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**The Happiness of Rural-to-Urban Migrant Workers in  
Shanghai: Comparing Migrant Workers and  
Shanghai's Urban Residents**

**Handan Xue**

**Qualification for which the thesis is submitted**

**The department in which the research was conducted**

**Durham University**

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## **Abstract**

Despite extensive research into China's migrant workers, little is known about their happiness levels, particularly in the cultural and social context of China. Based on hedonic and eudaimonic theories, this study explores the happiness of China's migrant workers in terms of subjective wellbeing, mental health, and self-actualisation, in addition to contrasting it with that of urban residents, by analysing 45 semi-structured interviews and 600 questionnaires conducted in Shanghai in 2014. The major findings are as follows: (1) migrant workers' definition of happiness primarily focuses on their family lives, especially their children, and not particularly on themselves; (2) migrant workers' definition of happiness is significantly influenced by traditional Confucian culture, while this is less true for urban residents; (3) demographic variables, i.e. gender, age, education, marital status, income, working hours, and number of children, appear to have no discernible effect on migrant workers' happiness levels, except for housing status and length of residence; (4) seven factors affect the happiness levels of migrant workers: material wealth; meeting the basic psychological needs of relatedness; mental health; social environment; meeting the basic psychological needs of competence; family life; and job and career; (5) a happy migrant worker is one who has a healthy mind, satisfactory material conditions and relatedness needs, a basic level of satisfaction with the social environment, and a higher degree of satisfaction with his/her family life, job, and competence; (6) there is a happiness gap between migrant workers and urban residents, and distinctions in material wellbeing regarding income, social welfare, and housing are the main drivers of such a disparity. With regard to Chinese urbanisation, building an equal and free Chinese society, lowering property prices, improving migrant workers' satisfaction with their material conditions, and improving migrant workers' education and professional skills would best promote migrant workers' happiness; (7) two theoretical models – 'Mapping Chinese Happiness' and 'The Cupcake Model' – are proposed to generalise the characteristics and influential factors of Chinese people's happiness.

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## **Declaration**

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# 1 Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Rationale

### *1.1.1 Do people feel happy in China?*

China has undergone significant economic growth, reform, opening-up, and social changes over the past 30 years, all of which have led to it becoming an influential member of the international community and emerging markets. In economic terms, the people of China have enjoyed a dramatic increase in income because of rapid development of the Chinese economy; in this sense, China's disposable income per capita increased by 1,737 per cent between 1978 and 2012, while its GDP per capita grew by a staggering 2,443 per cent during the same period (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2013). Thus, the material lives and standard of living of the people of China have greatly improved as a result of China's economic boom.

However, more money does not necessarily mean more happiness. China's meteoric economic rise raises the question of whether China's fast-growing economy has made its people happier, the answer to which is probably not particularly optimistic. Evidence shows that, despite China's astonishing economic progress, its happiness index is relatively low. According to the Gallup World Poll (2010), between 2005 and 2009, Denmark, South Korea, Russia, and China were ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, 56<sup>th</sup>, 73<sup>rd</sup>, and 125<sup>th</sup> respectively among 155 countries in terms of happiness (Forbes, 2010). Similarly, a World Happiness Report (United Nations, 2013) ranked Denmark, South Korea, Russia, and China 1<sup>st</sup>, 41<sup>st</sup>, 68<sup>th</sup>, and 93<sup>rd</sup> respectively among all countries between 2010 and 2012. These four countries were specifically chosen for comparison for the following reasons: Denmark is ranked the happiest country in the world but has an extremely low or even negative economic growth rate; South Korea's national economy, like China's, experienced rapid development between 1990 and 2011; and Russia is currently undergoing the same social transformation as China.

According to Easterlin (2010), even though the income of the people of China doubled over a 10-year period, they experienced a slight decline in life satisfaction. In an article

about Chinese people’s life satisfaction from 1990 to 2010, Easterlin et al. (2012) analysed the trend of life satisfaction during China’s socio-economic transition and the differences in life satisfaction by socio-economic status. In doing so, they argue that the trajectory of life satisfaction in China followed ‘a U-shaped swing while having a nil or declining trend’ (ibid., p.9775). They further suggest that the decline of life satisfaction in China mainly took place among the lowest socio-economic groups due to the fact that an initial highly egalitarian distribution of income in China was replaced by an increasingly unequal one (see Table 1.1).

**Table 1.1: Life satisfaction by income group (1990 and 2007)**

<b>Income group</b>	<b>Proportion reporting high levels of life satisfaction in 1990</b>	<b>Proportion reporting high levels of life satisfaction in 2007</b>
Upper third	68	71
Middle third	72	58
Lower third	65	42
All	68	59

While some researchers believe that unequal distributions of income could be a positive promoter of people’s happiness during economic development (e.g. Bardhan et al., 2000), most researchers agree that growing income inequality is one of the major causes of deterioration in the wellbeing of Chinese people (e.g. Brockmann et al., 2009; Wang, 2011; Easterlin, 2012). A generally accepted view is that China’s economic growth over the past 30 years has been achieved at the expense of income inequality, especially between urban and rural areas. Yang and Zhou (1999) argue that a widening of the rural-urban divide since 1985 has been a consequence of the Chinese government’s financial transfer programmes in favour of the urban sector. In *Urban-Biased Policies and Rising Income Inequality in China*, Yang (1999) points out that, in the 1980s and 1990s, state investment in the rural sector accounted for less than 10 per cent of the national budget, despite the fact that the rural population made up 73–76 per cent of the total population. Yang also stresses that rural-urban income inequality comprises a large proportion of the total inequality in China, and the expanding gap between the urban and rural sectors in recent years has led to China’s rising inequality. According to Xie and Zhou (2014), more than 10 per cent of general income inequality in China can be ascribed to the widening income

gap between rural and urban areas.

Therefore, it is hardly surprising that China has become one of the most unequal societies in the world since the 1990s, so much so that reducing the rural-urban income gap has represented a major priority for the Hu-Wen government and its successor. At present, China has one of the world's highest levels of income inequality, even worse than countries with advanced economies such as the US, Japan, and Germany. China's Gini coefficient, a widely applied measure of inequality, has risen from roughly 0.3 in the 1980s to 0.474<sup>1</sup> in 2012 (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2013). China also has the world's largest rural-urban income disparity (Li and Yue, 2005). The rural-urban income gap in China has increased from 1:2.57 (rural income being 1) in 1978 to 1:3.10 in 2012, peaking at 1:3.33 in 2009 (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2013). China appears to be a rapidly growing economic powerhouse, but it seems to be less successful when it comes to the happier lives that its citizens want. In this sense, the happiness of most Chinese people is not improving despite the country's economic upsurge.

### ***1.1.2 The unanswered question: Do migrant workers feel happy in China?***

A tide of rural migrants started to appear in the late 1980s and grew rapidly with the expanding urban-rural gap in the 1990s. Today, rural migrants account for about one-fifth of China's total population. The appearance of migrant workers is closely associated with China's urban-rural dualistic economic structure, with particular regard to the *hukou* system (the household registration system) and the imbalances between urban and rural society.

According to Liang and Ma (2004), China's migrant workers are people who have temporarily moved from rural to urban areas without a permanent permit for urban residence (*chengshi hukou*). The 2000 census (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2001) depicts them as usually young, with a higher-than-average level of education than others from their place of emigration, predominantly male, working in the private sector, holding jobs in factories and the service industry, working long hours, with lower household incomes than permanent urban residents and higher incomes than rural

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<sup>1</sup> The World Bank considers a coefficient of above 0.40 to represent severe income inequality.

residents, and coming mainly from poor rural areas such as Sichuan, Henan, and Jiangxi provinces and moving to metropolitan cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou. Unlike trans-culture or trans-country immigrants, war refugees, or internal migrants in North America and Europe (e.g. Dion and Barn, 1975; Miritsuga and Sue, 1983; Sluzki, 1986; Dion and Giordano, 1990; Kuo, 1995; Pernice and Brook, 1996; Noh et al., 1999; Li et al., 2006), China's migrant workers are temporary migrants because of existing legal restrictions on employment and housing in cities (Shi, 2008). Further, China's migrant workers are almost exclusively economically-driven and are therefore different from most migrants described in earlier studies, who are driven not only by economic reasons but also by cultural, political, ecological, or religious reasons. Growing income inequality between urban and rural areas in China is a strong incentive for rural residents to migrate to urban areas in search of better economic conditions (Li and Zhao, 1999).

Unfortunately, although millions of migrant workers have made an enormous contribution to the lasting growth of the Chinese economy, they have received little in return. This is not only because of the unequal distribution of both economic resources and social welfare, but also because of the lack of proper attention paid to migrant workers' happiness. In fact, the question of whether migrant workers feel happy in China has never been answered satisfactorily, in spite of their difficult living circumstances. According to a recent study by the Chinese government, migrant worker households suffer the lowest levels of happiness amongst all Chinese households, with 6.49 out of 10 points, which is 0.43 lower than rural households and 0.23 lower than urban unemployed households (Chinese Family Happiness Hot Issues Survey, 2015). Wu (2007) also notes that China's migrant workers in Zhejiang Province are much less happy than other occupational groups and young migrant workers are less happy than their elders. In addition, *The People's Daily* (2014) reports that crimes committed by migrant workers comprise more than 70 per cent of all crime, with a peak age for committing crime of between 18 to 29 years, and 25 per cent of migrant worker crime relates to crimes of intentional injury, 14.3 per cent of which are fraud. Although some studies have gradually begun to focus on promoting migrant workers' living conditions and social integration over the past decade (see Chapter 4 in regard to relevant studies on China's migrant workers), they have had limited success. More specifically, there has been very little English and Chinese language research on the

happiness of China's migrant workers.

This does not mean that the wellbeing of migrant workers has not attracted the attention of academic researchers. Most empirical studies in this area have concentrated on migrant workers' urban adaptation, living status, social security, the new generation of migrant workers' identities, and problems frequently encountered in the process of migrant worker urbanisation and the policies involved therein. Theoretically, most previous studies have focused on urbanisation, urban-rural relations, social mobility, urban-rural inequality, and imbalanced development in China. Although previous research has illustrated a less optimistic and unequal living state for migrant workers and recommended that the government should introduce policies to enable migrant workers to take part in social development, their happiness, or the question of whether China's migrant workers feel happier or less happy than China's urban population, remains unexamined. A prevalent point of view is that, if the Chinese government improves migrant workers' material conditions, they will automatically feel happier; from such a perspective, exploring their happiness may not be as important as improving their material benefits. However, the reality is probably not quite as simple, given that evidence to the contrary has been uncovered (e.g. Easterlin, 1973; Diener and Oishi, 2000; Cao, 2009; Easterlin and Angelescu, 2009; Easterlin et al., 2010).

The happiness of China's migrant workers is an extremely important topic not only because of the need to protect them as potentially vulnerable people, but also to build a safer, happier, and more equal Chinese society. Living at the bottom of China's socio-economic hierarchy, migrant workers leave their homes and families for jobs that offer less pay than urban residents. They make key contributions to China's economic expansion but have the lowest levels of happiness and the highest crime rate. They need care and protection, in terms of both their physical and subjective wellbeing. With this in mind, it is hoped that this research will benefit the least well-off members of Chinese society and reveal the truth about the happiness of the real urban poor in order to inform Chinese society about the realities of this marginalised and stigmatised group of people and provide recommendations for governmental planning in China.

## **1.2 Theoretical Perspectives and Framework**

Generally speaking, happiness is believed to include both hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing. Hedonic wellbeing is the experience of pleasant effects in one's life, while eudaimonic wellbeing relates to the experience of enriching activities and personal development. One has achieved all-round happiness when experiencing high levels of both hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing. Happiness is also highly influenced by cultural and social factors. Therefore, human happiness can be most productively analysed as a dynamic that constitutes all the aforementioned elements within specific cultural and social contexts. The section below provides a snapshot of the theoretical perspectives utilised in this study to answer the following important questions:

- (I) How is happiness defined in this study?
- (II) What theoretical perspectives and frameworks can be used to measure/analyse the happiness of China's migrant workers and the whole of Chinese society?

Through analysing empirical data gathered from a survey and in-depth interviews, this study aims to measure and analyse the happiness of China's migrant workers in the social and cultural setting of contemporary China and compare it with that of their urban counterparts. As happiness is a psychological state, it is inevitable that psychological tools and frameworks will be used to measure the happiness of migrant workers and urban residents, including the framework of subjective wellbeing and the theory of self-determination. Contemporary Chinese culture, including the legacies of Confucianism, Marxism, and Maoism, will be delineated as the cultural backgrounds and basis for theory in analysing the happiness of migrant workers or Chinese citizens within the context of a Chinese setting.

### ***1.2.1 Defining happiness: Integrating hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing***

First, this study defines happiness as both hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing, which is in line with an understanding that happiness is more than global self-reports on life satisfaction; in this sense, everyday wellbeing is considered to be a rich mixture of self-actualisation and ecological functioning (Stone et al., 1999). In other words, human happiness cannot be complete without either hedonic or eudaimonic wellbeing. This

viewpoint further requires an integrated measure of happiness that is broader than simply surveying subjective wellbeing, as in previous research developed in a Chinese setting. In recent years, adopting an integrated approach to studying happiness has been accepted by many researchers, not only in theory but also in practice. For example, Ryan and Deci (2001) illustrate that human wellbeing is best thought of as a combination of both hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing; Gallagher et al. (2009) state that hedonia and eudaimonia have different influences upon human wellbeing; Delle Fave et al. (2010) argue that hedonic wellbeing contributes more to impermanent happiness, whereas eudaimonic wellbeing slowly facilitates an individual's basic level of happiness; Seligman (2002) demonstrates that an integrated perspective contributes to an all-round good life because individuals who experience both high hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing have greater overall wellbeing than those who only experience high hedonic or eudaimonic wellbeing.

### ***1.2.2 Measuring happiness***

This research is concerned with the social origins of happiness and its distribution across two major social groups in China. Nevertheless, the integrated approach to studying human happiness explained above needs a measure of both hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing as psychological states; therefore, two psychological frameworks are introduced for defining and measuring hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing. The sections of this study associated with hedonic wellbeing are based on the notion of subjective wellbeing (SWB) proposed by Ed Diener (1984; 2000; 2009a), which is a measurement framework in accordance with ethical hedonism, proposing that individuals experience happiness when their positive affect and life satisfaction are both high. In this study, SWB is mainly used to investigate participants' life satisfaction and positive affect, which tend to provide short-term happiness (e.g. illustrated in the question: 'How satisfied are you with your standard of living?'). The primary goal of measuring SWB is to follow the hedonic perspective of pleasure attainment and pain avoidance in order to uncover the life satisfaction of both migrant workers and urban residents who have a variety of socio-demographic characteristics. In this regard, the International Wellbeing Group's (2006) Personal Well-Being Index-Adult (the PWI-A) is used to measure hedonic life satisfaction. The sections of this study associated with eudaimonic wellbeing primarily adopt the self-

determination theory (SDT) proposed by Deci and Ryan in the 1980s, in addition to the concept of psychological wellbeing (PWB) proposed by Ryff in 1989. SDT is a eudaimonic approach that emphasises human beings' innermost power and self-actualisation. It argues that simply pursuing life satisfaction brought about by extrinsic factors, such as fame and money, can have a harmful effect on both wellbeing and mental health; instead, happiness is brought about by the fulfilment of basic psychological needs. In this study, SDT is used to explore the participants' basic levels of psychological fulfilment, self-actualisation, and permanent wellbeing (e.g. illustrated in the question: 'To what extent can you be yourself in your daily life?'). The primary aim of measuring SDT is to investigate whether China's migrant workers and urban residents live happy lives that are meaningful to them. At the same time, although mental health is partly included in SDT, it is measured separately under the concept of PWB because migrant workers' high crime rate may imply a lower performance with regard to psychological wellbeing. In this sense, the aim of measuring PWB is to investigate the psychological wellbeing, especially the mental health status, of China's migrant workers and urban residents. To measure eudaimonic wellbeing, Johnston and Finney's (2010) Basic Needs Satisfaction in General Scale (BNSG-S) is employed in order to explore eudaimonic self-determination and the needs for self-actualisation, and Kozma and Stones' (1980) Memorial University of Newfoundland Scale of Happiness (MUNSH) is applied to describe eudaimonic PWB and mental health.

According to the integrated perspective, individuals who experience both high-level hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing are considered to be living all-round happy lives. This implies that it can be difficult to measure hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing with the same scale. Hence, the two types of wellbeing are measured separately in this study, although their results will be examined together in order to develop more integrative and coherent findings.

Methodologically, a quantitative survey and semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted to investigate the specific details and profound meanings of the happiness of China's migrant workers and urban residents and to explore participants' personal views and experiences on general wellbeing, hedonic life satisfaction, eudaimonic self-actualisation, and PWB. In addition to describing the levels of happiness of migrant

workers and urban residents, the interviews also aimed to investigate how participants define their happiness, the factors affecting their happiness, and the conditions that best promote their happiness in the context of contemporary China. The frameworks applied in the interviews included SWB, SDT, PWB, as well as sociological theories, such as Veenhoven's (1991) conception that happiness is relative. A cultural approach was applied to the research, as there is a strong culture in China that is both inherited and changing (i.e. the legacy of Confucian culture and China's Marxist culture). Since Chinese urbanisation is the social background to the emergence of, and the solution to, the issues of migrant workers in China, it was also utilised in the interviews.

### ***1.2.3 Analysing happiness***

While psychological tools and frameworks were used to collect empirical data so as to measure the happiness of migrant workers and urban residents at the experiential level, they will also be used to explain some of the findings of the empirical study, including descriptions of the happiness of migrant workers and the comparison of happiness between migrant workers and urban residents.

The macroscopic analysis of this study puts particular emphasis on China's social and cultural backgrounds, primarily involving features of Chinese urbanisation and social change, together with the legacy of traditional Confucian culture and China's Marxist culture and their impacts on the values and happiness of contemporary China. As an integral part of contemporary Chinese culture, as well as the official ideology of the Chinese Communist Party (the CCP), Marxism and Maoism play an important role as theoretical underpinnings for the study of the happiness of Chinese people. This is because the cultural and social changes produced by the spread and development of Marxism and Maoism, such as the formation of China's Marxist culture, the establishment of the People's Republic, and the advancement of socialism with particular Chinese characteristics, have exerted a significant influence on the values and happiness of contemporary Chinese people. Moreover, a critical stance is adopted throughout this study, especially with regard to urbanisation in the context of contemporary China and its impact on human happiness. A critical analysis of the happiness of the people of China in relation to their cultural and historical backgrounds, which has not been adequately covered by

recent Western studies, is also outlined. In simple terms, from a cultural perspective, the macro analysis of the empirical data pays special attention to the happiness of the people of China within the context of specific cultural and social backgrounds, in addition to analysing the related fields that have not been examined in detail by Western studies.

### **1.3 Research Aims**

This study focuses on the happiness of China's rural-to-urban migrant workers in Shanghai in 2014. In order to draw a detailed picture of the happiness of migrant workers, who are considered as the new urban poor, this study also investigates the happiness of Shanghai's urban residents over the same time period. Since little research has been carried out in this area, this study first aims to investigate the current happiness of migrant workers based on an analysis of empirical data, which includes two main aspects: what migrant workers think happiness is and what their level of happiness actually is, after which a general description of the happiness of migrant workers will be generated. Second, after further investigation and analysis of the empirical data, the study aims to explore the happiness of migrant workers at a deeper level. This involves exploring the factors that influence the happiness of migrant workers and the ways to raise their levels of happiness at the experiential level in the context of Chinese urbanisation. Third, a cultural approach focusing on the specific cultural and social backgrounds of China is used to describe and reflect the empirical outcomes of the study at the theoretical level. This part of the study aims to build theoretical models of the Chinese view of happiness and the factors that can influence the happiness levels of the Chinese people. Next, by taking a cultural approach, this part of the study also aims to analyse the influence of traditional Confucian culture on the happiness of Chinese people, in addition to China's specific pattern of urbanisation, which is different from the West, and its impact on the happiness levels of Chinese people. The three different levels of analysis are not offered in isolation; in fact, as they are essential for researching the happiness of migrant workers and the people of China, they can thus be understood as intertwined and shaping the entirety of this study.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

This study mainly focuses on four research questions:

- (I) How do China's migrant workers define happiness?
- (II) How happy are China's migrant workers?
- (III) What are the factors influencing the happiness of China's migrant workers?
- (IV) How can the happiness of Chinese migrant workers be promoted?

These questions are largely answered in Chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9. In order to compare the happiness of Shanghai's migrant workers to its urban residents, the same research methods and steps are applied to both migrant workers and urban residents. Therefore, this study also aims to investigate the happiness of urban residents based on four additional research questions:

- (I) Are migrant workers less happy than urban residents?
- (II) If migrant workers are less happy than urban residents, how can we explain the differences between them in terms of levels of happiness?
- (III) What are the most significant factors that have led to the happiness gap between the two social groups?
- (IV) If such a happiness gap exists, how can we close it?

Because the ultimate aim of this study is to examine the happiness of migrant workers, these questions are not answered separately, and the happiness levels of migrant workers are better shown in comparison with those of urban residents. In addition, the macroscopic analysis of the aforementioned research questions also puts particular emphasis on China's social and cultural contexts in addition to applying a sociological perspective to the study.

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

From an integrated perspective of hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing, this study reveals the reality behind, and the affecting factors of, migrant workers' happiness in order to suggest a number of ways to promote migrant workers' happiness as well as close the happiness gap between migrant workers and urban residents. This study contains ten original contributions to research into the happiness of China's migrant workers or Chinese citizens. Since each contribution will be stated in detail in the final chapter (see Section 10.4), only a brief description is provided here.

On the empirical level, this study comprehensively demonstrates the reality of migrant workers' happiness, maps Chinese people's happiness, discovers the factors that influence Chinese people's happiness, proves there is a happiness gap between migrant workers and urban residents and, on this basis, offers a series of suggestions to promote migrant workers' happiness or close the happiness gap between the two social groups. These aspects have been insufficiently studied by Chinese and Western scholars. These findings, therefore, contribute to the research on the happiness of China's migrant workers or Chinese citizens, along with governmental decision making.

From the cultural perspective, this study systematically reviews which factors of traditional Confucian culture and China's Marxist culture continue to play important roles in shaping the values and happiness of contemporary Chinese people, and explores the representations and causes of differences in urbanisation between China and Western countries, along with the impacts of Chinese urbanisation on the happiness of Chinese people. These aspects have received little attention amongst Chinese and Western scholars. The findings of this study therefore contribute to the literature on the happiness of China's migrant workers or Chinese citizens within particular Chinese cultural and social contexts.

In terms of methodology, this study demonstrates that Chinese happiness is an intertwining of hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing, outlines the advantages of using mixed methods (both quantitative and qualitative methods) to study the happiness of China's migrant workers or Chinese citizens, and argues that the BNSG-S may not effectively reveal the happiness of Chinese people before being carefully localised and examined. In this regard, these findings question certain research methods that have commonly been used in previous studies, i.e. equating human happiness with hedonic wellbeing through the use of only quantitative methods or applying Western scales or indexes to Chinese citizens, thus providing a methodological reference for future research into the happiness of China's migrant workers or citizens.

## **1.6 Outline of the Chapters**

Chapter 2 of this study reviews happiness in the West, which is the main theoretical basis with regard to experience and theory. The chapter begins with traditional ethical hedonism and eudaimonism, which are the philosophical origins of modern scientific research into

human happiness. It then moves onto scientific and psychological approaches to human happiness, i.e. hedonic SWB and eudaimonic SDT, which represent the theoretical basis for collecting the empirical data and measuring the happiness of migrant workers and urban residents at the experiential level. Finally, the chapter discusses sociological approaches to human happiness, notably Marx's theory of alienation, which is one of the most important theoretical bases for analysing the happiness of migrant workers and the whole of Chinese society in the context of China's particular cultural background.

From a cultural perspective, Chapter 3 reviews relevant studies concerning the happiness of Chinese people from mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the West, the 'big three' classic schools of philosophy, i.e. Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, in the history of Chinese culture, as well as contemporary Chinese culture within the context of China's distinctive cultural history and its impact on the values and happiness of contemporary Chinese people. After reviewing these studies on the happiness of Chinese people, the chapter reviews traditional Chinese concepts of happiness and traditional Chinese values by combining concepts of happiness from Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. It then discusses the inheritance of traditional Confucian values within the cultural and historical context of modern China, in addition to clarifying which parts of traditional Confucian concepts have been dismissed and which parts remain active in China today. Finally, the chapter discusses contemporary Chinese culture and history by focusing on Marxism and Maoism, as well as their influence on the Chinese concept of happiness.

Chapter 4 introduces the background to, and the basic features of, China's migrant workers on a national scale and in Shanghai. After providing a basic understanding of the definition, features, and living state of China's migrant workers, the chapter introduces China's urbanisation with regard to the particular Chinese characteristics that have been considered to be the cause of the appearance of migrant workers in Chinese cities. China's urbanisation is also an important subject for investigating the happiness of migrant workers in the Chinese context. Since urbanisation is a significant trend that has long been analysed by Western sociologists and political theorists, this section reviews previous research into urbanisation in the West before reviewing the historical processes and features of Chinese urbanisation, with regard to China's social reform, that are different from those in Western society. The impact of Chinese urbanisation on Chinese people's

happiness is also discussed in this section. Finally, the literature on the happiness/SWB of China's migrant workers is reviewed, in which regard there has been very little research; most studies in Chinese suffer from a lack of rigorous research methodologies and tend to offer ambiguous definitions of happiness/SWB.

Chapter 5 discusses the methodology and field research. After illustrating the benefits of using a mixed method approach and the relationship between the quantitative and qualitative data, the research subjects, research site, and timespan of this study are outlined. Then, the procedures for conducting the pilot study and for carrying out the field research are described. The field research included a questionnaire survey and semi-structured interviews with Shanghai's migrant workers and urban residents. The logic of using semi-structured interviews is also addressed here. Finally, the chapter discusses the methodology used to analyse the data and the study's ethical considerations.

Chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9 answer the four research questions in turn, both empirically and theoretically. Chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9 analyse the happiness of migrant workers and urban residents from four aspects: the view of happiness, levels of happiness, factors that affect happiness, and improving happiness. A cultural approach focusing on Chinese culture and urbanisation in the context of China's socio-economic reform is stressed in the analysis.

Chapter 10 summaries the key findings of this study and distinguishes the main points of the discussion as well as the practical and theoretical developments from the research results. It also describes the main contributions and limitations of the research and outlines important implications for Chinese policy and future research.

## **2 Chapter 2: Happiness in the West**

### **2.1 Introduction**

As the old saying goes, ‘There are a thousand Hamlets in a thousand people’s eyes’ (adapted from *Global Times*, 2014). From the same perspective, everyone has their own subjective view of what ‘happiness’ is. As such, there may not be an absolute method for defining happiness. Nonetheless, the question remains: what is happiness? This question has been analysed for thousands of years, with some outstanding thinkers providing excellent insights into the study of human happiness. Chapter 2 reviews the notion of happiness in the West, which is the primary theoretical basis of this study with regard to experience and theory.

Section 2.2 combines traditional ethical hedonism and eudaimonism, which are the philosophical origins of modern scientific research on human happiness, in addition to discussing the merits and demerits of hedonism and eudaimonism. Section 2.3 reviews the psychological approaches to human happiness, including hedonic subjective wellbeing (SWB) and eudaimonic self-determination theory (SDT), which form the theoretical basis for collecting the empirical data and measuring/analysing the happiness of migrant workers and urban residents at the experiential level. Section 2.4 reviews two sociological approaches to human happiness, i.e. Marxism (notably Marx’s theories of alienation and historical materialism), which is a significant theoretical foundation for the later discussion on the happiness of Chinese people within China’s distinctive cultural and social contexts, and Veenhoven’s ‘happiness is relative’ perspective. Section 2.5 concludes this chapter and summarises the theoretical basis of the study.

### **2.2 Traditional Ethical Hedonism and Eudaimonism**

Ethical hedonism and eudaimonism have long held dominant positions in the history of Western philosophy in regard to the exploration of the essence of human happiness. These two ethical trends of thought, both of which have their own unique strengths, have profoundly influenced contemporary scientific research into human happiness. Today, hedonic and eudaimonic views of happiness derived from ethical hedonism and

eudaimonism remain particularly influential, at least where mainstream Western values and the lifestyle of Westerners are concerned.

Hedonism, as a school of thought, argues that aspiring toward happiness and avoiding sadness is inherent to human nature; in this sense, pleasure and happiness are the most important intrinsic goods of human life, and pursuing the maximum happiness is a proper goal for living a human life. Ethical hedonism is thought to have been originated by Aristippus of Cyrene (c. 430–350 BC), while the main representatives of hedonism include the ancient Greek philosopher Epicurus (c. 341–270 BC), British empirical philosopher John Locke (1632–1704 AD), and utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832 AD). Hedonism is the most well-known view of happiness, which has impacted not only the values of many Westerners but also a wide range of aspects of Western society, e.g. legislation and the economic system. Theoretically, hedonism views human nature as the direct source of morality and treats an increase or decrease in personal happiness as a measure of good or evil. A moral system was established based on this type of awareness and has since provided a theoretical basis for later Western individualism and egoism.

Though hedonism is considered to be one of the principal features of modern Western culture, pure hedonism generally receives less support from modern scholars because it includes several critical flaws in logic. Firstly, hedonism focuses on all the pleasure and pain that humans experience, even those unrelated to happiness. Secondly, even if all types of pleasure and pain lead to a change in the capacity for personal happiness, human perception of these emotions is not necessarily true (e.g. see Nozick's experience machine)<sup>2</sup>; as such, the principles of hedonism based on the human senses can be controversial. Thirdly, hedonism is generally accused of being shallow in that it is thought to place excessive emphasis on one aspect of human nature, i.e. that part that likes happiness and its benefits but avoids pain and harm, thereby ignoring other human attributes. If one theory focuses solely on primitive human instincts, it will not be able to observe the differences between humans and other animals.

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<sup>2</sup> Nozick's experience machine was a thought experiment proposed by American philosopher Robert Nozick in 1974. By simulating a choice between daily reality and a clearly preferable simulated reality, it strongly refuted ethical hedonism.

While hedonism has its shortcomings, it also offers distinct advantages. In general, hedonism has a significant advantage for quantifying happiness, which will satisfy the needs of most empirical studies on SWB. This is because the principles of hedonism, based on the perception of pleasure and pain, have enabled researchers to convert the capacity of one's happiness directly to the number of material or financial resources one has acquired.

As a school of thought, Eudaimonism maintains that eudaimonia (happiness and wellbeing) is achieved through virtue. The concept of eudaimonism is thought to have been established in Aristotle's (c. 384–322 BC) *Nicomachean Ethics*, though earlier philosophers such as Democritus (c. 460–370 BC), Socrates (c. 469–399 BC), and Plato (c. 428–348 BC) presented very similar ideas. Other representatives of eudaimonism include the Roman Stoic philosopher Lucius Annaeus Seneca (c. 4 BC–65 AD), Christian theologian Augustine of Hippo (c. 354–430 AD), German philosopher, Friedrich Paulsen (1846–1908 AD), and German social psychologist Erich Fromm (1900–1980 AD). Although all proponents of eudaimonism view eudaimonia as the highest human good, they are divided as to how to achieve it in its relation to virtue. Therefore, eudaimonia is generally presented in different forms, with two of the most significant being those of Aristotle and the Stoic School. In this sense, Aristotle understands virtue and its exercise as the most important component of eudaimonia, in addition to recognising the importance of external goods, such as wealth, beauty, health, and a good birth. In contrast, the Stoic School views virtue as the sole human good that is sufficient for eudaimonia, and thus views all external goods as transitory and harmful.

Different from hedonism, which is closely linked to the subjective assessment of the quality of one's life, eudaimonism adopts the idea of having an objectively good life, irrelevant of one's subjective perception. Despite eudaimonism overcoming some of the disadvantages of hedonism that are associated with the inherent uncertainty of human perception, it has drawn criticism from many scholars due to its excessive pursuit of the eudaimonic life that is seen as objectively desirable (see the 'paradox of eudaimonism'<sup>3</sup>).

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<sup>3</sup> The 'paradox of eudaimonism' arises from the contradiction between Aristotle's forms of ethical motivation and his eudaimonist framework. For more detail, see Davenport's (2007) article 'The Paradox of Eudaimonism: An Existential Critique'.

In particular, eudaimonism is widely criticised for ignoring human differences in terms of value orientation, personal preferences, etc. This is because what may make one person happy may be detrimental to another, given that people are likely to have different views about happiness. As a result, pure eudaimonism fails to receive significant support from modern scholars, since happiness is essentially viewed as a psychological process. However, as a philosophical source of the eudaimonic view of happiness within modern society, eudaimonism provides a solid foundation for modern happiness studies in many different fields.

## **2.3 Psychological Approaches to Human Happiness**

Psychology is considered as one of the most suitable fields for studying human happiness because happiness is, in essence, a complex psychological experience within an individual's state of mind. On the basis of ethical hedonism and eudaimonism, two schools of research into human happiness have developed in modern psychology: the hedonic approach, which defines happiness as pleasure attainment and pain avoidance, and the eudaimonic approach, which defines happiness in terms of the degree to which a person is fully functioning (Ryan and Deci, 2001; Keyes et al., 2002).

### ***2.3.1 Hedonic wellbeing: Ed Diener's theory of subjective wellbeing***

Hedonic wellbeing is conceptualised as the experience of pleasant effects in one's life. Most research within new hedonic psychology is based on the notion of SWB, as proposed by Ed Diener (1984; 2000; 2009a; Ryan and Deci, 2001), which is a scientific term that is commonly used to denote a happy or good life. In colloquial terms, SWB is generally identified as happiness (Diener, 2000). More specifically, SWB comprises an affective component (frequent positive affect and infrequent negative affect) and a cognitive component (life satisfaction), and proposes that individuals experience happiness when their positive affect and life satisfaction are both high (Carruthers and Hood, 2004).

Diener (1984) posits that SWB must be measurable in order to adapt it to the needs of scientific research into human happiness. Therefore, by inheriting the principle of ethical hedonism, which defines happiness as pleasure attainment and pain avoidance, Diener (1984) proposes three aspects when considering a definition of SWB. Firstly, SWB

expresses one's subjective judgment about one's own life. Secondly, SWB involves a series of positive measures of one's own life. Thirdly, SWB includes a global assessment of one's own life. Therefore, from this perspective, a measure of SWB includes not only specific domains, such as one's satisfaction with one's standard of living, but also an integral evaluation of one's life. Diener (2000) further outlines the four basic components of SWB: global life satisfaction, life satisfaction with specific domains, positive affect (shown as frequently experiencing positive emotions), and negative affect (shown as experiencing few negative emotions) (see Table 2.1). According to Diener, since three of the components are generally inter-related, a higher level of order, i.e. global life satisfaction, is required in order to fully define SWB as a complete method of assessment (Diener et al., 1999). Note that, although Diener provides a complete theoretical system for SWB, he never states that SWB can fulfil all of the conditions necessary for people to lead happy lives. However, he believes that SWB can represent a greater percentage of people's happiness, compared to the development of the world's economy (Diener et al., 1998; Diener, 2000).

**Table 2.1: Components of subjective wellbeing**

<b>Pleasant affect</b>	<b>Unpleasant affect</b>	<b>Life satisfaction</b>	<b>Domain satisfaction</b>
Joy	Guilt and shame	Desire to change life	Work
Elation	Sadness	Satisfaction with current life	Family
Contentment and pride	Anxiety and Worry; Anger	Satisfaction with the past	Leisure Health
Affection	Stress	Satisfaction with the future	Finances
Happiness	Depression	Significant others' views of one's life	Self
Ecstasy	Envy		One's group

*Source: Diener et al. (1999, p.277).*

Diener's definition of SWB determines the measurability of the quality of people's subjective lives and wellbeing. Diener et al. (1999) suggest that the measures of SWB are anchored in survey research, and the most commonly applied assessment techniques for SWB are self-report measures that depend on cross-sectional, self-report scales of

happiness. In general, self-report measures require respondents to delineate either global judgments of their lives or to what extent they experience certain emotions. Due to their high internal consistency and moderate stability, self-report measures have been widely applied in measuring SWB; however, they still have some limitations. According to Diener et al. (1999) and Diener and Ryan (2009), the risk of measurement bias will arise when trying to measure everything with self-report correlates because the measurement results may experience problems such as common method variance, which can have a confounding influence on the relationships between variables. For this reason, non-self-report assessment techniques, such as observer reports and physiological measures, are also utilised to provide objective measures of people's quality of life. However, self-report measures are considered as having higher levels of convergent validity and stability than non-self-report measures over time (Sandvik et al., 1993; Diener and Ryan, 2009).

Single-item and multi-item scales are applied in the structuring of happiness scales (see Table 2.2). Diener (1984) suggests that the most commonly used scales are single-item scales, such as the self-anchoring ladder (Cantril, 1965), and the Gurin scale (Gurin et al., 1960). With moderate reliability and validity, single-item scales have the advantage of simplicity, but they are subject to criticism for their excessive dependence on a single item. Firstly, since it is impossible to estimate the internal consistency of single-item scales, the only method for examining their reliability is temporal reliability, which can make it difficult to distinguish real change among participants through measuring error and bias (Diener, 1984). Additionally, single-item scales are inclined to be less reliable over time (Stock et al., 1982). Secondly, the results of single-item scales can be distorted, as most of the responses will fall into categories that indicate high levels of happiness (Andrews and Withey, 1976). Thirdly, since single-item scales do not include certain specific domains of SWB and are over-reliant on global life satisfaction, they cannot provide a well-differentiated vision of one's SWB and will lack the ability to observe detailed information in constitutional dimensions. Further, evidence shows that multi-item measures generally perform better than single-item measures in terms of reliability, as they are more effective at reducing the negative effects of ambiguity or conceptual vagueness (OECD, 2013). According to Schimmack and Oishi (2005) and Michalos and Kahlke (2010), the improved reliability of multi-item measures is likely due to their ability

to reduce the impact of random error (OECD, 2013)

**Table 2.2: Subjective wellbeing scales (Diener, 1984, p.546)**

<b>Study</b>	<b>Scales</b>	<b>Description</b>
Cantril (1965)	Self-anchoring ladder (single item)	A nine-rung ladder is anchored with ‘best life for you’ at the top and ‘worst possible life for you’ at the bottom. Respondents mark one rung.
Gurin, Veroff and Feld (1960)	Gurin scale (single item)	To a question about how their life is going at present, respondents choose among ‘very happy’, ‘pretty happy’, and ‘not too happy’.
Andrews and Withey (1976)	Delighted–terrible scale (single item)	To a question, ‘How happy do you feel about how happy you are?’, respondents select one of seven responses ranging from ‘delighted’ to ‘terrible’.
Lawton (1975)	PGCMS (multi-item, geriatric)	A 17-item scale measuring loneliness, dissatisfaction, agitation, and attitude towards ageing.
Morris and Sherwood (1975)	PGC-M (multi-item, geriatric)	Revision of the original PGCMS.
Neugarten, Havighurst and Tobin (1961)	LSI (multi-item, geriatric)	Factors measured include zest vs. apathy, resolution, fortitude, and congruence in terms of desired and achieved goals.
Wood, Wylie and Sheafor (1969)	LSI-Z (multi-item, geriatric)	13-item revision of the LSI.
Kozma and Stones (1980)	MUNSH (multi-item, geriatric)	24-item scale measuring positive and negative affect and experiences.
Tellegen (1979)	Differential personality questionnaire – wellbeing sub-scale (multi-item, general use)	21-item sub-scale of an omnibus personality inventory measuring a combination of positive affect, positive attitudes, and optimism.
Campbell, Converse and Rodgers (1976)	Index of general affect (multi-item, general use)	Subjects rate their lives using eight semantic differential scales, e.g. enjoyable–miserable.
Underwood and Froming (1980)	Mood survey (multi-item, general use)	Two sub-scales measure hedonic level and hedonic variability or reactivity (16 items).
Dupuy (1978)	General wellbeing schedule (multi-item, general use)	Seven specific aspects of wellbeing are assessed: life satisfaction, health concerns, depressed mood, person-environment fit, coping, energy level, and stress.
Fordyce (1978)	Self-description inventory (multi-item, general use)	Several sub-scales are included: achieved personal happiness, happy personality, happiness values and attitudes, and happy lifestyle.
Bradburn (1969)	Affect balance scale	Ten items designed for measuring both positive and negative affect.

Fordyce (1977b)	Happiness measures	Asks respondents to estimate the percentage of time they are happy, unhappy, or neutral. Also includes an 11-choice scale according to which respondents rate overall happiness.
Kammann and Flett (1983)	Affectometer	Measures the frequency of positive and negative affect.
Larsen (1983)	Affect intensity measure	Measures the typical strength or intensity of a person's affective responses.
Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin (1983)	Satisfaction with life scale	Measures general life satisfaction; suitable for all ages, from adolescents to adults.

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*Note: PGCMS=Philadelphia Geriatric Center Morale Scale; LSI=Life Satisfaction Index; MUNSH=Memorial University of Newfoundland Scale of Happiness.*

Since happiness has been significantly discussed in many fields of hedonic psychology during the second half of the twentieth century, a fair amount of results have been drawn from relevant empirical studies. For example, research has found that most people are happy and perceive themselves as having a positive level of SWB, even those from vulnerable groups. Most people are satisfied with domains such as work, marriage, and leisure, and most people's affect is mainly pleasant. Additionally, there appears to be a positive level of SWB worldwide, except in some very poor societies (Diener and Diener, 1996). Data from a worldwide survey, the World Values Survey (Oishi, Diener and Lucas, 2007), found that people who reported the highest levels of SWB were most successful in the categories of close relationships and volunteer work. People who reported slightly lower levels of SWB were most successful in the categories of education, income, and political participation. When people reported being mildly happy, their optimal level of SWB may have been influenced by the specific outputs used to define success and the resources available to them. The survey also found that people's level of SWB tended to be stable over time (Diener et al., 2003), which was partly related to personality traits; for example, a positive relationship existed between extraversion and SWB while a negative relationship was found between neuroticism and SWB (DeNeve and Copper, 1998). Moreover, compared to external factors such as education, income, marriage, and even physical health, which may contribute little to the variance in individual SWB measures,

happiness, as such, can also be considered as a consistent personal trait<sup>4</sup> (Diener et al., 2003). In this sense, it consists of Brickman and Campbell's notion (1971) that people tend to adjust themselves to life conditions very quickly, in that they react strongly to good and bad conditions at the start but, subsequently, their SWB soon returns to its original level. Some studies have also shown that SWB has a positive influence on people's health, both directly and indirectly. For example, there is a positive correlation between SWB and physical health (Okun et al., 1984), longevity (Danner et al., 2001), managing one's health (Aspinwall, 1998), and satisfactory relationships (Russell and Wells, 1994). The progress of SWB research is also reflected in the vast number of multi-country studies, which indicate two major findings: (1) wealthier countries report higher levels of SWB than poorer countries (Diener and Biswas-Diener, 2002) and (2) in wealthier countries, despite income increases, the levels of SWB tend to stay the same over time, while poor countries' SWB tends to be impacted following a small increase in income (Diener et al., 2003).

Based on the rich findings in the field of SWB, one question demands particular attention: 'Who is happy?' or, alternatively, 'Who is the happiest?' Although happiness can never be achieved by a single factor or a simple aggregate of factors, researchers still attempt to provide opinions on the topic. According to Wilson (1976), the happy person is a 'young, healthy, well-educated, well-paid, extroverted, optimistic, worry-free, religious, married person with high self-esteem, job morale, modest aspirations, of either sex and of a wide range of intelligence' (p.294). In re-examining Wilson's conclusion, Diener et al. (1999, p.295) state that 'the happy person is blessed with a positive temperament, tends to look on the bright side of things, and does not ruminate excessively about bad events, and is living in an economically developed society, has social confidants, and possesses adequate resources for making progress toward valued goals'. Diener et al. (1999) believe that Wilson's (1976) conclusion that a married, religious, optimistic, extraverted person tends to be happier has withstood the test of time, and there has been considerable evidence to support this in both national and cross-cultural studies. For example, Glenn and Weaver (1979) suggest there is a significant relationship between marriage and SWB, even when variables such as income and age are controlled. Large-scale surveys in many countries

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<sup>4</sup> Although individual SWB has been perceived as being less affected by a number of external factors, Diener (2000) suggests it is significantly influenced by life circumstances.

also indicate that married people report higher levels of SWB than those who never marry or are divorced, separated, or widowed (Diener et al., 1999). Furthermore, among adults who never marry, people who cohabit with a partner report significantly greater SWB than those who live alone (Kurdek, 1991; Mastekaasa, 1995). Additionally, married women report the highest levels of SWB, followed by, in descending order, married men, never-married women, and never-married men (Lee et al., 1991).

Religion is also considered likely to bring about psychological and social benefits; evidence from large-scale national surveys shows that SWB significantly correlates with religious certainty (Ellison, 1991), the strength of respondents' relationship with religion (Pollner, 1989), participation in religious activities (Ellison et al., 1989), and prayer experience (Poloma and Pendleton, 1991).

With regard to Wilson's (1976) other claims (i.e. income, gender, etc.), Diener et al. (1999) maintain that such factors have to be analysed according to different cultural backgrounds and the use of various measures. Firstly, according to Diener and Biswas-Diener (2002), survey data does not provide a strong causality between income and SWB; affluent individuals are considered as only slightly happier than poorer people in rich countries, whereas rich countries appear to be much happier than poor countries. As noted above, income growth will not inevitably bring about higher levels of SWB, which means that changes in income will not always be a predictor of happiness. Additionally, people who consider money as the most important goal in their lives tend to be less satisfied with their quality of life, even when the income variable is controlled (Crawford, 1998). Secondly, there are small but significant correlations between SWB and education. Previous studies (e.g. Campbell et al., 1976) indicate that a significant relationship between SWB and education is not uncommon; additionally, education is proven to be more strongly related to SWB in poor countries (Veenhoven, 1994a) with lower incomes (Campbell, 1981). Thirdly, a large number of studies indicate job satisfaction as being significantly correlated with life satisfaction (Tait et al., 1989); in particular, in recent years, life satisfaction among women has been found to be more highly correlated with job satisfaction (Tait et al., 1989), while being unemployed is likely to cause lower SWB (Clark, 1998). Fourthly, there are no significant correlations between SWB and age, health, and gender. Although Haring et al. (1984) find that men tend to be somewhat happier than women, women are

more likely to experience higher levels of both positive and negative affect. So far, there is no evidence to prove men have higher levels of SWB than women.

### ***2.3.2 Eudaimonic wellbeing: Deci and Ryan's theory of self-determination***

Despite the tendency for happiness to be equated with hedonic wellbeing, particularly in modern Western societies (McGregor and Little, 1998; Keyes et al., 2002; Kashdan et al., 2005; Drakulić, 2012), eudaimonic wellbeing, on the other hand, is conceptualised as the experience of enriching activities and personal growth, which is strongly reliant on Maslow's (1943; 1954) ideas of self-actualisation<sup>5</sup> and Roger's (1962) concept of the fully functioning person<sup>6</sup> and his/her SWB. In primarily adopting SDT to conceptualise happiness (Deci and Ryan, 2000; Keyes et al., 2002), the eudaimonic approach suggests that SDT posits three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and theorises that the fulfilment of these needs is essential for psychological growth (e.g. intrinsic motivation), integrity (e.g. internalisation and assimilation of cultural practices), and wellbeing (e.g. life satisfaction and psychological health), as well as the experience of vitality (Ryan and Frederick, 1997) and self-congruence (Sheldon and Elliot, 1999). Need-fulfilment is thus viewed as a natural aim of human life that delineates many of the meanings and purposes underlying human actions (Deci and Ryan, 2000).

From this perspective, through engaging in eudaimonic pursuits, SWB will occur as a by-product. Thus, enriching activities and higher-order meaning are believed to produce happiness. In this sense, happiness does not result from the pursuit of pleasure but from the development of individual strengths and virtues, which ties in with the concept of positive psychology (Vella-Brodrick, Park and Peterson, 2009). Although several components of eudaimonic wellbeing are strongly associated with the typical measures of SWB (i.e. being satisfied with one's life and experiencing both relatively higher positive

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<sup>5</sup> See Abraham Maslow's article 'A Theory of Human Motivation' (1943) and subsequent book *Motivation and Personality* (1954). In defining self-actualisation, he writes: 'What a man can be, he must be. This need we may call self-actualization [...]. It refers to the desire for self-fulfilment, namely the tendency for him to become actualized in what he is potentially. This tendency might be phrased as the desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming' (Maslow, 1954, p.93).

<sup>6</sup> In 'Diffusion of Innovations', Carl Rogers (1962, p.50) defines the fully functioning person as follows: 'Such a person experiences in the present, with immediacy. He is able to live in his feelings and reactions of the moment. He is not bound by the structure of his past learnings, but these are a present resource for him insofar as they relate to the experience of the moment. He lives freely, subjectively, in an existential confrontation of this moment in life.'

affect and lower negative affect) (Watson, Clark, McIntyre and Hamaker, 1992; Kashdan, Rose and Fincham, 2004), hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing are nonetheless distinguishable through related dimensions (Keyes, Shmotkin and Ryff, 2002) with diverse correlates, predictors, and dynamics of wellbeing (Ryan and Deci, 2001). The differences between eudaimonic and hedonic happiness are outlined in Table 2.3.

**Table 2.3: Differences between hedonic and eudaimonic definitions of happiness**

<b>Hedonic wellbeing (SWB)</b>	<b>Eudaimonic wellbeing (SDT)</b>
1. Presence of positive mood	1. Psychological growth (e.g. intrinsic motivation)
2. Absence of negative mood	2. Integrity (e.g. internalisation and assimilation of cultural practices)
3. Satisfaction with various domains of life	3. Wellbeing (e.g. life satisfaction and psychological health)
4. Global life satisfaction	4. Experiences of vitality
	5. Self-congruence

SDT is a theory concerning the motivational process of human self-determination behaviour, as proposed by Deci and Ryan in the 1980s. By means of adopting and adapting eudaimonic conceptions of wellbeing, SDT specifies different types of motivation based on the degree of autonomy involved, the process and what the conditions for self-actualisation are, and how self-realisation can be completed (Deci and Ryan, 2000). According to Ryan et al. (1997), ‘SDT is an approach to human motivation and personality that uses traditional empirical methods, while employing an organismic meta theory that highlights the importance of humans’ evolved inner resources for personality development and behavioural self-regulation’ (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p.68). Stemming from an organismic view, SDT views human beings as active organisms that have an inherent potential for psychological growth and development, while self-determination relates to the potency of empirical choice, which is free and based on a full awareness of individual needs and contextual information. Therefore, as a precondition, SDT assumes that human beings are born with the potential for psychological growth and the inclination to be curious, explorative, energetic, and self-motivated (Ryan and Deci, 2000). In simple terms, SDT is an approach that emphasises humans’ innermost power, which does not arise from external regulation, such as rewards and punishments, but from intrinsic motivation through the interaction between both inherent activity and external contexts. From a eudaimonic perspective, SDT also suggests that not all available avenues to happiness are

equally good (Ryan and Deci, 2001; Veenhoven, 2003), as exclusively pursuing extrinsic goals, such as fame, money, and individual interest, may have a harmful effect on both physical and psychological health and erode wellbeing.

SDT is composed of three major sub-theories: basic psychological need theory, cognitive evaluation theory, and organismic integration theory. Basic psychological need theory explains the meaning and the relationship between basic psychological needs and subjective wellbeing. SDT posits that everyone has the requirement of development, and that this is a basic human psychological need that has a variety of expressions, which can be generalised across cultures and religions. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), empirical evidence has shown there are three basic psychological needs: the need for competence (White, 1963; Hater, 1978), autonomy (Deci, 1975), and relatedness (Reis, 1994; Baumeister and Leary, 1995). The essential question of basic psychological need theory addresses the relationship between the degree of basic need satisfaction and the experience of wellbeing, with a series of studies indicating them to be positively correlated.

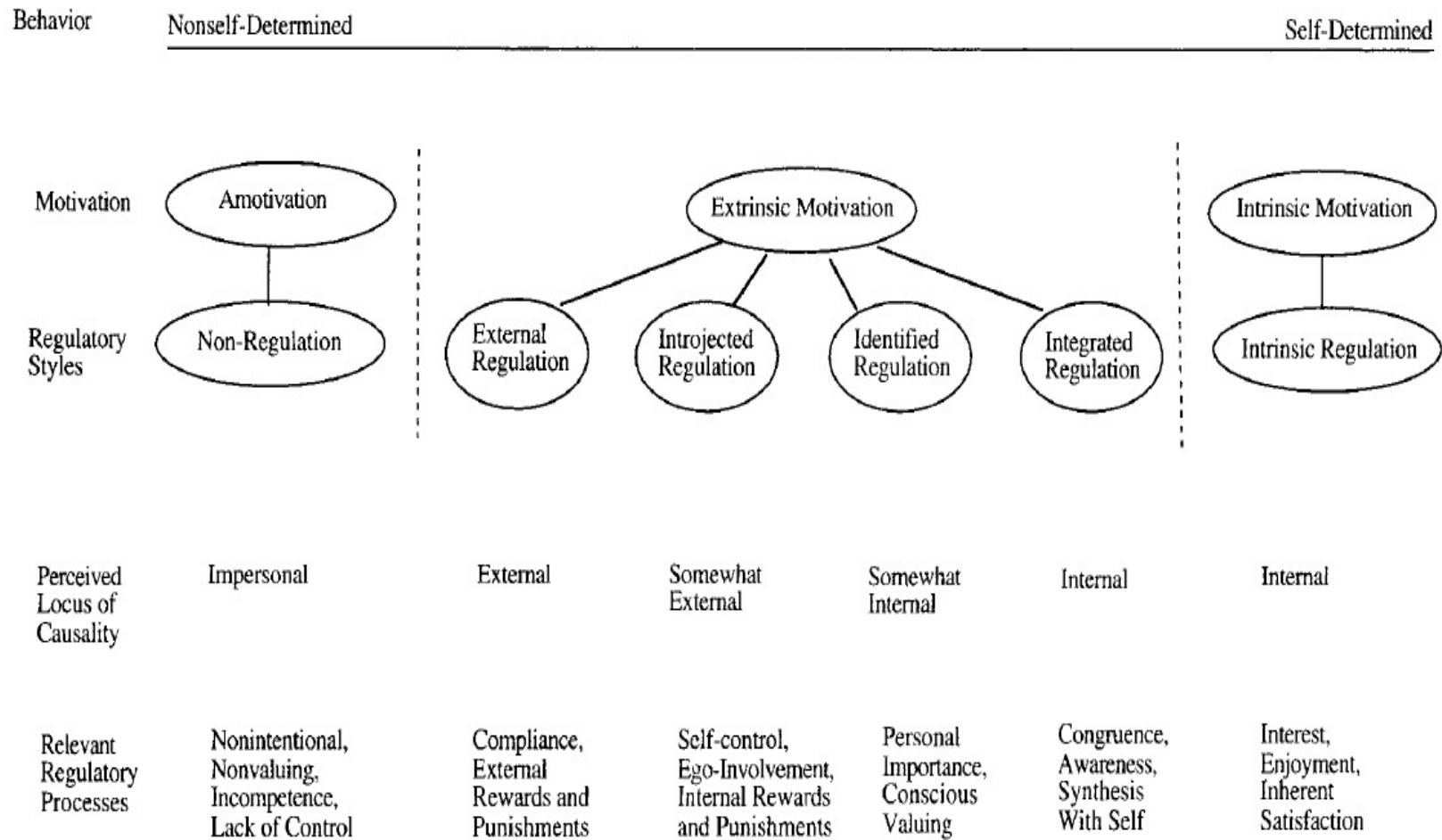
Cognitive evaluation theory mainly focuses on the influential factors of intrinsic motivation, especially social and environmental factors that promote rather than erode intrinsic motivation. Firstly, cognitive evaluation theory posits that social-contextual events, such as remuneration, feedback, communication, and freedom from being demeaned, evoke feelings of competence that, when actively engaged, are able to enhance intrinsic motivation for the task at hand (Vallerand and Reid, 1984; Ryan and Deci, 2000). Secondly, social-contextual events, such as opportunities for choice and self-determination, can also facilitate intrinsic motivation, as they offer people a better sense of autonomy (Deci and Ryan, 1985). Thirdly, some research suggests that satisfying the psychological need for relatedness may be critical for promoting intrinsic motivation because people generally experience a greater level of intrinsic motivation in a secure and related climate. In general, cognitive evaluation theory suggests that social and environmental factors can promote, rather than erode, intrinsic motivation by supporting, rather than hindering, basic human psychological needs.

Organismic integration theory specifies different types of motivation (i.e. amotivation, extrinsic motivation, and intrinsic motivation), particularly different types of extrinsic

motivation, as well as the social-contextual factors that either facilitate or undermine the internalisation and integration of the external regulation for these behaviours. Different from intrinsic motivation, which is highly autonomous, extrinsically motivated behaviours are not caused by intrinsic interests but by the need to achieve a separate outcome. According to an increasing degree of autonomy for individual behaviour, extrinsic motivation can be classified into four types: external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and integrated regulation (see Figure 2.1). External regulation, which has been intensively studied by behavioural psychologists, refers to extrinsically motivated behaviour with the lowest autonomy, i.e. those that fully comply with external rules in order to meet extrinsic requirements or to receive incidental rewards during the action. Individuals typically feel alienated or controlled when experiencing such extrinsically motivated behaviour. Introjected regulation refers to behaviour during which individuals absorb external rules but do not fully accept them as part of the self. In this case, individuals are extrinsically motivated to engage in activities in order to demonstrate their ability (or to avoid failure), thereby maintaining a sense of worth. In some studies, external regulation and introjected regulation are combined into controlled motivation. With more autonomy and self-determination, identified regulation involves the conscious evaluation on the part of individuals of behavioural goals or rules, i.e. if personal importance is found, the action is accepted as part of the self. Finally, integrated regulation suggests that integration arises when identified regulation is thoroughly assimilated into one's own needs and values. Although actions featured in integrated motivation are still viewed as extrinsically motivated behaviours, they share many common features with actions driven by intrinsic motivations. Therefore, in some studies, identified regulation, integrated regulation, and intrinsic motivation, are combined as an autonomous motivation composite.

According to Ryan and Deci (2000), important research methods have been utilised in SDT within the Baconian tradition. Using this approach, social-contextual variables have been directly operated in order to examine their impact on both internal processes and behavioural manifestations. Ryan and Deci (2000) further suggest that SDT research generally exists within experimental paradigms that are able to examine the external environments under which individuals' vitality and constructiveness will prosper, as well

Figure 2.1: The types of extrinsic motivation



Source: Ryan and Deci (2000, p.72).

as the conditions that facilitate the identification and integration of extrinsic motivation. Therefore, on account of SDT being highly dependent on experimental methods, measures of SDT may inherently include both the strengths and weaknesses of such methods; for example, artificial environments and low ecological validity may both make effective generalisation difficult, which has thus given rise to controversy regarding their use in experimental methods.

A number of achievements have been made involving SDT and its sub-theories. These findings have not only enriched theories of motivation but have also been applied to practical domains, such as religion, schooling, family education, and healthcare, especially for those who are required to inspire others (e.g. teachers, parents, coaches, and medical staff). In short, SDT suggests that the external environment can facilitate, rather than undermine, individual satisfaction concerning basic psychological needs, which, in turn, affects the degree of internal prosperity and, subsequently, yields different levels of happiness. The most important finding pertaining to SDT is that the satisfaction of basic psychological needs has determining influences on optimal experience and wellbeing in everyday life, which means that needs satisfaction is correlated with the improvement of wellbeing in particular domains, especially those in a central position of personal life, such as education, work, and home life. In addition, through observation of the relative presence or absence of support for basic psychological needs, researchers are able to better diagnose the roots of alienation versus engagement and promote both individual fulfilment and wellbeing (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

Other findings refer to several facets linked to sub-theories. First, the three basic psychological needs are innate, essential, and universal, which means they do not vary over different time periods and cultures. Second, positive performance feedback promotes intrinsic motivation, while negative performance feedback erodes it (e.g. Deci, 1975), as positive feedback enhances a sense of competence (Vallerand and Reid, 1984). Additionally, a sense of competence cannot facilitate intrinsic motivation unless accompanied by a feeling of autonomy or self-determination (e.g. Fisher, 1978; Ryan, 1982). Third, extrinsic rewards and intangible constraints, such as threats, deadlines, and imposed goals, can undermine intrinsic motivation because they tend to provide a more externally perceived locus of causality. Fourth, compared to people who are highly

externally controlled, people whose motivation is self-determined perform higher in terms of general wellbeing (Ryan et al., 1995). More internalised motivation can also yield positive outcomes in other domains, such as religion (Ryan et al., 1993), intimate relationships (Blais et al., 1990), physical exercise (Chatzisarantis et al., 1997), and environmental activism (Green-Demers et al., 1997). Finally, people who place strong importance on intrinsic aspirations (goals such as personal growth, affiliation, and communication, which directly meet basic psychological needs) tend to feel happier than those strongly focused on extrinsic aspirations (goals such as money, fame, and position, which indirectly meet basic psychological needs). At the same time, the former is also positively related to wellbeing indexes such as self-actualisation, self-esteem, and being free from anxiety and depression, while the latter is negatively related to these indexes. However, as a newly developed theory, SDT still has its flaws. Firstly, it treats self-determination, which is a human social demand, as the fundamental cause of human action, a claim that is likely to ignore the complexity of human behaviour. Secondly, there is no scientific explanation for the internal mechanism of self-regulation, while some basic concepts such as self-determination have been questioned for their uncertainty. Thirdly, assumptions proposed by SDT need to be further verified, for example, within the context of different cultural orientations.

## **2.4 Sociological Approaches to Human Happiness**

While there have been fewer studies on human happiness in sociology, from a macro point of view, sociological approaches are thought to be better suited for studying human happiness. This section reviews the sociological theories that are used to study the happiness of migrant workers and Chinese people in subsequent chapters, i.e. Marx's theories of alienation and historical materialism and Veenhoven's theory that happiness is relative.

This section reviews Marx's theory of alienation because it has strong explanatory power for certain negative social phenomena that have emerged during the process of urbanisation, such as social inequality, urban poverty, the loss of personal values, and so on. Urbanisation is a critical social background to the emergence of, and the solution to, the issues of migrant workers in China, and the phenomena resulting from urbanisation

can have negative impacts on the levels of migrant workers' happiness. The role of Marx's theory of alienation in this study will be elaborated in Section 2.4.1.

This section then reviews Marx's theory of historical materialism because not only is it the earliest Marxist theory to have been introduced in China but it also played a key role in the formation of China's Marxist culture. In so doing, it has significantly influenced the development of contemporary Chinese culture, thus affecting the values and happiness of Chinese people in present-day China. The role of Marxist historical materialism in this study will be further discussed in Section 2.4.2.

The last part of this section reviews Veenhoven's theory that happiness is relative. This is because, according to the interview results, the levels of happiness of some interviewees have been influenced by those of others or themselves in the past. Hence, this theory will help to understand the nature and cause of this type of phenomenon in this study.

#### ***2.4.1 Marx's theory of alienation***

Marx's theory of alienation describes the estrangement of people from aspects of their nature as a species as a consequence of living within a class society. The alienation from the human self is a consequence of being a mechanistic part of a class society, the condition of which estranges a person from their humanity. Marx describes alienation as a condition in which people are controlled by forces of their own creation, which work against them as alien powers. The notion of alienation is of great importance to Marx's earlier philosophical writings and continues to inform his later work, although no longer as a philosophical issue but as a social phenomenon.

For Marx, alienation does not arise from ideas but from the material conditions and nature of capitalist economy. The theoretical basis of alienation, in the capitalist mode of production, is that workers will inevitably lose the ability to determine their lives and fate by losing control over their work. Workers are therefore no longer autonomous, self-realised human beings in any significant sense. As an economic entity, workers are shepherded towards goals and activities laid down by capitalists (who own the means of production) in order to extract the maximum amount of surplus value from workers in commodity production. Under pre-capitalist conditions, a tailor would own his own shop, determine his own products, working hours, and working conditions, and decide how to

sell his products. His relationships with the people with whom he works would have a more or less personal character. At this point, his work would be part of his own life, and he would identify with the role he plays. In contrast, in the capitalist mode of production, the average worker is no more than a replaceable cog in a mass-produced and impersonal product line. The worker essentially loses control over the process of production, over the products that he produces, and over the relationships he has with others. Consequently, he no longer has his own ideas or character within the activities of production; instead of affirming himself in his work, he denies himself; what is embodied in the product of his labour is no longer his own and, as such, he becomes estranged from his human nature.

In the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (1987), Marx identifies four types of alienation in labour under a capitalist system of industrial production. The first is alienation of the worker from the product of his labour. In the capitalist mode of production, the product's design and the manner by which it is produced are not determined by its actual producer, but by the bourgeoisie, who appropriate labour and seek to maximise profit through mass production. Under such circumstances, the object that the worker produces, or the worker's product, does not belong to him but confronts the worker as something alien to him.

The second is the alienation of the worker from the act of production. Marx describes this form of alienation as existing when

work is external to the worker, that it is not part of his nature; and that, consequently, he does not fulfil himself in his work but denies himself, has a feeling of misery rather than wellbeing, does not develop freely his mental and physical energies but is physically exhausted and mentally debased (Marx, 1964, pp.124-125).

The worker is alienated from the act of production because work no longer belongs to his intrinsic nature; he is not voluntary in his work but is instead forced to work in order to survive in a commodity-producing society.

The third form of alienation is alienation of the worker from his species-being. For Marx, what makes us human is that we work. An individual's species-being is not separate from our activities or from the work through which we transform the material world to meet

our needs. In the capitalist mode of production, people are alienated from their work, which is what makes them human; therefore, we are alienated from our very human essence. Marx writes:

It is just in his work upon the objective world, therefore, that man really proves himself to be a species-being. This production is his active species-life. Through this production, nature appears as his work and his reality [...]. In tearing away from man the object of his production, therefore, estranged labour tears from him his species-life, his real objectivity as a member of the species and transforms his advantage over animals into the disadvantage that his inorganic body, nature, is taken from him (Marx, 1956, p.32).

The fourth type is the alienation of the worker from other workers; in this sense, the capitalist system reduces the production of the individual to a commercial commodity, which can be traded in the labour market, rather than it being a constructive activity that is part of the collective common effort, performed for personal survival and the betterment of society. Marx describes this type of alienation as ‘an immediate consequence of the fact that man is estranged from the product of his labour, from his life activity, from his species-being’ (Marx, 1956, p.32). He writes: ‘When man confronts himself, he confronts the other man’ (ibid.). This is likely the most complex idea in the theory, i.e. as individuals enter the world of commodity production, they are estranged from the product of their labour, from the act of production, and from their species being; they therefore spontaneously confront other individuals by observing them as objects. For Marx, alienation is not a general condition of humankind; rather, alienation emerges in modernity and is the characteristics of modernity and modern urban life that keeps us from interacting with others as human beings; instead, it results in us using others as instruments in order to achieve a particular goal.

In conceptual terms, Marx formulates the estrangement of the worker and his production as estranged, alienated labour. By analysing the concept of estranged, alienated labour (i.e. of alienated man, of estranged labour, of estranged life, and of estranged man), he proposes that ‘private property is thus the product, the result, the necessary consequence, of alienated labour, of the external relation of the worker to nature and to himself’ (Marx,

1956, p.33). Within his theory of alienation, Marx attempts to relate alienation to commodity production by claiming that each individual is alienated in the capitalist mode of production but that only the worker is fully alienated. Based on this understanding, Marx further states that, due to alienation or estrangement, alienated labour will prompt the working class to emancipate themselves from private property in order to achieve the emancipation of humankind. In this sense:

from the relationship of estranged labour to private property it follows further that the emancipation of society from private property, etc., from servitude, is expressed in the political form of the emancipation of the workers; not that their emancipation alone is at stake, but because the emancipation of the workers contains universal human emancipation (Marx, 1956, p.34).

Marx's theory of alienation provides the foundation for the two aspects relating to the social background for analysing the happiness of migrant workers in the following chapters. The first aspect is related to urbanisation, which is a critical social background for the emergence of, and the solution to, the issues of migrant workers in China today (see Chapter 4). This is because Marx's theory of alienation is able to explain certain negative social phenomena that have arisen from the process of urbanisation. The critical reading of the new urban sociology relating to the social conflicts that emerge in the process of urbanisation is based on Marx's criticism of capitalism, including his theory of alienation (see Section 4.3.1). The second aspect relates to the effects of these negative social phenomena on the happiness of migrant workers. These phenomena, such as the poor social integration of migrant workers and the loss of personal values, can influence the happiness levels of migrant workers. For example, in modern city life, people often feel their work to be characterised by monotony, apathy, and exhaustion. In addition, many people work for no other reason than to earn a living. Such phenomena can be prominent among migrant workers, who often work far from their homes in cities and earn extremely low salaries, which can significantly reduce their levels of happiness. Overall, Marx's theory of alienation is reviewed in this chapter not only because it helps to understand the nature of urbanisation, which is an important social background for analysing the happiness of migrant workers in present-day China, but also because it serves as a theoretical base for analysing the phenomena that may damage the happiness of migrant

workers in the following chapters.

#### ***2.4.2 Marx's theory of historical materialism***

Marx's theory of historical materialism, which he called the 'materialist conception of history', is a methodological approach to the study of human societies and their development over time. It is primarily a theory of history, based on the idea that history can be explained by the evaluation of productive forces and class struggles, which asserts that economic forces are the primary factors that have propelled humanity through history via the interaction of social classes. Since Marx and Engels initially elaborated on historical materialism, additions and different interpretations have been put forward by, among others, Trotsky, Plekhanov, Lenin, and Mao (Baltas, 1999, p.52). To avoid digression, this section focuses on the theory of historical materialism as developed by Marx and Engels. Additions and interpretations with regard to Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping will be discussed in following chapters, as these are expected to affect Chinese people's way of thinking, including how they think about happiness.

Generally, Marx's theory of historical materialism includes five aspects. First, productive forces tend to develop throughout history (Cohen, 2000), which are composed of labour power and the means of production, such as raw materials, tools, and the technology that labour power utilises in order to transform nature in order to meet human needs. Productive forces tend to develop throughout history mostly because the main source of change within productive forces is the desire of rational humans to overcome natural scarcity.

Second, the nature of relations of production within a society is explained by the level of development of its productive forces. Relations of production refer to the sum total of social relations that people must enter into by participating in economic life. Marx does not only refer here to the technology applied in production with regard to productive relationships, but also to social relationships involving people and the control of productive forces, such as the system of ownership concerning the means of production (property relations) and the interrelations between people within production. In this sense, 'machinery is no more an economic category than is the ox which draws the plough. The modern workshop, which is based on the use of machinery, is a social relation of

production, an economic category' (Marx, 2008, p.145). For Marx, the productive relations of a given society correspond to the stage of development of its productive forces. In this regard, productive relations are the social form assumed by the development of productive forces.

Third, the nature and character of non-economic institutions in a given society, especially its political-legal order and social consciousness (which Marx called 'the superstructure'), is explained by the nature and character of its economic structure (which Marx called 'the base'). According to historical materialism, therefore, human society is composed of two parts: the base and the superstructure. The base consists of the productive forces and the relations of production, while the superstructure includes culture, ideology (social consciousness, values, world views, etc.), social institutions (education, religion, media, etc.), political power structures, and the forces that periodically create conflict between the productive forces and the relations of production. As the productive forces continue to develop, the existing productive relations (primarily property relations) gradually become an obstacle to the development of productive forces. At this point, the existing productive relations impede the effective use and continued development of the productive forces. As a result, a time of social instability (or 'social revolution') ensues. According to Marx, the long-term outcome of the conflict between productive forces and social relations is that the existing relations ultimately adapt to the new forces. The society then enjoys stability until the productive forces and relations are again no longer compatible.

Fourth, Marx's theory of historical materialism also includes 'the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles' (Marx and Engels, 2010, p.14). Marx views history as the story of class struggle, in which the oppressed fight against their oppressors (such as the proletariat fighting against the bourgeoisie in a capitalist society). Classes develop due to the conflict between productive forces and relations. Class struggle is the embodiment of the conflict between productive forces and relations and is the tension that exists in society due to the competition for economic and political power between people of antagonistic classes. Marx holds that the structure of society is created by its major classes and that the struggle between its major classes serves as the engine of change in this structure. The long-term outcome of the struggle between the oppressed and their oppressors is the oppressed overthrowing their oppressors and forming new

productive relations that better adapt to the productive forces. The superstructure changes alongside the new productive relations and serves the interests of the new oppressors. The new structure of society will continue to exist until conflict between the productive forces and relations arise again.

As a whole, historical materialism posits that the material conditions of a given society's way of producing and reproducing the means of human existence, which Marx calls the union of its productive forces and relations of production, determine its constitution and development. Historical materialism explains history as the way in which humans collectively produce their means of existence. Social classes and the relations between them, along with the political, legal, and religious environments therein and their corresponding forms of consciousness, are built upon and reflect contemporary material conditions. That is to say, human material existence has a history, and ideas reflect these material conditions. In fact, people's consciousness or ways of thinking are often related to their material conditions in real life. For example, people's voting behaviours may directly relate to the class to which they belong.

Marx's theory of historical materialism provides a theoretical basis for the two aspects relating to the cultural background for analysing the happiness of Chinese people in subsequent chapters. First, as the earliest Marxist theory to be spread throughout China, historical materialism exerted a certain influence on Chinese culture and the happiness of Chinese people at that time (see Sections 3.5.1 and 3.5.2). Second, historical materialism had a major impact on the formation and development of Mao's sinification of Marxism (i.e. it not only laid the groundwork for China's Marxist culture but also accelerated the decline of China's tradition of Confucian), which affected the orientation of contemporary Chinese culture and the happiness of people in present-day China (see Sections 3.5.3 and 3.5.4). For instance, this study finds that Chinese people tend to be more focused on material satisfaction when defining their personal happiness, which would probably indicate a mind influenced by the principle of historical materialism (i.e. the material determines consciousness). Therefore, in general, Marx's theory of historical materialism not only affects the cultural background used for analysing the happiness of Chinese people, but it is also useful for understanding some specific attributes of Chinese people's happiness.

### ***2.4.3 Veenhoven's theory that happiness is relative***

The concept that happiness is relative argues that happiness is determined through the process of comparisons between given conditions and reference standards. According to Veenhoven (1991), happiness is defined as life satisfaction, which is based on three assumptions: happiness is caused by comparisons; standards of comparison can be adjusted but will have some delay after a change in living conditions; standards of comparison are arbitrary and do not necessarily meet any actual requirements for living a good life. Based on the above assumptions, the theory that happiness is relative infers that: (1) happiness is not linked with actual quality of life; (2) happiness may not last, because changes in living conditions only have a temporary effect on happiness; (3) people tend to be happier following difficult times; and (4) people tend to be neutral about their lives because their standards of comparison are continually adjusted.

The results from some studies provide support for the theory of happiness is relative. For example, Easterlin's paradox shows that differences in the level of happiness among nations rely on relative wealth rather than on wealth as such (Easterlin, 1974). There is also some controversy regarding the happiness is relative theory. For example, the inference of happiness is relative is that the level of happiness is irrelevant to one's true quality of life, which is likely not true. Some research has found that people are inclined to be unhappy under adverse conditions, such as war, poverty, and isolation. Further findings indicate that, for better or worse, some conditions may have a lasting effect on happiness, early hardships do not contribute to later happiness, and people are generally positive about their lives.

Accordingly, Veenhoven (1991) argues that happiness is only partially related to comparison and that it largely depends on the satisfaction of people's internal bio-psychological needs, which do not adjust to external conditions. People tend to be happier when they experience a greater satisfaction of internal needs, and they cannot be happy when these basic needs are not satisfied. For example, people cannot feel happy when suffering from hunger or cold simply because their neighbours are worse off. That is to say, happiness can depend on a small number of factors; overall happiness or life satisfaction does not solely arise from conscious comparisons but is also generated by the

satisfaction of innate needs that are not relative to given conditions or reference standards.

## 2.5 Conclusion

Chapter 2 has reviewed a number of important theories about human happiness in Western society. The chapter started with a discussion of traditional ethical hedonism and eudaimonism, which are the philosophical origins of modern scientific research into human happiness. It then moved on to scientific and psychological approaches to human happiness, i.e. hedonic SWB and eudaimonic SDT, which form the theoretical basis for collecting the empirical data and measuring the happiness levels of migrant workers and urban residents at the experiential level. Finally, it discussed sociological approaches to human happiness in the context of Marxism, notably Marx's theories of alienation and historical materialism, as well as Veenhoven's theory that happiness is relative, which form the theoretical bases for analysing the happiness of migrant workers and of Chinese society as a whole at the theoretical level.

Marxism, either the original version developed by Marx and Engels or the localised version in China, plays an important role in this study because it serves as the official ideology in China and has provided the basis for establishing a Chinese variant of socialism in the country; therefore, it is expected to affect Chinese people's way of thinking, including how they think about happiness. Moreover, Chinese Marxism, with regard to Maoism, notably Maoist ideology related to happiness, the inheritance of Maoist ideology within the contemporary cultural and historical contexts in China, and the influence of Maoist ideology on Chinese people's happiness, will be discussed in Chapter 3. Chinese Marxism, as it concerns modernisation/urbanisation in China, will be discussed in Chapter 4.

This chapter has reviewed the question of *what happiness is* according to the schools of hedonism and eudaimonism. Despite rich findings with regard to the characteristics of happiness, along with the relationships between happiness and a number of variables, such as marriage, income, and working conditions, the nature of, and measures for, happiness are ambiguous and uncertain, therefore requiring further study. For example, the question of how to accurately translate propositions suggested by metaphysical philosophy into measurable variables, as well as the question of whether hedonic or eudaimonic wellbeing

can give people overall happiness, must be addressed. Evidence increasingly indicates the importance and necessity of integrating both hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives when studying human happiness. For this reason, the present study is specifically based on such a theoretical foundation. The concrete research methods and fieldwork adopted for conducting the research will be outlined in detail in Chapter 5.

## 3 Chapter 3: Happiness in China

### 3.1 Introduction

What happiness is and how to achieve it varies across different cultures. Lu and Gilmour (2004) suggest that culture and subjective wellbeing (SWB) are most productively analysed together as a dynamic of mutual constitution. Inglehart (1990) also suggests that, rather than individual emotions, different cognitive cultural norms and traditions result in cross-national differences in happiness. Contemporary Chinese culture is primarily a mixture of traditional Chinese culture,<sup>7</sup> marked by Confucianism, and China's Marxist culture, influenced by the model of the Soviet Union and Mao Zedong's sinification (Yu, 2007). Keeping in mind that happiness is a highly culture-specific feeling, Chapter 3 will review relevant studies concerning the happiness of Chinese people from mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the West, 'the big three' classic schools of philosophy, i.e. Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, in the history of Chinese culture, and the impact of contemporary Chinese culture on the values and happiness of contemporary Chinese people.

### 3.2 Current Studies on the Happiness of the Chinese People

Although the happiness of the Chinese people has drawn growing attention from scholars in China and abroad over the past fifteen years, there has been little research on the happiness of China's migrant workers or Shanghai's urban residents. Section 3.2.1 reviews the Chinese-language literature on the happiness of the Chinese people, most of which focuses on a general description of the SWB or life satisfaction of the Chinese people; pays little attention to eudaimonic wellbeing; lacks rigorous methods; only looks at the SWB or satisfaction of students; and is based on Western theories and measurement tools, thus ignoring the impact of the specific Chinese cultural environment. Section 3.2.2 reviews relevant English-language literature, revealing that there has been little research written in English on the happiness of Chinese people. Although most research has

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<sup>7</sup> Traditional Chinese culture usually refers to Confucian culture in the Chinese language (see Section 3.4.1). China's Marxist culture belongs to contemporary Chinese culture rather than traditional Chinese culture (Yu, 2007).

realised that the happiness of Chinese people is shaped, in part, by Chinese culture, which is very different from Western culture, such research has also focused on students as the main object of study.

### ***3.2.1 Chinese-language literature on the happiness of the Chinese people***

An interest in the happiness of Chinese people has only emerged in recent decades in mainland China. Compared with the diversified theoretical frameworks and tools in Western countries, the research contents and methods of mainland scholars are relatively homogenous.<sup>8</sup> According to Chen and Davey (2008), the first Chinese happiness study was published in 1999, and, by 2007, only about 800 relevant studies were published. The authors further suggest that the field mainly concentrates on the general description of SWB in ten areas (see Table 3.1). To be more specific, they believe that, first, general surveys among groups of people in different social environments and geographic regions are most popular in this field, such as a general survey investigating the happiness/SWB of college students in Beijing. The second main area refers to the relationships between happiness/SWB and certain variables of health psychology or personality research. For example, such research may examine the relationship between the personality and happiness/SWB of college students in Beijing. Finally, most of the studies are not sufficiently deep, as only 5.9 per cent of the studies are equivalent to Stage 3 of Diener and Biswas-Diener's classification system<sup>9</sup> (Chen and Davey, 2008).

At the same time, via a keyword search using the search terms 'Happiness/SWB'<sup>10</sup> in the databases of philosophy and human sciences, Social Science I, Social Science II, medical science and technology, and economics and management provided by the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI),<sup>11</sup> this study shows there has been about 16,000 relevant papers published in Chinese academic journals between 1 January 2008 and the

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<sup>8</sup> In this case, 'mainland scholars' refers to those who publish their papers in Chinese in journals edited and published geographically on the mainland. This does not include co-written papers led by foreign scholars and papers written by scholars who were born on the mainland and educated abroad.

<sup>9</sup> According to Diener and Biswas-Diener (2000), Stage 1 signifies that the research describes and compares life satisfaction/happiness in different populations, which is typically without a report of scale reliability and validity. Stage 2 signifies that the research explores theoretical models, the improvement of SWB measures, and relationships between cultures and SWB. Stage 3 signifies that the research takes recognised psychological influences on different measures into consideration and uses multiple measures, longitudinal designs, and experimental manipulation.

<sup>10</sup> In simplified Chinese: '幸福感'.

<sup>11</sup> CNKI is the biggest digital library on the mainland. It was initiated by Tsinghua University and is supported by a number of governmental departments.

present day.

**Table 3.1: The main areas of Chinese mainland research into happiness/SWB from 1999-2007 (Chen and Davey, 2008)**

<b>Research area</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
General survey	113	39
Health psychology	48	17
Personality research	35	12
Social psychology	24	8
Scale creation/research methods	13	4
Educational psychology	13	4
Socio-economic characteristics	7	2
Medical psychology	6	2
Cultural psychology	6	2
Organisational (industrial) psychology	6	2

After checking 183<sup>12</sup> from a total of 15,891 papers that have been cited 20 times or more,<sup>13</sup> Table 3.2 was created to indicate the main areas of Chinese mainland research into happiness/SWB from 2008 to March 2015 (see Table 3.2). In order to make a clear comparison with the research areas between 1999 and 2007, as presented in Table 3.1, the same items and patterns are applied in Table 3.2. It should be noted that health psychology, personality research, and social psychology are merged into one item because it may not possible to accurately distinguish one from the other, given that some papers use vague terms and some refer to more than one. A comparison between the two tables first reveals that general surveys and research into health psychology, personality, and social psychology are still the major areas of interest in this field after 2007. Although the percentage of general surveys drops from 39 per cent after 2007, such research still accounts for 22 per cent of this field. Meanwhile, the percentage of health psychology, personality, and social psychology research declines slightly from 37 per cent to 34 per cent after 2007. Note that, despite the slight change in this percentage, the patterns and methods of the papers change little after 2007, meaning that such research areas are still less emphasised when numerous publications are compared. Secondly, a new area

<sup>12</sup> There were 199 papers cited 20 or more times, but 15 of them did not meet the academic criteria.

<sup>13</sup> Most papers were cited fewer than 20 times.

appeared, as an introduction to, or a literature review of, Western theories become popular after 2000, accounting for 16 per cent of this field. Thirdly, increasing attention has been paid to the area of socio-economic characteristics, with its percentage increasing from two to nine per cent. Fourthly, with regard to scale creation/research methods, educational psychology, organisational (industrial) psychology, cultural approaches, and medical psychology, very little work has been carried out in these areas, as their percentages are low. Generally speaking, although the development of this field looks robust when judging by the numbers of published papers, with regard to its core concerns and research features, little has changed. Meanwhile, most studies are comparatively simple, as some try to explore happiness via one or several variables while others lack clear theoretical bases and research methods. In addition, as Chen and Davey (2008) have argued, in the mainland, this field is detached from the Chinese happiness studies published in Western journals. In this regard, except for the studies of Lu (2001) and Lu and Gilmour (2004), other studies may be unknown on the mainland.

**Table 3.2: Main areas of Chinese mainland research into happiness/SWB, 2008-March 2015**

<b>Research area</b>	<b>N=183</b>	<b>%</b>
Health psychology/Personality research/Social psychology	62	34
General survey	41	22
Literature review of Western theories	30	16
Socio-economic characteristics	16	9
Scale creation/research methods	8	4
Educational psychology	8	4
Organisational (industrial) psychology	8	4
Cultural approach	4	2
Medical psychology	1	0.5

Among the 183 papers mentioned above, surveys are the most popular research method in mainland China, accounting for about 52 per cent of total studies. Consistent with Chen and Davey's finding in 2008, this area still centres on surveys examining the relationship between happiness/SWB and variable(s) connected with health psychology, personality, or social psychology (see Table 3.3). At the same time, the survey samples focus strongly on college students. According to Chen and Davey (2008), between 1999 and 2007, about

47 per cent of 290 studies included students, thus resulting in concerns about the overuse of student samples. Moreover, this trend became stronger after 2007; as shown in Table 3.4, the percentage of student samples increased to 58 per cent in 2015. This may be because most relevant research is carried out by mainland scholars who work in universities; consequently, university students are the most easily available and accessible respondents. In addition, students seem to be one of the mainland's vulnerable groups, as many students are under great pressure, and therefore some of them are at risk of poor mental health.

**Table 3.3: Survey area**

<b>Survey area</b>	<b>N=95</b>	<b>%</b>
Health psychology/Personality research/Social psychology	54	57
General survey	41	43

**Table 3.4: Types of survey samples**

<b>Sample</b>	<b>N=95</b>	<b>%</b>
Student	55	58
Elderly	15	16
Children	7	7
Teacher	5	5
<i>Others</i>		
Medical staff	4	
Minority	3	
National	2	
Urban resident	2	
Peasant	2	
Women	1	
Victim	1	
Total	15	16

The overuse of student samples may negatively influence the development of this area on the mainland, as, not only has too much attention been paid to students, but there has also

been too much dependence on student samples to examine issues of public happiness. For example, a research project may use a sample of students instead of sampling people living in Beijing in order to examine people's happiness in Beijing, which is clearly inappropriate. Besides university students, the elderly is another popular sample group, accounting for 16 per cent of all sample types, a percentage that is similar to Chen and Davey's (2008) findings. The third most common sample type is children,<sup>14</sup> with seven per cent. This new emerging sample type is mainly concerned with the children of Chinese migrant workers. In general, compared with Western scholars, who focus their attention on the happiness of vulnerable groups, such as immigrants and women as well as public groups such as urban residents and peasants, mainland scholars tend to focus on university students and older people. At the same time, as an emerging social problem, the happiness of the children of migrant workers has come to the attention of researchers. As a relatively new field on the mainland, there is certainly space for development and further research.

There are only a handful of studies in most geographical areas of mainland China and a disproportionate amount of research in relation to other areas. In general, most studies have been conducted southeast of the Hu line,<sup>15</sup> except for the northeast plain (including Heilongjiang, Jilin, and Liaoning) and the Yunnan-Guizhou plateau (including Yunnan and Guizhou) (see Figure 3.1). Hardly any research has been conducted among the ethnic minority autonomous regions.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Children may be students; in this sense, it is difficult to say whether they are student samples or not. Despite this, the current study places them in the category of children because all the papers using a child sample refer to the problem of 'stay-at-home children' or 'floating children'. So-called stay-at-home children and floating children are, respectively, children of Chinese migrant workers who are left behind in their rural hometowns or in the care of relatives or those who migrate into cities with their parents.

<sup>15</sup> As a famous population density contrast line, the Hu line is an imaginary line throughout the Chinese territory from Heihe to Tengchong. In 1987, Hu (1987) described this line; the Eastern area accounts for 42.9 per cent of the country and is inhabited by 94.4 per cent of the population; in contrast, the Western area accounts for 57.1 per cent, with a population of only 5.6 per cent (Hu, 1987).

<sup>16</sup> This means that the happiness research in mainland China mostly focuses on the Han people. In fact, only two studies refer to the happiness of Chinese minorities between 1998 and 2005. One focuses on minority students while the other examines minority children.

Figure 3.1: The distribution of happiness studies in mainland China



According to Table 3.5, research is most frequently conducted in (1) Shandong province, (2) Guangdong province, (3) Beijing, (4) Zhejiang province, and (5) Hubei province.

*Table 3.5: Number of studies in each province on the mainland between 1999 and 2015<sup>17</sup>*

<b>Province</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Shandong	44	10.0
Guangdong	43	9.8
Beijing	27	6.2
Zhejiang	25	5.7
Hubei	24	5.5
Chongqing	19	4.3
Hebei	19	4.3
Jiangxi	18	4.1
Henan	15	3.4
Jiangsu	14	3.2
Shaanxi	14	3.2
Hunan	13	3.0
Fujian	11	2.5
Sichuan	11	2.5
Shanghai	9	2.1
Liaoning	7	1.6
Tianjin	7	1.6
Yunnan	7	1.6
Guangxi	6	1.4
Guizhou	6	1.4
Gansu	5	1.1
Shanxi	5	1.1
Anhui	3	0.7
Heilongjiang	3	0.7
Jilin	3	0.7
Ningxia	2	0.5
Hainan	1	0.2
Qinghai	1	0.2
Xinjiang	1	0.2
Inner Mongolia	0	-
Tibet	0	-
Unknown	43	9.8
Whole country	31	7.1
International	5	1.1

<sup>17</sup> Table 3.5 has been calculated using Chen and Davey's (1998) findings, in addition to 183 out of a total of 15,891 papers that have been cited 20 or more times between 1998 and 2005.

It is remarkable that these five regions, with the highest frequency, have stayed the same since 2007, except that Zhejiang province has replaced Hebei province. Moreover, Guangdong province and Beijing are the fastest-growing areas in the field of research, and one-third of Beijing's new research focuses on the happiness of Chinese floating children.<sup>18</sup> Other administrative regions with greater than or equal to ten studies include Chongqing, Hebei province, Jiangxi province, Henan province, Jiangsu province, Shaanxi province, Hunan province, Fujian province, and Sichuan province. Clearly, the number of studies in Fujian province has grown rapidly, increasing by 120 per cent since 2007.

Secondly, there are eight areas where the number of studies are greater than or equal to five and fewer than ten: Shanghai, Liaoning province, Tianjin, Yunnan province, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, Guizhou province, Gansu province, and Shanxi province. It is worth noting that, as the mainland's economic centre, Shanghai has relatively less research on happiness among its population. Hence, this paper will carefully review the related research in Shanghai in Chapter 4.

Thirdly, research is extremely scarce in Anhui province, Heilongjiang province, Jilin province, Ningxia Hui autonomous region, Hainan province, Qinghai province, and Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, as their percentages are lower than one per cent, while no research has been conducted in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region and the Tibet autonomous region. Moreover, while 9.8 per cent of the research sites are disclosed, most of the papers use 'somewhere'. It is therefore questionable that these papers can generalise to national situations and theories based on samples from 'somewhere'.

In general, extant research on happiness within the mainland mainly focuses on a general description of SWB; in this sense, it rarely describes the whole picture of hedonic wellbeing and has little consideration for eudaimonic wellbeing. Therefore, Chinese research in this field may be not so comprehensive and systematic when compared to that of the West. There are other limitations of the happiness research in China. For instance, a large number of studies fail to provide adequate descriptions of their research methods, e.g. where the study was conducted. Further, most research tends to analyse happiness by means of only one or several relationships between happiness and variables; hence, hardly

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<sup>18</sup> Floating children refers to children who have migrated from rural to urban areas with their parents.

any in-depth qualitative methods have been applied in this field of research, which may result in monotonous research ideas and methods. Furthermore, too much attention has been paid to student samples in examining public happiness issues, thus neglecting other social groups, which may lead to a misunderstanding of Chinese people's happiness. Moreover, most research is conducted in Shandong, Guangzhou, Beijing, Zhejiang, and Hubei, whereas other areas have received little or no scholarly attention. It is also worth considering that mainland scholars have generally failed to note the influence of Chinese traditional culture on Chinese people's happiness/SWB, given that only two per cent of research involves a cultural approach (see Table 3.2). Although most express the idea that Chinese people's happiness is different from Western ideas, such an assertion is not proven by empirical evidence. Hence, this thesis will discuss, in depth, the Chinese cultural background, distinctive from that of the West, in Sections 3, 4, and 5 of this chapter.

### ***3.2.2 The English-language literature on the happiness of the Chinese people***

The quantity of papers written in English on the happiness of Chinese society is much smaller than those written in Chinese, although they have provided a solid basis and set the stage for further research in both English and Chinese. By searching for the keyword 'China' in the database of the *Journal of Happiness*, 39 China-related papers between 2008 and 2015 were found (see Table 3.6). Along with 12 relevant papers published in the *Journal of Happiness* between 2000 and 2007<sup>19</sup> (Chen and Davey, 2008), a total of 51 papers were found, the general features of which are outlined in Table 3.6.

First, the areas of research are generally erratic, although they are similar to papers written in Chinese. They cover cross-cultural comparisons between Chinese society and other nations or among Chinese societies such as Hong Kong and Taiwan (e.g. Liao et al., 2005); the national economy and its influence on national happiness; a general survey of SWB/happiness/life satisfaction/quality of life; personality; demographic (e.g. age, gender, and region) and social-economic characteristics; physical and psychological health; happiness and immigration (e.g. the happiness of migrant children (Fang et al., 2016)); immigrant wives in Taiwan (Chang and Liao, 2015); personal growth in migrant students

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<sup>19</sup> For the 12 papers, please see Chen and Davey (2008), Table 3.1.

in Hong Kong (Pan et al., 2013); happiness philosophy; scale localisation; happiness and high levels of education; and the fragility of happiness.

**Table 3.6: Papers published in the Journal of Happiness on Chinese society (2008-2015)**

<b>Chinese society studied</b>	<b>Authors</b>
<b>Mainland</b>	Bergsma, 2008; Zhang and Veenhoven, 2008; Brockmann et al., 2009; Chyi and Mao, 2012; Dai et al., 2013; Hu, 2015; Zhou and Xie, 2015; Rao et al., 2016; Sun et al., 2016
Beijing	Nielsen et al., 2010; Zhang and Tsang, 2013; Yuan, 2016
Zhejiang	Chen and Li, 2010; Fang et al., 2016
Fujian	Nielsen et al., 2010
Hunan	Davey et al., 2009
Yunnan	Monk-Turner and Turner, 2012
Shanghai	Yuan, 2016
Guangdong	Yuan, 2016
Shanxi	Zhang and Tsingan, 2014
Chongqing	Duan et al., 2014
Shaanxi	Kong et al., 2015
Tibet	Webb, 2009
<b>Hong Kong</b>	Kwan, 2010; Kwok et al., 2015
Mainland students in Hong Kong	Pan et al., 2013
<b>Taiwan</b>	Chiu et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2013; Keng and Wu, 2014; Chang and Liao, 2015
<b>Greater China</b>	Chen and Davey, 2008; Davey and Rato, 2012
<b>Cross Culture</b>	
Mainland and Portugal	Ho et al., 2013
Mainland and Canada	Bonn and Tafarodi, 2013
Mainland, Japan, and South Korea	Liang et al., 2013;
Mainland and South Africa	Chen et al., 2015
Mainland, Canada, India, and Japan	Tafarodi et al., 2012
Chinese and South Asian in Canada	Bonn and Tafarodi, 2014
Hong Kong and US	Ho et al., 2012
Hong Kong and Brazil	Ho et al., 2012
Hong Kong and other 14 countries	Joshanloo et al., 2015

The most common area for papers written in English is cross-cultural comparative

research, which is not the focus of papers written in Chinese. In addition, authors of papers written in English also pay attention to immigration, both within and outside of Chinese society.

Second, survey samples are diverse, with students representing the most frequent sample type, accounting for around 40 per cent of all the samples. Table 3.7 shows the most commonly used sample types: students, national samples, international samples, and migrants. Most cross-cultural studies make use of student samples, such as international or migrant students or students from compared nations; therefore, there is more overlap between student, international, and migrant samples. A national sample covers adults or urban residents in the studied counties. As a comparison with Chinese papers, student samples are less frequently used (40 per cent compared to 58 per cent) than in English papers, and, instead of paying attention to the happiness of teachers and medical staff, English papers focus more on cultural approaches and migrants.

Finally, the most commonly studied area is the Chinese mainland, with the number of mainland-related papers sharply increasing from two (Chen and Davey, 2008) to 27 in the past few years. Meanwhile, the frequency of studies in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and other areas in China has not significantly changed. In this sense, first, the Chinese mainland has become a significant research site, and second, instead of focusing on national surveys/samples, a growing body of research has been carried out in Chinese cities.

*Table 3.7: Types of survey samples<sup>20</sup>*

<b>Sample</b>	<b>N=35</b>	<b>%</b>
Student	14	40.0
National	10	29.4
International	11	29.4
Migrant	4	11.8
Elderly	2	5.9
Women	2	5.9
Children	1	2.9
Minority	1	2.9
Peasant	1	2.9
Taxi driver	1	2.9
White-collar	1	2.9

<sup>20</sup> There is overlap among the sample classifications.

In general, studies published in English offer a good basis for the further development of particular research areas, especially in the field of cross-cultural comparative studies. Most examine happiness through the lenses of psychology and economics, while a few take a sociological perspective. Although they may be more precise and dig deeper than Chinese papers, they still have some shortcomings. First, due the dearth of studies in this area, current research on Chinese happiness is still in its initial stages. Second, similar to Chinese papers, using student samples frequently in order to explore happiness in general may result in biased findings.

### **3.3 Traditional Concepts of Happiness in Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism**

There is increasing evidence that the happiness of the Chinese people is shaped, in part, by Chinese culture, which is distinct from Western culture (e.g. Nakamura, 1997; Yao, 2000; Lu et al., 2001a; Lu et al., 2001b; Gold et al., 2002; Gunde, 2002; Lu and Gilmour, 2004; Chappell, 2005; Tafarodi et al., 2012; Bonn and Tafarodi, 2013; Gilmour, 2014; Lu and Gilmour, 2014). The emphasis of empirical research on such distinctness as a way to define (e.g. Lu et al., 2001a; Lu and Gilmour, 2004; Lu and Gilmour, 2014) or achieve (e.g. Lu et al., 2001b; Lu and Gilmour, 2004) happiness in Chinese and Western cultures clearly indicates that any research on the happiness of Chinese people should be considered within the background of China's particular cultural context.

Section 3.3 therefore describes (1) the term 'happiness' in the Chinese language and (2) traditional ideas about happiness through a brief introduction to the concept of happiness in Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism.

#### ***3.3.1 The term 'happiness' in the Chinese language***

From the perspective of philology, the concept of happiness, or *xingfu* in the Chinese language, is directly connected with ghosts and gods, whereby offering sacrifices to spirits in ancient China was a necessary shortcut for the blessing ritual, wherein destiny and the conquest of happiness came together (Shi, 2014). According to *Shuowen Jiezi*, an early second-century Chinese dictionary from the Han Dynasty, the original meaning of *xing* indicates growing up and becoming old while avoiding dying young or falling into decay; this also can be extended to pursuing good fortune and avoiding disaster. Likewise, the

original meaning of *fu* relates to pouring liquor into a drinking vessel in front of a god and sacrificing to it in order to obtain a blessing. The combination of *xing* and *fu* therefore signifies the wish of the ancient Chinese to pursue good fortune and avoid disaster by means of divine providence (Shi, 2014). Therefore, happiness in the ancient Chinese language is inseparable from the idea of divine blessing, and it relates to success in getting what one wants through luck and staying out of trouble.

According to the sixth edition of *The Contemporary Chinese Dictionary* (2009), in the Chinese language, the word *xingfu* refers to a pleasant feeling of satisfaction and fun in one's life, as well as the natural desire to sustain such a mood. *Xingfu* is also a synonym for *kuai'le*, *tianmi*, and *meiman* (pleasure, sweet, and perfectly satisfactory in English), and an antonym for *beican*, *jiku*, *tongku*, *ku'nao*, and *ku'nan* (miserable, suffering, pain, distress, and hardship). *The Great Dictionary of Modern Chinese* defines *xingfu* as being perfectly satisfied with one's life and situation (2009, p.738). Therefore, the contemporary Chinese language defines happiness as a pleasant mood derived from sustained life satisfaction and a feeling of great fun in one's own life, which is hoped will last for a long time. Hence, in contemporary Chinese, happiness mainly refers to hedonic wellbeing.

### **3.3.2 Confucian happiness**

Confucianism, also known as *ruxue* in Chinese, is an ancient Chinese ideological, philosophical, and cultural school, which represents the mainstream consciousness of ancient China and has had a profound impact on Chinese and East Asian countries. Although the term *xingfu* is neither explicitly included in pre-Qin Confucianism nor the ideological development of Confucian successors in later dynasties, Confucian happiness, based on the concept of *le* (delight), has established a sophisticated system to describe human happiness. The Confucian concept of *le* includes a number of concepts such as *le*, *fu* (blessing), *li* (profit), *xi* (joy), and *ji* (lucky), and is developed through a number of steps, such as Confucius' *kong yan zhile* (the delight of Kong Yan), Mencius' *junzi sanle* (a gentlemen's three delights), and Tong Chung-shu's *sangang wuchang* (the three cardinal guides and five constant virtues).

Generally speaking, Confucian happiness can be understood as a patriarchal and hierarchical virtuous happiness that is focused on spiritual *le*; it believes in the existence

and rationality of human desire (i.e. hedonic wellbeing) while adjusting accordingly to accommodate such desires within the rubric of moral norms, in addition to restraining such desires in order to achieve spiritual and virtuous happiness. Practical means are proposed to answer the question of ‘how to achieve happiness’, including constantly improving moral satisfaction by controlling human desires, being fond of learning and cultivating virtue, and shaping the Confucian ideal personality in order to realise *neisheng waiwang* (inner saintliness and outer kingliness). In addition, one may achieve harmony in familial and interpersonal relationships as well as in society as a whole by means of engaging in ethical careers and observing ethical *xiaoti* (filial piety and fraternal duty) and *sangang wuchang* (which ensures the three most important ethical relationships as ruler and ruled, son and father, wife and husband). At the same time, Confucian happiness embraces both virtuous satisfaction and feudal ethics and is, to a large extent, entwined with national politics; in this sense, it suggests that a feudal ruler should adopt a policy of benevolence in order to instil moral behaviour in his subjects, while subjects should comply with *sangang wuchang*. Likewise, a hierarchy of political ethics has been sanctified as the fundamental principle of heaven and earth, requiring people to carry out their role-dependent obligations harmoniously in order to serve families and interpersonal relationships and maintain social standing, security, and national politics. From such a perspective, individual happiness is not a concern, since it is repressed under social and collective happiness.

7:16. The Master said, ‘Eating coarse food, drinking water, crooking one’s arm and pillowing upon it – happiness may be found also in these circumstances. To be unrighteous and so become wealthy and even honoured – to me, this is like a drifting cloud.’ (*The Analects*, translated by Brooks and Brooks, 1998, p.41)

6:11. The Master said, ‘Worthy indeed was Hwéi! One dish of food, one dipper of drink, living in a narrow alley – others could not have borne their sorrow, but Hwéi did not waver in his happiness. Worthy indeed was Hwéi.’ (*The Analects*, translated by Brooks and Brooks, 1998, p.33)

What is *kong yan zhile*? Based on 6:11 of *The Analects*, Yan Hwéi, one of Confucius’

favourite disciples, received praise from Confucius (551–479 BC) for his simple diet and poor house while enjoying his happiness. This is not only a generalised understanding of Confucius' idea of happiness (see 7:16), but it also laid the foundation for the concept of virtuous happiness in the Confucian heritage. To be clear, together with being content in poverty while enjoying episteme, *kong yan zhile* also refers to the aspiration of rejecting utilitarian pleasure and seeking virtuous happiness. In line with the idea in 7:16 that 'to be unrighteous and so become wealthy and even honoured – to me this is like a drifting cloud', in addition to the quotes below, Confucius believes that human desires, such as fame and wealth, are restrained by ethics, suggesting that excessive hedonism should be opposed while moderate hedonism should be under the guidance of moral norms; in addition, virtuous happiness of the spirit is indeed the ultimate destination for Confucius's theory of happiness.

4:5. The Master said, 'Wealth and honour: these are what everyone desires, but if he cannot do so in accordance with his principles, he will not abide in them. Poverty and lowliness: these are what everyone hates, but if he cannot do so in accordance with his principles, he will not avoid it. If the gentle avoid rún, how shall he make his name? A gentleman does not for the space of a meal depart from rún. In direst straits he cleaves to it; in deepest distress he cleaves to it.' (*The Analects*, translated by Brooks and Brooks, 1998, p.14)

16:5. Confucius said, 'What is helpful is Three Joys, and what is harmful is Three Joys. To joy in seasonal ritual and music, to joy in the goodness of men of the way, to joy in having many worthy friends: there are helpful. To joy in arrogant pleasures, to joy in dissipated adventures, to joy in feasting and music: there are harmful.' (*The Analects*, translated by Brooks and Brooks, 1998, p.155)

4:16. The Master said, 'The gentleman concentrates on right; the little man concentrates on advantage.' (*The Analects*, translated by Brooks and Brooks, 1998, p.16)

14:23. The Master said, 'The gentleman is successful in benevolence and righteousness; the little man is successful in wealth and advantage.' (*The*

*Analects*, translated by Brooks and Brooks, 1998, p.131)

First, according to ‘The Master’, ‘wealth and honour: these are what everyone desires.’ Hence, in 4:5, Confucius recognises that human desires (i.e. wealth and honour in 4:5, beauty in 15:13, good food in 16:5) are natural, which is obviously different from the perspective of ‘*cun tianli, mie renyu*’ (‘uphold justice, annihilate desire’) of the Cheng-Zhu School, which is one of the leading philosophical schools of Neo-Confucianism in the Song and Ming dynasties. Second, based the acknowledgement of human desires, Confucius suggests that neither absolute satisfaction nor the elimination of human desires is advisable for achieving happiness. Likewise, evidence in 4:5 further suggests that ‘principles’ or moral rules should be applied to control human desires at a proper level, i.e. one should appropriately obtain personal satisfaction from human desires under the guidance of reasonable moral principles. At the same time, one should not avoid kindness and then offend other people’s right to satisfy their own desires. Third, although human desires are recognised as legitimate, from Confucius’ perspective, the realisation of human desires is by no means a commendatory way to achieve positive happiness; indeed, such desires are despised.

According to 16:5, ‘to joy in seasonal ritual and music, to joy in the goodness of men of the way, to joy in having many worthy friends: there are helpful. To joy in arrogant pleasures, to joy in dissipated adventures, to joy in feasting and music: there are harmful’; in this sense, human nature regarding food and amusement are recognised as harmful pleasures. According to 4:16, ‘the gentleman concentrates on right; the little man concentrates on advantage’, and 14:23 ‘the gentleman is successful in benevolence and righteousness; the little man is successful in wealth and advantage’. Thus, human desires for wealth and chasing advantage are also considered the actions of a base person, and a gentleman would never do such things. Therefore, *kong yan zhile* is closely related to virtue, which is contrary to hedonism and, according to the *Nichomachean Ethics* (as translated by Bartlett and Collins, 2011), is similar to Aristotle’s view of happiness regarding the activity of a soul in accordance with perfect virtue. Meanwhile, *kong yan zhile* is the spiritual happiness of moral contentment that concentrates on rejecting utilitarian pleasure and seeking virtuous happiness. Though not every Confucian shares the identical opinion of happiness, for example, Hsun-tzu believed that worldly happiness

is reasonable and Chu Hsi wanted to annihilate human desires, virtuous happiness is still at the centre of the Confucian concept of happiness.

How is one to achieve *kong yan zhile*? Except for the restraining of human desires, the love of learning together with the accomplishment of the Confucian ideal personality could be ways to achieve Confucius' idea of sustained moral satisfaction. 19:7 points out that 'the gentleman studies to realise his way', 19:6 states that 'to be of wide learning and sincere intent – benevolence will be found on this', and 19:13 maintains that 'if he is underoccupied in service, he may study. If he is under-occupied in study, he may serve'; in this sense, the importance of learning is connected with the implementation of a gentleman's way, the achievement of the central tenet of Confucianism, i.e. benevolence, and the realisation of entering into an official career in order to accomplish a gentleman's supreme ideal. Thus, learning, which is self-sufficient and internal and could be acquired through cultivating personal skills, plays an important role in Confucius' concept of happiness. Evidence from 1:1 and 6:20 illustrate Confucius' intention regarding study as a kind of happiness: 'to learn and in due time rehearse it: is this not also pleasurable?'; 'Knowing is not as good as loving it; loving it is not as good as taking delight in it'.

Apart from the goodness of education, cultivating an ideal personality is another inner practice contributing to Confucian virtuous happiness. The ideal personality is a moral model of what a human being can be. From Confucius' perspective, it refers to both noble-minded morality together with outstanding personal skills and the meritorious career capacity of 'one who bestowed benefits widely among the people'; specifically, the characteristics of the ideal personality point to being benevolent and caring for the political affairs of human life, called *neisheng waiwang*. Note that being fond of learning also serves for the belief of *neisheng waiwang*; in line with cultivating personality, the aim is to develop one's moral character in order to strive for an official career. Hence, for Confucius, happiness is naturally generated during the process of realising the Confucian ideal of *neisheng waiwang*.

Since the Confucian succession of Mencius' gentlemen's three delights and Hsun-tzu's argument for simple hedonic wellbeing, Tong Chung-shu's (c. 179–104 BC) idea of *sangang wuchang*, which conforms to both heavenly and human realms, is a further

development of Confucius' virtuous theory. *Sangang wuchang* places greater emphasis on the happiness provided by social order for the purpose of establishing an ideal country wherein everyone lives happily and harmoniously. According to Pan Ku's (c. 32–92 AD) *Baihu Tongyi*, 'What are the Three Cardinal Guides? They are: ruler guides subject, father guides son, and husband guides wife' (Pan, n.d., p.201); *sangang* (the three cardinal principles) is essentially a feudal system that covers both family and king-subject relationships. In accordance with Tong's *Ju Xianliang Duice*, *wuchang* (the five constant virtues) refers to benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and fidelity (Tong, n.d.; Hwang, 1987; Kwok, 1989). *Wuchang* is a basic solution for the superior and inferior relationship adopted by the ruling class. In general, Tong's view of happiness is not only a personal feeling of moral satisfaction but also a social wellbeing that relies on the union of heavenly and human realms, i.e. if people can follow their own positions in their families and society, the whole of society and all the people will be happy.

Adhering faithfully to *sangang wuchang* is Tong's way of achieving happiness. He believes that selfishness and greed will ultimately lead to great misfortune for both individuals and the whole of society; in this sense, social wellbeing is the foundation and precondition for personal wellbeing. Therefore, in order to obtain personal and social wellbeing, one should feel pleased with one's family and role in society, thereby creating a harmonious social order and a happy society. It is not difficult to see that Tong's view of happiness focuses more on social wellbeing and cares less about personal wellbeing, especially that of female groups. Although the production of *sangang wuchang* was rooted in the social background of Tong's age, Tong's ideas have had a significant influence on Chinese values, and they are still thought to affect Chinese people's happiness and way of thinking to this day. For example, some Chinese people remain willing to perform their traditional role-dependent obligations within their families and society in order to achieve harmonious social connections and household wellbeing. However, the impact of the core values of Confucianism, such as *sangang wuchang*, on Chinese people's happiness is weakening due to changes in contemporary Chinese culture. The inheritance and transformation of the core values of the Confucian tradition, especially during the Cultural Revolution, along with the extent to which the traditional Confucian values continue to affect Chinese people's happiness in present-day China, will be discussed in Section 3.4.

### 3.3.3 Taoist happiness

After Lao-tzu's *Daodejing* was first published, Taoist thought, with *tao* (meaning way) at its core, was formed in hundreds of ideological schools during the Pre-Qin period, emphasising *tiandao wuwei* (being nature and letting things take their own course) and *dao fa ziran* (the tao way follows nature) as well as containing plain dialectical thought, such as 'yin and yang embrace each other and yin and yang bring all into harmony'. Through the deification of the Pre-Qin moral philosophers, a Chinese local religion, that of Taoism, was established around the second century CE, with its basic belief of becoming immortal.

Differing from Confucian conceptions of virtuous happiness, which pay close attention to participating in political affairs, Taoist happiness refers to both sensual and spiritual pleasure and, as a combination of physical health and mental joy, is a means of achieving virtue and supreme goodness (Sun, 2011). The main features of Taoist happiness include values of individualism, escapism, hedonism, harmony between man and nature, and plain dialectics. Bauer (1976) suggests that passionate individualism is an important source of Taoist teaching about the world. Ren (1983) suggests that, from Chuang-tzu's perspective, a human being is a natural person in pursuit of one's own happiness. In fact, Pre-Qin Taoism is antisocial in a certain sense, since Lao-tzu believed that humanity would be happier if they lived in blissful ignorance in a more primitive society – a political wish for a form of anarchism (Hu, 1954; Fan, 2006); therefore, escapism or avoiding official careers is evident in Taoist happiness. Hedonism is another feature, in that Taoist happiness emphasises maintaining physical health, spiritual joy, and a love of life in order to enjoy lasting happiness and longevity. It also advocates holding few desires and living harmoniously with nature, in addition to showing mercy to all creation (Sun, 2011). In addition, Taoist dialectics (e.g. 'good fortune lies within bad, bad fortune lurks within good') also lead to the happiness of physical and mental balance. Therefore, for the purpose of achieving happiness, Taoism inspires one to 'manifest plainness, embrace simplicity, reduce selfishness, and hold few desires', believing that 'content is happiness' and that one should 'not only love human beings but also love all creation', in line with the dialectical balance between happiness and sadness.

### ***3.3.4 Buddhist happiness***

Buddhism was established by Prince Siddhartha Gautama of Kapilavastu (now in Nepal) around three thousand years ago. It spread all over the Chinese mainland, as far back as the Northern and Southern Dynasties (420-589 AD) and reached its peak in the Sui and Tang dynasties (581-907 AD); it declined in the later feudal society, but has since been revitalised by the insights of modern Chinese Buddhism. Similar to Christian happiness, the Buddhist concept of happiness also leads people to strive for happiness in the next life. Although it has unique effects on all levels of Chinese society, especially among women, the Buddhist influence on the Chinese is much less than that of Christianity on the Western Middle Ages (Fang, 1995). There are many kinds of happiness, or *le*, in Buddhist ideology, but only through true happiness derived from the blessing that is beyond this world, i.e. the happiness of nirvana (*niepan* in Chinese), is one able to escape from worldly troubles and achieve spiritual liberation. Other kinds of happiness, such as happiness depending on external conditions rather than Dharma, are all illusions, which are hindrances to the pursuit of nirvana.

Regarding nirvana, Buddhism believes that people have ‘the sensation of Dukkha (suffering)’, meaning that suffering in life is inevitable. Moreover, by means of understanding the ‘Four Noble Truths’ and then practising the ‘Noble Eightfold Path’, people are able to avoid suffering and obtain eternal happiness. The ‘Four Noble Truths’ are the Truth of Dukkha, the Truth of the Origin of Dukkha, the Truth of the Cessation of Dukkha, and the Truth of the Path of Liberation from Dukkha. People need to understand suffering as the essence of life, the reasons for suffering, the ways to eliminate suffering, and the ultimate goal of achieving nirvana (happiness). The ‘Noble Eightfold Path’ refers to the right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. The ‘Noble Eightfold Path’ can be divided into three: ethical conduct, concentration, and wisdom (Jie, Ding, and Hui in Chinese), which teach people to purify their behaviour and spiritual lives in order to temper their concentration, keep calm, and summon their faculties of penetrative understanding to see things as they really are. Buddhism also has faith in practice because such faith can lead people away from the bitter samsara of birth and death and achieve eternal liberation. As an important ideological school that has consistently influenced traditional Chinese

culture, enlightenment with regard to the pursuit of happiness can be found by treating happiness and suffering properly, keeping a peaceful mind while not worrying about suffering, and not being over-delighted with happiness; rather, it advises that both rich and poor maintain their mental balance. Moreover, the idea of ‘karmic circles’ urges people to pay attention to karma, act with altruism, and do more kind deeds in order to become immortal.

### **3.4 The Legacy of Confucian Culture and Its Potential Impact on the Happiness of Today’s Chinese People**

China has experienced war, decline, revival, and regeneration in modern times. The resultant transformation of Chinese society has involved every field of social life and has brought great changes to the Chinese people and their culture. In Chinese people’s cultural lives, the rapid decline of traditional Confucian culture occurred almost simultaneously alongside Mao’s sinification of Marxism-Leninism (see Section 3.5). The fading of Confucian culture and its values, as well as the rise of Chinese Marxist culture, has greatly influenced the happiness and ways of thinking of contemporary Chinese people.

With the purpose of exploring what role traditional Confucian culture continues to play in shaping the happiness of Chinese people in present-day China, the discussion in this section centres around two themes: (1) the transformation and legacy of traditional Confucian culture and (2) the impact of the Confucian legacy on Chinese people’s happiness.

#### ***3.4.1 The transformation and legacy of traditional Confucian culture***

This section aims to identify which Confucian values have been weakened or inherited in contemporary Chinese culture in order to provide a basis for discussing the impact of the Confucian legacy on the happiness of Chinese people in the following section. The discussion below is focused around three aspects: (1) Confucian culture is the mainstream of traditional Chinese culture; (2) the transformation of Confucian culture since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century; and (3) the Confucian legacy on contemporary Chinese culture.

##### ***3.4.1.1 Confucian culture is the mainstream of traditional Chinese culture***

This section demonstrates the dominance of Confucianism on traditional Chinese culture,

with the purpose of clarifying why this thesis only includes the Confucian legacy on contemporary Chinese culture and its potential impact on the happiness of Chinese people, but not those of Taoism or Buddhism.

It is believed that Confucian culture represents the mainstream of traditional Chinese culture (Pye, 1985; Engardio, 1995; Farh et al., 1997; Ralston et al., 1997; Leung, 2001; Ouyang and Cui, 2013). According to Ouyang and Cui (2013, p.13), although there are ‘plural traditions’ in Chinese traditional culture, i.e. Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, the influence of Confucianism on Chinese people is much broader and far-reaching than that of the other two because Confucian culture can be understood as the foundation of Chinese people’s Chineseness. The dominance of Confucianism in traditional Chinese culture is most strongly shown in two aspects. First, not only China’s legal system and social norms, but also Chinese traditional morals, values, lifestyles, and cultural practices, were built upon the basis of Confucianism in ancient times. Secondly, Confucian culture still shapes the minds and daily lives of Chinese people today. In this sense, the following conclusions can be drawn: (1) Confucian culture represents the mainstream of traditional Chinese culture; (2) due to Confucian culture being the centre of the traditional Chinese value system, the core values of traditional Chinese culture are usually identified with those of Confucian culture; and (3) Confucian culture is often synonymous with traditional Chinese culture in the Chinese language (ibid.).

The above illustrates that traditional Chinese value systems and culture are centred on Confucianism rather than on Taoism or Buddhism. In fact, due to its rejection by Chinese emperors in later feudal society, Taoism and Buddhism started to decline much earlier than Confucianism (Lyu, 2013). Because they are neither deeply involved in the traditional Chinese moral and value systems nor have complete cultural systems to serve their doctrines, Taoism and Buddhism are thought to have much less power in present-day China (Lin, 2007). According to a survey by Purdue University in 2004, Taoism and Buddhism have had a limited impact on contemporary Chinese culture and the daily lives of Chinese people in present-day China (except in Tibet) (Zhang, 2017). As the survey results indicate, the impact of Buddhism and Taoism on the minds and daily lives of Chinese people will continue to decline over the next ten years (ibid.). Therefore, this thesis will only include the legacy of Confucianism and China’s Marxist culture when

discussing contemporary Chinese culture and its impact on the happiness of contemporary Chinese people in the rest of this chapter.

#### *3.4.1.2 The transformation of Confucian culture since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century*

In general, the decline and change of traditional Confucian culture in modern times has experienced four main periods: (1) the Old Democratic Revolution (the late 19<sup>th</sup> century–1919); (2) the New Democratic Revolution (1919–1949); (3) the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976); and (4) the period of reform and opening up (1978–to date).

Because the transformation of traditional Confucian culture is intimately connected to the Chinese Communist Party's (the CCP) attitude towards it, this thesis also reviews the CCP's shifting attitude to traditional Confucian culture after the founding of the People's Republic. This shifting attitude progressed through three major phases: (1) Mao's criticism and denial of Confucianism (1949–1976); (2) the disapproval of Confucianism (1979–the mid-1980s); and (3) promoting some valuable parts of Confucian culture (the late 1980s–to date). Since the majority of the three phases above took place after reform and opening up, for ease of reading, all content relating to this part will be discussed in the period of reform and opening up.

##### *I. The Old Democratic Revolution period: late 19<sup>th</sup> century–1919*

Various striking revolutions occurred in the fields of thought and culture in the period of the Old Democratic Revolution. These revolutions, clearly described in slogans, included the Moral Revolution (also known as the Revolution of the Three Cardinal Guides), the Literary Revolution, the History Revolution, and the Sage Revolution. The historical mission of these cultural revolutions was 'discarding the old and setting up the new'. In essence, these cultural revolutions were a series of struggles between the new bourgeois culture and the old feudal culture. They were led by the Chinese bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie, with the aim of opposing old traditions and cultural values (mainly referring to traditional Confucian culture) as well as reshaping Chinese civilisation with a more modern orientation.

In general, as a series of cultural movements against the feudal superstructure, China's modern cultural revolutions began with the Reform Movement of 1898 and reached their zenith during the period of the New Culture Movement and May Fourth Movement, after

the Revolution of 1911. Representing a great change in Chinese culture, the influence of these cultural revolutions has been far reaching. As a result, the values of the Confucian tradition, which had existed for more than two thousand years (e.g. ‘the cardinal guides and constant virtues are sacred’; ‘the three obediences and the four virtues’; ‘male superiority to female’, ‘the divine right of kings’; ‘respecting god and following the examples of ancestry’; ‘maintaining the natural law and abolishing selfishness’) were shaken in the Chinese mind at different levels. In particular, Confucian ethics and norms, which centred on ‘the three cardinal guides and five constant virtues’, were quashed by the Chinese bourgeoisie and received an irrecoverable blow in the Chinese mindset. However, as the cultural revolutions in this period remained at the level of thought and culture, their results were not able to penetrate deep, especially with regard to the peasant masses. Therefore, vast rural areas of China were barely touched by the cultural revolutions of this period, and the ideology and values of Chinese peasants remained the same (Zhang, 1992).

## *II. The New Democratic Revolution period: 1919–1949*

During the period of the New-Democratic Revolution, the further decline of Confucian culture coincided with Mao’s sinification of Marxism and the propagation of Marxism in China (Fairbank and Reischauer, 1989). Under such historical conditions, wherein the Confucian moral system further declined without a new code of ethics being established, Mao, the heart of the CCP, built a new value system featuring his sinification of Marxism, including nationalism and collectivism, during his rectification of morality in the revolutionary ranks (see Section 3.5 for the specific content of the value system promoted by Mao).

Unlike the cultural revolutions in the period of the Old Democratic Revolution, the values and moral system promoted by Mao were not the ideology or thoughts spread amongst Chinese intellectuals. They were transformed into the values and moral system of the real world that affected the Chinese masses, including the peasants, during the period of the New Democratic Revolution. In a larger sense, because of the victory of the New Democratic Revolution and the leadership of the CCP, Mao’s moral system was internalised into the ethical beliefs and the codes of conduct of ordinary Chinese people

after the founding of new China, and has since played an important role in contemporary Chinese culture as well as the happiness and values of contemporary Chinese people (Sun, 2013) (see Section 3.5 for a detailed discussion).

### *III. The Cultural Revolution: 1966–1976*

The Cultural Revolution, which began in 1966, represented a devastating blow to Confucian culture. The advent of the Cultural Revolution exposed a sharp conflict between radical Maoism and traditional Confucianism. In fact, Mao treated Confucius as his greatest enemy because, to some extent, his regime was a mixture of ‘religion’ and politics, and Maoism or Maoist ideology was the foremost doctrine of his legitimacy. Philosophically, Maoism was built upon Mao’s ambition to break the exclusive superstructure and ideology in feudal society. Thus, it is not difficult to see that Maoism was anti-traditional and could allow no other ideology. In some sense, Mao launched the Cultural Revolution in order to eradicate his worst enemy by erasing the impact of Confucius on the thoughts and the lives of the Chinese people. The aim of Mao’s Cultural Revolution and other social economic revolutions was to destroy Confucian values and the social structure they inherently supported. Zhou (2013) argues that the regime and the official ideology of the CCP was hostile to Confucianism in the days of Mao. He further points out that Confucianism emphasises order, stability, harmony, and gentleness, whereas Mao launched the Cultural Revolution to realise his political goals and revolutionary ideals. Further, Confucianism learns from and treasures the past, whereas Maoism pursued a future society that was perfect and new. Confucianism is inclusive, whereas Maoism was exclusive. Confucianism believes that all men can achieve virtue, whereas Mao’s class struggle rejected the concept of benevolence and believed that the struggle against class enemies was absolutely necessary to ensure a better life.

During this cultural catastrophe, a large number of Confucian classics were burned, many Confucian relics and monuments were destroyed, and almost all the Confucian temples across the country were demolished. ‘Commenting on Confucianism and Criticising Legalism’ and ‘Condemning Lin Biao and Confucius’, which were launched in the later years of the Cultural Revolution, resulted in a damaging attack on Confucianism. At that point, Confucian culture was negated, and all studies on Confucian ideology and culture

stagnated. In this sense, Confucianism sank to an unprecedented low during Mao's Cultural Revolution.

#### *IV. The period of reform and opening up: 1979–to date*

After the reform and opening up, Deng pointed out that the CCP must concentrate on economic construction rather than class struggle. Chinese people were then released from ultra-leftist ideologies and Mao's cult of personality, which had prevailed during the decade-long trauma of the Great Cultural Revolution, and began to rethink the position of Confucian culture (or traditional Chinese culture with Confucianism at its centre) in their lives. From the start, Confucian culture gradually began to reassert itself amongst Chinese people during the early years of reform and opening up, in addition to recovering in the field of political culture. In particular, the influence of Confucian culture on contemporary Chinese political culture since the foundation of the People's Republic can be divided into three phases.

The first phase is Mao's criticism and denial of Confucianism during the Cultural Revolution, whereby Mao directly labelled Confucius as a class enemy because he believed that Confucius was an idealist and his doctrine represented the interests of the slave owners and feudal nobles. During this period, Confucian culture became a tool in Mao's political struggle and was seen as opposing the CCP's official ideology.

The second phase is from the beginning of the period of reform and opening up to the mid-1980s. Although Confucianism showed signs of revival among the Chinese people after Deng's call to 'bring order out of chaos' and rethink the Great Cultural Revolution, the CCP continued to disapprove of Confucianism during this period. This is because many Confucian ideologies, such as Confucian ethics emphasising feudal patriarchy and hierarchy and the idea of an elitism that stresses meritocracy, were still thought to be in conflict with the official ideology of the CCP. The attitude of the CCP was manifested in the fact that the Chinese government did not publicly express its support for the revival of Confucianism among the Chinese people and in academia.

The third phase is from the late 1980s to the present day, during which Chinese society has since undergone a more profound and comprehensive transformation. The in-depth development of the market economy and the social problems produced by unbalanced

economic development, such as the growing gap between rich and poor and the introduction of Western liberalism, have changed the attitude of the CCP to Confucianism from negative to positive. To some extent, the CCP has curbed its all-negative attitude towards Confucianism and has begun to consciously promote certain aspects of Confucian culture among the masses. Confucianism has also been highlighted in the CCP's ideas relating to the governance of the country at the political level. For example, Jiang Zemin's concept of diplomacy contains the idea of harmony from Confucian philosophy. In this sense, Confucius maintains that 'harmony is prized' while Mencius advocates a 'benevolent government'. In addition, political slogans such as 'eight honours and eight disgraces' (which contains several Confucian virtues), 'harmonious society', and 'rule the country by virtue', were put forward by the Hu-Wen government, while Confucius Institutes were established worldwide during this period. Moreover, Xi Jinping suggested that 'traditional culture is a part of core socialist values', advocating ruling policies such as 'virtue primary and punishment secondary'.

However, the CCP implemented a socialist system after gaining control of China in 1949, whereby Maoism and Marxism-Leninism were the CCP's official ideologies; Confucian culture, especially its ethical culture, was officially rejected. Although the CCP began to promote some traditional aspects of Chinese culture as well as revive certain parts of Confucianism in the late 1980s, any effectiveness of such an approach was limited by many factors, such as the CCP's official ideology and thought inertia. As Yao (2012) has pointed out, although the CCP has used certain tenets of Confucian culture, such as harmony, in the past three decades, it has maintained a high degree of vigilance over the core values and systems of Confucian culture, such as the three cardinal guides and the five constant virtues, the supremacy of emperors and male elders' power, the patriarchal clan system, and so on. Such vigilance has been reflected in the CCP's repressive attitude towards the revival of Chinese folk beliefs relating to the Confucian clan system, such as clans expanding their self-governance and farmers beginning to offer sacrifices to ancestors, building ancestral halls, and focusing on genealogy once again. Yao (2012) therefore argues that the CCP has adopted an instrumentalist attitude towards Confucian culture, with its strategy being to 'make a difference between good and bad parts and use what I need' (2012, p.2). Thus, it is difficult for Confucianism to be revitalised in an all-

encompassing manner in contemporary Chinese culture and amongst the Chinese people.

#### *3.4.1.3 The Confucian legacy on contemporary Chinese culture*

Generally speaking, after decades of setbacks dealt by the May Fourth new culture movement, ‘Breaking the four-olds’ and ‘Condemning Lin Bao and Confucius’ during the Cultural Revolution, as well as Marxist culture promoted by the successive leaders of the CCP, the influence of traditional Confucian culture on contemporary Chinese culture and values is weak. Thus, what portion of traditional Confucian culture has been destroyed or inherited in modern times?

Specifically, the essence of traditional Confucian culture, i.e. a Confucian ethical system that is patriarchal, hierarchical, and characterised by ‘the three cardinal guides and the five constant virtues’, has crumbled, especially after suffering heavy blows from the New Culture Movement and the Cultural Revolution. In this sense, one may say that the core aspect of Confucian culture, focusing on Confucian ethics, has had limited effects on contemporary China at both cultural and practical levels.

However, the Confucian relationship system, characterised by family-style collectivism (or patriarchal collectivism) and ‘family-first’ values, has been maintained and still exerts a direct impact on contemporary Chinese culture and Chinese people’s happiness. In this sense, certain family- and collective-oriented Confucian values, such as ‘honour your father and mother’, ‘respect the aged and care for the young’, ‘harmony between spouses’, and ‘a harmonious family can lead to the success of everything’ are still honoured. Due to the impact of the Confucian legacy on the happiness of Chinese people being of crucial importance to the research in this thesis (such as migrant workers’ definitions of happiness in Chapter 6 and the factors that affect the levels of migrant workers’ happiness in Chapter 8), it will be discussed separately and in more detail in Section 3.4.2.

#### ***3.4.2 The impact of the Confucian legacy on Chinese people’s happiness***

Based on the above, the Confucian legacy on contemporary Chinese culture relates to the Confucian relationship system characterised by family-style collectivism and ‘family-first’ values. With the purpose of investigating what role this Confucian legacy plays in shaping the happiness of Chinese people in present-day China, the discussion in this section is

focused around two themes: (1) family-style collectivism and related Confucian values and (2) the integration of family and country.

#### *3.4.2.1 Family-style collectivism and related Confucian values*

The mass culture of contemporary China has not broken free of Confucius in today's society. From a historical and cultural perspective, Confucianism is the kernel of Chinese civilisation and the essence of traditional Chineseness. Although the part of the Confucian ethical system that stresses cardinal guides and constant virtues has been degraded, this system contains many theories relating to interpersonal relationship that are very different from those in the West. Such a relationship system, characterised by 'family-first' and family-style collectivism, has affected people's lives in numerous ways and is a vital cultural imprint that is deeply encoded in the DNA of every Chinese person.

With regard to Chinese people's happiness, this relationship system often manifests itself as a significant emphasis on family interests and family wellbeing. In this case, one could say that the Chinese tend to think that family wellbeing trumps individual wellbeing; individual wellbeing is achieved when one gains family wellbeing; individual value is realised in the process of contributing to family benefits; and the individual needs to make sacrifices and share the family's burdens when necessary. On this basis, some traditional virtues of Confucian culture relating to family relationships, such as 'honour your father and mother', 'respect the aged and care for the young', 'harmony between spouses', and 'a harmonious family can lead to the success of everything', are still important to the values and happiness of ordinary Chinese people.

#### *3.4.2.2 The integration of family and country*

In Confucianism, the concept of family is closely linked to that of country because the family-first principle is the foundation of social stability in traditional Chinese society. That is, the country is the expansion of every family, and the country will obtain stability as long as every family maintains harmonious interpersonal relationships.

With regard to Chinese people's happiness, the concept of family and country often reveals itself as an emphasis on social relationships and harmony between people and society. Under such a conception, in present-day China, people believe that society is made up of individuals and that every one of them is involved in all types of social relations. On this

basis, in the pursuit of their happiness, they value their interpersonal relationships, pay attention to cultivating good interpersonal relationships in their work and personal lives, praise harmony among people and between humans and society, and disapprove of coming into conflict with others with regard to their work unit, society, nation, and country.

Furthermore, the impact of the revival of Confucian traditions in the area of political culture on the happiness of ordinary Chinese people is mainly reflected in their values, moral standards, and behaviour patterns. Since the period of reform and opening up, the CCP has brought certain tenets of Confucianism into political culture in order to popularise the values and morality that it firmly supports (such as Hu's 'eight honours and eight disgraces'<sup>21</sup>). Such a perspective is primarily based on the nationalistic and collectivist feelings that are valued in Confucian traditions. In general, the values and moral standards promoted by the CCP include three themes: nationalism, collectivism, and socialism (Rong, 2014), which will be discussed in the next section. These three themes have guided ordinary Chinese people in navigating the relationships amongst and between individuals, collectives, and the state, in tune with the values and moral standards advocated by the CCP, when defining, experiencing, and pursuing their personal or family happiness.

From such a perspective, the individual should put national interests before self-interest, and the individual should not damage the interests of the state or the public interest when serving personal or family wellbeing. In addition, in order to obtain the social wellbeing that is highly valued by the CCP, ordinary Chinese people have been encouraged to deal with various conflicts in their work and lives through using the knowledge of Confucius. In this sense, in the process of China's social and economic transformation, Confucian concepts of harmony can help to ease tensions between rich and poor, rural and urban, and the natural environment and economic development, so as to achieve the harmonious development of society. Although the socialist moral standards and values advocated by the CCP today are not as strong as in Mao's time, the CCP's political culture has still imposed a strict 'forbidden zone' with regard to the behaviour and thinking of ordinary Chinese people. For example, individuals should not intensify social contradictions and

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<sup>21</sup> Hu Jintao, who was the paramount leader of China from 2002 to 2012, released the 'eight honours and disgraces' on 4 March 2006.

damage social harmony in pursuit of their own happiness and personal interests.

### **3.5 China's Marxist Culture and Its Potential Impact on the Happiness of Chinese People in Present-Day China**

Contemporary Chinese culture consists of traditional Chinese culture, marked by Confucianism, and Marxism, shaped by the model of the Soviet Union and Mao's sinification (Yu, 2007). After outlining the transformation and legacy of Confucian culture and its potential impact on the happiness of Chinese people in the previous section, this section discusses how and which principles of Marxism and Mao's sinification of Marxism continue to play an important role in shaping the values and sense of happiness of the Chinese people in China today.

The discussion in this section is focused on four topics: (1) the early spread of Marxism in China; (2) the impact of the early spread of Marxism on the happiness of Chinese people; (3) Mao's sinification of Marxism; and (4) the impact of Mao's legacy on the happiness of Chinese people in present-day China.

#### ***3.5.1 The early spread of Marxism in China***

China suffered from the aggression and oppression of imperialist powers after the Opium War in 1840. Under the enormous influence exerted by Western aggression and its advanced systems and culture, ancient Chinese customs and morality marked by traditional Confucianism began to fall apart. The Chinese people then started re-evaluating traditional Confucian culture and values while beginning the process of learning from the West in order to find a way of saving their nation and people. In 1911, the Xinhai Revolution, led by the Chinese national bourgeoisie, erupted with armed uprisings; this revolution ended 2,000 years of imperial rule and toppled the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911). However, the Xinhai Revolution failed to fundamentally alter the chaos in China. From 1911 onwards, individuals within ideological, intellectual, and political circles started offering different opinions and ideas about how to best find a way of rejuvenating China. In this context, Marxism was introduced to China around the time of the May Fourth Movement in 1919. The Chinese people's interest in Marxism was mainly as a result of the success of the Russian October Revolution in 1917.

The early spread of Marxism in China mainly consisted of two phases. According to Nie (2015), the first phase was from the initiation of Marxism through the May Fourth Movement to the failure of the First Revolutionary Civil War in 1927, while the second phase was the systematic dissemination of Marxism from the failure of the First Revolutionary Civil War to the publication of Li Da's *The Outline of Sociology* in 1937.

With regard to content, the early spread of Marxism in China was basically confined to the dissemination of Marx's historical materialism and dialectical materialism. In this sense, by the mid-1930s, the Chinese were able to understand Marxist philosophy more completely through a combination of dialectical materialism and historical materialism (Wang, 2013).

### ***3.5.2 The impact of the early spread of Marxism on the happiness of Chinese people***

The impact of the early spread of Marxism on the happiness of Chinese people can be seen in the strong impact of Marxism on Chinese culture at that time, which can be understood on two levels.

First, Chinese people began to criticise traditional feudalistic ethical codes and ideology in their pursuit of personal happiness. During the New Culture Movement of the mid-1910s and 1920s, feudal customs and ideology representing the oppression of human nature and culture, such as the patriarchal clan system, arranged marriage, and polygamy, were strongly criticised by Chinese intellectuals. Traditional feudalism was further eroded in the minds of Chinese people with the spread of Marx's historical materialism and dialectical materialism in the 1930s (Zhang, 1992). A direct consequence of these social trends was that Chinese people increasingly began to criticise traditional feudalistic values and to realise their own individual demands in the pursuit of personal happiness. Typically, women began to pursue marital freedom, independence, equal rights, and justice, which were crucial in shifting their views of happiness (Guo, 1999).

Second, cultural changes caused by the spread of Marxism, along with the fusion of Marxist ideology and Chinese culture, brought about new contents for the happiness of Chinese people. Since the May Fourth Movement of 1919, Chinese Marxists had spread, interpreted, and practiced Marxism in a way that was adapted to their specific cultural,

linguistic, and mental practices (Wang, 2013). Due to the rapid spread of Marxism and the familiarity resulting from some inherent similarities between Marxism and Chinese culture (e.g. between Marxist materialist dialectics and the concept of yin and yang), Marxism impacted on many Chinese people's thought processes. The change in cultural trends generally led to the modern transformation of Chinese culture and impelled the birth of Chinese Marxist culture. As a result, from then on, the happiness of Chinese people began to be imbued with Chinese Marxist culture. For example, a growing number of scholars and young people started associating their personal happiness with the fate of their motherland and people, which directly contributed to the further spread of Chinese Marxist culture.

### ***3.5.3 Mao's sinification of Marxism***

Mao's sinification of Marxism was a milestone on the road to constructing 'socialism with Chinese characteristics'. Mao (1893–1976) was a Chinese communist revolutionary, political leader, theorist, and the founding father of the PRC. Mao's sinification of Marxism, which was formed between 1927 and 1935 and matured between 1935 and 1940, including his Marxist-Leninist theories, military strategies, and political policies, is collectively known as Maoism or Mao Zedong Thought.

Generally speaking, Maoism is Marxism-Leninism developed in and applied to China (The Seventeenth National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, 2007). Maoism accepted the orthodoxy of Marxism, which emphasises society's progression from one stage to another, and Lenin's ideas of the feasibility of staging a revolution in a non-industrialised country (Terrill, 2012). The major contribution of Maoism to the enhancement of communist ideology was its effort to adjust communist principles to the realities of China's semi-colonial and semi-feudal society (ibid.). Although both Marxism and Maoism focus on a proletariat revolution that would change society, the most compelling characteristic of Maoism was to base a revolution on the mass support of the peasants. Mao claimed that the peasants should be the essential revolutionary class in China because, contrary to their industrial working companions, they were more suited to establishing a successful revolution and socialist society in China. As such, Maoism provided a distinct perspective from that espoused by orthodox Marxism, which

underscored the importance of the urban industrial proletariat.

The main contents of Maoism included the importance of the peasants, the theories of 'New Democracy', 'People's War', the 'Mass Line', 'Continuous Revolution', 'Contradictions', and Mao's sinified version of Marx's theory of history (Schram and Schram, 1989; D'Mello, 2009) (see Appendix 1: The Key Elements of Maoism). The CCP believes that Maoism played an important role in the triumph of the New Democratic Revolution, the Anti-Japanese War (1937–1945), the Chinese Civil War (1945–1949), and the establishment of Communist China in 1949 (The Sixth Plenary Session of the Eleventh Congress of the CCP, 1981).

Due to the 'errors of Mao's later years', which led to turbulence during the Great Leap Forward (1958–1960) and the Cultural Revolution, many of Mao's ideas have been criticised, and some of them have been repudiated altogether since his death in 1976 (Schram and Schram, 1989). The fact remains that the influence of Maoism is still enormous. His ideology not only forms a necessary part of contemporary Chinese culture but has also left a rich legacy with regard to the happiness of Chinese people.

#### ***3.5.4 The impact of Mao's legacy on the happiness of Chinese people in present-day China***

In order to provide a cultural background for research into the happiness of Chinese people in subsequent chapters, this section aims to determine what role Maoism or Marxist ideology continues to play in shaping the values and sense of happiness of Chinese people today.

The impact of Mao's legacy on contemporary Chinese culture and the happiness of Chinese people in present-day China is primarily underpinned by three principles: (1) nationalism; (2) socialist collectivism; and (3) material determinism. In general, although many of Mao's ideas have become controversial after his death, those that enshrine nationalism, socialist collectivism, and material determinism still shape the happiness of Chinese people in present-day China. This legacy has given Chinese people special kinds of culture or ideology, e.g. feelings of patriotic nationalism, giving priority to national and collective interests, and focusing on material wellbeing, when defining, experiencing, and pursuing their happiness. The impact of the above three principles will be discussed below,

from the meaning of these principles to their influences on contemporary Chinese culture and their potential impacts on the happiness of Chinese people in present-day China.

#### *3.5.4.1 Nationalism*

The first principle relates to the idea of enlightenment and modern nationalism in China, which was the fundamental political task of Maoism in the fight for national independence and the people's freedom in colonial and semi-colonial China.

Due to humiliations beginning with the Opium War, a 'weak national psychology' fundamentally shook the Chinese people's sense of national and cultural identity and became the obstacle in China's path to pursuing national independence. Marx argues that the class struggle of capitalism mainly exists between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat; Lenin, with the victory of the October Revolution, extended Marx's class struggle to the contradiction between imperialism and backward colonies or semi-colonies. Mao's sinification of Marxism-Leninism adapted Marx's class struggle in order to analyse the national conflicts between East and West, especially between imperialist Western powers and the oppressed Chinese nation, characterised as semi-feudalism and as a semi-colony. He thus believed that, as the proletariat must be a progressive social body that has consciousness of resistance and acts accordingly, the Chinese nation should be able to realise national independence and prosperity as long as it develops uncompromising class consciousness and nationalism and determinedly fights against the forces of imperialism. Mao's very strong sense of identification with China and its fate gave rise not only to a fierce nationalistic culture that united the whole country in resisting foreign aggression, but also to an insistence on the need to pursue national independence and flourish in its own way. In a sense, Maoism is a combination of Chinese nationalistic culture and Marxism-Leninism, and the same is true for the establishment of the People's Republic (Schram and Schram, 1989).

Today, nationalistic sentiment centred on national interests still has a profound impact on contemporary Chinese culture and the happiness of Chinese people, as evidenced by three factors. Firstly, under the strong influence of national-patriotism, Chinese people still hold an ideological compulsion to put the national interest first. In the Chinese concept of happiness, this mainly reveals itself as: (1) Chinese people are less inclined to criticise the

CCP's national or government policy, even if the policy may damage their personal happiness; and (2) as far as possible, they would like to avoid conflicts between personal and country or collective interests in pursuit of their happiness. Secondly, like Mao, who always regarded China as the 'central place' and Chinese culture as the 'central flower', Chinese people often inadvertently think that their national culture has certain superiorities, particularly compared to Western civilisations. As a result, Chinese people may subconsciously exclude ideas from Western culture, even if such ideas could contribute to their happiness. Thirdly, according to existing studies (e.g. He, 2017), Chinese people who feel more patriotic usually have higher levels of personal happiness.

#### 3.5.4.2 *Socialist collectivism*

The second principle relates to Mao's construction of socialist collectivism and its contribution to Chinese collectivist culture. One thing to be aware of is that Mao's socialist collectivism, while reflecting an integral part of Chinese collectivist culture, does not represent its whole content. In many ways, Chinese collectivist culture is a combination of two types of collectivism: (1) Confucian family-style collectivism and (2) Mao's socialist collectivism (Chen, 1999). Because family-style collectivism has been discussed in detail in Section 3.4, this section will focus on Mao's collectivism and its potential impact on the happiness of Chinese people.

After the Chinese socialist transformation in 1956, Mao's socialist collectivism replaced family-style collectivism and became the dominant mode of Chinese collectivist culture during that period. Mao's collectivism had two main sources: Soviet-style collectivism, as promoted by Stalin, and the wartime communist practices in the Soviet Union and the liberated areas controlled by the CCP. Although Mao emphasised the dialectical relationship between personal interests and national interests (hereafter 'collective interests') in *On the Ten Major Relationships* (1956) and *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People* (1957), his socialist collectivism is a system of values based on absolute obedience to national interests (Chen and Wang, 2012). The basic argument of Mao's collectivism is that national interests are more important than anything else and that individuals should sacrifice their personal interests to protect the national interest when conflict between the two occurs (ibid.). That is, the nation is the only subject

of interest, and individual interests are immoral unless they are consistent with national interests.

The ethical aspect of Mao's collectivism is reflected in its corresponding moral system, which can be summed up as viewing the national interest as one's sole purpose and adopting patriotism, love for the party and the people, loyalty to the revolutionary cause, the party line, hard work, solidarity, and a high sense of organisation and discipline as codes of conduct (Sun, 2013). Under this moral system, Mao's collectivism requires people to achieve their personal happiness through selfless service to the country and people, and their personal happiness must be in harmony with the interests of the country and people. In addition, in extending the moral principles in special circumstances (e.g. in wartime) to the ultimate criteria for evaluating individual actions, Mao's collectivism tends to view selflessness and self-sacrifice as the only standards to evaluate all behaviours. This leads not only to the inability of Chinese people to achieve happiness or satisfaction, in the common understanding of the terms, but also to difficulties in promoting all-round, harmonious development in both individual and collective interests.

Although Mao's socialist collectivism begun to fade away with China's reform and opening up, as a significant part of Chinese collectivist culture, alongside the CCP's guiding ideology for building an ideal system of socialist morality, it has a role to play in shaping contemporary Chinese culture and the happiness of Chinese people, consistent with a model of socialism that reflects specific Chinese characteristics. This can be seen in two aspects. Firstly, although Mao's collectivism can no longer force itself into all aspects of social life, as in the Mao era, it remains a core value for Chinese people in dealing with personal happiness and national interests in difficult times (e.g. in times of natural disasters). Today, to an ordinary Chinese citizen, individual behaviour that sacrifices personal happiness to preserve national interests during exceptional times is still honoured. For example, selfless dedication and self-sacrifice – values that are highly praised in Mao's collectivism – are still highly important in fighting natural disasters, such as the China floods of 1998 and the Yushu earthquake in 2010, and are still effective in working on state mega-projects, such as the Three Gorges Project (1994–2006) and the Beijing-Shanghai High-Speed Railway (2008–2011). Secondly, since Mao's collectivism remains the CCP's method of justifying the internal contradictions created among the

people by China's economic and social reforms (e.g. the laid-off workers produced by the transformation of state-owned enterprises and the land lost by farmers as a result of the expropriation of land and economic development), it still influences Chinese people to respect the harmony between individuals and the country in pursuit of their personal happiness.

#### 3.5.4.3 Material determinism

The third principle is concerned with Mao's sinification of Marxist historical materialism, which has compelled Chinese people to accept the relations between different parts of modern society and to gradually form a way of thinking shaped by material determinism.

In traditional Chinese society, people generally think that all fields of society, such as culture, politics, and economics, are entirely distinct and separate. From the perspective of historical materialism (see Section 2.4.2 for Marx's historical materialism), Mao pointed out that (1) Confucian culture was essentially a patriarchal ethical code based on a feudal smallholder economy; (2) Confucian culture was used as a tool of mind control on the toiling masses by the feudal ruling class in order to protect its regime; and (3) culture and politics are not determined by morality but by the economic base. In this sense, Mao's criticism of Confucianism thus destroyed the myth of the Chinese people regarding the relationships between different social fields at that times, particularly with regard to the moral doctrines of Confucian culture (e.g. the three cardinal guides and the five constant virtues), which were held to be sacred and independent of other social fields. After disclosing the decisive effect of the economic base on the superstructure, Mao educated people to critique the legal and political superstructure and social consciousness from the economic base.

Therefore, Mao's sinification of Marxist historical materialism resulted in a direct shift in Chinese people's thinking. In particular, it prompted Chinese people to form a series of values and thought patterns featured in modernism, which is opposite to the feudal tradition of Confucianism, and material determinism. Since the CCP after Mao remains an advocate for and practitioner of economic determinism (Shigeaki et al., 1991; Meisner, 1996), this further strengthens the thought patterns of Chinese people to automatically reflect the ideas of material determinism (Shih, 1990).

So, it is not surprising that, even to this day, many ordinary Chinese citizens still unconsciously hold certain ideas related to material determinism, for example, (1) the material determines consciousness; (2) social consciousness and political systems are determined by their economic base and they both reflect the economic base; (3) economic growth and change are the fundamental causes of social development; and (4) the development of the whole superstructure is the inevitable requirement of economic growth (Chen, 1999). The mapping of these ideas, via individual ideology and values, manifests itself as a preoccupation with material conditions in pursuit of personal happiness. This can be reflected in the following two aspects. First, Chinese people often think that their sense of happiness is determined by their material conditions, i.e. their levels of happiness are primarily determined by their material conditions and higher levels of happiness are usually associated with better material conditions. Secondly, on this basis, they tend to believe that they will naturally feel happier if their material conditions are enhanced. So, one can see that (1) Chinese people tend to focus on their material happiness rather than their ‘insubstantial’ happiness, which is believed to have been built on their material base; and (2) they often try to improve their levels of happiness by increasing their material conditions.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has systematically reviewed the Chinese-language and English-language literature on the happiness of Chinese people in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan in order to argue that there is a research gap with regard to understanding the happiness of Chinese people, particularly that of migrant workers. In view of happiness being a highly culture-specific feeling, this chapter has also carefully reviewed the specific cultural background of China in order to provide a basis for analysing the happiness of migrant workers (or Chinese citizens) in Chapters 6–9.

By reviewing the Chinese-language literature in Section 3.2, it can be concluded that: (1) the existing research on the happiness of Chinese people has focused on a general description of their levels of SWB or life satisfaction, usually involving some aspects of hedonic wellbeing but not eudaimonic wellbeing; (2) most studies have examined students, very few have looked at urban residents, and hardly any have analysed migrant workers;

(3) most studies have been carried out in Shandong, Guangzhou, Beijing, Zhejiang, and Hubei, with very few studies being carried out in Shanghai; and (4) the specific cultural background of China has received little attention from Chinese scholars when researching the happiness of Chinese people. It was also found that little research has been carried out on the happiness of Chinese people in the English-language literature. Hence, based on the above findings, it can be concluded that the happiness of migrant workers in Shanghai (or even that of Shanghai's urban residents) has not been well addressed with regard to both the contents and research samples of previous studies.

The remainder of this chapter reviewed the specific cultural background in China that makes up the base for understanding the happiness of Chinese people. In this sense, Section 3.3 reviewed the concept of happiness in 'the big three' classic schools of philosophy (i.e. Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism), which constitute the very basis of the traditional concept of happiness in the cultural history of China, while Sections 3.4 and 3.5 discussed contemporary Chinese culture within the context of its own cultural history (i.e. the legacy of traditional Confucian culture and China's Marxist culture) and its potential impact on the happiness of Chinese people in present-day China.

Section 3.4 focused on the Confucian legacy on the happiness of Chinese people. By discussing the transformation of Confucian culture since the late 19th century, along with the Confucian legacy on contemporary Chinese culture, it was found that the essence of traditional Confucian culture, notably a Confucian ethical system that is patriarchal, hierarchical, and characterised by 'the three cardinal guides and the five constant virtues', has collapsed, in particular after suffering heavy blows from the New Culture Movement and the Cultural Revolution. However, the Confucian relationship system, characterised by family-style collectivism and 'family-first' values, has been maintained and still exerts a direct impact on contemporary Chinese culture. Based on the above findings, this section further investigated the impact of the Confucian legacy on the happiness of Chinese people in present-day China. In this regard, it was found that the legacy of Confucian culture has shaped the happiness of Chinese people in relation to valuing family wellbeing, social relationships, and harmony between people and society.

Section 3.5 focused on the legacy of China's Marxist culture (i.e. Marxism and Maoism)

on the happiness of Chinese people. China's Marxist culture is not only the official ideology of the CCP but also an integral part of contemporary Chinese culture. By exploring the early spread of Marxism in China and its impact on the happiness of Chinese people at that time, as well as Mao's sinification of Marxism and its legacy on the happiness of contemporary Chinese people, it was concluded that Mao's legacy has imprinted on contemporary Chinese people particular kinds of culture or ideology, i.e. feelings of patriotic nationalism, giving priority to national and collective interests, and focusing on material wellbeing when defining, experiencing, and pursuing their happiness. Through a review of the special cultural background of China and its potential impact on the happiness of Chinese people, this chapter not only contributes to the existing literature by summarising the cultural factors that may affect the happiness of Chinese people, but also raises three pointed questions for exploring the happiness of Chinese people within the specific context of Chinese cultural and history. The first question is: 'Do Chinese people tend to define their happiness in a Chinese way?' Since this question is closely related to this study's first research question (i.e. 'How do China's migrant workers define happiness?'), it will be answered along with this research question in Chapter 6. The second question is: 'Is traditional Confucian culture still helpful for Chinese people in pursuing happiness nowadays?' This question is raised to challenge research arguing that traditional Confucian culture is still beneficial for Chinese people in pursuing happiness in present-day China (e.g. Zhang and Veenhoven, 2008; Zhang, 2009). This question will be addressed in Chapter 10. The final question is: 'Are the measurement tools aimed at Westerners able to effectively measure the happiness of Chinese people?' This final question will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

## **4 Chapter 4: Understanding Rural-to-Urban Migrant Workers in China**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The previous two chapters have reviewed the main theoretical bases regarding research into happiness for this study as well as the cultural background of happiness in China and its potential impacts on Chinese people's happiness. Chapter 4 will outline the basic characteristics of, and previous research into, China's migrant workers, who are the researched group of this thesis, along with the special background for the formation of, and solution to, the problems facing China's migrant workers.

Section 4.2 describes the definition and basic characteristics of China's migrant workers. Section 4.3 reviews the previous research on urbanisation in sociology and discusses the representations and causations of differences in urbanisation between China and Western countries. Chinese urbanisation is the background for the formation of, and solution to, the problems facing China's migrant workers, which holds important implications for understanding and analysing the problems of migrant workers in China. Section 4.4 reviews the previous literature on China's migrant workers in both this study's research location, i.e. Shanghai, and nationwide.

Chapter 4 serves three aims, the first of which is to introduce the reader to the basic situation of China's migrant workers. The second aim is to offer a grounding in the previous research on urbanisation in sociology and to show how distinctions regarding Chinese urbanisation have been made in the urban literature, with the purpose of providing a backdrop for the research into the happiness of migrant workers in the ensuing chapters and contributing to the literature and the nascent theorisation of China's urban trajectory. The third aim is to provide a literature review of previous research into China's migrant workers by both Chinese and Western scholars, with the purpose of demonstrating the rationale and necessity for the current research.

## 4.2 A Definition of China's Migrant Workers

According to Liang and Ma (2004), in China, the term 'migrant workers' (See Figure 4.1) is defined as people who have temporarily moved from rural to urban areas without a permanent permit of urban residence (an urban *hukou*). Unlike the migrants in existing studies, which have largely focused on migrations in the form of permanent resettlements, such as trans-cultural or trans-country immigrants, war refugees, or internal migrants in North American and European countries (Dion and Barn, 1975; Miritsuga and Sue, 1983; Sluzki, 1986; Dion and Giordano, 1990; Kuo, 1995; Pernice and Brook, 1996; Noh et al., 1999; Li et al., 2006), China's migrant workers are temporary migrants because of the prohibition of existing legal restrictions on employment and housing in cities (Shi, 2008). Hu et al. (2002) suggest that China's migrant workers have 'dual occupations': they work in the fields during planting and harvest seasons while taking up jobs in urban areas during the slack agricultural seasons. A 1996 survey in Beijing found that 76 per cent of migrant workers stayed in Beijing for less than one year (World Bank, 1997), and there has been a general trend for a longer stay, particularly among young migrants (Li et al., 2006). The 2000 census (State Statistical Bureau, 2001) depicts China's migrant workers as usually young, with a higher-than-average level of education than others from their place of emigration, predominantly male, working in the private sector, holding jobs in factories and the service industry, working long hours, with lower household incomes than permanent urban residents and higher incomes than rural residents. Despite millions of migrant workers flooding into major cities annually, few studies have focused on China's migrant workers. Most of China's migrant workers come from poor rural areas in interior provinces such as Sichuan, Henan, and Jiangxi, and they go to urban cities in the eastern coastal areas, such as Shanghai and Guangdong province.

Different from international immigrants, who are driven not only by economic reasons but also by cultural, political, ecological, or religious reasons, China's migrant workers are almost exclusively economically-driven. As suggested by the National Bureau of Statistics of China (2016), average rural incomes were 55 per cent of urban incomes in 1983, which lowered to 33.7 per cent in 2014 (US\$1,591 in rural areas and US\$4,726 in urban areas).

*Figure 4.1: China's migrant workers*



Nine construction workers are standing in two lines in this photograph. They are clad in raincoats and carry shovels after a hard day's work. Though their work is very hard, in their minds there is still hope. This is the epitome of China's migrant workers in Chinese cities. Source: [www.ctps.cn](http://www.ctps.cn) (n.d.), accessed at <http://www.ctps.cn/PhotoNet/Profiles/2011/20120413/201241314838288.JPG>

At the same time, evidence shows that there has been a significant trend of economic-related migrations worldwide; in this sense, Haour-Knipe et al. (1999) suggest that there are mass movements of economic migrants (e.g. rural-to-urban migrants) in many developing countries, particularly in Asia, and this economically-driven migration is increasing in Western Europe and the United States (Finch et al., 2000). Li et al. (2006) suggest that since China's reform and opening up, rapid economic development in urban areas has widened the income disparity between rural and urban areas to a historically high level, and this growing income gap has provided a strong incentive for rural residents to migrate to urban areas in search of more money and a better life.

### **4.3 Urbanisation in China**

As the issue of migrant workers in China is associated with Chinese urbanisation (Friedmann, 2006; Chen et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2015) and its improvement/solution should therefore be considered in the context of Chinese urbanisation (Wang, 2007; Long, 2011; Liu, 2014), this section will review the previous research on urbanisation in sociology and discuss the representations and causations of the differences in urbanisation

between China and Western countries. The purpose of this section is to offer a grounding in early studies/analyses on urbanisation in sociology and to show how distinctions regarding Chinese urbanisation have been made in the literature. The aim is to provide a backdrop for research into the happiness of migrant workers in the subsequent chapters and to contribute to the literature and the nascent theorisation of China's urban trajectory. This section is organised around three themes: (1) previous research on urbanisation in sociology; (2) China's particular form of urbanisation; and (3) the impact of Chinese urbanisation on human happiness.

### ***4.3.1 Previous research on urbanisation in sociology***

Urbanisation is a significant trend that has long been analysed and critiqued by sociologists. The following is a review of the development of the sociological study of urbanisation and the major criticisms of the implications of urbanisation in Western academia, particularly in Western Europe and the United States. This review mainly examines urbanisation by means of the sociological perspectives of functionalism and conflict theory. The functional perspective on urbanisation focuses on the ecology of the city, while the conflict perspective focuses on the political economy. Since today's criticisms of the implications of urbanisation have been shaped and influenced by the revival of Marxist political economy in new urban sociology since the 1970s (Short, 2006), the implications of urbanisation will be critiqued in this study from such a perspective. Therefore, the review of this section mainly focuses on three areas: (1) the concept of urbanisation; (2) the Chicago School and urban ecology; and (3) the new urban sociology and its criticisms of urbanisation.

#### ***4.3.1.1 The concept of urbanisation***

According to the *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*, urbanisation is characterised by the movement of people from small communities concerned chiefly or solely with agriculture to other communities that are generally larger and whose activities are primarily centred on government, trade, manufacturing, or allied interests (Thompson, 1935). Since the term urbanisation is intimately related to the terms modernisation and westernisation, the concept of urbanisation can be better understood after understanding the relationships between these terms. Modernisation relates to the social and economic transformations in

developing societies in order to acquire some characteristics of developed industrial societies in Western Europe and North America, such as urbanisation and industrialisation (Tipps, 1973); in this sense, modernisation can be understood a process parallel to westernisation. At a symposium in 2012, Li Keqiang, China's Premier, said that urbanisation is the main indicator of the modernisation of a nation or region, and it is a key strategy in the process of China's modernisation (*China News*, 2013). Li further pointed out that the requirement of continuously promoting modernisation is consistent with the development of urbanisation in the current period of social and economic transition; thus, there is no essential distinction between urbanisation and modernisation in the way that it serves Chinese society (*China News*, 2013). In this regard, it is not difficult to see that, as the most significant component of modernisation, urbanisation is roughly synonymous with modernisation in the political context of present-day China.

#### *4.3.1.2 The Chicago School and urban ecology*

Urban ecology is a functionalist field of study that focuses on the relationships between people and their built and natural physical environments (Park, 1934). In general, urban ecology argues that urban land use and urban population distribution occur in predictable patterns once we understand how people relate to their living environment. The Chicago School (of sociology) was the first theoretical paradigm of urban ecology in the domain of sociology. According to Saunders (1981), urban ecology, as created by the Chicagoans, sees patterns of urban life as driven by principles similar to those evident in plant ecology, where different species of plant gain dominance in particular habitats. The school played a very significant role in the development of sociological theories of urbanisation between the 1900s and 1930s and had a lasting effect and defining influence in the study of urbanisation until the 1970s (Xia, 1998).

The Chicago school is best known for Burgess' model of urban form (also known as the concentric zone model), which attempts to arrange different social groups into five different circles and represent the internal structure and spatial changes of cities (Park and Burgess, 1925). Burgess' model explains a general pattern of distribution of different social groups in cities by addressing its relationship to land prices in different urban areas. This model sees a city as a series of concentric circular areas, expanding outward from the

centre of the city (see Appendix 2: Burgess' Model). In this model, Zone I, in the middle of the city, is a non-residential central business district (CBD), with an extremely high land cost. Zone II, the concentric circle surrounding the CBD, is a transition zone, which has been abandoned by formerly wealthy families, as it is waiting to be taken over by the expanding CBD. This zone is composed of industry, such as factories, along with formerly wealthy homes divided into cheap and low-quality housing. In addition, resulting from the force of urbanisation, immigrants and the urban poor tend to live here, as most of the houses are made for one or two people. Zone III was previously a habitat for the middle class, but now houses working-class families because of lower land prices and shorter distances to factories. As the city grows, houses with complete facilities tend to be built on the outskirts of the city due to an inability to bear the cost of occupying more space for better facilities, resulting in the middle class moving out of this area to the outer zone. Most families living here rent their homes. Zone IV houses middle-class families, with a smaller percentage of people who rent. Zone V contains the estates of wealthy families and the suburbs.

This model holds that, as residents' socio-economic status increases, their living areas become further away from the city centre. The order of the distribution of different social groups in cities, from the zone surrounding CBD to the suburbs, is immigrants or urban poor followed by blue-collar workers, the middle class, and the upper class. This model also describes the important role ecological processes have played in shaping spatial changes of urban form. That is, as cities grow, continuous waves of 'invasion' occur as people spill out from their original areas to other areas, resulting in competition among different communities and the expansion of cities in every direction (Savage et al., 2003). Although Burgess' model has some limitations, such as the difficulty of generalising it to other cities because it was created based on observations of Chicago (Mao and Yan, 2004), it provides a straightforward, clear, and concise manner for sociological research on urban form, social environment, structure, and conflict, particularly in the context of urbanisation. This model has already led to considerable statistical research, mainly including mapping land use, the distribution of particular social groups, the competition and conflict among different communities, and the incidence of social sicknesses, such as crime and suicide.

As advocates of urbanisation, the Chicagoans believed that the city was a model of order and harmony (Xia, 1998). The rise of the Chicago School was closely related to the mass migration brought about by rapid urbanisation during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Hunter, 1980). At that time, large influxes of immigrants caused serious public disorder and social problems as the city grew. For this reason, how to solve the social problems brought about by a substantial number of immigrants became a matter of concern. The rise of the Chicago School was specifically related to the need to find a resolution to such concerns. The Chicago School believed that the problems caused by urbanisation could eventually be solved by urbanisation itself. In this sense, through the process of competition and the succession of different social groups, the city will form the best division of labour and regional differentiation so that the urban system will become more orderly and harmonious and will finally achieve social balance by itself (Park and Burgess, 1925). Burgess' model also refers to such a process.

The perspective of the Chicagoans, which views social problems such as racism and class conflict as an ecological process of competition and succession (i.e. survival of the fittest), has generated many criticisms among its opponents, especially since the rise of the new urban sociology after 1970 (Zukin, 1980; Smith, 1995). The new urban sociologists argue that the old Chicago School of urban ecology cannot explain the urban crises that appeared in Europe and the United States after 1960 (Xia, 1998). They argue that the more modern situation of the city does not match the scene presented by the Chicagoans. That is, urban society is not increasingly integrated and orderly; instead, various social problems, such as violent crime, class conflict, and the race issue, are getting worse. Manuel Castells, one of the key representatives of new urban sociology, believes that what the Chicagoans called urbanism is not caused by an urban environment but by a broader economic and social structure. He asserts that urbanism is the 'cultural expression of capitalist industrialisation, the emergence of the market economy and the process of rationalisation of modern society' (Castells, 1976, p.38). He therefore argues that urban ecology is not a science but an ideology or, more simply, a bourgeois ideology. The rise of the new urban sociology, also known as new Marxist urban sociology or political economy, ended the nearly half a century ascendancy of the Chicago ecologists.

#### 4.3.1.3 The new urban sociology and its criticism of urbanisation under capitalism

If the Chicago School tended to think that urbanisation/the city is good, the new urban sociology based on critical conflict theory is undoubtedly the opposite. The new urban sociology draws heavily upon the conflict theory of Karl Marx, which asserts that economics is the centre of human life, restricting the whole process of social, political, and spiritual life (Gottdiener and Feagin, 1988; Smith, 1995), as well as criticising the implications of urbanisation with regard to their capitalist essence. Thus, understandably, the perspectives of the new urban sociology are uniformly critical. In this sense, when analysing urbanisation under capitalism, they assume a basic conflict between society's 'haves' and 'have-nots', or between the economic and political elites and the poor and minority groups.

The new urban sociology has its origin in the Chicagoans' ineffective response to the urban crises in Europe and the United States during the 1960s. For the growing urban crises, the new school has two primary theses (Xia, 1998), the first of which is a critique of the marriage between public policies and private interests. The new school believes that state management ultimately serves social stability, which is required by the protection and expansion of private interests. The second is the critique of the city/urbanisation. The new school sees the city as a symbol of inequalities in wealth and power created by a capitalist economy, with space representing the concentration of capital and class struggle (Friedmann, 1986). In addition, it believes that urban spatial organisation and structure are the products of capital and that urbanisation under capitalism is a contradictory process of capital accumulation and class struggle (Brenner, 1998).

The new school's critique of urban ecology is mainly based on the idea of capitalist urbanisation initially proposed by Marx's critique of political economy (Smith, 1995). Marx's criticism of capitalist urbanisation is reflected in his reading of history or time (Xia, 1998). In this regard, he believes that capitalist urbanisation is replete with ugliness and alienation; mankind cannot be liberated and gain true happiness unless achieving socialism through a social revolution. According to Marxist historical materialism, capitalism contains the seeds of its own destruction and socialism is inevitable (see Section 2.4.2 for Marx's theory of historical materialism). Marx criticises the

consequences of urbanisation under capitalism. For him, one aspect of urbanisation is pauperisation and material degradation, while the other is the desolation of social relations of the traditional community and its replacement by urban utilitarianism. Marx argues that capitalism is alienating; modern cities not only bring about improvements to society but also alienation of people from their work and species-being, thereby eroding their wellbeing. Marx suggests that men's species-being is not separate from the work by which they transform the world to meet their needs. Due to work in a capitalist society being characterised by the private ownership of the means of production and inhibiting the realisation of men's species-being, men are alienated from their work and species-being (see Section 2.4.1 for Marx's theory of alienation). Put simply, Marx believes that, under capitalistic private ownership, men (including both workers and capitalists, as they are all alienated) are unable to obtain true happiness, as they are deprived of the opportunities to benefit from their own work and to fulfil their aspirations. Marx then believes that human happiness, wellbeing, and individuality can only be fully realised in a society free of alienation and exploitation, and achieving such a society requires a collective struggle to change the world. Consequently, although Marx views the concentration of mass migration in the new urban agglomerations as a necessary stage in the creation of a revolutionary force, freedom and true happiness can only exist beyond the city under capitalism.

Instead of time, the development of Marxism in the new urban sociology is mainly reflected in its reading of space (Harvey, 2008). David Harvey, one of the main representatives of the new urban sociology, applies Marxist theories and methods to the urban problem, deducing that urban spatial organisation and structure are the products of capital (Harvey, 2001). Based on Marx's political-economic writings, especially Volume II of *Capital*, Harvey proposes his theory of capital switching and the urban process to explain the relationship between the paths of capital flow and urban spatial organisation (Feldman, 2015). Harvey divides the paths of capital flow into three groups: the primary, secondary, and tertiary circuits. The primary circuit of capital mainly relates to the production process. This capital is created by increasing production and using machine and wage labourers to produce products. Excessive competition forces capitalists to exploit labourers to their maximum. However, when excessive competition ultimately

leads to overproduction, capitalists need to do something with surplus capital in order to avoid a drop in profits when supply and demand became unequal. So, they simply reinvest in the secondary circuit of capital, or built environment. The secondary circuit of capital is concerned with consumption. Over-accumulated capital, which is not used up in the production process, is invested in fixed assets, such as houses, durable goods, and machinery, hence the term 'built environment'. Harvey (1985) thinks that the secondary circuit of capital is what defines the urban spatial organisation and structure, arguing that the urbanisation process 'implies the creation of a material physical infrastructure for production, circulation, exchange and consumption' (p.14). The tertiary circuit of capital includes investments in science and technology, which can increase productivity in production through technological advances, as well as investments into various social expenditures, in order to either improve the quality of labour power or control it so as to prevent labourers from organising and acquiring class consciousness. Harvey considers that, in essence, private capital is reluctant to invest in the tertiary circuit because it does not directly generate profits. Capitalists have never really been interested in the wellbeing of labourers; instead, they have only been interested in the wellbeing of labourers as far as it relates to their production and bottom line.

More remarkably, the state plays an intervention role in the secondary and tertiary circuits of capital, which is a testament to the marriage between public policy and private interests. This is because, in the secondary circuit of capital, the demand for building environment requires heavy investment in the long term. The government, therefore, needs to create a favourable investment environment through monetary policies and administrative measures in order to facilitate surplus capital to flow into the secondary circuit. Moreover, given that the tertiary circuit of capital cannot create direct profit, the government must press surplus capital to reinvest in the tertiary circuit so as to improve the quality of labour power and to maintain social stability, which is required for the protection of private interests. Therefore, private capital and state power are jointly involved in the three circuits of capital (especially in the secondary and tertiary circuits) so as to ease capitalist crises of overproduction and ensure that labourers create more surplus values. Harvey then argues that urban area changes made according to specific decision making by political and economic leaders generally benefit the middle and upper classes while exploiting the

working and lower classes.

Although the new urban sociology provided a strong response to the urban crises that generally appeared in Europe and the United States after 1960, many scholars criticise it as economic determinism that seeks to explain all social conflicts by means of economic factors and class struggle. In this sense, such critics believe that there is no single political-economic model that can be used to explain all social conflicts in all cities; we must pay attention to cultural diversity and the role of people as actors when studying urbanisation/cities (Logan and Molotch, 1987). Giddens also suggests that urban sociologists should pay less attention to grand theories, such as national economic reconstruction and the world system, and pay more attention to local area research, such as local history, local communities, resource differences, and local actors' choices in urban transition (Flanagan, 2010). Because of the above criticisms, sociologists have increasingly turned their attention to case studies in specific regions and attached more importance to historical factors and cultural diversity. In the following section, the history, experiences, characteristics, and ideological sources of Chinese urbanisation that are distinct from urbanisation in Western countries, in addition to the impact of Chinese urbanisation on the happiness of Chinese people, will be discussed in detail.

### ***4.3.2 China's urbanisation with its own specific characteristics***

The last section reviewed previous research on urbanisation in sociology, which mostly involved the main theories of the dominant schools of urban sociology, in addition to their criticism of urbanisation/urbanisation theory, and the trend of urbanisation study over the past century. This section discusses China's urbanisation through three themes: (1) the growing literature on Chinese urbanisation; (2) the differences in urbanisation between China and Western countries; and (3) the reasons that contribute to the differences in urbanisation between China and Western countries. By showing how distinctions about Chinese urbanisation have been made, the aim of this section is to contribute to the literature and the nascent theorisation of China's urban trajectory.

#### ***4.3.2.1 The growing literature on Chinese urbanisation***

Western scholars have long been attracted by Chinese urbanisation because it provides urbanisation experiences in a traditional and historical setting that is radically different

from that of Western countries. Despite the enthusiasm of Western scholars, there had been little growth in the studies of Chinese urbanisation, especially before Deng Xiaoping's great transformation of 1978. This was largely due to the lack of opportunities to conduct fieldwork and the reluctance of the CCP to make information and data available to Western scholars (Murphey, 1973). At the same time, Chinese scholars were generally silent because of the overarching control resulting from the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) (Shen and Cui, 1990). However, Deng's reform and opening up made it possible for Westerners to visit Chinese cities. As more information and data became available, Western scholars were better able to study Chinese urbanisation. Their attention quickly moved away from questions like, 'Could socialist China create a better path of urbanisation?' to the pros and cons of Chinese urbanisation (Whyte and Parish, 1984), especially the role of unique institutions (such as the *hukou* system) in the process of Chinese urbanisation and their profound influence upon Chinese society (which will be discussed later in this section).

The new role of Chinese cities as multi-functional centres and economic organisers in economic reform caught the attention of Chinese social scientists in emphasising studies of Chinese urbanisation to facilitate national development. Considerable literature on Chinese urbanisation in the Chinese language has emerged since the late 1970s. The question of initial concern was, 'Does China need to be urbanised?' Due to the long-standing anti-urban strategy of the Mao era and the preoccupation of rural-urban integration as a goal for socialist development, many scholars opposed the urbanisation of China (e.g. Chen and Chen, 1982; Zhang, 1984). They argued that the negative consequences of urbanisation, such as the bankruptcy of peasants, the shortage of housing, and the poor urban environment, deviated from the orthodox theory of Marxism-Leninism and Maoism (Zhang, 1987). Proponents of urbanisation argued that experiences of developed Western countries showed that urbanisation was necessary for economic growth and social progress (e.g. Wu, 1980; Li, 1983). Closely related to the urbanisation vs. rural-urban integration argument was the debate on the growth of large cities. Some scholars thought that small cities should be the central task of Chinese urbanisation, wherefore the growth of large cities should be contained (Cao, 1983; Wang, 1983). They asserted that the uncontrolled growth of cities would burden the already over-loaded urban

infrastructure and harm economic growth. Others argued that the growth of large cities should be encouraged in order to facilitate the mobility of labour and enhance the role of large cities as innovative centres. In the search for urbanisation strategies, in the 1980s, the Chinese government organised several conferences and research groups in order to study Chinese urbanisation. This move shifted the interest of Chinese scholars to urbanisation policies in order to facilitate government planning.

Research into urbanisation policies has remained popular up to the present day. By analysing the academic trends of China's urbanisation research between 1992 and 2011, Li et al. (2014) summarise the major research topics in the field of Chinese urbanisation during this period. They point out that the research conducted since the 1990s is still based on the needs of the Chinese government, i.e. to provide inspiration for solutions (chiefly with regard to government policy) to emerging problems that arise in the process of rapid urbanisation. The major research topics include: (1) urban-rural social and economic disparities (e.g. Cao et al., 2010; Ma et al., 2010; Zhou et al., 2011); (2) rural economic development (e.g. Yang, 2004; Wang, 2004; Gu et al., 2009); (3) reform of the urban-rural dual social economic system (e.g. Zhao, 2003; Li, 2008; Ye and Xu, 2014); (4) the issues of migrant workers (Zhu, 2002; Bai and Li, 2008; Wang, 2010); and (5) the issues of environmental protection (Zhang et al., 2010; Sun, 2011; Ding, 2016). This literature not only reveals the changes brought about by market reform in Chinese urbanisation but also unmask some existent problems, especially those caused by urbanisation policies.

#### *4.3.2.2 The differences in urbanisation between China and Western countries*

Does urbanisation occur differently in China than in the Western context? The answer is probably yes. The differences in urbanisation between China and Western countries are as follows: (1) different starting times of urbanisation; (2) different starting levels of urbanisation; (3) different speeds of urbanisation; and (4) different experiences of urbanisation.

First, researchers at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (2003) believe that the starting time of urbanisation is essential for a country's quality of urbanisation. Gao (1991) argues that Chinese urbanisation had a very late start. In this sense, she states that 'Chinese urbanisation began in 1949, which is about 150 years later than the UK, 100 years later

than the average of other developed countries, 50 years later than the world average, and 20 years later than the average of developing countries' (p.202).

Second, Hu (1989) points out that the starting level of urbanisation exerts an important influence on the progress of urbanisation. He indicates that countries that have a higher starting level of urbanisation tend to have faster urban development. Data published by the National Bureau of Statistics of China (2014) shows that China's initial urbanisation rate<sup>22</sup> was 10.6 per cent in 1949, which was 10 per cent lower than that of the US circa 1860, and 15 per cent lower than that of the UK circa 1750. Gao (1991) argues that Chinese urbanisation started from a relatively low base. She points out that, in 1949, developed countries had realised urbanisation with an average urbanisation rate of 51.8 per cent, with the UK exhibiting the highest urbanisation rate of 80.5 per cent.

Third, He (2006) states that the speed of urbanisation has a major influence on the process and direction of urban development, along with the adjustment of urbanisation policies. Li (1984) points out that, from 1949 to 1989, the level of Chinese urbanisation increased from 10.6 per cent to about 30 per cent; the world average urbanisation rate increased from 13.3 per cent to 24.8 per cent from 1900 to 1940; the average urbanisation rate of developed countries increased from 11.4 per cent to 25 per cent from 1850 to 1890; and the average urbanisation rate of developing countries increased from 10.3 per cent to 25.8 per cent from 1930 to 1970. Li (1984), therefore, maintains that Chinese urbanisation has grown at a faster rate than that of any other country.

Yu (1994) argues that, if the speed of Chinese urbanisation is only measured by comparing the increments of the urbanisation rate between China and other countries at a particular interval, it would be difficult to rule out various environmental factors for urbanisation in different countries. Given the high correlation between urbanisation and economic development, Yu uses regression analysis to compare the differences in the urbanisation process between China and the big countries model<sup>23</sup> from 1949 to 1991. He finds that (1) during 1949–1959, the process of Chinese urbanisation lagged slightly behind the big

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<sup>22</sup> The urbanisation rate refers to the percentage of the population living in urban areas.

<sup>23</sup> According to Yu (1994), the big country model was derived from regression analysis of per capita GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and the urbanisation rate in 25 big countries in 1965. Big countries refer to countries with a population of more than 30 million in 1990. This model includes 25 big countries, and most of the developed countries, such as the US and the UK.

countries model, but the degree of the lag was continually shrinking; (2) although the process of Chinese urbanisation slightly surpassed the big countries model from 1960 to 1968, it fluctuated greatly. Yu (1994) believes that this is a result of the interaction between drastic changes in the national economy and the forcible intervention in the urbanisation process by administrative means; and (3) after 1968, the process of Chinese urbanisation began to lag behind the big countries model once more. In fact, in the late 1970s, the process of Chinese urbanisation fell far behind the big countries model. In this regard, Yu (1994) argues that the *hukou* system (since 1958), which strictly prohibits the mobility and migration of rural populations to cities, has increasingly transformed itself into an obstacle to urban development after completing its mission of curbing over-urbanisation. Thus, Yu (1994) believes that the speed of Chinese urbanisation needs to be analysed in a specific timespan. However, there is a clear difference in the speed of urbanisation between China and the big countries model, which may be due to the tremendous impact of China's national policies on its population mobility and urbanisation.

Finally, the distinctive experiences of Chinese urbanisation are the most obvious differences between it and Western urbanisation (Tao, 2014). Because China's process of urbanisation was intimately connected to state power and planning, both in the Mao and reform eras, such unique urbanisation experiences (under state control) reflect not only one of the main differences between Chinese and Western urbanisation, but also the reasons that led to differences in urbanisation between China and Western countries. Therefore, Chinese urbanisation, and its ideological source, will be discussed in detail in the next section.

#### 4.3.2.3 *The reasons that contribute to the differences in urbanisation between China and Western countries*

In addition to wars and invasions by imperialist powers in modern Chinese history, along with the consequent 'piled-up poverty and weaknesses', the differences in urbanisation between China and Western countries may come from the enormous impacts arising from the dominant role of Chinese state power and its unique institutions (such as the *hukou* and dormitory labour systems) on China's urbanisation. As Ebanks and Cheng (1990) note, 'where China's experience of urbanisation is unique rests on the Chinese government's uncompromising command over human resources [...]' (p.48).

By surveying the work of Chinese and Western scholars, China's state power, national scale framing, and unique institutions in the process of urbanisation since 1949 are believed to have contributed to the differences in urbanisation between China and Western countries. From this perspective, the following discussion is focused on three themes: (1) China's unique urbanisation experiences (i.e. urbanisation in the Mao era (1949-1978), urbanisation in the reform era, and the characteristics of urbanisation since reform); (2) the ideological source of China's unique urbanisation (i.e. the ideological source of Mao's anti-urbanism and the ideological source of urban policies in the post-Mao era); and (3) the unique institutions in China's urbanisation (i.e. the *hukou* system and the dormitory labour system).

#### 4.3.2.4 China's unique urbanisation experiences

##### *I. Urbanisation in the Mao era: 1949–1978*

Radical changes were observed in Chinese urbanisation after 1949. Western scholars use the anti-urban thesis to describe Chinese urbanisation under Mao between 1949 and 1978 (Yeh et al., 2011). Nevertheless, from 1978 onwards, Chinese cities experienced rapid growth. This section reviews the anti-urban experiences during Mao's time and their impacts on the course of Chinese urbanisation. The ideological source of Mao's anti-urbanism will be discussed later (see Section 4.3.2.5).

The anti-urban thesis has three major components: (1) a pro-rural and anti-urban attitude; (2) the dispersion of the urban population in the name of *xiafang* (downward transfer) and *shangshan xiaxiang* (going up to the mountains and coming down to the villages); and (3) the urban communes and the Daqing model.

First, the CCP's pro-rural and anti-urban attitude played a significant role in the course of Chinese urbanisation during the Mao era (Gronewold, 2007; Zhao, 2007; Brown, 2008). The CCP seized power from rural areas by using the strategy of encircling cities from the countryside. Because of this rural-based revolutionary victory, the peasant masses were viewed as possessing great intrinsic revolutionary energy. The hard work and plain living of peasants were viewed as worthy of emulation (Ma, 1976). In the cities, urban entrepreneurs, their family members, and intellectuals were viewed as the seedbed for the growth of capitalism (ibid.). Ma (1976) argues that such perceptions of peasants and

urbanites produced at least three types of impact on China's urbanisation and social development: (1) they helped to formulate a rural-based development strategy, or a bottom-up approach, to China's development, which focused on the provision of basic needs for the people, especially for the rural masses; (2) they helped to set up the goal of rural-urban integration to narrow the existing differences of production and living conditions between urban and rural areas; and (3) they also helped to formulate a series of anti-urban policies and programmes, such as *xiafang* and *shangshan xiaxiang*.

Second, the manner of dispersing the urban population, such as *xiafang* and *shangshan xiaxiang*, reflected the main manifestation of Mao's anti-urbanism (Shin, 2015). The *xiafang* programme was conceived in 1957 and was continued until the late 1970s, the targets of which were party cadres and government workers. The initial goal of *xiafang* was to trim government personnel and relocate them to the countryside in order to reinforce government control and promote rural development (Ma, 1976). By February 1958, the total number of cadres transferred downwards reached 1.3 million. The *shangshan xiaxiang* movement was conceived in 1955. The government asked urban graduates who could not find employment in cities to return to their home villages. However, *shangshan xiaxiang* was interrupted by the Great Leap Forward (1958–1962) and was not reintroduced until 1962.

The initial goal of *shangshan xiaxiang* was to eliminate the 'three major differences', i.e. the differences between workers and peasants, urban and rural areas, and physical and mental labour. During the Great Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), the majority of urban youths were sent to rural areas. In 1968, Mao's famous instruction encouraged the educated youth to go to the countryside so as to be re-educated by the peasants. Unlike *xiafang*, the *shangshan xiaxiang* programme tried to settle urban youth permanently in the countryside. It was estimated that, by 1978, about 27 million urban youth had resettled in rural areas (Chen, 2004). Between 1950 and 1978, Mao's de-urbanisation not only caused a great waste of the labour force but also led to many chaotic implementations in national, social, and economic life as well as chaos in urban development (Deng, 2011).

Third, Salaff (1967) believes that the establishment of urban communes in 1958 can be understood as another major manifestation of China's anti-urbanism. She argues that Mao

attempted to use urban communes, a new form of urban organisation, which returned cities to small communities, to establish communist cities. China's urban communes were products of the Great Leap Forward. During the Great Leap Forward, China's countryside was quickly communised. While the rural communes were viewed as higher and desirable forms of socialism, many peasants and unemployed urbanites in cities were viewed as a social problem. It was hoped that urban communes would not only facilitate the industrial leap forward by resulting in the massive participation of urbanites, but would also solve the unemployment problems in cities. Salaff (1967) maintains that urban communes did not involve the modernisation of the countryside; rather, Mao returned cities to small communities by breaking down their size and integrating them with agriculture. Therefore, urban communes represented Mao's attempt to do away with the large industrial city by substituting it with small non-evolving cities with little potential for growth (Salter, 1976).

The Daqing model was Mao's other attempt to create socialist cities in light of rural-urban integration (Lo, 1987; Tang, 2000). The Daqing oil field was established in the early 1960s. In Daqing, while the oil workers worked in the oil field, their dependents cultivated the surrounding land. The Daqing model was the combination of an oil field, refinery factories, and farms. Mao called on industries to learn from Daqing because it integrated industries with agriculture and the city with the countryside (Hama, 1980). Daqing gave priority to production rather than livelihood, the effect of which was to reduce the emphasis on housing and urban infrastructure in the construction of new industrial bases (Buck, 1984). Murphey (1980) points out that Daqing is both a city in the countryside and a village in the city, and its essence is the spirit of anti-urbanism in the CCP's urban strategy.

It is believed that, while Mao's anti-urbanism eased the employment tension and financial burden (including the food supply, social security, and urban infrastructure) in cities during the period of 1950 to 1978, it also caused a massive reduction in urban populations, thereby inhibiting the process of Chinese urbanisation (Qiu and Zheng, 2006). In taking Shanghai as an example, although its natural population growth never stopped, the overall size of its population decreased by 168,800 between 1967 and 1977. According to the National Bureau of Statistics of China (1999), China's urban population decreased by 43.69 million in the period of 1961 to 1964, causing the growth of the agricultural population to go from 73.83 to 80.15 per cent in only four years. Yan and Chen (2015)

indicate that Mao's massive de-urbanisation push may have had negative impacts on both urban and rural development. They believe that, first, when the Cultural Revolution ended, much of the rural population returned to cities, leading to a surge in unemployment in 1979. At that time, the number of unemployed people in cities exceeded 15 million, which not only resulted in a lot of negative effects on people's lives, but also put great pressure on social order and urban development. Second, the resettlement of the urban population in the countryside exacerbated the rural labour surplus, causing a shortage of means of subsistence and labour wastage in rural areas. The widespread poverty of rural areas aggravated the economic inequality brought about by the urban-rural dual system; thus, moving to cities became the best hope for peasants and the former urban population to improve their lives. Such a longing ultimately led to a mass return to cities in post-cultural revolution China and, in part, resulted in a great tide of migrant workers moving to urban areas from the late 1980s onwards. These phenomena took large amounts of high-quality labour from rural areas, thereby hindering rural development.

## *II. Urbanisation in the reform era*

The post-1978 period represented a new policy era because of Deng's strategy of economic reform and opening. In this new era, pro-rural, anti-urban development strategies gave way to a city-driven strategy of national development (Lo, 1991). Cities were viewed as multifunctional centres and economic organisers; thus, urbanisation was viewed as a precondition for economic growth. In effect, economic reform in the countryside dismantled rural communes and made peasants unfettered. The surplus labour in rural areas was thus freed up, generating a push towards Chinese urbanisation (Chen and Hu, 1991). In cities, urban reform diversified the production sectors. The increased control over production and management at lower levels of enterprises and the growth of private economic ownerships created more room to absorb peasant migrants, which may have acted as a catalyst for Chinese urbanisation. As a result, in the post-1978 period, Chinese urbanisation proceeded at a rapid pace. In examining several cities and their populations, Yeh and Xu (1990) found that both the urban growth rates and the increased number of cities and city populations were considerably higher and larger than those of the pre-1978 period.

In 1978, the central government drafted an urbanisation strategy that attempted to contain the growth of large cities, to develop medium-sized cities rationally, and to promote the growth of small cities (Wang, 2010). This strategy was legitimised in the *Urban Planning Regulations* in 1980. In addition, a rural-urbanisation policy, which intended to keep the rural surplus labour in its hometowns, was gradually formulated in the early 1980s (Hun and Wong, 1994). This strategy is also reflected in the urban policies of Deng's successors (Wang, 2010). Although the central government loosened some restrictions on the growth of large cities after the late 1990s, and provided a wide range of policies to help coordinate the development of large, medium-sized, and small cities and towns during the first decade of the twenty-first century, it still restricts the size and population of large cities and encourages the development of towns and small and medium-sized cities. For example, in the *National New-Type Urbanisation Plan (2014–2020)*, the central government aims to 'fully release the restrictions on settling down in towns and small cities; to release methodically the restrictions on settling down in medium-sized cities (with populations ranging from half a million to one million) [...]. The population of mega-cities (with populations over five million) should be strictly controlled. Large and medium-sized cities may set the requirements for the number of years that [immigrants] participate in urban social security systems [in order to regulate the scale and pace of settling down]. Mega-cities can adopt an integral system to set a ladder-type channel to regulate the scale and pace of settling down' (The CCP Central Committee and State Council, 2014, Chapter VI). For this reason, Henderson et al. (2009) argue that the number of mega-cities and the average city size in China are still relatively small. They believe that China's overall urbanisation level is still below other countries with similar income levels. Although some Chinese cities have experienced large-scale population inflows in recent years, most of them still do not have sufficient populations to support the rapid development of cities.

### *III. The characteristics of urbanisation since reform*

The rapid urbanisation in post-reform China has four main characteristics, the first of which is a rapid growth of the urban population, with an increase of 308.9 million people, resulting in an increase in the country's urbanisation rate from 19 per cent in 1978 to 54.77 per cent in 2014 (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2015). This rapid growth is continuing and is anticipated to become even faster (Yeh et al., 2011).

Second, large and medium-sized cities have gained a large volume of the floating population. This floating population is largely made up of rural surplus labourers who migrated to cities, typically called migrant workers. They make up about 30 to 40 per cent of the entire population in large and medium-sized cities (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2015).

Third, rural non-farming enterprises have absorbed a considerable amount of the rural surplus labour. Rural market centres were revived in the 1980s. The traditional function of market centres was transformed by the growth of rural industries into processing and manufacturing centres. Chinese leaders view the growth of rural industries as a potential for developing Chinese-style urbanisation (Hun and Wong, 1994).

Fourth, cities and towns in the coastal provinces have experienced more growth than those in the inland provinces (Yeh et al., 2011). This is not only because the Chinese government assigned favourable policies to coastal provinces by designating fourteen coastal cities (e.g. Tianjin, Shanghai, Wenzhou, and Guangzhou) and four special economic zones (i.e., Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shantou, and Xiamen), but also because the rural industries of the coastal provinces were more developed than those of the inland provinces.

#### 4.3.2.5 The ideological source of China's unique urbanisation

##### *I. The ideological source of Mao's anti-urbanism*

It is believed that Mao's anti-urbanism may have come from three sources: (1) an anti-urban peasant culture, (2) an anti-urban revolution, and (3) an anti-urban tradition in Marxist theory (Tu and Luo, 2014).

First, the anti-urban peasant culture originated in the long agrarian tradition that admired agriculture but disdained trade. This was influential in policymaking, as, in 1949, 90 per cent of the Chinese communists were peasants by origin (Kirkby, 1985).

Second, the anti-urban peasant culture was reinforced by an anti-urban revolution. Cities were perceived as having accommodated a strong alignment with the communists' enemies, i.e. the rural landlords, the urban bourgeoisie, and the Western imperialist powers (Murphey, 1974). This urban-based revolutionary strategy led to a heavy loss because the communists were countered by a strong Kuomintang force in the cities. Because of the

failure of the urban-based revolution, the Chinese communists were expelled to the countryside. Cities were thus conceived as counter-revolutionary fortresses and were increasingly distrusted during the communist struggle for power.

Third, the CCP upheld the anti-urban tradition in Marxist theory and believed that the decentralisation of industries from large cities was an effective way to realise urban-rural integration (Tu and Luo, 2014). The anti-urban tradition in Marxist theory mainly came from the work of Engels (Kirkby, 1985). In this sense, Engels argued that the separation of cities and the countryside resulted in the bankruptcy of the peasants and poverty in the countryside, in addition to causing pollution and overcrowding in cities. Rural-urban separation thus destroyed the basis of the intellectual development of the peasants and the basis of the physical development of individual workers. Engels claimed that equal distribution of industries and population was the only means to solve this problem. This resolution included rural-urban integration, containment of large cities, and regional equality of industrial and population distribution. Rural-urban integration would help to clean the polluted air, water, and soil; it would make urban waste benefit the countryside. The containment of large cities was the only way to solve the problems of overcrowding and housing shortages. Regional equality in industrial and population distribution would help the countryside overcome its isolated status and save on transportation costs.

## *II. The ideological source of urban policies in the post-Mao era*

Certain ideological justifications have been marshalled by the central government since 1978 to garner support for its economic reform policies. Su and Feng's (1979) theory of the 'primary stage of socialism' may be the most significant ideological source for urban policies in reform-era China. The authors argue that, owing to China's unique historical condition as a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country when it adopted socialism, it has not yet been able to reach the socialist stage as defined by Marx and Lenin. In this light, Deng suggested that, in relation to mature socialist societies, classical Marxism should be developed, but not for nations at a 'primary stage of socialism' and with low economic development. In addition, China needed to develop a distinct, 'socialism with Chinese characteristics, that is, the application of socialism with respect to China's unique situation' (Su and Feng, 1979, cited in Fan, 1997, p.623).

During the late 1980s, when party leaders desperately sought legitimisation for the reform movement and the non-state economy, Su and Feng's (1979) idea became popular and was adopted by state officials. If China's development has been underscored by its unique historical background, various scholars have further contended that Chinese urban and economic transformations are different from those in the West, in that the situation in China is not one of pure market transition but of a mixture of socialist and market economies based on partial reform (Nee, 1989; Bian and Logan, 1996). Essentially, economic reforms begun in 1979 have generated a distinctive set of conditions that have profoundly changed the previous dynamics of Chinese urbanisation.

#### 4.3.2.6 The unique institutions in China's urbanisation

##### *I. The hukou system*

The *hukou* (household registration) system, as the most distinctive institution in Chinese urbanisation, artificially divides Chinese citizens into agricultural and non-agricultural accounts, thereby forming two very different social systems for agricultural and non-agricultural populations. This not only leads to a dual social and economic structure between the city and countryside, but is also closely connected to the emergence of a tide of migrant workers nationwide since the late 1980s. At present, the strict household registration system is only implemented in China, North Korea, and Benin; however, even North Korea's household registration system does not impose a marked distinction between peasants and workers (Fundan University, 2015). Some scholars have also compared China's *hukou* system with India's caste system (e.g. Whyte, 2010).

The discussion of this section is focused on three themes: (1) the meaning of the *hukou* system, (2) the *hukou* system and the distribution of social resources, and (3) the *hukou* system and the urban-rural divide.

First, the *hukou* system is an individual-based population management policy (Wang, 2003). According to this policy, the state collects, confirms, and registers citizens' basic population information, such as birth, death, kinship, and legal address, in order to protect citizens' rights with regard to employment, education, social welfare, and so on. The citizen's *hukou* status is directly determined by his/her father or mother's *hukou* status, which means that one is not free to select or change his/her *hukou* status without the

approval of the government. Therefore, Chinese citizens are born with their *hukou* status (Yu, 1994).

Second, the *hukou* system never just means population registering (Ding, 1992; Chan and Zhang, 1999; Jiang, 2002; Zhu, 2003; Cai et al., 2003; Lu, 2004; Wang, 2004; Wu and Treiman, 2004; Liu, 2005; Yu, 2013); since it came into being, it has also been linked with the distribution of social resources such as food (Cheng and Selden, 1994), housing (Wu, 2004), education (Chan and Buckingham, 2008), and social security (Selden and You, 1997). According to Yu (2013), China's current household registration (*hukou dengji*) includes two aspects, the first of which is the 'place of permanent residence', whereby citizens are registered as permanent residents depending on their place of habitual residence. This aspect divides household registration into urban *hukou* and rural *hukou*. The second is the 'household type', which contains agricultural *hukou* and non-agricultural *hukou*. The household type directly determines citizens' eligibility for various social resources and welfare, and there are more benefits and prerogatives attached to the non-agricultural *hukou*. For example, citizens with non-agricultural *hukou* achieve better health, education, and social insurance benefits than those with agricultural *hukou*. The place of permanent residence therefore clearly defines the specific geographical areas where citizens enjoy their benefits, and only citizens with local *hukou* can fully enjoy the public services and welfare provided by the local government.

Under such an unfair system, Chinese citizens with different household types and places of permanent residence usually have asymmetrical status with regard to the distribution of social resources (Tian, 2013). Generally speaking, citizens with agricultural *hukou* (i.e. peasants with a rural residence as well as peasants with an urban residence – migrant workers) are at the bottom of the distribution chain, followed by four kinds of non-agricultural *hukou*: in increasing order, town *hukou*, city *hukou*, metropolis *hukou*, and municipality *hukou* (e.g. Shanghai's permanent urban residents) (Yu, 2013). Thus, this system causes inequalities in social status between permanent urban and rural residents.

Third, China's rural-urban divide is largely embodied in the *hukou* system, which has aroused considerable discussion in recent literature (Cheng and Selden, 1994; Chan and Zhang, 1999; Fan, 2002; 2004; Cai, 2007). Scholars believe that the *hukou* system has

greatly influenced people's social mobility, employment opportunities, labour-market return, and social public benefits, which has resulted in great inequalities between Chinese agricultural and non-agricultural populations (Liu, 2005).

The *hukou* system was first established in China's urban areas in 1951 and was then extended to rural areas in 1955 (Chan and Zhang, 1999). In this sense, the *hukou* system was part of a larger economic and political system that was set up to serve multiple state interests and secure social and political order and other related objectives (ibid.). The early years of the *hukou* system largely served as a monitoring rather than a control mechanism of population migration and movement. However, as the influx of peasants into cities escalated and began to be a serious burden, the central government tried various measures to stem the *mangliu* (blind flows) of rural labour. Consequently, this led to the promulgation of China's first set of *hukou* legislation by the National People's Congress in 1958. This new legislation established a fully-fledged *hukou* system and granted state agencies greater powers in controlling citizens' geographical mobility through a system of migration permits and recruitment as well as enrolment certificates.

It is believed that the basic idea of the *hukou* system can be traced back to the Soviet model of accelerating urban industrialisation at the cost of rural development (Chan and Zhang, 1999). In particular, the republic, founded in 1949, needed an institutional arrangement to drain its vast countryside of agricultural goods and to concentrate its economic resources in limited urban areas in order to foster rapid industrialisation (Cheng and Selden, 1994; Wang, 2005; Mallee, 2006). Even though the central government expanded the country's urban areas before 2010, individuals with agricultural *hukou* status still accounted for 50.05 per cent of the nation's total population in 2010 (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2011). Thus, a large proportion of China's population suffered from this institutional arrangement in support of urban development. Meanwhile, the *hukou* system served as a mechanism to control rural-urban migration, which was an effective way to ensure the adequacy of rural labourers producing agricultural products and to limit the number of urban people enjoying low-priced food (Cai, 2007).

In the last two decades, the *hukou* system assumed a new role in China when rural residents became a source of cheap labour for manufacturing industries (Fan, 2002;

Mallee, 2006; Smart and Lin, 2007). Meanwhile, the abolition of the commune system and the introduction of the ‘household responsibility system’ greatly improved the efficiency of agricultural production and allowed peasants newly freed from the land to seek jobs in the industrial and service sectors (Liang, 2001; Wu and Treiman, 2004). Hence, both the supply and demand of cheap labour made the central government gradually diminish the role of the *hukou* system with regard to rural-urban migration (Chan and Zhang, 1999).

However, despite these changes in the function of the *hukou* system, the urban-rural divide prescribed by the *hukou* system continues to play a key role in determining access to social benefits and entitlement to social resources. This dualistic system still demonstrates the state’s bias towards urbanites, and its expectation that the rural Chinese should be self-reliant and contribute to the country without state support (Chan and Zhang, 1999; Fan, 2002). For example, migrant workers with agricultural *hukou* in urban areas are not entitled to the many rights and benefits enjoyed by workers with urban *hukou*, no matter how similar their jobs (Wang et al., 2002). Overall, *hukou* is indeed a unique institutional system, which has the function of resource allocation and controlling benefits, resulting in many inequalities between agricultural and non-agricultural populations.

## *II. The dormitory labour system*

The appearance of the dormitory labour system (also known as the dormitory labour regime) in China relates to the hybrid outgrowth of China’s global integration in the course of urbanisation combined with the legacies of state socialism (Ngai, 2007). What is striking about today’s China is that, due to a combination of state control (i.e. the control of the *hukou* system), extensive provision of factory dorms, and shortages of private housing, the dormitory labour system used to accommodate and manage migrant workers is widespread, especially in the manufacturing and construction industries (Hussain, 2000).

In this system, two conditions shape the mobility of migrant workers: (1) the freedom of migrant workers to sell their labour to global and private capital, which was allowed after reform and opening-up in China, and (2) state laws on population and the remaining limits on mobility through the *hukou* system (Ngai, 2007). These laws attempt to block the free flow of migrant workers in order to meet the demands of transnational capital as well as

China's urban development. Ngai (2007) argues that this double social conditioning is basically a paradoxical process because the freedom of migrant workers to work in industrial urban areas is checked by social constraints preventing their permanent settlement in the cities. This means that, on finishing their labour contracts, which usually last one to two years, migrant workers must return to their place of birth or find another temporary employment contract (Walder, 1986; Solinger, 1999), again confining them in the dormitory labour system. Factory dormitories thus attract migrant workers for the short term, and accommodation is not the means for cultivating a long-term or protracted relationship between the individual firm and the individual worker, which is the rationale for accommodation in some other paternalistic factory forms elsewhere (Sassen, 1988; Perry, 1993).

Under this system, management within foreign capital or privately-owned enterprises have exceptional control over migrant workers (Ngai, 2007). With no access to a home space independent of the enterprise, time spent moving from the living space to the shop floor is eliminated, and working days are extended to suit production needs (Ren and Pan, 2006). This permits a flexible utilisation of labour time and means that employers can respond to product demand more readily than in situations where migrant workers' time is regulated by the state or the migrant workers themselves. Compared to the normal separation between work and home that factory arrangements usually entail, the dormitory labour system exerts a greater breadth of control over the working and non-working day of labourers. This contrasts with accommodation arrangements of the pre-reform period, which were not used to prolong working hours.

However, the dormitory is not only a means of labour control and discipline but it also provides benefits to migrant workers and even to society. It helps reduce the costs of travel and living expenses, facilitates savings and remittances, and provides a relatively protected environment for young and vulnerable female workers (Ngai, 2007).

In summary, the dormitory labour system may have the following characteristics: (1) the system usually has primitive living conditions, and there is no private space for individuals, except for their beds (Ren and Pan, 2006); (2) the lengthening of the workday results in a compression of work life (Ngai, 2007); (3) employers' tactics of divide and rule rely on

migrant workers' kinship and ethnic allegiances being nourished in the dormitories so as to extract greater productivity per hour of work and discipline from workers; (4) the system leads to a suppression of wage-increase demands because the rapid circulation of temporary labour makes it more difficult for migrant workers to demand wage increases; (5) easy access to labour power during the workday facilitates a labour system for just-in-time production and quick-delivery order and distribution systems; (6) control of the daily reproduction of labour power rests with the factory since accommodation, food, travel, and social and leisure pursuits all occur within a production unit; and (7) employers have direct control over the labour process by relying on a system of labour discipline that imposes penalties on migrant workers not only in the workplace but also in the dormitory.

### ***4.3.3 The impact of Chinese-style urbanisation on Chinese people's happiness***

In the previous section, the representations and causations of the differences in urbanisation between China and Western countries were discussed. However, do these differences affect human happiness and cause differences with regard to how happy Chinese people feel? As various scholars have pointed out, on the Chinese road to urbanisation, the pre-existing two-class society that has led to huge economic disparities based on *hukou* status, with sharp rural-urban distinctions in income levels and the public provision of social security, is the major cause of clear disparities in wellbeing between Chinese urban and rural residents (e.g. Xing, 2006; Knight and Gunatilaka, 2008; Whyte, 2010; Zhang, 2010; Treiman, 2012).

The urban-rural division brought about by the *hukou* system, along with the consequent disparities and inequalities between urban and rural residents in terms of economic conditions and social security, are the main areas of focus in current research on the impacts of China's unique urbanisation on human happiness among Chinese and Western scholars (Zhang, 2012). The influence of China's unique migrant labour regime (notably the dormitory labour system) on the level of happiness of migrant workers has also received growing attention among Western scholars (e.g. Lee, 1998; Ngai, 1999; Gaetano and Jacka, 2004; Ngai, 2007). Few studies have been conducted in other directions, which may be related to Chinese-style urbanisation not being adequately covered by the current literature into the happiness of Chinese citizens.

These studies have revealed some key characteristics and circumstance of the impacts of Chinese-style urbanisation on the happiness of Chinese people that are essential for understanding the disparities between levels of happiness of Chinese urban and rural residents in the context of rapid urbanisation and transition. In view of Chinese-style urbanisation (including its specific experiences and institutions) being discussed in detail in the previous section, how it led to China's dual urban-rural division and sharp distinctions in many aspects between Chinese urban and rural residents will not be addressed in this section. Instead, by reviewing the current literature on the impact of Chinese urbanisation on the happiness of Chinese people, the influences of the urban-rural division and its consequent disparities in terms of economic conditions and social security, to name a few, on the level of happiness of Chinese urban and rural residents will be addressed. It is also worth mentioning that rural residents referred to herein refers to all Chinese people with rural *hukou*, including migrant workers with rural *hukou* and an urban residence.

Therefore, the discussion below is focused on three areas: (1) the disparity in happiness between Chinese urban and rural residents under the urban-rural division; (2) the shrinking disparity in happiness between Chinese urban and rural residents; and (3) the lower level of happiness of migrant workers caused by the dormitory labour system.

First, although some scholars believe that rural residents are happier than urban residents in China's dualistic urban-rural division (Zai and Lu, 2005; Luo, 2006), most scholars hold the opposite view that the latter is happier than the former (Yang, 1999; Xing, 2006; Knight and Gunatilaka, 2008; Fang and Feng, 2009; Whyte, 2010; Zhang, 2010; Treiman, 2012; Wang et al., 2014; Zhao and Ge, 2014).

Zai and Lu's (2004) survey on the happiness of 3,859 urban and rural residents in 22 large and medium-sized cities, towns, and villages across China found that rural residents are happier than urban residents. They point out that the level of happiness of rural residents is 3.82 (out of 5) compared with 3.76 for urban residents (5 = very happy, 1 = very unhappy), and the overall life satisfaction of rural residents is 3.59 (out of 5), when compared with 3.36 for urban residents (5 = very satisfied, 1 = very dissatisfied). The results from their study triggered a heated debate in the Chinese media and caused

discussion in Chinese academic circles about whether the urban-rural division leads to a lower level of happiness for rural residents. On 14 December 2004, *People.com* published Sun's criticism, entitled 'Rural residents are the happiest? Who is taking the public happiness as a gimmick?', stating that Zai and Lu's (2004) questionnaire was ambiguous and did not provide a true picture of the level of happiness of rural residents. In this sense, if peasants are happier than urban residents, why should they have to endure the pain of moving far from home and working in the cities, why should they do the hardest work and have the lowest levels of income, and why should they have to undergo hardships when asking for pay and education for their children? (Sun, 2004). Sun then further points out that the above phenomena are precisely the difficulties that the urban-rural divide brings to peasants. In her interview with the *People's Tribune* in 2005, Lianxiang Sha, a professor at the Renmin University of China, cast doubt on Zai and Lu's (2004) data, arguing that the data 'showed inappropriate representativeness because they surveyed too few villages, wherefore such results can hardly represent all Chinese peasants' (Sha, 2005, cited in Wei, 2005, p.32).

Against this background, Zhang (2012) conducted a meta-analysis of 84 articles (including 86 sets of data) from 2001 to 2010 in order to explore the impact of the urban-rural division on the levels of happiness between urban and rural residents. His pioneering work shows that the happiness level of urban residents is higher than that of rural residents, and the results tend to be stable due to the exclusion of publication bias; the lower material and living conditions of rural residents brought about by the urban-rural division are important reasons for their lower levels of happiness. Zhang further points out that the level of happiness of urban and rural residents is closely linked to their differences in terms of (1) living expenses, (2) health care, and (3) leisure and entertainment caused by different *hukou* status. He explains that, since people tend to see the improvement of living conditions brought about by money as happiness when their living standards are not high (Diener and Diener, 2002), lower levels of living expenses, health care, leisure, and the entertainment of rural residents have led to their lower levels of happiness. In terms of living expenses, in 2010, the annual per capita living expenditure of rural residents was 6991.79 yuan, about 52 per cent of that of urban residents. The tightening of living expenses for rural residents means that they cannot enjoy the same level of living

conditions as urban residents. In terms of healthcare, rural residents find it difficult to afford medical services due to their lower incomes and being excluded from urban medical insurance. Compared with the urban medical insurance system, rural medical insurance, i.e. new rural cooperative medical care, has a relatively low reimbursement rate and a narrower scope for protection against disease. With regard to leisure and spiritual life, rural residents are far behind urban residents both in terms of spending on leisure and entertainment and forms of leisure and entertainment. Urban residents, with a fixed income guarantee (from urban residents' endowment insurance) after retirement, usually spend some of their income on leisure and entertainment because they feel a higher level of social support. However, rural residents are often cautious about spending on leisure and entertainment due to their lack or lower levels of old-age insurance.

Similarly, most Western scholars believe that, in Chinese-style urbanisation, the urban-rural division caused by the *hukou* system has resulted in many inequalities to Chinese rural residents and has made them feel less happy than their urban companions. Whyte (2010) maintains that China has built an urban welfare state on the back of the peasants by arguing that 'the actual trend (of the urban-rural cleavage) looks much more like descent into serfdom for rural residents in the Mao era, [...] producing a caste-like [urban-rural] division that did not exist before 1949' (p.5). Treiman (2012) believes that the 'urban-rural gap in wellbeing [in China] remains substantial', so much so that the difference between an urban and rural existence has been likened to the 'difference between heaven and earth' (p.33). Based on a comparison of the level of happiness between agricultural and non-manual workers in China and the US, Lam and Liu (2014) found that the probability of agricultural workers in China being happy is 9.2 per cent lower than non-manual workers; the same does not hold in the US, where rural-urban differences in income, education, amenities, and living conditions are much smaller than those in China.

Second, in recent years, some scholars have pointed out that the difference between urban and rural residents with regard to levels of happiness is shrinking. Treiman (2012) states that evidence regarding the gap in the happiness levels of urban and rural residents is lacking, except for income, for which there have been several studies focusing on the trends in the urban-rural gap (e.g. Knight and Song, 1999; Riskin et al., 2001a; Sicular et

al., 2010). Zhang (2012) conducted a study on the difference in the level of happiness of urban and rural residents between 2001 and 2010, showing that (1) the difference in the level of happiness between urban and rural residents in China tended to decrease slowly over the decade, and (2) the narrowing of the gap in the level of happiness between urban and rural residents is related to the overall development of China's economy. He found that, with the overall development of China's economy, the narrowing differences in urban-rural happiness are closely linked to the gradual reduction of differences between urban and rural residents in terms of Engel's coefficient,<sup>24</sup> per capita consumption expenditure, possession of household facilities and articles, and minimum living allowance. In addition, not only is Engel's coefficient in urban and rural areas continuing to decrease, but the gap between the two areas is continuing to decrease, dropping from 9.5 in 2001 to 5.4 in 2010. This shows that the Chinese people can devote more money to other aspects of life, except for food, and this trend is even more obvious in rural areas. The findings of Treiman (2012) are similar to those of Zhang (2012). Using data from two national probability sample surveys, one in 1996 and the other in 2008, Treiman (2012) studied the differences in the level of happiness among urban and rural residents caused by different *hukou* status. He found that 'a rising tide lifts all boats' (p.33), i.e. on the whole, the steady improvement in conditions in China (e.g. education, occupational position, earnings, family income, and material wellbeing) equally benefitted all groups studied, resulting, on the one hand, in the continuation of a rural origin disadvantage narrowing over time and, on the other, in a strong sense that life is much better than it used to be, especially on the part of the rural-origin population.

Third, although the influence of a dormitory labour system on the happiness of migrant workers does not raise concerns for Chinese scholars, some Western scholars believe that China's unique migrant labour regime, notably the dormitory labour system, has undermined the level of happiness of migrant workers. At present, the related research by Chinese scholars mainly focuses on the impact of poor housing conditions on the happiness of migrant workers. Such housing can include villages in the city, rental houses

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<sup>24</sup> Engel's coefficient, i.e. the proportion of household expenses spent on food (between 0 and 1), is seen as an indicator of a nation's standard of living. The figure falls as a nation's economic growth makes its people wealthier, and tends to rise when they become poorer.

with poor sanitation, dormitories, and so on. For example, based on the data of a floating population dynamic monitoring survey in 2012, Zhu and Leng (2017) studied the impact of different housing conditions on the happiness of migrant workers, which included dormitories. They find that (1) living in dormitories has a significant negative impact on the happiness of migrant workers, and (2) the level of happiness of migrant workers who live in dormitories is lower than those who rent, although the cost of renting is much higher than living in dormitories.

Some Western scholars have conducted studies into China's dormitory labour system. Démurger et al. (2014) believe that migrant workers who live in free housing provided by the employer or in dormitories in the workplace report a significantly lower level of happiness than those who rent housing from the market. Their results suggest that renting migrants are happier if they do not depend on their work unit for housing due to having more freedom and more private space. Based on a series of interviews with migrant workers in a manufacturing plant in Shanghai, Knowles (2016) indicates that a dorm that looks like a prison, disproportionate to the size and profitability of the plant, is seriously damaging to the wellbeing of migrant workers. Drawing upon the findings from a 2003 case study of an electronics factory in South China, Ngai (2007) analysed the operation of the dormitory labour system, finding that the costs of daily labour reproduction of the individual workers are largely undertaken by the dormitory system in subsidising the living cost of labour in terms of wages, accommodation, and consumption, making cheap workers available for production for the global market. The dormitory labour system contributes to maximising production and profits through the efficient control of migrant labour while generating hidden costs for the reproduction of the labour force, the physical strain of long hours without sick days, incidences of abuse, and psychological pressure related to relocation and isolation borne by migrant women workers, thus seriously impairing the sense of happiness of migrant workers.

#### **4.4 Literature on China's Migrant Workers**

This section reviews the previous literature on China's migrant workers both in the study location, Shanghai, and nationwide, with the purpose of demonstrating the rationale and necessity for the current research.

Figure 4.2: The origins of China's migrant workers in Shanghai



#### ***4.4.1 China's migrant workers in Shanghai***

Shanghai, as China's economic and financial centre, is located in the Yangtze River estuary on the Chinese mainland's east coastline (see the yellow area in Figure 4.2). It is also one of the three most frequent inflow areas for China's migrant workers (the other two being Beijing and the Guangdong Province). The Cable News Network (CNN) report that, in 2011, almost 40 per cent of Shanghai's population was made up of migrant workers and their families. According to the 2010 Sixth National Population Census, with a huge increase of 5.51 million in a decade, Shanghai's floating population<sup>25</sup> had reached 8.98 million in 2010, accounting for 39 per cent of its total population (China's National Bureau of Statistics, 2011).

According to a large-scale survey of Shanghai's migrant workers run by the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences between 2006 and 2007, the demographic characteristics of Shanghai's migrant workers are as follows: (1) most of them (62.5 per cent) complete junior high school education and very few of them (2.34 per cent) have a college degree or above; (2) their origin covers 27 provinces and cities, except for Beijing, Tianjin, Tibet, and Xinjiang, of which two-thirds come from Anhui (28.58 per cent), Jiangsu (20.17 per cent), Sichuan (9.15 per cent), and Zhejiang (7.63 per cent) (see Figure 4.2); (3) a high proportion of migrant workers from Fujian, Guangdong, and Zhejiang engage in business, a high proportion of migrant workers from Gansu, Hubei, Hunan, and Sichuan engage in construction, and a high proportion of migrant workers from Anhui, Guangxi, Henan, Chongqing engage in electronic machinery manufacturing; (4) most migrant workers are married (73.29 per cent), and about one-fifth of married migrant workers do not live with their spouses; (5) 47.1 per cent of migrant workers live with their child or children in Shanghai, and, although 23.8 per cent of their children are enrolled in local public schools, none of them are able to enter local public high schools due to the lack of local *hukou*; (6) a large majority of migrant workers (92.72 per cent) consider themselves physical healthy, and about one-third of them have health-related insurance; (7) the employment rate of migrant workers is high, and they mainly work in low-level jobs in private or individual sectors; (8) their job security is relatively low, and more than 70 per cent of them have

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<sup>25</sup> In national statistics, a floating population often relates to China's migrant workers.



#### ***4.4.2 Other studies on China's migrant workers***

The existing research on China's migrant workers in English is mainly concerned with: (1) inequality (Lo, 1990; Benjamin et al., 2005); (2) the very old and the very young (Brauw and Giles, 2008; Wong et al., 2008; Giles et al., 2010); (3) mental health (Lin et al., 2009; Qiu et al., 2011; Mao and Zhao, 2012); (4) physical health (Shao, 2006; Peng et al., 2010); (5) welfare (Selden, 1999); (6) quality of life (Zhang et al., 2009); (7) poverty (Selden, 1999); (8) suicide (Li et al., 2007); (9) stress (Cui et al., 2012); (10) addictive behaviour (Cui et al., 2012); (11) marginalisation (Wong et al., 2007); and (12) stigma (Li et al., 2006). Instead of the subjective feelings of China's migrant workers, existing research has been more focused on their material life. On account of the previous literature review, it is clear that there is scarcely any research on the happiness of China's migrant workers in English.

At the same time, keyword searches for 'migrant workers' across all CNKI databases (see Chapter 3, footnote 5) reveals that there have been 71,280 papers published in Chinese academic journals and newspapers between 1982 and 2015. The most active areas of related research include: (1) urban adaption and urbanisation (Tian, 1995; Zhu, 2002; Jiang, 2003; Liu and Zhou, 2004; Liu, 2006; Liu and Cheng, 2008; Wang et al., 2008; Liu et al., 2010); (2) social security (Li, 2001; Zheng, 2002; Yang, 2003; Yang, 2004; Hua, 2005); (3) the younger generation (Liu and Xu, 2007; Wu, 2009; Liu, 2010; Wang, 2010); (4) migratory movements (Ma and Meng, 2003; Wu, 2005; Wu and Qi, 2005; Cai and Wang, 2007); (5) employment (Li, 1999; Zhai, 2003; Gao, 2006); (6) public policies (Lu, 2003; Zhu, 2005; Zhen and Huang, 2006); (7) income and financial situation (Li, 2001; Liu and Zhang, 2007; Xing 2008); (8) children's education (Xiang, 2005; Huang and Xu, 2006); (9) stigma (Zhu, 2001; Li, 2004; Xie and Yao, 2006); (10) the *hukou* system (Li, 2002; Liu and Cheng, 2009); (11) social conflict (Li, 1995; Cai et al., 2009); and (12) identity (Zhou, 2004; Chen 2005). Among them, the urban adaption of China's migrant workers is the most discussed; social security, particularly medical insurance, and the identity (*shenfen rentong* in Chinese) of the younger generation are also discussed. It is not difficult to see that existing research in the Chinese language focuses more on China's migrant workers' living status and relevant national macro-policies, together with the problems that have been encountered when adjusting to city living. This research hardly

touches on their mental status, subjective feelings, or in-depth accounts of their daily lives. Thus, we can see from the previous literature that migrant workers' living conditions, financial status, social insurance, housing, and even the lives of the younger generation are worse than those of urban residents. However, the subjective feelings of migrant workers or questions regarding their levels of happiness have never been answered because of the problematic view that if we improve migrant workers' external material conditions, they will naturally feel happier; from such a perspective, exploring migrant workers' subjective feelings may not be as important as their material conditions.

Although some Chinese studies have emerged over the past decade to improve migrant workers' living conditions, they have had limited results. The question regarding the level of happiness of migrant workers has never been answered. By searching for both 'migrant workers' and 'happiness/SWB' in all the CNKI databases, 154 papers or news reports available between 2006 and 2015 were found, accounting for only 0.2 per cent of all the papers on China's migrant workers. In addition, most of them have not been noticed by Chinese academics. Through examining all 30 papers that have been referenced greater than or equal to three times, the existing Chinese studies on the happiness of China's migrant workers are listed in Table 4.1. Thus, the area of the younger generation, especially with regard to issues of social integration of the new generation of migrant workers, has achieved a great deal of attention in this field, since it accounts for 43 per cent of all papers. The areas of happiness/SWB and social support, and the general description of happiness/SWB, are also popular, indicated by their respective percentages of 23 and 20. Among them, the most influential works, which have been cited between 20 and 37 times up to July 2015, are Wu's survey on the happiness of China's migrant workers in the Zhejiang Province in 2007, Zhang's (2007) study on SWB and its influential factors on 512 China's migrant workers in Wuhan (provincial capital of Hubei Province), Liu et al.'s (2008) study on the relationship between SWB and mental health and personality in China's migrant workers, Ye's (2011) empirical study on the SWB of China's migrant workers' urban lives in Hunan, Henan, Chongqing, Guangdong, Yunnan, Fujian, and Guangxi provinces, Fang and Fu's (2012) quantitative research on the happiness of 6,000 new-generation migrant workers, and Xia et al.'s (2010) survey on the influencing factors of the new-generation migrant workers' wellbeing in Wuhan.

Wu's (2007) leading research suggests that the wellbeing of China's migrant workers in Zhejiang is far less than that of other occupational groups, new-generation migrant workers are less happy than their elders, and migrant workers' general wellbeing tends to increase as income increases. Zhang (2007) suggests that most migrant workers in Wuhan consider that their sense of happiness has remained at a normal level, and, compared to the past when they lived in rural areas, more people believe they are less happy in their urban lives. Moreover, the main factors that have influenced their sense of happiness are marital status, mental health, work environment, and current living conditions. Similarly, Ye (2011) finds that migrant workers in the seven provinces mark higher scores for their rural lifestyles, new-generation migrant workers feel less happy as they experience a stronger sense of relative deprivation, and marriage, family, and social support have a positive impact on their SWB. Similar to previously discussed studies on Chinese happiness, research into the happiness of China's migrant workers also tends to be simplistic and without rigorous research methods. Instead of how people feel inside, researchers mainly focus on the influential factors of happiness and the relationships between happiness and one or several variables. Overall, little research exists regarding the happiness of China's migrant workers. For example, there is no research on the happiness of China's migrant workers in Shanghai. Moreover, subjectively defined happiness/wellbeing has been widely applied to happiness research, and there is no research that embraces both hedonic and eudaimonic approaches to exploring the happiness of China's migrant workers.

Other than reviewed papers at CNKI, the most noticeable exception is perhaps the following: with a high media exposure and online attention, the People's University of China's (2013) survey on feelings about life is probably the leading national research project on this relatively uncharted area. In this survey,<sup>26</sup> Hu et al. embrace the hedonic approach (SWB) and define happiness as self-reported satisfaction in different dimensions of day-to-day life (China Development Gateway, 2013). With a stratified random sampling method, they used 3,589,971 registered users on *www.gzh.com*<sup>27</sup> as the sampling

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<sup>26</sup> *Zhongguo mongmingong 'shencun ganshou' 2013 niandu baogao* means 'China's migrant workers' feelings about survival in 2013'.

<sup>27</sup> An unofficial online community for China's migrant workers.

population to quantify their ‘feelings of survival’ (*shengcun ganshou* in Chinese).

**Table 4.1: Papers on China’s migrant workers’ happiness in Chinese (2006-2015)**

<b>Research Area</b>	<b>Authors</b>	<b>N=30</b>	<b>%</b>
The new generation	Li, 2008; Xia et al., 2010; Zhang, 2010; Xia et al., 2011; Yang et al., 2011; Zhao, 2011; Fang and Fu, 2012; Liu and Liu, 2012; Ren, 2012; Zhang, 2012; Jin and Cui, 2013; Liu and Zhang, 2013; Zhang and Gu, 2013.	13	43
SWB/happiness and social support	He et al., 2007; Du and Liu, 2011; Hu et al., 2011; Jin and Cui, 2013; Jing, 2013; Xiong and Ye, 2013; Zhang and Gu, 2013.	7	23
General description of SWB/happiness and its influencing factors	Du et al., 2007; Wu, 2007; Zhang, 2007; Yuan and Li, 2010; Da, 2010; Ye, 2011.	6	20
SWB/happiness and personality	Liu et al., 2008; Du and Liu, 2011; Zhang et al., 2011.	3	10
SWB/happiness and self-esteem	Feng and Huang, 2010; Hu et al., 2011; Xiong and Ye, 2013.	3	10
Children	Fan et al., 2011; Zhou and Ye, 2012; Xiong and Ye, 2013.	3	10
SWB/happiness and social rights protection	Liu et al., 2013.	1	3
Happiness/SWB and crime	He et al., 2007.	1	3

It is probably thought to be the most comprehensive study because it can measure the value of different variables (e.g. age, gender, education, marital status, monthly income, employment, job types, housing, social interaction, etc.) and the extent of their contribution to self-reported happiness. In fact, putting the accuracy of its sampling aside (which will be discussed in Section 5.1 below), it does provide a complete picture of SWB in China’s migrant workers. For example, it reveals migrant workers’ alienation in their lives, social interaction, and work, as well as finding that migrant workers are more likely

to feel alienated in their lives (China Development Gateway, 2013). Other relevant research includes Nielsen et al.'s (2009) study into the SWB of China's off-farm migrants, which applies a personal wellbeing index to ascertain whether they are satisfied with their lives, and Knight and Gunatilaka's (2009) examination of the SWB of rural-urban migrants in China, which develops hypotheses to explore why rural-urban migrant households settled in urban China have an average happiness score lower than rural households.

Hence, from the literature reviewed above on the SWB/happiness of China's migrant workers written in both English and Chinese, the research questions this study aims to examine have not yet been answered. The reality is that millions of migrant workers have made great contributions to China's economic development, but they receive little in return. There are very few studies about migrant workers' happiness; therefore, the present research is pioneering in this area and aims to provide advice for China's governmental planning.

## **4.5 Conclusion**

In summary, Chapter 4 has reviewed the basic situation and the previous research on China's migrant workers, as well as Chinese-style urbanisation, which is the background for the formation, and solution to, the problems of migrant workers in China.

First, in Section 4.2, this chapter described the definition and basic characteristics of China's migrant workers. Second, by surveying work by Western and Chinese scholars, Section 4.3 reviewed the previous research on urbanisation in sociology and discussed the representations and causations of the differences in urbanisation between China and Western countries. Section 4.3.1 reviewed the previous research on urbanisation from the sociological perspectives of functionalism and conflict theory. Functional perspectives on urbanisation focus on urban ecology, while the conflict perspective focuses on the new urban sociology inspired by the conflict theory of Karl Marx. Criticisms of the implications of urbanisation, largely shaped by Marxist political economy, were also examined in this section. Section 4.3.2 discussed the differences in urbanisation between China and Western countries, as well as the reasons that contribute to such differences. In particular, China's unique urbanisation experiences, such as Mao's anti-urbanism between

1949 and 1978 and the reverse of this trend towards de-urbanisation after reform and opening up, were discussed here. China's unique institutions with regard to urbanisation, such as the *hukou* system and the dormitory labour system, were also examined. Section 4.3.3 discussed the impact of Chinese-style urbanisation on the happiness of Chinese people. In so doing, it argued that the urban-rural division brought about by the *hukou* system can lead to disparities in the level of happiness between Chinese urban and rural residents (including migrant workers). China's unique migrant labour regime, notably the dormitory labour system, can also have a negative impact on the level of happiness of migrant workers. This section aimed to provide a background for the research on the happiness of migrant workers in the ensuing chapters (especially the research question, 'How can the happiness of China's migrant workers be promoted?') and contribute to the research literature and the nascent theorisation of China's urban trajectory.

Third, Section 4.4 reviewed the previous literature on China's migrant workers in both the study location, Shanghai, and nationwide. The review found that there are few studies on the happiness of migrant workers in Chinese and Western literature. More remarkable, Chinese literature tends to lack a clear definition of happiness and rigorous research methods when studying the happiness of migrant workers. In this sense, a research gap exists regarding the current understanding of China's migrant workers and their levels of happiness.

## 5 Chapter 5: Research Design and Methodology

### 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter covered the basic characteristics of and the previous research into migrant workers, as well as the special background for the formation of and solution to problems facing migrant workers. This chapter addresses the methodological issues of this study, including the following five areas: (1) why a mixed methodological approach was selected; (2) why Shanghai was chosen as the study location; (3) how the fieldwork was adjusted and conducted; (4) how the data was analysed; and (5) ethical considerations.

Section 5.2 explains why the mixed methods approach was employed in this study. Section 5.3 illustrates the study's location and duration. Section 5.4 outlines the setting, running process, and feedback from the pilot study. Section 5.5 explains the fieldwork setting, including sampling, creating the survey questionnaire, and the semi-structured interview guide. Section 5.6 introduces the detailed procedure for the fieldwork. Section 5.7 covers the analytical methods for qualitative and quantitative data. Finally, Section 5.8 summarises the ethical considerations involved in this study.

### 5.2 A Mixed Methodological Approach

#### 5.2.1 *Can happiness be measured?*

Happiness, as such, can be described in many different ways: it may be as elusive as 'a butterfly' upon the shoulder,<sup>28</sup> 'a bubble on the stream',<sup>29</sup> or even 'a mystery [that] should never be rationalised'.<sup>30</sup> Although philosophical hedonism is supposed to have a great advantage with regard to quantifying happiness, there is no denying that happiness cannot be measured in most philosophical and literary works.

However, over time, the formation of both hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing has followed a pattern from metaphysical philosophy to theoretical and measurable systems.

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<sup>28</sup> 'Happiness is like a butterfly which, when pursued, is always beyond our grasp, but, if you will sit down quietly, may alight upon you.' – Nathaniel Hawthorne

<sup>29</sup> 'And Happiness? A bubble on the stream,  
That in the act of seizing shrinks to nought.' – John Clare

<sup>30</sup> 'Happiness is a mystery, like religion, and should never be rationalised.' – Gilbert Chesterton

In *OECD Guidelines on Measuring Subjective Wellbeing* (2013), the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) suggests that being able to measure people's quality of life is essential when evaluating the progress of human societies; measuring SWB is a basic part of measuring quality of life, as well as other social and economic dimensions. In *Conditions of Happiness* (1984), Veenhoven believes that happiness can only be measured by asking people about it; this view is at least true for overall happiness and contentment, and hedonic wellbeing can, to some extent, be inferred from nonverbal cues. Veenhoven (1984) further argues that, although some criticisms can be raised about the validity of direct questions concerning people's overall wellbeing (e.g. people may not know, they may be reluctant to discuss the issue, or they may try to appear happier than they know they are), none of these sceptical voices have been proven to be correct either. Diener's conception of SWB distinctly suggests that people's SWB is measurable (Diener, 1984). In this regard, he maintains that SWB has three characteristics: (1) it is subjective; (2) it includes positive measures; and (3) its measures typically include an overall assessment of all aspects of a person's life. In such cases, we have reasons to think that people's happiness can be measured.

### ***5.2.2 Why a mixed methods approach is applied in this study***

The remainder of this section explains why a mixed methods approach is applied in this study. The discussion is focused on two themes: (1) what benefits the mixed methods approach brings to this study; and (2) the relationship between quantitative and qualitative data in this study. Due to the strong connection between these two themes, they will not be separated from each other in the discussion below.

Since it first arrived on the scene in academia in the late 1950s, the mixed methods approach has been considered as having some specific advantages (Jick, 1979; Greene et al., 1989; Johnson et al., 2007; Maxwell, 2016). According to Bryman (2006), there are three branches of methodology: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (see also Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003). The formation of the mixed methods approach was in response to the limitations of the sole use of quantitative or qualitative methods (Doyle et al., 2009). Chen (2006) suggests that 'mixed methods research is a systematic integration of quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study for

purposes of obtaining a fuller picture and deeper understanding of a phenomenon' (cited in Johnson et al., 2007, p.119). Kelle (2006) views mixed methods research as 'the combination of different qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and data analysis in one empirical research project' (cited in Johnson et al., 2007, p.120).

Mixed methods research has several advantages, the first of which is that it can provide strengths that offset the limitations of both qualitative and quantitative research (Blake, 1989; Greene et al., 1989; Rossman and Wilson, 1991). Quantitative research aims to establish general patterns of behaviour or phenomena across different contexts. It also attempts to answer 'what' or 'to what extent' questions, but it cannot always explore 'why' or 'how'. It is also weak in understanding the context in which data is collected (Carr, 1994). On the other hand, qualitative research aims to explain 'how' and 'why' a particular behaviour or phenomenon operates as it does in a particular context. It is seen as deficient because of the potential for biased interpretations made by researchers and the difficulty in generalising findings to a large group. Hence, by using both types of research in the same study, the strengths of each approach can make up for the weaknesses in the other. Second, mixed methods research can provide a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the research problem than either quantitative or qualitative approaches alone (Morse, 2003). By using a mixed methods approach, researchers can access all the tools available to them and collect more comprehensive data, thus providing results that have a broader perspective of the research problem. Third, mixed methods research allows researchers to identify aspects of a behaviour or phenomenon more accurately by using both approaches in one study, thus providing additional evidence and support for the findings. In mixed methods research, the results may include both observations and statistical analyses. Therefore, the final results can be validated by the findings of each approach in a given study.

Before examining the benefits that the mixed methods approach brings to the present research, it is important to clarify the relationship between the quantitative and qualitative data in this study. Structurally, the research was composed of two phases that were independent and yet connected to each other. With the purpose of providing an overall statistical picture of happiness levels, the first phase of the research was a quantitative questionnaire survey used to measure the levels of happiness of migrant workers/urban

residents. This was followed by the second phase: qualitative semi-structured face-to-face interviews, which enabled in-depth investigation into the reasons for happiness or unhappiness. The relationship between the quantitative and qualitative data in this study thus can be summed up as follows: (1) the two types of data separately address different research questions; and (2) their findings complement/verify each other and form complete research results. The specifics of these points will be explained below, together with the benefits of mixed methods for this study.

Here, a more reflexive account is produced to discuss three important aspects of the mixed methods approach adopted in this study. First, mixed methods were used because the nature of the studied phenomenon (i.e. happiness) requires such an approach. That is, the happiness of an individual person is a mental state, which requires qualitative description and understanding; at the same time, however, if the happiness of two social groups (i.e. migrant workers and urban residents) are being studied, then quantitative measures and methods are needed. Thus, by mixing both quantitative and qualitative research and data, an extensive and in-depth understanding of the happiness of migrant workers is obtained, while offsetting the limitations inherent in using each approach by itself. In this study, quantitative research and data are mainly used to measure the levels of happiness of migrant workers/urban residents. In this sense, they mainly address research question two ('How happy are China's migrant workers?') for the purpose of providing an overall statistical picture of happiness levels and how the two social groups in this study have different levels of happiness. On the other hand, qualitative research and data are used to explore the view of happiness, the meaning of happiness, the reasons for happiness or unhappiness, and the factors for promoting happiness levels. They mainly address research questions one ('How do China's migrant workers define happiness?'), three ('What are the factors influencing the happiness of China's migrant workers?'), and four ('How can the happiness of Chinese migrant workers be promoted?'), which aim to delve into more detail regarding the happiness of migrant workers. In this way, the two types of data not only provide a broader research perspective, but they also make up for each other's inherent flaws in exploring particular research questions.

Second, using both quantitative and qualitative research and data can increase the comprehensiveness of the overall findings, showing how qualitative data (the second

phase) provides explanations for the quantitative data (the first phase). For instance, in this study, the quantitative data (statistical data) illustrates that housing status is a strong predictor of happiness levels among migrant workers. However, further interpretation of this finding would be difficult (such as why this phenomenon occurs) if only quantitative data was to be relied on.

Third, using both quantitative and qualitative research and data can increase the methodological rigour of the study, as the findings in both phases can be checked for consistency. For instance, in this study, the quantitative data reveals that migrant workers report lower levels of happiness than urban residents. The qualitative data suggests that both migrant workers and urban residents believe that migrant workers are less happy than urban residents. Thus, the result that migrant workers are less happy than urban residents is validated by the finding of both approaches. Generally, then, using a mixed methods approach can greatly enhance understanding of the happiness of migrant workers in this study.

Although the use of a mixed methods approach in this study has advantages, it also poses several challenges. One of the most significant challenges is that mixed methods research requires more resources for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data; therefore, it is costlier and time consuming. Moreover, due to a more complicated research process and additional data, more work is required to complete such a study.

## **5.3 Explanations for the Study Location and Duration**

### ***5.3.1 Study location***

Shanghai was chosen for this empirical work because, first, it is one of the three most frequently accessed areas for migrant workers (the other two being Beijing and Guangdong Province). Cable News Network (CNN) report that almost 40 per cent of Shanghai's population was made up of migrant workers and their families in 2011. In addition, according to the 2010 Sixth National Population Census, Shanghai's floating population, which has increased massively by 5.51 million in a decade, a large proportion of which are migrant workers, had reached 8.98 million by 2010, accounting for 39 per cent of its total population (China's National Bureau of Statistics, 2011).

Second, as China's largest economic, financial, and trade centre, there has been relatively little research regarding the happiness of the Shanghai population; in this sense, there were only nine studies conducted, with respect to people's happiness in Shanghai, between 1999 and 2015, accounting for merely 2.1 per cent of all the happiness studies in China.

Third, based on an annual survey conducted by the People's University of China in 2011, Shanghai was the third least happy city for migrant workers (it was ranked 18<sup>th</sup> out of 20 Chinese cities, with Beijing ranked 14<sup>th</sup>) (China Labour Bulletin, 2012). However, Shanghai's happiness index then showed a dramatic improvement, whereby it was positioned as the tenth happiest for migrant workers (China Development Gateway, 2013). Thus, Shanghai's significantly changed happiness index could offer a better opportunity for observing the changing process of happiness among migrant workers.

### ***5.3.2 Timespan***

The time interval for this research was 2010-2014. In addition, given that the researcher planned to conduct the pilot work in September 2013, the fieldwork was conducted in March and April 2014 and completed by the end of 2014.

## **5.4 Pilot Study**

In order to examine the feasibility and practicality of the research plan, as well as to collect reasonable suggestions via feedback, a pilot study was implemented in Shanghai in late February and early April 2014.

### ***5.4.1 Participants in the pilot study***

The pilot study was conducted in two steps: firstly, one focus group with five migrant workers was conducted by using the initial interview outline in Shanghai in February 2014; secondly, ten copies of the Chinese version of the questionnaire and the adjusted interview outline were piloted in Shanghai in early April 2014.

Therefore, the first step of the pilot study related to five migrant workers: Jack<sup>31</sup> (55 years old, construction worker), Charlie (24 years old, skilled worker), Thomas (36 years old,

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<sup>31</sup> With regard to privacy and confidentiality, all the names found in this thesis are aliases. For readability, common English names are applied to replace participants' real Chinese names.

sales), Lily (31 years old, assembly worker), and Sophie (49 years old, housewife). The second step related to ten participants<sup>32</sup> taking the Chinese questionnaire, and three migrant workers and three urban residents for adjusting the interview outline. The interview participants were Alfie (27, deliveryman, migrant worker), Riley (56, boiler man, migrant worker), Isabella (36, self-employed, migrant worker), James (20, student, urban resident), Ruby (28, teacher, urban resident), and Poppy (64, retired, urban resident). Note that all the pilot participants were selected via convenience sampling.

#### ***5.4.2 Running the pilot study***

The first step aimed to pilot the interview plans. After determining the participants, a fifty-minute focus group with five migrant workers was conducted in one of the participants' houses, and then the researcher received quick feedback and had the first opportunity to adapt the original interview outline. Thereafter, the second step aimed to (1) apply the adjusted outline to the pilot interviews of both migrant workers and urban residents, and (2) pilot the Chinese questionnaire. The three interviews with migrant workers were conducted respectively in their workplaces, while the three urban residents were separately interviewed in a spare classroom in the East China University of Science and Technology (ECUST). The pilot questionnaires were conducted in Xuhui District, mainly for testing the process and the actual amount of time taken to complete each copy.

#### ***5.4.3 The pilot study experience***

First of all, some revisions were made after each step of the pilot study to adapt to Chinese language habits and reality. The major revisions were, first, to reformat the whole questionnaire and edit a few items in 'Section A: Background Information' according to the feedback received and Chinese grammar (e.g. changing 'five insurance plans and the housing fund' to 'three insurance plans and the housing fund' in question A11, since the feedback suggested that most migrant workers would not have industrial injury insurance and maternity insurance). Second, as the pilot interviews revealed that, based on the original interview outline, the participants tended to talk too broadly, alternative sub-

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<sup>32</sup> Since the scales were not self-created and have shown acceptable internal consistency coefficients and construct validity in the Chinese context, the pilot questionnaire focused on the layout structure and the process of conducting a questionnaire. Thus, there were not many requirements for the participants.

questions, especially sub-questions regarding negative moods, were noted in the margins of the original outline. Finally, due to participants' feedback and different research habits, some formal terms in the information letter and consent form were changed, since they tended to make participants feel nervous and even unwilling to attend the research.

It is important to value the researcher-participant relationship during the pilot study and subsequent fieldwork. Firstly, it may be a weakness that, based on the researcher's sampling strategy and the limited time available, all the participants were strangers, meaning that the researcher could not act as an insider while conducting this field research. Therefore, a good first impression and a positive atmosphere were crucial for improving the quality of the qualitative data. For this purpose, the researcher sought to appear friendly and build a trustworthy relationship with the participants through some conversation before the interviews. Secondly, she found that, as a Chinese researcher educated in the West, traditional Confucian culture seemed both familiar and unfamiliar to her. Thus, she respected participants' means of thinking and expression and tried her best to make clear what they really thought about happiness.

## **5.5 Fieldwork Setting**

In order to collect relevant quantitative and qualitative data, the fieldwork was conducted from mid-April 2014 to late June 2014 in 15 districts of Shanghai. The whole fieldwork can be divided into two parts. Part one was a quantitative questionnaire survey in order to collect personal background information and to understand participants' current situations in terms of both hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing. Part two, involving 7.5 per cent of all the participants in part one, involved qualitative interviews carried out after completing part one in order to explore the research participants' innermost thoughts and stories about happiness.

This section has illustrated the following: (1) the main research method for this fieldwork included a quantitative questionnaire and qualitative interviews; (2) in number, it included 600 copies of fifteen-minute questionnaires as well as 45 forty-minute interviews; (3) half of the participants were Chinese migrant workers in Shanghai, while the other half were urban residents; (4) quota sampling was applied to select the participants, and quotas were carefully allocated based on the population's location, age, and gender; (5) Thirty-one

postgraduates and undergraduates from the ESUST helped the researcher with the survey, primarily to find proper participants in public places and help them fill in the questionnaires using a question-and-answer format; and (6) certain procedures were applied to guarantee the privacy, confidentiality, and avoidance of harm to participants. Details of each part of the fieldwork will be described below.

### ***5.5.1 Sampling***

#### *5.5.1.1 Participants*

The research participants were 300 Chinese migrant workers and 300 urban permanent residents in Shanghai. They all volunteered for the questionnaire, and 22 migrant workers and 23 urban residents took part in the subsequent interviews. In addition, according to the definition given in Chapter 4, Chinese migrant workers refer to those migrant workers who are Chinese and temporarily move from rural to urban areas without urban *hukou*. That is to say, the migrant worker participants did not include foreign migrants or Shanghai's native agricultural population. They simultaneously satisfied two conditions: (1) non-Shanghai native but currently living in Shanghai, and (2) agricultural population without urban *hukou*. Likewise, urban permanent residents of Shanghai refer to Shanghai natives with urban *hukou*; thus, they were both (1) Shanghai natives and (2) non-agricultural population with urban *hukou*. It is important to note that these requirements were applied in filtering the participants, and the participants essentially covered all the districts of Shanghai. The detailed sampling method and process will be outlined next.

#### *5.5.1.2 Sample size and strategy*

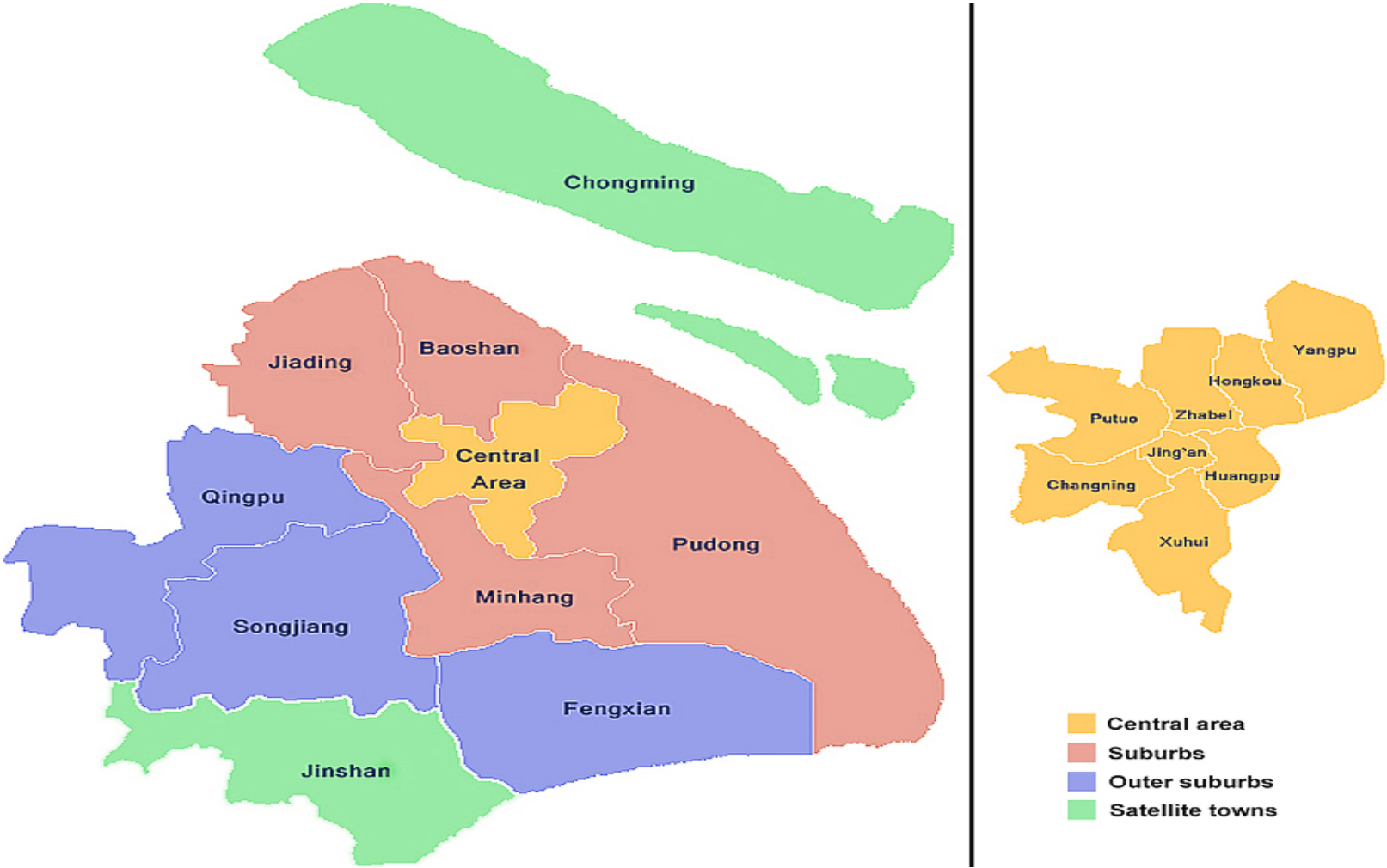
Ideally, the target population of this research would contain all the migrant workers and urban permanent residents distributed throughout Shanghai's 18 districts (see Figure 5.1). However, practically, it was impossible for the researcher to carry out this ideal strategy given the limited time, budget, and human resources. To properly address this problem, a 2010 population structure (original data and reports from the Sixth Nationwide Population Census, by China's National Bureau of Statistics and Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Statistics in 2010), which represents the entire Shanghai population, including sections of Shanghai's individual rural-to-urban migrant workers, as well as the same information for Shanghai's urban permanent residents, was carefully calculated to support the sampling

procedures.

Moreover, the segments of the China General Social Survey (2006; 2008) (original data, questionnaires, and authorisation from the People's University of China and Hong Kong University of Science and Technology) concerning Shanghai's permanent residents and floating populations in Xuhui, Putuo, Jinshan, and Pudong districts were used to further estimate the participants' essential information.

Several critical issues needed to be taken into consideration when sampling: sample size, sampling strategy, and access to the sample. In this sense, the aim was to survey 300 migrant workers and 300 urban permanent residents in Shanghai. In line with the limited resources available, the more affordable but theoretically less sound quota sampling approach was used in this study. According to Saunders et al. (2012), quota sampling is a non-probability sampling method, defined as a sampling strategy that collects representative data from a group. Further, the utilisation of quota sampling ensures that the sample group can represent certain features of the population chosen by the researcher. Although its human element in respondent selection has been criticised, Moser and Stuart (1953) suggest that quota sampling often provides good results and has the virtue of economy; in many cases, given the sufficient information provided, differences between the results of quota samples and probability samples are relatively insignificant. Based on an experiment in 1986 and 1987, which compared the results of two sampling methods on the same population in Sydney (the first applied quota sampling and the second applied probability sampling), Cumming (1990, p.137) concludes that 'quota sampling with age and sex quota controls may be an acceptable alternative to probability sample survey'. In an experimental study comparing the results from two samples of a student society in Northeast England, Yang and Banamah (2014) suggest that, although quota sampling tends to be biased toward people who are easily accessible and interested in the research topic, it is no worse than probability sampling when the response rate of probability sampling is low (e.g. between 20 per cent and 30 per cent). They further conclude that quota sampling may be an acceptable alternative or second best when it is impossible to achieve a high response rate in probability sampling (Yang and Banamah, 2014).

Figure 5.1: Map of Shanghai



Although Hu et al. (2012) believe that the happiness of migrant workers is significantly associated with gender, education, income, employment, job type, and living arrangements (China Development Gateway, 2013), Diner et al. (2003) demonstrate that demographic factors such as gender and age, together with external factors such as education, income, and marriage, could contribute little to the variance in individual SWB measures. Moreover, Wong and Leung's (2008) survey of the functions of social support in the mental health of migrant workers finds financial and employment difficulties and interpersonal relationship difficulties significantly correlate to their migration stress. As certain information for the target population (i.e. migrant workers in Shanghai and urban residents) is generally difficult to obtain, such as monthly income and housing status, the researcher split the samples into three fundamental groups:

- (a) Location
- (b) Age
- (c) Gender

Location is thought to be related to the living expenses, such as commodity prices and housing prices, of the studied population. In addition, another eight items of background information were collected in order to examine their relationships with wellbeing:

- (a) Education
- (b) Marital status
- (c) Monthly income
- (d) Housing
- (e) Employment
- (f) Job type
- (g) Working hours per week
- (h) Duration of stay

Thus, the assignment sheet for the questionnaire looked as in Table 5.1.

### 5.5.1.3 *Sampling procedure*

The specific quota allocation for both the 600 questionnaires and the 45 interviews in the different districts was applied during the actual operation (see Appendix 3). It was calculated based on Table 5.1 and databases of Shanghai's different districts within the Sixth Nationwide Population Census in 2010. Although the number of participants was relatively small, the participant number must be an integer, so the figures in the appendix were rounded up to the nearest digit and carried into further adjustment.

**Table 5.1: Assignment sheet for quota sampling (600 copies of the questionnaire)**

<b>Central area (Yellow area in Figure 5.1)</b>				<b>Suburbs (Pink area in Figure 5.1)</b>				<b>Outer suburbs (Blue area in Figure 5.1)</b>				
Huangpu District				Minhang District				Fengxian District				
Changning District				Baoshan District				Songjiang District				
Jing'an District				Jiading District				Qingpu District				
Xuhui District				Pudong New District								
Putuo District												
Zhabei District												
Hongkou District												
Yangpu District												
<b>Migrant workers</b>		<b>Urban residents</b>		<b>Migrant workers</b>		<b>Urban residents</b>		<b>Migrant workers</b>		<b>Urban residents</b>		
<b>Age</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
15-24	8	8	11	10	22	21	9	8	11	10	5	4
25-34	9	9	15	15	26	25	13	12	13	13	7	6
35-44	8	7	12	12	21	20	11	10	11	10	6	5
45+	5	4	28	28	13	13	24	24	7	6	13	12
Sub-total	30	28	66	65	82	79	57	54	42	39	31	27
	58		131		161		111		81		58	
<b>Total</b>			<b>189</b>				<b>272</b>				<b>139</b>	

It is important to note that the further division of Table 5.1 was solely for the questionnaires' easy and fast operation, since the Shanghai area is vast (four times as large as Greater London), and it is inconvenient to travel between two or three districts in a day. Moreover, although convenience sampling was applied in the interviews, the diversity and

representativeness of the participants were still carefully considered in the sampling process (for detailed information of the interview participants, see Tables 6.1 and 6.4).

#### *5.5.1.4 Access to sample*

The accessibility of the sample is another key issue that must be taken into consideration when sampling. Although the researcher planned to contact local non-governmental organisations and residents' committees at the early stage of the fieldwork, she soon found that this was a complicated matter, with a series of formalities that would strain her budget. Therefore, based on the experience she had gained in the pilot study and the grouping of the participants in different districts, most of the participants were accessed in public places of each district in Shanghai, such as streets, parks, residential areas, and marketplaces. For those respondents who were hard to access in public, a solution was to knock on doors and ask participants if they could participate in the research. For example, female urban residents between the ages of 35 and 44 who live in central areas were very difficult to encounter in public because they have to work during the day and take care of their families after work. It is important to note that migrant worker respondents were often easier to access than urban residents, possibly because they are more willing to talk about their happiness and sense of wellbeing.

### ***5.5.2 Quantitative survey***

#### *5.5.2.1 Indexes and questionnaires applied in previous research*

Questionnaires with access to a large population are considered the most widely applied and useful instrument for collecting quantitative data. This section will review the indexes and questionnaires utilised in previous research into the happiness of migrant workers published in the Chinese language. The number of publications reviewed here is small because (1) primary scales applied in the measures of SWB in English need not be repeated here (see Table 2.2); (2) there is almost no research on migrant workers' wellbeing in English; and (3) there is very little related research in Chinese (see Table 4.1), although all the relevant academic papers that can be searched for in the CNKI are included.

Basically, existing research with regard to migrant workers' happiness mainly focuses on

the area of SWB and life satisfaction, with a small proportion referring to mental health or psychological wellbeing. Instead of ready-made scales used in Western academia, more than 80 per cent of Chinese papers chose to use self-created scales and questionnaires; in this regard, in almost all the papers concerning SWB and life satisfaction, self-created scales and questionnaires are employed (e.g. Wu, 2007; Zhang, 2007; Jiao et al., 2008; Xia et al., 2010; Ye, 2011; Fang and Fu, 2012), and only papers with respect to mental health apply scales such as the Symptom Check List-90 (the SCL-90) and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (the SWLS) (e.g. He et al., 2006; Liu et al., 2008). For measuring the happiness of migrant workers, Chen and Davey (2008) suggest Fazio's (1970) General Well-Being Schedule (the GWBS) (accounting for 22 per cent of all relevant studies in Chinese) and Kozma and Stones' (1980) Memorial University of Newfoundland Scale of Happiness (the MUNSH) (16 per cent). The most commonly sampled populations by Chinese scholars to measure happiness or SWB are students (46.90 per cent), the elderly (16.90 per cent), general public (11.72 per cent), and hospital patients (7.93 per cent).

There are two main theoretical orientations in the measurement of happiness and wellbeing in the West: the first focuses on subjective wellbeing with regard to life satisfaction, which has its roots in economics, e.g. Neugarten et al.'s (1961) Life Satisfaction Index (the LSI), Diener et al.'s (1985) Satisfaction with Life Scale (the SWLS), and the International Wellbeing Group's (2006) Personal Wellbeing Index-Adult (the PWI-A). The second, originating from psychology, measures eudaimonic wellbeing with regard to self-determination and health (including mental and physical health), e.g. Johnston and Finney's (2010) Basic Needs Satisfaction in General Scale (the BNSG-S), Derogatis et al.'s (1973) Symptom Checklist-90 (the SCL-90), and Kozma and Stones' (1980) MUNSH. In addition, health-related wellbeing scales are usually applied to people who are vulnerable, which explains why most of China's extant research has adopted health-related indexes. The present research also employs this approach because immigrants are at a relatively high risk of mental disorders. According to a recent survey (Cui et al., 2012), migrant workers manifest a high prevalence of both life and work stress; specifically, up to 25 per cent of male and 6 per cent of female migrant workers in Shanghai could be classified as mentally unhealthy, which is much higher than for urban residents (Wang et al., 2008).

Applying a health-related index alone may not be sufficient for studying the happiness of migrant workers. First, based on leading research from the People's University of China, the happiness of migrant workers is still significantly related to their material resources and basic survival needs. Second, the research has demonstrated that individuals who are high in both hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing have greater overall wellbeing than those who are high in either hedonic or eudaimonic wellbeing alone; thus, neither hedonic nor eudaimonic wellbeing alone can bring about an all-around good life (Seligmen, 2002). This means that an integrated measure of both health and life satisfaction should best fit the description of migrant workers' happiness. Hence, mixed indexes are used in this research, consistent with the definition of happiness previously defined in this research, which includes hedonic SWB on life satisfaction as well as eudaimonic self-actualisation and mental health.

It should be noted that most of the scales applied in existing research have been translated into Chinese; some of them, such as the PWI-A, have been modified slightly for Chinese respondents, some of them, such as the BNSG-S, have hardly been applied or examined in the Chinese context, and some of them, such as Xing and Huang's (2007) Subjective Well-Being Scale for Chinese Citizens (the SWBS-CC), have been developed by Chinese researchers. In short, there are no standard scales and indexes in Chinese that are suitable for the measurement of migrant workers' happiness. Consequently, a questionnaire was built for this research. Considering the limited time and resources available, the researcher chose to translate ready-made scales because she would have no opportunity to pilot a self-made scale/index as well as test its reliability and validity.

#### *5.5.2.2 Designing the questionnaire*

A cross-sectional survey was conducted among migrant workers and urban permanent residents in Shanghai from April to June 2014. The structured questionnaire aimed to quantify the participants' hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing in the belief that, via a comparison with urban permanent residents, migrant workers' situation would be more distinctive. The purpose of the survey was:

- (a) to quantify the happiness of the two social classes;
- (b) to discover whether or not migrant workers feel less happy than urban residents;

- (c) to learn the extent to which the results are different across different groups (e.g. gender, age, marital status, and income).

These aims guided the construction of the questionnaire used in the survey. First of all, in accordance with the definition of happiness in this study and the situation of migrant workers, it was decided to use the International Wellbeing Group's (2006) PWI-A, Kozma and Stones' (1980) MUNSH, and Johnston and Finney's (2010) BNSG-S. The PWI-A measures hedonic life satisfaction on several fronts, the MUNSH measures eudaimonic psychological wellbeing and mental health, and the BNSG-S measures eudaimonic self-determination and needs for self-actualisation. In this way, participants' hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing would be measured more comprehensively; in addition, such an approach was more convenient for exploring the relationship between hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing and further investigating their relationship with overall wellbeing in the subsequent interviews.

From such an understanding, a structured questionnaire in English was built in the second step. Structured questionnaires, instead of semi-structured or unstructured questionnaires, were always used in earlier surveys with regard to the measurement of happiness. The main problem here was that some background information, such as demographic data, had to be collected in order to answer the research question regarding what kinds of migrant workers tend to feel happier or unhappier. By discussing this issue with Chinese researchers and referencing previous Chinese studies, it was decided to place 'Section A: Background Information' before the scales. In this sense, Section A consisted of eight items of background information, including education, marital status, and monthly income (see Appendix 4). In addition, with the purpose of discovering what the most important factors are for an individual's happy life, a separate sorting problem was placed at the end of Section B (see Appendix 4, B10).

After the English questionnaire was completed, the third step was to translate it. In this regard, the MUNSH Chinese version was quoted directly, since it has been widely applied in past Chinese research, and the PWI-A and BNSG-S were translated because their Chinese versions were not available to the public, although the PWI-A has been used in Chinese studies, demonstrating good reliability and validity in the Chinese context. The

process of translation was divided into several steps: (1) translating the questionnaires into Chinese by the researcher and then discussing the translations with her supervisors to ensure accuracy and idiomaticity; (2) asking two Chinese postgraduate students to translate them back into English and to modify the translations according to areas with different meanings from the initial English version; (3) piloting the questionnaire in early April 2014 to increase its validity and practicability; and (4) adapting and modifying the questionnaire on the grounds of the pilot feedback.

### ***5.5.3 Qualitative interviews***

#### *5.5.3.1 Why use semi-structured interviews?*

The methodological logic underpinning the use of semi-structured interviews is discussed in this section. Such a discussion focuses on two themes: what semi-structured interviews are and why they are used in this study.

##### *I. What are semi-structured interviews?*

Interviews can be classified into three types: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured (Bernard, 1988; Fontana and Frey, 1994). According to *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, ‘The semi-structured interview is a qualitative data collection strategy in which the researcher asks informants a series of predetermined but open-ended questions’ (Ayres, 2008, p.810). Fylan (2005) suggests that

semi-structured interviews are simply conversations in which you know what you want to find out about – and so have a set of questions to ask and a good idea of topics will be covered – but the conversation is free to vary, and is likely to change substantially between participants. They contrast with structured interviews, in which there is a predetermined list of questions that are covered in the same order for each person: you can think of these as questionnaires that are administered verbally. They also contrast with unstructured interviews, in which the area of investigation is delineated, but there is no assumed order to the questions, and very little predetermine boundaries as to the topics that should be covered (pp.65-66).

In a semi-structured interview, the researcher develops and uses an interview guide, which is a list of topics and questions that need to be addressed during the interview, usually in a particular order. The researcher follows the guide when conducting the interview but is able to follow topical trajectories that may deviate from the guide when he/she feels this is reasonable. The guide provides a clear direction for the researcher and can provide reliable, comparable qualitative data (Bernard, 2006; Stuckey, 2013; Mihr, 2017). Semi-structured interviews are often preceded or accompanied by observations or informal and unstructured interviewing (Mihr, 2017). This may allow the researcher to gain a keen understanding of the topic in order to develop relevant semi-structured questions (ibid.). According to Ayres (2008), semi-structured interviews are particularly useful in research questions where the concepts and relationships among them are relatively well understood. Bernard (1988) points out that semi-structured interviews are most useful when researchers only have one opportunity to interview someone or when several researchers in the same project will be sent to different countries to conduct fieldwork with different interviewees.

## *II. Why use semi-structured interviews in this study?*

This section discusses why semi-structured interviews are applied in this study in relation to two factors: (1) why not choose structured or unstructured interviews; and (2) how the subject of this research (i.e. happiness) demands the use of semi-structured interviews.

First, structured interviews were not chosen for this study because this method is not flexible enough to explore some of the issues that are the focus of the research, such as the personal experiences the interviewees feel characterise them as happy or unhappy, why they feel happy or unhappy, and why and how their levels of happiness change. That is to say, although this method has practical advantages in terms of saving time and effort, it did not seem suitable for this study because new questions could not be asked as needed during the interviews. In this case, the use of structured interviews may have posed a risk of losing the opportunity to look deeper into the interviewees' happiness.

In addition, unstructured interviews were not chosen because this method may present a risk of over-dispersion of questions or topics during the interviews. This is because, although the researcher wanted to hear the specific stories of the interviewees (such as the

experiences they feel characterise them as happy or unhappy), she also wanted to explore particular topics or questions during the interviews (such as how migrant workers/urban residents define their own happiness) in order to fulfil the specific research purposes. This means that, if unstructured interviews were used, she would have been at risk of being too distracted and unable to effectively explore the issues she was trying to follow during the interviews. In addition, unstructured interviews often require a great deal of effort and time, which would have brought certain pressures to this field research.

Second, semi-structured interviews were chosen because the subject of this research (i.e. happiness) demands such an approach. This is mostly because personal happiness has both specific and general characteristics. Since happiness for an individual is a personal mental state, it is not difficult to understand that happiness will have particular characteristics with regard to certain topics or questions set out in the interviews. For example, different people think differently about happiness, different people have different experiences of happiness, and the same event, process, or item does not necessarily mean the same for everyone. For this reason, allowing the interviewees a degree of freedom to explain their thoughts and to highlight areas of particular importance to them is essential in understanding the specifics of each interviewee's feelings or experiences of happiness or unhappiness.

However, personal happiness also shares things in common. Theoretical models, such as Diener's subjective wellbeing and Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory, as reviewed in Chapter 2, are theoretical constructions relating to the common features of personal happiness. Since verifying whether these theoretical models reflect the happiness of the interviewees was one of the aims of the interviews, it was important to include certain topics or questions in the interviews associated with such an endeavour (e.g. 'Is your happiness affected by the social environment/personal realisation?'). In addition, because the interviews also had the task of answering certain research questions, such as the first research question, 'How do Chinese migrant workers define happiness?', these related topics or problems were also inevitable in the interviews. In general, in order to explore the happiness of migrant workers in this study, the interviews necessitated listening to the specific stories of the interviewees while also addressing some specific topics or questions to achieve certain research purposes. Hence, semi-structured interviews, which meet such

needs, were used.

### 5.5.3.2 *Developing a semi-structured interview outline*

By means of the semi-structured interviews, the researcher wanted to learn:

- (a) how the participants define their happiness, especially whether they tend to define happiness in a Chinese way (e.g. Lu, 2001) and in a eudaimonic way (e.g. Delle Fave et al., 2010);
- (b) the participants' overall wellbeing and the process of change in terms of this wellbeing;
- (c) what factors are significantly related to changes in their happiness; and
- (d) how they fall into negative thoughts (if they are scored as mentally unhealthy in the previous quantitative survey).

Thus, a semi-structured interview outline was developed around the above key points. Semi-structured interviews are often preceded by observation, as well as informal and unstructured interviewing, in order to allow interviewers to develop a keen understanding of the topic of interest necessary for developing relevant and meaningful semi-structured questions (Bernard, 1988). Thus, based on abundant review work and the preliminary survey, an interview guideline was developed, i.e. a list of questions and topics that need to be covered during the interview, usually in a particular order (Silverman, 2010). The researcher planned to keep an open mind in dealing with the guideline in the formal interviews, preparing to accept respondents' different actions and follow their threads. Thus, the majority of the questions were designed as open-ended; meanwhile, the researcher would follow the interviewee's responses in modifying her questions and identifying new ways of seeing and understanding the topic at hand.

Second, as with the questionnaire, all interview schedules were carefully piloted in February and early April 2014. A few problems were found while piloting, such as some interviewees tending to talk too broadly on the basis of the original interview guideline, some tending to answer the questions in a eudaimonic way, which may distinctly contradict their attitude regarding external conditions, such as their family's economic conditions, and some saying very little about their unhappy experiences. Consequently, it

was decided to increase the number of alternative sub-questions, particularly sub-questions on unpleasant moods and satisfaction with material life. For example, the issue of being unhappy was split into several opinions, such as material privation, inharmonious family, and unhappy marriage. The full English interview guideline can be seen in Appendix 6 and the Chinese version in Appendix 7.

## **5.6 Fieldwork Procedure**

This fieldwork started from mid-April 2014 and lasted more than two months. Apart from the pilot study, the entire fieldwork had three steps. The first thing for the researcher to do was to train 31 college students, who joined in this research and helped to conduct most of the questionnaires. They majored in sociology and had attended a large-scale survey run by Beijing University in 2013. Based on this situation, a three-hour training class was provided to update their understanding of the Chinese questionnaire, the information letter and consent form for participants used in this research, as well as the skills necessary for conducting questionnaires through the use of a question-and-answer format. The second step was to carry out the questionnaire and interviews simultaneously. Since all interviewees came from the pool of questionnaire participants, the most convenient method was to conduct the interviews after the questionnaires. In the course of the implementation, the researcher and research assistants conducted questionnaires and interviews during the day, while the inspection work, feedback, and any rectification were carried out at night.

It is important to note that, after random follow-ups by telephone, the questionnaire data was found to be one hundred per cent genuine. For the sake of correctly meeting the quota, statistics regarding quota fulfilment in both the questionnaires and interviews were utilised during the process of this research. The third step was to identify and edit any missing data, obvious mistakes, or errors. During this period, redundant questionnaire data was left out while the missing values were estimated. After confirmation of the data collected through 600 questionnaires and 45 interviews, the field research came to an end.

## **5.7 Data Analysis**

IBM SPSS Statistics 19 and Amos 20 were used in the analysis of the quantitative survey

data (see Chapter 7 for detailed analysis). Via creating nodes and coding, NVivo 10 was used to analyse the qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews (see Chapter 6 for detailed analysis). In addition to answering the corresponding research questions, the results of the qualitative data also contributed to building a theoretical model for mapping Chinese people's happiness.

## **5.8 Ethical Considerations**

Before setting out on the pilot study, a separate ethics form was submitted for approval by the Ethics Committee at School of Applied Social Sciences (SASS), Durham University. Although this fieldwork would pose no harm to interviewees, certain ethical considerations were still taken into account. First, the information letter (see Appendices 8 and 9) and the consent form (see Appendices 10 and 11) were shown to participants before they joined the project, which allowed participants to know the content and purpose of the research, in addition to understanding that they had the right not to answer any question that they did not feel comfortable with and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. The consent form also confirmed that the participants' responses would be kept strictly confidential and that the project would remain completely anonymous; as a result, their names would not be linked to any research material. Second, in order to protect personal privacy, there would be no names on the questionnaires; instead, they had unique serial numbers showing their locations and interviewers. Thirdly, all the data would be kept in the researcher's personal computer while all the hard copies would be stored in locked drawers; finally, after the conclusion of the research, all the data and relevant documents would be destroyed.

## **5.9 Conclusion**

This chapter has covered all the methodology-related matters of this study. It has not only explained the methodological logic underpinning the use of a mixed methods approach and semi-structured interviews, but also presented the design and implementation of the pilot study and fieldwork. A mixed methods approach was used while planning and conducting this fieldwork, since quantitative data can provide an overall picture of the participants' happiness levels and qualitative data can explore, in-depth, stories about their happiness or unhappiness. Although some criticisms may arise regarding the limitations

of this fieldwork, such as quota sampling not reflecting the make-up of the entire population, the researcher did the best she could in the absence of prior literature and research experience.

## **6 Chapter 6: How Do Chinese Migrant Workers Define Happiness**

### **6.1 Introduction**

After outlining the methodological issues as well as the logic and procedures for organising and conducting the fieldwork of this research in the previous chapter, Chapter 6 will analyse both the qualitative and quantitative data in order to answer the study's first research question – How do China's migrant workers define happiness? This question has two sub-questions: (1) Do China's migrant workers tend to define their happiness in a more Chinese style? (2) Are there any differences with regard to how China's migrant workers and urban residents define happiness?

The answers to these questions mainly come from the subjects' responses to the first three semi-structured interviews questions (What do you think happiness is? What has been your happiest experience in recent years? What was your unhappiest experience in the past?), as well as question B10 in the second section of the quantitative questionnaire (What is the most important thing for your happiness in everyday life?).

Data collection and analysis were undertaken by means of qualitative data analysis software package NVivo 10, quantitative information entry software EpiData, and statistical analysis software package IBM SPSS Statistics 19. In order to carry out an in-depth analysis of the interviews, all 23 interview recordings on migrant workers and their text transcripts were imported into NVivo 10 for further node coding. There were two essential sources to create nodes, one being the theoretical strands reviewed in Chapters 2, 3, and 4, and the other being the contents of the interviews. At the same time, all 300 questionnaires on migrant workers were entered into EpiData, cleaned up, and analysed in IBM SPSS Statistics 19 in order to complete the analysis of the quantitative data. For the comparative study of migrant workers and urban residents, these methods and procedures were carefully repeated for the 22 interviews and 300 questionnaires from the urban sample.

Chapter 6 has five sections. Section 6.2 answers the first research question, while Sections

6.3 and 6.4 respectively answer the first research question's two sub-questions.

## **6.2 How Do Migrant Workers Define Happiness?**

This section aims to answer the question, 'What do migrant workers think happiness is?' To be more specific, based on an in-depth analysis of the qualitative interviews along with the principle of data saturation, this section turns to the analysis and discussions of migrant workers' definitions of happiness, their patterns and perspectives for interpreting their happiness, and the features of their happiness definitions. It is worth noting that, for the purpose of reflecting a more real definition of migrant workers' happiness, research question one is not only answered by means of the 23 interviews, but it is also supplemented by question B10 from the 300 questionnaires. Since the analysis results produced by in-depth interviews can be significantly influenced by the analytical methods and procedures used, the following section will detail the analysis procedures, including respondents' demographic information, the patterns used to create nodes and nodes' contents, and the particular coding process used.

### ***6.2.1 Interviewees' demographic information and the validity of qualitative data***

The demographic information of the 23 interviewees is shown in Table 6.1. Since qualitative interviews aim to provide a detailed interpretative understanding of the interviewees' responses, and the validity of their results, other than the number of samples, often lies in whether the selected participants are appropriate for answering the target questions, a non-probability purposive sampling strategy was utilised when identifying appropriate interviewees in the fieldwork. During the actual operation, (1) all 23 interviewees come from the pool of 300 questionnaire participants<sup>33</sup> and (2) a maximum variation sampling technique was applied since it pays attention to the maximum differences in respondents' demographic variables, such as gender, age, education, income, and marital status, thus making it easier to reflect the complete picture of migrant workers' happiness and make comparisons among different demographic groupings; given that (3)

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<sup>33</sup> In total, 317 valid questionnaires on migrant workers were retrieved. In order to meet quota sampling requirements, 17 extra copies were removed.

**Table 6.1: The interviewees' demographic information (migrant workers)**

Alias <sup>34</sup>	Gender	Age	Education	Job	Income <sup>35</sup>	Housing	Location	Marital status	How many children he/she has	Any separation from child/children	Duration of stay
Alex	Male	36	Junior college	Engineer	6,000	Renting	Yangpu	Married	2	Yes, from 2 children and wife	2 years
Austin	Male	52	Junior high school	Sanitation	2,500	Dormitory	Pudong	Married	3	No	18 years
Blake	Male	21	Technical secondary school	Student	1,700	Dormitory	Minhang	Unmarried, with girlfriend	0	No	3 years
Felix	Male	23	Undergraduate	HR management	3,820	Dormitory	Qingpu	Unmarried, with girlfriend	0	No	1 year
Harry	Male	31	Senior high school	Painter	5,420	Renting	Jiading	Married	1	Yes, from 1 child	4 years
Henry	Male	34	Technical secondary school	Dessert cook	4,000	Renting	Xuhui	Married	2	No	8 years
Jake	Male	58	Illiterate	Unemployed	0	Renting	Songjiang	Married	3	Yes, from 2 children	5 years
Jenson	Male	21	Junior college	Sales	2,200	Renting	Pudong	Unmarried, without girlfriend	0	No	0.5 years
Liam	Male	45	Junior high school	Taxi driver	5,000	Renting	Minhang	Married	1	Yes, from 1 child	5 years
Noah	Male	26	Undergraduate	Technician	4,400	Dormitory	Pudong	Unmarried, without girlfriend	0	No	5 years
Owen	Male	45	Junior high school	Self-employed	7,000	Own house	Zhabei	Married	1	No	21 years
Sebastian	Male	26	Undergraduate	Software technician	6,150	Renting	Minhang	Unmarried, with girlfriend	0	No	2.5 years

<sup>34</sup> To protect privacy, the names referred to herein are not real names. English aliases are applied in order to facilitate reading, but this does not mean that the respondents have English names in addition to their real Chinese real names. In this sense, it is unlikely to have a Chinese migrant worker in Shanghai named Alex in real life.

<sup>35</sup> The exchange rate of the Chinese renminbi (CNY) to the US dollar (USD) is about 1 CNY = 0.156 USD.

Toby	Male	30	Junior high school	Self-employed	8,000	Renting	Fengxian	Married	2	Yes, from 2 children	10 years
Tyler	Male	23	Undergraduate	Student	0	Dormitory	Songjiang	Unmarried, without girlfriend	0	No	4 years
Bella	Female	37	Primary school	Self-employed	3,100	Own house	Qingpu	Married	1	No	18 years
Elisa	Female	51	Junior high school	Packer	2,400	Own house	Baoshan	Married	1	No	21 years
Katie	Female	22	Undergraduate	Student	1,500	Dormitory	Minhang	Unmarried, without boyfriend	0	No	2.5 years
Lola	Female	45	Postgraduate	Teacher	4,800	Own house	Songjiang	Married	1	No	10 years
Molly	Female	18	Technical secondary school	Student	0	Renting	Jiading	Unmarried, without boyfriend	0	No	5 years
Paige	Female	29	Junior high school	Sales	2,000	Renting	Fengxian	Married	2	Yes, from 2 children	2 years
Sara	Female	29	Junior high school	Self-employed	4,000	Renting	Pudong	Married	2	No	9 years
Sophia	Female	49	Illiterate	Cleaner	1,800	Renting	Pudong	Married	1	Yes, from 1 child	0.3 years
Violet	Female	29	Junior high school	Housewife	2,520	Own house	Jiading	Married	1	No	10 years

young married migrant workers<sup>36</sup> now make up the majority of migrant workers in Shanghai, this group was prioritised in the sampling process. Further, based on the experience of the pilot study, some of the interviewees, especially migrant workers, appeared nervous and expressed fears about whether they could provide useful information for the researcher. This may be because they believed that they have a lower education level and social status. Therefore, all interviews were conducted in a natural environment, for example in public areas or in their workplaces or living places, so as to ease their tension; essentially, they were invited to complete the questionnaires first and then interviews would be conducted after some small talk when they became more relaxed.

### ***6.2.2 Patterns to create nodes and the coding process***

After collecting the qualitative data, the in-depth analysis of the interviews was primarily conducted by means of NVivo 10. Three steps were involved in the analysis process. First, both the interview recordings and their text transcripts were imported into NVivo 10, and then all the contents were read so as to generate a preliminary understanding of what was involved in the interviews and whether and in what manner they reflected any of the researcher's previous theoretical strands. On this basis, all the nodes reflected the researcher's previous theoretical strands were created and were then ready for further coding in the next step. For example, to answer research question one, all relevant content was segmented into four pre-set parent nodes, which were 'hedonic wellbeing', 'eudaimonic wellbeing', 'happiness is relative', and 'perspectives with Chinese characteristics', and then parent nodes were split into several child nodes, such as 'hedonic wellbeing' split into 'feel happy', 'free from unhappiness', 'global life satisfaction', 'satisfaction with various domains of life', and so on if needed. In this stage, the researcher also established nodes that were used to describe the demographic information of the interviewees.

Secondly, all of the transcribed interviews were reread, and, in this process, all the interviews were coded word by word. This coding process included two main aspects; one was coding the contents that fit pre-set nodes, while the other was exploring other contents

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<sup>36</sup> 'Young migrant workers' refers to migrant workers who are between the ages of 25 to 34; they make up the largest proportion of all migrant workers in Shanghai (see Table 5.1).

that may make sense in order to build nodes and make more codes. For example, in Felix's interview, he stated:

*Four years ago, I was a sophomore; I certainly had different ideas and values compared to what they are now. If you had asked me what happiness was at that time, I definitely thought happiness was skipping classes, playing video games, dining, and drinking with my friends; my happiness was certainly like this. However, after stepping into society, I have discovered many problems; my happiness is...as a man, I should get married; as a son, I should treat my parents with honour.*

From this, the researcher added the parent node 'other opinions' to supplement the four pre-set nodes, and then the child node 'different life stages have different ideas of happiness' was also created. It is noteworthy that the whole coding process was carried out manually. Based on the queries generated through the first two steps, in the third step, new ideas were put forward, and the findings relating to research question one were summarised.

### **6.2.3 How do migrant workers define happiness?**

In general, migrant workers tend to define happiness with regard to what is most important and necessary for happiness in their daily lives. In this sense, they tend to understand happiness as equivalent to the necessities that enable them to acquire happy lives. This tendency is clear since, except for Austin and Henry, who tended to define happiness as pleasure, and Noah and Katie, who tended to define happiness as a subjective feeling, the rest of the interviewees were inclined to define happiness around what they considered was most important for leading a happy life, and this way of understanding happiness accounted for more than 80 per cent of the total:

*Happiness is family harmony...my child becoming a useful person, and being in good physical health. A harmonious family is happiness, [such as] not quarrelling at home, coming home from work and finding that my husband has the food ready, and everyone helping to do the housework at home. My husband used to care about nothing but drinking and bumming around; now he wants to do up the home [...]. He is trying to earn money; I think I feel*

*happy (Elisa).*

*To be real, [happiness is] the material wealth to reach the upper-middle class. I certainly should have my own family. Ideally, I want to have two children, in good physical health, and stay longer with my family members; I don't want to live too far away from my parents; all my family members should get along well, in addition to keeping in touch with my friends and having real friendships [all this is happiness] (Felix).*

According to Lu's (2001) research on happiness in the context of Taiwan, happiness is mostly defined by local undergraduates with regard to a spiritual state of contentment and satisfaction, positive feelings, a harmonious homeostasis, success and hope, and staying free from ill-being. Migrant workers in Shanghai, by contrast, are more inclined to define happiness in a more definite way, i.e. instead of an intangible mental state, they are more likely to define happiness as tangible objects that can assuredly bring them happiness.

#### *6.2.3.1 Defining happiness around family lives*

Based on the interviewees' answers to the three open-ended questions (What is happiness? What has been your happiest experience in recent years? What was your unhappiest experience in the past?), the specific components of their definition of happiness and each component's frequency were obtained by analysis in NVivo 10 (See Figure 6.1).<sup>37</sup> In general, migrant workers' definition of happiness is most concentrated around family life, especially, for those who are married, with regard to their children, and with little focus on themselves.

First, almost half of the components of their definition of happiness come from hedonic wellbeing/SWB, the most important of which is 'satisfaction with family life', contained in 'satisfaction with various domains of life', which accounts for 46.47 per cent of all SWB. 'Love for children' is the most essential factor for migrant workers' sense of satisfaction with family life, accounting for 19.5 per cent of all SWB, as well as 41.23 per

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<sup>37</sup> In the process of the concrete operation, the specific components were labelled as nodes, in NVivo 10 language (the nodes were created based on existing theories, common sense, and observations from the interviewees), and the frequency of each node was calculated from the number of codings within each node. For example, if an interviewee mentioned the node 'harmonious family' three times when defining happiness, the node 'harmonious family' was coded three times. Thus, the frequency of the node is thought to represent the importance of the node.

cent of the entire family life satisfaction. By performing the same calculations on married interviewees, the percentage of 'love for children' in family life satisfaction is 50.55, which is even higher than that for all the interviewees (i.e. 41.23 per cent).

It can therefore be said that migrant workers' happiness and definition of happiness are closely related to the next generation, and, for those who are married, happiness revolves around their children, who are probably valued more than their own happiness. In this regard, many of the interviewees expressed similar views:

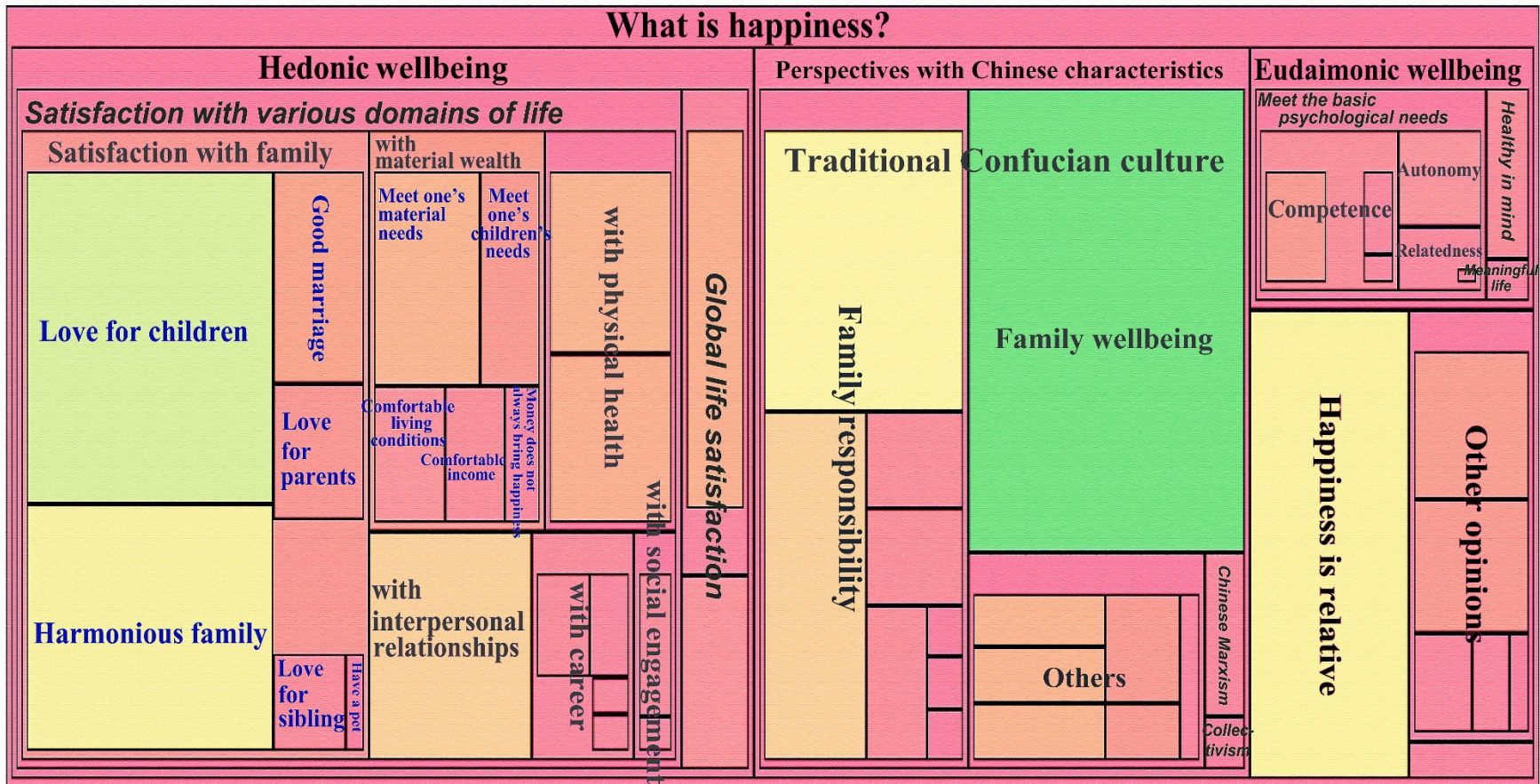
*I have some mental pressures about my child...because 1 May is coming, which is the first day for applying to a proper middle school for my son. Where should he go? When I think about it, I can't sleep...because everything I have done is for my child...happiness or something; I get a headache if this problem can't be solved. I had a friend called Rosé;<sup>38</sup> when I married my husband, she was a divorced woman. Later, she found a boyfriend who was a local man. Her child was very smart at school, but she was poor and didn't prepare any registration fee for her child. She was worried and kept trying to borrow money from others, but nobody lent her any, and the new term was coming. I think she didn't think about her child. Everyone, no matter what kind of person she/he used to be, has to think about their child after getting married, right? This is the most basic consensus. It is ok just to think about yourself before your marriage. My happiness is my child, and I'll give him all the best things (Bella).*

In line with the children-related coding in Bella's interview, the attention to her child can be seen as one of the central elements in her happiness as well as in her definition of happiness per se, since 18.68 per cent of her interview content was used to speak about her child, while much less space related to her. In addition, by means of Rosé's story, it can be noted that, as well as defining her happiness around her child, Bella also believed

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<sup>38</sup> Rosé is an alias.

Figure 6.1: What is happiness? (migrant workers)



that not only did it not make basic common sense but that it was wrong to prioritise oneself when defining happiness after getting married. In this sense, Bella's answer can be interpreted in the sense that married people should build their happiness and lives around their children, which is in accord with common (social) sense.

'Love for children' not only has a higher status than the respondent's own happiness, but it is also seen as being more important than both families and spouses. According to the qualitative interviews, (1) 'love for children', accounting for 41.23 per cent of overall family life satisfaction in defining happiness, is the most significant component, 9.98 per cent higher than a 'harmonious family' and 31.41 per cent higher than a 'good marriage' among the interview population; (2) for the married interviewees, the percentage for 'love for children' is even higher (50.55 per cent), compared to unmarried respondents; in addition, married migrant workers are also generally less likely to define happiness and life satisfaction around their families (i.e. a 'harmonious family' accounts for 27.47 per cent of their entire family life satisfaction) and their spouses (i.e. a 'good marriage' accounts for 6.60 per cent of their whole family life satisfaction); and (3) for both the whole interview population and married interviewees, the next generation tends to be much more meaningful than their families and spouses in defining happiness, while the respondent's spouses, who receive far less attention than their children and families, are the least important element for defining happiness.

Question B10 in the second section of the questionnaire (What is the most important thing for your happiness in everyday life?)<sup>39</sup> also results in similar findings: based on all respondents, 'family' is ranked as the most important factor, but, for married respondents, the percentage ranking 'children' as the most essential is the same as the proportion choosing 'family', while married females believe that 'children' are more important than 'family' for happiness in their day-to-day lives:

*Recently, the happiest thing is that my daughter has been admitted to a graduate school...so, I feel happy for my daughter's life transition. [Also], I feel happy when I go out to my part-time job...teaching...so I can make more*

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<sup>39</sup> The options were 'material wealth', 'family', 'children', 'interpersonal relationship', 'physical health', 'psychological health', and 'self-fulfilment'. A tie for any place was acceptable.

*money to buy lots of nice things for my daughter. In fact, the biggest plan for my family and me is to save more money so that my daughter can have enough money to study abroad. Because, I think now she is learning business, and, you know, the best place to learn business is the United States...I wish I could send her abroad to expand her vision, then she could have a higher starting point. In fact, my greatest happiness depends on my child; I hope that my child will have a good partner and her own family. It is my long-cherished desire to marry off my daughter a little earlier (Lola).*

In this case, it is clear that the focus of Lola and her family was on her daughter. Further, Lola's definition of happiness also involved her husband to a much lesser extent, since, compared with the significant amount of the interview referring to her child (10.45 per cent), only 0.36 per cent of the interview related to her husband. Toby's interview also reflected the same point: children were more important than his family and spouse in defining happiness; in this sense, he mentioned the word child/children 53 times in interview, while never mentioning his wife.

According to the above analysis, what is significant is that migrant workers' attention to their spouses is far lower than that to their children and families in defining happiness, given that it accounts for only 9.82 per cent of their overall family life satisfaction; the average frequency of the words child/children/daughter/son is 8.35 times throughout the whole interview population and 11.7 times for the married participants, while the mean frequency for the words wife/husband/girlfriend/boyfriend is 2.3 times throughout the whole interview population and 2.8 times for the married interviewees. Such a situation is consistent with a 2015 survey jointly carried out by *Xiaokang Magazine* and the media research lab of Tsinghua University, which argued that, while most married Chinese people vocally put their spousal relationship first in regard to their marital and family happiness, in reality, they always rate their children higher (E, 2015). The report further points out that, among nine elements<sup>40</sup> of a happy marriage, what respondents look for the most is 'healthy and lovely children' and then 'loyalty between husband and wife'; among

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<sup>40</sup> They were 'comfortable housing conditions', 'substantial income', 'healthy and lovely children', 'harmonious sexual life', 'no contradiction between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law', 'properly matched for marriage', 'mutual loyalty', 'sharing household chores', and 'regular chats'.

the ten leading factors affecting marital happiness, those that were married were primarily concerned with 'children' and 'husband-wife affection' (E, 2015).

Further, for older third-generation migrant workers, their children may not be as important as their grandchildren. That is, their 'love for children' seems to be transferred to their grandchildren, probably because of China's strong cultural imperative for offspring, especially male offspring, to continue the family line. Interviewees who had grandchildren all reflected this point:

*My happiest experience was when my daughter gave birth to a child. My granddaughter's weight was very low when she was born, only about 1 kilogramme. My granddaughter had to stay in the hospital, and it cost a lot of money, but now it's all right. She's back, and I feel very happy indeed. I'm happy...it's true...because I have had both a grandson and granddaughter and have three generations under one roof. Now, I'm certainly satisfied with my grandson and granddaughter; I definitely feel happy (Austin).*

Aside from 'love for children', the second most important element in defining happiness is 'harmonious family', accounting for 14.52 per cent of all SWB and 31.25 per cent of the whole family life satisfaction. These two aspects are the most significant components of migrant workers' family life satisfaction, together receiving more than 70 per cent of the total. It should be noted that, different from 'love for children', which appears to be much more important for the married population, the importance of family seems to be universal for the entire interview and questionnaire populations. According to the questionnaire, (1) most married and unmarried respondents tend to believe that 'family' is the most important factor in their happiness, since 79.67 per cent of all participants consider 'family' as an essential element for their happiness, while 76.77 per cent of unmarried participants and 81.10 per cent of married participants rank 'family' as the primary critical factor in their happiness; (2) a majority of both male and female respondents tend to consider 'family' as a main step in accessing happiness, given that 81.17 per cent of male respondents and 78.10 per cent of female respondents put the 'family' first; further, married males have the higher proportion (83.84 per cent) while unmarried males have the lowest proportion (76.36 per cent) with regard to putting the

'family' first. Many interviewees also express the decisive importance of their families in defining their happiness:

*Happiness is family happiness! Besides family, everything else is secondary. A harmonious family can lead to the success of everything! In my conception of happiness...there is my family and my family members' physical health. I don't have too many desires, besides my family...all other things are subordinate. For me, as long as I can have a comfortable life, I feel ok (Alex).*

Clearly, migrant workers' happiness concerning family life satisfaction is mostly limited to their core families. In line with the interviews, for unmarried interviewees, the conception of family primarily relates to the respondents and their parents, while it is usually associated with the respondents, their spouses, and their children for married respondents, who concentrate less on their extended families. This is not to say that migrant workers take no account of their parents and siblings in defining happiness after marriage. In fact, instead of integrating filial piety and fraternal duty into their family life satisfaction, they are more willing to see their parents and siblings as their responsibility, though part of that responsibility can make them feel happy. According to the interviews, 'love for parents' and 'love for siblings' only account for 6.25 per cent and 3.75 per cent, respectively, of overall family life satisfaction.

#### 6.2.3.2 Defining happiness around material wealth

Second, in addition to 'satisfaction with family life', 'satisfaction with material wealth' included in 'satisfaction with various domains of life' is also valued by the migrant workers in defining their happiness, since the analysis of the interviews shows that 'satisfaction with material wealth' accounts for 18.70 per cent of the entire SWB, which is next only to 'love for children'.

It is worth noting that migrant workers often hold an ambivalent attitude towards material wealth while defining happiness. For instance, Felix confirmed his emphasis on material wealth in the first sentence of his interview:

*To be real, [happiness is] material wealth to reach the upper-middle class.*

Nevertheless, in question B10, after ranking 'family', 'children', 'physical health', and

'self-fulfilment' as his principal factors for gaining happiness, only then did he rank 'material wealth', together with 'interpersonal relationships' and 'psychological health', as factors for happiness.

Such a situation appears to be commonplace, given that what is communicated in the questionnaires is frequently contradicted by what is revealed during the in-depth interviews for both the migrant worker and urban resident populations. According to the 300 migrant worker questionnaires, they tend to classify 'material wealth' as relatively secondary with regard to happiness, since the mode of its ranking was 2, which is lower than 'family', 'children', and 'physical health' and equal to 'interpersonal relationships' and 'psychological health', and the average ranking was 3.17, which is the second lowest-ranking amongst the full set of opinions (the lowest-ranked opinion being 'self-fulfilment'). As a result, in integrating such findings with the analysis of the in-depth interviews above, it can be inferred that, though migrant workers admit that material wealth is of great importance in defining happiness, they do not initially reveal the importance of material wealth in their interviews, and the same is true for urban residents.

The reason for this may be because shying away from talking about material wealth or money is a common tacitly-endorsed social phenomenon in Chinese society. According to a user survey conducted by *ifeng.com* in 2011, shying away from talking about money still represents the taken-for-granted mindset of most Chinese people. In 2011, a professor at Beijing Normal University, who publicly asserted that he would only meet his students if they could make 40 million yuan (US\$6.12 million) before the age of 40, has received plenty of criticism from Chinese people, who saw his statement as reflecting money worshipping (*China Daily*, 2011). Data shows that seven out of ten users of a web-based survey disapproved of his attitude towards money, the main argument being that people will not learn to deal with family and social values if all they are interested in is money (*ifeng.com*, 2011). Given that traditional Confucian ideas, such as 'the gentleman concentrates on right; the little man focuses on advantage' and 'the gentleman is successful in benevolence and righteousness; the little man is successful in wealth and advantage', are believed to exert a subtle influence on Chinese people's minds, this situation is considered to be closely connected to the specific ideological and cultural values deeply believed by the Chinese from ancient times. As a result, since such a national mentality

has alienated the word ‘money’ throughout history, the pursuit of money has thus become synonymous with decadence and degeneracy in the Chinese mindset. Indeed, ancient Chinese scholars even called money *kong fang xiong* (meaning ‘brother of the square hole’) in order to avoid talking plainly about this offensive word (Tao, 1993). Therefore, it is understandable that most Chinese people are not at ease talking about the importance of material wealth, especially in front of outsiders. This may also explain why their indifference to ‘material wealth’ in question B10 is in conflict with their concern about ‘satisfaction with material wealth’ in the in-depth interviews.

Migrant workers are extremely concerned about satisfaction of material wealth when defining happiness. According to the results of the interviews, nine out of ten migrant workers tend to acknowledge that sufficient material conditions are a substantial ingredient in the definition of happiness, wherein the satisfaction of material wealth not only includes satisfying their own needs but also relates to meeting the needs of their family members, particularly their children. In line with Figure 6.1, the satisfaction of material wealth they are referring to mainly embraces (1) meeting their own and their family members’ material needs; (2) comfortable living conditions, and (3) a comfortable income. For example, Bella, Lola, Paige, and Toby directly conveyed their concerns about meeting their children’s material demands:

*I can financially support my kids...all my energy and time goes to meeting the needs of my kids, all they need, the material stuff; I want to satisfy them. I just try my best. That’s why I think meeting the needs of material wealth is critical in my definition of happiness (Paige).*

Tyler indicated that possessing material wealth could not only ease his financial burden but also make his life more comfortable, in addition to enjoying the sense of receiving more value than costs. Austin, Felix, Harry, and Henry expressed their requirement to be paid decent salaries when defining happiness.

Moreover, according to this study, both migrant workers and urban residents are keen to stress that a certain level of material comfort is the foundation of happiness, although migrant workers place even more emphasis on this than urban residents. This finding is different from the research findings of some scholars regarding the happiness of people in

other countries (e.g. Ho et al., 2012; Bonn and Tafarodi, 2013; Ho et al., 2013; Chen et al., 2015). This may be because, as detailed in the literature review (see Section 3.5) regarding the extent to which Marxism and Maoism continue to affect the happiness of Chinese people in China today, migrant workers' definitions of happiness (or even Chinese people's definitions of happiness) has been influenced by Mao's ideology of material determinism. However, another possibility is that people with lower incomes, i.e. with per-capita disposable incomes of below US\$20,000 (Layard, 2005), tend to be more focused on happiness brought about through material wealth (Diener et al., 1995; Hagerty and Veenhoven, 2003; Clark et al., 2008). According to data from the National Bureau of Statistics of China (2015), the per-capita disposable income of urban residents in Shanghai was about US\$7,229 in 2014 (migrant workers earn considerably less). Because of the lack of necessary research on the tendency for Chinese people to place a great deal of importance on material advantage, more research is needed to determine whether the Chinese emphasis on material conditions is influenced by Mao's ideology of material determinism.

### *6.2.3.3 Defining happiness around physical health*

Third, in addition to separate concerns about their children, material wealth, and family, 'satisfaction with physical health' is another significant element of the happiness defined by migrant workers. As stated in the interviews, more than six out of ten interviewees refer to 'satisfaction with physical health' in the happiness definition: 17.40 per cent of them define happiness in reference to 'one's family members are in good physical health', 26.10 per cent of them define happiness in regard to 'one's own good physical health', and 21.74 per cent of them address both themselves and their families. For instance, Sebastian referred to personal physical health as a necessary prerequisite for happiness. Noah stated that being physically unhealthy could make him unhappy in life. Elisa, Felix, and Liam directly equated happiness, in part, with personal physical health. Alex, Harry, Lola, Owen, Sophia, and Violet were inclined to link the physical health of their families with their definitions of happiness.

According to the questionnaires, 'physical health' is the third crucial factor for migrant workers in regards to making them happy. In comparison to 'family' and 'children', which

are the most significant elements, selected by 79.67 per cent and 66.00 per cent of all migrant worker respectively, 'physical health' is classified as an essential aspect by 51.67 per cent of all migrant worker participants. Among them, the ratio of female participants who rate physical health as the most important factor is 2.7 per cent higher than that of male participants (52.05 per cent and 49.35 per cent respectively). In addition, single female participants are most likely and single male participants are least likely to put physical health above all the other factors (59.10 per cent and 49.09 per cent respectively). Further, female migrant worker participants, especially single ones, are more inclined than male participants to put physical health first. This finding is in line with the large-scale survey *2015 Chinese Happiness Index*, which reports that Chinese women are more likely than Chinese men to choose physical health as the greatest influencing factor on their sense of happiness (E, 2015). Moreover, compared with the questionnaires about urban residents, except for 'family', ranked first by both groups, 'physical health' is ranked second in attaining happiness, which generally means that China's migrant workers tend to pay less attention to physical health than urban residents.

#### *6.2.3.4 Defining happiness in a more hedonic way*

Drawing on the previous analysis and Figure 6.1, we can summarise that migrant workers generally equate happiness, as such, with the necessities that enable them to live happy lives. At the same time, when compared to eudaimonic wellbeing, which is hardly mentioned, migrant workers are more inclined to define happiness in a hedonic way, which means that, in their thoughts, hedonic wellbeing is more important and is necessary to make them happy. As discussed above, nearly half of the defined content of happiness is within the scope of hedonic wellbeing, including the most highly rated areas contained in 'satisfaction with various domains of life', including 'satisfaction with family', 'satisfaction with material wealth', and 'satisfaction with physical health'.

According to the interviews, migrant workers generally pay more attention to satisfaction with certain domains of life, while losing sight of eudaimonic wellbeing; in other words, they consider happiness as living a pleasant life but not a meaningful one, at least not a meaningful life with regard to their own fulfilment. When compared to the definition of Delle Fave et al. (2010), which suggests that people generally tend to define happiness in

an eudaimonic way, such as a status of mental balance and harmony, migrant workers do not tend to define happiness in such a way; in fact, only 6.60 per cent of all the coding reflects the contents of eudaimonic wellbeing. That is to say, hedonic wellbeing, mainly characterised by life satisfaction, is the most valued type of happiness for migrant workers. It must be said that, although eudaimonic wellbeing does not appear to be significant in research question one, it was identified as a critical factor that is able to influence the level of a person's happiness in further interview results. That is, migrant workers mainly define happiness from the perspective of hedonic wellbeing, but their degree of happiness is more influenced by eudaimonic wellbeing.

Through self-determination theory, the most commonly used conception in defining the happiness of migrant workers is to 'meet the needs of competence', which primarily relates to personal feelings of achievement and recognition. Although it contributes little to the contents of the definition of happiness, it makes up more than half of the proportion of total eudaimonic wellbeing (53.13 per cent). About a third of the interviewees expressed related ideas:

*Recently, my happiest experience was that I took an exam. I was working hard for a long time, and I passed it. I'm jubilant! I have a strong sense of accomplishment...I had poor grades when I entered school, and the teacher always ignored me, since I was not a good student. No one came to teach me when I couldn't answer some questions, so I used to feel very hurt when I sat in the classroom. Then, I went to my friends; they taught me a lot, and my performance improved (Molly).*

'Meet the needs of autonomy' is the second most commonly used conception by migrant workers when describing their happiness, accounting for 18.75 per cent of all eudaimonic wellbeing, with about one in five migrant worker interviewees expressing related opinions. Most of them focused on the idea of being able to live their lives or getting the job they really want:

*I feel happy with my current job. Though I'm still new to this business, I think I'm satisfied with it because I feel free when I'm working. As a self-employed labourer, I can decide when I will open my shop, and no-one can interfere*

(Henry).

Among all the three basic psychological needs, ‘meet the needs of relatedness’ is the most underappreciated by migrant workers, accounting for merely 12.50 per cent of all eudaimonic wellbeing, with less than one-fifth of the interviewees expressing related contents:

*My happiest work experience is...once I had a part-time job in a large supermarket that sold sporting goods. I felt very happy at that time because all the part-time employees there were students like me. We were all from a similar environment; we had a common language. I felt very happy (Katie).*

In addition, compared to physical health, which is very important for migrant workers, ‘mental health’ seldom appears in their happiness definition, accounting for only 12.50 per cent of the total eudaimonic wellbeing. Harry, Jake, Katie, and Sebastian all referred to mental health in their definition of happiness, although most of them merely talked about it in passing. To be clear, although both physical and psychological health are deemed as fundamental measures of individual wellbeing, the majority of migrant workers still believe that psychological health is not important enough to be taken into consideration with regard to their definitions of happiness.

In synthesising the very different attitudes toward hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing by migrant workers, it can be summarised that their definition of happiness is short of a concern for themselves but pays much more attention to hedonic life satisfaction related to their family lives. In particular, according to their patterns of defining happiness, which generally equate happiness itself with what they believe are the essential factors to achieve happiness, it can be seen that (1) they do not think that psychological wellbeing and self-realisation are the most important elements in being happy; and (2) what they are most concerned with is to acquire hedonic life satisfaction brought about by ‘tangible factors’, such as their children’s welfare, material wealth, family, and physical health, though the concept of mental health and self-actualisation may not be as secondary as they imagine, as, given further analysis in the interviews, they have been found to play critical roles in affecting the respondents’ levels of happiness.

In addition, it is noteworthy that migrant workers’ neglect and insufficient understanding

of psychological health may be a common phenomenon in Chinese society. Moreover, their inattention to mental health seems to have no connection to their state of psychological wellbeing (See Table 6.2). According to a broad survey of floating people jointly conducted by Nankai University and East China University of Science and Technology in 2013,<sup>41</sup> 24.54 per cent of migrant workers in Shanghai thought that they knew almost nothing about mental health-related issues, 84.33 per cent believed that they did not have to learn such knowledge at all, while only 3.73 per cent felt that such knowledge was extremely important. In the same way, only 2.56 per cent of all the respondents in Shanghai believe that mental health-related knowledge is necessary.

**Table 6.2: The interviewees' MUNSH scores**

Alias	The MUNSH* score
Alex	44
Austin	40
Blake	43
Felix	35
Harry	36
Henry	41
Jake	31
Jenson	31
Liam	20
Noah	39
Owen	42
Sebastian	22
Toby	43
Tyler	40
Bella	34
Elisa	8
Katie	40
Lola	31
Molly	35
Paige	27
Sara	27
Sophia	38
Violet	34

\* The MUNSH scores usually range from 0 to 48 points, and the higher the better. A score greater than or equal to 36 is often considered as a high level, a score less than or equal to 12 is considered a low level, and a score between 12 and 36 is normally regarded as an intermediate level. For details, see Chapter 7.

Therefore, the reason why migrant workers pay less attention to mental health while

<sup>41</sup> Calculated by the researcher, based on the first-hand data from East China University of Science and Technology.

defining happiness may be that (1) they are more focused on the physical world, such as their children, material wealth, and so on; and (2) they do not know much about mental health and probably do not want to know about it since mental health itself is seen as a Western import, which did not originally exist in the Chinese language.

Moreover, different from self-centred Western hedonic wellbeing, migrant workers' life satisfaction, i.e. attaching much more importance to family and family members, has become increasingly prominent in defining their happiness. Instead of achieving instant personal comfort, migrant workers are more likely to obtain psychological benefits from their family-centred life satisfaction. That is, to a large extent, the happiness they would like to pursue is neither for personal enjoyment nor for their own personal growth, but for the psychological satisfaction brought about by the happiness of their family members and their entire families. In addition, their psychological satisfaction can be a result of their unconscious identification with traditional Chinese culture. According to their interviews, migrant workers believe their definition of happiness is as it should be, as they do not feel there is anything special in their definition and they do not even realise that their definition has been affected by the cultural background of Chinese society. Therefore, their definition of happiness, focusing on their family members and families, is very different from hedonic wellbeing as defined by Westerners, though it has been found that they are certainly more inclined to define happiness by means of a hedonic approach.

### **6.3 Do Migrant Workers Tend to Define Their Happiness in a More Chinese Style?**

The definition of the happiness of migrant workers is significantly influenced by traditional Confucian culture, particularly family-style or patriarchal collectivism that features family responsibility and family wellbeing. According to the interview results, (1) 81.94 per cent of the contents in the category 'the perspectives with Chinese characteristics' fall into the sub-category 'traditional Confucian culture', (2) 15.49 per cent of the contents fall into the sub-category 'others', and (3) only 2.57 per cent of the contents belong in the sub-category 'China's Marxist culture'.

Because of the dominance of traditional Confucian culture in the contents, this section will discuss how it affects migrant workers' definition of happiness. The details that fall

into the sub-category ‘others’ will also be briefly analysed in the final part of this section. It should be noted that, based on the interview results, the contents of the sub-category ‘China’s Marxist culture’ include only a few representations of Mao’s socialist collectivism (e.g. collective interests are more important than personal happiness; the individual should sacrifice his/her personal happiness for the good of the country when necessary). This does not mean that China’s Marxist culture includes purely Mao’s socialist collectivism, but it illustrates that Mao’s socialist collectivism is the only Marxist cultural element mentioned by the interviewees. Since little mention was given to Mao’s socialist collectivism by the interviewees, the analysis of this sub-category is focused on revealing the difference in their impacts on the happiness of Chinese people between the literature about Mao’s legacy to Chinese happiness in Chapter 3 and the interview results. This content will be discussed in the chapter conclusion and the suggestions for further research in the study’s final chapter.

### ***6.3.1 Traditional Confucian culture***

From the interview data, family-style collectivism, which is highly emphasised by traditional Confucian culture, still exerts a direct impact on migrant workers’ definition of happiness. Based on Figure 6.1, the category ‘traditional Confucian culture’ can be divided into two sub-categories, which reflect the two aspects of family-style collectivism: family responsibility and family wellbeing. However, this does not mean that traditional Confucian culture only consists of the above two aspects. According to the literature review on the Confucian view of happiness in Chapter 3, traditional Confucian culture also contains other elements, such as its core content represented by ‘the three cardinal guides and the five constant virtues’ (see ‘wifely submission and virtues’ in Table 6.3) and the ‘delight of Kong Yan’ (*kong yan zhi le*) (see ‘happiness of learning’ in Table 6.3). However, these contents are not included in the following analysis regarding the impact of traditional Confucian culture on migrant workers’ definition of happiness because they are not clearly reflected in the interviews with migrant workers (see Table 6.3). For this reason, the sub-categories ‘family responsibility’ and ‘family wellbeing’ will be analysed in the following sections.

**Table 6.3: The composition of traditional Confucian culture in migrant workers' definition of happiness**

Traditional Confucianism	Numbers of the interviewees who mentioned Confucianism	Percentage of the interviewees who mentioned Confucianism	Number of the coding referring to Confucianism	Percentage of the coding referring to Confucianism
		N=23		N=67
Filial piety	12	52.17	30	44.78
Gender-based family responsibility				
Taking care of their families (women)	8	34.78	19	28.36
Supporting their families (men)	5	21.74	5	7.46
Wifely submission and virtues (women)	1	4.35	1	1.49
Achieving harmony	1	4.35	5	7.46
Fraternal duty	1	4.35	5	7.46
Happiness of learning	1	4.35	1	1.49

#### 6.3.1.1 *Family responsibility*

Migrant workers' definition of happiness is influenced by family responsibility, which is an integral part of family-style collectivism. Among all the component elements of family responsibility, filial piety is most emphasised in migrant workers' definition of happiness, with 44.78 per cent of the contents in the subcategory family responsibility, followed by gender-based family responsibility, with 37.31 per cent (see Table 6.3). At the same time, more than half of the interviewees mentioned filial piety and gender-based family responsibility in their interviews.

Many migrant workers provided opinions in respect to filial piety in their interviews. For instance, Harry's definition of happiness was directly linked to what he could offer his mother. He stated that:

*Happiness...well, different people have a different understanding. What I think is that my family members should have good physical health...I'm very much a family man; I feel very sorry and worried because I can't stay with my mum [when she is ill]. As a child, I can't be with my mum, and that's what has bothered me most so far.*

The researcher then asked, 'How long has this situation lasted?'

*I feel much stronger this year, especially when I'm aware that their [my mum and dad's] bodies are getting worse and my children are getting older; my mum and dad are taking care of my two brothers' children in my hometown, so it will become harder and harder for them. After we have saved money for the decoration of our new house in my hometown, I feel I will be ready to go back to comply with my parents. Now, I mainly think about my mum's physical health; if she's well, I'll stay in Shanghai a little longer, and if not, I'll go back immediately. However, my general plan is to go back to look after my parents and children after some time.*

Violet thought that she must be loyal not only to her mother but also to her mother-in-law:

*Recently, my happiest experience was to travel with my mum. I took my mum to Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai, and then paid a visit to my child's father's alma mater, Zhejiang University. I took her on a walk around the university. Actually, it's not easy for me to take my mum out, since I live quite far away from her home. Usually, it takes me about two hours to pick her up; it is a time-consuming process, even on a normal day, let alone to take her shopping [before we went travelling]. At the same time, I have to make everything right at home or my husband would feel unhappy when he returns from work. I feel that filial piety is, of course, related to the definition of happiness, although sometimes I worry about our parents. My dad and mum are living together in a house of their own, and my father-in-law has died, so my mother-in-law is residing in a nursing home. I always look after both our parents; I always show my mother-in-law that we are thinking of her, and I always consider her as my real mother. I think she would regard me as a qualified daughter-in-law as I always take good care of both my own parents and her.*

It is not difficult to see that, as a married woman, Violet seems to bear more family responsibility than her husband since not only does she recognise filial piety as taking care of both of their parents, but she also has to look after the house when her husband goes to work. The interview results show that, in relation to traditional Confucian culture, submitting oneself to gender-based family responsibilities seems to have a more

significant impact on married female migrant workers because all the married women demonstrated relevant content in their interviews, while only about one in three men talked about a man's responsibility to support their families. At the same time, given the qualitative interview analysis, female migrant workers, especially married ones, displayed a much stronger tendency to reflect gender-based family responsibilities than female urban residents. Therefore, it can be seen that, under the influence of traditional Confucian culture, it may well be more difficult for married female migrant workers to escape from their family responsibilities with regard to looking after families so as to pay more attention to the realisation of their own values:

*My life is stable because I don't go out to work; my husband works outside, and I stay at home to take care of my baby. Unhappiness, well, I often feel bored at home because I stay at home alone every day. When all the family members are out, I feel unhappy because I have nothing to do (Violet).*

The researcher then asked, 'Do you want to go outside to find a suitable job or do something for yourself since you are still very young?'

*Well, you are too young to understand. Having a family means that one goes outside to make money and the other stays inside to take care of the household. I think I'm a traditional person who has inherited the older generation's viewpoint. I come from Suzhou, and there is an old saying in our place: men go out and women stay home. So, I think, you little girls should focus more on your families. It's all right if you girls want to go outside for jobs, but, first of all, you have to wait. You can't go out to work before your family has settled down, your husband's career has been established, and your child has grown up. I'm a more traditional person; that's what I really think about it. Actually, I'm quite satisfied with my life; I don't need to pay much attention to things outside of my family, and I don't care about a job. I think my life and social circle are all centred on my family (Violet).*

In saying, 'You can't go out to work before your family has been settled down, your husband's career has been established, and your child has grown up', Violet suggests that

women<sup>42</sup> should not go out to work after getting married.

Violet was not the only women with this idea, although she made it the clearest, since all the other married female migrant workers more or less expressed this idea, which not only included the cleaner Sophia, who had never gone to school, but also the teacher Lola, who had graduated from graduate school. However, it can be seen that female migrant workers who have lower education levels are generally more inclined to define their happiness by means of family responsibility, while those with higher education levels are more likely to focus on both their personal values and family responsibility. That is, in accordance with the interview analysis, female migrant workers who are better educated are more likely to ‘find themselves’ while defining or feeling happiness.

In addition, compared with married female migrant workers, whose happiness is quite traditional (and therefore more affected by Confucian family responsibility), the definition of the new generation of female migrant workers is relatively similar to that of same-aged female urban residents. This is probably because they generally have higher education levels together with educational backgrounds and occupations that are relatively similar to those of young urban dwellers. In this sense, female migrant workers who are less educated (such as those who are illiterate or with only a primary school education) may have the most traditional view of happiness, whereas female migrant workers who are better educated (such as having secondary or higher education) may be less influenced by traditional views of happiness; in this regard, young female migrant workers (i.e. the new generation of migrant workers) tend to focus more on personal development, just like their urban peers.

Furthermore, the new generation of migrant workers have also shown a greater ability than the previous generation to adopt urban life and culture. For example, Katie and Molly, who are new-generation female migrant workers, never mentioned family role-related responsibilities in their interviews; further, there were no special contents referring to their gender and gender-related roles in the interviews, which, according to the analysis, were quite similar to those of young male migrant workers.

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<sup>42</sup> In the interview, Violet suggested that I should not go out to work after marriage. This may be interpreted as her believing that all women should follow this tradition, regardless of their education.

### 6.3.1.2 Family wellbeing

Family wellbeing is the other aspect of family-style collectivism that has impacted on migrant workers' definitions of happiness. Being different from the sub-category 'family responsibility', which emphasises the individual's responsibility for his/her family, the sub-category 'family wellbeing' focuses more on the priority given to and significance of the overall wellbeing of the family. As discussed above, instead of their own personal wellbeing, migrant workers tend to define happiness around their families, especially their children, in line with the values of family-style collectivism, which places a greater emphasis on the overall wellbeing of the family. According to the interview data, migrant workers' definition of happiness is concerned with their family wellbeing, which made itself apparent in four ways: (1) the respondents tended to define happiness in relation to preserving the harmony and warmth in the family, with every family member enjoying healthy development; (2) they considered themselves as having achieved self-fulfilment when carrying out their family responsibilities and then making sure that their families were well fed and living comfortably; (3) any family members' unpleasant emotions and poor physical health would negatively impact on their happiness; and (4) they realised that they were willing to make sacrifices for the good of the whole family when defining their own happiness. Because the first of the aforementioned points has been discussed in Section 6.2.3.1, the following analysis will focus on the other three points.

Firstly, migrant workers can achieve self-actualisation by bringing wellbeing to their family through the undertaking of family responsibilities:

*I'm not sure whether I'm satisfied with my career or not. The only thing I know is this: it [my not really happy working status] helps me to maintain my family's day-to-day life so that, in one sense, it is worth my indescribable feelings and everything I have talked about before. The material condition is still one of the most fundamental aspects in maintaining my family's daily life because I can't let my wife and child have nothing to eat, although I would feel ok if I couldn't feed myself. In other words, there is no relationship with my career and happiness at all. All I want to do is to support my family (Harry).  
My family doesn't put too much pressure on me to contribute to my family life*

*because I'm still a student; right now, they want me to take care of myself. However, I feel like an adult who is more than 20 years old. I feel more family responsibility than what they require of me. I feel very disappointed in myself because I haven't done much for my family yet. I want to do more in the future* (Blake).

The interview excerpts above show that the self-presentations of Harry and Blake were located within their families. For instance, Harry explained that he worked for the wellbeing of his family, but not for himself. His self-actualisation was then reflected in his responsibility to support his family rather than the realisation of his own values. The content of this point partially overlaps with family responsibility, which has been discussed above.

Secondly, the levels of happiness of migrant workers can be influenced by the bad feelings or poor physical health of their family members, which may be one reason why they often mention the pleasure and the health of their family members when defining their happiness:

*Happiness is family happiness! Besides family, everything else is secondary. A harmonious family can lead to the success of everything! In my conception of happiness...mainly there is my family and my family members' physical health. I don't have too many desires, besides my family...all other things are subordinate. Actually, I haven't felt happy recently because I often go to ask about my father's condition. I'm very pessimistic because my father is ill. His illness is not severe, and the doctor is able to cure him, though it can be time consuming and painful. I feel sad not only because my father is in a lot of pain, though this kind of disease cannot kill him, but also because of my mother's bad state of mind. My mother always takes things too hard, so she started to feel very depressed after my father became ill. My father is lying at home every day; she just feels sad...So, today, I'm going to see the specialist and to see my father's test report and diagnosis. To be frank, I have got used to my father's illness since he has been ill for a long time. However recently, his condition has worsened, so my mother is in an appalling mood and my father is unhappy to see my mother's sadness. In any case, physical health is*

*the most important thing for my happiness (Alex).*

Thirdly, migrant workers are willing to make personal sacrifices in order to preserve family wellbeing. This point is also connected with migrant workers' family responsibility, especially when it comes to conflict between their personal and family wellbeing. For example, Liam stated that, in order to feed his family, he had to work hard as a taxi driver, at considerable cost to his health.

*I work day and night every other day. As a taxi driver, basically, our physical health is not very good, and we generally experience some form of occupational disease. In a sense, we are robots when we are working, and we are vegetative when we are at home. I think I'm making a sacrifice for my family, as no one wants to go to a job with such huge workload. I won't do it anymore after my daughter secures a bright future; my income will probably get less, but that's all right. For now, however, I have to keep this job; I want to change it...I mean, my life and my work, but I have to support my family; I feel tired.*

The above interview excerpt illustrates that family responsibility is much like a regulator in balancing the conflict between personal and family wellbeing.

### **6.3.2 Other perspectives**

Aside from Confucian culture, there are other perspectives that affect migrant workers' definition of happiness. In this section, those perspectives within the sub-category of 'others', which primarily relate to the views of happiness in Taoism or Buddhism, will be discussed.

According to the interview results, the perspectives that fall into the sub-category 'others' mainly include 'content is happiness' (*zhizhu changle* in Chinese), 'flat is a blessing' (*pingdan shi fu*) and 'mental calm' (*neixin pingjing*), associated with Taoist happiness, in addition to 'generating good karma with everyone' (*guangjie shanyuan*), which belongs to Buddhist happiness. This is not to say that Taoist or Buddhist happiness is composed only of the above perspectives, but simply that they were the only aspects of Taoist or Buddhist happiness mentioned by the interviewees.

‘Content is happiness’ is the most influential perspective concerning Taoist happiness among the interviewees. According to the interview results, around one fifth of the interviewed migrant workers mentioned this perspective in their interviews, although they tend to see it as a single perspective rather than as a systematic approach that is used to guide their lives and values (as with Confucian family-style collectivism). That is, compared with Confucian family-style collectivism, which has an all-encompassing effect on the lives and values of migrant workers, Taoist ‘content is happiness’ is merely a fragment in the construction of their views of happiness. The evidence shows that, although some interviewees (e.g. Alex, Harry, and Katie) referred directly to ‘content is happiness’ in their interviews, they did not expound on this perspective in detail in the rest of their interviews, while the contents of the rest of their interviewees did not reflect this perspective at all. Based on the interview results, the other two Taoist perspectives (i.e. ‘flat is a blessing’ and ‘mental clam’) and one Buddhist perspective (i.e. ‘generating good karma with everyone’) present the same problem.

Due to the fact that most of the perspectives falling into the sub-category ‘others’ focus on ‘content is happiness’ (more than 70 per cent), the other perspectives will not be analysed individually for reasons of space constraints. In summary, according to the interview results, the other perspectives, notably Taoist or Buddhist happiness, do not affect the definition of happiness of migrant workers as much as Confucianism. This may be because the impact of Taoism and Buddhism on Chinese culture and values is not as great as that of Confucianism (Wang, 1996; Luo and Yan, 2000; Guo et al., 2007; Ding, 2008; Luo et al., 2010; Zeng and Guo, 2012), and therefore the popularity of Taoist or Buddhist ideologies is not as high as those of Confucianism amongst Chinese citizens.

#### **6.4 Are There Any Differences Between Migrant Workers and Urban Residents in Defining Happiness?**

The research finds that there are four main differences between migrant workers and urban residents’ definitions of happiness. First, compared with migrant workers, who tend to define happiness with regard to what is the most important and necessary for happiness in their daily lives, urban residents are more inclined to define happiness as a state of pleasure or satisfaction so that their definition of happiness explicitly contains a character of

hedonism, which emphasises the human nature of tending to happiness and avoiding suffering.

Second, urban residents are much more focused on hedonic wellbeing than migrant workers when defining happiness: (1) in comparison to migrant workers, who mostly care about 'love for children' in the domain of family life satisfaction, urban residents are more concerned about a 'harmonious family' and they are surer of their family life satisfaction brought about by a 'good marriage'; and (2) when considering their satisfaction with various domains of life, urban residents care less about 'satisfaction with health' than about 'satisfaction with interpersonal relationships' and 'satisfaction with career'.

Third, urban residents cultivate the meaningful life more than migrant workers, since, as opposed to migrant workers, who are indifferent to eudaimonic wellbeing, urban residents pay significant attention to their self-realisation, especially with regard to the aspect 'meet the needs of competence', when defining their happiness.

Fourth, urban residents' definition of happiness is much less influenced by Confucian culture; therefore, (1) urban residents have similar ideas of happiness because they are much less affected by Chinese Confucianism, which reveals itself as traditional gender-based family roles and responsibilities; (2) urban residents also pay more attention to their own subjective feelings, given that they tend to think less about filial piety, as advocated by Confucianism and family-style collectivism, when they define their happiness. Table 6.4 displays the demographic information of all 22 urban resident interviewees, Table 6.5 illustrates the constituents of urban residents' definition of happiness, and Table 6.6 makes the comparisons between the two groups.

Urban residents are more inclined to define happiness as a state of pleasure or satisfaction in as much as half of the urban resident respondents' definition of happiness could be wholly or partially summarised as living in a happy or satisfied state. Accordingly, urban residents tend to see happiness as a subjective feeling, given that such a state of happiness is defined by themselves. Migrant workers, in contrast, prefer to define happiness by means of material factors, i.e. what they need most for happiness in their daily lives. For example, Chloe, a female urban resident, reported that:

*I think the feeling of happiness is different for different periods of time. First*

*of all, there is an evaluation system (for evaluating my happiness). Actually, I feel quite happy at the present stage. Oh no, I think this answer isn't right; I have to answer again. To be frank, if I think about it in a simpler way, happiness is a subjective feeling, which is not the same as some kind of substance. It is a feeling that I'm living a happy life. If I carry out a deep analysis on my happiness, I will have some indicators to measure it. For example, my happiness can be achieved by the satisfaction of emotional needs, such as kinship and friendship, and an appreciation of the living standards when I enter society later*

**Table 6.4: What is happiness? Urban residents' definition of happiness**

<b>Constituent</b>	<b>%</b>
Hedonic wellbeing	66.33
Eudaimonic wellbeing	14.29
Perspectives with Chinese characteristics	13.52
Others	3.83
Happiness is relative	2.04

**Table 6.5: What is happiness? A comparison between migrant workers and urban residents**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Hedonic wellbeing</b>	<b>Eudaimonic wellbeing</b>	<b>Perspectives with Chinese characteristics</b>	<b>Others</b>	<b>Happiness is relative</b>
Migrant workers	49.69%	6.60%	31.96%	5.20%	6.60%
Urban residents	66.33%	14.29%	13.52%	3.83%	2.04%

Secondly, urban residents are much more focused on hedonic wellbeing than migrant workers when defining happiness. Table 6.7 illustrates the dissimilarities between migrant workers and urban inhabitants in the field of hedonic wellbeing and its sub-field 'satisfaction with various domains of life' when considering their definitions of happiness.

**Table 6.6: The interviewees' demographic information (urban residents)**

Alias <sup>43</sup>	Gender	Age	Education	Job	Income <sup>44</sup>	Housing	Location	Marital status	How many children he/she has
Hugo	Male	25	Undergraduate	Supply chain management	5,000	Own house	Jing'an	Unmarried, without girlfriend	0
Tommy	Male	22	Undergraduate	HR	3,000	Own house	Jing'an	Unmarried, with girlfriend	0
Samuel	Male	53	Undergraduate	Civil servant	10,000	Own house	Yangpu	Married	1
Edward	Male	22	Undergraduate	Student, part-time voice actor	600	Own house	Jiading	Unmarried, with girlfriend	0
Ashton	Male	18	Technical secondary school	Student	0	Own house	Jiading	Unmarried, without girlfriend	0
Max	Male	55	Junior high school	Environmental management	3,100	Own house	Pudong	Married	2
Oscar	Male	28	Postgraduate	Civil engineer	8,000	Own house	Pudong	Unmarried, with girlfriend	0

<sup>43</sup> To protect privacy, the names referred to herein are not real names. English aliases are applied in order to facilitate reading, but this does not mean that the respondents also have English names in addition to their real Chinese names. In this sense, it is unlikely that an urban resident in Shanghai will be named Hugo in real life.

<sup>44</sup> The exchange rate of the China renminbi (CNY) to the US dollar (USD) is about 1 CNY = 0.156 USD.

Daniel	Male	22	Undergraduate	Student	0	Own house	Pudong	Unmarried, without girlfriend	0
Ryan	Male	66	Junior high school	Retired, part- time volunteer	3,000	Own house	Songjiang	Married	2
Leon	Male	31	Senior high school	Sales manager	19,220	Own house	Changning	Married	1
Jackson	Male	41	Senior high school	Self-employed	3,500	Own house	Qingpu	Married	1
Imogen	Female	46	Senior high school	Conductor	2,320	Own house	Xuhui	Married	1
Grace	Female	31	Undergraduate	Secretary	4,200	Own house	Zhabei	Divorced	1
Lucy	Female	73	Technical secondary school	Retired, used to be a doctor	1,100	Public house	Hongkou	Married	2
Holly	Female	28	Junior college	Clothing store owner	10,000	Own house	Hongkou	Married	0
Maria	Female	23	Undergraduate	HR	4,700	Renting	Putuo	Unmarried, without boyfriend	0

Lydia	Female	23	Undergraduate	Intern student	1,680	Own house	Putuo	Unmarried, without boyfriend	0
Amelia	Female	45	Junior college	Supermarket security	2,200	Own house	Minhang	Divorced	1
Willow	Female	57	Junior high school	Retired, now is a babysitter	3,330	Own house	Jiading	Married	1
Chloe	Female	21	Undergraduate	Student	0	In a dormitory	Pudong	Unmarried, with boyfriend	0
Olivia	Female	22	Undergraduate	Intern student	1,200	Own house	Xuhui	Unmarried, without boyfriend	0
Ella	Female	25	Undergraduate	Village official	5,000	Own house	Songjiang	Unmarried, without boyfriend	0
Ruby	Female	27	Postgraduate	English teacher	8,760	Renting	Minhang	Unmarried, without boyfriend	0
Zoe	Female	51	Junior high school	Shop employee	1,880	Own house	Qingpu	Married	2

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It can be seen that (1) the definition of the happiness of migrant workers is more concentrated because they pay little attention to factors (such as mental health) other than ‘satisfaction with family’, ‘satisfaction with material wealth’, and ‘satisfaction with health’; and (2) compared to migrant workers, urban residents care less about ‘satisfaction with family’ and ‘satisfaction with health’ than about ‘satisfaction with interpersonal relationships’ and ‘satisfaction with career’, although ‘satisfaction with family’ is still their highest rated domain.

In comparison to migrant workers, who mostly concentrate on ‘love for children’ in the domain of ‘satisfaction with family’, urban residents’ family life satisfaction is clearly more diffuse, since, apart from ‘love for children’, they are more concerned about a ‘harmonious family’, while also acknowledging the importance of a ‘good marriage’.

**Table 6.7: Hedonic wellbeing and its sub-domains: A comparison between migrant workers and urban residents**

Panel A: Hedonic wellbeing						
Group	Presence of positive mood and absence of negative mood		Global life satisfaction	Satisfaction with various domains of life		
Migrant workers	2.49%		6.22%	91.29%		
Urban residents	9.23%		6.92%	83.85%		

Panel B: Satisfaction with various domains of life						
Group	Family	Material wealth	Interpersonal relationships	Career	Health	Social engagement
Migrant workers	50.91%	20.45%	8.64%	5.45%	12.27%	2.27%
Urban residents	40.83%	22.02%	14.22%	10.55%	7.34%	4.13%

Table 6.8 demonstrates the distinctions between migrant workers and urban residents in the sub-domain ‘satisfaction with family’. Note that, different from most migrant workers, who tend to devote themselves to their children, urban residents in Shanghai are more concerned about their own personal feelings when dealing with ‘love for children’, i.e. they describe themselves as happy because they are happy and not because they are contributing to the wellbeing of their children. For example, Samuel, a male civil servant, stated that:

*I feel happy for my son because he is getting a good job. He has a job and a*

*new apartment for his wedding, though sometimes he is still not happy. I think it is because he is not well paid at present; [his salary is] 3,000 to 4,000 yuan. I'm happy with my living conditions. I think I'm free from the pressures of life, although the prices have been rising so fast in recent years. It will not affect my sense of wellbeing because it is not a problem for me. However, I think it is an issue for my son because he is a young man and has more life stress. He has to think about his career planning, and he is not married yet. I think he should work hard to create his own future because he can't rely on dad and mum's support forever; I never worry about my son because it's useless; everyone has his or her own life. It's meaningless to worry about another's life; my son's life pleasure will not affect my wellbeing*

**Table 6.8: Satisfaction with family: A comparison between migrant workers and urban residents.**

Group	Harmonious family	Love for children	Good marriage	Love for parents	Love for grandparents	Love for siblings	Having pets
Migrant workers	31.25%	41.96%	9.82%	.25%	0.00%	3.57%	0.89%
Urban residents	40.45%	24.72%	19.10%	10.11%	3.37%	0.00%	2.25%

Also of note is that urban residents have much more to say regarding satisfaction with their marriage or love life. For example, Hugo, a male company employee, reported that:

*Happiness is a state where, one day, I can drive my favourite car and live happily with my wife. This is the life I really want to have. Now, I'm looking to find a girlfriend, and I think this is the most important part of my plan. I'll never take a random girl to be my wife; I must love her very much!*

At the same time, compared with migrant workers, who pay close attention to 'satisfaction with family', 'satisfaction with material wealth', and 'satisfaction with health', urban residents are more inclined to distribute their attention to different domains, especially 'satisfaction with career' and 'satisfaction with interpersonal relationships'. From the interviews, urban residents are much more willing to talk about their work when defining their happiness, and they are more attached to their jobs. This is probably because urban residents are more likely to connect work to self-actualisation and personal achievement, while migrant workers (especially first-generation migrant workers) are more likely to

connect work with economic benefits and making a living. For example, Ruby, a female English teacher, stated that:

*First of all, I think happiness is a state where I can satisfy myself or make myself happy through my own abilities. Therefore, self-actualisation is vital when I try to define my happiness. I'm satisfied with my current job because, recently, I have had some development in my work. I think having a suitable position is closely linked with my self-actualisation; my job has brought me a lot of happiness, or I wouldn't have been doing it for such a long time. I'm happy with my students, who have a lot of new ideas, and it is good for me to maintain a sense of being younger...and I feel wonderful being a teacher because it is a respectable profession in Chinese society.*

The situation that urban residents pay more attention to eudaimonic wellbeing may also relate to their higher need for self-actualisation and self-expression, as they demonstrated their stronger resolve to 'meet the needs of competence' during the course of their interviews. Based on the specific code in NVivo 10, 55.36 per cent of the contents of eudaimonism lie within the range of 'meet the needs of competence'. This means that urban residents tend to treat developing and proving their own competence as the most meaningful thing in their lives.

Finally, urban residents' definition of happiness is much less influenced by traditional Confucian culture (see Table 6.9). In this sense, compared to migrant workers, who place great emphasis on family responsibilities and wellbeing, urban residents place more value on their personal development, though most of them still maintain relatively high levels of concern for their families and family members.

**Table 6.9: Perspectives with Chinese characteristics: A comparison between migrant workers and urban residents**

Group	Family wellbeing (Confucianism)	Family-style collectivism (Confucianism)	Taoism	Buddhism	Mao's collectivism and Marxism
Migrant workers	43.23%	38.71%	15.48%	0.00%	2.59%
Urban residents	18.87%	37.74%	43.40%	0.00%	0.00%

There are two major findings on this front: (1) urban residents are more concerned about

family wellbeing than family responsibility; and (2) the gender differences in the definition of happiness are smaller among urban residents because they are much less influenced by ideas of gender-based family responsibility. Thus, it is understandable that urban residents' definition of happiness is less likely to include distinct gender characteristics when compared to that of migrant workers. For example, Amelia, a divorced female security guard, reported that:

*Happiness is living a happy life every day. To me, happiness means that I can work healthily every day.*

Daniel, a male undergraduate, stated that:

*Happiness is a subjective feeling in that I feel I live happily every day. For example, sometimes I feel happy when I take a break and have fun after studying for a long time; sometimes I feel happy when I achieve some substantive result, which also makes people around me happy.*

## **6.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has answered the first research question and its two sub-questions. The main findings of this chapter include the following six points. First, migrant workers tend to define happiness in relation to what is most important and necessary for happiness in their daily lives. Second, migrant workers' definition of happiness is concentrated on their family lives, especially their children, and is not particularly focused on themselves. Third, migrant workers are most likely to define happiness as satisfaction with regard to their family lives and material conditions, in addition to having sound physical health. Fourth, migrant workers' definition of happiness is distinct from that of urban residents. Migrant workers tend to define happiness around factors that make them satisfied with their daily lives, whereas urban residents tend to define happiness as a state of satisfaction or fulfilment. Migrant workers focus more on family wellbeing and family-style collectivism when defining happiness, whereas urban residents focus more on individual wellbeing and self-actualisation (which will be further discussed in Section 10.3). Fifth, migrant workers' definition of happiness is significantly affected by traditional Confucian culture. It was found that, although the essence of Confucian culture (i.e. the Confucian ethical system

characterised by ‘the three cardinal guides and the five constant virtues’) exerts no significant influence on migrant workers’ definition of happiness, its relationship system characterised by ‘family-first’ values and family-style collectivism still has a direct impact on their definition of happiness. Thus, certain family- and collective-oriented Confucian values, such as ‘honour your father and mother’, ‘a harmonious family can lead to the success of everything’, and so on, are still intertwined with migrant workers’ definitions of happiness. Such results agree with the findings from the literature review with regard to the Confucian legacy on the happiness of Chinese people (see Section 3.4).

Finally, migrant workers’ definition of happiness has also been affected by Mao Zedong’s legacy on contemporary Chinese culture. In this sense, it was found that both migrant workers and urban residents are keen to stress a certain level of material comfort as being the foundation for happiness, although migrant workers place even more emphasis on this than urban residents. This finding is different from the research findings of other scholars regarding the happiness of people in other countries (e.g. Ho et al., 2012; Bonn and Tafarodi, 2013; Ho et al., 2013; Chen et al., 2015). This may be because, as detailed in the literature review (see Section 3.5) in relation to the extent to which Marxism and Maoism continue to affect the happiness of Chinese people in present-day China, migrant workers’ definitions of happiness (or even Chinese people’s definitions of happiness) have been influenced by Mao’s ideology of material determinism. However, another possibility is that people with lower incomes, i.e. with per-capita disposable incomes of below US\$20,000 (Layard, 2005), tend to be more focused on happiness brought about through material wealth (Diener et al., 1995; Hagerty and Veenhoven, 2003; Clark et al., 2008). According to data from the National Bureau of Statistics of China (2015), the per-capita disposable income of urban residents in Shanghai was about US\$7,229 in 2014, whereas migrant workers earn considerably less. Because of insufficient research data in this regard, further research is needed to determine whether the Chinese emphasis on material conditions is influenced by Mao’s ideology of material determinism (see Section 10.6).

Further, according to the literature review in Section 3.5, Mao’s legacy on contemporary Chinese culture and the Chinese people’s view of happiness also includes, in addition to the aforementioned material determinism, nationalism and socialist collectivism (as opposed to patriarchal collectivism). However, these two elements were not reflected in

the findings of this study. It appears that migrant workers' definitions of happiness (or even Chinese people's definitions of happiness) are not affected by Mao's ideology of nationalism and socialist collectivism. This finding is consistent with the research of Steele and Lynch (2013) on the happiness of Chinese people during China's economic and social transformation in 2013. In this regard, although some scholars have argued that collectivist factors would be important predictors of individual wellbeing in the cultural context of China, the Chinese people are increasingly prioritising individualist factors in assessing their own happiness and life satisfaction, thus validating descriptions of their society as increasingly individualistic (Steele and Lynch, 2013).

# **7 Chapter 7: How Happy Are Chinese Migrant Workers? Comparing Migrant Workers with Urban Residents**

## **7.1 Introduction**

In the last chapter, it was found that migrant workers usually place much more stress on their satisfaction with regard to domains such as family life, material wealth, and physical health, but they are not so concerned about their eudaimonic wellbeing, such as mental health and self-actualisation. By analysing the data from the survey, this chapter aims to investigate the happiness levels of Chinese migrant workers in Shanghai in 2014 and to then probe whether there is a disparity in happiness levels between migrant workers and urban residents.

Chapter 7 will answer the second research question of this study (i.e. How happy are Chinese migrant workers? Do they feel less happy than Shanghai's urban residents?) and its two sub-questions: (1) What are the levels of migrant workers' subjective wellbeing (SWB), mental health, and self-actualisation? (2) What conditions are related to higher or lower levels of migrant workers' happiness? The questions above are primarily answered by means of the statistical analysis of 600 valid questionnaires. By comparing the happiness levels of migrant workers and urban residents in terms of SWB, mental health, and self-actualisation, the happiness levels of migrant workers will be clearly outlined.

Chapter 7 includes four sections. Based on the survey data, Section 7.2 describes the happiness levels of migrant workers. This section illustrates migrant workers' levels of hedonic wellbeing, measured by the Personal Well-Being Index-Adult (the PWI-A), as well as their levels of eudaimonic wellbeing, measured by the Memorial University of Newfoundland Scale of Happiness (MUNSH) and the Basic Needs Satisfaction in General Scale (the BNSG-S). This section will introduce the three scales applied in the survey, summarise the demographic characteristics of the survey participants, and finally describe the results of the descriptive statistics of the three scales in order to compare the levels of happiness between migrant workers and urban residents. Compared with previous research on the happiness levels of Chinese citizens, the findings generated from the final

section are further discussed in Section 7.3. Section 7.4 will summarise the key findings of this chapter, in addition to pointing out that the BNSG-S may need to be revised before it is used in the Chinese context.

## **7.2 The Levels of Migrant Workers' Happiness.**

The discussion in this section is focused on three themes: (1) The detailed contents of the three scales (i.e. the PWI-A, MUNSH, and BNSG-S) applied in the survey; (2) the participants, procedures, and data analysis methods for the survey; and (3) the results of the survey, including the levels of happiness of migrant workers and urban residents, the factors that relate to higher or lower levels of happiness, and the reliability and validity of the three scales.

### **7.2.1 Scales**

The questionnaire applied in this survey was made up of four parts: Section A: Background Information; Section B: Satisfaction with Life and the PWI-A; Section C: Mental Health and the MUNSH; and Section D, Self-Determination and the BNSG-S (see Chapter 5 for details).

#### *7.2.1.1 The PWI-A Index*

In line with the understanding that SWB can be measured by questions about satisfaction related to personal feelings, the PWI-A was designed to measure the subjective dimension of quality of life (SWB) (The International Wellbeing Group, 2006). It is measured on an 11-point Likert scale that requires respondents to provide numerical scores from 0 'extremely dissatisfied' to 10 'extremely satisfied' for eight measured items (Nielsen et al., 2010). Each item corresponds to one domain of quality of life, including standard of living, health, life achievement, personal relationships, personal safety, feeling part of community, future security, and spirituality or religion<sup>45</sup> (The International Wellbeing Group, 2006). An additional item focusing on overall life satisfaction was included to explore respondents' satisfaction with their life as a whole, although it was not part of the PWI-A. Section B included three separate parts: B0 (the overall life satisfaction), B1-8

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<sup>45</sup> The eighth domain, 'spirituality or religion', was added to the PWI-A in 2006.

(the PWI-A), and B9-10 (the income satisfaction and the subjective ranking of items that are thought to affect Chinese happiness) (see Appendices 4 and 5). The reason for adding B9 was to probe respondents' satisfaction with income because, according to the pilot study and the interview results, Chinese people's satisfaction with income is far lower than their satisfaction with their standard of living, which can also be strongly linked to future security, which is measured by the PWI-A. B10 was used for the first research question to discuss migrant workers' definition of happiness.

#### 7.2.1.2 *The MUNSH*

In Kozma and Stones (1980), the MUNSH was employed to measure the levels of mental health (psychological wellbeing) of migrant workers. Health-related wellbeing scales are usually applied on populations who are predisposed to mental stress<sup>46</sup> or physical illnesses. The MUNSH contains 24 items: 5 items reflect positive affect (PA, which refers to items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 10); 5 items measure negative affect (NA, which refers to items 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9); 7 items represent positive experience (PE, which refers to items 12, 14, 15, 19, 21, 23, and 24); and 7 items represent negative experience (NE, which refers to items 11, 13, 16, 17, 18, 20, and 22) (see Appendices 4 and 5). Among them, the sub-scales NA and NE are reverse scored. The answer 'Yes' scores two points, the answer 'Don't know' scores 1 point, and the answer 'No' scores 0 point for each item, except for items 19 and 23. For the 19<sup>th</sup> item, the answer 'Present living place' (e.g. Shanghai and some districts in Shanghai) scores 2 points and the answer 'Anywhere else' scores 0 points. For the 23<sup>rd</sup> item, the answer 'Satisfied' scores 2 points and the answer 'Not satisfied' scores 0 points. The MUNSH score=PA-NA+PE-NE. The constant '24' is always added for the convenience of statistics and reports. Therefore, the MUNSH scores usually range from 0 to 48 points, the higher the better (i.e. the higher the score the healthier one is mentally). A score greater than or equal to 36 is generally considered a high level, a score less than or equal to 12 is considered a low level, and a score between 12 and 36 is normally regarded as an intermediate level.

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<sup>46</sup> According to Cui et al. (2012), China's migrant workers have manifested a high prevalence of both life stress and work stress, and up to 25 per cent of male and 6 per cent of female migrant workers in Shanghai could be classified as mentally unhealthy (Wang et al., 2008). Evidence from the interviews also indicates that the stress generated in China's migrant workers' lives and work has been the primary factor decreasing their happiness, and that male migrant workers show a much greater probability of feeling stressed in their lives and work than female migrant workers.

### 7.2.1.3 *The BNSG-S*

The BNSG-S was applied to measure the self-actualisation of migrant workers. The BNSG-S was compiled by Gagné (2003) on the basis of the basic psychological needs theory (part of self-determination theory) proposed by Ryan and Deci in 2000.<sup>47</sup> Although self-determination theory has been introduced into China in order to offer a different perspective on Chinese wellbeing, there is little research on its suitability for the Chinese population (Xie et al., 2012). The BNSG-S covers 21 items: 7 items represent the basic psychological needs of autonomy (items 1, 4, 8, 11, 14, 17, and 20); 6 items reflect the basic psychological needs of competence (items 3, 5, 10, 13, 15, and 19); and 8 items indicate the basic psychological needs of relatedness (items 2, 6, 7, 9, 12, 16, 18, and 21) (see Appendices 4 and 5). Among them, items 3, 4, 7, 11, 15, 16, 18, 19, and 20 are reverse scored.<sup>48</sup> The BNSG-S is measured on a 7-point Likert scale that requires respondents to provide numerical scores from 1 'Not at all true' to 7 'Very true'. The results of the BNSG-S are represented by the Averaged Autonomy/Averaged Competence/Averaged Relatedness Score (AVG-A/AVG-C/AVG-R for short). AVG-A/AVG-C/AVG-R is equal to the mean of the items involved. AVG-A/AVG-C/AVG-R usually ranges from 1 to 7 points, the higher the better.

### 7.2.2 *The participants and procedure for this survey*

A quota sampling strategy was applied to investigate 300 Chinese migrant workers and 300 urban residents' happiness levels in Shanghai in 2014. According to the sex ratio, the age ratio, and the distribution of the population of Shanghai, the quota allocation was calculated based on Table 5.1's Assignment Sheet for Quota Sampling and the databases of Shanghai's different districts of the Sixth National Population Census in 2010. Most of the participants were accessed in public places for each district in Shanghai, such as streets, parks, workplaces, residential areas, and so on, and most respondents were from different families and work environments (see Chapter 5 for details). The demographic characteristics of the respondents are displayed in Table 7.1.

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<sup>47</sup> According to Ryan and Deci (2000), there are three basic psychological needs: the needs for competence (White, 1963; Harter, 1978), autonomy (Deci, 1975), and relatedness (Reis, 1994; Baumeister and Leary, 1995). A series of studies has shown that the degree of basic needs satisfaction and the experience of wellbeing are positively correlated (see Chapter 5).

<sup>48</sup> Since these items are reverse scored, they first need to be subtracted from 8 to get the true scores.

**Table 7.1: The characteristics of the questionnaire respondents**

	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
	China's migrant workers		Shanghai's urban residents	
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	154	51.33	153	51.00
Female	146	48.67	147	49.00
<b>Age</b>				
15-24	80	26.67	47	15.67
25-34	95	31.67	68	22.67
35-44	75	25.00	56	18.67
>45	50	16.67	129	43.00
<b>Education</b>				
Unschooling	10	3.33	2	0.67
Primary and junior secondary	152	50.67	74	24.67
Senior secondary	63	21.00	64	21.33
Tertiary and higher	75	25.00	160	53.33
<b>Marital status</b>				
Married	201	67.00	213	71.00
Single, with a boyfriend/girlfriend	40	13.33	30	10.00
Single, without a boyfriend/girlfriend	56	18.67	53	17.67
Divorced, widowed, or separated	3	1.00	4	1.33
<b>Average monthly income (yuan)</b>				
0-1,620	47	15.67	56	18.67
1,621-3,000	106	35.33	82	27.33
3,001-6,000	106	35.33	98	32.67
6,001-10,000	32	10.67	44	14.67
>10,000	9	3.00	20	6.67
<b>Housing</b>				
Living in his/her own apartment/house	49	16.33	259	86.33
Renting	161	53.67	19	6.33
Living in a staff dormitory	84	28.00	10	3.33
Other situations	6	2.00	12	4.00
<b>Working hours per week</b>				
0-44	117	39.00	227	75.67
>44	183	61.00	73	24.33
<b>Duration of stay in Shanghai (year/years)</b>				
<1	10	3.33		
1≤duration of stay<5	132	44.00		
5≤duration of stay<10	71	23.67		
≥10	87	29.00		

Because the questionnaires were administered by trained university students in a question-and-answer format, there were few mistakes or missing responses in the questionnaires. Valid questionnaires with minor flaws, such as the absence of personal details, were completed through follow-up phone calls. In general, migrant workers' levels of cooperation were slightly higher than those of urban residents. Compared to migrant workers, who tended to answer whatever the questionnaire asked, a small proportion of urban residents were not willing to disclose their monthly income, especially in public.

### ***7.2.3 The data analysis methods for this survey***

SPSS Statistics 19 and Amos 20 were used to analyse the quantitative data from the survey. After data cleaning and pre-processing, the PWI-A data was normalised into a 0-100 distribution based on the percentage (percentage of Scale Maximum) unit; the item scores for Q3, Q4, Q7, Q11, Q15, Q16, Q18, Q19, and Q20 of the BNSG-S were reversed (being subtracted from 8). Descriptive statistics were employed to summarise the scores of the PWI-A, MUNSH, and BNSG-S; t-test, one-way ANOVA, and post hoc tests were applied to explore the relationship between the scale scores and gender, age, education, marital status, number of children, income, housing, working hours, and duration of stay. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient, item-total correlations, and item domain correlations were used to test the internal reliability of the PWI-A, MUNSH, and BNSG-S. Confirmatory factor analysis, model fit indices, RMSEA, and standardised regression coefficients of the subscales were produced to examine the construct validity of the PWI-A, MUNSH, and BNSG-S.

### ***7.2.4 The survey results***

#### ***7.2.4.1 Satisfaction scores for the PWI-A***

The means and standard deviations of the PWI-A dimensions are shown in Table 7.2. The mean dimension scores of migrant workers ranged from 57.80 (SD=25.99) to 75.67 (SD=19.78), and the PWI-A score was 65.93 (SD=15.67). This score was significantly lower than that of urban residents, since the mean dimension scores of urban residents were within the range of 64.07 (SD=22.24) to 75.03 (SD=16.57), and the PWI-A score was 69.09 (SD=14.94). For respondents who were migrant workers, satisfaction with health, personal relationships, and personal safety was greater than the PWI-A score,

whereas satisfaction with standard of living, life achievement, feeling part of community, and future security was lower than the PWI-A score. The mean satisfaction score was highest for satisfaction with health (75.67, SD=19.78) and lowest for satisfaction with future security (57.80, SD=25.99). These statistics were not much different than those of urban residents in Shanghai. According to Table 7.2, satisfaction with standard of living, health, personal relationships, and personal safety was above the PWI-A score; satisfaction with life achievement, feeling part of community, and future security was below the PWI-A score. The highest mean score was for satisfaction with personal relationships (75.03, SD=16.57) and the lowest was for future security (64.07, SD=14.94).

**Table 7.2: Mean and SD for the PWI-A**

	China's migrant workers N=300		Shanghai's urban residents N=300	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Satisfaction with...				
Standard of living	64.60	20.50	69.73	20.16
Health	75.67	19.78	70.67	19.53
Life achievement	61.07	21.93	64.90	19.96
Personal relationships	71.43	20.24	75.03	16.57
Personal safety	73.03	21.35	74.57	19.24
Feeling part of community	57.93	24.53	64.67	22.22
Future security	57.80	25.99	64.07	22.24
Personal Well-Being Index	65.93	15.67	69.09	14.94

Table 7.3 illustrates satisfaction ratings for life as a whole and income for migrant workers and urban residents. The table shows that both migrant workers and urban residents reported higher levels of overall life satisfaction when compared to their PWI-A scores. The mean for migrant workers' satisfaction with life as a whole was 67.27 (SD=20.03), which was 1.34 higher than their PWI-A score. In addition, both migrant workers and urban residents reported the lowest satisfaction ratings for income when compared with the items for the PWI-A, such as standard of living. According to Table 7.2, the lowest mean scores were reported with regard to future security (57.80 for migrant workers and 64.07 for urban residents), and they were still much higher than both groups' satisfaction with income (52.87 for China's migrant workers and 53.30 for urban residents).

**Table 7.3: Satisfaction ratings for life as a whole and income**

	China's migrant workers		Shanghai's urban residents	
	N=300		N=300	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Satisfaction with...				
Life as a whole	67.27	20.03	70.57	19.32
Income	52.87	25.40	53.30	25.76

There were significant differences in the PWI-A items, together with the PWI-A score, between migrant workers and urban residents. According to Table 7.4, the statistically significant differences concerned satisfaction with standard of living, life achievement, personal relationships, feeling part of community, future security, and the PWI-A score, for which urban residents were statistically higher than migrant workers. This was also the case with regard to satisfaction with health, in which migrant workers scored statistically higher. This probably means that urban residents have a higher life satisfaction and SWB than migrant workers, except for their level of satisfaction with physical health. Evidence from the interviews also suggests that migrant workers are less happy than urban residents, whether in the thoughts of migrant worker or urban resident respondents (see Chapter 9).

**Table 7.4: Comparing the satisfaction ratings of migrant workers and urban residents**

	China's migrant workers		Shanghai's urban residents		Mean diff	t-statistic	p-value
	N=300		N=300				
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Standard of living	64.60	20.50	69.73	20.16	-5.13	-3.092	0.002*
Health	75.67	19.78	70.67	19.53	5.00	3.116	0.002*
Life achievement	61.07	21.93	64.90	19.96	-3.83	-2.239	0.026*
Personal relationships	71.43	20.24	75.03	16.57	-3.60	-2.384	0.017*
Personal safety	73.03	21.35	74.57	19.24	-1.53	-0.924	0.356
Feeling part of community	57.93	24.53	64.67	22.22	-6.73	-3.523	0.000*
Future security	57.80	25.99	64.07	22.24	-6.27	-3.173	0.002*
Personal Well-Being Index	65.93	15.67	69.09	14.94	-3.16	-2.526	0.012*

\*Significant differences are marked by “\*”, and the significance level is 0.05.

#### 7.2.4.2 Gender, age, education, material status, and SWB

Table 7.5 presents item scores and the PWI-A scores by gender among migrant workers, which show no significant gender differences in the items of PWI -A and the PWI-A score, according to student's *t*-test at the 0.05 level.

**Table 7.5: The PWI-A by gender among migrant workers**

	Males N=154		Females N=146		t-statistic	p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Standard of living	63.57	21.01	65.68	19.96	0.89	0.37
Health	76.82	19.26	74.45	20.31	-1.04	0.30
Life achievement	60.65	22.42	61.51	21.48	0.34	0.74
Personal relationships	71.56	20.93	71.30	19.56	-0.11	0.91
Personal safety	72.60	21.87	73.49	20.86	0.36	0.72
Feeling part of community	58.90	24.46	56.92	24.65	-0.70	0.49
Future security	58.18	25.17	57.40	26.91	-0.26	0.79
Personal Well-Being Index	66.04	15.76	65.82	15.62	-0.12	0.91

Table 7.6 demonstrates migrant workers' PWI-A scores broken down by age, educational background, and marital status. The table shows that there were no significant statistical differences between different age ( $F(3, 296)=0.26, p=0.85$ ), educational background ( $F(3, 296)=1.45, p=0.23$ ), and material status ( $F(3, 296)=1.18, p=0.32$ ) groups, as determined by one-way ANOVA. It can also be seen that, from the categories 'unschooled' to 'senior secondary', the respondents who received more education reported higher levels of life satisfaction than those who were less educated. The respondents within the category 'tertiary and higher' reported a slightly lower level of life satisfaction than those in the category of 'senior secondary'. This may be because highly-educated respondents experienced more financial strain and life stress owing to their aspirations to settle in the cities. Evidence from the interviews also demonstrates that highly-educated migrant workers are more likely to experience stress because they want to get ahead more; in this sense, they believe that they will have a much better chance of settling in Shanghai if they achieve success in their jobs. Note that, the scores for all the dimensions of the PWI-A, such as 'standard of living', 'health', and so on, were also statistically insignificant with respect to age, education, and marital status at the 0.05 level.

**Table 7.6: The PWI-A by age, education, and marital status among migrant workers**

	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	Mean	SD	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i> -value
<b>Age</b>					0.26	0.85
15-24	80	26.67	66.13	14.45		
25-34	95	31.67	66.50	16.25		
35-44	75	25.00	64.57	14.52		
>45	50	16.67	66.60	18.24		
<b>Education</b>					1.45	0.23
Unschooling	10	3.33	60.29	12.83		
Primary and junior secondary	152	50.67	64.62	16.19		
Senior secondary	63	21.00	68.07	15.96		
Tertiary and higher	75	25.00	67.54	14.45		
<b>Marital status</b>					1.18	0.32
Married	201	67.00	66.25	16.59		
Single, with a boyfriend/girlfriend	40	13.33	61.82	13.03		
Single, without a boyfriend/girlfriend	56	18.67	67.68	13.80		
Divorced, widowed, or separated	3	1.00	66.67	13.58		

One-way ANOVA finds that the PWI-A score was not statistically significant with respect to age, education, and marital status at the  $p < 0.05$  level.

#### 7.2.4.3 Income, working hours, number of children, and SWB

Table 7.7 displays respondents' satisfaction ratings for the PWI-A, broken down based on average monthly income. The table shows that, although the category '>10,000' had the greatest satisfaction in many aspects of life, such as 'standard of living', respondents from this category tended to have the lowest mean in the dimension of 'personal safety'. This is consistent with what was suggested in the interviews, i.e. a community with better economic conditions, such as urban residents and better-off migrant workers, can also benefit from creating an equal society and increasing public safety (see Chapter 8).

One-way ANOVA also finds that the satisfaction ratings for 'standard of living' ( $F(4, 295)=3.10, p=0.016$ ) and 'future security' ( $F(4, 295)=3.88, p=0.004$ ) were statistically significant with respect to income at the 0.05 level. The income categories '0-1,620' and '1,621-3,000' ( $p=0.012$ ), '1,621-3,000' and '>10,000' ( $p=0.009$ ), and '3,001-6,000' and '>10,000' ( $p=0.043$ ), indicated significant differences in the satisfaction rating for 'standard of living', according to Fisher's least significant difference (LSD) *post hoc* test at  $p < 0.05$ .

**Table 7.7: The PWI-A by average monthly income among migrant workers**

	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p-value</i>
<b>Standard of living</b>					3.096	0.016*
0-1,620	47	15.67	69.36	19.04		
1,621-3,000	106	35.33	60.38	19.76		
3,001-6,000	106	35.33	64.62	19.03		
6,001-10,000	32	10.67	67.50	26.27		
>10,000	9	3.00	78.60	20.88		
Total	300		64.60	20.50		
<b>Health</b>					0.673	0.611
0-1,620	47	15.67	73.40	19.14		
1,621-3,000	106	35.33	76.32	20.06		
3,001-6,000	106	35.33	74.72	20.06		
6,001-10,000	32	10.67	77.81	21.06		
>10,000	9	3.00	83.33	10.00		
Total	300		75.67	19.78		
<b>Life achievement</b>					2.407	0.050
0-1,620	47	15.67	56.60	23.62		
1,621-3,000	106	35.33	59.06	20.59		
3,001-6,000	106	35.33	62.17	21.16		
6,001-10,000	32	10.67	66.25	25.75		
>10,000	9	3.00	76.67	14.14		
Total	300		61.07	21.94		
<b>Personal relationships</b>					0.530	0.714
0-1,620	47	15.67	67.87	22.45		
1,621-3,000	106	35.33	71.60	18.88		
3,001-6,000	106	35.33	71.89	19.62		
6,001-10,000	32	10.67	74.06	24.74		
>10,000	9	3.00	73.33	14.14		
Total	300		71.43	20.24		
<b>Personal safety</b>					1.480	0.208
0-1,620	47	15.67	68.30	24.08		
1,621-3,000	106	35.33	72.26	21.35		
3,001-6,000	106	35.33	74.91	19.43		
6,001-10,000	32	10.67	78.13	23.20		
>10,000	9	3.00	66.67	18.71		
Total	300		73.03	21.35		
<b>Feeling part of community</b>					1.669	0.157
0-1,620	47	15.67	56.17	26.67		
1,621-3,000	106	35.33	54.62	22.94		
3,001-6,000	106	35.33	59.06	23.20		
6,001-10,000	32	10.67	64.69	30.58		
>10,000	9	3.00	68.89	17.64		
Total	300		57.93	24.53		
<b>Future security</b>					3.877	0.004*
0-1,620	47	15.67	52.34	27.99		
1,621-3,000	106	35.33	52.74	24.52		
3,001-6,000	106	35.33	61.70	24.40		
6,001-10,000	32	10.67	64.69	29.40		
>10,000	9	3.00	75.56	20.68		
Total	300		57.80	25.99		
<b>PWI-A score</b>					2.308	0.058
0-1,620	47	15.67	63.43	16.19		
1,621-3,000	106	35.33	63.85	14.39		
3,001-6,000	106	35.33	67.01	14.89		
6,001-10,000	32	10.67	70.45	20.51		
>10,000	9	3.00	74.76	11.20		
Total	300		65.93	15.67		

\*Significant differences are marked by '\*'. One-way ANOVA finds that the satisfaction ratings for 'standard of living' and 'future security' were statistically significant with respect to income at the  $p < 0.05$  level.

Fisher's LSD also shows that the income categories '0-1,620' and '3,001-6,000' ( $p=0.037$ ), '0-1,620' and '6,001-10,000' ( $p=0.035$ ), '0-1,620' and '>10,000' ( $p=0.013$ ), '1,621-3,000' and '3,001-6,000' ( $p=0.011$ ), '1,621-3,000' and '6,001-10,000' ( $p=0.021$ ), and '1,621-3,000' and '>10,000' ( $p=0.010$ ), were statistically different in the satisfaction rating of 'future security' at the 0.05 level. In this sense, although there were no significant differences between the two groups with the lowest income levels (i.e. '0-1,620' and '1,621-3,000') in the 'future security' score, there were significant differences with the other three categories with higher income levels. This probably means that migrant workers who earn less than 3,000 RMB a month usually have a significantly lower satisfaction with regard to 'future security' when compared to those who earn more than 3,000 RMB per month. Such a speculation can be supported by evidence from the interviews, which propose that migrant workers' insecurities about their future lives mainly originate from the financial anxiety caused by low incomes, little savings, and the lack of a retirement pension and medical insurance (see Chapter 8). In general, respondents who have higher incomes tend to have higher subjective wellbeing and life satisfaction, though there were no significant income differences in the PWI-A scores, according to one-way ANOVA ( $F(4, 295)=2.31, p=0.058$ ) at the 0.05 level.

Table 7.8 presents respondents' satisfaction ratings for the PWI-A, broken down based on weekly working hours. The student's t-test finds that the satisfaction ratings for 'feeling part of community' and 'future security' were statistically significant with respect to weekly working hours at the 0.05 level. Moreover, working long hours is often interconnected with lower incomes and blue-collar careers, according to the questionnaire data. This is because (1) about 56 per cent of the respondents who worked more than 44 hours per week earned no more than 3,000 RMB per month; and (2) based on question A13 (What is your job?) in the questionnaire, the professions of the respondents who worked more than 44 hours every week mainly included factory workers, construction workers, cleaners, restaurant workers, and self-employed catering industry workers.

**Table 7.8: The PWI-A by working hours among migrant workers**

	0-44		>44		t-statistic	p-value
	N=117		N=183			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Standard of living	67.35	19.32	62.84	21.10	1.87	0.063
Health	74.19	20.23	76.61	19.49	-1.04	0.301
Life achievement	61.03	20.44	61.09	22.90	-0.03	0.979
Personal relationships	70.60	19.27	71.97	20.88	-0.57	0.569
Personal safety	74.36	21.15	72.19	21.50	0.859	0.391
Feeling part of community	62.22	21.86	55.19	25.78	2.44	0.015*
Future security	63.85	25.52	53.93	25.61	3.27	0.001*
Personal Well-Being Index	67.66	15.89	64.83	15.47	1.53	0.128

\*Significant differences are marked by '\*'. The student's t-test finds that the satisfaction ratings of 'feeling part of community' and 'future security' were statistically significant with respect to working hours at the  $p < 0.05$  level.

Evidence from the interviews also demonstrates that job dissatisfaction caused by long working hours and low incomes is one of the main reasons for the happiness gap between migrant workers and urban residents (see Chapter 9).

Based on grouping the number of children the respondents had, Table 7.9 shows that the satisfaction ratings for 'standard of living' ( $F(4, 295)=2.96, p=0.020$ ) were statistically significant with respect to the number of children at the  $p < 0.05$  level. Subsequent Fisher's LSD analysis shows that the '4 children' group was significantly different from 'No child' ( $p=0.09$ ), '1 child' ( $p=0.02$ ), '2 children' ( $p=0.03$ ), and '3 children' ( $p=0.04$ ) at  $p < 0.05$ . This means that the respondents who had four children reported the lowest satisfaction with standard of living among all the groups, while there were no significant differences in the satisfaction of living standards between the remaining groups.

**Table 7.9: The PWI-A by number of children among migrant workers**

	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i> -value
<b>Standard of living</b>					2.955	0.020*
No child	102	34.00	62.16	18.54		
1 child	102	34.00	66.57	21.69		
2 children	72	24.00	66.11	21.20		
3 children	20	6.67	67.50	17.43		
4 children	4	1.33	35.00	17.32		
Total	300		64.60	20.50		
<b>Health</b>					1.360	0.248
No child	102	34.00	74.22	19.87		
1 child	102	34.00	75.78	19.82		
2 children	72	24.00	77.36	19.79		
3 children	20	6.67	80.00	16.86		
4 children	4	1.33	57.50	26.30		
Total	300		75.50	19.78		
<b>Life achievement</b>					0.970	0.424
No child	102	34.00	59.51	18.21		
1 child	102	34.00	61.57	24.93		
2 children	72	24.00	62.08	23.91		
3 children	20	6.67	66.00	16.35		
4 children	4	1.33	45.00	5.77		
Total	300		61.07	21.94		
<b>Personal relationships</b>					0.378	0.825
No child	102	34.00	71.67	16.42		
1 child	102	34.00	69.71	21.50		
2 children	72	24.00	73.37	24.10		
3 children	20	6.67	72.00	17.35		
4 children	4	1.33	70.00	18.26		
Total	300		71.43	20.24		
<b>Personal safety</b>					0.530	0.714
No child	102	34.00	73.82	18.78		
1 child	102	34.00	73.73	20.49		
2 children	72	24.00	72.78	26.07		
3 children	20	6.67	66.50	20.33		
4 children	4	1.33	72.50	20.62		
Total	300		73.03	21.35		
<b>Feeling part of community</b>					0.979	0.714
No child	102	34.00	60.29	21.41		
1 child	102	34.00	58.82	24.22		
2 children	72	24.00	53.47	29.37		
3 children	20	6.67	59.00	21.25		
4 children	4	1.33	50.00	27.08		
Total	300		57.93	24.53		
<b>Future security</b>					1.259	0.286
No child	102	34.00	60.88	19.56		
1 child	102	34.00	58.53	28.61		
2 children	72	24.00	54.44	29.55		
3 children	20	6.67	54.00	27.42		
4 children	4	1.33	40.00	18.26		
Total	300		57.80	25.99		
<b>PWI-A score</b>					0.727	0.574
No child	102	34.00	66.08	13.30		
1 child	102	34.00	66.39	17.19		
2 children	72	24.00	65.67	17.28		
3 children	20	6.67	66.43	13.42		
4 children	4	1.33	52.86	10.88		
Total	300		65.93	15.67		

\*Significant differences are marked by “\*”. One-way ANOVA finds that the satisfaction ratings for ‘standard of living’ were statistically significant with respect to the number of children at the  $p < 0.05$  level.

#### 7.2.4.4 Housing status, length of residence, and SWB

The questionnaire analysis reveals that ‘housing status’ and ‘length of residence’ are the most important variables influencing the levels of participants’ life satisfaction. Table 7.10 represents participants’ satisfaction ratings by housing conditions. It shows that the category ‘renting’ reported the lowest item scores and PWI-A score among all the categories.

One-way ANOVA finds that the satisfaction ratings for ‘standard of living’ ( $F(3, 296)=2.95, p=0.033$ ), ‘feeling part of community’ ( $F(3, 296)=3.15, p=0.025$ ), and ‘future security’ ( $F(3, 296)=3.16, p=0.025$ ) were statistically significant with respect to housing status at the 0.05 level. Fisher’s LSD ( $p<0.05$ ) shows that the ‘renting’ group was significantly different from ‘living in his/her own apartment/house’ ( $p=0.040$ ) and ‘other situation’ ( $p=0.033$ ) in the satisfaction ratings of ‘standard of living’. The category ‘renting’ was also different from ‘living in his/her own apartment/house’ ( $p=0.006$ ) ( $p=0.014$ ) and ‘living in a staff dormitory’ ( $p=0.046$ ) ( $p=0.026$ ) in the items of ‘feeling part of community’ and ‘future security’. Moreover, as determined by the one-way ANOVA, the PWI-A scores ( $F(3, 296)=2.92, p=0.035$ ) were statistically significant with respect to housing status; in addition, according to Fisher’s LSD, the categories ‘renting’ and ‘living in a staff dormitory’ ( $p=0.029$ ) indicated significant differences in the PWI-A score.

This means that (1) respondents who rented may have the lowest life satisfaction among all categories, and (2) the happiness gap between migrant workers and urban residents may be related to their different housing conditions. This is because most migrant workers (53.67 per cent) lived in rented homes, whereas most urban residents (86.33 per cent) lived in owner-occupied homes. In addition, migrant workers who lived in owner-occupied homes reported much higher item scores and a much higher PWI-A score than those who lived in other housing conditions – both their item scores (except for the items ‘health’ and ‘personal relationships’) and the PWI-A score were very close to those of urban residents, and they even had a slightly higher PWI-A score than urban residents (Mean=69.09, SD=14.94).

**Table 7.10: Satisfaction ratings of the PWI-A and housing status**

	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p-value</i>
<b><i>Standard of living</i></b>					2.945	0.033*
Living in his/her own apartment/house	49	16.33	68.78	19.65		
Renting	161	53.67	61.93	20.51		
Living in a staff dormitory	84	28.00	66.19	20.71		
Other situations	6	2.00	80.00	10.96		
Total	300		64.60	20.50		
<b><i>Health</i></b>					0.687	0.561
Living in his/her own apartment/house	49	16.33	75.31	16.60		
Renting	161	53.67	75.09	20.83		
Living in a staff dormitory	84	28.00	76.19	19.99		
Other situations	6	2.00	86.67	8.17		
Total	300		75.67	19.78		
<b><i>Life achievement</i></b>					1.117	0.342
Living in his/her own apartment/house	49	16.33	65.10	21.90		
Renting	161	53.67	59.19	21.88		
Living in a staff dormitory	84	28.00	61.90	21.76		
Other situations	6	2.00	66.67	25.82		
Total	300		61.07	21.94		
<b><i>Personal relationships</i></b>					1.099	0.350
Living in his/her own apartment/house	49	16.33	71.02	19.07		
Renting	161	53.67	70.50	20.91		
Living in a staff dormitory	84	28.00	71.50	19.99		
Other situations	6	2.00	85.00	10.49		
Total	300		71.43	20.24		
<b><i>Personal safety</i></b>					1.429	0.235
Living in his/her own apartment/house	49	16.33	74.90	20.53		
Renting	161	53.67	71.06	22.52		
Living in a staff dormitory	84	28.00	74.88	19.67		
Other situations	6	2.00	85.00	13.78		
Total	300		73.03	21.35		
<b><i>Feeling part of community</i></b>					3.148	0.025*
Living in his/her own apartment/house	49	16.33	65.31	21.80		
Renting	161	53.67	54.29	23.66		
Living in a staff dormitory	84	28.00	60.83	25.99		
Other situations	6	2.00	55.00	34.50		
Total	300		57.93	24.53		
<b><i>Future security</i></b>					3.159	0.025*
Living in his/her own apartment/house	49	16.33	64.08	27.23		
Renting	161	53.67	53.66	25.02		
Living in a staff dormitory	84	28.00	61.43	26.21		
Other situations	6	2.00	66.67	24.22		
Total	300		57.80	25.99		
<b><i>PWI-A score</i></b>					2.915	0.035*
Living in his/her own apartment/house	49	16.33	69.21	15.09		
Renting	161	53.67	63.67	15.12		
Living in a staff dormitory	84	28.00	67.70	16.58		
Other situations	6	2.00	75.00	13.99		
Total	300		65.93	15.67		

\*Significant differences are marked by '\*'. One-way ANOVA finds that the satisfaction ratings for 'standard of living', 'feeling part of community', and 'future security' were statistically significant with respect to housing status at the  $p < 0.05$  level. It also finds that the PWI-A scores were statistically significant with respect to housing status at  $p < 0.05$ .

Evidence from the interviews also demonstrates that not having their own homes in Shanghai has been one of the main reasons for migrant workers' lower levels of material wellbeing, which can lead to a happiness gap between the two social groups (see Chapter 9).

Table 7.11 represents participants' satisfaction ratings by length of residence. It finds that participants' life satisfaction was u-shaped over the length of residence. In this sense, the scores usually sank down to the bottom in the category ' $5 \leq \text{duration of stay} < 10$ ', while reaching the top in the range ' $\geq 10$ '. One-way ANOVA analysis finds that the item scores for 'standard of living' ( $F(3, 296)=5.57, p=0.001$ ), 'health' ( $F(3, 296)=3.71, p=0.012$ ), and 'life achievement' ( $F(3, 296)=3.67, p=0.013$ ), together with the PWI-A score, were statistically significant with respect to length of residence at the 0.05 level. Fisher's LSD ( $p < 0.05$ ) finds that ' $\geq 10$ ' was significantly different from ' $1 \leq \text{duration of stay} < 5$ ' and ' $5 \leq \text{duration of stay} < 10$ ' in the item scores for 'standard of living', 'health', 'life achievement', and the PWI-A scores.<sup>49</sup> This illustrates that migrant workers who have been living in Shanghai no less than ten years usually have a higher life satisfaction than those who have stayed less than ten years but no less than one year.

Such a finding is in accord with the interview results, which suggest that ten years is a watershed for migrant workers with regard to urbanisation (see Chapter 8 and Table 8.8). The point to emphasise here is that the length of residence not only influences migrant workers' satisfaction with regard to their basic psychological needs of relatedness, but it also has a significant impact on their levels of life satisfaction, particularly in the dimensions of standard of living, physical health, and life achievement. In short, length of residence may have significant psychological and economic effects on the happiness of migrant workers. In combining the questionnaire and interview results, both migrant workers' sense of belonging and material conditions have grown over time; in this sense, they could be converted into urban residents, psychologically and economically, after having lived in the city for ten years.

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<sup>49</sup> The category ' $\geq 10$ ' was significantly different from ' $1 \leq \text{duration of stay} < 5$ ' ( $p=0.000$ ) ( $p=0.031$ ) ( $p=0.011$ ) and ' $5 \leq \text{duration of stay} < 10$ ' ( $p=0.001$ ) ( $p=0.001$ ) ( $p=0.002$ ) in the item scores for 'standard of living', 'health', and 'life achievement'. The category ' $\geq 10$ ' was also significantly different from ' $1 \leq \text{duration of stay} < 5$ ' ( $p=0.016$ ) and ' $5 \leq \text{duration of stay} < 10$ ' ( $p=0.003$ ) in the PWI-A score.

**Table 7.11: The PWI-A by length of residence among migrant workers**

	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p-value</i>
<b>Standard of living</b>					5.568	0.001*
<1	10	3.33	62.00	19.32		
1≤duration of stay<5	132	44.00	62.05	18.89		
5≤duration of stay<10	71	23.67	60.70	20.38		
≥10	87	29.00	71.95	21.50		
Total	300		64.60	20.50		
<b>Health</b>					3.714	0.012*
<1	10	3.33	79.00	15.95		
1≤duration of stay<5	132	44.00	74.85	20.58		
5≤duration of stay<10	71	23.67	70.56	17.72		
≥10	87	29.00	80.69	19.58		
Total	300		75.67	19.78		
<b>Life achievement</b>					3.668	0.013*
<1	10	3.33	63.00	26.69		
1≤duration of stay<5	132	44.00	59.47	21.77		
5≤duration of stay<10	71	23.67	56.34	18.84		
≥10	87	29.00	67.13	22.97		
Total	300		61.07	21.94		
<b>Personal relationships</b>					2.370	0.071
<1	10	3.33	84.00	13.50		
1≤duration of stay<5	132	44.00	70.23	20.32		
5≤duration of stay<10	71	23.67	68.73	18.67		
≥10	87	29.00	74.02	21.43		
Total	300		71.43	20.24		
<b>Personal safety</b>					1.471	0.222
<1	10	3.33	82.00	18.14		
1≤duration of stay<5	132	44.00	73.11	20.23		
5≤duration of stay<10	71	23.67	69.44	20.56		
≥10	87	29.00	74.83	23.67		
Total	300		73.03	21.35		
<b>Feeling part of community</b>					1.282	0.281
<1	10	3.33	60.29	21.41		
1≤duration of stay<5	132	44.00	58.82	24.22		
5≤duration of stay<10	71	23.67	53.47	29.37		
≥10	87	29.00	59.00	21.25		
Total	300		57.93	24.53		
<b>Future security</b>					1.455	0.227
<1	10	3.33	44.00	26.33		
1≤duration of stay<5	132	44.00	58.33	23.42		
5≤duration of stay<10	71	23.67	55.49	25.12		
≥10	87	29.00	60.46	29.88		
Total	300		57.80	25.99		
<b>PWI-A score</b>					3.323	0.020*
<1	10	3.33	66.14	14.80		
1≤duration of stay<5	132	44.00	64.91	15.11		
5≤duration of stay<10	71	23.67	62.70	15.01		
≥10	87	29.00	70.10	16.47		
Total	300		65.93	15.67		

\*Significant differences are marked by '\*'. One-way ANOVA finds that the satisfaction ratings for 'standard of living', 'health', and 'life achievement' were statistically significant with respect to length of residence at the  $p < 0.05$  level. It also finds that the PWI-A scores were statistically significant with respect to length of residence at  $p < 0.05$ .

Moreover, length of residence can also have an impact on migrant workers' housing status in that they are more likely, over time, to have their own homes in Shanghai. This is because (1) the percentage owning their homes in Shanghai (34.49 per cent) has doubled after having lived in Shanghai for at least ten years; and (2) more than 60 per cent of the participants who reported having their own homes in Shanghai have been living there for at least ten years. Evidence from the interviews also suggests that most participants who stayed no fewer than ten years owned their homes in Shanghai, before which they usually strived to buy homes in Shanghai (see Chapter 8).

*7.2.4.5 Internal reliability and validity of the PWI-A*

Based on the questionnaires about China's migrant workers, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient for the PWI-A was 0.83, which represents good reliability and is comparable to the findings of prior studies on this issue. The item-total (domain-PWI) correlations ranged from 0.48 to 0.65, and many items displayed a moderate item-total correlation of around 0.5. The inter-item correlations illustrated by Table 7.12 ranged from 0.28 to 0.59. The highest inter-item correlations were for 'standard of living' with 'life achievement' (0.59), and the lowest correlations were for 'future security' with 'health' (0.28).

**Table 7.12: The PWI-A domains: Inter-item correlation matrix**

	SOL	HLTH	ACH	REL	SAF	COM	SEC
SOL	1.00						
HLTH	0.35	1.00					
ACH	0.59	0.35	1.00				
REL	0.45	0.38	0.51	1.00			
SAF	0.39	0.41	0.37	0.45	1.00		
COM	0.45	0.35	0.40	0.34	0.40	1.00	
SEC	0.52	0.28	0.52	0.35	0.39	0.56	1.00

*SOL*=standard of living, *HLTH*=health, *ACH*=life achievement, *REL*=personal relationships, *SAF*=personal safety, *COM*=feeling part of community, and *SEC*=future security. All the correlations are significant at the  $p < 0.01$  level.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was applied to verify the constructive validity of the PWI-A. Table 7.13 illustrates the model fit indices of the PWI-A, finding that the model fit index of NFI (i.e. 0.913), IFI (i.e. 0.932), and CFI (i.e. 0.931) were all greater than 0.90, which represents a good model fit. Table 7.14 represents the standardised regression coefficients for all the items of the PWI-A, finding that the factor loadings for the seven

items ranged from 0.511 to 0.738. Therefore, the CFA suggests good internal construct validity for the PWI-A.

**Table 7.13: The PWI-A: Model fit indices**

	CMIN/DF	NFI	IFI	CFI	RMSEA	LO90	HI90
Model	4.250	0.913	0.932	0.931	0.104	0.078	0.132

**Table 7.14: The PWI-A: The factor loadings**

	Estimate
SOL	0.738
HLTH	0.611
ACH	0.735
REL	0.626
SAF	0.586
COM	0.636
SEC	0.693

*SOL*=standard of living, *HLTH*=health, *ACH*=life achievement, *REL*=personal relationships, *SAF*=personal safety, *COM*=feeling part of community, and *SEC*=future security. All the correlations are significant at the  $p < 0.01$  level.

#### 7.2.4.6 The MUNSH scores

The means and standard deviations of the MUNSH scores for both migrant workers and urban residents are presented in Table 7.15. The mean of the MUNSH score was 31.50 (SD=9.10) for migrant workers and 34.52 (SD=9.21) for urban residents, which illustrates that both migrant workers and urban residents' health-related wellbeing were located at the intermediate level. The actual range of MUNSH scores was from 7 to 48 for migrant workers and 6 to 48 for urban residents. Three per cent of migrant workers and 2.67 per cent of urban residents reported lower levels of happiness (less than or equal to 12 points); 59.33 per cent of migrant workers and 42.67 per cent of urban residents reported moderate happiness (between 12 and 36 points); 37.67 per cent of migrant workers and 54.67 per cent of urban residents reported higher levels of happiness (36 points or above). Thus, most migrant worker respondents reported having moderate happiness, while most urban resident respondents reported having higher levels of happiness. The student's t-test ( $p <$

0.05) shows that there were statistically significant differences in MUNSH scores between migrant workers and urban residents, suggesting that urban residents may have higher psychological wellbeing than migrant workers.

**Table 7.15: The MUNSH: Descriptive statics (Panel A)**

	China's migrant workers <i>N</i> =300		Shanghai's urban residents <i>N</i> =300		Mean difference	<i>t</i> -statistic	<i>p</i> -value
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>			
The MUNSH score	31.50	9.10	34.52	9.21	-3.02	-4.041	0.000*

\*Significant differences are marked by ‘\*’. The significance level is 0.05.

#### 7.2.4.7 The demographic variables and mental health

Table 7.16 demonstrates migrant workers’ MUNSH scores, broken down according to gender, age, education, marital status, number of children, income, housing, working hours, and duration of stay. The MUNSH scores were statistically insignificant with respect to all the above variables, except for housing status ( $F(3, 296)=4.12, p=0.007$ ). The category ‘living in a staff dormitory’ was significantly different from ‘living in his/her own apartment/house’ ( $p=0.003$ ), ‘other situations’ ( $p=0.029$ ), and ‘renting’ ( $p=0.039$ ) in the MUNSH score at the 0.05 level. In this sense, migrant workers who live in dorms may have the lowest psychological wellbeing, whereas those who have their own homes in Shanghai may have the highest. Housing status is also a significant variable affecting respondents’ (migrant workers) PWI-A score (or SWB).

#### 7.2.4.8 Internal reliability and validity of the MUNSH

The MUNSH in Chinese was used without any modification in this questionnaire since it had been widely applied in previous studies conducted in China (e.g. Dai et al., 2013). As the sub-scales NA and NE were reverse scored, the data for the two sub-scales were properly reversed for analysis purposes. Based on the survey of 300 Chinese migrant workers in Shanghai in 2014, Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  coefficient for the whole MUNSH was 0.83, which indicates good internal reliability. Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  coefficients for the four sub-scales were 0.72 (PA), 0.60 (NA), 0.58 (PE), and 0.69 (NE). Item 19 (If you could live where you wanted, where would you live?) in the sub-scale PE had inadequate reliability. If this item was deleted, Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  coefficient for PE was 0.66 and 0.84 for the whole

MUNSH. The inter-scale correlations ranged from 0.42 to 0.86 (see Table 7.17). The highest correlations were for NA with NE (0.86), whereas the lowest correlations were for PA with NA (0.42).

**Table 7.16: The MUNSH: descriptive statistics (Panel B)**

	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	Mean	SD	<i>p</i> -value
<b>Gender</b>					0.467
Male	154	51.33	31.13	8.75	
Female	146	48.67	31.90	9.46	
<b>Age</b>					0.304
15-24	80	26.67	30.03	8.92	
25-34	95	31.67	31.43	9.43	
35-44	75	25.00	32.57	8.82	
>45	50	16.67	32.40	9.09	
<b>Education</b>					0.456
Unschoolled	10	3.33	28.70	7.59	
Primary and junior secondary	152	50.67	31.68	9.50	
Senior secondary	63	21.00	32.59	7.95	
Tertiary and higher	75	25.00	30.61	9.33	
<b>Marital status</b>					0.075
Married	201	67.00	29.02	8.98	
Single, with a boyfriend/girlfriend	40	13.33	30.73	8.23	
Single, without a boyfriend/girlfriend	56	18.67	32.40	9.21	
Divorced, widowed, or separated	3	1.00	28.00	7.00	
<b>Number of children</b>					0.057
No child	102	34.00	30.07	8.90	
1 child	102	34.00	31.37	9.30	
2 children	72	24.00	33.50	9.10	
3 children	20	6.67	33.60	7.92	
4 children	4	1.33	25.00	6.98	
<b>Average monthly income (yuan)</b>					0.298
0-1,620	47	15.67	30.70	10.27	
1,621-3,000	106	35.33	32.18	8.44	
3,001-6,000	106	35.33	31.22	8.80	
6,001-10,000	32	10.67	29.94	10.39	
>10,000	9	3.00	36.67	8.20	
<b>Housing</b>					0.007*
Living in his/her own apartment/house	49	16.33	34.08	9.73	
Renting	161	53.67	31.70	8.95	
Living in a staff dormitory	84	28.00	29.20	8.66	
Other situations	6	2.00	37.50	5.96	
<b>Working hours per week</b>					0.717
0-44	117	39.00	31.27	9.07	
>44	183	61.00	31.66	9.13	
<b>Duration of stay (year/years)</b>					0.315
<1	10	3.33	31.00	7.83	
1≤duration of stay<5	132	44.00	30.42	9.07	
5≤duration of stay<10	71	23.67	32.48	9.12	
≥10	87	29.00	32.40	9.21	

\*Significant differences are marked by \*\*. One-way ANOVA finds that the MUNSH scores were statistically significant with respect to housing status at the  $p < 0.05$  level.

**Table 7.17: The MUNSH: Inter-correlations of the sub-scales**

	PA	NA	PE	NE
PA	1.00			
NA	0.42	1.00		
PE	0.70	0.64	1.00	
NE	0.40	0.86	0.54	1.00

By utilising confirmatory factor analysis, Table 7.18 demonstrates the model fit indices of the MUNSH. The model fit index of NFI (0.683), IFI (0.795), and CFI (0.795) were all less than 0.90, which suggests an inadequate model fit. RMSEA (0.065) was between 0.05 and 0.08, which indicates a moderate model fit (MacCallum et al., 1996). Based on each sub-scale, Table 7.19 represents the standardised regression coefficients for the MUNSH items, finding that most factor loadings for the 24 items were around 0.5. The highest was for item 21 (I am as happy now as when I was younger) (0.763), whereas the lowest was for item 24 (My health is the same or better than most people's my age) (0.225). The correlation between item 19 and sub-scale PE was insignificant at the  $p < 0.001$  level. The AVE values for PA, NA, and NE were less than 0.5, suggesting insufficient construct validity of the sub-scales. Therefore, the MUNSH in Chinese has good reliability and inadequate validity.

**Table 7.18: The MUNSH: Model fit indices**

	CMIN/DF	NFI	IFI	CFI	RMSEA	LO90	HI90
Model	2.249	0.683	0.795	0.791	0.065	0.057	0.072

#### 7.2.4.9 The BNSG-S scores

The means and standard deviations of AVG-A, AVG-C, and AVG-R for both migrant workers and urban residents are shown in Table 7.20. The student's t-test ( $p < 0.05$ ) shows that there were statistically significant differences in AVG-A, AVG-C, and AVG-R between migrant workers and urban residents, which indicates that urban residents may have higher self-actualisation than migrant workers.

**Table 7.19: The MUNSH: The factor loadings**

	Estimate
Q1 (PA)	0.619
Q2 (PA)	0.526
Q3 (PA)	0.671
Q4 (PA)	0.512
Q10 (PA)	0.580
Q5 (NA)	0.503
Q6 (NA)	0.651
Q7 (NA)	0.608
Q8 (NA)	0.252
Q9 (NA)	0.552
Q12 (PE)	0.696
Q14 (PE)	0.382
Q15 (PE)	0.449
Q19 (PE)	0.034
Q21 (PE)	0.763
Q23 (PE)	0.436
Q24 (PE)	0.225
Q11 (NE)	0.488
Q13 (NE)	0.433
Q16 (NE)	0.499
Q17 (NE)	0.559
Q18 (NE)	0.466
Q20 (NE)	0.582
Q22 (NE)	0.408

*Q1* = the 1<sup>st</sup> item of the MUNSH, and so on (see Appendices 4 and 5). All the correlations are significant at the  $p < 0.001$  level, except *Q19*.

**Table 7.20: The BNSG-S: Descriptive statics (Panel A)**

	China's migrant workers <i>N</i> =300		Shanghai's urban residents <i>N</i> =300		Mean difference	<i>t</i> -statistic	<i>p</i> -value
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Averaged Autonomy Score	4.24	0.82	4.55	1.00	-0.31	-4.15	0.000*
Averaged Competence Score	4.50	0.82	4.77	0.88	-0.27	-3.87	0.000*
Averaged Relatedness Score	5.30	0.85	5.59	0.78	-0.29	-4.30	0.000*

Significant differences are marked by '\*'. The significance level is 0.05.

7.2.4.10 Demographic variables and self-determination

Table 7.21 represents migrant workers' AVG-A, AVG-C, and AVG-R broken down according to various demographic variables. AVG-A, AVG-C, and AVG-R were statistically insignificant with respect to gender, age, number of children, income, working hours, and duration of stay at the 0.05 significance level. The AVG-A was statistically significant in relation to marital (Welch(3, 11.788)=6.105,  $p=0.009$ ) and housing status ( $F(3, 296)=4.40$ ,  $p=0.005$ ) at the 0.05 level. The Games-Howell post hoc test shows that the category 'divorced, widowed, or separated' was significantly different from 'single, with a boyfriend/girlfriend' ( $p=0.042$ ) and 'single, without a boyfriend/girlfriend' ( $p=0.044$ ). The LSD post hoc test shows that the category 'living in a staff dormitory' was significantly different from 'living in his/her own apartment/house' ( $p=0.009$ ), 'renting' ( $p=0.027$ ), and 'other situations' ( $p=0.006$ ), which suggests that migrant workers who live in the dorm may have the lowest satisfaction in the basic psychological needs of autonomy. In addition, the AVG-C was statistically significant according to education ( $F(3, 296)=3.722$ ,  $p=0.012$ ) at the 0.05 significance level. The LSD post hoc test shows that the category 'tertiary and higher' was significantly different from 'unschooled' ( $p=0.030$ ), 'primary and junior secondary' ( $p=0.005$ ), and 'senior secondary' ( $p=0.012$ ), indicating that migrant workers with a college background or above may have the highest satisfaction in regard to the basic psychological needs of competence.

**Table 7.21: BNSG-S: Descriptive statistics (Panel B)**

	<i>N</i>	%	Mean	SD	<i>p</i> -value
<b>Gender</b>					
AVG-A Male	154	51.33	4.23	0.87	0.830
Female	146	48.67	4.25	0.76	
AVG-C Male	154	51.33	4.57	0.83	0.134
Female	146	48.67	4.43	0.81	
AVG-R Male	154	51.33	5.22	0.92	0.051
Female	146	48.67	5.41	0.77	
<b>Age</b>					
AVG-A 15-24	80	26.67	4.12	0.67	0.49
25-34	95	31.67	4.29	0.93	
35-44	75	25.00	4.28	0.79	
>45	50	16.67	4.27	0.84	
AVG-C 15-24	80	26.67	4.53	0.80	0.234
25-34	95	31.67	4.62	0.84	
35-44	75	25.00	4.42	0.88	
>45	50	16.67	4.36	0.70	

AVG-R	15-24	80	26.67	5.29	0.77	0.358
	25-34	95	31.67	5.43	0.95	
	35-44	75	25.00	5.21	0.83	
	>45	50	16.67	5.25	0.81	
<b>Education</b>						
AVG-A	Unschooler	10	3.33	4.16	1.06	0.815
	Primary and junior secondary	152	50.67	4.27	0.85	
	Senior secondary	63	21.00	4.16	0.87	
	Tertiary and higher	75	25.00	4.26	0.66	
AVG-C	Unschooler	10	3.33	4.17	0.77	0.012*
	Primary and junior secondary	152	50.67	4.44	0.77	
	Senior secondary	63	21.00	4.41	0.99	
	Tertiary and higher	75	25.00	4.76	0.72	
AVG-R	Unschooler	10	3.33	5.06	0.71	0.611
	Primary and junior secondary	152	50.67	5.27	0.90	
	Senior secondary	63	21.00	5.39	0.92	
	Tertiary and higher	75	25.00	5.35	0.72	
<b>Marital status</b>						
AVG-A	Married	201	67.00	4.28	0.89	0.009**
	Single, with a boyfriend/girlfriend	40	13.33	4.11	0.51	
	Single, without a boyfriend/girlfriend	56	18.67	4.15	0.72	
	Divorced, widowed, or separated	3	1.00	4.76	0.22	
AVG-C	Married	201	67.00	4.47	0.83	0.508
	Single, with a boyfriend/girlfriend	40	13.33	4.49	0.77	
	Single, without a boyfriend/girlfriend	56	18.67	4.62	0.85	
	Divorced, widowed, or separated	3	1.00	4.94	0.25	
AVG-R	Married	201	67.00	5.31	0.90	0.405
	Single, with a boyfriend/girlfriend	40	13.33	5.15	0.75	
	Single, without a boyfriend/girlfriend	56	18.67	5.41	0.77	
	Divorced, widowed, or separated	3	1.00	5.75	0.25	
<b>Number of children</b>						
AVG-A	No child	102	34.00	4.17	0.64	0.121 <sup>b</sup>
	1 child	102	34.00	4.19	0.85	
	2 children	72	24.00	4.49	0.96	
	3 children	20	6.67	3.94	0.78	
	4 children	4	1.33	4.25	0.54	
AVG-C	No child	102	34.00	4.62	0.77	0.220
	1 child	102	34.00	4.46	0.77	
	2 children	72	24.00	4.45	0.90	
	3 children	20	6.67	4.48	1.03	
	4 children	4	1.33	3.79	0.76	
AVG-R	No child	102	34.00	5.33	0.77	0.143
	1 child	102	34.00	5.25	0.89	
	2 children	72	24.00	5.47	0.86	
	3 children	20	6.67	4.95	0.94	
	4 children	4	1.33	5.09	0.96	
<b>Average monthly income (yuan)</b>						
AVG-A	0-1,620	47	15.67	4.23	0.96	0.970
	1,621-3,000	106	35.33	4.22	0.81	
	3,001-6,000	106	35.33	4.28	0.77	
	6,001-10,000	32	10.67	4.19	0.81	
	>10,000	9	3.00	4.13	0.87	

AVG-C	0-1,620	47	15.67	4.61	0.93	0.120
	1,621-3,000	106	35.33	4.42	0.82	
	3,001-6,000	106	35.33	4.58	0.71	
	6,001-10,000	32	10.67	4.26	0.88	
	>10,000	9	3.00	4.85	1.06	
AVG-R	0-1,620	47	15.67	5.48	0.72	0.071
	1,621-3,000	106	35.33	5.40	0.78	
	3,001-6,000	106	35.33	5.25	0.89	
	6,001-10,000	32	10.67	4.98	1.01	
	>10,000	9	3.00	5.18	0.88	
<b>Housing</b>						
AVG-A	Living in his/her own apartment/house	49	16.33	4.41	0.62	0.005*
	Renting	161	53.67	4.27	0.86	
	Living in a staff dormitory	84	28.00	4.03	0.78	
	Other situations	6	2.00	4.97	0.98	
AVG-C	Living in his/her own apartment/house	49	16.33	4.61	0.78	0.196
	Renting	161	53.67	4.50	0.85	
	Living in a staff dormitory	84	28.00	4.41	0.77	
	Other situations	6	2.00	5.06	1.03	
AVG-R	Living in his/her own apartment/house	49	16.33	5.41	0.92	0.271
	Renting	161	53.67	5.34	0.81	
	Living in a staff dormitory	84	28.00	5.17	0.88	
	Other situations	6	2.00	5.63	0.93	
<b>Working hours per week</b>						
AVG-A	0-44	117	39.00	4.21	0.78	0.612
	>44	183	61.00	4.25	0.84	
AVG-C	0-44	117	39.00	4.49	0.78	0.854
	>44	183	61.00	4.51	0.85	
AVG-R	0-44	117	39.00	5.36	0.85	0.383
	>44	183	61.00	5.27	0.85	
<b>Duration of stay (year/years)</b>						
AVG-A	<1	10	3.33	3.94	0.76	0.370
	1≤duration of stay<5	132	44.00	4.24	0.83	
	5≤duration of stay<10	71	23.67	4.16	0.81	
	≥10	87	29.00	4.33	0.80	
AVG-C	<1	10	3.33	4.53	0.78	0.257
	1≤duration of stay<5	132	44.00	4.60	0.84	
	5≤duration of stay<10	71	23.67	4.45	0.70	
	≥10	87	29.00	4.39	0.88	
AVG-R	<1	10	3.33	5.35	0.89	0.957
	1≤duration of stay<5	132	44.00	5.32	0.85	
	5≤duration of stay<10	71	23.67	5.33	0.83	
	≥10	87	29.00	5.27	0.89	

AVG-A=Averaged Autonomy Score. AVG-C=Averaged Competence Score. AVG-R=Averaged Relatedness Score. Significant differences are marked by '\*'. The significance level is 0.05. a. Welch (3, 11.788)=6.105,  $p=0.009$ . b. Welch (4, 21.05)=2.067,  $p=0.121$ .

#### 7.2.4.11 *The applicability of BNSG-S in the Chinese context*

A self-translated BNSG-S in Chinese<sup>50</sup> was adopted in this questionnaire because previous translations were not publicly available (e.g. Xie et al.'s translation in 2012). Since the BNSG-S has hardly been applied in the Chinese context, and little research has been carried out on its applicability to Chinese samples, its internal reliability and validity were examined based on both Shanghai's migrant worker (Group A hereafter) and urban resident samples (Group B hereafter) for probing its suitability in a Chinese setting.

According to Group A, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient for the whole BNSG-S was 0.72. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient for the three sub-scales were as follows: 0.45 (Autonomy), 0.36 (Competence), and 0.65 (Relatedness) (see Table 7.23). Based on Johnson and Finney (2010), Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient for the sub-scales ranged from 0.61-0.81 (Autonomy), 0.60 to 0.86 (Competence), and 0.61 to 0.90 (Relatedness), which, according to Group A, demonstrates the deficiency of the internal consistency of the sub-scales Autonomy and Competence. However, the BNSG-S and its sub-scales show vastly higher internal consistency based on Group B. As illustrated by Table 7.22, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient for the whole scale was 0.82 on the basis of Group B. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficients for the three sub-scales were 0.70 (Autonomy), 0.52 (Competence), and 0.69 (Relatedness), which demonstrate good internal consistency, except for the sub-scale Competence.

**Table 7.22: The BNSG-S: Internal consistency and inter-correlations of the sub-scales**

	Group A			Group B				
	$\alpha$	A	C	R	$\alpha$	A	C	R
Autonomy (A)	0.45	1.00			0.70	1.00		
Competence (C)	0.36	0.97 <sup>a</sup>	1.00		0.52	0.77	1.00	
Relatedness (R)	0.65	0.76	0.75 <sup>b</sup>	1.00	0.69	0.84	0.78	1.00

The significant level is 0.001.

a. The covariance between Autonomy and Competence is significantly different from zero at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).  $p=0.023$ .

b. The covariance between Competence and Relatedness is significantly different from zero at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).  $p=0.037$ .

<sup>50</sup> A two-way translation strategy was utilised in the translating process in order to ensure the accuracy and idiomaticity of the Chinese translation (see Chapter 5).

According to Group A, the inter-item correlations for the sub-scales were inadequate, since many items in the sub-scales Autonomy and Competence showed an insufficient inter-item correlation of below 0.2. The low correlations existed between the items D20 and D14, D20, and D17, D3 and D5, D3 and D10, D15 and D10, and D15 and D13 (see Appendices 4 and 5). Given that most items indicated an inter-item correlation of above 0.2, the sub-scale Relatedness represented a higher internal reliability than the sub-scales Autonomy and Competence, though it was still unsatisfactory when compared to Western samples. The lowest correlations for the sub-scale Relatedness existed between items D9 and D7 as well as D9 and D19 (see Appendices 4 and 5). However, the inter-item correlations for the sub-scales were often between 0.2 and 0.3 based on Group B, which indicates that the sub-scales may have better internal consistency according to Group B. Moreover, as reported in Table 7.22, the inter-scale correlations ranged from 0.77 to 0.84 based on Group B, whereas the covariances between Autonomy and Competence and between Competence and Relatedness were not statistically significant at the 0.001 level, according to Group A.

According to both Group A and Group B, the BNSG-S and its sub-scales have insufficient construct validity. By using confirmatory factor analysis, Table 7.23 represents the model fit indices of the BNSG-S for the two sample groups. The model fit indices of NFI (Group A=0.476, Group B=0.601), IFI (Group A=0.584, Group B=0.686), and CFI (Group A=0.571, Group B=0.680) were all less than 0.90, which indicates a deficient model fit. RMSEA was 0.078 for Group A and 0.086 for Group B, which, according to MacCallum et al. (1996), demonstrates a moderate and inadequate model fit. Table 7.24 illustrates the standardised regression coefficients for the sub-scales. It finds that, based on Group A, the sub-scales Autonomy and Competence (especially Competence) have inferior construct validity, while, based on Group B, all the sub-scales (especially Competence) have insufficient construct validity, though it is much better than that of Group A.

**Table 7.23: The BNSG-S: Model fit indices**

	CMIN/DF	NFI	IFI	CFI	RMSEA	LO90	HI90
Model with Group A	2.842	0.476	0.584	0.571	0.078	0.071	0.086
Model with Group B	3.226	0.601	0.686	0.680	0.086	0.079	0.094

**Table 7.24: The BNSG-S: The factor loadings**

	Group A		Group B	
	Estimate	<i>P</i>	Estimate	<i>P</i>
Q1 (Autonomy)	0.501		0.707	
Q4 (Autonomy)	0.216	.004	0.363	***
Q8 (Autonomy)	0.544	***	0.547	***
Q11 (Autonomy)	0.118	.113	0.393	***
Q14 (Autonomy)	0.361	***	0.365	***
Q17 (Autonomy)	0.312	***	0.609	***
Q20 (Autonomy)	0.084	.257	0.465	***
Q3 (Competence)	0.185		0.368	
Q5 (Competence)	0.323	.050	0.362	***
Q10 (Competence)	0.397	.043	0.304	.001
Q13 (Competence)	0.521	.022	0.595	***
Q15 (Competence)	-0.096	.299	0.343	***
Q19 (Competence)	0.243	.027	0.444	***
Q2 (Relatedness)	0.589		0.565	
Q6 (Relatedness)	0.550	***	0.596	***
Q7 (Relatedness)	0.268	***	0.375	***
Q9 (Relatedness)	0.381	***	0.447	***
Q12 (Relatedness)	0.550	***	0.479	***
Q16 (Relatedness)	0.284	***	0.396	***
Q18 (Relatedness)	0.464	***	0.385	***
Q21 (Relatedness)	0.412	***	0.634	***

*Q1*=the 1<sup>st</sup> item of the BNSG-S, and so on (see Appendices 4 and 5). Significant differences are marked by '\*\*\*'. The significance level is 0.001.

From above analysis, therefore, the BNSG-S seems to lack applicability in the Chinese context, especially for the migrant worker population. Based on the samples from migrant workers, the BNSG-S and its three sub-scales have much lower internal reliability and validity when compared to the Chinese editions of the PWI-A and the MUNSH, which may suggest that the theory behind the BNSG-S or the items of the BNSG-S are not sufficient to actually explain the happiness of migrant workers. Among the three sub-scales, the sub-scale Competence has the lowest feasibility according to the sample data from migrant workers, whereas the sub-scale Relatedness has the highest. The sub-scale Competence is also considered as having the lowest applicability based on the samples from urban residents. Given that having a higher satisfaction with regard to basic psychological needs of competence has been considered as a major factor promoting migrant workers and urban residents' happiness (see Chapter 8), it is much more likely that the items for the sub-scale Competence are not reflective of Chinese people's psychological needs of competence. For example, according to the interviews, Chinese

people usually talk about ‘competence’ with regard to factors associated with their work, such as realising their personal values at work and acquiring the ability to support their families through their work. However, the items for the sub-scale Competence mostly focus on aspects of personal life such as ‘people I know tell me I am good at what I do’ (Q5) and ‘I have been able to learn interesting new skills recently’ (Q10)

### **7.3 Discussion**

Based the above findings, it can be concluded that migrant workers have lower levels of happiness than urban residents, which includes not only hedonic wellbeing measured by the PWI-A but also eudaimonic wellbeing measured by the MUNSH and BGS-G-S. This finding is consistent with the interview results, which suggest that migrant workers have lower levels of hedonic wellbeing/life satisfaction and general wellbeing than urban residents in the eyes of both social groups (see Chapter 9).

The survey finds that the SWB of migrant workers (PWI-A Score=65.93) was located at the intermediate level in Shanghai in 2014, whereas the SWB of urban residents (PWI-A Score=69.09) was at a higher level. Based on the literature, the PWI-A score for both migrant workers and Shanghai’s urban residents was within the normal range of 60-70 in the Chinese context (e.g. Huang and Xing, 2005; Lau et al., 2005; 2008; Macau Inter-University Institute, 2007; Chen and Davey, 2008a; 2008b, 2008c; Davey et al., 2008; Nielsen et al., 2008; Davey et al., 2009; Nielsen et al., 2009; Smyth et al., 2009; Smyth et al., 2011; Rato and Davey, 2012). According to Cummins (1995; 1998), populations’ life satisfaction<sup>51</sup> usually lies within a narrow range when measured on Likert scales. With a large number of empirical studies, the upper bound of this range has been defined as 80 (percentage of scale maximum), whereas the lower bound is considered to be 70 for Western countries and 10 per cent lower for elsewhere (Cummins, 1998). This is consistent with Diener and Diener’s (1996) inference that ‘most people are happy’, in that most people report a positive level of subjective wellbeing (even the majority of disadvantaged people) and consider they are satisfied with various domains of their lives, such as work, marriage, and leisure (see Chapter 8). The questionnaire results are

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<sup>51</sup> When they are asked some variation of: ‘How satisfied are you with your life as a whole?’.

consistent with those of prior studies and further support the viewpoint that the normative range for the mean of the PWI-A of Chinese societies is 60-70, which is 10 per cent lower than that of Western samples. This small difference can be explained by material wealth (e.g. Cummins, 1998), individualism (e.g. Cummins, 1998), cultural bias, such as modesty in Chinese culture (e.g. Lau et al., 2005), or any other unknown reasons.

The PWI-A score of migrant workers (65.93) (in Shanghai in 2014) was slightly higher than that of migrant workers in Fujian province (62.6) (Nielsen et al., 2009; Smyth et al., 2009), and the Chinese agricultural population in Hunan province (64.2) (Davey et al., 2009). It was even higher than that of urban residents in Zhuhai (64.4) (Chen and Davey, 2008b) and Shandong (65.0) (Huang and Xing, 2005) and the general adult population in Macau (63.9) (Macau Inter-University Institute, 2007) and Hong Kong (65.9) (Lau et al., 2008). Such a result implies that migrant workers appeared to have a relatively higher level of subjective wellbeing and life satisfaction in Shanghai in 2014, although the mean of their PWI-A scores was still much lower than that of Shanghai's urban residents. In addition, the data also suggests that urban residents (in Shanghai in 2014) were high on the PWI-A score, as it almost reached the upper edge of the normal range (70). Based on Table 7.5, the mean of their self-reported overall life satisfaction (when they are asked, 'How satisfied are you with your life as a whole?') was even higher than 70, which also suggests that Shanghai's urban residents have a higher satisfaction with their lives. In accordance with the satisfaction ratings of the PWI-A in this research, it can be suggested that (1) Chinese SWB and life satisfaction (especially for mainland Chinese people) are likely to have increased in recent years; (2) the population who live in Shanghai may have reported higher SWB and life satisfaction than people who live in other Chinese societies, which may be because, as the greatest disseminator of Western ideologies and culture in China (Qiushi, 2013; *Wenhui Daily*, 2013), Shanghai is more affected by individualism (see Chapter 6), which has proved to be a significant factor in enhancing individuals' subjective wellbeing (see Chapter 3). Therefore, more data is needed, especially in mainland China, in order to confirm these propositions.

Moreover, it was found that 'housing status' and 'length of residence' may be the foremost

reasons influencing the levels of migrant workers' SWB and life satisfaction.<sup>52</sup> It seems that migrant workers who have their own homes in Shanghai or have been living in Shanghai for no less than ten years have the highest SWB, and yet gender, age, education, and other variables appear to have no discernible effect on their SWB. Such a finding is consistent with the interview results, which propose that having no house/apartment in Shanghai has undermined migrant workers' happiness as well as also leading to a happiness/material wellbeing gap between them and urban residents. Similarly, evidence from the interviews also proves that migrant workers will be converted into urban residents after living in Shanghai for no less than ten years, which means that their SWB will be greatly enhanced when their duration of stay reaches ten years. This finding also implies that the Chinese government could enhance migrant workers' SWB by improving their housing status (especially by offering them support to buy their own homes in Shanghai) and encouraging viable China's migrant workers to live in Shanghai for a longer time (which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 9). Further, according to the calculations of the PWI-A, MUNSH, and BNSG-S, 'housing status' is the only variable that is statistically significant, which may suggest that housing issues are priorities for all in improving migrant workers' overall wellbeing.

The mental health of migrant workers (MUNSH Score=31.50) was at an intermediate level; it was at a relatively lower level when compared to other normal groups (such as peasants and urban residents) and at a much higher level when compared to vulnerable groups (such as vulnerable women and HIV/AIDS patients). For example, it was lower than the psychological wellbeing of urban residents in Shanghai in 2014 (MUNSH Score=34.52), the middle-aged and elderly population in Shandong Province (MUNSH Score=31.59) (Hu et al., 2015), and the agricultural population in Jiangxi Province (MUNSH Score=33.63) (Sui and Len, 2011). On the other hand, it was much higher than that of vulnerable women in Shanghai (MUNSH Score=19.36) (Tang, 2002), and end-of-life AIDS patients in rural Henan Province (MUNSH Score=21.00) (Sheng et al., 2010).

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<sup>52</sup> Based on the theoretical basis for the influencing factors of people's SWB/life satisfaction, the researcher aimed to explore the relationship between the PWI-A score and housing status/length of residence by regression analysis. Although the adjusted R-squared results for the regression equations were extremely low, 'having their own housing or not' was proved to be linked to their levels of SWB/life satisfaction; in this sense, people who have their own housing in Shanghai have higher levels of SWB/life satisfaction than those who do not.

These findings suggest that (1) according to the comparison of the MUNSH scores, the status quo of migrant workers' psychological wellbeing may not be so good and (2) a population that has higher SWB/life satisfaction does not necessarily have higher psychological wellbeing/mental health. This also demonstrates the need and reasoning for dividing happiness into hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing.

It is more difficult to infer the degrees of migrant workers' self-actualisation, given that the BNSG-S has hardly been applied in the Chinese context and in the field of immigration, though migrant workers' BNSG-S scores (AVG-A=4.24, AVG-C=4.50, and AVG-R=5.30) were significantly lower than those for urban residents (AVG-A=4.55, AVG-C=4.77 and AVG-R=5.59). In addition, according to the sample data from urban residents, the BNSG-S in Chinese had good internal consistency and acceptable construct validity (except the sub-scale Competence). Based on the interviews with migrant workers and urban residents, such differences may be caused by their different understandings of happiness. Firstly, migrant workers' happiness is more influenced by traditional Confucian culture, marked by family-style collectivism, with less focus on personal autonomy and development. That is to say, migrant workers usually possess an interdependent self (Markus and Kitayama, 1991) and aspire to achieve satisfaction and wellbeing in terms of connecting themselves with their families. However, unlike migrant workers, who tend to have an interdependent form of self-expression, urban residents are more individualistic, since they are much less affected by traditional Confucian culture and attach more importance to the personal pursuit of happiness and personal autonomy, similar to Westerners (which will be discussed in Chapter 8). As reported in the interviews, more than 86 per cent of urban resident respondents felt that doing things that they really wanted would improve wellbeing, while around 40 per cent believed that having a lack of self-determination in their lives could undermine their sense of wellbeing.

Secondly, migrant workers tend to define happiness in a hedonic way, which means they usually pay more attention to satisfaction with regard to certain domains of life, such as material conditions and family life, while losing sight of eudaimonic wellbeing. Unlike migrant workers, who essentially consider happiness as living a pleasant life but not a meaningful one, urban residents tend to define happiness in a more comprehensive way. For example, they usually cultivate the concept of the 'meaningful life' more than migrant

workers and pay appropriate attention to their self-realisation (especially in regard to meeting their basic psychological needs of competence) when defining happiness. Therefore, basic psychological needs theory, and the BNSG-S that is based upon it, could well be more suitable for Shanghai's urban residents since they are more individualistic and more focused on eudaimonic wellbeing (especially on Autonomy and Competence) when perceiving happiness.

## 7.4 Conclusion

Based on the questionnaires with migrant workers and urban residents, the following findings can be summarised. First, migrant workers report lower levels of hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing than urban residents. This result therefore supports the finding that migrant workers are less happy than urban residents (see Yang, 1999; Xing, 2006; Knight and Gunatilaka, 2008; Fang and Feng, 2009; Whyte, 2010; Zhang, 2010; Treiman, 2012; Wang et al., 2014; Zhao and Ge, 2014). Second, migrant workers report higher levels of hedonic wellbeing (or life satisfaction) when compared with previous research on the levels of happiness of Chinese people in other parts of China (e.g. Huang and Xing, 2005; Macau Inter-University Institute, 2007; Chen and Davey, 2008b; Lau et al., 2008; Davey et al., 2009; Nielsen et al., 2009; Smyth et al., 2009). Third, migrant workers report lower levels of eudaimonic wellbeing (or mental health) when compared with other studies on the happiness levels of Chinese peasants (Sui and Len, 2011), in addition to middle-aged and elderly populations (Hu et al., 2015). Fourth, demographic variables, such as gender and age (consistent with Dew and Huebner, 1994; Cai et al., 2007), education, marital status, income, working hours, and number of children, appear to have no discernible effect on the happiness levels of migrant workers. Fifth, housing status and length of residence are strong predictors for the happiness levels of migrant workers. This means that migrant workers who have been substantially urbanised, in the sense of having their own homes in Shanghai or having lived in Shanghai for no less than ten years, but with no urban *hukou*, are often the happiest amongst all migrant workers. In this sense, such migrant workers tend to report similar levels of happiness as urban residents. Finally, some standard scales and measurement instruments applied to Western people may not effectively reveal the happiness of Chinese people before being examined and localised.

This chapter has found that the BNSG-S has both low reliability and validity for the survey data of migrant workers, a finding that will be explained further when outlining the study's contribution in Section 10.4.

## **8 Chapter 8: The Factors that Can Influence the Happiness of Chinese Migrant Workers**

### **8.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter answered the second research question and found that there is a disparity in happiness levels between migrant workers and urban residents. By analysing the semi-structured interviews with migrant workers and urban residents, this chapter aims to explore the factors that affect the happiness levels of migrant workers.

Chapter 8 will answer the third research question of this study (i.e. What are the factors influencing the happiness of China's migrant workers? Who are the happiest migrant workers?) and its three sub-questions, including: (1) What are the factors increasing migrant workers' happiness levels? (2) What are the factors decreasing migrant workers' happiness levels? (3) Compared with those of urban residents, are there any differences in the factors that affect migrant workers' happiness levels?

This chapter contains five sections. Sections 8.2 and 8.3 explore the factors that increase or decrease migrant workers' happiness levels, before concluding with the seven factors that affect migrant workers' happiness levels. Section 8.4 compares the differences between the affecting factors of the happiness levels of migrant workers and urban residents. Section 8.5 summarises the major findings of this chapter and reveals who the happiest migrant workers are.

### **8.2 The Factors That Increase Migrant Workers' Happiness Levels**

Through the analysis of the interviews with migrant workers, this study finds that both hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing are of great importance in promoting migrant workers' happiness levels (see Table 8.1). Based on Tables 8.2 and 8.3, the primary factors that are thought to improve migrant workers' happiness levels include: (1) satisfaction with their basic psychological needs of competence (accounting for 21.22 per cent of all the factors that are able to promote migrant workers' happiness levels); (2) satisfaction with their material conditions (20.00 per cent); (3) satisfaction with their basic psychological needs

of relatedness (16.73 per cent); (4) satisfaction with their family life (13.47 per cent); and (5) satisfaction with their jobs (11.43 per cent). The above five factors will be discussed sequentially in the rest of this section.

**Table 8.1: Different types of factors that improve migrant workers' happiness levels**

Perspective	Number	%
Hedonic wellbeing	118	48.16
Eudaimonic wellbeing	118	48.16
Happiness is relative	9	3.7

**Table 8.2: Eudaimonic factors that improve migrant workers' happiness levels**

Eudaimonic factor	Number	%
Satisfied with the psychological needs of competence	52	44.07
Satisfied with the psychological needs of relatedness	41	34.75
Having better mental health	13	11.02
Satisfied with the psychological needs of autonomy	7	5.93
Having a more meaningful life	5	4.24

**Table 8.3: Hedonic factors that improve migrant workers' happiness levels**

Hedonic factor	Number	%
Having better material conditions	49	41.53
Satisfied with family	33	27.97
Satisfied with career	28	23.73
Satisfied with social environment	6	5.08
Satisfied with interpersonal relationships	2	1.70

### **8.2.1 More satisfaction with their basic psychological needs of competence**

According to the interviews with migrant workers, having more satisfaction with their basic psychological needs of competence is the foremost factor for improving their levels of happiness. This factor accounts for over a fifth of all the factors that are thought to promote migrant workers' happiness levels. In addition, more than six out of ten migrant workers directly pointed out in their interviews that their levels of happiness would be

improved or have been improved when they feel more satisfaction with their competence (e.g. when they achieve personal values or growth, enhance individual competency, or feel fulfilled).

By calculating Jaccard similarity coefficients through NVivo 10<sup>53</sup>, this study finds that: (1) among all the migrant worker interviewees, those who were below middle-aged (i.e. the groups '15-24'  $S_j=0.400$  and '25-34'  $S_j=0.352941$ ) usually focused more on the happiness brought about by self-realisation, whereas those who were above middle-aged (i.e. the groups '35-44'  $S_j=0.0625$  and '45+'  $S_j=0.1$ ) often had little concern for self-realisation; (2) those who were better-educated (i.e. the group 'tertiary and higher'  $S_j=0.4375$ ) tended to attach more importance to self-realisation than those who were lower-educated (i.e. the groups 'junior and senior school'  $S_j=0.285741$  and 'illiterate and primary school'  $S_j=0.125$ ); and (3) those who are male ( $S_j=0.428571$ ) tended to pay much closer attention to self-actualisation than those who were female ( $S_j=0.352941$ ). This may mean that having more satisfaction with their basic psychological needs of competence is most effective at improving the happiness levels of male migrant workers who are under 35 and are well educated.

For example, Sebastian, a 26 years old software technician, expressed his aspiration for achieving self-actualisation in Shanghai:

*Recently, I created a website, and I plan to share some of my ideas with other people through my website. Now, I'm expanding it when I'm free. I think I'm ready to attain my ambitions through sharing my thoughts and technical advice on my website. [I want to] achieve my personal values in Shanghai, although I'm not satisfied with my current living conditions. I think, as a migrant worker, I'm an outsider to some extent. I don't have my own housing in Shanghai and, apparently, I cannot afford to buy one. So, I think I'm not satisfied with my current living condition.*

The researcher then asked, 'Do you like shanghai?'

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<sup>53</sup> It is calculated by coding similarity.

*Yes, I love it, although it's big and fast-paced, and my life here is very difficult, but I still love it because, here, I can realise my own values. Actually, I don't think Shanghai is a city that can make people feel warmth and comfort like at home. It is too fast; I mean, its pace of life. You know, I see people walk hurriedly every day on their commutes at the metro stations. They never seem to stop, and this circumstance makes me feel pressured. I think Shanghai is much busier than Nanjing [which is the provincial capital of my hometown]; I feel comfortable in Nanjing.*

The researcher then asked, 'Have you integrated into city life in Shanghai?'

*No, I haven't, but if I do, I will definitely feel much happier. I think I'm used to most aspects of city life, except the rapid pace of life. Actually, I have little sense of belonging in Shanghai because, you know, I don't have my own housing in Shanghai, and I have to rent. For me, it's not a home, it's just a dormitory. I won't have my home here until I settle here; I think I want to improve my living conditions, in particular, to buy a house and reorganise myself through starting a business. Apart from my career, my biggest plan is to settle down in Shanghai. I want to bring my girlfriend here and find her a job. To me, I really want to stay here, if possible, though my parents would definitely prefer staying in our hometown.*

In addition to Sebastian, other male interviewees, who were under 35 and well educated, such as Felix, Noah, and Tyler, also expressed great concern about the happiness brought about by more satisfaction with their competence (see Table 8.4). Moreover, as the interview content has shown above, Sebastian's longing to realise his personal ambitions in Shanghai was consistently associated with the idea of settling down in Shanghai. This phenomenon is also fairly common among migrant workers who are under the age of 35 and well educated. This finding may mean that any positive experience related to settling down in Shanghai can promote migrant workers' happiness levels.

**Table 8.4: The number and percentage of the coding under the note ‘satisfied with the psychological needs of competence’\***

Alias	Gender	Age	Education	Number of coding	Percentage of coding in the interview
Lola	Female	45	Postgraduate	7	8.69
Felix	Male	23	Undergraduate	7	8.05
Noah	Male	26	Undergraduate	6	5.39
Blake	Male	21	Technician secondary school	5	10.07
Tyler	Male	23	Undergraduate	5	6.17
Sebastian	Male	26	Undergraduate	4	4.88
Molly	Female	18	Technician secondary school	3	6.42
Sara	Female	29	Junior high school	3	5.44
Harry	Male	31	Senior high school	3	1.31
Paige	Female	29	Junior high school	2	1.45
Jake	Male	58	Illiterate	1	4.25
Bella	Female	37	Primary school	1	2.02
Katie	Female	22	Undergraduate	1	1.89
Violet	Female	29	Junior high school	1	1.34
Jenson	Male	21	Junior college	1	1.17
Alex	Male	36	Junior college	0	0.00
Austin	Male	52	Junior high school	0	0.00
Henry	Male	34	Technician secondary school	0	0.00
Liam	Male	45	Junior high school	0	0.00
Owen	Male	45	Junior high school	0	0.00
Toby	Male	30	Junior high school	0	0.00
Elisa	Female	51	Junior high school	0	0.00
Sophia	Female	49	Illiterate	0	0.00

\* One of the child notes for ‘eudaimonic factors increase their happiness’.

It is noteworthy that well-educated male migrant workers under the age of 35 were not the only group who longed to settle down in Shanghai. In fact, settling down in Shanghai was a common dream among the interviewed migrant workers. However, female migrant workers generally showed lesser aspirations to realise this dream because they were less likely to be assertive (e.g. Bella, Paige, Elisa, and Sophia), though those who were young and unmarried had similar levels of aspirations as their male peers (such as Katie and Molly). Migrant workers above 35 usually had the weakest aspirations to realise this dream because they often thought that the difficulties they would face in the process of achieving this dream would be too severe (e.g. Alex, Austin, Henry, Liam, Owen, and

Toby).

In general, this study finds that having more satisfaction with regard to the basic psychological needs of competence can be most effective in improving the happiness levels of the new generation of well-educated migrant workers,<sup>54</sup> particularly males. Since the new generation of migrant workers now make up the majority of Chinese rural migrants (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2011) and represent a major force for accelerating Chinese urbanisation (Pan et al., 2009; Sun, 2010; Wang, 2010; Guo, 2011), better meeting their psychological needs of competence, or providing the circumstances to better realise their personal values, from a policy maker's point of view (which will be further discussed in Chapter 9), would have significant value in increasing the happiness levels of migrant workers and promoting Chinese urbanisation. In addition, both the new generation and first generation of migrant workers would like to stay in the city<sup>55</sup> if possible, though the new generation has shown much more desire and determination to settle in Shanghai than their elders. According to the interviews, 'cannot afford to buy housing' (e.g. Sebastian, Noah, Katie, Paige, and Jake) and 'unequal treatment due to Shanghai's urban *hukou*' (e.g. Paige) were the main reasons preventing them from settling down in Shanghai; on the contrary, other positive experiences, such as more satisfaction with their material conditions, can also be related to their aspiration levels.

### ***8.2.2 More satisfaction with their material conditions***

Material wealth still has a significant effect on migrant workers' happiness levels. As stated in the interviews, most of migrant worker respondents felt that better material conditions and greater satisfaction with material conditions would increase their happiness levels and vice versa, a situation that is similar for urban residents. In this sense, achieving higher levels of being 'satisfied with material wealth'<sup>56</sup> is the second significant factor for promoting migrant workers' happiness levels, accounting for 41.53 per cent of the hedonic factors as well as 20.00 per cent of all factors; in this sense, it is the most important hedonic

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<sup>54</sup> The new generation of migrant workers refers to Chinese migrant workers who were born in or after 1980 (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2011). Chinese migrant workers who were born before 1980 are referred to as the 'the first generation of migrant workers (ibid.).

<sup>55</sup> Some migrant worker respondents indicated that they would migrate to other cities, particularly small and medium-sized cities. For example, Sophia stated that she would migrate to Danyang (a small city in Jiangsu Province).

<sup>56</sup> This is a child node of 'hedonic factors increase their happiness', which mainly includes 'have better material condition' and 'higher income'.

factor thought to promote migrant workers' happiness. Further, 'satisfied with material wealth' is also an important factor for urban residents with regard to increasing or decreasing their happiness levels. As reported in the interviews, better material conditions or more satisfaction with their material conditions can moderately increase their happiness, while worse material experience or dissatisfaction with their current material conditions can greatly reduce urban residents' happiness levels.

Although Easterlin (2010) has suggested that progress in material conditions does not necessarily bring about happiness,<sup>57</sup> the vast majority of migrant worker respondents (see Table 8.5) still believed that being more 'satisfied with material wealth' would significantly improve their wellbeing. Around eight out of ten migrant worker respondents directly reported that their happiness levels had been improved or would improve when having 'better material conditions', 'higher income', 'some savings for my children', and 'some savings for my pension'. By comparing Jaccard similarity coefficients, this study finds that: (1) respondents who were above middle-aged (i.e. the group '45+'  $S_j=0.315789$ ) generally focused more on the happiness bought about by being more satisfied with material wealth than respondents who are below middle-aged (i.e. the groups '15-24'  $S_j =0.263158$  and '25-34'  $S_j =0.238095$ ); (2) male respondents ( $S_j=0.571429$ ) attached much more importance to better material conditions than female respondents ( $S_j=0.3$ ); (3) married respondents ( $S_j=0.5$ ) attached much more importance to better material conditions than unmarried respondents (i.e. the groups 'unmarried, with boyfriend or girlfriend'  $S_j = 0.166667$  and 'unmarried, without boyfriend or girlfriend'  $S_j=0.210526$ ); (4) respondents who lived with their children ( $S_j=0.545455$ ) attached more importance to better material conditions than respondents who did not live with their children ( $S_j=0.315789$ ); (5) respondents who were renting ( $S_j=0.428571$ ) attached much more importance to better material conditions than respondents who were living in a dormitory ( $S_j=0.333333$ ) and had their own housing ( $S_j=0.15$ ); and (6) respondents who had stayed in Shanghai for 1-5 years ( $S_j=0.578947$ ) attached much more importance to better material conditions than respondents who had stayed for shorter or

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<sup>57</sup> According to Easterlin (2010), China showed a mild (not statistically significant) decline in life satisfaction, while people's real income doubled in less than ten years (Easterlin, 2010, p.129); China's life satisfaction declined from 68 to 59 between 1990 and 2007 (see Table 1.1). For detailed information, see Chapter 1.

longer in Shanghai (i.e. the groups ‘less than 1 year’  $S_j=0.052632$ , ‘6-11 years’  $S_j=0.15$ , and ‘more than 11 years’  $S_j=0.157895$ ).

**Table 8.5: The number and percentage of the coding under the note ‘satisfied with material wealth’\***

Alias	Gender	Age	Number of coding	Percentage of coding in the interview
Owen	Male	45	5	7.14
Lola	Female	45	5	5.76
Jake	Male	58	4	8.28
Sophia	Female	49	4	3.46
Sebastian	Male	26	4	2.58
Paige	Female	29	4	1.79
Bella	Female	37	3	7.24
Alex	Male	36	3	2.63
Felix	Male	23	3	1.95
Austin	Male	52	2	5.09
Liam	Male	45	2	3.15
Toby	Male	30	2	1.15
Noah	Male	26	2	0.81
Katie	Female	22	2	0.66
Molly	Female	18	1	0.77
Sara	Female	29	1	0.67
Blake	Male	21	1	0.28
Tyler	Male	23	1	0.27
Harry	Male	31	0	0.00
Henry	Male	34	0	0.00
Jenson	Male	21	0	0.00
Elisa	Female	51	0	0.00
Violet	Female	29	0	0.00

\* One of the child notes of ‘hedonic factors increase their happiness’.

This shows that being more ‘satisfied with material wealth’ may be inferred as universal for the happiness of both new-generation and first-generation migrant workers, except for first-generation migrant workers between the ages of 35 and 44, and it may be the most effective factor for first-generation migrant workers over 45<sup>58</sup> (See Table 8.5). As reported in the interviews, the main reasons for migrant workers to think highly of becoming more ‘satisfied with material wealth’ may be that they have come to appreciate the happiness

<sup>58</sup> Although by using Fisher’s exact test, there was no statistical association between ‘age’ and the ‘number of coding’ of the note ‘satisfied with material wealth’.

brought about by gaining more material wealth, together with the expectation that more economic gain would allow them to get what they and their family members (especially their children) want. For example, Lola, a 45-year-old teacher, stated that she enjoys the happiness from comes from material progress, and she would like to make more money in order to send her daughter abroad:

*I feel happy when I go out to my part-time job...teaching...so I can make more money to buy lots of nice things for my daughter, or sometimes to buy a new dress for myself. In general, as a teacher, I have a regular salary; I feel happier because, sometimes, I can go out to make more money. I'm feeling happier now, compared with 2010, because I think I'm a person who enjoys the new things. I've got a smart phone and have learned to make video calls with my daughter; I feel happier, and it is all based on the improvement in material conditions. Also, recently, we bought a car, which means we now have more convenient travel conditions. In fact, the biggest plan for me and my family is to save more money so that my daughter can have enough money to study abroad. Now, she is learning business, and, you know, the best place to learn business is the United States; I wish I could send her abroad to expand her vision, and then she could have a better starting point. So, if I have more money or better material conditions, I would definitely feel much happier.*

It should be noted that, improving migrant workers' satisfaction with material wealth is not exactly the same as increasing their economic income. According to the interviews, material progress expected by migrant worker respondents mainly referred to being able to obtain what they and their family members wanted in their daily lives, and while this is established on the basis of more economic income, it reflects much more than simply increasing economic income. For example, most migrant worker respondents believed that having their own housing in Shanghai would make them much happier (e.g. Owen, Liam, Sophia, Jake, Austin, Sebastian, and Katie), while high housing prices have made this almost impossible, despite their economic incomes having increased one or two times from their original levels. For illustration, Austin's income was 2,500 RBM each month, and he stated he would like to buy a one-bedroom apartment in Shanghai, which was

valued at one million RMB in 2014, meaning that it would take around 33.3 years to buy it, but only if he saved all of his income. Therefore, having better material conditions does not necessarily mean that migrant worker respondents would be happier when Chinese society makes significant material progress, since (1) the purchasing power of money falls with overall price increase (as suggested by Elisa, Liam, Molly, Sebastian, and Sophia) and (2) compared to decades ago, it is now more difficult to meet the material needs of Chinese people (as suggested by Owen, Felix, Henry, Jenson, and Katie).

In this regard, it may be useful to understand Easterlin's paradox (2010) in the Chinese context, on account of Chinese people's satisfaction with material wealth may well have dropped in connection with great material progress.<sup>59</sup> For example, Liam reported that his satisfaction with living conditions has dropped with more income:

*Definitely, I'm not satisfied with my living conditions. I kept moving because the rent is extremely high. I have to move for survival. This is because the overall prices have risen continuously. Five years ago, when I had just arrived in Shanghai, I earned little, but I still had some savings; now, I earn much more, but I have nothing left.*

In general, having better material conditions or, to be more exact, having more material satisfaction has shown a significant impact on the extent of both migrant workers and urban residents' happiness levels. It seems that, compared with achieving better self-actualisation, which has been found to be the most effective happiness factor for the new generation of migrant workers, achieving more satisfaction with material wealth has a wider response group, including both new-generation and first-generation migrant workers, particularly with regard to first-generation migrant workers who are above 45. The universal concern with material wealth seems to be consistent with their definitions of happiness, which are more motivated to achieve both 'biological and physiological needs' and 'safety needs' (Maslow, 1943; 1954). In addition, as suggested by the interviews, the government could promote migrant workers' happiness by means of improving their material satisfaction, particularly by meeting their relatively higher level of material needs so that they can be more well-off (e.g. enable them to be able to buy a

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<sup>59</sup> This situation is quite similar to that of urban resident respondents.

home in Shanghai). In this sense, it is clearly not just a question of boosting incomes but of enhancing material satisfaction along with an increasing cost of living and higher expectations.

### ***8.2.3 More satisfaction with their basic psychological needs of relatedness***

Similar to more satisfaction with the basic psychological needs of competence, better meeting the psychological needs of relatedness is more important for the new generation of migrant workers (i.e. the group '25-34'  $S_j=0.352941$ ), for males ( $S_j=0.428571$ ) more than females ( $S_j=0.352941$ ), in addition to being closely linked with their aspirations of settling in Shanghai. It accounts for about 35 per cent of eudaimonic factors as well as for about 16 per cent of all the factors that are expected to or have increased their happiness levels (See Table 8.2). In addition, more than 65 per cent of migrant worker respondents directly conveyed concerns about having 'a sense of belonging in Shanghai' in terms of 'I can integrate into city life', 'I'm respected in my social circle', and 'people around me care about me', particularly with regard to 'I can integrate into city life' (as suggested by around six out of ten respondents) and having 'a sense of belonging in Shanghai' (as suggested by about 30 per cent of respondents). Though the issues of social integration and identity of new-generation migrant workers have gained increasing attention from Chinese academia (See Table 4.1), in fact, migrant workers have been found to focus more on achieving self-worth than merely striving for integrating into city life or obtaining the social cohesion they need.

Further, it can be seen that, among the three basic psychological needs (i.e. Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness), which are known as essential for subjective wellbeing (Deci and Ryan, 2000), Competence is the most meaningful and influential for migrant workers in promoting their happiness, followed by Relatedness and then Autonomy. As reported in the interviews, only about two out of ten migrant worker respondents referred to Autonomy-related content when asked about what could improve their happiness levels. In addition, compared with urban residents in Shanghai who attach importance to 'do things I really want to do', 'live a free life', 'have a job with more freedom', and 'start my own business and work for myself' in the area of 'satisfied with the psychological needs

of autonomy',<sup>60</sup> migrant workers tend to view a more autonomous lifestyle as an irrelevance, given that all they want is to 'have a job with more freedom'. This may well be because they seldom consider what they really want to do in their everyday lives, while also having little understanding of their own interests. For example, Henry, who was busy supporting his family and rarely considered himself, stated:

*We just want to make more money because all I have done is to make money.*

*If I can make more money by engaging in a cushy job, I will be much happier.*

Similar to improving the satisfaction of their psychological needs of competence, which is often associated with their desire to settle in Shanghai, better meeting their psychological needs of relatedness was repeatedly proposed in the interviews (e.g. Noah and Sebastian). In contrast to the migrant workers who had stayed in Shanghai less than 1 year (i.e. the group 'less than 1 year'  $S_j=0.0625$ ), migrant workers who had stayed more than 1 year usually showed similar levels of concern for better integrating into city life and having a greater sense of belonging (i.e. the groups '1-5 years'  $S_j=0.285714$ , 'more than 11 years'  $S_j=0.267$ , and '6-11 years'  $S_j=0.25$ ). Of course, this does not mean that their levels of both meeting urban life and developing a sense of belonging is constant over time. In fact, according to the interviews, for those migrant workers who had been living in Shanghai for less than ten years, they showed different degrees of inadaptation and dislike for city life and invariably thought they did not belong in Shanghai (at least, to some extent; see Sebastian's interview about meeting the psychological needs of competence). However, for those who had been living in Shanghai for equal to or greater than ten years, Shanghai had become their second home town, which they were deeply dependent upon (e.g. Austin, Owen, Toby, Bella, Elisa, Lola, and Violet). They generally reported that they had their own homes in Shanghai and had less differences with local residents in Shanghai, and, after living in the city for more than ten years, being without Shanghai urban *hukou* was one of the main reasons for them to lose this sense of belonging to Shanghai. With regard to this finding, it can be speculated that ten years is a watershed for migrant workers with regard to population urbanisation, and they would probably not

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<sup>60</sup> This is a child node of 'eudaimonic factors increase their happiness'.

have too much contact with the city in the first two years (See Table 8.6).

**Table 8.6: Duration of stay and migrant workers' quality of urbanisation**

<b>Alias</b>	<b>Duration of stay</b>	<b>Do you have a sense of belonging in Shanghai?</b>	<b>Can you adapt to city life?</b>
Owen	21 years	Yes, I am almost native.	Yes, Shanghai is my home.
Elisa	21 years	Yes, I am almost native.	Yes, Shanghai is my home.
Austin	18 years	Yes.	Yes, I like Shanghai.
Bella	18 years	Yes.	Yes, I like Shanghai.
Toby	10 years	Yes, I am almost native.	Yes, Shanghai is my home.
Lola	10 years	Yes, I am almost native.	Yes, Shanghai is my home.
Violet	10 years	Yes, I am almost native.	Yes, Shanghai is my home.
Sara	9 years	No.	To some extent I can; I think Shanghai is so so.
Henry	8 years	No.	No, I like country life; I dislike Shanghai.
Jake	5 years	No.	Yes, I like Shanghai.
Liam	5 years	No.	No, I am still not used to city life.
Noah	5 years	No.	To some extent I can; I like Shanghai.
Molly	5 years	No.	No, I dislike Shanghai.
Harry	4 years	No.	To some extent I can, but I am still not used to city life.
Tyler	4 years	No.	No, I dislike Shanghai.
Blake	3 years	No.	To some extent I can; I dislike Shanghai.
Sebastian	2.5 years	No.	To some extent I can; I like Shanghai.
Katie	2.5 years	No.	No, I am still not used to city life; I dislike Shanghai.
Alex	2 years	I have little contact with the city.	I have little contact with the city.
Paige	2 years	I have little contact with the city.	I have little contact with the city.
Felix	1 year	No.	To some extent I can; I dislike Shanghai.
Jenson	0.5 year	No.	To some extent I can; I dislike Shanghai.
Sophia	0.3 year	I have little contact with the city.	I have little contact with the city.

In accordance with Table 8.6, some of the migrant workers wanted to better adapt to city life or get a greater sense of belonging to the city simply because they were eager to take up residence in the city and not because they loved city life in Shanghai (e.g. Henry, Liam, Blake, and Katie). Alternatively, their adaption to or love for the city would be gradually established in the process of their urbanisation. Therefore, it can be assumed that migrant

workers' satisfaction with their basic psychological needs of relatedness<sup>61</sup> would be progressively increased with time, and they would essentially become local residents after having lived in the city for ten years. For example, Lola and Violet, who had been living in Shanghai for ten years, shared their experiences of urbanisation in their interviews, and they believed that adapting to city life and building a sense of belonging is a process that needs to take place over years:

*I couldn't adapt to city life when I first arrived here. The pace of life here was too fast. In addition, I couldn't speak Mandarin, let alone the Shanghai dialect. I had no idea, but I learned Mandarin by using a dictionary. It took me years to slowly acclimatise to the new environment. Now, I think that my fast-paced life is quite good because I can do more with my time and it makes me feel meaningful.*

The researcher then asked, 'Do you have a sense of belonging in Shanghai?'

*Yes, I do. After the Shanghai World Expo in 2010, Shanghai became more beautiful and the air is fresher. It's really good living here. I'm almost native now. However, like most people, I didn't have any sense of belonging at all when I first arrived in Shanghai. It was built day by day. Actually, I felt very lonely and out of place at that time, especially when I saw the city lights at night. I could not help thinking that my home was not here and that none of the twinkling lights belonged to me. At that time, it wasn't just me that felt like I didn't fit in; all my friends had this idea that Shanghai was a cold city that excluded all outsiders...but when I think of it now, I have to admit that I was wrong because it has nothing to do with Shanghai – it's about our own minds. It was us rejecting Shanghai. Actually, Shanghai is very inclusive. In Shanghai, I gradually got my work, my home, my friends, and my social circle, and then my sense of belonging was built little by little.*

Given this, it can be suggested that, from a national macro-level perspective, attention to whether migrant workers can improve their psychological needs of competence, i.e.

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<sup>61</sup> This mainly refers to 'I can integrate into city life' and 'have a sense of belonging in Shanghai'.

whether the government can provide migrant workers with more opportunities and a more equal platform on which to demonstrate their abilities, is probably more meaningful than an overwhelming emphasis on social integration and self-identity, which are supposed to solve issues associated with their lower happiness levels and the social problems brought about by their urbanisation (e.g. the extremely high crime rate for new-generation migrant workers). There are two main reasons for this point of view: (1) according to the interview results, unlike the focus of Chinese academia, which is greatly concerned with the new generation's social integration and self-identity, migrant workers feel that getting ahead in their careers and receiving others' approval at work are more essential for them with regard to promoting their happiness; (2) Chinese academia's enthusiasm for the social integration and self-identity of migrant workers, particularly with those of new-generation migrant workers, is largely an active reaction to a series of problems caused by migrant workers entering the city. In this sense, it has generally been aimed at ameliorating migrant workers' state of living, safeguarding social stability, and lowering the crime rate in the process of urbanisation, in addition to enabling migrant workers to achieve more happiness in their lives. However, if, as suggested above, migrant workers, especially new-generation migrant workers, think that neither better adapting to city life nor better understanding their identity are the most effective ways to promote their happiness, besides the problems specifically related to their social integration and self-identity being eased over time,<sup>62</sup> then the focus of governmental policy and other actors (e.g. nongovernmental organisations and social workers) on social integration and self-identity problems may not be the best solutions for migrant workers to increase their happiness. Thus, from the perspective of macro social policies, this thesis argues that providing greater opportunities and a more equal platform for migrant workers to better meet their basic psychological needs of competence (such as more equitable employment policies) may be more effective than the specific but limited approach of improving their sense of wellbeing and state of existence.

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<sup>62</sup> As reported in the interviews, all migrant worker respondents (regardless of job, education background, income, etc.) who had been living in Shanghai equal to or more than ten years reported that they were well integrated into city life and had a great sense of belonging to Shanghai.

### ***8.2.4 No separation from family members***

According to the interviews, being more satisfied with family life also earns a place among all the factors that would expect to or have improved migrant workers' happiness, accounting for about 28 per cent of hedonic factors together with about 13.5 per cent of all factors (See Table 8.3). As reported by the interviewees, around six out of ten respondents pointed out that their happiness levels had been or would be enhanced when they are not separated from their family members (i.e. the nodes 'no separation from my child or children', 'no separation from my parents', and 'no separation from my spouse, girlfriend, or boyfriend'), they could spend more time with their families (i.e. the node 'have more time to accompany my family'), and they get what they expect from their family members (i.e. the node 'I hope my son will have a son' and 'my child will have a good marriage').

Predictably, being more satisfied with family life is one of the noteworthy factors that can positively affect migrant workers' happiness levels because it agrees with their definition of happiness, which emphasises the satisfaction of family life and family-style collectivism (see Chapter 6). In addition, the requirement of being more satisfied with family life is largely because they have been working alone in the city and unable to live with their children or elders. For example, around 40 per cent of migrant worker respondents (e.g. Toby, Sara, and Sophia), who had been separated from their children, indicated that they would definitely feel happier if they could have their children close at hand. Therefore, it is understandable that no separation from their family members, together with spending more time with their families, were thought to improve their happiness levels. However, though getting more satisfaction with their family life is a factor that is much more consistent with their definition of happiness, it is still not the most effective method for promoting happiness. In this sense, it can be suggested that, compared with having their families close by, migrant workers are even more eager to become new citizens in the process of urbanisation and achieve their personal values in city life. Consequently, from a national macro-level perspective, better addressing problems in relation to their children gaining access to education in the city would be meaningful for those migrant workers who already have children (discussed in more detail in Chapter 9).

### ***8.2.5 More satisfaction with work***

Being more ‘satisfied with career’ is also a hedonic factor that is expected to or has already promoted migrant workers’ happiness levels, accounting for 23.73 per cent of the hedonic factors and 11.43 per cent of all the factors. Around 43 per cent of migrant worker respondents reported that their happiness levels would improve or have improved when they ‘have an ideal job’, while about 30 per cent of migrant worker respondents reported that they would feel happier if they could ‘have a more relaxed job’. In comparing the coding similarities through Jaccard similarity coefficients, it is found that: (1) ‘have an ideal job’ seems only to be valid for promoting the happiness level of new-generation migrant workers (i.e. the groups ‘15-24’  $S_j=0.454545$  and ‘25-34’  $S_j=0.285714$ ), especially young migrant workers aged between 15 and 24, while it is likely to be ineffective for promoting the happiness level of first-generation migrant workers (i.e. the groups ‘35-44’  $S_j=0.090909$  and ‘45+’  $S_j=0$ ); and (2) ‘have a more relaxed job’ is most significant for improving the happiness of first-generation migrant workers aged above 45 (i.e. the group ‘45+’  $S_j=0.27$ ) and, compared with new-generation migrant workers, are generally less educated and have physically strenuous jobs.

It is noteworthy that the factor ‘have an ideal job’ is closely linked with better satisfying migrant workers’ psychological needs of competence ( $S_j=0.5625$ ). As reported in the interview, nine out of ten migrant worker respondents who indicated that having an ideal job would improve or has improved their happiness levels also demonstrated concerns about better satisfying their psychological needs of competence. For instance, according to Sebastian, Noah, and Katie’s previous descriptions of better satisfying their psychological needs of competence, they always connected their ideal jobs with better self-realisation, and they also considered that they could achieve personal values by engaging in ideal jobs (see Section 8.2.1). Therefore, to some extent, being more ‘satisfied with career’ was a basic requirement for better self-realisation. For example, Tyler stated that his ideal job was that of a teacher, and by means of performing this job, he would definitely obtain a sense of achievement and better self-realisation. Given that some relevant examples (e.g. Sebastian, Noah, and Katie) have been given in Section 8.2.1, this section will not go into further detail on this point.

Besides 'have an ideal job', 'have a more relaxed job' is the other factor believed to improve happiness levels, particularly with first-generation migrant workers. According to the interview analysis, those migrant worker residents who reported that having more relaxed jobs could promote their happiness tended to believe that they would feel happier if they could do their jobs with relatively low stress levels and a high-salary. In part, this is perhaps because some of them have experienced hard work while others were still involved with hard work (e.g. the blue-collar migrant workers). For example, Austin (52 years old), who used to be a sanitation worker, suggested that his happiness levels had increased since being given a promotion:

*I'm satisfied with my current job. Actually, I feel happier since I got a promotion. I used to be a sanitation worker, and now I'm in charge of several sanitation workers. This means that I don't have to clean the streets myself. Now, my job is easy; I just walk the streets and manage my subordinates. I have a more relaxed job and I'm paid a better salary. I feel much happier.*

In addition, the white-collar migrant worker respondents generally had similar perspectives on their job prospects. In this regard, it seems natural that people will want to live a good life with a considerable income from an easy job, although most of them may not be as hungry as migrant workers who have experienced very hard work or are undertaking very hard work.

On the whole, the factor 'have an ideal job' is closely linked with better satisfying psychological needs of competence, especially for those new-generation migrant workers who expect to realise their personal values through carrying out their ideal jobs. This also suggests that enhancing job opportunities and providing a more equal playing field for new-generation migrant workers are very likely to improve their sense of wellbeing. In addition, 'have a more relaxed job' is also very meaningful for promoting the happiness of first-generation migrant workers, which may be because they usually earn a living by means of low-skilled and difficult jobs. Thus, reduced working hours and intensity for older first-generation migrant workers who carry out manual labour may enhance their sense of wellbeing.

### 8.3 The Factors That Decrease Migrant Workers' Happiness Levels

According to the interviews, dissatisfaction with eudaimonic wellbeing is a prime factor in the reduction of the happiness of migrant workers (see Table 8.7). Amongst all the eudaimonic factors, becoming depressed about life and work seems to be the leading cause of decreasing migrant workers' happiness, since about seven out of ten migrant worker respondents reported that it was common for them to feel stressed when getting frustrated about their lives and work, accounting for 20.86 per cent of all the factors that are thought to reduce or have reduced migrant workers' happiness (see Table 8.8).

**Table 8.7: Different types of factors that reduce migrant workers' happiness levels**

Perspective	Number	%
Eudaimonic wellbeing	191	51.07
Hedonic wellbeing	178	47.59
Happiness is relative	3	0.53
Others	2	0.80

**Table 8.8: Eudaimonic factors that reduce migrant workers' happiness levels**

Eudaimonic factor	Number	%
Getting depressed about life and work	78	40.84
Satisfied with the psychological needs of relatedness	50	26.18
Satisfied with the psychological needs of competence	45	23.56
Satisfied with the psychological needs of autonomy	18	9.42

**Table 8.9: Hedonic factors that reduce migrant workers' happiness levels**

Hedonic factor	Number	%
Dissatisfied with material conditions	61	34.27
Dissatisfied with social environment	37	20.79
Dissatisfied with family	30	16.85
Dissatisfied with career	17	9.55
Dissatisfied with interpersonal relationships	12	6.74
Dissatisfied with physical health	10	5.62

As Tables 8.8 and 8.9 illustrate, other primary factors thought to reduce or that have reduced migrant workers' happiness include: dissatisfaction with material wealth

(accounting for 16.31 per cent of all the factors); dissatisfaction with the psychological needs of relatedness (13.37 per cent); dissatisfaction with the psychological needs of competence (12.03 per cent); dissatisfaction with the social environment (9.90 per cent); and dissatisfaction with family (8.02 per cent).

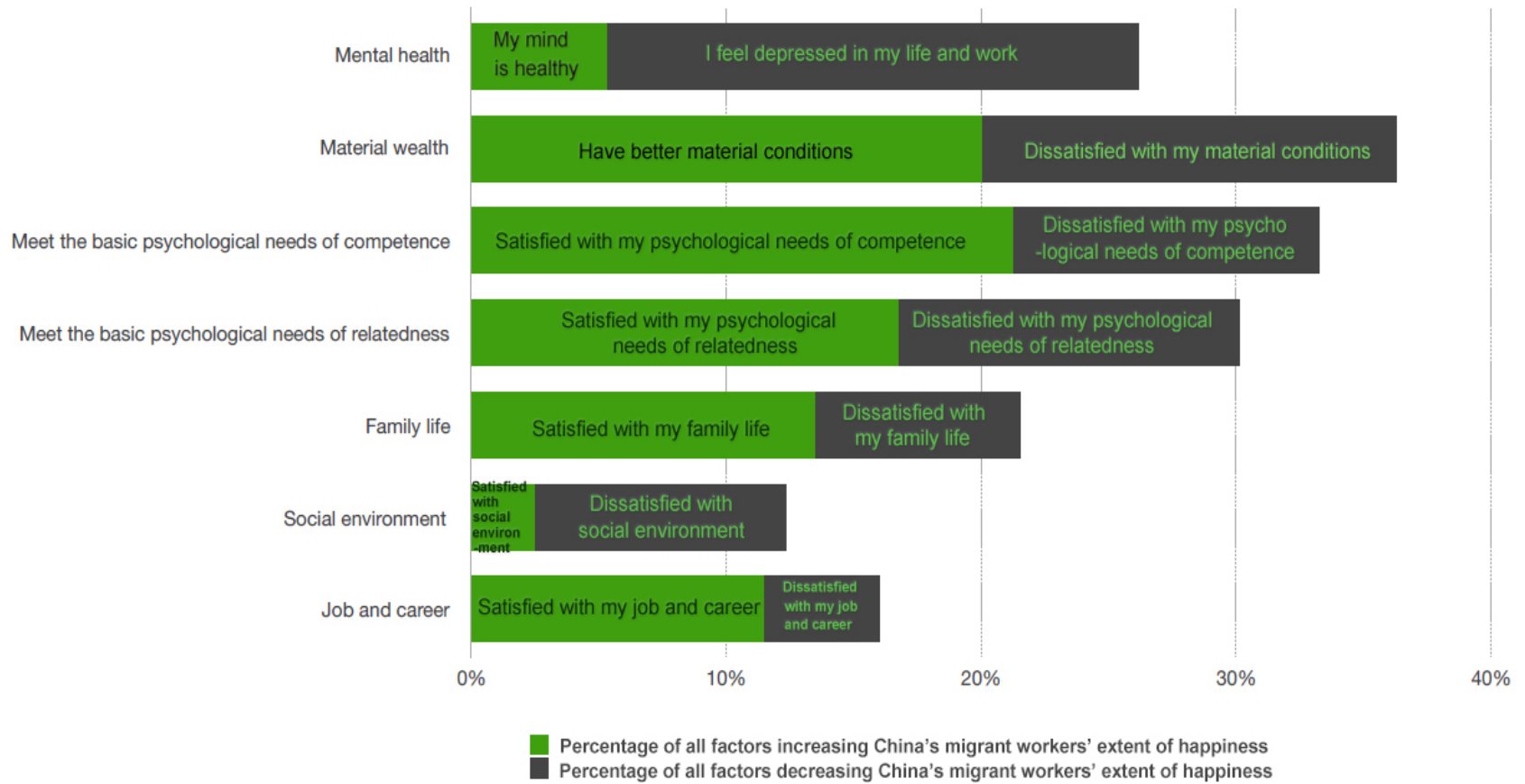
The factors presented here are identical to those that are thought to improve migrant workers' happiness (i.e. 'mental health', 'material wealth', 'meet the basic psychological needs of competence', 'meet the basic psychological needs of relatedness', 'family life', 'social environment', and 'job and career'), but the percentage of each factor increasing or decreasing migrant workers' happiness levels varies from factor to factor (see Table 8.10). For example, the two aspects of 'mental health' ('my mind is healthy' and 'I feel stressed in my life and work') play different roles in increasing or decreasing migrant workers' happiness levels, since getting depressed about life and work is the number one reason for undermining migrant worker's sense of wellbeing, while better mental health conditions are shown to have a much smaller effect on improving their happiness levels (see Table 8.10). As Table 8.10 shows, (1) both aspects of 'material wealth', 'meet the basic psychological needs of competence', 'meet the basic psychological needs of relatedness', and 'family life' have a stabilising influence and function on the increase and decrease of migrant workers' happiness; (2) the positive aspects of 'mental health' and 'social environment' have a relatively small impact on improving migrant workers' happiness, while the negative aspects have a much more significant effect in undermining migrant workers' sense of wellbeing; and (3) the positive aspect of 'job and career' has a strong impact on improving migrant workers' happiness, while the influence of its negative aspect on reducing migrant workers' happiness is much milder.

This section will mainly examine the two factors that have not been discussed before: 'mental health' and 'social environment.' This does not mean that the other factors, such as 'material wealth' or 'meet the psychological needs of competence' are not responsible for the decline in migrant workers' happiness. However, this approach has been taken here because their positive aspects have been discussed in detail before, and there is no essential difference between their positive and negative aspects regarding what they are and how they are functioning.

**Table 8.10: The seven factors that affect migrant workers' happiness levels**

Panel A

<b>Group</b>	<b>Mental health</b>	<b>Material wealth</b>	<b>Meet the basic psychological needs of competence</b>	<b>Meet the basic psychological needs of relatedness</b>	<b>Family life</b>	<b>Social environment</b>	<b>Job and career</b>
Percentage of all factors that improve migrant workers' happiness levels	5.31	20.00	21.22	16.73	13.47	2.45	11.43
Percentage of all factors that reduce migrant workers' happiness levels	20.86	16.31	12.03	13.37	8.02	9.90	4.55



### 8.3.1 *The stress generated in life and work*

The stress generated in work and life is a primary factor in decreasing migrant workers' happiness levels. As Table 8.11 shows, over one-third of migrant worker respondents considered 'job stress' and 'life stress' as the foremost mental health-related reasons that have undermined their sense of wellbeing, with other relevant reasons including 'worry about family members', 'general mental stress', 'family squabbles' and 'boring life'. In addition, by comparing the coding similarities through Jaccard similarity coefficients, male migrant workers demonstrated a much greater probability of feeling depressed about their lives and work than female migrant workers (i.e. the groups 'male'  $S_j=0.722222$  and 'female'  $S_j=0.142857$ ); this was particularly the case with regard to their work (i.e. the groups 'male'  $S_j=0.533333$ , and 'female'  $S_j=0$ ), which is probably because male migrant workers usually attach more importance to their work and career plans than women. Further, compared to first-generation migrant workers, new-generation migrant workers are more likely to feel stressed (i.e. the groups '15-24' and '25-34'), since they may be exposed to greater pressures, especially for those who want to settle in Shanghai.

**Table 8.11: The causes of stress in migrant workers' lives and work**

<b>Job stress</b>	<b>Life stress</b>	<b>Worry about family members for some reason</b>	<b>General mental stress</b>	<b>Family squabbles</b>	<b>Boring life</b>
34.78%	34.78%	26.09%	21.94%	8.70%	8.70%

According to the interviews, male migrant workers are at high risk of being stressed at work because nearly six out of ten male migrant worker respondents reported that the pressure of their jobs had undermined their sense of wellbeing. In fact, male migrant workers are the group most likely to be stressed by their jobs, followed by male urban residents, female urban residents, and then female migrant workers. The job stress for male migrant worker respondents mainly results from (1) heavy workloads (e.g. Noah, Felix, Jenson, Liam, Sebastian, and Tyler); (2) questioning their abilities at work and fearing that they could not do their jobs very well (e.g. Noah, Jenson, and Owen); and (3) life disturbances directly related to their jobs (e.g. Sebastian).

It is understandable that there are connections among some of the factors affecting migrant workers' happiness levels, such as the factors related to jobs and meeting the basic

psychological needs of competence, which is similar to what appeared in the previous discussion on factors improving migrant workers' happiness levels (e.g. 'have an ideal job' being closely linked with better satisfying the psychological needs of competence). Here, it can also be seen that questioning one's ability to carry out one's work causes not only stress at work but also undermines satisfaction with the core psychological needs of competence, i.e. these two factors work together on decreasing one's sense of wellbeing. Therefore, the primary factors affecting migrant workers' happiness levels are probably not individually influencing migrant workers' sense of wellbeing. Moreover, another example may be the interconnection between 'social environment' and 'meet the basic psychological needs of relatedness', which will be discussed in the following section.

In addition, it is worth noting that migrant workers may endure much more job stress caused by heavy workloads than urban residents, although the sources of stress at work are not so unique when compared with those of urban residents. In this sense, migrant workers may have to undertake larger workloads because of their identities, since even though most of them are engaged in similar jobs as urban residents, they have reported much more job stress regarding heavy workloads. According to the interviews, this situation is probably the result of two factors. First, compared with female migrant workers, who do not demonstrate a clear tendency for being stressed by their work, male migrant workers are under more pressure in life and shoulder more responsibilities with regard to feeding their families, which means that they are likely to be more eager to get ahead through hard work and provide a better life for themselves and their families. Second, given that migrant workers may not be well adapted to fast-paced city life, this could lead to problems with regard to understandings of heavy workloads; in this sense, the interpretation of hard work is likely to be different for migrant workers and urban residents. In general, although it may be difficult to say whether lowering workloads would improve their sense of wellbeing, according to the interview results, heavy workloads are indeed a significant reason for job stress, thereby reducing migrant workers' happiness.

Besides job stress, life stress was the other important mental health-related reason undermining migrant workers' sense of wellbeing. Similar to job stress, male migrant worker respondents also reported much more life stress than female migrant workers. In

line with the interviews, migrant workers' life stress usually springs from (1) heavy financial burdens and accompanying life issues, such as poor quality of life and not being able to afford an apartment (e.g. Bella, Blake, Noah, and Owen); (2) the difficulty in finding a good job (e.g. Blake and Katie); and (3) fears about an uncertain future (e.g. Blake). Compared with urban residents, who say little about life stress brought about through financial burdens, migrant workers are clearly more worried about their financial situation:

*I feel I have a lot of pressure in life because, for people like us who have dedicated our youth to the city, who will come to us when we grow older? [On the one hand] we have no pension to support ourselves in old age, [and on the other] the trend of prices is still upwards. What can 100 yuan buy now? We cannot even rely on our children because they also have a heavy financial burden. For example, they have to support both their parents and their children financially (Bella).*

It seems that, compared to urban residents, who feel pressure related to inner anxieties regarding their uncertain futures (e.g. Daniel, Holly, Leon, Lydia, and Olivia), migrant workers become stressed in their daily lives due to a lack of some external conditions, such as better material conditions and good jobs. This also reflects the importance of the role of external conditions, such as material wealth, in affecting migrant workers' happiness.

Worrying about family members is an important mental health-related reason for reduced migrant workers' happiness, which is probably related to their significant concerns over family-style collectivism when defining their happiness. According to the interviews, they were mainly worried about family members' physical conditions (e.g. Alex, Felix, and Harry), especially their parents' physical health (e.g. Alex and Harry) and their children's education (e.g. Bella and Owen). For example, Harry reported that he felt depressed due to his mother's health problem:

*My mother called me up several days ago at midnight and told me she was suffering from cholecystitis. I'm worrying about her health so much that I cannot sleep at night. Her body has been not good since my younger brother*

*and I were born. I was told that she had been left with the root cause of an ailment because of the bad recovery from her childbirth. Probably due to inadequate conditions of confinement, she caught some diseases. We do not know what kind of sickness it is; she just feels uncomfortable constantly. I am always worrying about her health, and now I feel so stressed. I think it does have some negative effect on my mental health.*

This excerpt illustrates that, compared to urban residents who generally do not feel stress because of their family members' difficulties, it is much easier for migrant workers to become depressed when their families or family members suffer negatively, especially when suffering from illnesses or problems. Moreover, it seems that migrant workers' self-presentation is more focused on family relationships, and their happiness levels are more affected by the happiness of their families than urban residents.

In general, this study finds that the stress generated in their lives and work is the primary reason undermining migrant workers' happiness. Instead of negative emotions influenced by personality (e.g. 'general mental stress'; see Table 8.11), their psychological pressures usually come from their and their family members' difficulties in daily work and life, such as heavy workloads, heavy financial burdens, and their families' suffering. Meanwhile, male migrant workers show a greater tendency towards depression in both their lives and work than female migrant workers, and this is especially true with regard to their work. Among all the respondents, male migrant workers are also at the highest risk of being stressed at work, although, according to the interview results, there is no significant difference between migrant workers and urban residents with regard to their possibility of feeling depressed. In addition, compared to urban residents, migrant workers find it much easier to get depressed about their family members' suffering, which is probably closely linked to their concerns regarding family-style collectivism when defining their happiness.

Note that, as one of the main factors affecting migrant workers' happiness, both positive and negative aspects of 'mental health' play different roles in increasing or decreasing their happiness levels. As already discussed at the beginning of this section, migrant worker respondents consider the positive aspect of 'mental health', i.e. 'my mind is healthy,' as having little impact on improving their happiness, while its negative aspect, 'I

feel stressed in my life and work', is thought to be critical in undermining migrant workers' sense of wellbeing (see Table 8.10). Moreover, such an imbalance in influence with regard to migrant workers' happiness is also reflected in the factors of 'social environment' and 'job and career'. However, contrary to 'mental health' and 'social environment', migrant workers thought that the positive aspect of 'job and career', i.e. 'satisfied with my job and career', could significantly improve their wellbeing, while its negative side, 'dissatisfied with my job and career', was believed to have less impact on undermining their happiness levels. As for the other factors, i.e. 'material wealth', 'meet the basic psychological needs of competence', 'meet the basic psychological needs of relatedness', and 'family life', both their positive and negative aspects play important roles in both increasing or decreasing wellbeing. In this regard, it can be inferred that some of the factors may play fundamental roles in affecting migrant workers' happiness. This means that migrant workers' happiness may not rise or fall consistently in line with the improvement or decline of certain factors. For example, the continuous improvement of 'mental health' may not lead to a sustained increase in happiness. Despite this, some of the factors seem to have an 'unlimited' influence on changes to migrant workers' happiness, since the extent of migrant workers' happiness is sensitive to the ups and downs of these factors. This is probably related to fluctuations of these factors around migrant workers' aspirations, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 10.

According to the interview analysis, the main reasons for migrant workers not being satisfied with the social environment are 'unequal treatment due to being without Shanghai's urban *hukou*' (accounting for 72.73 per cent of all reasons) and 'being discriminated against' (36.36 per cent). In addition, 'poor public security', 'poor public health', 'everything depends on *guanxi*', and 'poor quality of education' are the other causes. In this sense, different from urban residents, who tend to consider previous unfair policies and a bad social climate as the primary reasons for their dissatisfaction, migrant workers mostly report unequal social treatment and discrimination as the main causes of their dissatisfaction with the social environment.

In the interviews, 'unequal treatment due to being without Shanghai's urban *hukou*' includes three sub-aspects. In order of importance, they are 'unequal education policies for their children', 'unequal employment opportunities', and 'unequal social security

policies'. With regard to 'unequal education policies for their children', this factor was touched on in Chapter 6 when analysing migrant workers' definition of happiness with regard to their children, as well as in the above section related to their concerns about family members. In this sense, the respondents suggested that the primary reason for their children not being allowed to go to local schools is the unreasonable education policies developed by the local government. For instance, Austin cited the requirement of certain certificates when applying for a Shanghai permanent residence permit as the key obstacles preventing his grandson from going to the local primary school. In addition, Bella, Henry, and Toby also spent much of their interviews explaining about their dissatisfaction with the migrant children education policy. In this regard, their negative feelings regarding migrant children's education generally stemmed from the reality that their children could not go to the local schools like other local school-age children; they suggested that the local government should not put so many roadblocks in place that effectively isolate migrant children from the local public education system.

In addition to 'unequal education policies for their children', Blake, Henry, and Katie also agreed that urban residents usually have better job opportunities as well as more promotions and preferential policies than migrant workers. For example, Katie believed that she had been unfairly treated when trying to find a job in Shanghai. Henry stated that urban residents enjoy preferential policies, such as tax concessions, when setting up a shop. They all believed that this employment environment, which makes a distinction between migrant workers and urban residents, is injudicious and has led to many problems:

*I feel that I have been cursed by my identity. I can't enjoy what I deserve, [such as] promotion and social security because, no matter how much I have done for this city, I am always an outsider. I feel miserable because I do not have a Shanghai hukou (Blake).*

Aside from Blake, Bella also felt that urban residents enjoy better social security provisions, though migrant workers have put the same effort into contributing towards the city's development:

*I cannot pay endowment insurance, unemployment insurance, and medical insurance by myself because I am self-employed. This means that, if I want to*

*pay these types of insurance, I have to be attached to some work unit. I am not satisfied with the current social security policy, in particular for self-employed migrant workers just like me. It is, of course, unfair because I have to beg others to be anchored to some work unit in order to pay my insurance, although I am working as hard as a Shanghai native (Bella).*

Based on analysis of the three sub-aspects above, without Shanghai's urban *hukou*, migrant workers and their children have run into a series of practical problems in their daily lives. They maintain that they should not be treated differently in their social environment and by social policies, and they aspire to get equal treatment in order to improve their wellbeing.

'Being discriminated against' is the other important dimension making migrant workers feel less satisfied with their social environment. Being discriminated against, in this case, refers to urban residents who discriminate against migrant workers as a result of their identities as migrant workers. This includes neither social identity discrimination, which mostly refers to urban-rural discrimination based upon the *hukou* system, such as unequal treatment due to being without Shanghai's urban *hukou*, nor various perceptions related to particular areas of their lives and work, such as 'unequal employment opportunities'. Blake, Katie, Molly, and Sophia all maintained that discrimination against migrant workers usually comes from the superiority inherent in the minds of urbanites:

*I always feel that some locals look down on migrant workers, and it makes me uncomfortable. Also, I think that some Shanghai natives have reputations for holding xenophobic stereotypes, and I was wondering how Shanghai can be such as a large city and have urbanites that are so exclusive. Well, I think for me, being discriminated against is not a distinct feeling, since, actually, no-one will come to me and say he or she looks down upon me. However, it does exist, just like the air that fills every corner of life, maybe in a glance or a sentence. You know some locals always have a sense of superiority, and they think they were born with advantages (Katie).*

In fact, believing they have been discriminated against by urban residents is no illusion. According to the interviews with urban residents, the majority who have some type of

contact with migrant workers, more than 70 per cent suggested that they did not like migrant workers very much. In this sense, they believed that migrant workers are generally unrefined and uneducated, and they thus have some negative impacts on the social environment and security. In addition, they argued that the influx of numerous domestic migrant workers has taken away resources initially provided for urban residents, particularly with regard to medical and education resources, which are also imperative for natives. However, although urban residents did not seem to exhibit kindness towards migrant workers, very few urbanites (only about 9 per cent) directly stated that they disliked domestic migrant workers as a homogenous group. Moreover, most urban residents thought that there was no need to label all migrant workers as bad-mannered, since most of them are acceptable with regard to both living habits and their way of dealing with people. For instance, Chloe, a 21-year old female urbanite, stated:

*I think they can be divided into two groups; one is good, and the other is relatively bad-mannered to some extent. I think that I do not like migrant workers who are bad-mannered because, sometimes, they are not good at getting along politely with people. However, I think that some migrant workers are nice, for example, my neighbours upstairs; I like them.*

Although migrant workers act kinder toward urban residents, most of them hold that they have kept a certain distance from Shanghai locals because they are not able to make friends with them. This shows that migrant workers and urban residents may well be mutually exclusive in regard to their daily activities and communication. According to the interview results, around 30 per cent of migrant worker respondents reported having little contact with urban residents, while 26 per cent considered that they could not be friends with natives, although most of them seemed to be friendly. In addition, about 13 per cent of migrant worker respondents pointed out that they disliked urban residents as a whole. Only about 26 per cent of all migrant worker respondents made it clear that they liked urban residents and would like to build friendships with them. From what has been discussed, the discrimination and stigma that migrant workers understand may not solely be caused by the atmosphere of the city and the sense of superiority inherent in the minds of urbanites. In this sense, the poor communication between both social groups may also be a factor.

## 8.4 The Differences between the Factors That Affect the Happiness of Migrant Workers and Urban Residents

The previous section summarised seven primary factors thought to affect migrant workers' happiness levels. In order of importance,<sup>63</sup> they are: (1) 'material wealth'; (2) 'meet the basic psychological needs of competence'; (3) 'meet the basic psychological needs of relatedness'; (4) 'mental health'; (5) 'family life'; (6) 'job and career'; and (7) 'social environment'. According to the interviews, there are also seven essential elements that play important roles in influencing urban residents' happiness levels. In order of importance, they are: (1) 'material wealth'; (2) 'meet the basic psychological needs of competence'; (3) 'job and career'; (4) 'meet the basic psychological needs of autonomy'; (5) 'social environment'; (6) 'mental health'; and (7) 'interpersonal relationship' (see Table 8.12).

Based on the contrast between the two groups, first, 'material wealth' and 'meet the basic psychological needs of competence' are the most critical influencing factors for the happiness of both migrant workers and urban residents (see Table 8.12). This implies that these two factors may have more generalisable importance in affecting Chinese people's happiness levels. In this sense, compared with other elements that are thought to have a significant influence on the happiness of migrant workers or urban residents, these two factors appear to have a more universal and essential impact on the fluctuations of both migrant workers and urban residents' happiness. In this regard, such features may also be used to investigate the elements that affect the happiness levels of the Chinese population in general. For these reasons, the thesis will return to this point in Chapter 10.

Second, only one of these two factors, i.e. 'material wealth', belongs to the field of SWB. This means that prior studies on the happiness of the Chinese people, which depend significantly on the theoretical strands of SWB, may be inadequate for exploring the full picture of Chinese wellbeing (see Chapter 3). This also echoes the suggestion of Ryan and Deci (2001) that wellbeing is best thought of as a combination of both hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing.

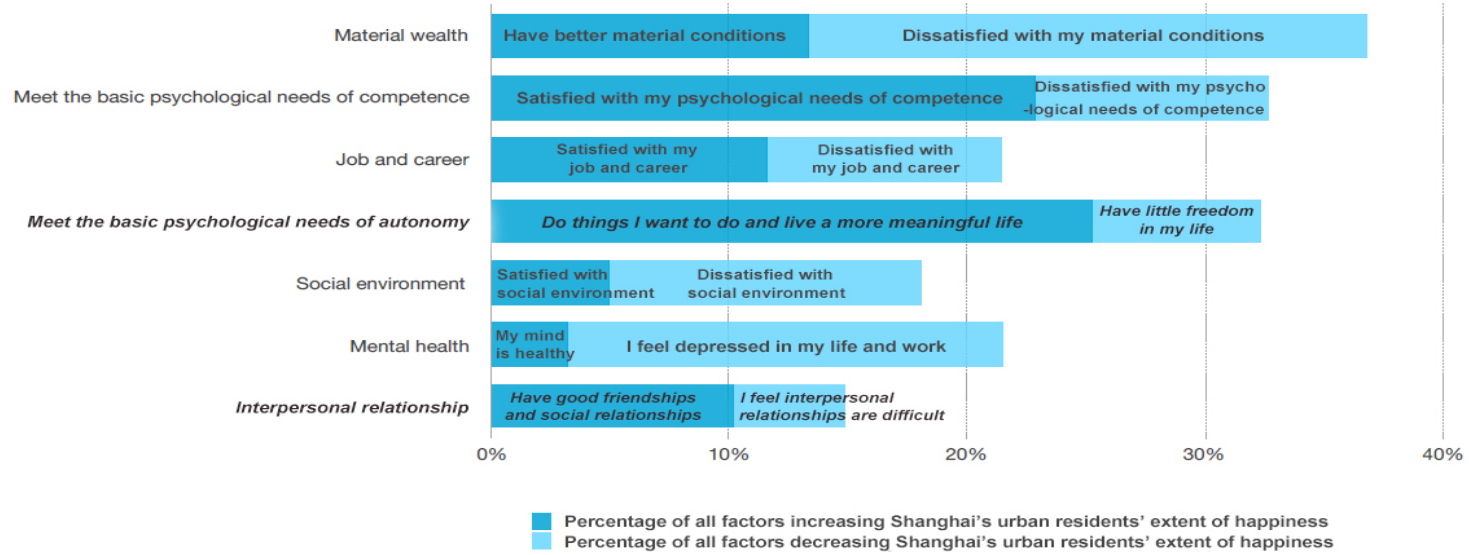
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<sup>63</sup> The order of importance of each factor was calculated by its average ranking in increasing or decreasing migrant workers' happiness.

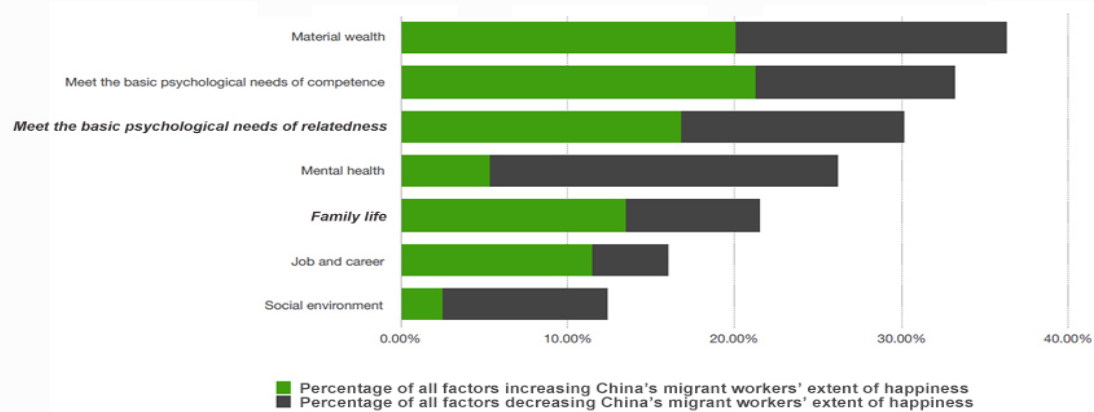
*Table 8.12: The seven factors that affect urban residents' happiness levels*

Panel A							
Group	Material wealth	Meet the basic psychological needs of competence	Job and career	Meet the basic psychological needs of autonomy	Social environment	Mental health	Interpersonal relationships
Percentage of all factors that improve urban residents' happiness levels	13.33	22.81	11.58	25.26	4.91	3.16	10.18
Percentage of all factors that reduce urban residents' happiness levels	23.47	9.86	9.86	7.04	13.15	18.31	4.70

**THE PRIMARY FACTORS AFFECTING SHANGHAI'S URBAN RESIDENTS' HAPPINESS**



**THE PRIMARY FACTORS AFFECTING CHINA'S MIGRANT WORKERS' HAPPINESS**



In this regard, the question of whether a combination of hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing can provide a more comprehensive picture when exploring individuals' sense of wellbeing will be discussed in Chapter 10.

Third, in contrast to migrant workers, there are significant differences in the factors affecting urban residents' happiness. Instead of 'meet the basic psychological needs of relatedness' and 'family life', which are considered critical by migrant workers, urban residents tend to regard 'meet the basic psychological needs of autonomy' and 'interpersonal relationship' as the most important factors influencing changes in their wellbeing.

On the one hand, this probably means that urban residents in Shanghai focus more on personal autonomy than migrant workers in their lives and work on account of them generally caring little about connections with their surroundings. Moreover, different from migrant workers, who seek to achieve satisfaction and a sense of security through connecting themselves with their surroundings, urban respondents seem to be in search of a more meaningful life, at the same time as being more predisposed to enjoying their rights to choose their own path of living. That is, urban residents may well have a more independent form of self-expression, given that their happiness often depends more on individual autonomy while having less to do with connections to their surroundings. Therefore, it is not difficult to see that the perspective of urban residents is distinct from that of migrant workers on this point. According to the interview analysis, rather than attaching importance to relatedness, more than 86 per cent of urban citizen respondents in Shanghai believed that to 'do things I really want to do and live a more meaningful life' would improve their happiness, while around 40 per cent thought that to 'have little freedom in my life' could undermine their sense of wellbeing. For example, Lydia, a female graduate, stated that:

*My philosophy of life is 'choose what you love and love what you have chosen' because, in today's world, there are many options available to us if we want them. I think I should follow my heart when choosing my way of life. Otherwise, I may not feel happy, and I will regret it later for sure. However, once I have made my decision, I must continue. I do not care what others think*

*about me. I must work hard to accomplish my goal, and then seek the meaning of my life.*

One the other hand, it can be suggested that, compared with migrant workers who attach great importance to their family lives, the happiness of Shanghai's urban residents is more influenced by their interpersonal relationships. This probably means that, for urban residents in Shanghai, the family is becoming less important than friendships or other social relationships in influencing their sense of wellbeing. Such a conclusion seems to differ from Lu and Gilmour's (2004) findings from their comparative study of Chinese and Western culture in 2004. According to Lu and Gilmour (2004), for the Chinese population, their socially-oriented SWB mainly includes role obligation and dialectical balance, while for Western people, whose happiness is individually-oriented, it mainly refers to personal accountability and personal pursuits. However, based on the interviews in this thesis, urban residents in Shanghai are more individually inclined, for they are much less affected by traditional Chinese culture, especially with regard to the role-dependent obligations advocated by Confucian cultural tradition, as well as their self-expression being much more independent than that of migrant workers.

Moreover, it seems that, for most of the time, urban residents do not connect their happiness directly or indirectly with their families. This may imply that, instead of an interdependent self, as suggested by Markus and Kitayama (1991), urban residents in Shanghai are more likely to possess an independent self, like most Westerners, although the degree of independence may be different. In this sense, urban residents exhibit a different perspective about happiness with regard to collectivism or family-style collectivism, which has previously been considered as widespread in China (see Section 3.4.2). For example, urban residents in Shanghai do not think that family wellbeing is more important than their own subjective wellbeing, and they feel happy when their own values and desires are achieved. They also demonstrate significant concern for personal pursuits and personal autonomy, similar to Westerners. For instance, Ruby, a female teacher, felt that she would never connect her happiness with her parents or her married life in the future:

*Family, I mean my parents, is probably a refuge for me, but I will never rely*

*on my family when pursuing my happiness. I think I have a strong will, to some extent, because, for most of the time, I do not need other people's approval to continue my life. I rely on myself. Right now, I feel that I love my living status because everything is following my plan, and I have a lot of freedom in my life. I have been living in this steady state for a few years, and I enjoy it very much. At the same time, I think the state of my life cannot be easily changed, even if I experienced some changes in the future. From my point of view, my marriage in future should not change my lifestyle too heavily or unduly limit the freedom in my life. Otherwise, I have no choice but to shun marriage if I want to pursue my happiness, as I am an independent individual and I have lots of things I would like to do.*

## **8.5 Conclusion**

Based on the interviews with migrant workers and urban residents, this chapter has explored the following findings. First, there are seven factors affecting the happiness levels of migrant workers: 'material wealth'; 'meeting the basic psychological needs of relatedness'; 'mental health'; 'social environment'; 'meeting the basic psychological needs of competence'; 'family life'; and 'job and career'. In contrast, the factors affecting the happiness levels of urban residents do not include 'meeting the basic psychological needs of relatedness' and 'family life'; instead, they are replaced with 'meeting the basic psychological needs of autonomy' and 'social relationships'. Like their definitions of happiness, migrant workers' levels of happiness are also more affected by Confucian culture, which emphasises family wellbeing and patriarchal collectivism. This is demonstrated in two unique affecting factors of the happiness levels of migrant workers (i.e. 'meeting the basic psychological needs of relatedness' and 'family life'). The characteristics of all these factors and their influences on the happiness levels of Chinese people will be examined when discussing the Cupcake Model in Section 10.3.

Second, based on analysing the effects and characteristics of the seven factors affecting the happiness levels of migrant workers, this study has found that a happy migrant worker is one who has a healthy mind, satisfactory material conditions and relatedness needs, a basic level of satisfaction with the social environment in which he/she lives, and a higher

degree of satisfaction with his/her family life, job, and competence. This finding will be discussed further in Section 10.3. Finally, combined with the findings of Chapter 6, this study has found that simply promoting migrant workers' degrees of satisfaction with regard to the major components of their definition of happiness (such as family life and material comfort) may not significantly improve their happiness levels because the factors they expect to promote their happiness are more diverse than what they emphasise when defining their happiness.

## **9 Chapter 9: How Should the Level of Chinese Migrant Workers' Happiness Be Promoted**

### **9.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter addressed the third research question and found seven factors influencing the levels of happiness of Chinese migrant workers. Although Chapter 8 included some suggestions for improving migrant workers' happiness levels, they are not yet complete answers to the fourth research question – 'How should the level of Chinese migrant workers' happiness be promoted?' This is because, according to the literature review relating to the background of the formation of Chinese migrant workers in Chapter 4, the fourth research question is best answered in the context of Chinese urbanisation.

Chapter 9 addresses the fourth research question and its four sub-questions, which include:

(1) According to the findings from Chapter 8, what kinds of conditions would best promote migrant workers' happiness levels?

(2) Does a happiness gap between migrant workers and urban residents exist?

(3) If a happiness gap exists, which criteria most likely produce it?

(4) If a happiness gap exists, how should it be closed?

This chapter contains six sections. Based on the findings from the previous chapter, Section 9.2 summarises the four essential conditions that would best promote migrant workers' happiness levels. Section 9.3 shows that, according to the interview results, there is a happiness gap between migrant workers and urban residents. Section 9.4 explores the criteria that are most likely to produce the happiness gap between the two social groups. Section 9.5 demonstrates how to close the happiness gap, especially the material wellbeing gap, between the two social groups. Section 9.6 concludes the findings of this chapter and makes the suggestion that a more equal and freer Chinese society can contribute to both migrant workers and urban residents' happiness.

## 9.2 The Conditions That Would Best Promote Migrant Workers' Happiness Levels

The previous chapter found that there are seven factors affecting the happiness levels of migrant workers: 'material wealth'; 'meeting the basic psychological needs of relatedness'; 'mental health'; 'social environment'; 'meeting the basic psychological needs of competence'; 'family life'; and 'job and career'. The characteristics of these factors can be grouped into two categories: the factors with discontinuous effects (i.e. 'mental health', 'social environment', and 'job and career') and the factors with continuous effects ('material wealth', 'meet the basic psychological needs of competence', 'meet the basic psychological needs of relatedness', and 'family life'). The features of the factors that have discontinuous impacts on migrant workers' happiness are concretely shown by the fact that (1) the sustained improvement of 'mental health' and 'social environment' may not bring about an uninterrupted growth of migrant workers' happiness levels, and (2) a continuous setback in 'job and career'<sup>64</sup> may not lead to a permanent decline in happiness (see Table 8.10). However, at the same time, the factors that have continuous effects upon migrant workers' happiness are thought to play a greater role in the influence of their happiness levels, since both the ups and downs of these factors could affect the extent of their happiness. For example, according to the interviews, migrant workers' happiness can be extremely sensitive to changes in 'material wealth'.

Given this, the conditions that best promote migrant workers' happiness may include the following: (1) building an equal society and decreasing rural-urban differences in order to facilitate Chinese urbanisation; (2) building a freer society and providing migrant workers with equal opportunities and better platforms to demonstrate their competence; (3) lowering property prices and increasing migrant workers' satisfaction with their material conditions; and (4) raising migrant workers' education levels and job skills, especially for children and the new generation of migrant workers.

It is noteworthy that each of these four aspects can correspond to one or more factors that are thought to affect migrant workers' happiness. For instance, establishing an equal

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<sup>64</sup> The continuous setback of 'job and career' does not include the situation that someone is unemployed or retired. It only refers to the circumstance that someone has got and kept a job.

society can be concerned with ‘mental health’, ‘meet the basic psychological needs of relatedness’, ‘social environment’, and ‘family life’, since it is supposed to ameliorate migrant workers’ difficulties in city life, as well as those of their families and the social problems generated by working in cities. Moreover, the influence of each aspect may not be mutually independent, since people’s happiness is not produced by isolated elements.

### ***9.2.1 Building an equal society***

Establishing an equal Chinese society is one of the most important conditions for promoting migrant workers’ happiness. This mainly refers to avoiding inequality between migrant workers and urban residents because, from the interviews, most migrant workers tend to equate ‘equality’ with ‘receiving equal rights, opportunities, and treatment with the Chinese urban population’. Migrant workers also believe that the social inequality between city and countryside (or between the agricultural and non-agricultural population) has become one of the leading causes of their lower happiness levels and the dip in their overall wellbeing (see Chapter 8). These results correspond with the findings from the literature review in Section 4.3.3, regarding the disparity in happiness between Chinese urban and rural residents under the urban-rural division. Therefore, with the purpose of alleviating institutional discrimination against migrant workers and relieving the social inequality produced by the widening gap between urban and rural areas, the Chinese government should further promote the process of urbanisation and urban-rural integration, in particular by facilitating the population urbanisation of migrant workers so as to enhance the equality of the whole of Chinese society.

Tian (2014) believes that urbanisation is the result of economic, cultural, and political development as well as the fundamental development of social productivity. According to the literature review on Chinese-style urbanisation in Chapter 4, urbanisation, as such, is supposed to be a problem-solving procedure for the social inequality between cities and the countryside. This also means that, as part of Chinese urbanisation, migrant workers’ population urbanisation<sup>65</sup> may well be the principal remedy for present problems relating to inequalities and the happiness gap between migrant workers and urbanites. Although the development of urbanisation and population urbanisation is meant to promote equality

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<sup>65</sup> This means permitting eligible migrant workers have a local urban *hukou*.

between migrant workers and urban residents, according to national statistics, it may not be so positive. Based on *The National Plan on New Urbanisation (2014-2020)*, Chinese urbanisation is primarily challenged by two major issues: (1) The Chinese urbanisation rate is relatively lower than other developing countries at similar income levels; and (2) the development of migrant workers' population urbanisation has been slow, particularly with regard to providing real household registrations for those who are eligible. The national plan further points out that, according to the permanent urban population ratio,<sup>66</sup> the Chinese urbanisation rate was 53.7 in early 2014, which is well below the average ratio for developed countries (around 80 per cent) and even below the average ratio for other countries at the same income level (around 60 per cent) (the State Council of China, 2014). Moreover, according to the registered urban population ratio, the Chinese urbanisation rate was just 36 per cent over the same time period, which implies that about one-third of the permanent population who were living in cities had not yet acquired an urban *hukou* during the process of population urbanisation. This may well be one of the principal causes of inequality between migrant workers and urban residents, as these inhabitants (most of them being migrant workers and their families) have not yet been completely transformed into urban residents as they are still prohibited from accessing most *hukou*-based welfare, such as health, education, employment, and housing. According to the interviews, about 74 per cent of migrant workers thought that the Chinese government should enhance social equality between themselves and urbanites so as to best promote their happiness. In addition, more than 40 per cent believed that social equality comes mainly from acquiring equal rights, especially equal access to education; further, more than one-third believed that social equality is mainly derived from wholesale household registration reform, particularly from a sound solution to rural-urban immigration's *hukou* problem.

Given this, it can be seen that, in order to best promote migrant workers' happiness, the authorities should continue facilitating migrant workers' population urbanisation, particularly with regard to resolving the household registration problems for eligible rural-urban immigration. In the meantime, to narrow the social security and welfare gap

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<sup>66</sup> The permanent urban population ratio is calculated by dividing the number of the permanent urban population (those who have an urban *hukou*) by the total population.

between migrant workers and urban residents, and especially to provide equal education rights for both rural and urban citizens, is also critical to boost migrant workers' sense of equality and wellbeing. Note that the positive effect of population urbanisation on social equality may not be unidirectional, seeing that an equal society could also be good for transforming agricultural surplus labour into an urban population. According to the interviews, establishing an equal society between the rural and urban population may not only promote the integration of rural-urban immigration, but can also encourage eligible migrant workers to settle in cities. Moreover, besides enriching migrant workers' sense of equality and their *hukou*-based social rights, an equal Chinese society also benefits their mental health, family life, and basic psychological needs of relatedness. For example, Austin, Henry, Paige, Sophia, and Toby believed that the problems with their children's education and the resulting family issues, such as separation from their children, have seriously undermined their families' satisfaction and their determination to settle in cities:

*If you ask me what I want from the government to best promote my happiness, I would say that I hope to resolve my children's education problems. It is unfair to exclude my children from the [urban] public education system just because we don't have an urban hukou. I think this suggestion is not just of my own, but also of many other migrant workers...because, for people like us, we have to work in cities to support our families, but, in the meanwhile, we don't want to be separated from our children.*

The researcher then asked, 'Why don't you work in your hometown?'

*I'd love to, but there are few factories and job opportunities in my hometown, which means we can't feed our kids if we do not go out as migrant workers. Actually, we planned to settle in Shanghai years ago. We thought we were competitive at that time. But now, I am confused, because my children cannot access public education in Shanghai. I feel sorry for leaving my kids behind, and I feel that Shanghai is unfriendly to migrant workers as well. This situation puts a lot of stress on me; it decreases my sense of wellbeing and makes me feel I'm on pins and needles (Toby).*

Although further facilitating urbanisation and population urbanisation may be an effective

solution for a range of issues that negatively impact on migrant workers' general wellbeing, it is still a big challenge for large cities like Shanghai to maintain their public services when facing a huge influx of rural-urban immigration. According to the Shanghai Municipal Government (2012), there was a shortage of public health resources in Shanghai in 2012, particularly in the medical field of rehabilitation, geriatric nursing, mental health, and maternal and child health. Moreover, based on the State Council of China (2015), the number of China's floating population reached 245 million in 2013, and, at the same time, there were more than 200 million migrant workers included in the urban permanent population who had not yet equally accessed basic public services such as medical treatment, pensions, and education. This means that the discrepancy that existed between the supply and need for medical health resources will become more prominent with the development of population urbanisation, on account of a growing number of migrant workers being transformed into urban residents in the future.

Beyond this, according to government statistics, Shanghai's public education resources also face a long-term challenge. Based on a blue book by the Shanghai Academy of Social Science in 2014, Shanghai's school-age population will continue to grow in the next twenty years, which means that the deficiency in Shanghai's public education resources will become a long-term issue in the next two decades. Therefore, the insufficiency of social public resources, such as medical services and education, may account for the slow progress of migrant workers' population urbanisation in China's big cities. This may also imply that the population urbanisation of migrant workers should be carried out in stages because there are not enough public resources to promote their population urbanisation fully. Given this, in order to better facilitate migrant workers' population urbanisation and their satisfaction with the social environment, the government should prioritise those migrant workers who are more suitable to be transferred into the urban population. The classification of migrant workers, as well as their detailed housing, income, and *hukou* issues during their process of urbanisation, will be discussed in Section 9.5.

### ***9.2.2 Building a freer society***

According to Chapter 8, better experiences in the satisfaction of their psychological needs of competence is the most significant factor for enhancing migrant workers' happiness.

Such a realisation is different from both the traditional image we may have of profit-driven domestic migration and the primary focus of Chinese academics, which is expecting to mitigate social issues caused by rural-urban immigration. In fact, providing Chinese migrants with equal opportunities and the possibility to demonstrate their competences, i.e. to establish a freer society where one is more able to fully demonstrate one's ability, may be the most effective means to elevate migrant workers' happiness and life satisfaction. Though this is seen as more important for China's new generation of migrant workers, in particular for young men who have received a higher level of education, it is also likely to have general applicability to most migrant workers, since new-generation migrant workers have become the main constituent of rural-urban immigration (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2011) and the main force for Chinese urbanisation (Pan et al., 2009; Sun, 2010; Wang, 2010; Guo, 2011).

Although migrant workers often complain that Chinese society (or China's social environment) has installed all kinds of limitations to prevent them from furthering themselves, they do not believe that the government will take steps to facilitate their sense of competence or to help them demonstrate their abilities in their daily lives. For example, Bella believed that her business had been negatively affected by local policies, but she did not place any hope in the government:

*Who doesn't want to demonstrate his or her abilities at work? However, once I worked outside, I came face-to-face with the harsh reality; I knew I could only rely on my family.*

The researcher then asked, 'Do you want some policy support from the government to better demonstrate your ability at work?'

*No, I don't. I don't think the government could do anything.*

The researcher continued, 'For example, to provide a more liberal environment for a self-employed entrepreneur like you?'

*These demands are unrealistic. To give you an example, we borrowed an identity card from a local man to handle our business license<sup>67</sup> when we*

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<sup>67</sup> This is because the procedure for handling the business license is much easier for a local resident than an outsider (such as migrant workers).

*planned to start our business in Shanghai. Life is so hard, and everything needs the guanxi networks in today's society.*

She argued that building a freer society (or social environment) was less concerned with the government and its corresponding policies, though some of the restrictions were probably caused by the government policy. In this case, Bella had no confidence in the effectiveness of government policy, and she attributed the harsh reality to the ruthlessness of society. Similarly, Lola suggested that:

*To some extent, Chinese society is very complicated because it always depends on all kinds of guanxi. Most of the time, one cannot get ahead only with his or her talent. So, I think it's really hard for me to move up [at my work] because I'm just a rural woman without any background. It is a society of cruelty, of ruthlessness.*

In addition, it is not difficult to see that, for migrant workers, *guanxi*,<sup>68</sup> or personal background, is another important factor preventing them from improving themselves. In accordance with the interview analysis, the emphasis on *guanxi* and interpersonal relationship in Chinese society has had a negative effect on migrant workers' wellbeing, since it often results in disappointments and imbalances after they are blocked by the lack of *guanxi* in their work and everyday lives (e.g. Bella, Blake, and Lola). They also believed that such a phenomenon was mainly due to the characteristic or tone of Chinese society, which is extremely difficult to change through public policies. In fact, *guanxi* does exist in all aspects of Chinese life. According to Li (2013), Chinese people tend to gain unfair competitive advantage over others through *guanxi*, from buying a train ticket during Spring Festival to getting good jobs or getting promotion in their working lives. This may partly explain why migrant workers (especially the new generation of migrant workers) often feel that their abilities are barely recognised in a fair manner. More alarmingly, this can also lead to more intense emotions than simply disappointment, such as social discontent and social resentment, given that such a situation would likely intensify their psychological gap between imagination and reality, which is considered as the underlying

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<sup>68</sup> '关系' in Chinese, which refers to drawing on personal connections in order to secure reciprocal favours in personal relations (Li, 2013, p.143).

driver of delinquency (China Court, 2014; China News, 2014). It should be noted that, although this situation can also have an impact on urban residents' self-actualisation (e.g. Chloe and Zoe), it is probably not as serious as the adverse effects on the self-fulfilment of rural-urban immigrants. Compared with indigenous residents, who more or less have some *guanxi* in their social circles, migrant workers usually know very few people in cities, and most of the people they know are their fellow villagers and workmates, who are also isolated.

Considering that 'meet the basic psychological needs of competence' was the foremost factor for increasing migrant workers' wellbeing, the government should lower the politically-constructed barriers (such as discrimination policies in employment and residence) that hinder migrant workers from demonstrating their abilities. This can partly overlap with 'building an equal society', as discussed previously, since it stresses that, giving the opportunity, migrant workers can thrive just like urban residents, while 'building a freer society' places much more emphasis on offering Chinese people a freer and more competitive environment within which to represent themselves. Apparently, based on the interviews, an excessive reliance on *guanxi* or utilising *guanxi* has had a negative influence on the degree of freedom in Chinese society; in this sense, it hinders common Chinese people, especially migrant workers, from flourishing in a fair competitive environment. For these reasons, the government should take effective measures to alleviate this phenomenon in order to make Chinese society more healthy and free.

### ***9.2.3 Increasing migrant workers' material satisfaction***

Since 'material wealth', or the degree of satisfaction with material life, has been shown to greatly affect the changes in migrant workers' happiness, the Chinese government should elevate migrant workers' satisfaction with material conditions in order to best facilitate their sense of wellbeing. In so doing, specific measures may include stabilising prices, reducing inflation, and lowering property prices, since, based on the interviews, high prices, the decline in the purchasing power of the Renminbi (RMB), and extremely high real estate prices have become the main reasons for the decline of both migrant workers and urban residents' material satisfaction. In particular, unaffordable real estate prices are

considered to be one of the principal factors preventing migrant workers from settling in cities and enjoying a higher level of material life.

It should be noted that having better experiences with regard to their material satisfaction is not necessarily associated with having higher incomes, on account of migrant workers' aspirations to have both an apartment and savings in cities remaining difficult even if they are paid much more (see Chapter 8). This may mean that increasing incomes would not be enough for them to achieve satisfaction in material life, and their material needs would not be satisfied unless they were able to buy their homes in cities and have money saved for emergency needs. Therefore, in order to best promote migrant workers' happiness, the government should take steps to facilitate migrant workers' material wellbeing, especially to make housing more affordable for those who are willing to take up residence in cities. Note that this section does not discuss other elements, such as problems brought about by having no urban *hukou* (see Section 9.2.1) and lower incomes caused by a lack of education (see Section 9.2.4), though they may also undermine migrant workers' material wellbeing to some extent.

#### ***9.2.4 Raising migrant workers' education levels and job skills***

Although most migrant workers do not associate educational status with their levels of happiness in the interviews, their lower education levels and professional skills do seem to affect their happiness levels and abilities to gain necessary resources that lead to happiness. For example, a lack of education and career skills has led to most migrant workers working long hours and for low wages. In fact, according to the interview analysis, it is also one of the major causes of the happiness gap (especially the material wellbeing gap) between them and urban residents,<sup>69</sup> seeing that, compared to their urban peers, who are usually well educated, they tend to be at a disadvantage with regard to employment, productive capacity, and the acquisition of both economic benefits and social acceptance. It is conceivable that, if the government cannot improve migrant workers' education and job skills in the future, they will have a difficult time being recognised by the urban labour market, which is more oriented to a well-educated workforce. Moreover, this will not only prevent them from acquiring the economic and cultural foundations to become new urban

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<sup>69</sup> The other major cause is having no local urban *hukou*.

residents, but will also result in many issues brought about by slow urbanisation, such as an extensive happiness gap between rural-urban immigrants and city dwellers. However, education for the children and the new generation of migrant workers has never been a simple question, in view of the fact that the cumulative dropout rate from Chinese rural middle schools had reached 63 per cent between 2007 and 2013, with most rural teenagers who had dropped out of school feeling that education does not appear to provide them with any advantages later in life (Shi et al., 2015). This issue was discussed in Chapter 8 and will be further discussed in Chapter 10.

### 9.3 Migrant Workers Are Less Happy Than Urban Residents

Migrant workers are less happy than urban residents, whether in their own thoughts or in those of urban residents. According to the interviews with migrant workers, nearly three-quarters of the migrant worker respondents considered that they were, in some ways, less happy than Shanghai’s urban dwellers. Specifically, as described in Table 9.1, about 52 per cent of migrant worker respondents believed that they are definitely less happy than urban citizens in Shanghai, while around 22 per cent of them felt that they are sometimes less happy. Only slightly more than a quarter of the migrant worker respondents thought of themselves as happier than, or as happy as, urban residents.

*Table 9.1: Do migrant workers think they are less happy than urban residents?*

Less happy	Sometimes less happy	Happier	The same level of happy
52.17%	21.75%	17.40%	8.70%

Similarly, urban residents also tend to think that migrant workers are less happy than themselves. As illustrated in Table 9.2, half of the urban resident respondents felt that migrant workers are less happy than city dwellers, and nearly 14 per cent of them suggested that, in some ways, migrant workers are less happy. However, somewhat differently, urban residents in Shanghai were more likely to view migrant workers as happier when compared with the self-assessment of migrant workers themselves. As shown in Table 9.2, more than 27 per cent of urban resident respondents believed that migrant workers are happier than themselves, which is 10 per cent higher than the percentage of migrant workers who thought they are happier than urban dwellers. This is probably because urban residents are more inclined to define happiness as a subjective

feeling that depends on one's subjective judgement regarding one's sense of satisfaction and happiness. In this regard, city dwellers in Shanghai are more likely to think of migrant workers as more contented simply because they have obtained what they most desire (e.g. more money) in the city.

**Table 9.2: Do urban residents think migrant workers are less happy than them?**

Less happy	Sometimes less happy	Happier	The same level of happy
50.00%	13.64%	27.30%	9.10%

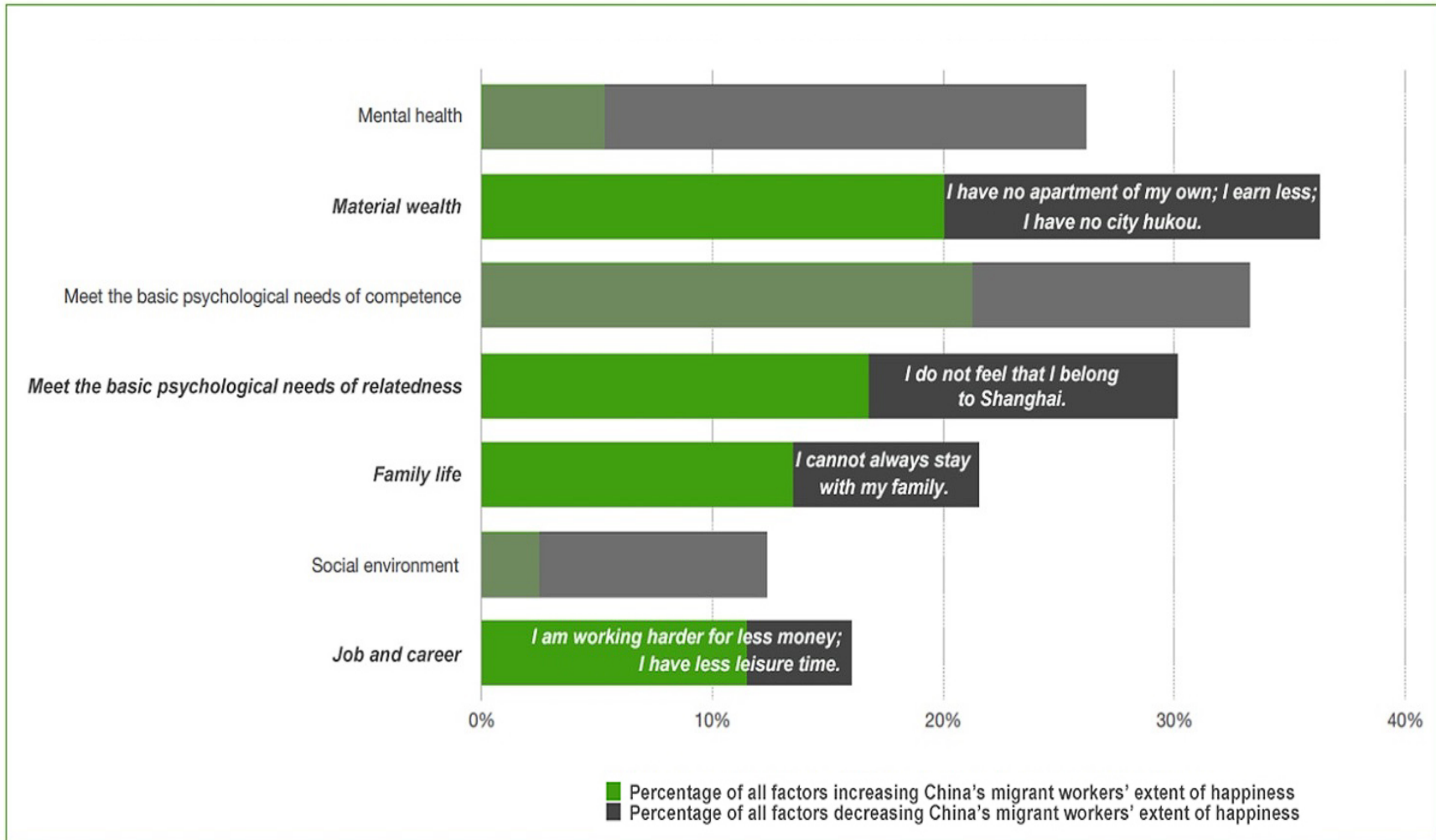
## 9.4 The Criteria That Most Likely Result in the Happiness Gap Between Migrant Workers and Urban Residents

According to the perspectives of migrant workers, the main reasons leading to their lower levels of happiness involve three aspects: material wealth, emotional satisfaction, and job (see Table 9.3). However, these aspects do not exist independently; each aspect corresponds to one or more of the essential factors that have an impact on migrant workers' happiness. In this sense, as shown in Figure 9.1, the aspect of material wealth is related to the factor of 'material wealth'; the aspect of emotional satisfaction is associated with 'family life' and 'meet the basic psychological needs of relatedness'; and the aspect of job is connected with 'job and career'. Therefore, the fact that migrant workers believe they are less happy than urban residents is probably caused by their lower levels of satisfaction with 'material wealth', 'family', 'meet the basic psychological needs of relatedness', and 'job and career', when compared with urbanites in Shanghai.

**Table 9.3: The major causes of the happiness gap between migrant workers and urban residents**

Group	Number	%
Material wealth	28	58.57
Job	6	12.77
Emotional satisfaction	5	10.64
Others	8	17.02

Figure 9.1: The criteria that make migrant workers feel less happy than urban residents



### ***9.4.1 Different levels of material wealth***

First of all, unsatisfactory material conditions are the most important cause of differences in happiness levels between migrant workers and urban residents, which includes three main aspects of material benefits: housing, income, and social benefit allocation. According to the interview analysis, most migrant worker respondents believed that their present state of having no apartment and earning less money makes them less happy when compared to urban residents, who usually have their own apartments and relatively high salaries. It is also worth noting that these two aspects of material interests are essential ingredients in the happiness gap between the two social groups, as, together, they account for about half of the number of codings listed under the ‘urban residents are happier than migrant workers’ category.

For example, Harry, a male painter, felt that Shanghai’s urban residents of his age are much happier than him. Because of being compared with these young urbanites, whose parents are often able to provide them with housing and other economic benefits, he has to worry about a lack of money and paying exorbitant rent every month:

*Though happiness is a subjective feeling...only one can tell if one is happy or not...from my personal perspective, the young people in Shanghai are much happier than me because they can lean heavily on their parents. First, like the most common 4-2-1 family in Shanghai, two families integrate into one family after the son and daughter get married, and both of their parents leave their properties to the younger generation, who can take one property and sell it, which will be an enormous amount of money. In Shanghai, we are closely connected to the low-rent housing policy. For example, if the area we are living in now was demolished, what would I do? For low-income migrant workers like us, we earn 4000 RMB every month. Without cheap housing and low-rent housing, ordinary housing would cost us more than 4000 RMB every month, and then how could I live in Shanghai? I know that the low-rent housing policy is aimed at solving the housing problems of low-income urban residents. I hope it will open up for us as well in the future because I think that most of the urban residents in Shanghai have their housing; even if they don’t have new homes, they still have old ones. For us, we don’t have any housing*

*in Shanghai; usually, we go for cheap accommodation in the suburban areas. If these sectors are demolished, we'll have nowhere to go, and the only thing we can do is to leave Shanghai. So, I think, to some extent, the urban residents in Shanghai are much happier than us.*

Besides Harry, Felix, Katie, Liam, Sara, Sebastian, Sophia, and Violet also felt that having no apartment was the main reason for feeling less happy than urban residents.

Having lower incomes or a weaker financial footing is another material cause for making migrant workers feel less happy than urban residents. For example, Blake, a salesperson, suggested that, compared to urban residents, who usually have better material lives and higher levels of confidence, he was less happy because he had an inferiority complex about his living conditions:

*I feel that the urban dwellers in Shanghai are happier than me. I think they are happier because they have some advantages in income and material conditions. They also have some mental advantages, which are based on their material conditions. Compared with those urban residents who are always full of confidence, I feel inferior. I want to improve my living conditions, and I want to speak as confidently as those natives, who always seem so sure.*

Austin, Blake, Felix, Harry, Jenson, Katie, Lola, and Sophia also noted this point in their interviews. In this regard, having no home in Shanghai can be one of the most important reasons leading migrant workers to have less disposable income than urban families, since they have to pay rent to satisfy their basic need for housing. Thus, the material wellbeing gap between migrant workers and urban residents is caused not so much by income as by the general financial situation.

Moreover, some migrant workers believed that, compared to Shanghai's urban dwellers, who have the highly prized Shanghai urban *hukou*, they are less happy because they do not enjoy the same benefits due to their different *hukou* status. As noted earlier, China's current *hukou* system is specifically linked to the allocation of social resources with regard to housing, education, medical insurance, social welfare, and some other aspects. Moreover, based on the different *hukou* status, migrant workers are considered as being at the bottom of the social benefits chain. However, urban residents are thought of as being

the most privileged people out of all the Chinese population (see Chapter 4). In this regard, Paige, a female salesperson, stated that:

*Shanghai's urban citizens are certainly happier than us because they are born with a Shanghai urban hukou. I think their life pressure is relatively small. [For example], it is much easier and far cheaper for their children to go to local schools, as these schools are public facilities that are actually intended to serve those local urbanites. I think, for migrant workers like us, children's education is always a worrying thing because we have to pay the temporary schooling fee for our children, and we also face costly and tiresome admission formalities before trying to apply to local schools for our children. I do believe that urban residents are happier than me, and I think it is a common phenomenon. Because we are in Shanghai, this means that the local government will consider its urbanites first, and then the local peasants, and finally the outsiders just like us.*

Based on the above analysis, the distinctions relating to material wellbeing, including different states of housing, income, and social benefit allocations, are most likely to be responsible for the happiness gap that exists between migrant workers and urban residents. This finding is also the beginning of another issue, i.e. how to close the happiness gap? With this in mind, Section 9.5 will propose policy recommendations on how to close the material wellbeing gap.

#### ***9.4.2 Different levels of job satisfaction***

Job dissatisfaction caused by large workloads and disproportional income is one of the secondary reasons for the happiness gap between the two social classes. As reported in the interviews, migrant workers' job dissatisfaction is mainly illustrated by two perspectives. First, they tended to believe that, compared to themselves, who often keep long working hours, urban residents usually have more leisure time. Second, they also felt that, compared with their jobs, which are always linked to low pay and long hours, the jobs of urban residents are often more rewarding and enjoyable. For example, Austin, a city hygiene worker, noted that:

*I think they [urban residents] are happier [than us] because they can live well*

*even doing nothing. They eat and then play very happily. I think that they are happier than us because they have higher incomes. They have more money [so that] they [can] play well. Besides that, I think their work is much easier, so they must be much happier than us. We have to work more than ten hours a day to make 2,000 RMB [every month]. However, for people like them, they can get more than 2,000 RMB [each month] just by working three or four hours each day.*

Sophia, a cleaner, reported that:

*They are happy [but] I am not. They are happy because they have more leisure time. They dance and they do physical exercise when they are free. They have more money and they have a higher income, [so] they have lots of time to play. However, I am a migrant worker who goes out to work; it is hard for me to make every penny. They are happier than me because they have some time to rest.*

These ideas were often found in the interviews of first-generation migrant workers who do or did manual work, such as Austin, Elisa, and Sophia. This is probably related to the nature of their work, which is thought to be physically harder than mental work, as none of the white-collar migrant worker respondents agreed on these points in their interviews. In view of the dissatisfaction with work being closely related to material wealth (especially income), the factor of job dissatisfaction will be located within the problem of migrant workers' income when responding to the question of how to close the happiness gap.

### ***9.4.3 Different levels of emotional satisfaction***

A poor emotional state is the other secondary reason for the happiness gap between the two social classes. As reported in the interviews, migrant workers' unsatisfactory emotional needs were mainly reflected in a dissatisfaction with their family lives (e.g. Liam, Sara, and Sebastian) and a feeling of not belonging (e.g. Jenson and Sebastian). For example, Liam, a male taxi driver, stated that:

*They [urban residents] are happier than us for sure. We are going away to*

*work in the cities just because we have to feed our families. For me, I think I have no choice but to go out to work. This does not mean that I do not love my hometown or I do not cherish life with my family. I think I was much happier before.*

Sebastian reported that:

*I believe that they [urban residents] are happier than me. At least, they are not strangers here. They were born in Shanghai. They have always had a strong sense of belonging to this city because it is where they call home. They feel happier than me because they have a strong feeling of familiarity to and comfort in this city. This is what I do not have.*

In this sense, being away from home and their familiar routines are the main reasons for their dissatisfaction with emotional needs. However, it is worth noting that this factor will not be included in the question of how to close the happiness gap because it is likely to be resolved automatically through time and urbanisation (see Chapter 8).

#### **9.4.4 Discussion**

Through analysis of the three leading causes of the happiness gap between migrant workers and urban residents, it can be suggested that material wealth is most likely to be responsible for the happiness gap between the two social classes. That is not surprising, since ‘material wealth’ is the overriding factor in affecting both migrant workers and urban residents’ happiness (see Tables 8.10 and 8.12). However, it is worth mentioning that, as one of the leading predictors of the extent of migrant workers’ happiness, the element ‘meet the basic psychological needs of competence’ no longer exerts its influence on the happiness gap between the two social classes. In this regard, it is probably associated with migrant workers’ aim to migrate from the countryside to the city and their ways of defining happiness. More specifically, the reason for migrant workers moving to work in the cities is to search for better material conditions and quality of life, which means that they will inevitably put material gains first. This situation is also consistent with their patterns of defining happiness because, instead of subjective feelings (which may include a sense of competence), they are more inclined to define happiness as material wellbeing (see Chapter 6). In addition, urban residents also consider different levels of material wellbeing

as being the principal reason behind the happiness gap. As illustrated in the interviews with urban residents, about 80 per cent of respondents who regarded migrant workers as less happy groups also agreed that a dissatisfaction with material wellbeing would be the main reason for their lower overall subjective wellbeing.

## **9.5 The Conditions That Would Close the Happiness Gap Between the Two Social Groups**

Based on the above analysis, reducing the material wellbeing gap between migrant workers and urban residents would be the most effective way to close the happiness gap between the two social groups. This could be achieved by improving the issues of housing, income, and the *hukou* of China's migrant workers, although these issues are still difficult to change in present-day society.

Before examining the specifics of the policy suggestions that are hoped to ameliorate these issues, the researcher would like to offer some explanations about the following suggestions. First, these suggestions are presented within the context of Chinese-style urbanisation, which is seen as the cause for and the solution to migrant workers issues in China (see Chapter 4). In this case, these suggestions will focus more on the question of how to promote China's urbanisation, particularly its population urbanisation. Such intentions are reflected in concerns for how to retain competent migrants in cities. Second, there is a greater need to consider how to close the material wellbeing gap between the new generation of migrant workers and urban residents because, since 2010, the new generation of migrant workers have represented the majority of Chinese migrant workers (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2011). Moreover, the two generations are distinct from each other with regard to age, occupation, educational status, and mindset (*ibid.*), and the new generation is considered to be far more competent in urbanisation than its previous generation (Pan et al., 2009; Sun, 2010; Wang, 2010; Guo, 2011). Third, the issues of housing, income, and the *hukou* of migrant workers do not usually exist on their own; instead, they are inextricably bound to each other. For instance, one of the major reasons leading to the poor housing of migrant workers is they have no local urban *hukou*. Therefore, these issues will not be studied independently. Fourth, given that China's urbanisation is a long-term process and the policies that impede China's urbanisation

usually have their own historical origins (e.g. the *hukou* system), both short-term and long-term policy suggestions will be proposed in order to lessen the happiness gap between the two social groups.

### ***9.5.1 Improving migrant workers' housing problems***

Migrant workers' living conditions are much worse than those of urban residents. As illustrated by question A7 of the questionnaire, most migrant workers are renting (53.67 per cent) or living in the dormitory provided by their work units (28 per cent), with only about 16 per cent of them owning their homes in Shanghai. This situation is very different from the housing conditions of urban residents. In contrast, the vast majority of urban residents are living in their own homes (87 per cent), and only a few of them are renting (6 per cent) or staying in dorms (3.33 per cent). Beyond that, there are also great differences in their per-capita living space. In accordance with question A8, the per-capita residential area of migrant workers is around 15 square meters, which is less than half of the area for Shanghai natives (i.e. 33.81 square meters).

Given that migrant workers' requirements regarding housing policies may vary from one group to another, this section will set out the recommendations on housing policies in two sections, one of which is for migrant workers who want to improve their housing conditions with lower costs while the other is for those who want to buy their own homes.<sup>70</sup> Note that, as each section relates to different groups of migrant workers, the suggestions may have different effects on different aspects of Chinese society. For example, relieving the housing issues of the first group may be more beneficial for maintaining law and order, while improving the same problems for the second group may be more beneficial for urbanisation.

The first dimension aims to improve housing issues for migrant workers who do not plan to buy homes or cannot afford to buy homes in Shanghai.<sup>71</sup> Based on the interviews, this

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<sup>70</sup> Although, of course, these two dimensions may be too short term to provide more than superficial amelioration because they cannot fundamentally alter the variation in material wellbeing between migrant workers and urban residents.

<sup>71</sup> The price of housing is extremely high in present-day Shanghai. As reported by the Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Statistics (2016), the average selling price for new housing in Shanghai was 21,501 RBM per square meter in 2015, and the average selling price for new housing in the central area had reached 72,066 RBM per square meter. This means that the vast majority of migrant workers cannot possibly afford to buy their own homes in Shanghai, even though they may

type of rural migrant worker usually lives in a company dormitory (e.g. Austin and Felix) or rental housing provided by local farmers<sup>72</sup> (e.g. Harry, Jake, Jenson, Toby, Paige, Sara, and Sophia). They are also likely to reside in temporary housing at construction sites (*China Daily*, 2011). Moreover, they usually have lower education levels, tend to do manual work, and are considered as the middle- and lower-class migrant workers who have no basis for urbanisation.<sup>73</sup> Thus, it is understandable that this type of rural migrant worker usually requires the cheapest housing in the city because their housing demands are temporary, i.e. they will return to the countryside when have made enough money. For instance, Harry stated that:

*All I want is to have a place to sleep.*

Sophia reported that:

*I want to improve my current housing conditions. In particular, I want to rent a home with the most basic kitchen and sanitation facilities. However, I do not want to pay higher rents.*<sup>74</sup>

As a matter of fact, this view was extremely common in the interviews with migrant workers who had similar housing conditions to Sophia, such as the interviews with Austin, Harry, Jake, Toby, and Paige.

Based on the above analysis, the first suggestion for improving migrant workers' housing problems is to build a public housing system that is able to cover both urban and rural citizens. According to Li (2008), there are two general ways to ameliorate China's peasant

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think that having their own homes would make them much happier (e.g. Owen, Liam, Sophia, Jake, Austin, Sebastian, and Katie). For example, Austin's income was 2,500 RMB each month, and he reported that he would like to buy a one-bedroom apartment in Shanghai, which was valued at one million RMB in 2014, meaning that it would take him around 33.3 years to buy it if he saved all of his income.

<sup>72</sup> This type of housing (or shed) is mainly supplied by local farmers. With the development of the regional economy and urbanisation, many local farmers run rooming houses in their rural homesteads and low-income migrant workers, such as Sophia and her husband, are the major clients of this informal rental market.

<sup>73</sup> This is because they lack the necessary economic foundations for urbanisation, at least for now. This understanding has been generally applied in policy making. For example, Hebei province put forward a work plan in March 2016 suggesting that it would like to urbanise those rural migrant workers who have the ability and are willing to become urban residents in 2020 (*China Daily*, 2016).

<sup>74</sup> According to Sophia's interview, she and her husband lived in a temporary shed, which was illegally built by local peasants in the suburbs. As a matter of fact, most migrant workers who rent rooms in local farmers' homes live in dreadful conditions like Sophia. As suggested by Li (2012), the housing provided by local farmers is usually in a primitive condition, lacking even the most basic kitchen and sanitation facilities as well as basic security. Sophia believed that better housing with sanitation was badly needed to improve her wellbeing, although she did not want to pay more.

workers' accommodation problems: one is to provide housing directly for those who are in need, while the other is to provide indirect housing subsidies, such as a housing accumulation fund, to increase the affordability of housing for migrant workers. In this sense, the household registration system and urban housing policies' resistance to migrant workers should be reduced, which refers to expanding the urban housing social security system to eligible China's peasant workers. It should be noted that China's housing security system contains both the urban housing security system, which is applied to Chinese urban citizens,<sup>75</sup> and the rural housing security system, which is applied to Chinese rural citizens (including migrant workers). The problem with this division is that migrant workers are basically excluded from the system because they are rural residents who are now based in cities. However, they are more likely to need policy support from the urban housing security system on account of their poorer socio-economic status. In view of this, Hu and Ying (2007) suggest that *hukou* status should not be taken as the only basis for the application of urban housing security policies; instead, it can be replaced by the length of residency when applied to migrant workers.

Second, given that there is a shortage of public housing in Chinese cities (Zhang and Wang, 2007), the construction of public housing should be boosted, particularly low-rent housing and public rental housing. Note that, the public housing policies aimed at directly providing housing for migrant workers also need to target this group's specific housing requirements: low affordability and high mobility. For example, Sophia believed that she needed a temporary home with basic sanitation, but she could not afford to pay the rent if it were to rise to more than a quarter of her income (1,800 RMB per month). As a matter of fact, the most problematic part of this group's housing issues is strongly connected to their rational responses with regard to maximising their disposable income. In this sense, they are more inclined to save as much as they can on housing unless the local government can provide cheaper housing in a location that is convenient for them to commute between their workplaces and homes. This may also be one of the reasons why the number of the people who applied for low-cost renting in Shanghai decreased, along with increasing

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<sup>75</sup> Based on Hu and Ying (2007) and Li (2008), China's urban housing security system, which mainly includes housing accumulation funds, low-rent housing, economically affordable housing, public rental housing, and other policy-type housing, is specifically formulated to protect Chinese urban dwellers' basic housing benefits.

investments in low-cost housing, in 2008.

Given this, it can be suggested that, besides establishing a public housing system that is able to cover both urban and rural citizens, reorganising the low-end rental market could also be an effective way to ease housing issues related to low-end rental housing and low-cost renting. This means that, with the purpose of improving the quality of migrant workers' current housing and cultivating a healthy rental market, local authorities should ensure that property owners (especially local peasants who run a rental business on their homestead land) improve the quality and living conditions of their rental properties. In this sense, owners could be required to provide basic sanitation and security facilities for their rental housing before entering into any business activities. However, although this suggestion can be partly implemented by related business and neighbourhood committees, it is difficult to enforce compulsory requirements on local peasants because it is illegal for them to rent.<sup>76</sup>

The second dimension aims to alleviate housing problems for migrant workers who want to buy homes and then settle down in Shanghai. According to the interviews, migrant workers in this group are generally considered as having comparative advantages in the course of population urbanisation because they probably have the basic economic foundations for settling in Shanghai (e.g. Owen, Bella, Elisa, Lola, and Violet) or have received a good education and professional skills in order to make a better living (e.g. Blake, Felix, Noah, Sebastian, Tyler, Katie, and Molly). In particular, migrant workers who have better family economic conditions tend to be engaged in individual and private businesses in the tertiary industry (e.g. the catering business). They are also likely to be one of the target groups for population urbanisation, inasmuch as their higher family income and long-term settlement in Shanghai have resulted in being more attached to the city and feeling a sense of cultural identity around the city life that they have been living. Meanwhile, migrant workers who have a relatively good education usually participate in similar work as urbanites (i.e. white-collar employees). They may well be young, have a steady job, and share a similar way of living and value orientation as urbanites, and they

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<sup>76</sup> Although China's current law has ruled that the homestead is collectively owned and cannot be transferred, leased, or inherited, it is common for rural farmers to carry out a rental business on their homesteads nowadays (Hu and Ying, 2007; Li, 2008).

are the most suitable segment of the population for becoming new citizens of Shanghai in the short term. Moreover, unlike rural migrant workers who do not intend to live in the city for a long time, migrant workers in this group usually have relatively higher requirements with regard to housing conditions. As suggested in the interviews, they generally live in ordinary rental homes, and most of them would like to buy homes in Shanghai in order to satisfy their needs for long-term settlement and sustained development.

Although they are thought to be the luckier ones who have an edge in the process of urbanisation, the vast majority of them still cannot afford to purchase a house or an apartment without government support. Therefore, housing policies for this advantaged groups should involve at least two major factors: one is to allow them to buy homes in Shanghai while the other is to make housing more affordable. First of all, in accordance with the existing housing policy, people who live and work in Shanghai without a local household registration are not allowed to buy homes in Shanghai unless they are married and have paid individual income tax or social security for more than five consecutive years (The Shanghai Government, 2016). It is not difficult to see that such stringent restrictions on the home purchases of non-local residents have blocked a considerable amount of better-off migrant workers from the normal process of urbanisation. Further, even migrant workers with comparative advantages in urbanisation often doubt their perseverance to settle down in Shanghai because they will not be able to buy their own homes in Shanghai for a long time. For example, Sebastian, a young software technician, stated that:

*I think the biggest obstacle for me to integrate into city life is that I don't have my home in Shanghai. Although I feel I'm almost the same as young urbanites who are living and working in Shanghai, I still don't belong here because my home is not here. Sometimes, I think I'm sadly mistaken, and sometimes I doubt my choice to stay in Shanghai. I don't understand why unmarried non-Shanghai natives cannot buy a home in Shanghai. Also, I don't understand why the house prices in Shanghai are so high.*

In consequence, gradually dropping restrictions on home purchases by non-local residents would be an efficient means to relieve the housing problems of such migrant workers.

Under this premise, other policy recommendations for advantaged groups would involve introducing preferential policies with regard to enhancing housing affordability, and concrete measures may include: (1) integrating eligible rural migrant workers into the coverage of urban accumulation funds and other relevant social welfare policies; (2) allowing eligible rural migrant workers to purchase affordable housing, capped-price housing, and other public housing within a set range<sup>77</sup>; and (3) providing migrant workers who have a steady flow of income with preferential housing finance policies, such as allowing them relatively low ratios of down payments and longer loan terms.

### ***9.5.2 Improving migrant workers' income problems***

The income issues of migrant workers relate not only to lower incomes but also to the financial strain and psychological stress generated by their weaker economic foundations. According to the interviews, the income issues of migrant workers are primarily caused by two factors: the nature of their work and their extra spending to survive in the city.

First of all, income problems can be caused by the reality that a large proportion of migrant workers are still doing low-paid, physically demanding jobs. This kind of job usually has lower technical content and mainly targets migrant workers who have less or no particular expertise. As a consequence, migrant workers in this group tend to overlap low- and middle- income migrant workers who have been discussed earlier. Based on the interviews, this kind of migrant worker often complains about their longer working hours and relatively lower incomes. Second, the income issues of migrant workers also relate to the additional expenditure arising from a lack of the necessary foundations for survival and development in the cities (e.g. having no home in Shanghai, having no Shanghai urban *hukou*, and having to pay temporary schooling fees for their children). As reported in the interviews, most migrant workers who are dissatisfied with low incomes are also dissatisfied with the financial strains caused by high rents and high educational or medical expenses.

Based on such an understanding, the local government could alleviate migrant workers' income issues by (1) regulating China's low-end labour market; (2) removing the

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<sup>77</sup> This may require local authorities first ensuring the supply of public housing for the local low- and middle-income population.

discrimination and bias in jobs, housing, education, and other areas; and (3) improving migrant workers' education levels and work skills. Given the reality that the incomes of most low- and middle-income migrant workers are out of proportion to their working hours, and they rarely receive overtime pay for the long hours they work, first, the local authorities should regulate local labour markets and strengthen their administration regarding the implementation of relevant labour laws and regulations (e.g. the minimum hourly wage, the minimum wage, and maximum working hours per week). According to the interviews, such a situation tends to be more serious in the low-end labour market, mainly targeting migrant workers who do manual work. For example, Sophia, a minimum wage cleaner, reported that:

*I usually work ten hours a day, [and] I don't have any overtime pay. [Actually], our firm doesn't have any statement of working overtime. [This means that] we do not receive any overtime pay for weekdays.*

Second, given the reality that migrant workers' identities and household registration status have led them to face discriminatory restrictions and pay additional expenses in many aspects, the unity of city and countryside should be promoted in order to lessen unfair treatment and restrictions directed at migrant workers. This may include integrating employment policies for both urban and rural citizens, together with gradually promoting the unification of education, social welfare, and social security policies between urban and rural areas.<sup>78</sup> According to the interviews, the most effective measure for relieving migrant workers' sense of discrimination is to offer them equal employment opportunities and an equal work environment as for urbanites, since the extent of their happiness is closely linked to the degree to which they feel competent when at work or job searching (see Chapter 8). For example, Katie, a graduate, stated that:

*Companies refuse to hire a university graduate like me, as I do not have a Shanghai hukou. I think that local graduates have better job opportunities than me just because they are local, but not because they have better working abilities. I feel it is a little unfair and it bothers me a lot. Frankly, it really gets*

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<sup>78</sup> This partially overlaps with reducing both the household registration system and urban housing policies' resistance to migrant workers, which has been mentioned in the housing problems of migrant workers.

*me mad at present. I feel I am discriminated against. I would feel much happier if the government could provide us with equal employment opportunities and equitable wages for the use of our skills.*

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, improving migrant workers' education levels and work skills, and then helping them to navigate the identity changes from low-paid manual labourers to urban industrial workers, may be the most important way to boost their income and solve their income problems. According to a large-scale investigation by Shaanxi Normal University, the Chinese Academy of Science, and Stanford University in 2016, the cumulative dropout rate from Chinese rural middle schools (junior middle school, senior middle school, and secondary vocational school) reached 63 per cent between 2007 and 2013 (Shi et al., 2015). The fact remains that only less than 40 per cent of Chinese students in rural areas can obtain secondary education, even in today's society of more pervasive higher education. Further, the problem of Chinese rural teenagers dropping out of school is primarily caused by their rational analysis regarding the cost and benefits of staying in school or their spur-of-the-moment decisions under the influence of psychological pressure. In this sense, for most teenagers who drop out of school in rural China, the long-term benefits of education are not as attractive as the short-term gains resulting from becoming part of the labour market before their time. This may well be why most migrant workers and the next generations are relatively less educated and less skilled when competing with urbanites. In view of education's importance in enhancing migrant workers' happiness, this will be discussed in detail in Chapter 10.

### ***9.5.3 Improving migrant workers' hukou problems***

As stressed by the Communiqué of the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the CCP (2013), the urban-rural dualistic structure is a major obstacle to the integration of urban-rural economic and social development. In one sense, the dualistic societal division perpetuated by China's household registration system is at the heart of Chinese urbanisation. According to the introduction to the Chinese *hukou* system in Chapter 4, together with the relevant issues reflected in the interviews, China's *hukou* policy is closely related to the urban-rural divide as well as the income and social welfare gap brought about by the dual structure dividing urban and rural society. Moreover, the

vast majority of the surveyed migrant workers believed that their unhappiness or the happiness gap with urban residents is somehow linked to their disadvantageous *hukou* status, which is why reform of the *hukou* policy has been suggested with regard to housing and income issues.

Although reform of China's household registration policy is in full swing, it is still an arduous task, as there are many factors involved here, such as the allocation of social resources frequently mentioned in interviews (e.g. housing, education, social security, and medical insurance). In this regard, China's dual household registration system will not change radically in the short term; instead, carrying through rural urbanisation in the population, economy, and society is a long-term process in China. With regard to current *hukou* policies and the situation of urbanisation in Shanghai, both short-term and long-term policy suggestions will be proposed to promote the progress of migrant workers' population urbanisation and realise the harmonious development in society.

In the first place, reform of the household registration system is a gradual process that has to be stretched out over a considerable time, and it should firstly make migrant workers into new citizens. Therefore, in view of the current absorption capacity of Chinese cities and the differences among migrant workers, a series of more planned and diversified household registration policies are needed to facilitate the population urbanisation of migrant workers. For instance, Shanghai authorities could reduce the access requirements for migrant workers who are well educated and highly skilled, especially for young college students like Felix, Sebastian, Tyler, and Katie. With regard to the previous discussion on housing issues, new-generation migrant workers who are university educated have lifestyles and modes of thinking similar to urbanites their age, and they are one of the target groups for urbanisation. However, it is noteworthy that China's mega-cities, such as Shanghai, may not be the most appropriate settlement areas for most migrant workers, at least for now, since, as reported by urban residents, the shortage of social resources and accompanying tensions between migrant workers and urban residents are already common. For example, Lucy and Chloe believed that too many migrant workers from rural areas have resulted in an overconsumption of local medical resources, which has resulted in a shortage of maternity wards and paediatricians in Shanghai's hospitals. This is possibly a reflection of the insufficient absorption capacity of China's biggest cities. In fact, as

announced by the State Council of China in 2014, the Chinese central government will phase out the limitations on household registration in townships and small cities, loosen restrictions in mid-sized cities, and set reasonable conditions for enrolment in the major cities.

Second, considering that reform of the household registration system needs to convert existing functions of administrating population migration and resource allocation into population registering in the longer term, it would be recommended to gradually weaken the *hukou*'s functioning in regard to controlling people's movement and its value as a base for the distribution of social interests. It should be noted that, as a structural reform for the long-term public good, the transitions of existing functions of China's household system also need to be done systematically for the purpose of maintaining social stability. Given this, at the present stage, two concrete measures may be able to alleviate the happiness gap between migrant workers and urban residents:

- To relax restrictions on residence and household registration for migrant workers who are suitable for population urbanisation. This is consistent with previous advice related to reducing the entry conditions for migrant workers who are well educated, as it is one of the specific means for conditionally weakening the *hukou*'s function of controlling China's population migration.
- To gradually unify the social benefits attached to urban and rural household registration. For instance, local authorities could extend welfare policies that are only applied to local urbanites to eligible migrant workers, such as policy-type housing and the public accumulation fund.

## **9.6 Conclusion**

Based on interviews with migrant workers and urban residents, this section will summarise the research findings. First, the conditions that best promote migrant workers' happiness levels include building an equal society and reducing China's urban-rural divide in order to facilitate urbanisation; building a freer society and providing equal employment opportunities for migrant workers; reducing property prices and improving migrant workers' degrees of satisfaction with their material conditions; and improving migrant

workers' education and professional skills, especially those of the younger generation. Second, the distinctions in material wellbeing regarding income (consistent with Knight and Song, 1999; Riskin et al., 2001a; Sicular et al., 2010), social welfare (consistent with Zhang, 2012; Liu, 2014;) and housing (consistent with Zhang, 2012) are the prime drivers of the disparities in happiness between migrant workers and urban residents. Such factors will be discussed in more detail when discussing the implications for Chinese policy and practice in Section 10.5. Thirdly, most migrant workers do not care about education very much, although their lower levels of education and professional skills have had a negative impact on their levels of happiness and their abilities to obtain the necessary resources that can bring about happiness. Finally, in the context of Chinese-style urbanisation, this study has found that further advancing China's urbanisation, especially its population urbanisation, and reducing the urban-rural disparities in economic levels and welfare would improve the happiness levels of both migrant workers and urban residents. This is because a more equal Chinese society that would come with the lessening of the urban-rural dualistic structure would not only offer migrant workers equality of income, welfare, employment, and opportunities, but it would also provide a safer and healthier society for urban residents. This finding is consistent with the research of Wilkinson and Pickett (2009), which suggests that equality is better for everyone in society, whether rich or poor.

# **10 Chapter 10: Conclusions, Reflections, and Suggestions**

## **10.1 Introduction**

Chapter 10 will summarise the key findings of this research and attempt to develop four main points of discussion as well as set out the practical and theoretical implications from the research results. This chapter includes seven sections. Section 10.2 summarises the four research questions of this study and the key findings for each research question. In Section 10.3, drawing on the study's findings, two theoretical frameworks are proposed (i.e. Mapping Chinese Happiness and the Cupcake Model) in order to generalise the characteristics and significant aspects of Chinese people's happiness. This section also discusses the decline of Confucian heritage in present-day China, along with the question of who the happiest migrant workers are. Section 10.4 describes the major contributions of the study, while Section 10.5 indicates the study's main implications for Chinese policy and practice. Section 10.6 proposes the major implications for future research and Section 10.7 discusses the study's limitations.

## **10.2 Summary of the Thesis and the Main Findings**

This research has investigated the happiness of Chinese migrant workers in Shanghai in 2014 in comparison to that of Shanghai's urban residents. This research had four research questions:

- (I) How do Chinese migrant workers define happiness?
- (II) How happy are Chinese migrant workers? Do they feel less happy than Shanghai's urban residents?
- (III) What are the factors influencing the happiness of Chinese migrant workers? Who is the happiest migrant worker?
- (IV) How can the happiness of Chinese migrant workers be promoted? If a happiness gap exists between migrant workers and urban residents, how should it be closed?

The first research question was addressed in Chapter 6. Based on interviews with migrant workers and urban residents, this study has the following main findings:

(1) Migrant workers tend to define happiness in relation to what is most important and necessary to happiness in their daily lives.

(2) Migrant workers' definition of happiness is primarily concentrated on their family lives, particularly their children, and is not particularly focused on themselves.

(3) Migrant workers are most likely to define happiness with regard to satisfaction with family life and material conditions, in addition to having sound physical health. Moreover, in contrast to urban residents, migrant workers focus more on their satisfaction with material conditions when defining happiness. This finding is consistent with other studies demonstrating that, when defining their happiness, people with lower incomes are more focused on life satisfaction brought about by material wealth (Diener et al., 1995; Hagerty and Veenhoven, 2003).

(4) Migrant workers' definition of happiness is significantly different from that of urban residents. That is, migrant workers tend to define happiness in relation to certain factors that make them satisfied with their lives, whereas urban residents tend to define happiness as a kind of subjective feeling (i.e. a state of pleasure or satisfaction). In addition, migrant workers put greater emphasis on family wellbeing and family-style collectivism (or patriarchal collectivism) when defining their happiness, whereas urban residents appear to care more for individual wellbeing and self-actualisation. This finding will be further discussed in Section 10.3.

(5) Migrant workers' definition of happiness is significantly influenced by traditional Confucian culture. This study has found that, although the essence of Confucian culture, notably a Confucian ethical system that is patriarchal, hierarchical, and characterised by 'the three cardinal guides and the five constant virtues', exerts no significant influence on migrant workers' definition of happiness, its relationship system, characterised by 'family-first' values and patriarchal collectivism, still exerts a direct impact on their definitions of happiness. In this sense, some family- and collective-oriented Confucian values, such as 'honour your father and mother', 'respect the aged and care for the young', 'harmony between spouses', and 'a harmonious family can lead to the success of everything' are still

key components in migrant workers' definitions of happiness. These results correspond with the findings of the literature review regarding the extent to which traditional Confucian values continue to impact on the happiness of Chinese people nowadays (see Section 3.4).

(6) Migrant workers' definitions of happiness may be affected by Mao Zedong's legacy on contemporary Chinese culture. First, this study has found that both migrant workers and urban residents are keen to stress that a certain level of material comfort is the foundation of happiness, although migrant workers place even more emphasis on this than urban residents. This finding is distinct from the research findings of some scholars regarding the happiness of people in other countries (e.g. Ho et al., 2012; Bonn and Tafarodi, 2013; Ho et al., 2013; Chen et al., 2015). This may be because, as detailed in the literature review (see Section 3.5) regarding the extent to which Marxism and Maoism continue to affect the happiness of Chinese people in China today, migrant workers' definitions of happiness (or even Chinese people's definitions of happiness) has been influenced by Mao's ideology of material determinism. However, another possibility is that people with lower incomes, i.e. with per-capita disposable incomes of below US\$20,000 (Layard, 2005), tend to be more focused on happiness brought about through material wealth (Diener et al., 1995; Hagerty and Veenhoven, 2003; Clark et al., 2008). According to data from the National Bureau of Statistics of China (2015), the per-capita disposable income of urban residents in Shanghai was about US\$7,229 in 2014 (migrant workers earn considerably less). Because of the lack of necessary research on the tendency for Chinese people to place a great deal of importance on material advantage, more research is needed to determine whether the Chinese emphasis on material conditions is influenced by Mao's ideology of material determinism.

Second, according to the literature review in Section 3.5, Mao's legacy on contemporary Chinese culture and Chinese people's view of happiness also includes, in addition to the aforementioned material determinism, nationalism and socialist collectivism (different from patriarchal collectivism). However, these two elements were not mentioned by the interviewees. In this sense, it appears that migrant workers' definitions of happiness (or even Chinese people's definitions of happiness) are not affected by Mao's ideology of nationalism and socialist collectivism. This finding is consistent with the research of

Steele and Lynch (2013) on the happiness of Chinese people during China's economic and social transformation in 2013. The authors believe that, although some scholars have argued that collectivist factors would be important predictors of individual wellbeing in the cultural context of China, the Chinese are increasingly prioritising individualist factors in assessing their own happiness and life satisfaction, thus substantiating descriptions of their society as increasingly individualistic (Steele and Lynch, 2013). This trend will be discussed in more detail in Section 10.3.

The second research question was addressed in Chapter 7 and Section 9.3. Based on the questionnaires with migrant workers and urban residents, Chapter 7 generated the following findings: (1) Migrant workers report lower levels of hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing than urban residents, therefore supporting the finding that migrant workers are less happy than urban residents (see Yang, 1999; Xing, 2006; Knight and Gunatilaka, 2008; Fang and Feng, 2009; Whyte, 2010; Zhang, 2010; Treiman, 2012; Wang et al., 2014; Zhao and Ge, 2014); (2) migrant workers report higher levels of hedonic wellbeing (or life satisfaction) when compared with previous research on the levels of happiness of Chinese people in other parts of China (e.g. Huang and Xing, 2005; Macau Inter-University Institute, 2007; Chen and Davey, 2008b; Lau et al., 2008; Davey et al., 2009; Nielsen et al., 2009; Smyth et al., 2009); (3) migrant workers report lower levels of eudaimonic wellbeing (or mental health) when compared with other studies on the levels of happiness of Chinese peasants (Sui and Len, 2011), in addition to middle-aged and elderly populations (Hu et al., 2015); (4) demographic variables, such as gender and age (consistent with Dew and Huebner, 1994; Cai et al., 2007), education, marital status, income, working hours, and number of children, appear to have no discernible effect on the happiness levels of migrant workers; (5) housing status and length of residence are strong predictors of the happiness levels of migrant workers. This means that migrant workers who have been substantially urbanised, in the sense of having their own homes in Shanghai or having lived in Shanghai for no less than ten years, but with no urban *hukou*, are often the happiest amongst all migrant workers. In this sense, such migrant workers tend to report similar levels of happiness as urban residents; (6) some standard scales and measurement instruments applied to Western people may not effectively reveal the happiness of Chinese people before they are examined and localised. This study found

that the Basic Needs Satisfaction in General Scale (the BNSG-S) has both a low reliability and validity for the survey data of migrant workers. This finding will be explained further when outlining the study's contribution in Section 10.4. In addition, based on the interviews with migrant workers and urban residents, Section 9.3 found that both migrant workers and urban residents tend to believe that migrant workers are less happy than urban residents.

The third research question was addressed in Chapter 8. Based on interviews with migrant workers and urban residents, Chapter 8 generated the following findings: (1) There are seven factors that affect the happiness levels of migrant workers: material wealth; meeting the basic psychological needs of relatedness; mental health; social environment; meeting the basic psychological needs of competence; family life; and job and career. In contrast, the factors that affect the happiness levels of urban residents do not include meeting the basic psychological needs of relatedness and family life, instead being replaced with meeting the basic psychological needs of autonomy and social relationships. Like their definitions of happiness, migrant workers' levels of happiness are also more affected by Confucian culture, which emphasises family wellbeing and patriarchal collectivism. This is demonstrated in two unique affecting factors of the happiness levels of migrant workers (i.e. meeting the basic psychological needs of relatedness and family life). The characteristics of all these factors and their influences on the happiness levels of Chinese people will be examined when discussing the Cupcake Model in Section 10.3; (2) based on analysing the effects and characteristics of the seven factors that affect the happiness levels of migrant workers, this study found that a happy migrant worker is one who has a healthy mind, satisfactory material conditions and relatedness needs, a basic satisfaction with the social environment in which he/she lives, and a higher degree of satisfaction with his/her family life, job, and competence. This finding will be discussed further in Section 10.3; (3) combined with the findings of Chapter 6, this study found that simply promoting migrant workers' degrees of satisfaction with the major components of their definition of happiness (such as family life and material comfort) may not significantly improve their happiness levels. This is because the factors they expect to promote their happiness are more diverse than what they emphasise when defining their happiness.

The last research question was addressed in Chapter 9. Based on interviews with migrant workers and urban residents, the findings can be summarised as follows: (1) The conditions that best promote migrant workers' happiness levels include building an equal society and reducing China's urban-rural divide in order to facilitate urbanisation; building a freer society and providing equal employment opportunities for migrant workers; reducing property prices and improving migrant workers' degrees of satisfaction with their material conditions; and improving migrant workers' education and professional skills, especially those of the younger generation; (2) distinctions in material wellbeing regarding income (consistent with Knight and Song, 1999; Riskin et al., 2001a; Sicular et al., 2010), social welfare (consistent with Zhang, 2012; Liu, 2014), and housing (consistent with Zhang, 2012) are the prime drivers of disparities in happiness between migrant workers and urban residents. Such factors will be discussed in more detail when outlining the implications for Chinese policy and practice in Section 10.5.

## **10.3 Theoretical Reflections**

### ***10.3.1 Mapping Chinese Happiness***

Owing to different cultural backgrounds, Chinese people are different from Western people with regard to defining, perceiving, and experiencing their sense of happiness. This study indicates that Chinese happiness can, more or less, be described as family wellbeing based on family-style collectivism (or Confucian patriarchal collectivism). Although family-style collectivism has set the tone for Chinese happiness, it exerts varying degrees of influence on different populations. According to this study, the happiness of migrant workers is more influenced by Confucian culture (i.e. family-style collectivism) than that of urban residents. It is more focused on the life satisfaction of their children and families, and hence is more reflected as family wellbeing. In contrast, the happiness of urban residents is more focused on their own personal feelings, and therefore is more individualistic than that of migrant workers. Such a distinction then defines the first dimension for mapping the happiness of Chinese people, i.e. family-style collectivism vs. individualism. This dimension reflects one of the key questions in mapping Chinese happiness: who is the subject of Chinese happiness?

This study has also found that the happiness of migrant workers, which mainly manifests

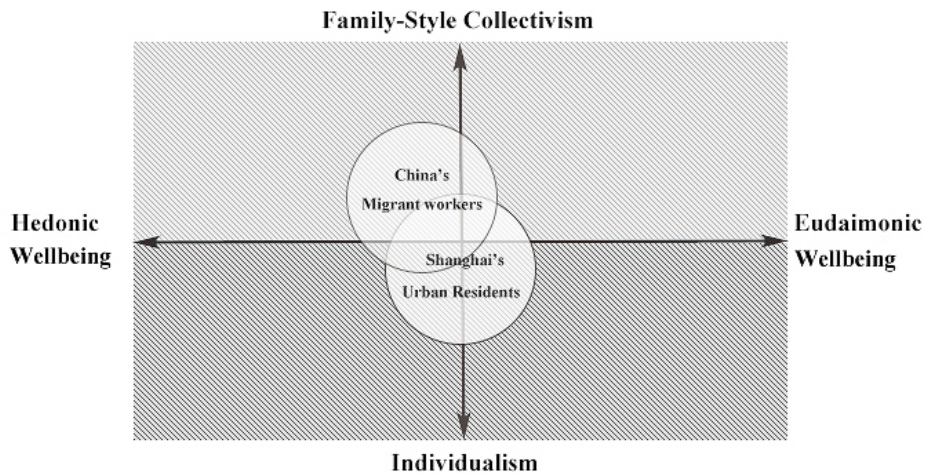
itself as family wellbeing, refers primarily to the hedonic wellbeing of their children and families. In this sense, their happiness often appears as the life satisfaction of their children and families, but it is not particularly focused on their individual feelings and values, which are represented in eudaimonic wellbeing. However, this phenomenon is not particularly noticeable among urban residents because their happiness is less influenced by family-style collectivism, which asserts that individuals should put family wellbeing first; instead, their happiness focuses more on personal development and the expression of their individualities. Such a distinction therefore raises the second dimension for mapping Chinese happiness, i.e. hedonism vs. eudaimonism. This dimension reflects the other key question in mapping Chinese happiness: what is the content of happiness?

As an attempt to generalise and speculate about Chinese happiness, a framework entitled Mapping Chinese Happiness has been constructed as a way of combining the two dimensions<sup>79</sup> above (see Figure 10.1). For further study and generalisation of Chinese happiness, a tentative interpretation is provided based on this study. Chinese happiness is composed of two dimensions: (1) the subject of happiness and (2) the content of happiness. Based on Figure 10.1, the vertical axis shows the subject of Chinese happiness, ranging from family-style collectivism at the top to individualism at the bottom. It stands for how the subject defines, understands, and experiences Chinese happiness. The horizontal axis shows the content of Chinese happiness, ranging from hedonic wellbeing (such as satisfaction with material wealth, family life, job and career, and social environment) on the left to eudaimonic wellbeing (such as mental health, the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness) on the right. The content of happiness is greatly influenced by its subjects for an important reason: an excessive focus on family wellbeing will inevitably dilute the attention on personal development as well as self-expression and self-actualisation. Moreover, family wellbeing, such as good living conditions, usually pertains to hedonic wellbeing, while eudaimonic wellbeing usually falls into the range of individual wellbeing.

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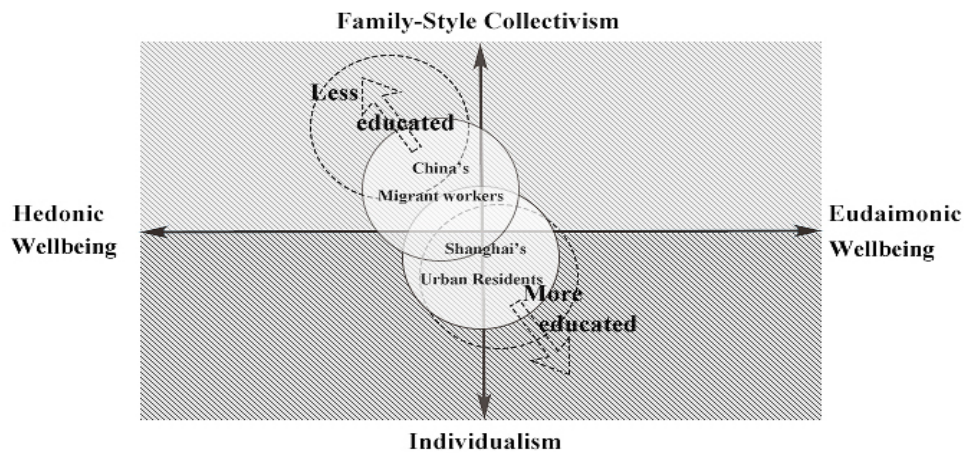
<sup>79</sup> What should be noted here is that the generalisation of this theory to the case of China's small and medium-sized cities needs to be viewed with caution because this theory was first developed in the context of Shanghai (one of China's megacities), as was the Cupcake Model, which will be proposed hereafter.

*Figure 10.1: Mapping Chinese happiness*



The white circles in Figure 10.1 visualise the two groups' happiness in two dimensions. It can be seen that the composition of migrant workers' happiness is different from that of urban residents. According to Figure 10.1, the white circle in the upper left represents the happiness of migrant workers – it is primarily located in the quadrant of family-style collectivism and hedonic wellbeing, which means that the happiness of migrant workers is mainly characterised by family wellbeing, which is usually hedonic and relates to bringing joy and comfort to their children and families. The white circle in the lower right indicates the happiness of urban residents – it is more focused on individual wellbeing and gives equal emphasis to the importance of hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing.

*Figure 10.2: Mapping Chinese Happiness - the impact of education*



Moreover, Chinese people with different levels of educational attainment may have

different happiness configurations. In other words, although education contributes little to the happiness levels of Chinese people, it may have an important effect on the composition of Chinese people's happiness (see Figure 10.2). According to Figure 10.2, the dotted circle in the lower right section represents the composition of the happiness of urban residents who are highly educated (such as college or university graduates), whereas the dotted circle in the upper left represents the composition of the happiness of migrant workers who are less educated (such as those who are illiterate or who only received primary school education). Such a distribution could explain the research results in which (1) migrant workers who attended or are attending colleges/universities tend to have a similar happiness composition as their urban peers and (2) young urban residents with higher education levels (such as postgraduates) are minimally affected by traditional Confucian happiness. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the more education one reports, the less likely one is to be influenced by traditional Confucian happiness focusing on family-style collectivism (as shown in Figure 10.2). However, further research is necessary in order to learn more about the effect of the traditional Confucian concept of happiness on modern Chinese people.

Given the above considerations, China's traditional concept of happiness, principally Confucian patriarchal collectivism, may gradually lose much of its influence on Chinese happiness and values in the future. This is because (1) the improvement of education in China will bring about a new generation of rural residents with a higher level of education and (2) more and more rural surplus labourers will be transformed into urban residents with the rapid development of Chinese urbanisation. Such an extrapolation agrees with the research of Steele and Lynch (2013). Through their research on Chinese happiness and its influential factors in the Chinese cultural context, Steele and Lynch (2013) found that, compared with collectivist factors that are considered as specific Chinese characteristics, individualistic factors, such as freedom of choice (similar to meeting the basic psychological needs of autonomy in this study) and measures of individual status (including personal feelings, values, and so on) predict higher happiness levels among Chinese people and will become more important predictors of happiness over time. Therefore, Chinese people and their society are becoming more individualistic (Steele and Lynch, 2013).

### ***10.3.2 The declining Confucian heritage: Is traditional Confucian culture still helpful for Chinese people in pursuing happiness nowadays?***

According to the results of this study, it can be predicted that the influence of traditional Confucian culture on Chinese happiness and society will gradually decline over time,<sup>80</sup> which means not only changes of Chinese happiness and values, but also an increased risk of losing Confucian heritage in the Chinese mind and society, especially with ever-growing urbanisation in China. The evidence behind this prediction mainly revolves around the following two aspects.

Firstly, according to this empirical study, the quintessence of Confucian culture, specifically a Confucian ethical system that is patriarchal, hierarchical, and characterised by ‘the three cardinal guides and the five constant virtues’, exerts no significant influence on Chinese people’s happiness. This means that neither ‘the three cardinal guides’, which are used to maintain family and social order, nor ‘the five constant virtues’, which are a basic solution for managing superior and inferior relationships, can be considered as significant factors affecting Chinese happiness and values any longer. This conclusion confirms the findings from the literature review regarding the inheritance and transformation of traditional Confucian culture, which pointed out that the central aspect of Confucian culture, i.e. the Confucian ethical system marked by ‘the three cardinal guides and the five constant virtues’, has crumbled after decades of setbacks dealt by the New Culture Movement (1915–1923) and Mao’s Great Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). In this sense, one might say that the core aspect of Confucian culture, focusing on Confucian ethics, has had limited effects on contemporary China at both cultural and practical levels.

Secondly, although some other aspects of Confucian culture, e.g. the Confucian relationship system characterised by ‘family-first’ values and patriarchal collectivism, still exert a significant influence on Chinese happiness and values, this influence seems to be being weakened over time, based on the Mapping Chinese Happiness framework.

Since traditional Confucian culture is likely to show an increasingly declining trend over

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<sup>80</sup> For why traditional Confucian culture is declining, see Section 3.4.

time and, at the same time, Chinese people and their society will likely become more individualistic, this raises a question about the modern value of traditional Confucian culture, i.e. is the traditional Confucian concept of happiness still beneficial for Chinese people in pursuing happiness nowadays? One possible answer is no. In the following discussion, this point will be examined by utilising the findings of this research and those of other studies.

According to this study, traditional Confucian culture (patriarchal collectivism) is not associated with higher levels of happiness among the survey population. This is because, based on the key findings of this study, migrant workers, who are more influenced by patriarchal collectivism (or are more traditional), report much lower levels of happiness than urban residents. On the contrary, urban residents, who are less influenced by patriarchal collectivism (or are more individualistic), have much higher levels of happiness than migrant workers. In addition, the findings of this study show that individual factors, such as the degrees of autonomy and self-actualisation, predict higher levels of happiness among the survey population. The above results mean that individualistic factors (such as the degrees of autonomy and self-actualisation), rather than those of patriarchal collectivism, predict happiness among the Chinese population. This finding substantiates the link between higher happiness levels and individualism found by Diener et al. (1995). Hence, from the foregoing discussion, it is probably fair to say that traditional Confucian culture (i.e. patriarchal collectivism) may be unhelpful for Chinese people in pursuing happiness nowadays.

Moreover, it should be noted here that only patriarchal collectivism is included in the above discussion about whether traditional Confucian culture is associated with higher levels of happiness. This does not mean that traditional Confucian culture includes only patriarchal collectivism. Rather, based on the findings of this study, only patriarchal collectivism has shown a significant impact on Chinese people's concept of happiness and happiness levels. To be more specific, apart from the Confucian ethical system (i.e. 'the three cardinal guides and the five constant virtues'), which is found by this study to have no significant influence on Chinese happiness, other elements of traditional Confucian culture that have not been captured by this study may still possibly be helpful for Chinese people in pursuing their happiness. Hence, further research is required in order to examine

these elements.

Currently, there is not much evidence as to whether Chinese people who are more affected by traditional Confucian culture feel happier or less happy than those who are less affected. While some scholars such as Zhang and Veenhoven (2008) and Zhang (2009) find that traditional Confucian culture is still beneficial for Chinese people in pursuing happiness in present-day society, other scholars, such as Levenson (1969), Tu (2004; 1989), Chen (2012a), Dong (2012), and Li and Xiao (2013), believe that traditional Confucianism has been deconstructed along with the rapid changes in Chinese society.

Zhang (2009) surveyed 819 college students in Beijing and Heilongjiang Province and found that college students who are more affected by traditional Confucian culture (i.e. by familism, which is similar to patriarchal collectivism in this study) have higher levels of happiness than those who are less affected. She points out that the Confucian concept of familism predicts happiness among college students because those who are more affected by familism often receive more attention and care from their families. Her results, however, would be difficult to extend to other groups, not only because of the particularity to college students (Huang and Zhen, 1999; Yu, 1999; Zhang and Zhen, 2004) but also due to the shift of the family role (from the person being cared for to the one caring for others) when they graduate from college.

Zhang and Veenhoven (2008) discuss, theoretically, whether traditional Confucian culture is beneficial for Chinese people with regard to finding happiness today. They believe that traditional Confucianism, which contains an outlook that emphasises being involved in real life, characterised by an attitude towards dealing with reality in the 'here and now' as well as an emphasis on learning, social values (such as friendship and family), and social environments (such as the rule of law and of government), appears to be helpful in finding happiness in present-day society (p.428). However, without the support of related evidence, further research is needed to confirm this finding.

In contrast to the abovementioned scholars, Levenson (1969) holds a more negative attitude to the impact of the Confucian legacy on present-day China. In his well-known book, *Confucian China and its Modern Fate*, Levenson explains the disengagement of modernisation with tradition in the Chinese experience as a cultural situation of broken

continuity (Chen, 2012b). In this sense, traditional Confucian culture has lost its wholeness and contemporary significance and has therefore merely become historically significant, i.e. no longer part of a living tradition providing genuine inspiration for the present. This process of deconstruction is what Levenson has called the museumisation of the Confucian legacy.

Tu (1989), a professor of the Asia Centre at Harvard University, asserts that ‘Levenson’s fear for the museumisation of the Confucian heritage might have already become a reality’ (p.88). He points out that several core values of Confucianism (the five constant virtues) have been dissipated from the whole with the development of society (Tu, 2004). In this sense, traditional Confucian culture exerts a limited impact on today’s China because it has been disconnected from social reality. For instance, feminists have criticised traditional Confucian culture as an antiquated tradition because its masculine doctrine marked by ‘the three cardinal guides’ is manifestly inconsistent with the spirit of today that emphasises gender equality (Li, 1994; 2000; Fan, 2011). Humanists have criticised the part of traditional Confucian culture that stresses responsibility and public will, arguing that personal wellbeing should not be subordinate to the benefits of the state or communities. Tu (2004) further states that, instead of the five constant virtues that are the core values of Confucianism, the most influential idea in today’s China is to be ‘rich and strong’ (p.9). This idea points towards economic and military power, coloured by a Social Darwinism that is able to defeat all other ideas, regimes, and rules that contradict it because of its inherently competitive mechanism. Tu (2004) therefore argues that, without rebuilding the kernel of traditional Confucianism, the Confucian heritage among Chinese people will continue to decline over time.

The above discussion has examined the opinions of this study and others on the question: ‘Is traditional Confucian culture still helpful for Chinese people in pursuing happiness today?’ Since there is little research on this question, more research is needed to determine whether/which part of traditional Confucian culture can be beneficial for Chinese people today. Because this focus has great potential, not only for protecting Confucian heritage but also for retaining Chinese people’s Chineseness,<sup>81</sup> it is one of the directions for further

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<sup>81</sup> For why Confucian culture is where Chinese people’s Chineseness lies, please see Section 3.4.1.

research presented by this study.

### ***10.3.3 The seven factors that affect Chinese people's happiness: The Cupcake Model***

In this study, seven factors have been found that affect Chinese people's happiness levels: material wealth, meeting the basic psychological needs of competence (hereafter 'competence'), meeting the basic psychological needs of relatedness (hereafter 'relatedness'), mental health, social environment, family life, and job and career. The seven factors affecting urban residents' happiness levels are material wealth, meeting the basic psychological needs of competence (hereafter 'competence'), meeting the basic psychological needs of autonomy (hereafter 'autonomy'), mental health, social environment, interpersonal relationships, and job and career. Among these factors, relatedness and family life are exclusive to migrant workers, while autonomy and interpersonal relationship are exclusive to urban residents. Such distinctions can occur as a result of different concepts of happiness in different populations. This is because, as this thesis has discussed with regard to the Mapping Chinese Happiness framework, the factors of relatedness and family life are often associated with the dimension of family-style collectivism, whereas the factors of autonomy and interpersonal relationships are often associated with the dimension of individualism. Therefore, the model that will be proposed has something in common with the Mapping Chinese Happiness framework.

The discussion of this section focuses on the different characteristics of those factors that are considered to have different levels of impacts on Chinese people's happiness. Based on the findings of this study, these factors can be classified into three major categories: (1) core condition; (2) down-sensitive; and (3) up-sensitive.

The core condition category includes the factors of material wealth and relatedness for migrant workers and material wealth and job and career for urban residents. As the name implies, core conditions are those factors that make a significant and lasting contribution to human happiness, no matter how and to what extent the factors change. That is, any change in these factors can result in changes in the levels of one's happiness. It is understandable, then, that these factors are the core conditions for Chinese people to achieve happiness. However, it is important to point out that changes in these factors will

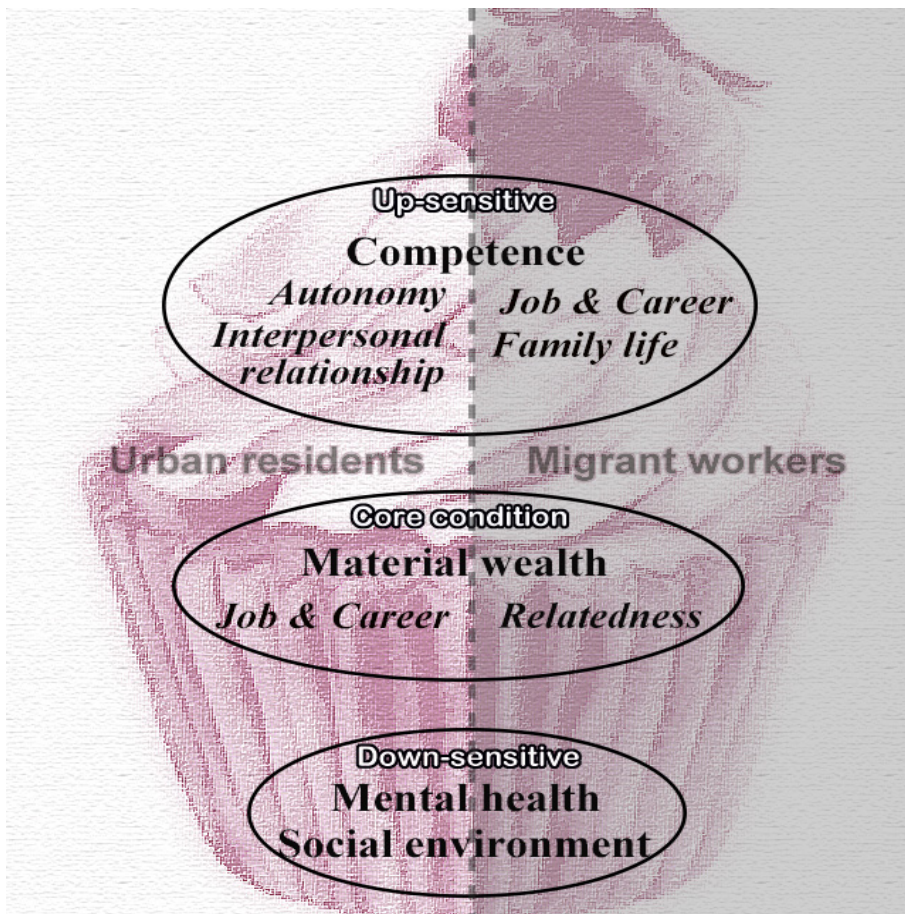
not have a continuous impact on one's level of happiness. For instance, a continuous increase in material wealth is thought to be unable to bring people more happiness once it has reached a certain level (Easterlin, 1973; Diener et al., 1995; Hagerty and Veenhoven, 2003; Clark et al., 2008). Therefore, the continuing influence of the core conditions should be framed within a certain range. Currently, apart from the range of material wealth that has been proposed by Layard (2005) (i.e. per-capita disposable income of below US\$20,000), little is known about the range of relatedness and job and career, thus requiring further study.

The down-sensitive factors can significantly reduce one's level of happiness as their level drops. The down-sensitive category includes factors of mental health and social environment for both migrant workers and urban residents. The impact of the down-sensitive factors on human happiness has directionality, which means that one's level of happiness is only sensitive to their negative changes and not to positive ones. The down-sensitive factors, therefore, may also be called the necessary conditions for Chinese people to achieve happiness, as one's level of happiness will decline significantly if the basic requirements of these factors are not guaranteed. For instance, one can hardly feel happy when one is facing severe stress or living in a turbulent society.

The up-sensitive factors can enhance one's level of happiness when their level improves. The up-sensitive category includes factors of competence, job and career, and family life for migrant workers and competence, autonomy, and interpersonal relationships for urban residents. Similarly, one's level of happiness is only sensitive to the positive changes in the level of these factors and not to the negative ones. One factor in particular is that negative changes here should not include a radical shift in these factors, such as a job loss or divorce.

The different characteristics and impacts of the abovementioned factors on Chinese people's happiness levels can be described as the Cupcake Model. That is, happiness is like a cupcake: the factors within the down-sensitive category are like the cup, the factors within the core condition category are like the cake, and the factors within the up-sensitive category are like the icing on the cake.

Figure 10.3: The Cupcake Model



Based on Figure 10.3, the factors within the down-sensitive category (i.e. mental health and social environment) are like the small cups in which to make and place the cupcakes, since these factors are the basic and necessary conditions for achieving happiness. For migrant workers, the factors of material wealth and relatedness are like the cake that forms the main body of the cupcake, as do the factors of material wealth and job and career for urban residents. In this sense, such factors are the core conditions affecting Chinese people's happiness, i.e. without these factors, the cupcakes are not cupcakes any longer and Chinese people are at risk of suffering. The factors of competence, job and career, and family life are like the icing on the cake for migrant workers, as are the factors of autonomy and interpersonal relationship for urban residents. In this sense, even without these factors, cupcakes are still cupcakes, although they may not taste so good.

#### 10.3.4 The happiest Chinese migrant workers

This study has found that migrant workers who have been substantially urbanised, in the

sense of having their own homes in Shanghai or having lived in Shanghai for no less than ten years, but with no urban *hukou*, are often the happiest of all migrant workers. These migrant workers tend to report a similar level of happiness as urban residents. This finding suggests that (1) migrant workers as such cannot be the happiest group in present-day China, and (2) rural migrants cannot achieve their maximum level of happiness until they are fully embedded in city life.

Based on the interview results and the Cupcake Model discussed above, ideally, a happy migrant worker is one who has a healthy mind, satisfactory material conditions and relatedness needs, a basic satisfaction with the social environment in which he/she lives, and a higher degree of satisfaction with his/her family life, job, and competence. Similarly, a happy urban resident is one who has a healthy mind, satisfactory material conditions and career development, and a basic satisfaction with the social environment in which he/she lives, along with a higher degree of satisfaction with his/her competence, individual autonomy, and interpersonal relationship. The distinctions between the two definitions fit the characteristics of the Chinese rural and urban population that have been summarised in the Mapping Chinese Happiness framework (see Figure 10.1). That is to say, a happy migrant worker is more affected by family-style collectivism, and hence believes it is essential to achieve happiness through family wellbeing, which is often represented as the blessing of family life and relations. In contrast, a happy urban resident is more individualistic, and, consequently, is more focused on personal wellbeing brought about by career development, individual autonomy, and interpersonal relationships. Therefore, perhaps the urbanisation of the Chinese rural population is a continual process of shifting consciousness, from family-style collectivism to individualism.

#### **10.4 Contributions of This Thesis**

In taking an integrated perspective on hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing, this study has revealed the reality and the affecting factors of migrant workers' happiness and has suggested a number of ways to promote migrant workers' happiness as well as to close the happiness gap between migrant workers and urban residents. The main contributions of this thesis are therefore as follows:

(1) Given that there is very little research on Chinese migrant workers' happiness, this

study has comprehensively demonstrated the reality of migrant workers' happiness for the first time; by so doing, people obtain a better understanding of, and pay more attention to, the happiness issues of this marginalised group that hovers between the city and the countryside.

(2) By summarising the two dimensions that influence the formation of Chinese happiness, the study is the first to map Chinese people's happiness; in this sense, it has visualised the happiness of migrant workers (or the rural population) and urban residents (or the urban population) and has pointed to the possibility that the more education one receives, the less likely it is that one will be influenced by family-style collectivism advocated by traditional Confucian culture.

(3) This study has uncovered the factors that influence Chinese people's happiness. Based on different characteristics of these factors, a model was put forward describing the different functions of these factors on Chinese people's happiness. On this basis, the study further discovered who the happiest migrant workers/urban residents are in present-day Chinese society.

(4) This study has systematically reviewed the transformation and inheritance of Confucian culture in contemporary China and its possible impacts on the values and happiness of Chinese people, an area that has received little attention among Chinese and Western scholars. On this basis, the empirical study of this thesis has found that the happiness of Chinese people is significantly influenced by traditional Confucian culture. That is, although the essence of Confucian culture, notably the Confucian ethical system characterised by 'the three cardinal guides and the five constant virtues', exerts no significant influence on the happiness of Chinese people, its relationship system characterised by 'family-first' values and patriarchal collectivism continues to play a role.

(5) This study has taken a close look at how, and which factors of, China's Marxist culture continues to play an important role in shaping the values and the sense of happiness of Chinese people during the era of market reform, and it therefore contributes to the literature by showing the potential impacts of China's Marxist culture on the values and happiness of Chinese people.

(6) By surveying the work of Chinese and Western scholars, this study has carefully

reviewed the representations and causations of the differences in urbanisation between China and Western countries, therefore contributing to the literature and the nascent theorisation of China's urban trajectory.

(7) This study has shown that there is a happiness gap between migrant workers and urban residents based on both the qualitative and quantitative analysis. A series of suggestions were put forward to promote migrant workers' happiness and to close the happiness gap between the two social groups. This research has been carried out in the interests of those belonging to the lowest social class, and, in doing so, it seeks to demonstrate to the Chinese government what is important and necessary for the promotion of migrant workers' happiness. In this sense, it is to be hoped that this research can offer advice for China's governmental planning with regard to creating a more equal, just, and happy Chinese society.

(8) In terms of methodology, this study has shown that Chinese happiness is an intertwining of hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing, in this sense, both these aspects occupy a certain proportion in the definition and the influencing factors of Chinese people's happiness. This challenges the academic trend in mainland China that equates hedonic wellbeing with happiness when researching Chinese wellbeing (see Chapter 4), in addition to suggesting that taking either a hedonic or eudaimonic approach alone in examining Chinese wellbeing may be inappropriate.

(9) Methodologically, this study has demonstrated the three advantages of using a mixed methods approach. First, it increases the comprehensiveness of the overall findings by showing how the qualitative data (interview data) provided explanations for the quantitative data (statistical data). Second, it expands the dimensions of the research topic, as qualitative interviews enabled investigation of the affecting factors of happiness more broadly after assessing migrant workers' happiness levels in the quantitative survey. Finally, it increases the methodological rigour of the research, as the findings of both approaches can be checked for consistency. Given current research, which primarily uses quantitative research to explore happiness or the happiness levels of Chinese citizens, this study demonstrates that using a mixed methods approach can greatly enhance our understanding of the happiness of Chinese migrant workers.

(10) Finally, with regard to methodology, the study has also suggested that some standard scales and measurement instruments applied to Western contexts may not effectively reveal the happiness of Chinese people before being examined and localised. This study found that the Basic Needs Satisfaction in General Scale (the BNSG-S) has both a low reliability and validity for the survey data from migrant workers. In addition, the study also found that the Personal Well-Being Index-Adult (PWI-A) has satisfying reliability and validity for the survey data from migrant workers and urban residents, while the Memorial University of Newfoundland Scale of Happiness (MUNSH) in Chinese has acceptable reliability and inadequate validity for the survey data from the two groups. Since the Basic Needs Satisfaction in General Scale (BNSG-S) has insufficient reliability and validity for the survey data from the two groups, it may lack applicability in the Chinese content, especially with regard to the population of migrant workers. So far, the BNSG-S has hardly been applied in the Chinese context and little research has been carried out on its applicability and localisation based on Chinese samples. Though some researchers, such as Xie et al. (2012), from the Institute of Psychology Research in the Chinese Academy of Science, have tried to translate and revise the BNSG-S for Chinese settings, their version of the BNSG-S in Chinese has not been subject to rigorous testing among the Chinese population, and it also shows deficient reliability and validity according to the survey data in this study. It must be said that the inapplicability of the BNSG-S in the Chinese context may not mean that the theory behind it is not appropriate to the study of Chinese people's wellbeing. On the basis of the interviews with migrant workers and urban residents, this study holds the opinion that the basic psychological needs theory can explain the wellbeing of migrant workers and urban residents to a certain extent. Therefore, more research is needed to understand Chinese happiness and localise standard measurement instruments applied to Western contexts.

## **10.5 Implications for Chinese Policy and Practice**

### ***10.5.1 Happiness and urbanisation***

This study has found that the pre-existing dual structure based on the *hukou* system, with sharp rural-urban distinctions in income levels and the public provision of education and social welfare and security, is a major cause of clear disparities in wellbeing between

Chinese urban and rural residents. This finding is in agreement with previous research by Yang (1999), Xing (2006), Knight and Gunatilaka (2008), Fang and Feng (2009), Whyte (2010), Treiman (2012), Zhang (2012), Wang et al. (2014), and Zhao and Ge (2014). Hence, this study contends that continuing to promote Chinese urbanisation, especially the urbanisation of the Chinese rural population, as well as gradually decreasing the urban-rural division and its consequent disparities regarding most aspects of people's lives, could be a fundamental means of promoting the happiness levels of Chinese people in the long term. More specifically, with the development of land and population urbanisation, Chinese rural residents (including migrant workers) will gradually obtain equal social rights, welfare, and security with urban residents, thereby increasing their levels of happiness. In addition, the development of urbanisation in China can facilitate the integration of rural migrants into urban life so as to reduce the social problems and violent crimes brought about by the massive influx of rural migrants and, by so doing, also improve the happiness levels of urban residents.

However, although the government has made a number of changes to accelerate urbanisation and to close the disparities between urban and rural areas, China's urbanisation, particularly with regards to population, remains a long-term endeavour that needs time and effort. Recently, the government has announced a series of new policies to improve the rural social security system and increase the fairness of the *hukou* system, with the aim of reforming the pre-existing dual structure so as to facilitate the development of urbanisation. The most notable of these policies is the further reform of the *hukou* system and the cancellation of agricultural *hukou* in order to establish a 'unified system' (*yi yuan tizhi* in Chinese) (Young, 2013, p.246). By enacting the *Opinions on Further Promoting Reform of the Hukou System* (hereafter referred to as *The Opinions*) in the middle of 2014, the central government announced it would vigorously reform the *hukou* system, which was first established in China's urban areas in 1951 and then extended to rural areas in 1955. Later, 30 provincial governments (including a majority of provincial-level regions in China, except for Tibet and Xinjiang) claimed that they would cancel agricultural *hukou* and initiate the unified *hukou* registration by September 2016 (People.com.cn, 2016). This demonstrates the government's intention to decouple welfare services, such as public health and education, from *hukou* registration.

Although this is the first time that the central government has tried to establish a unified *hukou* system, this attempt may not make an immediate impact on migrant workers' urbanisation and levels of wellbeing, especially for those who have been living in big cities or megacities. Firstly, the new policy needs time to work. The implementation of the *hukou* system reform requires support from additional policies in order to eliminate or revise regulations/policies that restrict its advocacy. Moreover, the policies on establishing supporting systems, such as relevant laws and regulations, are also required to protect the reform's implementation. Secondly, practicing the unified *hukou* registration on both the agricultural and non-agricultural populations does not equate to migrant workers having the same social rights and welfare services as local permanent residents because, even if there is no difference between agricultural and non-agricultural *hukou*, different regions (province-level) still have different welfare policies. That is, the cancellation of agricultural *hukou* simply means removing the differences between agricultural and non-agricultural *hukou* within a region, rather than eliminating the differences in *hukou* among regions. Thirdly, since most migrant workers do not have the financial capability to settle down in cities (even if the reform is put into practice), the reform of the *hukou* system may not benefit the seven factors that affect the levels of their wellbeing, at least in the short term. It is worth mentioning that the policy may have fewer positive impacts or even negative impacts on the happiness levels of migrant workers who have been living in big cities or megacities<sup>82</sup> because *The Opinions* has explicitly stipulated that 'the population of mega-cities should be strictly controlled. Large and medium-sized cities may set the requirements for the number of years that (the immigrants) participate in the urban social security system (to regulate the scale and pace of settling down) (...). Megacities can adopt an integral system to set a ladder-type channel to regulate the scale and pace of settling down' (The CCP Central Committee and State Council, 2014, Chapter VI). Given this, it can be speculated that the cancellation of agricultural *hukou* may not yield much improvement in the happiness levels of migrant workers, especially for those who have been living in megacities like Shanghai. Further research is needed into the changes of migrant workers' happiness levels since the start of the reform of the *hukou* system.

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<sup>82</sup> Big cities are those cities with populations ranging from one million to five million. Megacities are those cities with populations more than five million. Shanghai is a megacity.

### ***10.5.2 Alleviating housing problems***

Since buying property has arguably become a national passion in China (Financial Times, 2011) and a lifelong goal of many Chinese people, having an apartment or a house is always attached to Chinese people's happiness. The research suggests that housing problems are essential to China's migrant workers' wellbeing and have become one of the chief factors behind the happiness/material wellbeing gap between China's migrant workers and city dwellers. In this sense, unlike most demographic variables, such as gender, age, marital status, and income, which have no significant effect on China's migrant workers' happiness, housing status, or to be more specific, whether one has his or her own housing in the city, is a strong predictor of China's migrant workers' happiness levels. In this regard, Chinese migrant workers who have their own homes in the city tend to have a higher degree of happiness when compared with other migrant workers, and they usually report much higher levels of both hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing, similar to city dwellers.

Chinese migrant workers also shoulder a heavier burden when intending to buy an apartment or a house in the city. Compared to most urban residents, who usually have their own homes in the city, Chinese migrant workers are more likely to economise on clothing, food, housing, transportation, and entertainment in order to save up for an apartment or a house, and they are more inclined to believe that they work not only to make a living but also to save up to buy property, whether in cities or in their rural hometowns. At the same time, they tend to worry more about their financial problems and diverse issues in their lives caused by having no property in the city, which leads to a greater likelihood of having undesirable moods, such as anxiety, stress, and depression. Given this, apart from the suggestion that the government should take measures to alleviate housing issues, this study also suggests that China's migrant workers should lighten the burden on themselves, i.e. not attach too much importance to buying property.

### ***10.5.3 Improving educational consciousness and standards***

Educational levels and occupational skills have exerted an important impact on the enhancement of China's migrant workers' happiness. Firstly, this is because educational levels are closely associated with obtaining the necessary resources to bring about material

prosperity and materialistic happiness. The lack of competitiveness due to lower levels of education has left many migrant workers at a disadvantage in relation to productive capacity, employment, income levels, and the acquisition of both self-actualisation and social acceptance, which are directly linked to the happiness/material wellbeing gap between themselves and urbanites. Secondly, people with higher educational attainment frequently have greater satisfaction levels with regard to basic psychological needs of competence, and meeting the basic psychological needs of competence is one of the essential factors that influence Chinese people's happiness.

The low cultural quality of China's migrant workers and the educational problems of their children are issues that need to be urgently addressed. This study has shown that, although most migrant parents are keen to send their children to school in cities, they often lack specific educational ideas for their children and usually do not have much time/consciousness to participate in the academic, emotional, and social growth of their children. In other words, although the bulk of migrant parents realise the importance of their children's education from their own experience, they usually have no choice but to leave their children in their rural homes and they have little scientific or educational conceptions regarding their children because of the limitations in their thinking. This could be part of the rise of social issues such as marginalisation, high crime rates, and juvenile delinquency related to new-generation migrant workers and migrant children. For this reason, besides the further development of urbanisation, the study also assumes the importance and significance of family education by which parents' educational consciousness could be passed on to children and, by so doing, can lead to the improvement of educational levels in the general migrant worker population.

Moreover, a skewed sense of education and learning can also be a source of low cultural quality and professional skills, particularly for young and middle-aged migrant workers who are less educated. Firstly, while most migrant parents have realised the importance of education because of their own experiences, the study has found that their offspring may still say that education is of no use in relation to having a better life. Such an understanding could not only lead to lower levels of education but could also cause some social problems, such as high dropout rates and child labour. Based on Shi et al. (2016), the cumulative dropout rate from Chinese rural middle schools reached 63 per cent between 2007 and

2013, and most rural teenagers who dropped out of school felt that education does not appear to give them an advantage later in life. On 22 November 2016, the China News Service (Chinanews.com) reported on the phenomenon of the illegal employment of child laborers in the clothing workshops of Changshu city, Jiangsu Province. According to a video released on 24 November 2016 by China Central Television (CCTV), one of the rescued underage workers, under the alias of Xiao Xiong (who was fifteen years old), said that he did not want to waste his parents' hard-earned money to keep him in school because he did not want to go to school and he got bad grades (Tencent Video, 2016). Xiao's elder sister, Tao, said that their parents could not do anything with Xiao, and so agreed that he could go out to work with her because he insisted that he did not like school (Tencent Video, 2016). On 25 November 2016, The Beijing News commented that the idea of the uselessness of study is more shocking than the case of child labour in Changshu, and it revealed that the rescued child labourers went out to work only because they felt education was useless and that leaving home to work was something to be envied (The Beijing News, 2016). Secondly, this study has shown that most migrant workers have a lack of understanding regarding continuous learning after leaving school, except for those who are well educated. They tend to consider that they are too old to learn/change in their early years, which leads to their cultural quality and job skills remaining at a low level in later life. In this case, to improve their sense of wellbeing, the study also advises Chinese migrant workers to change their views on education and learning and dare to study new knowledge.

#### ***10.5.4 Giving migrant workers the platform to express their potential***

Public understanding of how to promote migrant workers' happiness would likely be biased because of migrant workers' poor economic conditions. For example, one is likely to think that having a better experience in the satisfaction of their psychological needs of competence is of no avail in improving migrant workers' happiness because most migrant workers experience poor economic conditions and also need money more than satisfying mental requirements. Evidence from the interviews has also shown that most urban residents tend to believe that raising migrant workers' living standards, such as increasing the minimum wage, is the most promising path for improving migrant workers' happiness because it is exactly what they need.

However, is this really true? According to this study's results, when considering what would promote or has promoted their levels of happiness, the interviewed migrant workers tended to think that attaining higher levels of self-actualisation was of greater importance than obtaining higher levels of materiality. New-generation migrant workers are even more concerned with realising individual values – they not only recognise the importance of self-realisation but have also shown a great desire to achieve personal ambitions in their life and work. That is, having a better experience with regard to the satisfaction of their psychological needs of competence (e.g. better self-actualisation) could well be one of the most significant aspects for promoting migrant workers' happiness, especially for new-generation migrant workers who are well educated.

However, although being satisfied with the basic psychological needs of competence is thought to be important for enhancing migrant workers' happiness, most interviewed migrant workers still contended that they lack the opportunity to show what they are capable of because have no family background. They generally thought that the direct reason causing them to face the dilemma of self-actualisation is the social reality that success depends on worldly wisdom, personal relationships, and so-called *guanxi*. This understanding not only influences how satisfied they are with their self-actualisation but also affects their personal outlook on life and values. For example, Blake, a new-generation migrant worker, felt puzzled about his life and future because he held lofty ideals, but they seemed very difficult to achieve solely through his own efforts:

*I thought that society would provide equal opportunities for every person to be a hit in life before going to college, but I was wrong. Sometimes, I think that education cannot change my fate because having a college degree is not as useful as having a good family background. I know it sounds funny now, but all I ever wanted was to realise my ideals by my own efforts. Now, I spend a lot of time playing computer games because I feel comfortable and confident in the virtual world.*

The Beijing News' (2016) commentary on child labourers in Changshu city also indicated that the unfair distribution of social resources and the fact that the social hierarchical system was increasingly being strengthened have significantly contributed to the opinion

that ‘schooling is useless’. Such an outlook illustrates the lack of social equality and free competition in Chinese society. In this case, the present study suggests that the relevant authorities need to change their thinking with regard to promoting migrant workers’ happiness and focus more on the establishment of a more equal and fairer Chinese society.

## **10.6 Implications for Future Research**

According to the process and findings of this study, there are three main implications for future research, the first of which is to build a thorough scale/index that measures Chinese people’s wellbeing. Given the lack of work in this area, future studies could focus on the development of new scales/indexes or the localisation of existing scales/indexes based on the major findings of this research. In particular, in developing new scales/indexes, the cultural influences associated with them need to be considered. For example, this research has shown that the happiness of the rural population in China is much more influenced by traditional Chinese Confucian culture; although the Chinese have a strong desire for self-realisation, the way they state or experience this objective is significantly different from that of Westerners.

The second implication is to research the happiness of migrant workers in China’s small and medium-sized cities and to compare this with that of migrant workers who live in big cities. As will be mentioned when discussing the limitations of this thesis, migrant workers who live in small and medium-sized cities may have higher levels of happiness than those who live in big cities. Attention to this area could offer a more comprehensive picture of the happiness issues of Chinese migrant workers, in addition to helping to find ways to improve the happiness levels of migrant workers. It could also examine whether the central government’s policy of ‘strict control on the population of the metropolis’ (from *The Opinions 2014*) and ‘accelerated development of small and medium-sized cities’ (from *the National Plan on New Urbanisation 2014-2020*) favour the growth of happiness.

The third implication is to learn more about the influence of Chinese culture on Chinese happiness and values. This includes two aspects: (1) Carrying out further studies to explore the influence of traditional Confucian culture on Chinese happiness and values. This is because, based on the findings of this study, only patriarchal collectivism has shown a significant impact on Chinese people’s concept of happiness and happiness levels.

However, strictly speaking, apart from the Confucian ethical system (i.e. ‘the three cardinal guides and the five constant virtues’), which was found to have no significant influence on Chinese happiness in this study, other elements of traditional Confucian culture not captured by this study could still possibly be helpful for Chinese people in pursuing their happiness. Hence, further research is required on related studies; (2) calling for more studies on Chinese Marxist/socialist culture, particularly Mao’s legacy on contemporary Chinese culture and its impact on Chinese happiness and values. This is because, although some scholars have argued that socialist factors, such as Mao’s national pride, socialist collectivism, and material determinism, would exert an important influence on Chinese people’s happiness (He, 2017), based on the results of this study, the influence of these factors either does not show up (such as national pride and socialist collectivism) or cannot be determined (i.e. material determinism). Therefore, more research is needed to fully understand the role of Chinese Marxist/socialist culture on Chinese happiness and values. Each of the two aspects discussed above is important, not only because they are helpful for better understanding Chinese happiness, but also because they are critical for the inheritance and development of Chinese culture in the rush to improve Chinese society.

## **10.7 Limitations of This Thesis**

There are two primary limitations of this thesis. First, this study is cross-sectional, i.e. both the survey and interview data were collected for the whole study population at a single point in time, meaning that this study may not accurately reflect the changes in the happiness levels of the study population. This issue was carefully considered in the research design stage. However, this study was still designed as cross-sectional research for the following reasons: (1) Given the conditions of a limited timeframe as well as limited financial, material, and human resources, it would be impractical to carry out a longitudinal study of the study population’s happiness/changes in happiness levels; (2) existing happiness research has concluded that long-term levels of wellbeing are almost completely stable (Lucas and Donnellan, 2007), i.e. one’s level of happiness probably does not change significantly over time, especially under long-term investigation;<sup>83</sup> and

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<sup>83</sup> Of course, this does not mean there is no sense in promoting individuals’ levels of happiness or exploring the factors that could increase or decrease individuals’ levels of happiness.

(3) if happiness/overall wellbeing is defined as both hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing (as in this thesis), even a longitudinal study may not necessarily bring about the desired outcome. For example, suppose that a repeated survey is conducted among the same population after one year from the first survey, the result would only show the changes in the study population's hedonic/eudaimonic wellbeing, which may not be able to explain the changes in its overall wellbeing. Also, suppose that follow-up interviews are held to explore the changes in the study population's overall wellbeing, there may be no better way than to ask the participants directly: 'How has your sense of happiness changed in this year?', which is exactly the same as what has been done in the first set of interviews. All in all, such a dilemma may be determined by the complexity of happiness as such, in that it can include both hedonic/eudaimonic wellbeing, but it is not the same as the sum of the two. Hopefully, a more scientific method will be applied to investigate and analyse changes in happiness/overall wellbeing.

The second limitation mainly relates to the choice of the research site. According to a 2011 study in the *China Labour Bulletin*, Chinese migrant workers who worked in relatively smaller cities, such as Suzhou (in Jiangsu Province), tended to be happier than those who worked in more traditional incoming cities, such as Shanghai and Beijing (*China Labour Bulletin*, 2012). The possible happiness difference between big and smaller cities could impact on this research in two ways: the comprehensiveness and completeness of the research and the generalisability of its frameworks to the case of small and medium-sized cities.

After much consideration, smaller cities were not included in this research for two reasons. First of all, there is no strong reason to believe that Chinese migrant workers who work in relatively smaller cities tend to be happier than those who work in big cities. This is because (1) according to the same research carried by the *China Labour Bulletin* in 2012, such a tendency appears to be very weak, and (2) the research carried by the *China Labour Bulletin* mainly defines happiness as hedonic wellbeing/life satisfaction, which could bias its results because it has neglected the effect of eudaimonic wellbeing in increasing/decreasing general wellbeing. Secondly, given limited time and resources, this study focused on Shanghai, one of the most important destinations for China's migrant workers/domestic migrants, and went into more detail on the happiness of China's migrant

workers there. However, the impact of site selection may still exist because the happiness of migrant workers in small and medium-sized cities is not yet clear. For this reason, the generalisation of the Mapping Chinese Happiness framework and the Cupcake Model needs to be viewed with caution because they were produced based on research in Shanghai, a special place that may have some peculiar features affecting its inhabitants' sense of happiness.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: The Key Elements of Maoism

### Orthodox Marxist beliefs

Marxist revolution

Progress will come through class struggle in which the landowners and bourgeoisie have to be overthrown. This will lead to a 'dictatorship of the proletariat' (or the masses). There should be collective ownership of the means of production.

### Specific Chinese elements

The importance of the peasants

The poor peasantry of the interior of a backward capitalist/semi-feudal society, rather than the urban proletariat, constitutes the support base for the movement.

A two-stage revolution, as explained in Mao's *On New Democracy* (1940)

The first revolution could incorporate elements of the bourgeoisie. During this stage, private ownership could continue. A second revolution would bring about the collectivisation and nationalisation of property and economic resources and remove the remaining elements of the bourgeoisie.

The stage of the New Democratic Revolution

The stage of the New Democratic Revolution makes capitalism much more compatible with democracy, thereby aiding the transition to socialism.

The path and strategy of the 'people's war' (*renmin zhanzheng*) and 'surrounding the cities from the countryside' (*nongcun baowei chengshi*)

The path and strategy of the people's war relies on the peasantry with regard to: building rural base areas, carrying out 'land to the tiller' and other social policies in these areas (run democratically as small, self-reliant states), and building a

political base in the countryside in order to finally encircle and capture the cities.

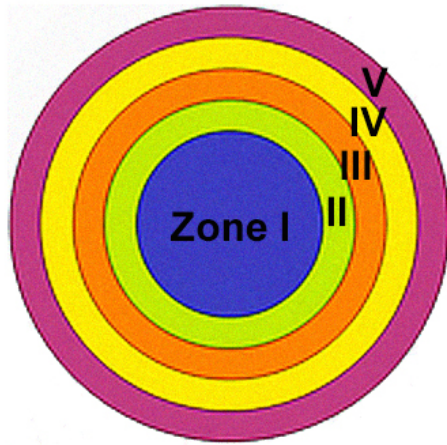
The conception of 'rural base areas' ( <i>nongcun geming genjudi</i> )	The conception of rural base areas and the way to establish them. At the heart of the course of the New Democratic Revolution, from 1927 to 1949, was the establishment of rural base areas.
Democratic centralism and the 'mass line' ( <i>qunzong luxian</i> )	Ensuring that 'democracy' does not take a backseat to 'centralism', and making sure that the people are involved in policymaking and its implementation.
Mass mobilisation and voluntarism	The party should 'learn from the people'. Campaigns should be peopled campaigns and not imposed from above. Properly guided, the people will voluntarily support campaigns and work in the best interests of all.
Self-criticism and rectification	Officials should undergo regular criticism in order to prevent them from becoming self-satisfied and elitist, and regular purges of the party will keep it pure. Only through self-criticism will individuals see the wisdom of mass campaigns and 'rectify' false thoughts.
Continuous revolution ( <i>jixu geming</i> )	This idea holds that political, managerial, and bureaucratic power holders entrench themselves as a ruling elite and, over a period of time, assume the position of a new exploiting class; for this reason, the people have to be constantly mobilised to struggle against this tendency. Therefore, revolution should not cease once a party achieves power; rather, it should be a constant process of renewal in order to avoid complacency and corruption.

Ideas about contradictions, as explained in Mao's <i>On Contradiction</i> (1937)	The struggle between functionally-united opposites causes continual change. Development stems from the resolution of contradictions, and strategy involves the choice of the form of struggle most suited to resolve a contradiction. However, the desired qualitative alteration can be brought about only through a series of stages, where the existing stage is impregnated with the hybrid seeds of the subsequent one, thereby dissolving the salient contradictions of the former and ushering in the latter.
Mao's conception of Marx's theory of history	Open-ended interrelations among and between the forces of production, the relations of production, and the superstructure.
A close interrelationship between theory and practice, as explained in Mao's <i>On Practice</i> (1937)	Maoism, by and large, privileges practice over theory, i.e. it views practice as the foundation of theory. Mao states that first there is practice (e.g. class struggle, political life, and scientific and artistic pursuits), then knowledge, again practice, and again knowledge. This form repeats itself in endless cycles, and, with each cycle, the content of practice and knowledge rises to a higher level.
Ruthless determination	Willpower and determination will be sufficient to bring about change, provided that everyone shows total commitment. From such a perspective, violence is a necessary element of revolution.

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Summarised from Schram (1989) and D'Mello (2009)

## Appendix 2: Burgess' Model



- I** Central Business District
- II** Transitional zone: recent immigrants, deteriorating housing, factories, abandonment
- III** Working class zone: single family tenements
- IV** Residential zone: single family homes with yards and garages
- V** Commuter zone: suburbs

### Appendix 3: Specific Quotas for Conducting Questionnaires and Interviews

District	Age	Urban residents		Migrant workers		Serial number <i>(first four rates)</i>
		Male	Female	Male	Female	
Huangpu; Jing' an	15-24	2	1	1	1	0101;0102
	25-34	2	2	1	1	
	35-44	2	2	1	1	
	45+	4	4	1	1	
	Sub-total	27 questionnaires; 3 interviews: 2 males and 1 female				
Xuhui	15-24	2	2	1	1	0201;0202
	25-34	2	2	2	2	
	35-44	2	2	1	1	
	45+	5	5	1	1	
	Sub-total	32 questionnaires; 3 interviews: 2 males and 1 female				
Zhabei	15-24	1	1	1	1	0301;0302
	25-34	2	2	1	1	
	35-44	1	1	1	1	
	45+	3	3	1	0	
	Sub-total	21 questionnaires; 2 interviews: 1 male and 1 female				
Changning; Hongkou; Putuo; Yangpu	15-24	6	6	5	5	0401;0402;0403; 0404;0405
	25-34	9	9	5	5	
	35-44	7	7	5	4	
	45+	16	16	2	2	
	Sub-total	109 questionnaires; 11 interviews: 6 males and 5 females				
Minhang	15-24	2	2	5	5	0501;0502;0503; 0504
	25-34	3	3	7	6	
	35-44	3	3	6	6	
	45+	6	6	3	3	
	Sub-total	68 questionnaires; 7 interviews: 4 males and 3 females				

Baoshan	15-24	1	1	4	3	0601;0602;0603
	25-34	2	2	4	4	
	35-44	2	2	3	3	
	45+	4	4	2	2	
	Sub-total	43 questionnaires; 4 interviews: 2 males and 2 females				
Jiading	15-24	2	1	4	4	0701;0702;0703
	25-34	2	2	5	4	
	35-44	2	2	4	3	
	45+	4	4	2	2	
	Sub-total	47 questionnaires; 5 interviews: 3 males and 2 females				
Pudong	15-24	4	3	10	9	0801;0802;0803; 0804;0805
	25-34	5	5	11	11	
	35-44	5	4	9	8	
	45+	10	10	5	5	
	Sub-total	114 questionnaires; 11 interviews: 6 males and 5 females				
Songjiang	15-24	2	2	5	5	0901;0902
	25-34	3	3	7	6	
	35-44	3	2	5	5	
	45+	6	5	3	3	
	Sub-total	63 questionnaires; 6 interviews: 3 males and 3 females				
Fengxian	15-24	2	1	3	2	1001;1002
	25-34	1	2	3	3	
	35-44	2	1	3	3	
	45+	3	3	2	2	
	Sub-total	36 questionnaires; 4 interviews: 2 males and 2 females				
Qingpu	15-24	1	1	3	3	1101;1102
	25-34	2	2	4	4	
	35-44	2	2	3	2	
	45+	4	4	2	1	
	Sub-total	40 questionnaires; 4 interviews: 2 males and 2 females				

## Appendix 4: Questionnaire (English Version)



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### QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE HAPPINESS OF RURAL-TO-URBAN MIGRANT WORKERS AND URBAN RESIDENTS IN SHANGHAI

[Date]

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Your name will only be used to identify people in the procedure of sampling.  
Address in Shanghai:  
Place of household registration: *(City / Province)* \_\_\_\_\_ /  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Section A: Background Information

This section of the questionnaire refers to background or biographical information. Although we are aware of the sensitivity of the questions in this section, the information will allow us to compare groups of respondents. Once again, we assure you that your responses will remain anonymous. Your cooperation is appreciated.

A1. What is your gender?

Female	1
Male	2

A2. What is the year of your birth? Please specify: *(YY)*

A3. What is the highest education you have received?

Unschool	1
Primary and junior secondary	2
Senior secondary	3
Tertiary	4
Postgraduate or above	5

A4. What is your marital status?

Married	1
Single	2
Divorced, widowed, or separated	3

A5. How many children do you have?

No children	0
1 child	1
2 children	2
3 children or above	3

A8. Who are you living with?

Living alone	1
Living with wife/spouse, but no children	2
Living with children, but no wife/spouse	3
Living with both wife/spouse and children	4

*If you have any children left at home, please specify how many*

A9. What is your accommodation situation?

Living in my own rented dwelling	1
Living in a staff dormitory	2
Other situations <i>Specify:</i>	3

If you are living in your own rented dwelling, how big is your housing area? Please specify:  
square meters

A10. How much did you earn **last month**? Please specify.

*If your work is not billed monthly, please calculate an average monthly income based on your annual income.*

Cash income:

Regular pay: ¥

Bonus: ¥

Financial or in-kind allowance:

Meals: ¥

Accommodation: ¥

Welfare: ¥

Insurance: ¥

A11. Are you working full time?

Full time	1
Part time	2

A12. What is your job? Please specify:

A13. How many hours did you work **last week**, from **last Monday** to **last Sunday**? *If you have a nine-to-five job, you work eight hours a day.*

Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_ hours

A14. How many years have you lived in Shanghai? Please specify: \_\_\_year(s)

**Section B: Satisfaction with Life and the Personal Well-Being Index (PWI-Adult) Scale**

The following questions ask how satisfied you feel, on a scale from zero to ten. **Zero** means you feel completely dissatisfied. **Ten** means you feel completely satisfied. The **middle of the scale is five**, which means you feel neutral, i.e. neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

**Part 1 [Optional Item]**

B0. Thinking about your own life and personal circumstances, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole?

Completely Dissatisfied					Neutral						Completely Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Part 2**

B1. How satisfied are you with your standard of living?

Completely Dissatisfied					Neutral						Completely Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B2. How satisfied are you with your health?

Completely Dissatisfied					Neutral						Completely Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B3. How satisfied are you with what you are achieving in life?

Completely Dissatisfied					Neutral						Completely Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B4. How satisfied are you with your personal relationships?

Completely Dissatisfied					Neutral						Completely Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B5. How satisfied are you with how safe you feel?

Completely Dissatisfied					Neutral						Completely Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B6. How satisfied are you with feeling part of your community?

Completely Dissatisfied					Neutral						Completely Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B7. How satisfied are you with your future security?

Completely Dissatisfied					Neutral						Completely Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B8. How satisfied are you with your spirituality or religion?

Completely Dissatisfied					Neutral						Completely Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Part 3**

B9. How satisfied are you with your income?

Completely Dissatisfied					Neutral						Completely Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B10. What is the most important thing in your life? Please rank the following items. *Note: a tie for any place is acceptable.*

Material wealth	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal relations	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical health	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mental health	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self fulfilment	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Section C: Mental Health and the Memorial University of Newfoundland Scale of Happiness (MUNSH)**

The following questions ask you how things have been going. Please answer **yes** if a statement is true for you and **no** if it does not apply to you. In **the past months**, have you been feeling:

C1. On top of the world?	Yes / Don't know / No
C2. In high spirits?	Yes / Don't know / No
C3. Particularly content with your life?	Yes / Don't know / No
C4. Lucky?	Yes / Don't know / No
C5. Bored?	Yes / Don't know / No
C6. Very lonely or remote from other people?	Yes / Don't know / No
C7. Depressed or very unhappy?	Yes / Don't know / No
C8. Flustered because you didn't know what was expected of you?	Yes / Don't know / No
C9. Bitter about the way your life has turned out?	Yes / Don't know / No
C10. Generally satisfied with the way your life has turned out?	Yes / Don't know / No

The next 14 questions have to do with more general life experiences:

C11. This is the dreariest time of my life.	Yes / Don't know / No
C12. I am just as happy as when I was younger.	Yes / Don't know / No
C13. Most of the things I do are boring or monotonous.	Yes / Don't know / No
C14. The things I do are as interesting to me as they ever were.	Yes / Don't know / No
C15. As I look back on my life, I am fairly well satisfied.	Yes / Don't know / No
C16. Things are getting worse as I get older.	Yes / Don't know / No
C17. Do you feel lonely?	Yes / Don't know / No
C18. Little things bother me more this year.	Yes / Don't know / No
C19. If you could live where you wanted, where would you live?	<i>Specify:</i>
C20. I sometimes feel that life isn't worth living.	Yes / Don't know / No
C21. I am as happy now as I was when I was younger.	Yes / Don't know / No
C22. Life is hard for me most of the time.	Yes / Don't know / No
C23. How satisfied are you with your life today?	<i>Satisfied / Not satisfied</i>
C24. My health is the same or better than most people's my age.	Yes / Don't know / No

**Section D: Self-Determination and the Basic Needs Satisfaction in General Scale**

Please read the following items carefully, thinking about how they relate to your life, and then indicate **how true** they are for you. Use the following scale to respond:

	1 Not at all true	2 3	4 Somewhat true	5 6	7 Very true		
D1. I feel like I am free to decide for myself how to live my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D2. I really like the people I interact with.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D3. Often, I do not feel very competent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D4. I feel pressured in my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D5. People I know tell me I am good at what I do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D6. I get along with people I come into contact with.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D7. I pretty much keep to myself and don't have a lot of social contacts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D8. I generally feel free to express my ideas and opinions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D9. I consider the people I regularly interact with to be my friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D10. I have been able to learn interesting new skills recently.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D11. In my daily life, I frequently have to do what I am told.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D12. People in my life care about me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D13. Most days, I feel a sense of accomplishment from what I do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D14. People I interact with on a daily basis tend to take my feelings into consideration.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D15. In my life, I do not get much of a chance to show how capable I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D16. There are not many people that I am close to.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D17. I feel like I can pretty much be myself in my daily situations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D18. The people I interact with regularly do not seem to like me much.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D19. I often do not feel very capable.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D20. There is not much opportunity for me to decide for myself how to do things in my daily life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D21. People are generally pretty friendly towards me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Thank you for your help.**

## Appendix 5: Questionnaire (Chinese Version)

问卷编号: \_ \_ / \_ \_ \_ \_ / \_ \_ \_

审核:

### 2014年“上海外来人口和本地居民幸福感”调查问卷

本匿名问卷涉及部分个人信息,对于您的回答,我们将仅用于学术研究。所有问题没有对错之分,您只要根据平时的想法和实际情况,实事求是地回答就行。我们将按照《统计法》的规定,严格保密,请您不要有任何顾虑。			
访问员姓名		访问员编号	
访问时间	___月___日, ___时___分到___时___分		
访问地点			
被访者现住址	上海市___区		
户口所在地【仅外来人口填写】	___省___市		
手机号码			

#### A. 个人信息

- A1. 性别: 1. 女; 2. 男。
- A2. 出生年份: \_\_\_\_\_年。
- A3. 您的学历是:
1. 没上过学; 2. 小学; 3. 初中; 4. 高中;
5. 中专/技校/职高; 6. 大专; 7. 本科; 8. 研究生及以上。
- A4. 您的婚恋状况:
1. 未婚, 也无恋爱对象; 2. 未婚, 但有恋爱对象;
3. 已婚; 4. 离异/丧偶/分居。
- A5. 您有几个孩子: \_\_\_\_\_个, 其中与您共同居住的有\_\_\_\_\_个。
- A6. 您的居住状况:
1. 独居; 2. 与配偶居住, 不与孩子居住;
3. 与孩子居住, 不与配偶居住; 4. 与配偶和孩子居住。
- A7. 您的住房状况:
1. 在自购房中居住; 2. 在出租屋中居住;
3. 在员工宿舍中居住; 4. 其他\_\_\_\_\_。
- A8. 您的住房面积为\_\_\_\_\_平方米; 您与\_\_\_\_\_个人共同居住。
- A9. 您的上月现金收入为:【请平均到每个月】基本工资\_\_\_\_\_元; 奖金\_\_\_\_\_元。
- A10. 您的上月现金或实物津贴:【请平均到每个月】伙食\_\_\_\_\_元; 住宿\_\_\_\_\_元。

A11. 您现在的工作单位是否提供以下待遇：

a. 养老保险	1. 有	2. 没有	3. 不知道
b. 医疗保险	1. 有	2. 没有	3. 不知道
c. 工伤保险	1. 有	2. 没有	3. 不知道

A12. 您的工作性质：1. 全职； 2. 兼职。

A13. 您的职业是：\_\_\_\_\_。

A14. 您上周工作\_\_\_\_\_天；平均每天工作\_\_\_\_\_小时。

A15. 您在上海居住了\_\_\_\_\_年。【仅外来人口填写】

### B. 个人幸福指数量表 (PWI-Adult)

下列几个问题是询问您的满意度的，量度从0到10。0表示您感觉完全不满意，10表示您觉得完全满意，5 表示您感觉中等，既不是满意也不是不满意。

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10						
完全 不满 意					中等					完全满意						
B0. 考虑一下您自身的生活和个人情况，您对整体生活的满意度如何？						0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
B1. 您对自身的生活水平有多满意？						0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
B2. 您对自身的健康状况有多满意？						0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
B3. 您对生活中取得的成就有多满意？						0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
B4. 您对自身人际关系有多满意？						0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
B5. 您对自身的安全状况有多满意？						0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
B6. 您对自身的社会参与有多满意？						0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
B7. 您对自己的未来保障有多满意？						0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
B8. 您对自身的精神生活或宗教信仰有多满意？						0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
B9. 您对自己的收入有多满意？						0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

B10. 您认为在您的生活中什么是最重要的？请对下列选项排序。

【1表示您认为最重要，允许并列。】

物质财 富	家庭	孩子	人际关系	身体健康	心理健康	自我实现

### C. 纽芬兰纪念大学幸福度量表 (MUNSH)

我们想问一些关于您的日子过得怎么样的问题，在最近几个月里，您是否有下面所描述的感受？如果符合你的情况，答“1=是”，如不符答“2=不是”，如感到不清楚答“3=不知道”。

最近几个月里，您感到：

C1. 状态极佳？	1=是	3=不知道	2=不是
C2. 情绪高涨？	1=是	3=不知道	2=不是
C3. 对自己的生活特别满意？	1=是	3=不知道	2=不是
C4. 感到走运？	1=是	3=不知道	2=不是
C5. 感到无聊？	1=是	3=不知道	2=不是
C6. 非常孤独或与人疏远？	1=是	3=不知道	2=不是
C7. 抑郁或非常不愉快？	1=是	3=不知道	2=不是
C8. 因为不知道将来会发生什么而担心？	1=是	3=不知道	2=不是
C9. 对自己目前的生活状态感到苦涩？	1=是	3=不知道	2=不是
C10. 总的来说，生活处境变得使你感到满意？	1=是	3=不知道	2=不是

以下 14 个问题更多的关于您的生活经历：

C11. 这是我一生中最难受的时期。	1=是	3=不知道	2=不是
C12. 我像年轻时一样高兴。	1=是	3=不知道	2=不是
C13. 我所做的大多数事情都令人厌烦或单调。	1=是	3=不知道	2=不是
C14. 过去我感兴趣做的事情，现在仍然乐在其中。	1=是	3=不知道	2=不是
C15. 当我回顾一生时，我感到相当满意。	1=是	3=不知道	2=不是
C16. 随着年龄的增加，一切事情更加糟糕。	1=是	3=不知道	2=不是
C17. 你感到孤独吗？	1=是	3=不知道	2=不是
C18. 今年一些小事情比往年更使我烦恼。	1=是	3=不知道	2=不是
C19. 如果你能随便选择自己的住处，你愿意住在哪里？	请具体说明：_____。		
C20. 有时我感到活着没意思。	1=是	3=不知道	2=不是
C21. 我现在像我年轻时一样快乐。	1=是	3=不知道	2=不是
C22. 大多数时候我感到生活是艰苦的。	1=是	3=不知道	2=不是
C23. 你对当前的生活满意吗？	0=满意	1=不满意	
C24. 和同龄人相比，我的健康状况与他们差不多，甚至更好一点。	1=是	3=不知道	2=不是

#### D. 基本需求满足量表 (BNSG-S)

下面请您仔细阅读下列每个选项，思考它与您生活相关的程度，然后指出其准确程度。量度从 1 到 7, 1 表示完全不准确，4 表示有些准确，7 表示非常准确。

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
完全不准确			有些准确			非常准确

D1. 我认为我可以自由决定自己如何生活。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D2. 我真心喜欢与我打交道的人。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D3. 我经常感觉不是很能胜任工作。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D4. 我感觉生活很有压力。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D5. 认识的人告诉我我擅长我所做的事情。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D6. 我与我所接触的人和睦相处。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D7. 我几乎总是一个人，没有很多社交活动。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D8. 通常，我都感觉能自如地表达自己的观点和意见。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D9. 我把经常与我打交道的人当作我的朋友。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D10. 我最近能够学习新的有趣的技能。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D11. 在日常生活中，我经常不得不做一些被要求做的事情。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D12. 我生活中的人关心我。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D13. 大多数时候我能从我做的事情中获得成就感。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D14. 和我每天打交道的人都会考虑我的感受。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D15. 在生活中我并没有太多机会展示我的能力。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D16. 我没有很多我所亲近的人。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D17. 在日常生活中，我感觉非常能按自己的意愿行事。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D18. 我经常打交道的人似乎不怎么喜欢我。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D19. 我经常感觉并不十分能干。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D20. 在日常生活中，我没有很多机会决定自己如何做事。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D21. 人们通常对我非常友好。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**感谢您的帮助!**

## **Appendix 6: Interview Outline (English Version)**

### **Interview Guide**

#### **Version A: Migrant Workers**

- A1. What do you think happiness is?
- A2. What has been happiest experience in recent years?
- A3. What was your unhappiest experience in the past?
- A4. Are you satisfied with your current living conditions?
- A5. What makes you feel negative?
- A6. What do you do to overcome your negative emotions?
- A7. Are you happy with your current job?
- A8. What is the most suitable job for you?
- A9. How has your sense of happiness changed in recent years?
- A10. Can you adjust to city life?
- A11. Do you think urban residents are happier than you?
- A12. What do you want from the government to increase your happiness?
- A13. What is your future plan?

#### **Version B: Urban Residents**

- B1. What do you think happiness is?
- B2. What has been your happiest experience in recent years?
- B3. What was your unhappiest experience in the past?
- B4. Are you satisfied with your current living conditions?
- B5. What makes you feel negative?
- B6. What do you do to overcome your negative emotions?
- B7. Are you happy with your current job?
- B8. What is the most suitable job for you?
- B9. How would you describe your social circle?

B10. How has your sense of happiness changed in recent years?

B11. Do you think migrant workers are happier than you?

B12. What do you want from the government to increase your happiness?

B13. What is your future plan?

## Appendix 7: Interview Outline (Chinese Version)

### 访谈提纲

#### Version A: 外来人口

- A1. 您认为幸福是什么？
- A2. 您最近最幸福的经历是什么？
- A3. 您最近最不幸福的经历是什么？
- A4. 您对您当前的生活条件满意吗？
- A5. 什么让您感到消极？
- A6. 您是如何克服自己的消极情绪的？
- A7. 您满意您现在的工作吗？
- A8. 最适合您的工作的什么？
- A9. 近几年您的幸福感有什么变化？
- A10. 您能适应城市生活吗？
- A11. 您认为城市居民比您幸福吗？
- A12. 您想从政府那里获得什么以增加自己的幸福感？
- A13. 您的未来计划是什么？

#### Version B: 城市居民

- B1. 您认为幸福是什么？
- B2. 您最近最幸福的经历是什么？
- B3. 您最近最不幸福的经历是什么？
- B4. 您对您当前的生活条件满意吗？
- B5. 什么让您感到消极？

- B6. 您是如何克服自己的消极情绪的？
- B7. 您满意您现在的工作吗？
- B8. 最适合您的工作的什么？
- B9. 您的社交圈子是什么？
- B10. 近几年您的幸福感有什么变化？
- B11. 您认为外来务工者比您要幸福吗？
- B12. 您想从政府那里获得什么以增加自己的幸福感？
- B13. 您的未来计划是什么？

## **Appendix 8: Information Letter (English Version)**



**School of Applied Social Sciences**  
Handan Xue  
32 Old Elvet  
Durham, UK  
DH1 3DE

E-mail: [handan.xue@durham.ac.uk](mailto:handan.xue@durham.ac.uk)

### **Information Letter for Participants**

[Date]

To whom it may concern,

I am surveying China's migrant workers and urban residents in Shanghai in order to investigate their happiness.

You have been invited to contribute your views on happiness so as to develop a happier and fairer Chinese society. This research is likely to become a reference for the planning of the Chinese government. I would greatly appreciate it if you could take 15 minutes to participate in this important survey.

There are no risks for you in participating in this survey. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign an informed consent form. All information that you provide will be kept confidential and restricted to the researchers. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Handan Xue by e-mail ([handan.xue@durham.ac.uk](mailto:handan.xue@durham.ac.uk)). I sincerely appreciate your help!

Sincerely,

Handan Xue

## Appendix 9: Information Letter (Chinese Version)

### 致被访者的信

朋友，您好！

我们在做一项“上海外来人口与本地居民幸福感”课题，来探索幸福感的问题。

您被邀请参与我们的调查，您关于幸福的看法将利于建造更幸福、包容与平等的中国社会，缩小中国的农民工与城市居民之间的幸福差距。这项研究很可能会成为中国政府制定计划的参考。我们的访员来自华东理工大学，如果您可以花大约 15 分钟参与我们调查，我们将不胜感激。

您参与这项研究不存在已知或者预期的风险。在完成调查之前，您将会签署一份知情同意书。您所提供的信息我们将严格保密并将匿名用于分析。如果您对这项调查有任何疑问，请联系薛含丹（邮箱：[handan.xue@durham.ac.uk](mailto:handan.xue@durham.ac.uk)）。

感谢您参与这个重要的项目！

华东理工大学社会与公共管理学院

2014 年 4 月

# Appendix 10: Consent Form (English Version)



School of Applied Social Sciences  
Handan Xue  
32 Old Elvet  
Durham, UK  
DH1 3DE  
E-mail: handan.xue@durham.ac.uk

## Consent Form for Participants

Title of Research Project: The Happiness of Rural-to-Urban Migrant workers and urban residents in Shanghai  
Name of Researcher: Handan Xue

- Please initial box
1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information letter dated *[insert date]* explaining the above research project, and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.
  2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.
  3. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.
  4. I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future research
  5. I agree to take part in the above research project.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of participant                      Date                      Signature  
(or legal representative)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of person taking consent      Date                      Signature

*Copies: Once this has been signed by all parties, the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/pre-written script/information sheet, and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be kept with the project's main documents, which must be kept in a secure location.*

## Appendix 11: Consent Form (Chinese Version)

### 研究参与者同意书

研究题目：上海市外来人口与本地居民幸福感问卷调查  
课题负责人：薛含丹

1. 本人已确认阅读和理解“致被访者的信”( 年 月 日) 所阐述的研究项目并保有询问该项目相关问题的权利。
2. 本人参与项目完全是自愿的，并且可以无条件在任何时间段退出该研究，而不带来任何负面影响。本人有权拒绝回答任何不愿意回答的问题。
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副本：本同意书一经各参与方签字后，研究参与人员应该得到一份有签名和日期的研究参与者同意书，并提供给研究参与人员信件/稿件/信息表以及其它任何相关书面信息。签名和标注日期的同意书应与该项目的主要文件一起妥善保存在安全之处。

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