attempted to redefine northwestern Ikebukuro in discourse in the past by labeling it as "Tokyo's Chinatown," today, they prefer to avoid being involved in the dispute about the representation of the local society. Similarly, in sharp contrast to the Yokohama Chinatown, which is decorated with red lanterns and crowded with people watching dragon and lion dances during China's spring festival, the Chinese groups did not organize public celebrations in Ikebukuro. Although the conflicts between the local society and the Chinese newcomers have eased in recent years, social activities related to local cultural traditions and the representative of the local society are still sensitive between the immigrant group and the locals.

The locals appreciated another mode of participation that would not cause *iwakan*: *kentō* (lantern contributions). During the festival, many lanterns (*chōchin* in Japanese) hang on wooden frameworks as high as two to three meters alongside the Ikebukuro streets (see Figure 5.6). *Chōchin* is traditional Japanese lighting equipment made of Japanese paper or plastics. Shrines and traditional festivals feature many *chōchin* lanterns with individual or company names on them. That is called *kentō*, a symbol of dedications and votive offerings to deities. Originating from Buddhism, Japan's Shinto believers use *chōchin* lanterns as the symbol of light guiding the deceased to the Land of Happiness (*Gokuraku Jodo* in Japanese) and burning away impurities. Like other rituals in modern Japanese festivals, *kentō* today has less religious meaning. In the *fukuro* festival, the lanterns were typically standardized in color and size.

Residents, private companies, and social groups who contributed lanterns with a cost of from thousands to 10,000 *yen* would be seen as supporters of the local festival.

The *chōchin* lanterns with Chinese names caught my attention when I walked by the lantern shelves on the streets before the festival. Some research participants also contributed to the *chōchin* lanterns labeled with their company's names. It was indeed an advertisement for their companies. However, such an advertisement strategy was not efficient. According to my observation, few passersby stopped in front of the lantern shelves to scrutinize the names. Although some Japanese companies contributed multiple lanterns to catch people's eyes, none of the local Chinese entrepreneurs I talked with did so. Another reason was related to the local *shōtenkai*s. Some *shōtenkai*s would ask members to make monetary contributions before the festival and help them order the lanterns. According to my informants, the local Chinese entrepreneurs who joined the associations hardly rejected the contributions.

Figure 5.6 A *Chōchin* Lantern Framework

Urban festivals in Japan generally include three main functions: revitalize local traditions and form local identities, promote local economies and consumption, and strengthen social integrity in communities or neighborhoods (Kurada and Inada 2016). Although the Chinese entrepreneurs attempted to remain "passive" in their participation in the *fukuro* festival, they were involved in the local social and economic activities through lantern contributions. Moreover, as the restaurant owner Kaneda said, the large number of visitors also brought the Chinese business owners an increase in customers. In the social aspect, the entrepreneurs' participation as individuals also created opportunities for comminutions with the local Japanese residents and business owners and does not conflict with the original intentions of holding the *fukuro* festival.

The reason for being passive participants lies in disputes about local identity. Similar to the succession of the Lion Dance for the creation of overseas Chinese culture in Yokohama Chinatown (Y. Zhang 2007), the *fukuro* festival is a symbol of the revitalization of Ikebukuro's cultural legacy. In this field, the Chinese entrepreneurs avoided causing "*iwakan*" and inharmoniousness. It is not a forced compromise for the immigrant group but a way they initiatively selected for the sake of harmonious coexistence. In these situations, my informants did not feel suppressed or uncomfortable or think the local cultural legacy was xenophobic. It would therefore be oversimplified to view the Chinese newcomers' invisibility in the host society merely as a result of discrimination or maladaptation.

5.3.3 Chinese Entrepreneurs' Political Participation

Although few Chinese newcomers were elected or stood for elections of ward councilors in Japan's large cities in the past, they have become more active in political participation in Japanese society. Among Chinese newcomers, Komaki Li is one of the most well-known Chinese politicians in Japan. Having a long involvement in Kabukichō in Shinjuku ward, the

largest red-light district in Japan, Komaki Li obtained a Japanese passport and declared his candidacy for Shinjuku Ward councilor in 2015. Despite standing unsuccessfully in the elections twice (i.e., in 2015 and 2019), he has long been active in Japanese and Chinese social media and was called a typical "immigrant politician" in Japan by the BBC (BBC Chinese News 2015). Komaki Li received both praise and blame on social media, but few people backed him in the Chinese entrepreneur community in Ikebukuro. The first reason is Komaki Li's personal background. As my informant Chen Sen described, the Chinese communities in Ikebukuro and Shinjuku were chaotic and disordered in the 1990s. The newcomers at the time were involved in illegal businesses (some related to the adult entertainment industry were "illegal" only for immigrants with student visas), and Komaki Li used to solicit customers for the *fūzoku* stores providing sex services in Kabuki-chō, Shinjuku. My informants spoke about him disrespectfully and always called him a "procurer." From their perspective, Komaki Li's self-marketing as a "Kabuki-chō guider" disgraced the whole community of Chinese newcomers.

Another important reason lies in their consideration of how they get involved in Japan's politics. Generally, my research participants tended to remain invisible in political participation in Japanese society to avoid the risk of expressing political preferences in public. Even the Chinese entrepreneurs who obtained Japanese citizenship and would like to express their political opinions thought that transitioning from entrepreneurs to politicians was a double-edged sword. If foreign politicians could maintain positive images, the community of Chinese entrepreneurs would also benefit considerably, particularly in terms of network expansions in the host society. However, if the politicians fell into disgrace, the ethnic entrepreneur group who supported the politicians might also be directly impacted. Nevertheless, the Chinese entrepreneurs in Ikebukuro did not entirely isolated themselves from the political issues in the

local society. Rather than placing a Chinese politician in the spotlight, they preferred to back up local Japanese politicians who had long maintained close relationships with the Chinese entrepreneur group.

In 2019, an election year of Toshima ward's councilors, many Japanese politicians stood at the Ikebukuro station's exits canvassing for votes before the polling day. The local election also garnered the attention of the Chinese entrepreneurs in Ikebukuro. At private parties and meetings of Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs, some people, particularly those who had the right to vote in Japan, discussed the candidates and their political claims. The critical points of their discussions pivoted around the candidates' views on immigrants in Ikebukuro and how close they were to the Chinese entrepreneurs. Moreover, after joining the Wechat groups of several local Chinese associations, I discovered that the group leaders would pitch a few Japanese candidates before the polling day, claiming that they were friendly to the Chinese group and that their policy proposals could benefit Chinese business owners. By backing the local Japanese politicians, Chinese newcomers could avoid the risks they were concerned about because they would not be directly blamed, if something went wrong.

Although the Chinese entrepreneurs in Ikebukuro preferred to remain invisible to the local political participants, the local politicians have paid them increasing attention due to their increasing influence on the local economy. Shopping street associations played a role as mediators bridging the local Chinese entrepreneurs and politicians. For instance, Guan Jie became acquainted with one Japanese candidate for the ward councilor at a shopping street association meeting. Although she told the candidate that she had not changed her nationality and did not have the right to vote, the Japanese candidate was glad to share his political views with her. The politician subsequently visited Guan Jie's office during the campaign and expressed how much he thought highly of the contribution of Chinese businesses to the local

economy. Although he was not elected, their photograph hangs on Guan Jie's office wall. The politician also came back to her company after the election stage, informing her of the result and expressing gratitude for her support. Guan Jie told me that she was touched by the Japanese politician. Although she did not have Japanese nationality, Guan Jie was an active and influential entrepreneur in the Chinese community. During the 2019 election, she suggested that Chinese business owners and residents in the Toshima ward support the Japanese candidate and his political stance in favor of the Chinese newcomers.

Overall, the Chinese entrepreneurs in Ikebukuro did not have a strong desire to choose a naturalized Chinese politician to represent the group in the local society, nor did they engage in financial contributions to a political campaign. However, they tended not to sever connections to local politicians. Instead, they had a unique way of participating in local politics: interacting with Japanese candidates in informal situations and choosing a representative whose political stances were consistent with their interests. Local Japanese politicians, in turn, could not ignore the influential immigrant group in the local society either. Although immigrants were still not the decisive force in the political elections, discussions regarding the immigrant residents and the developments of the multicultural neighborhood have been key political issues for local politicians.

Summary: Entrepreneurs' Choices

Culture, traditions, shared meaning systems, and collective memories that characterize a local society are not fixed in the globalization age. Immigrant groups continuously bring new values, cultural practices, and commercial products to local societies (Hall 1995). The obstacles to integrating migrant culture into local societies depend primarily on the original local identities and histories. Whereas the older generations of Chinese migrants in Japan did not encounter many difficulties in forging Chinatowns, the newcomer entrepreneurs promoting the

Chinatown project in Ikebukuro were seen as “challengers” or “troublemakers” sharpening social conflicts. The formation of Ikebukuro’s local identity is based on the diverse civil cultures from the Taisho era and has been facilitated by the local government’s effort to promote community regeneration activities in recent decades (Mizukami 2016; Coates 2018). The historical and social contexts distinct from the other Chinatowns in Japan largely affected the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs’ integration strategies as well as the way in which they presented themselves in the local society.

This chapter depicted the process and various ways Chinese entrepreneurs integrated into the local society of Ikebukuro. First, they highlighted their Chinese status and distinguished themselves from local Japanese business owners in terms of business activities and social life. From the business perspective, pursuing visible ethnic authenticity in Ikebukuro was consistent with market demand and offered business opportunities. Moreover, given the negative discourses about the Chinese newcomer immigrants in Ikebukuro in the past decades, the Chinese entrepreneurs tended to highlight their Chinese status in the self-organized voluntary and cultural exchange activities to change the negative image as much as possible. Boosting visibility in local society is different from building a Chinatown because, though highlighting their ethnic characteristics and immigrant status, the Chinese entrepreneurs did not intend to arouse disputes about local identity.

The former Tokyo Chinatown Project, with which the Chinese entrepreneurs intended to attract attention, was an unsuccessful attempt at the time. However, unlike the study focusing one-sidedly on the harmful effects of the conflicts between the Chinese newcomers and the local Japanese associations (Yamashita 2010), I view the conflict as a necessary process for both sides to explore the possibilities of coexistence. After the conflict, rather than holding back and isolating themselves, the Chinese entrepreneurs continued to seek opportunities to

build connections and access the social field of local Japanese residents and business owners. However, they were inclined not to make a showy display as a Chinese group but rather to behave like the locals in these fields. In their participation in *shōtenkai*s, the local festival, and political issues, the Chinese entrepreneurs thus did not overtly present their Chinese status. Moreover, in most cases, they were passive participants rather than organizers or planners of such local events to avoid raising conflicts.

Despite their invisibility in the social fields, Chinese entrepreneurs in Ikebukuro were not exclusively in a passive position. Either Ikebukuro's local history and traditions or the negative discourses on Chinese newcomers only affect but do not decide the Chinese entrepreneurs' integration strategies. After long-term interactions with Japanese business owners and commercial associations, Chinese entrepreneurs explored coexistence by balancing visibility in various fields. From proposing a Chinatown project to seeking alternatives to present themselves, they played the role of facilitators in handling the dilemmas between their own social and commercial desires and the wishes of local Japanese to maintain Ikebukuro's cultural tradition and identity.

The Chinese entrepreneurs' attempts to balance visibility in various fields are inseparable from their entrepreneurial prospects. Their integration desires and strategies based on specific socioeconomic status are not a common pattern among Chinese newcomer immigrants in Japan. Rather than seeing themselves as suppressed, Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs need a flexible way of expression in which they can integrate their businesses into the local society socially and economically, which gives them further development opportunities. That is, the Chinese newcomers' entrepreneurial status and practices decided their visibility as an immigrant group in the local society.

Chapter 6

National Belonging and Entrepreneurship

Shizuko obtained her Japanese passport approximately eight years ago. One reason for changing nationality was that her Japanese husband and his family expected her to bear her husband's surname. A more important reason was her business. After working at a Japanese trading firm for a few years, Shizuko started her first business. The firm's primary business was to import Chinese snacks and candies to Japan. In her daily business activities, she needed frequent and close contact with many Japanese clients. According to Shizuko, "Some Japanese clients never ostensibly expressed if they were willing to cooperate with you, but they had known the result deep down. In general, they still had concerns about trading with Chinese."

Due to the firm's unsatisfactory performance, she decided to break new ground. She subsequently established a company selling port warehouse freezers with the aid of her father-in-law, who was well-connected in this field. Shizuko's new business was far from a traditional ethnic business relying on ethnic products and markets. Instead, all her clients and personnel were Japanese, except for two Chinese employees. Having long realized the Japanese clients' concern about cooperating with Chinese entrepreneurs, particularly in fields where Japanese predominated, Shizuko decided to change her nationality in a bid to break, in her words, the "invisible wall" obstructing the business development.

For Shizuko, changing nationality seemed to be a life experience that was unforgettable and difficult to release. Even after many years, she could describe in detail how she felt on the day she recived the new passport with her new name, "Shizuko," at the local Legal Affairs Bureau. She thought she would be the only person depressed about changing nationality, but

according to Shizuko's recollection, everyone in the waiting room frowned anxiously and behaved uneasily. She admitted that she probably projected her feelings at the time onto others because that was exactly how she felt and behaved.

It was not a pleasant feeling for Shizuko. She had been low-spirited for a long time, suffering from a sense of alienation. One reason for her inner struggle was her family background. Shizuko said she grew up in a "red family" (*hong se jia ting* in Chinese) because her parents were both party members of the Communists Party of China. Her father worked in the military, and her grandfather was wounded in the War of Resistance against Japan (1937–1945). It made her feel awkward at the thought that the "red family" had a "Japanese daughter." Her father was outraged by her decision to change her nationality and bear a Japanese surname. It was not easy for her parents to accept her decision. Moreover, she admitted that she lacked a sense of belonging to Japanese society and culture at the time:

> Even though I have been living in Japan for decades, have a Japanese husband, made business achievements, and learned to behave like a professional Japanese *shakaijin* (a working member of society), Japan is still a foreign country rather than my country. … But I like Japan. I'm a Japanese citizen now, and I will live in Japan in the future. But my Chinese status, not the legal status but my self-identity as a Chinese and my attachment to China, will never be erased (Interviewed in May 2019).

Although her inner struggle was lengthy, Shizuko ultimately considered changing nationality a "correct" choice for her commitment to the business. Her words, such as "my clients always said I behaved more like Japanese than a 'real' Japanese," showed Shizuko's efforts to win her Japanese clients' and business partners' trust. Japanese nationality, associated with her ideal Japanese honorifics and her international marriage (her husband played a critical role in

growing relationships with Japanese clients), made for the front-stage image of "being Japanese." During our conversations, she described "naturalization" (*kika* in Japanese) as a worthwhile "sacrifice" (*xi sheng* in Chinese) for her entrepreneurial career more than once. Shizuko stated, "If I define myself now, I will say I am a Chinese entrepreneur with a Japanese passport."

Shizuko's middle school daughter, who could speak Japanese more fluently than Chinese, told me that her mother encouraged her to read more Chinese traditional classics and hung the *Tao Te Ching*, a Taoist classic, up on the wall of her room. She also brought her daughter to a cultural activity where Ikebukuro's Chinese entrepreneurs and their children learned traditional Chinese classics weekly. Shizuko said a significant change after she renounced her Chinese nationality was that she wanted to stay closer to Chinese culture, in whatever form, than before.

In the previous chapters, I concentrated on the Chinese entrepreneurs' ethnic networks and their strategies for balancing being visible versus invisible in presenting themselves in local society. However, their perceptions of ethnic ties and expressions cannot fully reflect how they identify themselves. The interactionalism school in ethnicity studies argues that ethnic group members' social interactions determine the fluidity of their self-definitions (Maleševic 2004). That is, ethnic group members' self-definitions are not fixed but situated and socially constructed. Do the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs in Japan also take flexible attitudes toward their identities, nationalities, and citizenship, like the Hong Kong business elites described in Ong's book (1999)? If so, how would daily entrepreneurial practices impel the changes?

Shizuko's story is a typical example of how Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs view the relationships between national belonging, nationality, and entrepreneurship. In entrepreneurial

identity research, becoming entrepreneurs implies that the actors tend to take business-oriented rational behaviors based on "entrepreneurial virtues" (Duening 2017). However, this point of view focuses mainly on the entrepreneurship dimension. To understand the immigrant entrepreneurs whose nationality selections intertwined with business development in the country of settlement, it is important to consider the intersections between entrepreneurial identity, perception of nationality, and their national belonging. Shizuko's story conveyed that changing nationality was the proper choice consistent with her self-definition as an entrepreneur. However, it was a difficult choice inconsistent with her former self-definition as a Chinese and her attachment to the homeland. For Shizuko, it was, therefore, necessary to reconstruct and redefine her status for the integrality of self-recognition.

The chapter starts by explaining the formation of Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs' national belonging. Rather than seeing the Chinese entrepreneurs as blind followers of contemporary Chinese society's patriotic discourses, it first concentrates on how the Chinese entrepreneurs felt and experienced the presence of their home country through their entrepreneurial activities. The second half of the chapter takes naturalization (*kika* in Japanese) as an example to explain how the Chinese entrepreneurs negotiated and reconstructed who they are and where they belong while facing the conflicts between pro-entrepreneurship decisions and individual emotional belonging.

6.1 Chinese National Belonging and Ethnic Chinese Identity

Most of my research participants expressed a clear sense of belonging to China, regardless of their present nationality. The three interviewees, who have been living and running businesses in Japan for over a decade, expressed their feeling:

> I am undoubtedly Chinese. That is something deep in my blood and bones. That is something that cannot be changed (Nishikawa, interviewed in June 2019).

> I was not a patriotic person when I was living in China. But my patriotic emotions have been getting stronger and stronger since I left China. 'Being Chinese' means a lot to me. I assume my Chinese identity and the pride of being Chinese will be further strengthened as China has grown more powerful in the world (Li Qing, interviewed in September 2019).
>
> Even though I changed (my nationality), I'm still a Chinese who was born and grew up (*tu sheng tu zhang in* Chinese) in China. If one day I could make greater success, the best praise I would appreciate would be "you are a great Chinese entrepreneur" (Miyasaki, interviewed in September 2019).

It was an unexpected finding because it was inconsistent with the new images of overseas Chinese immigrants depicted as cosmopolitan in many studies for their transnational lifestyles (Ong 1999; Guo 1999; B. Wong 2006).

Interestingly, many of the local events organized by Chinese entrepreneurs in their age of forties and fifties ended with celebrations at karaoke stores. At those parties I joined, the songs they were fond of singing were mostly patriotic and traditional Chinese songs. They seemed exhilarated while singing such songs soulfully (see Figure 6.1). Most middle-aged Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs have lived in Japan for more than 10 years. Like Shizuko, they speak Japanese fluently and have adapted to the social norms and business etiquette in Japanese society. At some local activities and events where the Chinese entrepreneurs participated with Japanese residents, they seldom mentioned that they were originally from China. However, in private, they longed to express their nostalgia for their time in China.

Figure 6.1 Singing Patriotic Songs

"I love you, China. You are milk, moistening my heart." (Translation of the lyrics)

Younger Chinese entrepreneurs expressed their patriotic enthusiasm more straightforwardly and boldly. Jia Ying, a young Chinese entrepreneur who owned a prominent foreigner-oriented cram school in Tokyo, stated:

> I have been living in Japan for more than 10 years, but I have never been confused with it (who I am). I am Chinese. It is obvious. I return to China twice or three times per year for business purposes or visiting my parents in Beijing. My wife is Chinese; most of my business partners are Chinese… I would say your daily preferences tell you who you are and where you belong. It does not mean I dislike Japan or Japanese culture. But for me, it is a foreign country (Interviewed in May 2019).

Jia Ying obtained permanent residence in Japan. While he intends to continue living and running a business in Japan, his transnational lifestyle and permanent residence in the "foreign" country did not sway his sense of belonging to the homeland.

Similar to Jia Ying, Sayuri, a female entrepreneur running a transnational labor dispatch agency, also had no doubt about her Chinese status. Sayuri was unwilling to call herself "a Chinese living abroad" (*hua qiao* in Chinese) because, for her, it sounded alienated from the domestic Chinese. Although she firmly identified herself as Chinese, like Jia Ying, she had no intention to return to China in the future. In fact, Sayuri thought she would stay in a nursing home in her old age. The advanced facilities and services in Japan's nursing homes were the primary reason she was determined to stay in Japan in the future.

Jia Ying and Sayuri's cases indicate that Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs differ from Chinese diasporas in the desire to return to their home country and hometown. Most Chinese entrepreneurs I met during fieldwork hold either permanent residence in Japan or a Japanese passport. While it does not necessarily mean that they would not return to China in the future, it included a connotation that they did not have emotional resistance to settling in Japan. During our talks, albeit sometimes murmuring about discrimination and inconveniences of daily life in Japan, the Chinese entrepreneurs usually appreciated Japan's quality of life and business environment. However, their preference for settling in Japan did not weaken their sense of belonging to China. As Jia Ying said, he likes Japan, and his family will probably live there in the future, but it is still a foreign country. For Jia Ying and many of the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs I interviewed, such thoughts made sense and did not seem contradictory.

In addition, the Chinese entrepreneurs' national belonging also differs from "long-distance nationalism" (Anderson 1998; Glick Schiller 2005). Actions taken by long-distance nationalists typically "include voting, demonstrating, lobbying, contributing money, creating works of art, fighting, killing, and dying" (Glick Schiller 2005, 570). The Chinese diasporas in the nineteenth century who were actively engaged in China's national movements of the day were typical long-distance nationalists (Kuhn 2009). However, the national belonging of the

Chinese entrepreneurs reflected more of an emotional attachment to the homeland emerging from individual pre-immigration experiences rather than a commitment to any national movements.

It is also necessary to differentiate their national belonging and ethnic Chinese identities. The Chinese newcomers' frequent transnational mobilities between China and Japan and their transnational lifestyles draw attention to the immigrants' identities transcending national territories. Liu-Farrer highlighted the identity as "new overseas Chinese" (Liu-Farrer 2012), arguing that new overseas Chinese played a more active role in a globalized economy. Such a status endowed the Chinese newcomers with a new identity. In my opinion, becoming a transnational immigrant does not mean that the "new overseas Chinese" is emotionally attached to a distinct Chinese ethnic group. It was true that during our conversations, most Chinese entrepreneurs called themselves "Chinese immigrants in Japan" (*zai ri hua ren* in Chinese) or "new overseas Chinese in Japan" (*zai ri xin hua qiao* in Chinese). However, they mainly used such terms to differentiate themselves from domestic Chinese or the older generations.

For example, Miyasaki told me that after living in Japan for so long, she experienced some culture shocks upon visiting China. One summer, she returned to China with her 10-year-old son. They were invited to a wedding during their stay in her hometown. The bride and groom arranged for cars to pick up the closest relatives, and Miyasaki and her son were in the last group to be picked up for the wedding ceremony. The car coming to them could accommodate only five people, but they were six, including her son. Their relatives suggested that her son sit on Miyasaki's lap so they could all get into the car, but her son refused because he was taught that it was illegal in his Japanese elementary school. The others expected Miyasaki to scold her son, but she took her son's side and decided to take a taxi separately.

> It was probably not a big deal in China and my hometown, but it did not make me comfortable. We (Chinese immigrants in Japan) have lived in Japan for so long, after all. Some habits, values, and moral standards have been different from theirs (the domestic Chinese). It has nothing to do with who is right and who is wrong. It is just a difference in our life. I was on my son's side because I thought he was right (Interviewed in September 2019).

In addition to "Chinese immigrants in Japan," the phrase "new overseas Chinese in Japan" also appeared in the Chinese entrepreneurs' talks. Li Qing was doing business in new media. He told me that the phrase "new overseas Chinese in Japan" started to spread across Chinese society in Japan because a famous Weibo (i.e., a Chinese microblogging website) influencer (who was also a Chinese newcomer in Japan) began to use it. Due to the lack of sufficient social interactions and the distinctions in immigration experiences between the newcomers and the older generations, the newcomers tended to demarcate the boundary by calling themselves "new overseas Chinese in Japan" to create a more positive and active image. However, Li Qing highlighted that it did not mean the newcomers had such a sense of belonging to such a group. Instead, there were constant conflicts rather than strong ingroup solidarity within the so-called "new overseas Chinese in Japan."

In their narratives, the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs called themselves "Chinese," "Chinese immigrants in Japan," or "new overseas Chinese in Japan." However, it is necessary to make a distinction depending on the situation and context they intended to emphasize. To this point, I agree with Pfaff-Czarnecka and Toffin's view concerning the distinctions between "identity" and "belonging." "Identity" is "outside-in-orientation" based on confrontation with others and clear-cut boundaries. In contrast, "belonging" is "inside-out-orientation," emerging from "the subjects as focal points or knots, located at junctures and intersections of relational

ties" (Pfaff-Czarnecka and Toffin 2011). "Chinese immigrants in Japan" or "new overseas Chinese in Japan" indicated their ethnic identity, reflecting "who they are" by differentiating from others (specifically, domestic Chinese and the older generations), whereas Chinese national belonging indicated individual emotional attachments and a sense of belonging to the home country. However, my view on national belongings differs slightly from Pfaff-Czarnecka's. In terms of national belonging, Pfaff-Czarnecka emphasizes the mutuality between nation-states and citizens regarding citizens' rights and obligations (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2013). In the following sections, I argue that the Chinese immigrants' national belonging does not necessarily emerge from political rights and obligations but rather from the way the immigrants felt and experienced the presence of the nation-state in their daily life.

6.2 The Formation of Chinese Entrepreneurs' National Belonging

This section aims to clarify the struggles with the Chinese newcomers' national belonging, choice of naturalization, and entrepreneurship. To understand their inner struggles, it is essential to examine the rationales for their strong national belonging.

According to my research participants, nostalgia and family attachments are critical in forming their national belonging. As first-generation immigrants, many Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs spent most of their life in China, although their entrepreneurial careers started in Japan. In our conversations, they frequently mentioned the term "roots" (*gen* in Chinese) while talking about China and their hometowns. They used the term to metaphorize the nation-state not only because they grew up in China but also because they wanted to stress the inseparable attachments with their parents and relatives living in China.

Cindy is a young female entrepreneur running an online marketing agency. She was born in Guangdong province, studied in Hong Kong, and moved to Japan with her husband in

2013. After living and studying in many countries and regions, Cindy described herself as a cosmopolitan person. Still, she explicitly expressed her sense of belonging to China:

> It sounds very natural for me to say, 'I'm Chinese.' I'm not sure if I can express the feeling very clearly. I think the feeling comes from personal memories. For me, "China" means the country where I grew up and had many precious memories, such as the times I spent with my parents, high school friends, and my first love. One time, a (Chinese) client asked me to send a package to China, and I checked the address on Google Maps. I found that it was very close to my hometown. I felt homesick at that moment. Although they are all personal memories, they happened in China. When talking about my memories with people from other countries, I always start with "when I was in China." … Another reason is my parents. In Chinese, we always say that "kids share the blood of their parents." It is a metaphor, but it illustrates the connections between children and parents. My parents have never lived abroad, and they firmly identify themselves as Chinese. It also affects how I identify myself. … I'm cosmopolitan, and I'm definitely not a nationalist. But I think I can call myself "a cosmopolitan Chinese" (Interviewed in September 2019).

The intertwinement between nostalgic memories and national belonging reflects that the sense of belonging to China can be reproduced in everyday life. National belonging comes into being through language, habits, symbols, material attachments, and daily interactions, which "allow certain groups to feel 'at home'" (Skey 2011, 148). Although few Chinese entrepreneurs saw national belonging as the expression of individual political obligations and rights, I found that certain political issues might influence their belonging to China.

China's nationalism, patriotic discourses, and national loyalty building in the transnational fields are not a secret. The government has utilized Chinese migrants' economic success and close relationships with China to justify the success of China's modernization (Nyíri 2010). Moreover, taking advantage of the internet, the ethnic/diasporic media and the domestic official media have formed a "contiguous narrative space," amplifying the impact of "official attitudes" on the Chinese abroad and advocating patriotism (Nyíri 2001). The findings of my research echoed this phenomenon.

Ethnic media is the mainstream platform on which the Chinese government advocates nationalism and patriotic discourses. Figure 6.2 displays a cover page of *Chinese Review Weekly*, one of Japan's most circulated ethnic Chinese newspapers. Instead of introducing the daily life of overseas Chinese in Japan, the newspaper typically propagandized political issues widely advocated in contemporary Chinese society. It includes the connotation that Chinese living abroad are an indispensable part of the "Chinese community" (*hua ren shi jie* in Chinese). The free newspapers are placed in many Chinese grocers and restaurants in Ikebukuro. I wondered how the publisher made profits until I asked Li Qing, who knew the ins and outs of the Chinese ethnic media in Japan. In fact, they usually left much space for commercial advertisements, but more importantly, some[26] were funded by the Chinese government to publicize political propaganda.

[26] Another typical example is the newspaper "*Chinese Newcomers in Japan*" which was authorized for the only overseas version of People's Daily, the official newspaper of CCP.


CHINESE REVIEW WEEKLY

中文導報

中国隆重庆祝改革开放40周年

Figure 6.2 Chinese Review Weekly Online Version (December 2018)

Headline: China grandly celebrated the 40 anniversaries of China's Open-up

Such nationalist discourses exist online, in newspapers, and elsewhere. The opening ceremony of the short film "Dreams Come True in Ikebukuro," introduced in the previous chapter, had another mission on that day: to welcome a Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) member whom the host introduced as the representative of President Xi Jinping (see Figure 6.3). On that day, the CPPCC member, Mr. Pan, arrived to promote his new book, *The World Needs China, China Needs Xi Jinping*. His hour-long speech boiled down to a single point: the central government would keep the Chinese living in Japan in their hearts, and the overseas Chinese should be integrated into "the big family of Chinese" (*zhong guo ren de da jia ting* in Chinese). According to him, "Chinese living abroad and Chinese living in China have no difference because we are all China's son and daughter (*zhong hua er nv* in Chinese)."

Figure 6.3 A group photo with a CPPCC member (middle)

The opening ceremony involved many Chinese association leaders and entrepreneurs in Japan, including some of my research participants. The entrepreneurs attended the opening ceremony, apparently not to listen to the political speech. Instead, they mainly aimed to expand their social networks in entrepreneurial circles. They were, therefore, keen on exchanging name cards and talking about business during the break. After the official ceremony, I asked a Chinese entrepreneur with a euphemistic tone what he thought about the speech by the representative of China's central government. He felt the speech had a crude political implication because President Xi Jinping would visit Japan in a few days for the G20 summits. Although some research participants on the spot beat around the bush, intentionally avoiding discussing politics with me, our talks occasionally concerned China's nationalism during our private and casual conversations. Like the aforementioned entrepreneur, many Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs identified that, on the one hand, they understood that the nationalist discourses had a strong political purpose. However, on the other hand, the narrations stressing the terms such as "family," "daughter and son," and "roots" as metaphors for the connections between the homeland and overseas Chinese spurred mixed feelings. Chen Sen, an influential

person in the Chinese entrepreneur community in Ikebukuro, was also invited to the ceremony. During our private talks, he expressed his opinion that the speech was devoid of substantial and practical contents, only agitating nationalism. To this point, he stated, "it is just a political show. I don't like the government always trying to teach us what 'Chinese' should be. I identify myself as Chinese, and I feel China is still my 'root' because I emotionally belong there. It should not be a political manipulation."

It was still questionable whether China's patriotic propaganda abroad was productive. For my research participants, their belonging and attachments to China did not result from the brainwashing of nationalist discourse. National belonging is experienced and produced in individuals' daily lives (Wood 2016). In the case of Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs, to understand their national belonging, it is also necessary to investigate how they are produced, shaped, and negotiated, particularly through the entrepreneurial activities that account for a significant part of their lives.

6.3 The Co-presence of Business and the Nation-State

Yu Bing ran a trading company exporting Japanese cosmetics and electronic products to China. When we spoke of her living and business experiences in Japan as a Chinese entrepreneur, she said she felt proud to be Chinese. She explained that such pride was because of China's astonishing economic achievements, particularly the fast-increasing purchasing power of Chinese consumers.

> Being Chinese gives me a lot of positive effects. I feel nothing wrong with being Chinese. I just moved to Japan and worked as hard as the domestic Chinese. Japanese around me did not look down on me just because I'm Chinese… More important is that my business benefits from China. The current success of my business is largely attributed to China's increasing economic power and

> domestic markets. So, I feel they (the business and China) are inseparable. China, I would say, is somehow the backing (*yi kao* in Chinese) (Interviewed in June 2019).

When asked what she meant by "backing," she stated that China was not only a sizeable potential market where she could sell the products, but also a country to which she had strong emotional attachments. By reviewing her entire migration experiences in Japan, we can find that her interpretations of economic dependence and emotional attachment make sense.

Born in 1980 and having moved to Japan in 2009, Yu Bing called herself an "old migrant" (*da ling yi min* in Chinese). After receiving a Bachelor's degree in management from an average private university, she suffered greatly from job-hunting activities in Japan (*shūshoku katsudō* in Japanese). Though the companies did not explicitly express it, according to Yu Bing, they rejected her because her university lacked a reputation. Moreover, she thought she was too old to be considered a "fresh graduate" (*shinsotsu* in Japanese).[27] Frustrated in the employment market, she had to work part-time in a ramen restaurant. Meanwhile, as the *dai gou* (procurement service) businesses boomed in China in the 2010s, she also started working as a freelance retail consultant. Her commitment to procurement services between China and Japan became the initial point of her entrepreneurial career. Yu Bing subsequently decided to

[27] Many high school/university-business interactions in Japan are based on the "*hensachi*-based university designation system" (Sugimoto 2014). *Hensachi* is a score reflecting the level of difficulty of entering each university. During the job-hunting seasons, many prestigious companies only consider prospective graduates from universities with high *hensachi* scores. Meanwhile, the companies build different employment channels for prospective/fresh graduates (*shinsotsu* in Japanese) and previous graduates (*kisotsu* in Japanese). For prospective/fresh graduates, many corporations do not put stock in working experiences but are relatively strict with applicants' age. In Yu Bing's case, although she could be regarded as a fresh graduate, her educational background, age, and lack of work experience brought her many obstacles in job-hunting activities.

establish her trading firm seven years ago. Last year, the small firm's annual sales reached one billion *yen* (approximately eight million dollars), bringing unprecedented change to her life. As she described, her business turned her "from a sparrow to a phoenix." She stated, "I should thank our team, of course, but it would be impossible to have success without China's economic development." During our conversation, her narratives about her business's success invloved her pride in being Chinese. When discussing how a person feels attached to their homeland, an object is needed to reasonably claim the intimacy with the homeland. For Yu Bing and many Chinese entrepreneurs I interviewed, the transnational commercial connections between their businesses and China and the consequent economic achievements gave them a reasonable ground for emotionally attaching themselves to the homeland.

Such a sense of attachment driven by commercial connections was also common among ethnic and cultural entrepreneurs whose businesses concentrated on marketing the "authenticity" of Chinese cuisines and culture. During my fieldwork, most Chinese businesses in Ikebukuro established by the Chinese newcomers (except for a few cases such as Shizuko's company introduced at the outset of the chapter) focused either on businesses targeting Chinese immigrants (e.g., restaurants, driving license schools, or kindergartens) or marketing authentic Chinese cultures to the locals (e.g., acupuncture and massage stores or Chinese dance classes). These ethnic and cultural entrepreneurs expressed an intense cultural belonging to China.

For example, Chen Sen was a tai chi and qigong professional. He claimed to be the first person to introduce tai chi to Japanese sports clubs. His dispatching company specialized in dispatching Chinese tai chi professionals to Japan. When we spoke of the relations between his business and Chinese traditional culture, he stated:

> Tai chi itself is, undoubtedly, a Chinese traditional culture. More and more Japanese want to learn tai chi now. They want to learn tai chi with me because

> I'm Chinese. They know that tai chi was transmitted from China, so they think a Chinese tai chi master can teach the "real" tai chi… I love tai chi not only because it's related to my business. Playing tai chi has become one important part of my life now. Not only tai chi, but I have also been engaged in many "pure" Chinese habits in my daily life (Interviewed in June 2019).

Chen Sen stressed that he was keen on tai chi, qigong, and feng shui, which were, in his opinion, typical traditional Chinese cultures, and such cultural preferences justified his Chinese status. From his perspective, the development of his cultural enterprises depends largely on the recent revival and spread of China's traditional cultures.[28] As a cultural entrepreneur, Chen Sen claimed he was passionate and professional in his work.

Likewise, Gao Ge was also a cultural entrepreneur running a Chinese acupuncture and massage store. I met Gao Ge at a picnic organized by a Chinese voluntary association. Gao Ge was popular in the group because he delighted in addressing others' daily physical problems. Gao Ge had studied acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) from a veteran doctor for many years before opening his acupuncture store in Japan. He always corrected me when I inadvertently called his store an "osteopathic clinic" (*seikotsuin* in Japanese). His store represented the authenticity of TCM, which should be differentiated from the osteopathic clinic prevailing in Japan. Although the prices were higher than general osteopathic clinics, his store had become renowned in his neighborhood. He told me that many Japanese customers had

[28] "Reviving Chinese Traditional Cultures" has become prevailing propaganda since Xi Jinping visited the Confucius temple in Qufu, Shandong province in 2013 and stated that "the cultural prosperity should support the prosperity of a country and a nation; the prosperity of Chinese traditional culture is the foundation of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" (CPC News 2014). Consequently, it entailed a boom in cultural patriotism in recent years.

increasingly recognized the value of TCM, which made him very proud of not only his business but also the traditional Chinese culture. Gao Ge lived in Japan with his family (his wife and two children). When speaking of his future, he said he preferred to settle in Japan like many other Chinese entrepreneurs: "We are just a Chinese family in Japan. Our connection with China is very strong. My business and my professions featured traditional Chinese cultures."

In their narratives, Chen Sen and Gao Ge indicated cultural nationalism. The cases demonstrated that Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs' national belonging aligned with their commercial considerations and performances. The growth of China's domestic purchasing capability, extensive and potential markets, and the revival of traditional Chinese culture, have provided numerous business opportunities for Chinese entrepreneurs in Japan. For many of my conversation partners, China's economic achievements and the increasing soft power boosted and entitled individual entrepreneurial success, giving them a sense of co-presence between the homeland and individual life. Such a feeling of co-presence can rarely be experienced and accepted only through state-led patriotic discourses. Instead, the sense of co-presence needs an intermediate that creates a connection between the individuals and the nation-state. In the cases of the aforementioned Chinese entrepreneurs, their businesses and entrepreneurial achievements played an intermediary role. Therefore, in spite of the market-oriented entrepreneurial activities known for economic rationality, one consequence of such business activities is the emergence and strengthening of the emotional attachment to the home country.

Thus far, I have discussed the rationales for the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs' national belonging. I agree with the view that national belonging must be produced through daily life (Skey 2011; Wood 2016). In my cases, I highlighted the influence of daily entrepreneurial activities on the Chinese entrepreneurs' sense of national belonging. Notwithstanding, the discussion should not end here. The influences of entrepreneurial

activities on their perception of who they are and where they belong are far-reaching and profound. In the next section, I focus on how they negotiated their self-identity and national belonging while facing a dilemma in their daily entrepreneurial practices.

6.4 *Kika* Entrepreneurs

In talking with the Chinese entrepreneurs, I presumed that the question, "What does renouncing Chinese nationality mean to you?", would not create any suspense because, for Chinese newcomers in Japan, it was regarded as a pragmatic step and the result of individual rational choice (Bail 2005) that seldom affects individuals' sense of belonging. However, during our conversations, their perceptions of changing nationality were not limited to a pragmatic choice. Obtaining Japanese citizenship, on the one hand, contributed to their entrepreneurial activities in many aspects. On the other hand, the Chinese entrepreneurs who renounced their Chinese nationality but still had a strong sense of belonging to the homeland did not seem as relaxed and insouciant as past studies described. This is exemplified by Shizuko's narratives introduced at the outset of this chapter. According to the narratives of my conversation partners, losing Chinese nationality and citizenship was not a thing emotionally easy to accept. To develop a comprehensive understanding of the dilemma, the section starts with the Chinese entrepreneurs' opinions about the influences of nationality on their entrepreneurial activities, followed by their individual struggles and reconciliations.

In this section, I will use the term "*kika* Chinese entrepreneurs" to describe the Chinese entrepreneurs who renounced Chinese nationality. "*Kika"* literally means "naturalized." When calling themselves "*kika* Chinese," my research participants were prone to highlight an individual decision and action of renouncing their Chinese nationality and receiving Japanese nationality rather than specific rights and obligations as Japanese citizens. Describing

themselves as "*kika* Chinese" also implies the desire to balance their belonging to the homeland and their new status as Japanese citizens.

6.4.1 Is *Kika* Necessary?

> I have permanent residence in Japan, but I would say it is perfectly justifiable (*ming zheng yan shun* in Chinese) to change nationality if you do business in Japan. When you registered a company with a Japanese legal representative, it would cause fewer troubles and the government institutions would not put many obstacles in your way. (Why didn't you consider *kika*?). Pragmatically, my firm currently does not rely on Japan's but on China's market, mainly Chinese tourists. For now, it is still not necessary. My personal feeling is that I still don't want to lose my Chinese nationality and to be seen as a Japanese. But, of course, it may change. (What might cause the change?). My business, for sure. (Xin, interviewed in June 2019)

Although not all Chinese entrepreneurs I met changed their nationality, many were open to it, like Xin. The entrepreneurs admitted that having a Japanese passport would ease their entrepreneurial careers in Japan. Reflecting on their entrepreneurial experiences, several episodes confirm this point. The first was office leasing, which had perplexed many Chinese entrepreneurs in Japan. An office lease is an indispensable step for foreign entrepreneurs since it is a prerequisite for obtaining an investor/manager visa in Japan. Nevertheless, the process of office searching was challenging. Nishikawa, the owner of two karaoke stores and three restaurants in Ikebukuro, was initially pushed from pillar to post while searching for an ideal store to lease. In Tokyo's downtown areas, such as Ikebukuro, information on offices and stores available for lease was generally not circulated in the leasing market. Chinese entrepreneurs could therefore not obtain such information unless they had particular individual connections.

For the first few times, Nishikawa acquired information about empty stores for rent in Ikebukuro through her personal connections with Japanese entrepreneurs she had been acquainted with at Sino-Japan cultural exchange activities. However, merely obtaining the information did not mean it would go well. The most disappointing thing was that some landlords politely and euphemistically refused to rent empty stores to Chinese tenants. Once, Nishikawa asked a landlord who had rejected her before if it was because she was Chinese. The landlord told her he did not want to risk renting his store to a Chinese person because he had unpleasant experiences with a former Chinese tenant. According to Nishikawa's paraphrase, the former tenant left the store in disarray after he quit the lease suddenly and returned to China. The landlord ultimately could not claim any compensation. I heard about the disputes between Japanese landlords and Chinese tenants incessantly during my fieldwork, and such negative discourses obstructed many Chinese immigrants who planned to start their own businesses.

Nishikawa ultimately found a prime location to open her first karaoke store thanks to her personal ties. Although claiming that she might have similar difficulties when taking further steps in business. Although claiming that being Chinese was something deep in her blood and bones, Nishikawa decided to apply for a Japanese passport. She justified her decision by stating, "Since I have determined to start a business on my own, I will prioritize my company's development prospect. In this sense, *kika* is a wise choice." On the one hand, Nishikawa, associating with many other Chinese entrepreneurs and immigrants, made many efforts to change Chinese immigrants' image by organizing voluntary activities and Sino-Japanese culture exchange events. On the other hand, she also realized that the change in social discourse would take a long time, but business opportunities could not wait. As she expected, with the Japanese passport, Nishikawa confronted fewer difficulties in searching for locations for her

new businesses and applying for loans.

In addition to office leasing, applying for loans from Japanese banks was not uncommon for Chinese entrepreneurs. Like many other Chinese entrepreneurs I met, Oda owned more than one business. After opening two restaurants, she started to invest in the real estate industry in Japan. Oda put her individual properties (including her two well-operated restaurants) in a pledge to apply for 20 million *yen* loans from a renowned Japanese bank. Being concerned about her nationality, Oda obtained Japanese citizenship two months prior to submitting the application documents. Despite the thorough preparation, the bank rejected her application. Oda thought the result was unacceptable because, given her present conditions, there was no reason to be rejected. After inquiring several times, she was told implicitly that the decision was made because she had not had her Japanese passport long enough. Oda was disappointed and indignant because she saw renouncing Chinese citizenship as a major sacrifice for her entrepreneurial career, but it did not turn out as well as expected. With a self-deprecating tone, Oda stated that she was rejected only because she was a "would-be Japanese" at the time.

After listening to Oda's story, I was curious about how Oda could knew nationality would be a problem for the loan application beforehand and then applied for Japanese citizenship in advance. To settle my doubt, Oda told me another story. The chefs at Oda's Chinese restaurants were all employed from China after being officially identified as "skilled laborers."[29] As the owner of the receiving restaurants, Oda was required to submit documents,

[29] According to the Immigration Services Agency of Japan, chef is categorized in the visa type of "skilled labor" (*ginō* in Japanese). In addition, the "skilled labor" residential status is also issued for foreigners engaging in highly skilled work in Japan, such as precious metal processing and piloting, etc. For the applicants who plan to work as a chef in Japan, long-term working experiences in the cuisine and professional training are required.

including her personal information and the state of business, to the Immigration Services Agency of Japan for visa application. Before changing her nationality and surname from Wang to Oda, she always received investigation calls from the immigration bureau, inquiring if the chefs were still working there. According to Oda, it was confirmed that there used to have Chinese restaurants, in collusion with some labor dispatching agencies in China, sending chefs (who might not be qualified for the visa application) to Japan for illegal work under the guise of "skilled labor." Due to the negative impressions and many illegal issues in Japan's Chinese community, Oda realized that her Chinese citizenship could probably be a problem for further business development. "As long as the legal representative has a Chinese surname, they (the Japan's government) will think I'm suspicious of doing something illegal. But if I have a Japanese surname, they will not bother me anymore," she said.

Whether they had changed their nationality or not, the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs believed that *kika* could benefit their business development in Japan and remove the obstacles they might confront in their daily entrepreneurial activities. In this sense, the reasons for changing nationality were primarily instrumental. However, it does not indicate that they would emotionally identify themselves as Japanese or expect their Japanese business partners to see them as "Japanese." For example, Shizuko told me that although she had a Japanese passport and changed her surname, her regular Japanese business partners still introduced her as a Chinese entrepreneur. Shizuko did not mind this. Instead, she was more concerned with another type of "integration:" integrating into the social circle of Japanese entrepreneurs. A Japanese passport facilitated the building of trusting relationships. Many of my research participants understood *kika* as a way of reassuring stable commercial partnerships with their Japanese business partners under Japanese laws. For them, obtaining Japanese citizenship implies that foreign entrepreneurs, regardless of where they originally came from, would settle in Japan in

the future and run their businesses in conformity with Japanese law and regulations. Japanese entrepreneurs would thus like to open long-term and stable cooperation partnerships without concern. In this sense, Japanese nationality is akin to a signal of "institutional sources of trust"[30] (Granovetter 2017,68).

Nevertheless, *kika* is not a compulsory step in their entrepreneurial career, but rather an individual choice. Whether the Chinese entrepreneurs would renounce Chinese nationality depends on many factors, such as family backgrounds, individual economic and social capital, life or business plans, and individual emotional attachment to the home country. For a few Chinese entrepreneurs in Japan starting a business with strong social and economic support, the difficulties besetting many immigrant entrepreneurs could be effortlessly solved. For instance, Jia Ying was the only entrepreneur who claimed that his startup was relatively easy since he received much financial support from his parents that was sufficient for his initial business. Such obstacles confronting the Chinese entrepreneurs did not trouble Jia Ying since his parents were well-connected in Japan.

However, most of my research participants did not build their businesses with such generous support. Confronted with the disadvantages, they were aware of what a Japanese passport could provide them. Given the market and institutional environments they confronted, *kika* was regarded as the "right" or "justifiable" thing to do for the business. In the conversation about *kika*, their opinions and attitudes were consistently associated with their understanding of the market, business partnership, and business prospects.

6.4.2 Newcomer Entrepreneurs' Struggle with Status

[30] Among the several sources of trust, Granovetter (2017,78) points out that "one trusts another because of institutional arrangements that make deception or betrayal less likely."

During the fieldwork, the *kika* Chinese entrepreneurs I interviewed seemed loath to go deep into the topic of nationality. In contrast, once we started to discuss their past entrepreneurial experiences and current businesses, there was an unceasing flow of words. Only topics concerning entrepreneur-related issues ignited their enthusiasm. However, on the other hand, *kika* became an inescapable topic in the talks about their entrepreneurial experiences. Many *kika* Chinese entrepreneurs claimed that, although *kika* would be conducive to business development in Japan, they were (or are) beset by the status change.

Changing nationality signifies the transfer of civic, social, and political rights and obligations from one sovereign state to another. However, it does not mean that individuals' old habits and cultural preferences change correspondingly, nor that they could quickly and effortlessly recognize the new status. They were not emotionless rational actors, and the piece of paper did mean a great deal to them. Despite the entrepreneurial activities to which they gave priority, they did not renounce Chinese nationality without an emotional struggle.

For example, Chen Sen, the preciously introduced cultural entrepreneur, expanded his business into Japan's pension industry a few years ago. Similar to Shizuko, he decided to change his nationality for a more "justifiable" status to enter the field predominated by the Japanese rather than the ethnic Chinese. While he never regretted doing so, but he indeed experienced a soul-searching process:

> I was born in Shanghai and studied at Beijing Sport University at the end of the 1980s. During the student movement in 1989, I was a group leader. It is hard to say if the movement was really progressive, but it was a part of nostalgic memories that connected the country and me…. I had a passion for doing something for China, even though it did not turn out as we expected at that point. I like Japan, and I made success in business here, but the feeling is

> different…For example, I was exhilarated by the Beijing Olympics and was very proud. I was also happy to see Tokyo's (successful Olympic bid) but had less national pride … I changed my nationality but retained my Chinese name. It is very important to me. It was at least my personal persistence (Interviewed in June 2019).

Moreover, while some of my interlocutors, such as Chen Sen, called themselves "*kika* Chinese entrepreneurs" in their daily narratives, they felt the kanji's (帰化) original meaning in the Chinese context emotionally uncomfortable because it connotes the submissiveness of marginalized (ethnic) groups to the majority groups[31].

For the entrepreneurs who hesitated to change their nationality, emotional factors also played a significant role in weighing the gains and losses. Liu operated one Izakaya and two Chinese restaurants renowned for providing authentic Hunan cuisine. About nationality, he stated:

> I hope to develop my business further in Japan, so I have considered changing nationality. We don't want to limit our business to the Chinese ethnic market but hope to promote our local cuisine to the mainstream market. So far, we have collaborated with many Japanese institutions and media. If I changed my nationality, it would be helpful in searching for more cooperation for sure. (Why did you choose not to change the nationality temporarily?). I'm still at the wait-and-see stage. On the one hand, currently, there is still growth space left for us. On the other hand, I personally still have resistance against naturalization into

[31] The initial use of the word dates back to Han Shu (Book of Han) written in 82 AD.

Japan (Interviewed in August 2019).

Regarding the feeling of "resistance," Liu gave a noteworthy perspective. Given the historical reasons (i.e., the First Sino-Japanese War from 1984 to 1985 and the War of Resistance against Japan from 1937 to 1945) and the current social discourses in China, changing to Japanese nationality was seen as less acceptable than to Western countries, such as the United States, Canada, and Australia. Liu said his generation grew up watching films and television shows about wars of resistance against Japan. Having US citizenship or obtaining a US green card was common and worth "showing off" in his hometown. However, renouncing Chinese nationality to naturalize into Japan (and changing to a Japanese name) is embarrassing and not worth making widely known.

As illustrated by their narratives, the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs' reluctance to renounce the Chinese nationality emerged from individual attachments (particularly with family members), nostalgic memories, and social discourses in contemporary China. As first-generation immigrants, they had strong feelings for the homeland, even though a few of them experienced political persecution in childhood.[32] For example, Ma's childhood was miserable since her journalist father was accused of being a "right opportunist" during the Cultural Revolution. Once her father's case was redressed after the political movement, her teenage life was relatively happy and stable, as she recalled. Ma stated that she had a love-hate relationship with China. On the one hand, the political movement cast a shadow over her childhood, but on the other hand, when renouncing her Chinese nationality, she confided that she felt sad and lost. She called herself "a Chinese Mama-san" (a woman in charge of a bar), but her snack bar's

[32] Only the earlier generation among the newcomers who or whose family encountered with China's political turbulence had such experiences. For the younger generation born in the 1990s, it was rare.

informal rule was not to discuss politics.

In regard to the benefits *kika* brought to the newcomers' entrepreneurial activities in Japan and their emotional resistance to renouncing Chinese nationality, there seems to be a dilemma between the wise choice of obtaining Japanese citizenship and the individual's attachment to the homeland. The practices of immigrants locating themselves in more than one country are emotionally demanding, which may cause a problem with "ontological security" (Skey 2010; Röttger-Rössler 2018).To understand how the Chinese entrepreneurs managed it, I discuss their bifocal perception of belonging in the following section.

6.4.3 Bifocal Perception

"That is unbelievable and unrealistic," Shizuko described her feelings upon leaving the local Legal Affairs Bureau with her Japanese passport, "How could it be possible that I became a Japanese just after handing in some documents?". The sudden "change" depressed Shizuko for a long while until she realized what exactly had changed. According to Shizuko,

> "Something has indeed changed. I cannot stay longer than two weeks in China without a visa; I did not have to deal with the Immigration Service Agency in Japan but was treated as a foreigner at the immigration desks of China's airports; I was notified to be qualified for voting in Japan. But I feel what has changed are the rights and obligations at the legal and administrative levels. But my emotion and my preferences did not change so much. I personally still see myself as Chinese (Interviewed in June 2019).

During the conversations with many *kika* Chinese entrepreneurs, I found that they have "bifocality" (Vertovec 2004; Brettell 2006) in polity and cultural belongings. Immigrants' transnational practices impact their outlooks and daily experiences and entail the emergence of "bifocality" in everyday life or a "dual orientation to here and there" (Vertovec 2004).

Immigrants who obtained citizenship in receiving societies did not necessarily alter their cultural belonging rooted in the place of birth. Still, the immigrants also admitted that they politically and legitimately belonged to a new sovereign state (Brettell 2006).

The bifocality of political and cultural belongings became increasingly apparent and recognizable after many Chinese entrepreneurs obtained Japanese citizenship. Chen Sen described the changes in his thoughts about "who the Chinese are" as follows:

> Before that (nationality change), China, for me, was a very vague concept. It seemed to mean everything but also seemed to be nothing. After that, one thing for sure is that I am legitimately identified as Japanese. I, legally, have nothing to do with China anymore. But China is still the place of birth that carries a lot of my memories and shapes my cultural preferences (Interviewed in June 2019).

Taking a bifocal insight into political and cultural belonging was common for many Chinese entrepreneurs with Japanese passports to redefine "who is Chinese" and reconstruct their self-identity and sense of belonging. For Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs, severing their legal and political connections with China is a predictable consequence in accord with their rational considerations concerning the advantages and disadvantages of changing nationality. In this regard, *kika* Chinese entrepreneurs did not find it unacceptable or insurmountable. They freely admitted that they politically and legitimately belonged to Japan due to their Japanese citizenship. In this sense, it would be flawed to think they have no attachment to the country of settlement because citizenship indicates the reciprocal relationships of rights and obligations between individuals and the state, comprising legitimate belongings (Yuval-Davis 2006).

Nevertheless, admitting political and legitimate belonging to Japan does not mean that they would see themselves as Japanese. Instead, they tended to ascribe their national belongings to the cultural intimacy with China. Different from Chen Sen and Gao Ge, who integrated their

cultural preferences with businesses, some Chinese entrepreneurs with Japanese citizenship, such as Shizuko, stated that they were more willing than before to learn Chinese traditional culture after renouncing their Chinese nationality.

For example, Jian Wie, a *kika* Chinese entrepreneur who established a trading company in Japan, confided that he was despondent after losing his Chinese nationality. He felt a loss of connection with his homeland despite understanding that nationality was not the only criterion to define his Chinese status. Jian Wei then became keen on rebuilding the connections by reading traditional Chinese classics. From the Confucius classics to Chinese Buddhist and Taoist literature, Jian Wei has repeatedly read these classics in recent years. During our talks, I was amazed by his ability to cite quotations from those traditional classics. Moreover, Jian Wei was one of the founders of a social group centered around "reading Chinese classics" in Ikebukuro. During my fieldwork, the weekly events attracted many Chinese parents and their kids living in Tokyo. Despite being a "wise" choice in the sense of business development, renouncing Chinese nationality made many Chinese entrepreneurs feel, as Shizuko put it, "less confident" (*xin xu* in Chinese) in stating their Chinese status. *Kika* Chinese entrepreneurs, therefore, had to rebuild their connections to their homeland. Jian Wei told me that one of his most enjoyable moments now was reading *Tao Te Chin*g and *I Ching* in his tearoom in the morning and drinking the Longjing tea he brought from China.

Familiarity with Chinese traditional cultures has become one way the *kika* Chinese entrepreneurs justify their Chinese status. Moreover, they typically combined such cultural preferences with their businesses in various ways, thereby developing specific business philosophies suitable to "Chinese entrepreneurs." For instance, Jian Wei told me that a line from the *I Ching* inspired his business philosophy. Enlightened by the *I Ching*, he used seawater as a metaphor for business opportunities and potential markets and used ocean waves as a

metaphor for his entrepreneurial performances. Jian Wie stated, “As the Chinese saying goes, ‘there are no waves without wind,’ the most critical is ‘wind’ rather the seawater. The ‘wind’ is the *Qi* (vital force) of an entrepreneur, which determines how far your business can go.” For Jian Wei, his entrepreneurship was attributed to metaphysics he comprehended from the traditional Chinese classics and further brought together with his day-to-day business practices.

Another case presenting the integration between the entrepreneurs’ cultural preferences with business practices is Chinese geomancy: feng shui. One day, Miyasaki, the owner of three language schools, invited me to her office for a casual talk. One of her close friends running a beauty salon happened to be there. Miyasaki complained half in earnest and half in jest that her businesses were not doing well recently. I thought they would have serious discussions regarding markets and management techniques, but Miyasaki’s friend responded, “maybe you should adjust the feng shui of your office!”. I was shocked by such an answer, but Miyasaki nodded in agreement. After her friend left, I asked Miyasaki if she believed in feng shui, and she exclaimed, “Absolutely!”

I originally planned to talk about her entrepreneurial trajectory. However, during our two-hour conversation, *feng shui* was the only topic on that day. She told me that she believed in feng shui so firmly that she would invite a feng shui master to help her choose a proper location and design the office’s inner configuration. Miyasaki narrated seriously, “Feng shui told us to go with the flow and seize the momentum (*shun shi er wei* in Chinese). The market is essentially a flow. Not only the person but also all the stuff around the person should be in accordance with the flow.” In her narratives, Miyasaki eagerly hoped to justify her Chinese status (she changed her nationality more than a decade ago) by emphasizing the uniqueness of her business philosophy with the use of feng shui. She stated, “Feng shui is our ancestor’s wisdom, so we Chinese should value it.”

After raising interest in feng shui in business, I spoke with Chen Sen, another Chinese entrepreneur and feng shui master. Chen Sen was a renowned feng shui master in the community of Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs and was often invited to evaluate the locations and interior layouts of their stores or offices. He shared how he combined feng shui with his business development.

> I chose to invest businesses in Ikebukuro because feng shui there was good…Ikebukuro, chaotic but civic in the past, is tightly bonded with China and Chinese immigrants. From the perspective of feng shui, such chaotic and civic features of Ikebukuro are one sort of "vital force from the earth" (*di qi* in Chinese) nurturing the local commercial prosperity. In urban feng shui, we should see buildings as mountains and streets as rivers. The landscape of Ikebukuro made it become a place where such "vital forces" could be stored up (Interviewed in June 2019).

My research does not aim to discuss whether or how feng shui promotes individual entrepreneurship. However, it was noteworthy that *kika* Chinese entrepreneurs desired to recreate or redefine their "Chinese entrepreneurs" status through the combination of individual cultural preferences and business philosophies. In their daily life and entrepreneurial practices, the entrepreneurs reconstructed the nexus of national belonging, cultural preference, and business success, thereby justifying their Chinese status after renouncing their Chinese nationality.

The debates regarding whether national belonging is attributed to cultural community or politics fostered various opinions. Kirloskar-Steinbach (2004) argues that national belonging refers to belonging to a polity involving "the sense of identification with the principles embodied by the main institutions present in a state." Similarly, Yuval-Davis (2006) conveys

that the relationship between citizenship and state, associated with rights and obligations, constructs the entitlement of the membership. Skey (2010), in contrast, redirected the discussion to ontological security, indicating that national belonging emerges from and is rooted in everyday life and daily preferences. To this point, I argue that Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs have a bifocal outlook on their legal status and cultural belongings. However, to achieve a bifocal view, they must traverse a process of resolving their inner conflicts.

Specifically, given their Japanese citizenship, the *kika* Chinese entrepreneur acknowledged the disconnections with the home country in a legitimate dimension and recognized the reciprocal relationships between the individuals and the new sovereign state. The entrepreneurs rationalized their decision on naturalization by highlighting the benefits to business development. Nevertheless, changing nationalities still aroused emotional discomfort, making them feel less confident and more uncertain about expressing where they belong. To justify their citizenship in Japan, the *kika* Chinese entrepreneurs stressed that they legally belong to Japan. Still, to claim their Chinese status — not only to identify themselves as Chinese but also to express their emotional attachment to the homeland — *kika* Chinese entrepreneurs highlighted their cultural belonging to China by culturally immersing themselves in traditional Chinese culture and classics in private life and developing a corresponding business philosophy.

Summary: Inner Struggles and Entrepreneurial Decisions

Unlike most of the existing literature concentrating on how ethnic entrepreneurs' shared sense of belonging benefits their ethnic businesses, this chapter discussed how Chinese newcomers' entrepreneurial status reshaped their sense of belonging. While "I'm an overseas Chinese in Japan" (*zai ri hua ren* in Chinese) and "I'm Chinese" (*zhong guo ren* in Chinese) both existed in their narratives, they called themselves "overseas Chinese in Japan" in most cases to justify

their different status compared to domestic Chinese and the older generation immigrants. The Chinese national belonging, in contrast, emerged from their emotional attachment to the homeland.

From the online domestic mainstream media and the local ethnic media to the events organized by Chinese associations in Japan, Chinese immigrants today are exposed to nationalist discourses. Nevertheless, it would be insufficient to say that their national belonging resulted from nation-led patriotic discourses. Instead, the sense of belonging to the homeland is formed, strengthened, and reproduced in the everyday life of Chinese immigrants, particularly in their entrepreneurial activities. My finding demonstrated that their commercial achievements and the socioeconomic situations in contemporary China were interknitted, evoking the feeling of co-presence and strengthening emotional and material attachment to the homeland.

Finally, the chapter focused on the entrepreneurs' emotional struggles in their daily entrepreneurial activities. The influences of their entrepreneurial activities and entrepreneurial recognition on individual national belonging were far-reaching, epitomized by the complex attitudes toward changing nationality (*kika*). On the one hand, given the present situation in Japanese society, the *kika* Chinese entrepreneurs considered changing nationality a "wise choice" that benefits their businesses. On the other hand, for most of the *kika* Chinese entrepreneurs who have a strong sense of belonging to China, renouncing Chinese nationality and citizenship aroused emotional resistance and struggle. *Kika* Chinese entrepreneurs thus must find a way to reconcile the inner conflict. To do so, they tended to take a bifocal outlook on cultural and political belongings. Although accepting the fact that they legally and politically belong to Japan after renouncing Chinese nationality, they highlighted their cultural belonging to China by joining cultural activities of Chinese associations in Japan or interpreting

their daily business practices as the reflection of traditional Chinese cultures. The bifocal perceptions bring the entrepreneurs' self-cognition as both entrepreneurs and Chinese back into consonance.

In sum, in line with the discussions in previous chapters, the chapter discussed another aspect of the entrepreneurialization of ethnicity, illustrating that the Chinese newcomers' entrepreneurial status and achievements are significant reasons for the growing sense of belonging to China and the decision to renounce Chinese nationality. As it aroused their emotional struggles, *kika* Chinese entrepreneurs developed a bifocal insight to reidentify who they are and where they belong.

Chapter 7

Entrepreneurialization of Ethnicity

A week before I left Tokyo, I had final in-person meetings with several key informants. They were curious about my findings from the long-term fieldwork in Japan. Since my data was still not well-organized at that point, I described my intuitive feelings. I felt that Chinese entrepreneurs live with several paradoxes about their entrepreneurial status and Chinese immigrant status, and they had to adjust their perceptions of ethnicity according to their entrepreneurial status. They reassuringly expressed their agreement and added that learning to live with certain inconsistencies is indispensable in their entrepreneurial careers.

Throughout the dissertation, I spilled much ink describing the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs' ethnic networks, ethnic expressions, and sense of belonging. Since immigrants' entrepreneurial activities received increasing attention in the 1970s, immigrants' ethnic characteristics and (transnational) ethnic networks have been central to discussions. However, the rise of the mixed embeddedness theory and its widespread application in empirical studies shifted attention from ethnicity to opportunity structures and institutional environments that immigrant entrepreneurs confront, highlighting that ethnic and cultural factors only play supplementary roles in entrepreneurial activities (Kloosterman, van der Leun, and Rath 1999; Kloosterman and Rath 2001; Kloosterman 2010). The waning importance of ethnicity in immigrant entrepreneurship research responds to the changing trends in migrant businesses worldwide. Moreover, their businesses have become more diversified and incorporated into local and mainstream economies developing transnationally (Nazareno, Zhou, and You 2019). The prevailing views cast doubt on whether ethnicity is still worth discussing.

My fieldwork with Chinese entrepreneurs led me to realize that ethnic factors still played critical roles in their daily entrepreneurial activities. However, ethnic factors cannot be reduced to the key to the ethnic entrepreneurs' success or supplements to opportunity structures and institutional environments. They are not merely "survivors" who economically integrated into Japanese society by right of predisposed ethnic advantages, but rather active facilitators mobilizing different values and resources that benefit their entrepreneurial careers. Throughout the dissertation, I, therefore, aimed to explain the research question: "How did Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs in Japan negotiate and recreate ethnicity in their entrepreneurial practices?".

7.1 Chinese Newcomers' Ethnicity and Entrepreneurship

This dissertation explored the relationships between ethnicity and entrepreneurship in three dimensions. Chapter 4 focused on seven types of co-ethnic ties that directly or indirectly affected their daily business activities and entrepreneurial careers. It elaborated on the changes in how Chinese entrepreneurs involved family members and fellow provincials in their businesses. Moreover, it showed that the Chinese entrepreneurs' perceptions of co-ethnic customers and employees varied with the development of their businesses. Taking an active part in formal and informal overseas Chinese associations in Japan was indispensable to their entrepreneurial career. More importantly, they formed cliques (*quan zi* in Chinese) where the members shared similar immigration experiences, lifestyles, habits, and socioeconomic status in Japan. The formation of entrepreneurial cliques indicated the Chinese entrepreneurs' distinctiveness in social networks and the stratification of Chinese newcomer immigrants in Japan.

This chapter presented the diversity and dynamics of co-ethnic social networks in the Chinese newcomers' entrepreneurial activities and noted that the co-ethnic networks were not

rooted in a fixed social pattern highlighted in the previous overseas Chinese businesses (Redding 1993; Chen 2001). The entrepreneurs' efforts to build, maintain or reconstruct the co-ethnic networks were not simply the manifestations of their cultural characteristics but resulted from their daily interactions with ethnic members. Their entrepreneurial status essentially decided the relationship with other Chinese immigrants and urged them to become active facilitators of mobilizing different social resources in favor of entrepreneurship.

In addition to ethnic networks, ethnic expressions and the presentation of ethnic authenticity are also associated with immigrants' entrepreneurship. In Chapter 5, I turned the focus to the Chinese entrepreneurs' ethnic expressions in commercial and societal aspects and their interactions with Ikebukuro's Japanese local society. The chapter detailed the Chinese entrepreneurs' visibility and invisibility in the local society and analyzed the rationales for maintaining the seemingly contradictory ethnic expressions.

Outwardly presenting ethnic characteristics and authenticity met the commercial needs of many Chinese entrepreneurs in Ikebukuro. However, the local conflicts on the "Tokyo Chinatown Project" made them realize that due to Ikebukuro's rich civil culture and tradition, staying invisible in certain situations was equally important to avoid arousing conflicts about the local identity. The arrival of Chinese newcomers and the consequent new values, landscapes, and organizations were regarded as incompatible with Ikebukuro's local identity formed in the past. To avoid conflicts, the Chinese entrepreneurs chose to refrain from highlighting their Chinese status in the areas predominated by local Japanese residents and associations. The second half of the chapter focused on three social fields (i.e., shopping street associations, the *fukuro* festival, and the local councilor election) where the Chinese entrepreneurs presented themselves and behaved like local Japanese and took part as "passive participants" who contributed to but did not profoundly engage in these activities.

Chapter 5 put forward three main arguments. First, the ways the Chinese entrepreneurs balanced visibility and invisibility were not predetermined but resulted from long-term interactions with the local Japanese society. I, therefore, do not take an entirely negative attitude toward the former conflicts in the local society but see them as a necessary exploration process for relatively stable coexistence. Moreover, being invisible in specific fields did not necessarily indicate social repression. None of the Chinese entrepreneurs stated they felt discriminated against and subdued when playing a "passive" role in the aforementioned activities. Instead, they took it for granted to take different approaches to ethnic expressions in the two social spaces of one geographical place. Finally, I argue that only the embeddedness approach cannot fully explain the relationships between entrepreneurs and local society. It is necessary to shift the focus to how entrepreneurs interpret and influence the social contexts that they confront (Baker and Welter 2020). Admittedly, Chinese entrepreneurs are embedded in Ikebukuro's local society in the sense that the local sociocultural contexts influence their integration strategies. However, the strategies of balancing visibility and invisibility were not predetermined or imposed. Instead, to meet the need to present their Chinese status and arouse sharp contradictions regarding the local identity, they needed to take the initiative to explore a way to position themselves in the local society. Such efforts will continue to reframe the local society since the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs and their businesses in Ikebukuro cannot be neglected in discussions regarding the ward councilor election, local economy rejuvenation, and the establishment of a multicultural society.

Existing ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurship research has focused more on external factors, including collective cultural characteristics and social capitals, as well as market and institutional environments, paying less attention to immigrant entrepreneurs' emotional fluctuations and cognitive dynamics in their entrepreneurial careers (Volery 2007). Chapter 6

expanded the discussion regarding ethnicity in the Chinese newcomers' entrepreneurship to the "internal factors" by highlighting the influences of entrepreneurial practices on their sense of belonging. The Chinese entrepreneurs had solid national belonging for several reasons, including nostalgic memories, family attachments, and patriotic discourses. However, for the Chinese entrepreneurs, I argue that the feeling of co-presence between their business achievements in Japan and the increase of China's national strength reinforced their attachment in both emotional and economic aspects to the home country.

However, national belonging could contradict their entrepreneurial ambitions in certain circumstances. They had a consensus that a Japanese passport could help them thrive in their daily entrepreneurial activities, particularly when they had to deal with Japanese legal issues and financial institutions. Many Chinese entrepreneurs, therefore, acquired or were inclined to change to a Japanese passport. Their decisions seem rational from a pragmatic perspective, thinking that renouncing Chinese nationality and becoming *kika* Chinese entrepreneurs in Japan are merely pragmatic strategies that do not cause emotional discomfort. However, *kika* means more than changing their nationality for many Chinese entrepreneurs. It could cause inner conflicts, impelling them to rethink who they are and where they belong.

In Chapter 6, I argued that the complex relationships between entrepreneurial identity and national belonging generated mutual reinforcements and conflicts. The sense of co-presence between China's economic development and the success of individual businesses intensified the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs' national belonging to China. Under such situations, their entrepreneurial identity was compatible with their national belonging. However, conflicts emerged in the situation where the Chinese entrepreneurs had to make a decision regarding their choice of nationality. In this case, taking a bifocal perception was a common way to overcome their inner struggles. On the one hand, they recognized their

Japanese citizenship, accepted their "Japanese status" at the legal and administrative levels, and considered *kika* as a "wise" choice they made to facilitate their careers in Japan. On the other hand, they reaffirmed their cultural belonging to China through varied cultural practices in daily life. The cultural preferences and practices, such as their commitment to feng shui, were also introduced to their business philosophies and daily management to justify that they were still "Chinese" entrepreneurs. The Chinese entrepreneurs' bifocal perception was an effective way to reconcile the inner struggle by redefining what a "Chinese entrepreneur" looks like.

In conclusion, the dissertation addressed how the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs in Japan negotiated and recreated ethnicity in their entrepreneurial practices by exploring the changes in co-ethnic networks, ethnic expressions, and sense of belonging in their careers, indicating the notable influences of their entrepreneurial status on the construction of ethnicity.

7.2 Entrepreneurialization of Ethnicity

Articulation is a frequently used term in ethnicity research that refers to "an ambiguous, relative and often temporary link between different elements whose relationship is dynamic, open to change" (Maleševic 2004,38). My dissertation clarified the articulation of the ethnic status of Chinese newcomers in Japan and their socio-economic status as entrepreneurs. I argue that Chinese newcomers' entrepreneurship associated with daily business practices and entrepreneurial mindsets and cognitions generated their new perceptions of ethnicity, which I call the "entrepreneurialization of ethnicity."

To understand such changes, it is necessary to acknowledge that entrepreneurship did not naturally come into existence when the Chinese newcomers obtained the manager and investor visa or other residence statuses which permitted them to establish companies in Japan. Entrepreneurship, whether for aboriginal or immigrant entrepreneurs, comes into being from a

series of daily business practices affecting the individuals' social circles and how they think and view things. The anthropological perspective on entrepreneurship highlights "entrepreneurialization" (Pfeilstetter 2022), an entrepreneur-driven process in which entrepreneurs as active facilitators reinterpret, reframe, or intervene in supposedly fixed social patterns and reconcile contradictory values, morality, and heritages (Barth 1963; Geertz 1963a). It does not mean that the entrepreneurial individuals were not subject to environmental and institutional factors, nor could entrepreneurship be understood without contextualizing their intentions, behaviors, and rationality. It emphasizes the need to change the view of treating resources, potential opportunities, values, and discourses as something "out there" acting unilaterally on the entrepreneurial individuals and instead draw more attention to the various ways they "do context" (Baker and Welter 2020).

Compared to the previous anthropological works showing less interest in including ethnicity in entrepreneurship research, the dissertation illustrated how to bring the actor-driven perspective to the forefront in analyzing ethnicity and entrepreneurship. Whether from the culturalist or the interactive approaches in ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurship research, ethnic and cultural factors have been depicted as built-in advantages that favor immigrants' entrepreneurship, particularly the benefits of co-ethnic social networks and ethnic niches to ethnic business development (Light, Bhachu, and Karageorgis 1994; Light and Gold 2000). However, as I presented in the dissertation (see Chapter 4), the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs did not regard the co-ethnic networks as fixed social patterns. Instead, their perceptions of co-ethnic networks associate with their entrepreneurship. That is, they approached these social connections not only as co-ethnic members but also, more importantly, as entrepreneurs. The social groups of the cliques manifested the reconstruction of the co-ethnic

networks with the emergence of new habits and desires in Chinese newcomers' entrepreneurial careers.

In addition to the relationships with co-ethnic members, they must cope with the reactions of Japanese society in the face of the increasing number and influences of Chinese entrepreneurs, which reflects the entrepreneurialization of ethnicity in the matter of ethnic expressions. Expressing ethnic authenticity in business has become a familiar and effective marketing strategy for Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs in northwestern Ikebukuro. The increasing influence on local economies drove them to expand their influence in the social aspect and redefine the local identity by labeling it "Chinatown." However, the strong opposition from the local Japanese society inhibited the process (see Chapter 5). Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs, therefore, needed to seek a balancing strategy to satisfy both parties. The process indicated that the entrepreneurialization of ethnicity is not characterized by a fixed development direction but contextualized. However, this does not mean that the social and historical context in the local society can ultimately determine the process. Despite confronting obstacles, the Chinese entrepreneurs did not express or present themselves in Ikebukuro merely as they were "expected" or "told" to the locals but rather reframed the local society through various agentive interventions.

Prior discussions regarding "entrepreneurialization" did not pay sufficient attention to entrepreneurs' cognition and emotion. The problem becomes magnified when considering ethnicity, as ethnicity is related to ethnic members' identity and belonging. The entrepreneurialization of ethnicity in the matter of belonging includes two characteristics. First, the immigrants' entrepreneurial achievements affected their sense of belonging. Admittedly, Chinese newcomers' attachment to their homeland is inseparable from their family in China, childhood experiences, and nostalgic memories. However, as presented in Chapter 6, their

entrepreneurial achievements are primarily built on China's increasing economic power and rejuvenation of traditional culture. Such connections invoked a sense of co-presence, further strengthening the immigrants' attachment and national belonging to China. In this respect, the immigrant entrepreneurs' national belonging not only originated from pre-immigration experiences and shared cultural preferences but also was refueled by their entrepreneurial success.

Another characteristic of the entrepreneurialization of ethnicity associated with the sense of belonging is the underlying inconsistency of ethnic or national belonging, social ties, and expressions. Traditional theorists believed that co-ethnic members concurrently exhibit the critical features of identifying themselves as community members, habitually expressing one or more elements of the shared culture, and maintaining solidary in-group social ties (Hutchinson and Smith 1996). However, ethnic members may not necessarily maintain consistency if we add their specific social and economic status is included in the discussions of ethnicity. While in some cases, the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs did not maintain ingroup cohesion or had less interest in expressing their cultural characteristics in consideration of their entrepreneurial careers in Japan, they were patriotic or, under certain circumstances, nationalistic. The inconsistency required the entrepreneurs to have integration capabilities in emotion and cognition to overcome their inner struggles (see Chapter 6). It is a process of rediscovering themselves as both entrepreneurs and Chinese immigrants.

In sum, by presenting the entrepreneurialization of ethnicity in the Chinese newcomers' business practices, the dissertation seeks a balance point between ethnic culture determinism and opportunity structure determinism in the prior literature. The entrepreneurialization of ethnicity results from articulating various elements in their migration experiences and entrepreneurial careers. It is characterized by the process of coupling and decoupling different

ethnic resources, seeking appropriate boundaries with Japanese society, and regaining their sense of belonging. In this sense, the ethnic factors involved in entrepreneurship are not predisposed and fixed attributes. Instead, a dynamic process occurs as the immigrants obtain a new social and economic status. Still, we should understand that the changes are not merely the results of the entrepreneurs' reactive actions in the face of specific opportunity structures. Negotiating ethnicity is not a survival strategy of passive compromise. By characterizing their ethnicity with entrepreneurship, the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs presented resistance to supposedly fixed social patterns and expectations. Instead, they expected to reach a new harmonious state and, in certain situations, impose more influences on the external environments. In short, the entrepreneurialization of ethnicity reflects the Chinese immigrants' changes in cognition and behaviors after recognizing and highlighting their status as entrepreneurs.

7.3 Beyond Economic Integration

Entrepreneurialization of ethnicity indicates a specific integration process of Chinese entrepreneurs in Japan for its emphasis on Chinese immigrants' changes from pre-entrepreneurs to entrepreneurs. For most foreign entrepreneurs in Japan, starting businesses was not their initial purpose in moving to Japan. Chinese newcomers moved to Japan as international students, highly skilled professionals, dispatched laborers, or dependents. The status shaped their immigration experiences, migration purposes, lifestyles, social circles, and imaginations for future life in Japan to a great extent. However, their statuses changed over time. Embarking on an entrepreneurial career not only reflects the livelihood changes but also greatly influences their willingness to settle down in Japan and the ways they integrate into Japanese society.

Rather than viewing their entrepreneurial activities exclusively as a successful strategy of economic integration into the country of settlement, my research focused on describing the changes in Chinese entrepreneurs' social interactions and individual cognition after they started their businesses. Compared to the other Chinese newcomer groups in Japan, Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs' integration strategies feature both generality and particularity.

In terms of generality, Chinese newcomers of any subgroups integrate into Japanese societies by expanding non-exclusive ethnic networks, establishing non-isolated ethnic concentrations, and living transnational lives. In other words, while relying on ethnic networks, they maintain constant social and economic connections with domestic Chinese and Japanese at the beginning of their migrant life and in the course of establishing roots in Japan, which differentiates them from the older generations whose lives were largely limited to ethnic enclaves.

Nevertheless, "Chinese newcomers in Japan" are far from a homogenous ethnic group. This does not mean that the entrepreneur group should be differentiated in the absolute quantity of financial resources they possess, nor that Chinese entrepreneurs are a superior group in the overseas Chinese society in Japan. Their particularities emerge from the behavior patterns or habits that they adopted in response to their entrepreneurial status. The entrepreneurialization of ethnicity underscores the ways they approached co-ethnic groups, interacted with the locals, and rediscovered themselves, not only as Chinese newcomer migrants but also as entrepreneurs in the process of integration, which differentiates them from other groups of Chinese immigrants in Japan.

Meanwhile, their influences on Japanese society also distinguish them from other Chinese newcomer subgroups. One apparent example is the changes in Ikebukuro's landscape as Chinese newcomers set up businesses in succession. While no magnificent Chinese temples

or archways are built in Ikebukuro, all elements used for showing authenticities, such as Chinese characters, billboards, and Chinese tourists flocking to northwestern Ikebukuro every day, bring people an intuitive feeling: here is another "Chinatown." Moreover, the new Chinatown in discourse has brought Ikebukuro deeper changes, transcending its heterotopic image formed in its history and presenting the local society on the world stage (Toshima Ward was selected as one of the three East Asian Cultural Cities 2019, along with Xian, China, and Incheon, Korea).

In addition, the Chinese newcomers' entrepreneurial status and daily entrepreneurial practices established long-term and stable communication channels with stakeholders, such as Japanese commercial associations, shopping street associations, and non-government cultural organizations, that other Chinese newcomer subgroups may have difficulty accessing. Such communication channels enable them to keep visible in the grassroots groups that are critical components of the local society. Entrepreneurialization of Chinese newcomers does not necessarily mean that they would become radical reformers or activists and subvert the original social structures and traditional culture. Instead, they have become active interveners in the process of integration into the local society by bridging different values and resources and negotiating conflicts between parties. In this sense, the perspective of the Chinese entrepreneur group is indispensable for the understanding of multicultural coexistence in Japanese society.

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APPENDIX 1

Profiles of the 30 Chinese Entrepreneurs

Name (Gender; Arrival Time; Nationality; Business Contents)

1. Chen Sen (Male; 1992; Japan; Laber dispatch agency)

Not seeing his immigration experiences as a series of "stories" (*gù shì* in Chinese), Chen Sen preferred to call them "accidents" (*shì gù* in Chinese) because his rationales for moving to and living in Japan emerged from many accidental events. Chen Sen's father was a Taoist priest during the Sino-Japan war, and he accidentally met an injured young Japanese soldier while wandering. Since his father specialized in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and knew basic western medicine knowledge, he took the soldier home and gave him care and treatments. His father also taught the Japanese soldier some basic skills about osteopathy and acupuncture. When the Japanese soldier returned to Japan after the war, he made his living running an osteopath shop. At the beginning of the 1990s, his father had become a famous TCM doctor in a hospital in Shanghai. One time, he represented the hospital attending a conference about TCM in Japan. On the spot, he met the soldier again after a few decades, who had become a successful businessman running many osteopath clinics in Tokyo. His father asked if it was possible to send his son to Japan because Chen Sen, one group leader of the student movement during the Tiananmen incident, was implicated in trouble and could not find a good job. After finishing his study in sports medicine at Beijing Sport University, Chen Sen moved to Japan and started working in the company run by the former Japanese soldier. Due to his lack of language proficiency, he worked as a driver with a very high salary. Seeing Chen Sen's father as his savior, the Japanese entrepreneur arranged many cushy works for Chen Sen. However, dreaming of making success on his own, Chen Sen finally left the company. Afterward, he made up a living delivering newspapers for a few months until he was accidentally involved in

illegal immigration issues. One day, he was told by a client to pick up some "stuff" from a beach. However, when arriving, he found that the "stuff" was a group of illegal immigrants who were abandoned on the beach. After some rational and emotional struggles, he decided to take them back but did not receive any financial reward. He opened and ran a small osteopath clinic for a few years until one day, he received a letter from a stranger who claimed that he was one of the illegal immigrants Chen Sen saved, and now they wanted to "repay" him, not with money but with business chances. The former stowaways found work in different fields, and some made economic successes. With such "rewards," he has made his business expand into different sectors in a few years and become a big name in the Chinese community. When I met him, he said he had kept his mind still and had no more ambitions to chase the pace and trends. Nowadays, he is more devoted to voluntary activities, such as teaching Japanese play Tai chi.

2. Cindy (Female;2012; China; New media)

I met Cindy in a workshop in Tokyo for young entrepreneurs. After starting her business in 2017, Cindy has become a frequenter of entrepreneurial workshops (there are also many workshops for female entrepreneurs in Tokyo). Cindy's pre-entrepreneur experiences are similar to other female entrepreneurs among my research participants. After receiving a master's degree in finance at a Hongkong university, she moved to Tokyo with her husband as a "dependent." Like many Chinese newcomers, she learned Japanese in a language school and started working in a Japanese financial company. While Cindy claimed that she had long dreamed of working independently, an important reason that "pushed" her to create a firm on her own was the working environment of the Japanese company. According to Cindy, it was a male-dominated company, and female employees could only take care of some support and secondary work with a much lower salary. In her words, female employees could get to know

their career ceilings once they join the company. Cindy quit the job and started an agency for online marketing with another female entrepreneur she got to know in an entrepreneurial workshop. Interested in fashionable garments, jewelry, and cosmetics, she intended to introduce some Japanese niche brands to China. Since most of the deals and promotions were digitalized, her business was relatively free from regional restrictions, and some of her clients were from Europe. However, during the Covid-19 pandemic, her company was profoundly affected, like many other Chinese entrepreneurs engaged in transnational economies.

3. Duan (Male; 1991; China; Publishing company)

Duan was a journalist in China. In 1991, he moved to Japan as a self-paying student and received a Ph.D. Over the past decades, he edited and translated several books introducing the immigration life of Chinese newcomers to Japan, the development of Overseas Chinese media, and the integration of war orphans back into Japan. His academic achievements helped him keep close relationships with politicians and scholars in China and Japan. In addition to being the founder of a publishing firm, Duan had multiple other statuses, including guest professors in some Chinese and Japanese universities and the chairman of several Overseas Chinese associations in Japan. His widely known status was the founder of the Chinese Japanese culture and language activity. It started in 2009 and took place almost every week in a small park in west Ikebukuro. The local Toshima government also appreciated the self-organized culture exchange activity. As Duan said, his status as an entrepreneur and a social activist overlapped.

4. Gao Ge (Male; 2009; Japan; Acupuncture and Massage)

Gao Ge was an active participant in the outdoor activities organized by the overseas Chinese associations in Japan. Many other participants called him jokingly a “culture ambassador” because he was keen on teaching Chinese traditional cultures, particularly those about Chinese traditional medicines, to Japanese or young Chinese participants. Gao Ge was one of the few

research participants who did not receive undergraduate education. As he said, he was not cut out for studying in school. Instead, he was more interested in mastering some practical skills. After moving to Japan, he chose not to enter any vocational school but to start an apprenticeship in a Chinese acupuncture and massage store. Unlike many crash courses in vocational school, Gao Ge studied and worked with a Qigong master for three years until the master passed the store to him. Gao Ge always stressed that he did not know so much about management skills or principles. One thing he valued most was to provide the most authentic Chinese acupuncture and massage to customers. Although he lived and ran the store in Tokyo's suburbs, many Chinese and Japanese customers residing in the city center would like to come a long way to enjoy his techniques.

5. Guan Jie (Female; 2005; China; Real estate agency)

Like many of the female entrepreneurs I met during the fieldwork, Guan Jie moved to Japan as a "dependent" of her ex-husband. Although having a master's degree from a famous Chinese university, she did not have many developments in her career at the beginning of her life in Japan. She was in and out of a language school, part-time workplaces, and home every day for the first four years. After adapting to the lifestyle of Japanese society, she opened a small izakaya in a small city in Shizuoka prefecture. Gao Jie is a quick learner, and it did not take long for her to master the know-how of running a small restaurant. However, due to the limitation of the potential market, the small izakaya restaurant could only maintain a regular monthly income. After obtaining some management experience, she intended to seek greater development. Therefore, she closed the izakaya and moved to Tokyo in 2011. Instead of searching for business opportunities in the food industry, she turned to real estate. One important reason was that she thought the boom of Chinese investments in Japan's real estate would come after the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008. Although the Tōhoku earthquake in

2011 held back the market development in Japan for a few years, as Guan Jie predicted, the enthusiasm for Japan's real estate did not end. Under the boom, Guan Jie's real estate agency received great success. Besides, her business was characterized by her personal experiences. As a housewife, she suffered a lot at the beginning of her immigration life. Therefore, she fully understands the plight of the female dependent immigrants in Japan and hopes to support their careers. Most of her twenty employees were female immigrants moving to Japan as "dependents" of their husbands. She believed that the female immigrants could successfully combine a career and bring up a family.

6. Hori (Male;1998; Japan; Software development)

Hori has been interested in mechanical equipment since childhood. Surrounded by many household appliances made in Japan when he was young, he was full of curiosity about the country. Hori studied software development in a Chinese college subordinate to the government. After the study, he was assigned to a research institution in Beijing. Aspiring for more challenging work, he quit the "iron rice bowl" and joined an entrepreneur team developing an electronic navigation system. Their product soon attracted the attention of a large Japanese IT company that invited Hori as the core developer to Japan later. Therefore, Hori's migration trajectory differed from most of my research participants. After a few years, Hori finished his project and decided to create something that belonged to himself. He developed an app for coupon sharing with a Japanese business partner. In order to promote his App in Chinese stores and restaurants, he had frequent contacts with many Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs in Ikebukuro.

7. Jia Ying (Male;2004; China; Education)

Jia Ying was my cousin's high school friend. His father used to be a diplomatic officer at China's embassy in Japan, and his mother does business in China. In light of the favorable

family conditions, he was the only Chinese entrepreneur who claimed that his business's set-up was relatively "easy." After receiving his bachelor's degree in Japan, he founded, together with his *senpai* (a person graduating from the same university but earlier than him), one of the earliest language schools oriented to Chinese international students in Japan. With the boom of Chinese international students to Japan, his company now covered multiple businesses, from a study abroad agency to a cram school. In 2019, his company established a private art college in Tokyo. The 35-year-old young entrepreneur operated an international company with more than one hundred employees.

8. Jian Wei (Male; 2009; Japan; Transnational trade / Cosmetic store)

Jian Wei experienced ups and downs in his entrepreneurial career over the past decade. Moving to Japan in 2009, Jian Wei started an agency handling mobile phone services, a profitable industry of the day because of the increasing demands of international students and migrants for communication services. After making a fortune, Jian Wei decided to return to China because he predicted a larger market in China's communication industry. However, since the communication industry was still not well regulated in China, his entrepreneurial experience in China did not go well. He lost almost all his savings before returning to Japan for the second time. After that, he first worked in a trading firm and realized the business opportunity of transnational trade between China and Japan. Jian Wei started once again a business independently and devoted himself, like many Chinese entrepreneurs in the 2010s, to the transnational trades of cosmetic products and household appliances. However, the rapid growth of his business and the accumulation of fortune made him feel lost. He said he had lost his way at the time and could not understand the meaning and significance of running a firm. Afterward, he commissioned the trading firm to his business partners and returned to his hometown in Heilongjiang province. During that period, he, in his words, tried to search for "a peaceful life."

He also financially supported several students in his hometown from families not affluent. Reading Taoism and Buddhism classics became one of his hobbies. A few years later, he returned to Japan for the third time. Jian Wei addressed that he changed a lot in his management styles and business prospects. Unlike most Chinese stores and restaurants in northwestern Ikebukuro, his cosmetic store seemed very "plain," without outstanding posters and advertisements. Jian Wei admired the Japanese entrepreneur Inamori Kazuo, believing his business principle that entrepreneurship was the pursuit of self-actualization.

9. Jing Wei (Male;2012; China; Study abroad agency / Real estate agency)

Many young Chinese newcomers moved to Japan through an educational channel, and some of them contributed to the reproduction of the immigration channel by opening study abroad agencies. Jing Wei was one of them. Jing Wei came to Japan for a master's degree in 2012. The first stop, like many other Chinese newcomers, was Ikebukuro. During his school time, he constantly rushed between the university, his dormitory, and the workplace for a part-time job. His life was so representative of Chinese newcomers that on the base of Jing Wei's life story, the committee of the Tokyo Chinatown Project produced a one-episode mini-movie to promote the positive image of Chinese newcomers in Ikebukuro. After graduation, Jing Wei developed his entrepreneurial career in both China and Japan. He set up a real estate agency in Tokyo. In his hometown, he opened a study abroad service agency. Jing Wei was a typical transnational entrepreneur. Unlike most Chinese entrepreneurs who handled their transnational businesses online without transnational mobility, Jing Wei always traveled back and forth between China and Japan. The Covid-19 pandemic restricted transnational mobility and made him rethink shifting his business focus to China.

10. Kaneda (Male; 1997; Japan; Restaurant)

During our conversation, Kaneda barely called himself an "entrepreneur," although he owned and operated a popular Chinese restaurant in northwest Ikebukuro. He came to Japan with a skilled labor visa (chef) and started working in the restaurant that he currently runs. The restaurant has a seventy-year history and had been transferred twice from a Japanese owner to a Taiwanese owner before Kaneda took it over. For Kaneda, taking over the restaurant means not only the transfer of managerial authority but also traditional inheritance. From the vintage interior decorations to the employees and food taste, he tried to maintain the same as before. Unlike most of the Chinese restaurants in northwest Ikebukuro providing authentic Chinese cuisine (*chūgoku ryori* in Japanese), his restaurant still insisted on localized Chinese cuisine (*chūka ryori* in Japanese) welcomed by many local Japan residence and business people. Kaneda also considered if he should change the food taste to attract more Chinese customers because of the increasing population of Chinese newcomers in the neighborhood. However, he saw him more as a "guardian" of the old restaurant. Kaneda also participated in the local shopping street associations to build close connections with the local Japanese society. His restaurant did not receive an enormous impact during 2009 and 2010 when resentment towards the Chinese newcomers appeared in the local society because, according to Kaneda, the restaurant's history was even longer than the history of Chinese immigrants to Ikebukuro. In fact, the locals did not see it as a "Chinese business."

11. Kenji (Male; 2010; Japan; Transnational trade/Cosmetic store/ E-commerce)

A six-story high building fifty meters from the Ikebukuro station was seen as a landmark for the Chinese newcomers in Ikebukuro because an audio and video store called *Zhiyin* in this building witnessed the history of the Chinese migrant groups in the past decades. After the store was closed due to spreading pirate editions, it was replaced by a cosmetic store whose owner was Kenji. In the beginning, he planned to go to Canada. In order not to add a burden to

his family, Kenji finally chose to come to Japan, where the tuition was relatively cheaper. Like many Chinese newcomers, the first stop was Ikebukuro, where he spent the first few years. After receiving a master's degree in tourism development, he devoted himself to the tourism industry. From a tourist agency to cosmetic stores and E-commerce, Kenji kept close to the trend of the increasing number of Chinese tourists to Japan. Opening the cosmetic store in such a landmark had a symbolic meaning for Kenji. By replacing the former "witness," his store represented the historical change of Chinese newcomers in the local society and aimed to lead the new development. Kenji's passion and ambition were not groundless. Many of my research participants said Kenji had become one of the representatives of Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs. Besides, although he obtained Japanese nationality, he still maintained close relationships with several influential Chinese associations and government agencies. The China Daily overseas edition depicted him as "one of the pioneers of Overseas Chinese entrepreneurs in E-commerce."

12. Lao Liu (Male;2012; China; Restaurant)

During our talks, Lao Liu stressed that the restaurants were not only means of making a living but also the cultural carrier of his hometown. Born in Hunan province, Lao Liu was very proud of Hunan cuisine's flavor, and his two restaurants were also decorated with local specialties. In contrast with the prevailing Sichuan cuisine among the Chinese restaurants in Japan, few restaurants specialized in Hunan cuisine when Lao Liu moved to Japan. After graduation from a Japanese university, he determined to open a Hunan restaurant with his fellow provincials. Although his first restaurant was in Ikebukuro, from the beginning, Lao Liu did not intend to rely exclusively on ethnic concentrations to attract customers. Instead, he hoped to introduce the hometown dishes to Japanese customers through digital networks and local channels. Many Japanese television channels have presented his restaurants, and they also appeared in some

Japanese dramas. Lao Liu was very strict with authentic flavors. Therefore, he bought out a piece of farmland, on which he planted some local ingredients (particularly chili) for his authentic Hunan dishes. In Lao Liu's words, his business strategies were promoting localization in marketing and adhering to flavor authenticity. Such ideas came from communications with his friends who run restaurants or other businesses in other countries. Lao Liu was the epitome of the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs in Japan who valued both the transnational social networks and the localization in the host society.

13. Li Qing (Male; 2009; China; New Media)

Li Qing's migration motivation reflected the local cultural tradition of Fujian province. Like many of his siblings, he started working abroad in Malaysia after graduation from a Chinese undergraduate school. A few years later, he returned to China and decided to move to another county afterward. The destination selection was very random since he applied for the studying visas of different countries, and the visa to Japan was the fastest to be issued. In his words, his migration to Japan was a "calling." When moving to Japan, he did not speak Japanese nor knew much about Japan's working environments. At that time, the only connection was that he heard many stories about the immigrants' lives in Japan from his friends from Fuqing, a city having a long history with Japan. Starting from a language school in Ikebukuro, he entered a vocational school and studied there for one year. After that, he opened a Chinese restaurant, like many of his fellow provincials. However, he conceded that he wanted to open a Chinese restaurant only because he intended to repeat other successful Chinese immigrant entrepreneurs. Personally, Li Qing did not have the passion or skills to operate a restaurant. Therefore, he decided to leave the catering industry and search for something suitable for him. With the increasing number of Chinese tourists to Japan, he found out that it was a potential market to provide helpful information for the tourists via Chinese social media, such as WeChat and Weibo. Therefore,

he opened a new media company in 2015. Unlike many Chinese entrepreneurs who moved their businesses to Ikebukuro, he moved his business out of Ikebukuro, where traditional Chinese ethnic businesses are concentrated. Instead, he intended to build a fresh and stylish image for his business.

14. Lin Fang (Male; 2011; Japan; Restaurant)

Lin Fang was born in Shaanxi. After graduating from a local cooking school, he became a chef. On one occasion, he had a talk with a friend who used to work in Japan as a technical trainee. It was the first time he had thoughts of going abroad. Although the Japanese government issues one sort of "specified skills visa" for foreign cooks, the application requirements are stringent (generally, it requires ten-year professional working experience). Therefore, Lin Fang could not come to Japan for a short time. Nevertheless, he had always kept an eye out for work opportunities in Japan. A few years later, under one friend's introduction, he got a job opportunity from a Chinese restaurant in Tokyo that was in urgent need of a Chinese pasta and pastry chef. Because Lin Fang was good at Shaanxi food, famous for Chinese pasta, he took the opportunity to move to Japan. Initially, he thought he would only stay in Japan for a few years and then return to his hometown. It turned out that he established his root in Japan. Not long after he came to Tokyo, he found out that there were few authentic Shaanxi restaurants. He decided to open a Shaanxi restaurant on his own in northwest Ikebukuro. It was a trend over the past decade that more and more Chinese immigrants opened restaurants, not for general Chinese cuisine but for regional flavors. However, as Lin Fang said, it had both advantages and disadvantages. While it could attract ethnic customers visiting for their hometown flavors, overemphasizing on regional or local authenticity might also stop Japanese customers. "If they (Japanese customers) are not familiar with our local food culture, we need to let them get

familiar," said Lin Fang. He actively promoted the Shaanxi cuisine to many Japanese social groups and hung his photos with Japanese celebrities and movie stars on the restaurant wall.

15. Ma (Female;1987; Japan; Snack bar)

Ma did not tell me her real name because, as she said, everyone in her store should call her *Mamasan* (a general term for the female owners of *Fūzoku* business in Japan). Having been living in Japan for more than thirty years and working as Mamasan in Ikebukuro for twenty years, she witnessed the history of the Chinese newcomers in the past decades. Born in Beijing in the 1960s, the center of the political turbulences during the Cultural Revolution, she suffered a lot from the political movements because her father working as a journalist, was accused of being a "right-opportunist," and the whole family was implicated. Even now, although I had a close relationship with her, political issues were taboo in our conversation. With the help of her father's friend, she came to Japan when she was twenty-seven and lived in an old apartment in Ikebukuro. After graduating from a vocational school, she married a Japanese and became a housewife. The trigger for opening a snack bar was an invitation from her friend, who had many experiences in doing business in the *fūzoku* field. Although her business was categorized as *Fūzoku,* she and all her female employees did not provide any erotic services. Most of the regular customers were middle-aged Japanese males living or working in Ikebukuro, and they felt very relaxed while talking with Ma. I always found Ma showed up at some local events and activities in Ikebukuro. As she said, living here for decades, she saw many Ikebukuro residences as close neighbors.

16. Miyasaki (Female; 1999; Japan; Education)

Miyasaki's migration experiences are exceptional. Born in Jilin province, she worked as an English teacher in a local junior high school before meeting her ex-husband, the son of a Japanese war orphan. In the 1980s, the Japanese government began to take back the Japanese

war orphans who grew up in China. Her ex-husband's mother, therefore, moved back to Japan first. After marriage, Miyasaki quit her job and moved to Japan with her ex-husband. However, her married life in Japan did not go well. They divorced three years later after she moved to Japan. From then on, she became a single mother who took care of her kid alone. During those times, she lived on making small trades in the Yokohama Chinatown and slowly saved up some money. Nevertheless, she still wanted to work in education as she used to do in China and her dream was to establish a foreigner-oriented school in Japan. Her life's turning point was the day when a Japanese factory owner asked if she could introduce some part-time workers to him. With her connections in the group of war orphans, she gradually introduced many Chinese immigrants who had similar experiences to Japanese factories. It brought her into the labor dispatching field and brought her considerable income. However, her dream has never changed, and she did not want the young Chinese immigrants to always do 3D (dirty, dangerous, and demeaning) work. Around ten years ago, she established her first private school for the descendants of war orphans. Nowadays, her business is getting larger and larger, and the school has international students from twenty-five countries.

17. Nishikawa (Female;1995; Japan; Restaurant/Entertainment)

Until I met Nishikawa, I realized that many of the restaurants and karaoke stores I frequented during my fieldwork in Ikebukuro all belonged to her. Before moving to Japan, she worked in a state-owned enterprise in Dalian. Since leaving the state-owned enterprises became a trend in the 1980s and 1990s in China, Nishikawa also quit her "iron rice bowl" (lifelong work) and decided to continue studying in Japan. After receiving her master's degree in western economic history, she passed Japan's accounting qualification examination and was employed as an accountant by a Chinese company in Japan. During this period, Nishikawa devoted herself to organizing grassroots cultural exchange activities to change the negative discourses of the

Chinese newcomers in Japan. The people she met in these activities played significant roles in her future entrepreneurial career. Whether quitting the steady work in China or doing business independently in Japan, Nishikawa was always a decisive person. Her personality, as she said, was attributed to her professional badminton training experiences during her teenage years. Her entrepreneurial career started in a Chinese restaurant in Ikebukuro, and her business has become one of the most well-known chain restaurants in the neighborhood. Nishikawa was also an active member of the local Chinese associations promoting the Tokyo Chinatown Project. In the early days of her immigration life, Nishikawa was still very active in promoting the positive image of the Chinese newcomers in Japan.

18. Oda (Female;1991; Japan; Restaurant/Real estate agency)

Oda came to Japan at the age of eighteen, the earliest among the Chinese entrepreneurs I talked to during the fieldwork. Encouraged by her Japanese teacher, she dropped her study at a Chinese university and moved to Japan. At that time, a Chinese student who wanted to study in Japan had to find a Japanese guarantor whose annual income must be higher than 10 million *yen*. Oda could not make it without her Japanese teacher's introduction to a Japanese professor. Because her parents were both working class, they could not give Oda too much financial support, so they had to borrow money from relatives. In Oda's words, all of those were the "debt of gratitude" she owed. To live up to the expectations, Oda studied hard in Japan and received a scholarship until she finished her master's studies. Despite the generous scholarship, she kept doing part-time jobs. She already had approximately eight million yen in savings when graduating from the university. With this money, she started her entrepreneurial career. Oda had a compelling desire to run a business independently . She registered a company in Tokyo with an extensive business scope even before figuring out what business she exactly wanted to do. Because of her long-term working experiences in the cuisine sector, Oda finally decided to

open a Chinese restaurant in Ikebukuro with her brother, who was also in Japan. Like many other Chinese entrepreneurs who preferred to expand businesses into different sectors, she turned to the real estate field by collaborating with her friends after having two restaurants. After commissioning all her restaurants and agencies to managers, Oda did not operate the businesses by herself anymore. Instead, she spent more time organizing grassroots activities for young Chinese immigrants living in Tokyo.

19. Qiu (Male; 2011; China; Education)

Growing up in Shenyang and studying in a high school with exchanges and cooperation with Japanese universities, Qiu came to Japan when he was eighteen, like most of his high school classmates. With excellent grades, Qiu entered Keio University, one of Japan's most famous private universities, and began to study software design. Two years later, he and three business partners founded a small cram school (*juku*). Because Qiu was still a college student at the time, the firm was not registered under his name, although he was still one of the leading managers. Therefore, he spent much time operating the cram school during his school time. After graduation, Qiu still did not run the business independently but entered a large Japanese IT company. Qiu claimed that he was a workaholic at the time because he worked in the Japanese company on workdays and in his cram school on weekends. In 2018, not long before I met him, he quit his job and started entirely devoted to his own business. Qiu did not see all his experiences as irrelevant. He set up their management system for the company, and the experiences of working in a large Japanese company also taught him valuable management skills. For the Chinese entrepreneurs' businesses in the education industry, combining the business contents of cram schools, language training schools, and study abroad agencies was common. So did Qiu's company, and he called it a "closed loop." However, surprisingly, Qiu also mentioned that he might quit the management team soon and try something new. As he

claimed, compared with the business itself, the challenges of dealing with something unfamiliar and the process of finding new solutions were more attractive to him. Considering the depression of the education industry in Japan during the pandemic, it seemed to be a prescient decision. In our latest talk, he planned to set up an IT-related new company.

20. Sato (Male;2005; Japan; Labor dispatch agency/Restaurant)

Sato was one of the youngest Chinese entrepreneurs I met in Japan. In 2005, he came to Japan alone and began to study at a junior high school in Sapporo. During his school time, Sato was interested in business and thought fascinating the legendary stories of prominent entrepreneurs and chose business management as his major at a Japanese university. His desire to start a business originated from his passion for the food industry, which was not common among my research participants because most of them threw themselves into the food industry, specifically Chinese restaurants, for the prominent market. Sato did not devote himself to the food industry after graduation. Instead, he joined a local Japanese company and became a "salaryman" to save some money and expand networks in business. He started a bar with a Japanese business partner in northwest Ikebukuro six years ago. Despite his passion and knowledge, the bar could not survive. He ascribed the failure to the complicated business environments in both local Chinese and Japanese communities. In his words, "water is deeper than he thought." For most of my research participants, the first entrepreneurial attempts usually ended in failure. At the same time, however, they started preparing for the second attempt. So did Sato. Differently, he started diversified businesses this time. In addition to a small café, Sato also ran a labor dispatch agency in Ikebukuro. Moreover, he was open to cooperating with non-ethnic members. He operated the café with several Vietnamese migrants and the labor dispatch agency with a Japanese and a Mongolian. Although his business achievements could still not be mentioned in the same breath as the Chinese newcomer

entrepreneur moving to Japan in the 1990s, his entrepreneurial story reflected a more open business vision of younger Chinese entrepreneurs.

21. Sayuri (Female; 2003; Japan; IT Consultant /Labor dispatch agency)

Moving to Japan with her husband, who was employed as an IT engineer in a Japanese company, Sayuri used to be a housewife at the beginning few years of her migration life. Before that, she was a Chinese teacher in an elementary school in Zhengzhou, Henan province. After arriving in Tokyo, she lived in a neighborhood located in Tokyo's suburbs, a gathering place of IT workers. Shortly afterward, she got acquainted with many international IT workers living there. 2008 was a turning point, called the "winter season" of Japan's IT industry. Many Chinese IT engineers suffered from it because most of them came to Japan as contract employees and the receiving Japanese companies had no intention of renewing their contracts. Without renewed working contracts, foreign IT engineers would not be able to apply for visa extensions. Sayuri's husband was also facing the same problem. However, the risk inspired her to establish an agency maintaining long-term relationships with foreign IT workers. After a few years of preparation, she set up an agency not only dispatches Chinese IT engineers to Japanese companies but also helps them build career planning and search for better opportunities. In the beginning, her company was in Akihabara, Tokyo, which is famous for its IT-relevant industries. With the overseas Chinese enterprises' growing demand for IT engineers, she decided to move her company to Ikebukuro to build closer relationships with the Chinese community in Japan.

22. Shizuko (Female; 1996; Japan; Transnational Trade/Manufacture)

Before migrating to Japan, she worked in a trading company in Qingdao, Shandong province. Many colleges could speak English and Japanese in the trading company because of the increasing commercial connections with these countries in the 1990s. Aspiring to learn a new

language, she came to Japan with the help of her cousin, who was living in Tokyo at that time. After graduating from a language school, she entered a Japanese university but quit it after two years because she received a job offer from a Japanese trading company. However, she did not take charge of the core business but mainly dealt with administrative issues. Working in a Japanese company's general affairs apartment as a female foreign employee gave her few opportunities to receive a promotion. With business experience in international trade, she saw food trading between China and Japan as a potential opportunity and set up her trading company. However, the increasingly fierce competition caused a decline in her company's profits. After marrying her former Japanese college, she opened up a new business field – selling refrigeration equipment for seaport warehouses - with the help of her father-in-law, who was a professional. She did not have close relationships with Japan's ethnic Chinese community because her business had less to do with the ethnic group. However, she has been keen on organizing China-Japan cultural exchange events in recent years.

23. Sugiyama (Male; 1998; Japan; Food processing)

Sugiyama was one of the earliest Chinese newcomers to Japan I met during my fieldwork. He was born in a small city in Fujian province that had a trend of migrating to Japan at the time. Unlike many young migrants in his hometown who came to Japan without finishing a college education, Sugiyama migrated to Japan after receiving his bachelor's degree. Nevertheless, it was still difficult for him to find a decent job in Japan at the beginning of his life. He started working in a Chinese restaurant owned by one of his fellow townspeople, quickly growing from an apprentice to a restaurant manager. A few years later, the owner decided to retire and transferred the restaurant to him. After that, he developed several restaurants in Tokyo, including Ikebukuro and Shinjuku, and Yokohama Chinatown. The turning point of his business happened in 2009. One of his employees was reported for an illegal stay in Japan

without working permission. In the same year, he found out that one of his managers from the same hometown misappropriated a large amount of daily flow. These things made Sugiyama very disappointed, and he doubted if he should continue running the restaurants. Since then, he began to search for other business opportunities. Finally, he found a potential market for importing Chinese chestnuts to Japan. Sugiyama was not satisfied with only importing food materials. Therefore, he also set up his chestnut processing factory and started promoting his brand. Sugiyama said entrepreneurship was nothing profound and mysterious but required a keen sense of remobilizing resources.

24. Sun (Male; 2013; China; Beauty salon)

Sun has long life experiences in China, Korea, and Japan. Sun is a Chinese Korean born in Jilin province, China. With the help of his relatives in South Korea, Sun moved to Korea and studied in a vocational school for hair design. During summer and winter vacations every year, Sun would come to Japan and do part-time jobs in Tokyo's Korean beauty salons for a few months. After studying in Korea, he moved back to his hometown in China and started a beauty salon on his own. However, his beauty salon did not run well due to a lack of management skills. When he was depressed about his career, a Korean friend, the owner of a Korean beauty salon in Tokyo where Sun used to work, offered him a chance for long-term employment. After moving to Japan, Sun worked in different beauty salons run by Korean, Chinese, and Japanese until he started his second entrepreneurial career. Having long been working with diverse groups made Sun very open to choosing his business partners, regardless of their origins. His current beauty salons in Ikebukuro and Takadanobaba, Tokyo, were very "cosmopolitan," including business partners and employees from different countries of East Asia and Southeast Asia.

25. Sun Jian (Male; 2009; China; Hotel/Real estate agency)

The first time I met Sun Jian was not long before he moved his office from Ikebukuro to Shinjuku. It was common for the Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs to move their offices out of Ikebukuro with the development of their businesses. After graduation, Sun Jian borrowed a massive amount of money from his relatives in China and started an agency undertaking outsourcing of hotel cleaning. In the beginning, he did not want to mention what sort of business he did to his relatives because he thought that a cleaning agency sounded not as a "fancy enterprise" as the relatives expected. However, his cleaning agency grew very fast because he could get access to many international students who sought part-time jobs while many Japanese competitors were exiting the industry. Sun Jian kept close contact with Zhejiang's Overseas Chinese associations in Japan, and with the help of several acquaintances, he entered the hotel industry. Not only did he undertake the outsourcing of hotel cleaning, but his agency started providing services of guesthouse operations. It was also a promising industry because the dramatic increase in Chinese tourists to Japan before the pandemic stimulated the growing investments to Japan's hotel industry. Many research participants whose businesses were not directly related to the hotel industry also invested in many guesthouses in Tokyo but did not take part in the management, which gave Sun Jian's agency many business opportunities.

26. Xin (Male; 1997; China; Software development)

Xin was the all-rounder who specialized in many different skills among my research participants. Born in Changle, Fujian, and graduating from a local university with a bachelor's degree in accounting, he started working in a local advertisement company, not as an accountant but as a sales businessman. During that period, he became interested in design and learned Photoshop on his own. After working for a few years, he came to Japan to broaden his horizon. Like many Chinese newcomer immigrants in Japan, Xin started his migration life at a

language school in Ikebukuro and entered a Japanese university for his second bachelor's degree in IT management. During that period, he learned programming and web development. His education, work, and business experiences were diverse. Before opening his own business, Xin worked in an advertisement and communication company, a publishing company, and a Chinese grocery (co-founder). Despite his seemingly scattered experiences, his extensive social networks and knowledge in various fields helped him find his entrepreneurial niche. In 2007, when there were only few IT companies run by Chinese newcomers and traditional ethnic businesses still predominated in the ethnic market, Xin opened his digital marketing company, targeting other Chinese ethnic entrepreneurs in Japan and helping them find new marketing channels. During the past decade, Xin also attempted to find more opportunities in education and E-business but failed to make satisfactory achievements. Nowadays, Xin concentrated again on Ikebukuro, where the place his migration life started, and developed an App for Chinese immigrants to search for food, services, and entertainment in Tokyo. Xin was not only an entrepreneur but also one of the founders of the Tokyo Chinatown Project and the organizer of the social group in Ikebukuro for promoting traditional Chinese classics.

27. Yu Bing (Female; 2007; China; Transnational Trade)

Yu Bing has started businesses twice so far. The first time was a ramen restaurant. After graduation from a Japanese university, she had difficulty finding a job in Japan. Therefore, she worked in a ramen restaurant as a part-time employee. Shortly after, she decided to open her ramen restaurant. Operating the restaurant took her so much energy that she did not have enough time to accompany her son. Like many other Chinese entrepreneurs in Japan, she looked promising the commercial connections between the two countries and entered the e-commerce sector. She opened a trading firm providing small-scale procurement services with her college classmate seven years ago. Whether the former ramen restaurant or the current

trading firm, Yu Bing has never thought of moving them out of Ikebukuro. For her, Ikebukuro is where she can obtain the most red-hot information about what is popular in Japan and what Chinese customers want.

28. Yu Long (Male; 2004; Japan; Restaurant)

Born in a central city in Zhejiang province, Yu Long grew up hearing many legendary stories of local entrepreneurs. His father was also running a middle-sized company in his hometown. Like many young Chinese people born in the 1980s and 1990s, Yu Long was deeply attracted to Japanese pop culture, especially the animations. At nineteen years old, Yu Long came to Japan. From the stories of Zhejiang entrepreneurs' and his father's experiences, Yu Long believed that a successful entrepreneur did not necessarily need high educational qualifications but experience, resolution, and talent. Therefore, he decided not to continue studying at a university but at a vocational school in Japan. During his school time, he did many part-time jobs in restaurants and izakaya, from which he learned how to manage a restaurant in Japan. After graduation, he opened a Chinese restaurant in Ikebukuro. For him, running a Chinese restaurant was a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the well-known new "Chinatown" and the concentration of Chinese businesses generated a scale effect. On the other hand, however, his restaurant must confront cut-throat competition. His strategy to break through the dilemma was "integration," specifically mixing Chinese cuisine with different food cultures over the world. On the basis of Chinese cuisine, he integrated Japanese *yōshoku*, Italian, Brazilian, and Vietnamese flavors. Innovation, as Yu Long said, was the core of his business.

29. Zhou (Male; 2014; China; Real estate agency)

While he was an art student before moving to Japan, Zhou did not follow the path of art after graduation. Instead, he had long dreamed of becoming an entrepreneur. Like many young Chinese entrepreneurs born in the 1990s, he was inspired by China's pro-entrepreneurship

social discourse in the 2010s and the successful experiences of some prominent Chinese entrepreneurs, especially Jack Ma. Zhou moved to Japan because he thought it was a thriving period between China and Japan in economic and cultural communications (before the Covid-19 pandemic). After one year in a Japanese university as an auditor, he did not continue studying. Zhou was very clear that he would start his own business in Japan. Therefore, instead of receiving another degree, he preferred to accumulate entrepreneurial experience as soon as possible. Among the most popular business industries for Chinese newcomers in Japan (such as the food industry, transnational trade, and real estate), he chose to start a real estate agency helping Chinese international students to rent apartments in Tokyo, particularly in Ikebukuro and Takadanobaba, where there were many cram schools and language schools for students to prepare college examinations. Zhou's firm did not have an absolute advantage because his business was still at the initial stage and in the very competitive real estate market. He said he kept the firm going "with his own legs." He would like to meet and talk with any potential customer, regardless of whether they had needs for renting apartments at the time. He was always "on the way," as he said. Instead of economic rewards, Zhou claimed that the most valuable thing he obtained in his entrepreneurial career was his growing willpower.

30. Zi Xiao (Male; 2008; China; Transnational trade)

Before studying in Japan, I attended a workshop in Zhongguancun, Beijing. The workshop aimed to encourage and teach the youth to start their businesses. I met Zi Xiao in the workshop, who joined the workshop during his vacation in China. Zi Xiao moved to Japan after undergraduate school. Like many young Chinese entrepreneurs, Zi Xiao was inspired by China's "startup boom" in the 2010s and aspired to run a business independently. Therefore, he did not even consider finding a job in Japan after graduation but joined many entrepreneurial workshops in both China and Japan. He wanted to start his business as soon as possible. Zi

Xiao had no interest in traditional ethnic businesses. However, he admitted that he had no idea what kind of business he could do initially. After various explorations, Zi Xiao found a small business niche suitable for him. Zi Xiao grew up learning piano, and he had many friends in China and Japan who were music lovers. It inspired him to start a music instrument trade company. In his view, the demands of Chinese musicians for Japanese music instruments were great, and meanwhile, it was a relatively less competitive niche. Unlike many Chinese entrepreneurs working on transnational trade between China and Japan, Zi Xiao's business did not suffer a heavy setback during the pandemic. Because of his close connections with Japan's instrument production industry, he had access to more global clients instead of exclusively relying on China's market.

APPENDIX 2

Summary of Dissertation Findings

This dissertation aims to answer how Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs in Japan negotiated and recreated ethnicity in their entrepreneurial practices. In this dissertation, Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs are defined as migrants who migrated after the 1980s from mainland China to Japan and established businesses there. Based on the data collected from ethnographic fieldwork in Tokyo in 2018 and 2019, this dissertation identifies three approaches to the question: ethnic networks, ethnic expressions, and sense of belonging.

Rather than viewing co-ethnic networks as predisposed social resources that favor their entrepreneurial activities, Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs constantly couple with and decouple from diverse co-ethnic networks in response to their entrepreneurial practices. The dissertation identifies seven types of co-ethnic networks associated with Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs' daily lives and businesses, including family members, fellow provincials, ethnic employees, ethnic customers, formal and informal overseas Chinese associations, as well as entrepreneur cliques. It points out that their entrepreneurial status profoundly influenced the formation and development of the networks, indicating overseas Chinese entrepreneurs' dynamic views of the relationships between entrepreneurship and ethnic ties.

Focusing on Ikebukuro, Tokyo, an area known for the concentration of Chinese newcomers and Chinese entrepreneurs, the dissertation highlights that the social and historical context of the local Japanese society restricted but did not decide the Chinese entrepreneurs' ethnic expressions. Due to negative discourses on Chinese newcomers in Ikebukuro and disputes about Ikebukuro's local identity which were triggered by the "Tokyo Chinatown Project," Chinese entrepreneurs must reconsider how to present themselves in the local society. The dissertation identifies that balancing visibility in different social activities has become a common strategy. On the one hand, it enables Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs to meet their commercial needs and to fulfill their desires to present themselves positively. On the other hand, it avoids deteriorating conflicts and facilitates coexistence.

As the Chinese newcomers' ethnic identity is replaced by national identity and belonging, the dissertation presents that their entrepreneurial achievements that benefit from China's increasing economic force to a large extent evoke a sense of co-presence, strengthening emotional attachment and belonging to China. However, confronting discrimination against

non-Japanese entrepreneurs, many Chinese entrepreneurs chose to change their nationality, which caused emotional discomfort and inconsistency in their self-perception. To reconcile the contradiction, they take a bifocal insight, distinguishing their cultural belonging from citizenship.

This dissertation integrates Chinese newcomer entrepreneurs' migrant and entrepreneurial statuses and draws attention to the entrepreneurialization of ethnicity. It enriches the anthropological approach to entrepreneurship research and brings the changes in immigrant entrepreneurs' emotions and mindsets to the fore. Moreover, it provides an additional view of understanding Chinese newcomers' integration into Japanese society.

Zusammenfassung der Ergebnisse der Dissertation

Diese Dissertation zielt darauf ab, zu beantworten, wie chinesische Newcomer-Unternehmer in Japan ethnische Zugehörigkeit in ihren unternehmerischen Aktivitäten verhandelten und neu definierten. In dieser Dissertation werden chinesische Newcomer-Unternehmer als Migranten definiert, die nach den 1980er Jahren vom chinesischen Festland nach Japan migrierten und dort ein Unternehmen gründeten. Basierend auf den in den Jahren 2018 und 2019 in einer ethnografischen Feldstudie gesammelten Daten, identifiziert diese Dissertation drei Herangehensweisen an die Frage: ethnische Netzwerke, ethnische Ausdrucksformen und Zugehörigkeitsgefühl.

Anstatt ethnische Netzwerke als prädisponierte soziale Ressourcen, die der unternehmerischen Aktivität förderlich sind, zu betrachten, koppeln sich chinesische Newcomer-Unternehmer als Reaktion auf ihre unternehmerischen Aktivitäten ständig mit verschiedenen ethnischen Netzwerken und entkoppeln sich von diesen. Die Dissertation identifiziert sieben Arten von ethnischen Netzwerken, die mit dem täglichen Leben und den Geschäften chinesischer Newcomer-Unternehmer verbunden sind: Familienmitglieder, Landsleute aus der Provinz, ethnische Angestellte, ethnische Kunden, formelle und informelle chinesische Vereinigungen im Ausland sowie Unternehmer-Cliquen. Es wird dargelegt, dass ihr Unternehmerstatus die Bildung und Entwicklung der Netzwerke maßgeblich beeinflusst hat, was die dynamischen Ansichten der chinesischen Unternehmer über die Beziehung zwischen Unternehmertum und ethnischen Bindungen zeigt.

In der Diskussion über die Interaktionen zwischen chinesischen Newcomer-Unternehmern und der lokalen japanischen Gesellschaft von Ikebukuro hebt die Dissertation hervor, dass der soziale und historische Kontext der lokalen Gesellschaft die ethnischen Ausdrucksformen der chinesischen Unternehmer einschränkte, aber nicht bestimmte. Aufgrund der negativen Diskurse in der Migrationsgeschichte chinesischer Neuankömmlinge in Ikebukuro und der durch das „Tokyo Chinatown Project“ ausgelösten Auseinandersetzungen um die lokale Identität müssen chinesische Unternehmer in der Frage, wie sie sich in der lokalen Gesellschaft präsentieren, umdenken. Infolgedessen wurde das Austarieren der Sichtbarkeit bei verschiedenen sozialen Aktivitäten zu einer gemeinsamen Strategie. Einerseits ermöglicht sie ihnen, ihre kommerziellen Bedürfnisse und den Wunsch nach einer positiven Außendarstellung zu erfüllen. Andererseits vermeidet sie eskalierende Konflikte und erleichtert das Zusammenleben.

Da die ethnische Identität chinesischer Neuankömmlinge durch nationale Identität und Zugehörigkeit ersetzt wird, stellt die Dissertation fest, dass ihre unternehmerischen Leistungen, die in hohem Maße von Chinas zunehmender Wirtschaftskraft profitieren, ein Gefühl der Ko-Präsenz in dem Heimatland hervorrufen und die emotionale Bindung und Zugehörigkeit zu China stärken. Angesichts der Diskriminierung nicht-japanischer Unternehmer entschieden sich jedoch viele chinesische Unternehmer für einen Wechsel ihrer Nationalität, was zu Widersprüchlichkeiten in ihrer Selbstwahrnehmung und emotionalem Unbehagen führte. Um den Widerspruch zu versöhnen, nehmen sie eine bifokale Sichtweise auf ihre Identität ein, und unterscheiden ihre kulturelle Zugehörigkeit von ihrer Staatsbürgerschaft.

Die Dissertation integriert den Migranten- und Unternehmerstatus chinesischer Newcomer-Unternehmer und hebt die Unternehmerisierung der Ethnizität hervor. Sie bereichert den anthropologischen Ansatz der Entrepreneurship-Forschung und bringt die Veränderungen in den Emotionen und Denkweisen von Unternehmern mit Migrationshintergrund in den Vordergrund. Darüber hinaus bietet sie einen zusätzlichen Blickwinkel auf das Verständnis der Integration chinesischer Neuankömmlinge in die japanische Gesellschaft.

APPENDIX 3

BIN LI

Education

- University of International Relations, Beijing, China

  B.A. Japanese Study, Jul.2012
- Tohoku University, Sendai, Japan

  M.A. Environmental Science & Cultural Environment, Mar. 2017

  Research Topic: Technical trainee program and Chinese labor migrants

Research Experiences

- Oct.2017-May. 2023

  Doctoral Researcher • Graduate School of East Asian Studies/Social and Culture Anthropology Faculty, Frei Universität Berlin, Berlin, Germany

  Research Topic: Entrepreneurship and Chinese immigrants
- Apr. 2019 – Nov. 2019

  Research fellow • Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan

Publication list

Bin Li. 2023. “Discerning Transnational Flows: The Formation and Development of Chinese Newcomers’ Transnational Businesses in Japan.” ASIEN 162/163 (January/April), 15-33 (forthcoming).