Guanxi, Renqing, and Mianzi in Chinese social relations and exchange rules– A comparison between Chinese and western societies (A case study on China and Australia)

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Submitted by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to give a better explanation and understanding of the underlying factors that lead to Chinese people's thinking pattern, interpersonal behavior, and decision making process, and trying to help reduce the potential misunderstandings and conflicts in intercultural communications between China and western countries by elaborating Guanxi, Renqing, and Mianzi, three of the very dominant elements in Chinese social exchange rules and social relationships. In order to reach the goal, it focused on three specific questions: 1) what are the rules of Renqing, Mianzi and Guanxi in china; 2) how does it work and influence Chinese people's daily life; 3) how and why is Chinese Renqing, Mianzi, and Guanxi rule different from the social exchange rule (s) and social relationship in western countries.

The study was based on a qualitative research methodology, research data consisted of eight qualitative semi-structured interviews with four of them from university students in China (age ranging 20-30) and four of them from university students in Australia (age ranging 20-30).

The comparison of data from Chinese and Australian university students showed three different aspects when being asked about principles and rules of social relationship and social exchange, which respectively were: 1) Different views regarding the disparity of social status; 2) Different views regarding favor returning; 3) Different views regarding rules of social exchange and social relationship in general. Based on the discussion of these three different aspects, the study concluded that: 1) Chinese social exchange and social relationship contain a very important idea of renqing. In the playing out of renqing, obligations of reciprocity are heavily formed by the hierarchically structured network of guanxi in which one is involved, by the long time period over which these relations are expected to last, and by the public nature of the obligations incurred in continuing exchanges (Hwang and Hu 2004). Also, these obligations are usually connected to mianzi, and negotiated through the acceptance as well as refusal of the request that enhancingor weakening social relations (Hwang and Hu 2004); 2) since the emphasis and combination of renqing and mianzi in Chinese social interaction, people tend to focus on one's social status, resources possession, capital, social power, social prestige etc during social exchange and social relationship; besides, the formalization of renqing in Chinese society causes the redundancy, hypocrisy, and false-heartedness among Chinese social exchange and social relationship, people tend to care more about the exchange of interests, resources as well as power rather than real emotion and help, also, individuals set up and use guanxi or guanxi network to pursue and exchange social resources and capital

by applying renqing and mianzi rules; 3) Geopolitical, social structural, as well as historical and cultural reasons are three main sources leading to the difference between Chinese and western social exchange and social relationship rules.

The author recommended that although cultures are distinct from one another; however, the aim of exploring the differences among various cultures should not be focusing on assimilation or change but being understandable, multicultural, and how to reduce potential conflicts and misunderstandings in nowadays intercultural communication. Also, the development and change of culture are taking place all the time, therefore studies related to this field should always keep pursuing and remain critical.

Key words: Renqing, Mianzi, Guanxi, Social exchange, Social relationship

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1. Introduction

As scholars have previously discussed and defined, culture is being perceived as the socially constructed patterns of perceptions, values, and behaviors which are shared by a certain group of people, and involving our sense of belonging and emotional attachment to that group (Martin & Nakayama 2007). Owing to the rapid boom of globalization and social mobility, we tend to see more different phenomena (for example: thinking pattern, principle of value, and code of conduct) that caused by this great cultural diversity around the world. However, the emergence and accumulation of those unacknowledged culture-related issues and values from different groups could become serious hurdles among intercultural communications and encounters.Studies regarding the difference of social exchange rules and social relations between China and western countries have just pinpointed one of the most outstanding parts among all the hurdles that led by cultural distinction throughintercultural communications.

Western research on interpersonal behavior patterns and exchange rules has movedbeyond the assumption of isolated individuals socialized to make rational decisions on the basis of self-interest (Hwang and Hu 2004).It has been claimed by many justice scholars that people basically apply three justice norms, which respectively are: equity norm, equality norm, and need norm (Deutsch 1975; Greenberg and Cohen 1982; Leventhal 1976) in social exchange or resources-distributing process within a group.Accordingly, those rules have guided people's social interactions and behaviors (Wischniewski, Windmann, Juckel and Brune 2009).

However, recent reviews have shown some inconsistence in those universal rules of exchange and resources distribution within certain society or group. It has been pointed out that Chinesesocietyfollows rules that deviate from those of the West (Hwang and Hu 2004); for instance, scholars have found out that intercultural communications between the UK and China could easily collapse because of the misunderstanding of or not knowing the Chinese most publicized social exchange principle of Renqing and Mianzi, as well as the particular Chinese social relationship, Guanxi (Brennan and Wilson 2008). Furthermore, this kind of phenomenon has also taken place among the business between the West and China. A debate from the Industrial Management Program (IMP) has proposed the query about whether business relationships between Chinese and western firms can be effectively analyzed by only using exactlythe same patterns or ideas that are used to analyze westernsocial relationships; or ifthe culturallyunique Chinese concepts such as Guanxi,Renqing, and Mianzi must be applied (Fang and Kriz, 2000; Kriz and Fang 2003; Shu 2004; Zolkiewski and Feng 2005).It has eventually been concluded that a

poor grasp of Guanxi could easily cause conflicts between the UK and Chinese companies and jeopardizethe business relationships of theirs.

While agreeing with the almost universality of the previously-mentioned three rules regarding social exchange and resources distribution, there might be a gap for them to explain certain behaviors and decision-making processes in some special culture, as in China. Owing to specificsocial structures and a particular series of cultural categories that give participants additional means of thinking about their interpersonal relations, the ways in which individuals achieve social relations differ slightly from place to place, and these differences fade but slowly, even in the face of rapid industrialization, urbanization, education, and communication (Hwang 1987). It is worth noticing that although there was an important time that Chinese people were fighting against negative Chinese traditional values and trying to change the society to be more populist-based by introducing and following western democracy, science, as well as other social protocols during 1915 to 1921, this so called "May Fourth Movement" (also known as New Culture Movement) still could not change the very basis of Chinese social structure;therefore, even the current Chinese society is far away from the one those previous political and social leaders advocated, and still way different from western countries which Chinese people tried to mimic and follow once upon a time. The difference regarding this point betweenwesterncountries and China could severely cause misunderstandings and conflicts through intercultural communications and encounters.

Numerous reviews and researches have been focusing on the differences between western and Chinese social exchange rules as well asinterpersonal relations and behaviors. However, seldom could they try to expound the hidden reason of those differences from an insider's perspective to westerners. Hence, this article is aiming to give a better explanation and understandingof the underlying factors that lead to Chinese people's thinking pattern,interpersonal behavior, and decision making process, andtrying tohelp reduce the potential misunderstandings and conflicts in intercultural communicationsbetweenChina and western countries by providing an as comprehensive as possible background knowledge of Chinese social exchange rule and interpersonal relations as well as behaviorsto the West.Therefore, the article will elaborate and explain Guanxi, Renqing, and Mianzi, three of the very dominant elements in Chinese social exchange rules and social relationships.In order to reach the goal of this study, it is focusing on three specific questions: 1) what are the rulesof Renqing, Mianzi and Guanxiin china; 2) how does it work and influence Chinese people's daily life; 3) how and why is Chinese Renqing, Mianzi, and Guanxi rule different from the social exchange rule (s)and social relationshipin western countries.

2. Methodological framework

2.1 Research consideration

This research is predicated on qualitative strategy with an ontologically constructivist consideration. It has been emphasized that culture, as an one of the external realities, has constantly been in a state of change (Bryman 2012), and social studies (phenomenon, rules) should take those 'peripheral' factors as in subculture, social structure, history,place, and time into consideration, meanwhile, another emphasis on which the active involvement of people in reality constructions will also be placed (Bryman 2012).It is also believed that the complexity of culture makes itself various from one another and hardly allows us to just applysingle or universal rule to explain or cover all different phenomena, behaviors, and situations.In this sense, the particularity of Chinesesocial norms and behaviors should be viewed and analyzed from its own underlying cultural specialty and Chinese people's social interactions within the social context.However, abide by the previous consideration, it is also conceivable that things like social order and norm within a culture could develop or change if given enough time or certain circumstances, therefore, a more developmental, and critical perspective should always be employed when viewing the relevant issues.

2.2 Research design

This research has adopted a comparative case study between China and Australia in connection with the research questions raised before. The study makes a contrast between the two case countries by using the same qualitative interviewing method for data collection.With the comparison, the study is aiming and hoping to generate some substantial findings regarding to which they could subsequently engage in the theoretical analysis and support the theoretical arguments.

The reason for choosing this particular designing of the study is the firm belief that with the logic of comparison, we tend to understand social phenomena better when they are contrasting with each other in relation to multiple contrastive cases or situations (Bryman 2012). More specifically, it has been claimed by Hantrais (1996) that it is an appropriate also widely accepted way to follow and apply when people set out to examine particular issues or phenomena in two or more countries involving the different socio-cultural settings with the aim of seeking explanations for similarities and differences or to gain a greater awareness and a deeper understanding of social reality in different national contexts.

However, constrained by financial, location, time reasons, and the ability of accessing for more information from other countries, the study willonly be focusing on two contrasting countries, which are

China and Australia. The comparison is therefore set up between one of the most typical western countries (Australia) and the main focusing country (China).Throughout the comparative study, it will be tentative to answer the questions that raised before.

2.3 Research method

When comes to the data collection part, the study entails a qualitative semi-structured interviewing method.It is believed that a good appreciation of what the interviewee sees as significant and important in relation to the topic area matters a lot to the later analysis as well as the whole study (Bryman 2012). Therefore, it tries to focus more on the interviewee's own perceptions concerningthe practice of renqing, mianzi, and guanxi in Chinese society (for Chinese interviewees) as well as how Australian people (the westerners)will behave in the similar contexts in social exchange process (for Australian interviewees).

The interviews are divided into two groups based on the nationalities (Australian and Chinese). Each group consists of university students (age ranging from 20-30) from Australia and China respectively. Questions and answers are distributed and collected by written texts since most of the interviewees would prefer to have more time to think and respond. All the interview questions are pretty much formulated based on three aspects: overall view of (rules or values of) social exchange and social relationship; (disparity of) social status; and favor returning. Questions for Australian and Chinese university students are not exactly same but related to the similar area and topic:

Questions for Australian interviewees

1. *Do you think there are any differences betweenthe relationships you have with your family, friends and other members of society? Are there different rules or principles you follow when you interact with different groups of people (such as work colleagues, school mates, etc)? Please provide some examples.*

2. *How do you normally establish and maintain your social relationships with others in Australia? What kinds of rules and principles do you prefer to follow during the interactions?*

3. *Generally speaking, do you think Australians follow certain socially-based rules during their interactions with different types of people? (For example, how might an Australian return favors, establish and maintain his/her relationships with friends, etc) Please describe some examples from your experience.*

4. *What do you think the underlying basis is behind individuals' social and interpersonal relations in Australia (ie. the principles or values of social exchange in Australia and Australian culture)?*

5. *Scenario: If somebody performed a significant and meaningful favor for you, how long is it appropriate for you to feel indebted to them?*

6. *Chinese people often feel obligated to use favors as a way of establishing solidarity and/or maintaining relationships (for example, a person wishing to receive a favor from someone may first offer a favor, thereby making the other party feel obligated to offer something in return or stay in contact). How do you feel about this? Do you think similar rules operate in Australia?*

7. *In China, lower-middle class citizens are often forced by high-status members to obey social conventions (such as returning of favors) even if doing so will significantly disadvantage them. This has to do with the Chinese notion of 'face' (where higher status members have more power and influence). Comparing this with Australia, do you think differences in social class/power hierarchy have an effect on the way in which social interactions take place? Why or why not, please give the examples.*

Questions for Chinese interviewees

1. *What kinds of person tend to be more socially welcomed and popular, and tend to have fewer obstacles in Chinese society (what qualities or characteristics do these people need)?*

2. *What do you think is or are the component/components of your relations with friends, family, and society? What do you they are based on? (for interview 1 and 2 only)*

3. *How would you normally establish and maintain your relations with other individuals through social exchanges and interactions?*

4. *Do you think there are certain rules or principles among social relations, exchanges, and interactions in Chinese society? If there are, what do you think they might be?*

5. *Generally speaking, what do you think is/are the most important element (s) or part (s) in Chinese social relations and interactions? (for interview 3 and 4 only)*

6. *What do you think are the factors that could influence individuals' relations, choices etc with others in Chinese society?*

7. *What could you conclude as the foundation of the above social phenomena in Chinese society?*

After answering the questions, a declaration of authenticity has been signed by each of the interviewees. A further analysis and discussion have proceeded after collecting all the answers back from the interviewees.

2.4 Limitations of the study

Due to historical and political reasons, special parts of China such as, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan, as well as other overseas Chinese communitiesfollow rules that are much more consistent with Gesellschaft societies other than the Gemeinschaft ones (Tönnies 2002), therefore, a more organic and systematic social structure and mechanism have been formed and advocated (Durkheim 2012).In this sense, social relationship and social behavior in terms of social exchange could be dramatically different from the onesin mainland China (on the other hand, it might be pretty similar to western countries). Hence, the generalization from this study might not be applicable when analyzing the particularity of these areas of China.

Furthermore, the single comparative case country of Australia in this study might lack the availability to represent every other country or community among western culture. Due to historical background as well as the formation of country, even though Australia could represent some of the common values of western culture, it might still fall short to cover all different circumstances or any culturally particular situation. Therefore, some minor inconsistencies of certain specific cultural value, social behavior and rule, or social relationship pattern standing between Australia and other western countries might be existing and seen in this study.

Thirdly, because of various experience, background, and individual factors, answers of the qualitative interviews in this study could be subjective to some certain extent. Therefore, individual answers might seem to be extreme, and sometimes not be able represent the majority opinion of certain questions.

Last but certainly not the least, because of the complexity of social and cultural study, although the sampling process is trying to select the most outstanding and representative roles from each of the societies, it can hardly cover all the situations and cases within the study filed. In another word, the external validity of this study may seem to be a bit weak compared with its internal one. However, the researchhas tried to narrow down the scale and generate some solid consistency. Further relevant studies will definitely be needed in order to expand the generalization.

3. Theoretical framework

3.1 Key concepts

Considering the distinctive perceptions of relevant terms in this study between western andChinese culture, it is believed that it would be necessary to provide clear and definitive explanations in advance of any further analysis and discussion. The study will therefore give definitions to three significant concepts of guanxi, renqing, and mianzi, which are particularly unique in Chinese culture and mainly employed for

analyzing the previously-mentioned research questions.

Guanxi

According to the literal Chinese-English translation, the closest equivalent counterpart of guanxi is the English word relationship or relation.Interestingly to notice, even though we kind of acknowledge the literal translation for convenience in our daily life, barely could this simple replacement of words maintain and convey the very original meaning of guanxi in Chineseculture. The previous literature has pinpointed the importance of the concept of guanxi as one of the most influential cultural elements in Chinese society; it plays an extremelyirreplaceable role and consequentlyguides people's minds and behaviors among social activities; it has also been claimed that guanxi is a very essential gateway to understand and interpret Chinese social behaviors (Zhu and Hong 2009). Also, a good establishment and maintenance of guanxi are perceived as Chinese art of relation management (King 1992).Unlike the western interpretation of relationship, Chinese guanxi is different from it in several ways: 1) Seen from the core basis of these two concepts, western culture perceives and explains relationship (personal and social) based on social exchange theory, which emphasizes a balanced model between giving and receiving (Homans, 1958). In this sense, western understanding of relationship is fundamentally predicated on a just and equitable status which led by rational calculation; whereas in China, guanxi basically comes from Confucian theory, and forms the practice of its ideology. The term "Pattern of Different Sequence"which firstly coined by Fei Xiaotong (2012),describes the particularity of Chinese people's interpersonal interaction, in which individual puts himself in the center and categorizes as well as grades other people interactively-related to him by closeness, and then applies different interactive rules into various people by categorizations and grades; 2) Turning to the perspective of code of conduct, western society build up interpersonal relationships on the basis of a mutual reciprocity system, people exchange reciprocity mutually and therefore strengthen relations in turn (Blau 1964);however, in Chinese culture and society, people pay tremendous attention on the obligation causedby guanxi, unlike western social exchange theory's emphasis on mutual and equal reciprocity of emotion and favor, Chinese people tend to focus more on the afterwards obligatory commitment entailed by the application of guanxi in an unequal way, once individual falls or gets involved in guanxi web, he or she must assume the responsibility and obligationin responding to the favor from the others in the guanxi web(King 1992; 3)Morally speaking, because of the difference in basic underlying values, westerners consider Chinese people unethicalseeing as the widespread unfairness and unbalance in social exchange and

socialrelationships;nevertheless, Chinese people tend to take the obligation and afterwards commitment that generated by the use of guanxi for granted, and only the failure of continuously completing the obligation and responsibility of guanxi would be perceived as immoral or unethical (Vanhonacker 2004); 4) The difference between western relationship and Chinese guanxi could also be viewed from its form of presentation, it has been proposed that western social and personal relationships are relatively clear and open, as opposed to the more intimate and invisible Chinese guanxi network (Hackley and Dong 2001);5) Moving to the interaction aspect, relationships in western countries stress on social exchange based on equivalent value; whereas in Chinese society, people would like to return twice or more than the original worth of value he or she has received before (Powell 1990);6) In terms of motive of return, western people incline to the view that reciprocation is aiming to mutually maintain the balance of interest, and it should follow the rule of equity and reciprocity; yet the Chinese reciprocation process seems not as instant and equitable as the one in western society, it otherwise abides by the old Chinese saying that (Kwang and Hu 2004) if received a drop of beneficence from other people, you should return to them a fountain of beneficence. The saying is not only pointing out the particular value in Chinese guanxi, but also indicating the involvement of another two important terms as renqing and mianzi, which will be elaborated later in this study; 7)As to analytic hierarchy, the relationship network is normally situated on organizational level in western society, and the management of relationship is taken as one of the strategic movements; but Chinese guanxi is always built up from and on a personal level, which including all the commercial, social, and interpersonal attributes (Luo 1997), hence,Chinese guanxi belongs to a personal movement rather than the organizational and cooperative model; 8)last but certainly not the least, in Chinese people's mindset, family and relatives always become the most trustable part in guanxi network, sometimes the same trustworthiness could also be applicable in close friends and fellow folks, on contrary, it is highly recommended that people should be cautious to others outside this trustworthy guanxi circle (Redding 1990); In contrast to Chinese guanxi, western relationship concept does not havemuch indication in this regard, generally speaking there is no particularly outstanding distinction among different parts in the relationship (Burt 1992).

Based on the previous comparative views and interpretations, this study has defined guanxi as a mutually dependable, reciprocal, obligatorynetworkinChineseculturefor constantly seeking social and interpersonal relations as well as resources inChinese society.

Renqing

As we have already discussed about the concept of guanxin in Chinese culture, it becomes inevitable to understand another two key elements of renqing and mianzi which are embedded and shaped by Chineseguanxi and playing such an essential role in it. In this part, we will mainly focus on the definition of renqing. Compared with guanxi, renqing tend to include both of the personal and social characteristics.In order to give a comprehensive understanding of renqing, it is going to explore and define it from its three meanings in Chinese culture: 1) From a very fundamental and traditional level, renqing indicates the personal and emotional responses of one who is facing different situations of the day-to-day life (Kwang and Hu 2004).It has been written in Li-Ji (Chinese ancient book: Book of Rites) that the so-called renqing contains happiness, anger, sadness, fear, love, hatred, and desire; they are all acquired as the person was born. One would be identified as sophisticated in renqing provided he or she is fully equipped with empathy.It has been further explained that if an individual could be able to appreciate others' emotional responses to various circumstances of life, as in feeling happy or sad when and as others do, or even catering to their tastes and avoiding what other people resent, then we shall consider this person as someone who knows well about renqing (Kwang and Hu 2004); however, if one is not sensitive enough to others' feeling or prepared to do them a favor especially when people in desperate need of it, then this apathy or insensibility to other people's emotions would definitely indicate a person's lack of knowing about renqing;2) Furthermore, renqing could also be interpreted as a resource that one could give to another person as a present in social exchange process (Kwang 1987). In Chinese culture and society, people are supposed to present gifts or offer some meaningful assistance to related or close people around them under decent circumstances (for instance, celebrations or condolences). It has been pointed out that renqing conveys not only emotions but also social expressions as in the offering of happy occasions or difficulties(Yang 1957). In such situations, a person who has received gifts or helps would be considered the one who owes a renqing to the giver.In this sense, we could also perceive renqing as particular "wealth" that could be taken as a means or medium of social exchange and resource or social capital in interpersonal transactions (Kwang and Hu 2004; King 1991). It is therefore evident to notice that renqing could consist of both abstract sentiment and concrete material, which consequently makes it hard to measure and return; 3) Renqing also implies a series of particularly special norms which correspondingly accord with the operational mode of guanxi and also are deeply shaped by it. People follow these norms with the particular aim of keeping harmony and getting along with other related people in Chinese society. These Confucian based norms of renqing are originated

from the old Confucianprinciple of Li (propriety), which emphasizes one's responsibility to know and act on certain prescribed rules of behavior. These rules basically present themselves in two kinds of social behaviors: a) keeping in contact with the acquaintances in one's social network (guanxi web), exchanging presents, greetings, and visitations with them on a regular basis, and b) when a member of one's network (guanxi web) gets into trouble or faces a difficult situation, one should do or send a renqing by sympathizing or offering help (Kwang 1987). It is also because of this entanglement of guanxi and renqing, the two sometimes seem to be interchangeable, and the build-up of renqing is as well a prerequisite to establish or maintain a guanxi in Chinese culture and society (King 1991).People therefore usually measure their degree of renqing with the other people in order to sense the closeness or distance of guanxi situation between them.As individual steps into renqing web or guanxi web, you suddenly become obligatory to other people in the circle (either you will have the need to send a renqing or owe someone a renqing for stabilizing the guanxi web or keeping it going), thus it is almost impossible to completely get yourself out of these entangled relationships.

Considering the above understanding of renqing, this study would like to define it as follows: renqing is an emotional or/and substantial social exchange (or social expression) includingthe (constant) exchange of gifts and favors, which based on and conducted under certain social rules and norms (of renqing itself) in Chinese society.

Mianzi

If we consider renqing as an important medium of social exchange for establishing and sustaining guanxi in Chinese culture, then mianzi would be an indicator of how much social guanxi and power an individual could yield and manipulate within Chinese society. One of the other essential elements in Chineseculture, mianzi connotesone's social status or prestige, obtained through successfully performing certain social role (s) that is(are) publicly recognized by other members of the society (Hu 1944). The derivative concept "face work"indicates the presentation of self-image management (Kwang and Hu 2004), and aims at shaping and infusing a favorable impression into other people's minds (Schlenker 1980; Schneider 1969, 1981; Tedeschi and Riess 1981).It is widely acknowledged that people could read and infer a person's social position and prestige in one's social network by perceiving how much his or her mianzi is, from which people could have a rough or sometimes a pretty accurate idea of individual's a) status gained by personal qualities of knowledge, strength, ability, and so on; b) position obtained through social or non-personal factors of wealth, authority, social connections, etc (Kwang 1987; Ho

1976). Therefore, "face work", which is the content of what a person intends to present highly relies on and connects to one's self-consciousness, social role (s), related group, as well as the perceptions of value, admiration and respect in his or her own social network (Alexander and Knight 1971; Alexander and Rudd 1981), which is the Chinese guanxi web.It should also be noted that individual's social connections or relationships (guanxi) are always reflected and judged by one's social status in Chinese society (Jacobs 1979). In this sense, it is obvious to have the reasoning that:whenChinese people evaluate the social power in one person's control, they are prone to think about and conjecture the social network or relationship (guanxi) situation to which that person belongs; the different situations (good or bad / high or low/ large or small)of one's social network or relationship (guanxi) are in proportion to how much a individual's power could be and subsequently also to how the person's social power impression and image (mianzi) would be viewed by others.Henceforth, mianzi seems to be a very front-staged indicator which denotes individual's back-staged social guanxi and power in Chinese society.

As being such a vital and influential factor in Chinese society, mianzi becomes not only a simple channel of showing one's status or position within the society, but also a method of getting more privileges than people who lack it. So, one of the most paramount rules that underlies Chinese culture is trying one's best to enhance or render or save mianzi rather than lose or damage it. Bearing this rule in Chinese people's mind, mianzi could also become a means of manipulating and obtaining potential resources in Chinese society. In practice, when individual A asks individual B for a favor, if B is actually able to help but otherwise turning A down by a refusal, B will be suffering from losing his social prestige and self-esteem, we therefore call this "losing mianzi" in China, it will then generate further disintegration between two individuals and even their corresponding guanxi webs; however, if A accepts the request and does B a favor, we call this "A sends B a renqing"(refer to the previous discussion of renqing concept), then, as B gets the help from A, he needs to reciprocate A sometime in the future (according to the renqing and guanxi rule mentioned before), but in the meantime, B feels honorable and his mianzi has been enhanced. Considering the close relationship between one's social status and mianzi, when the request comes from a person who has a relatively high level of mianzi, which indicates his superior social status, one might not dare to refuse but have to accept to help because of the worry of the cause of mutual disaffection and the potential damage of guanxi between them, even though the favor would sometimes be beyond one's capability or against one's original will.

In sum, mianzi, in this study, means an important indicator of the degree of one's social prestige,

status,guanxi web, and power, by which people would like to use to influence other people for gaining more resources in Chinese society.

3.2 Main theories

As discussing about different normsand behaviors between cultures, we are in fact gradually exploring and touching the very central and original values and rules which underlying the surface and accordingly guiding the way how people act in daily life. As a matter of fact, those explicitly expressed cultural norms and behaviors are deeply connected with as well as subtly reflecting the very implicit valuesand rules behind them.It is therefore obvious to notice the importance of understanding the "back-staged" origin (s) when analyzing various norms and behaviors. More specifically in this study, it concerns two different social exchange and social relation values; as well as the dramatically distinct social behaviors entailed consequently. Hence, in this part, it is going to introduce two theories regarding different values of social exchange and relation; and it will further elaborate the relevance of these two views in terms of the research field from a theoretical perspective.

Western social exchange theory

According to western scholar Morton Deutsch's point of view, generally speaking, there is often a positive, circular relationship between the well-being of the individuals in society and the well-functioningof that certain group: the more satisfied the individuals are, the better their group functions and vice versa (Deutsch 1975). Thus, it has consequently suggested that social justice has an inherentconnection with personal well-being and the functioningof society. It has been further claimed that, in the face of the circumstantial uncertainties or conditions, there still are natural values (or rules) of justice as well as the minimal standard conditions of social order and group integrityexisting, which could be perceivedas the very fundamental and necessary basis in terms of achieving the effectiveness of social relations and exchanges, as well as promoting individual well-being. Socially involved individuals have therefore followed and obeyed the essential values and rules among different conditions of social interaction and cooperationin order to keep the society going smoothly and maximize the individualwelfare (Deutsch 1975; Lerner 1974). Such values and rules are summarized under three categories of conditions as follows:

1. *The equity value in economic productivity based society or circumstances*

    Within a society that places economic productivity as the most primary goal, the rule of equity will be the dominant value among all resource distribution and allocation process. In another word, if a

socially cooperative system is focusing on increasing its economic productivity, the rational tendency of it will be to distribute or allocate its economic functions and goods to those most capable to utilize them effectively, rather than to allocate the rewards based on need or equality (Deutsch 1975). Also, as Leventhal (1976) pointed out, the reward receivers' paramount responsibility is to perform effectively in such economic-productivity-driven society.

However, the intrinsic demerits of the economic driven society to could also be obvious to notice. The equity principle under such circumstances would generate dysfunctions both economically and socially from a long term (Deutsch 1975). It has as well been proposed by Deutsch (1975) that economically speaking, allocating rewards and resources in a disproportional way would allow people who are in control of distribution or power to bias the system allocation to keep their disproportionate rewards even though they are not making relatively large contributions to the group's well-being anymore; while in terms of the society itself, it is prone to encourage the introduction of economic values in every aspect of social life, which might eventually lead to a loss of the quality of life.

2. *The equality value in harmony emphasized society or circumstances*

The equality value indicates that benefits or losses are distributed and allocated equally among social individuals no matter how many contributions they havemade (Kwang 1987). It is prevailing in a society stresses the priority of being harmonious, and the maintenanceof enjoyable social relations (Deutsch 1975), as well as when a person consider another as an individual rather than as an incumbent of a social position (Lerner 1975).

In such condition of a society, in order to build up the enjoyment for its members, mutual esteem and respect have been put on the top of the list. In this sense, the distribution principle of equity seems not appropriate seeing as it cannot guarantee but jeopardize participants' self-respect and mutual esteem (which are supposed to be essential for the enjoyment of such social relation) by pointing out the disparity of social value among the members in it (Deutsch 1975). Therefore, in a society carrying the foregoing characteristics, rule of equality would match its demand, and protect its need for an establishment of harmony, enjoyment as well as mutual respect.

3. *The need value in individual welfare oriented society or circumstances*

The need value suggests that profits or resources should be allocated in terms of receivers' personal and legitimate needs other than the disparity of contributions (Kwang 1987). Under such kind of

social relations, people tend to be mutually benefited from fostering of personal development and personal welfare, people living in such group or society feel obligated to give help and provide care to the one who is desperately in need or jeopardy, without losing or risking his or her own interest (Deutsch 1975).

Compared with the equity and equality principles, the need rule would evidently be much more consistent with a society that has a genuine concern for the development and welfare of its own members (Deutsch 1975). Since it is not hard to note that the personal demands could vary from time to time and situation to situation, thus, a firm obedience of equity or equality rule could definitely not satisfy an individual's need and welfare at a particulartime or situation (provided the need is extremely vital to an individual, so he or she must gain the resource or be helped immediately even if the person would not be eligible to get the accessfrom an equal or equitable perspective).However, the need rule could be avoiding the potential detriment to group members' welfare under such circumstances by providing whatever demandsthey need and whenever they ask forthem, regardless of individual's contribution to the society or the fostering and maintenance of equal status of each member.

In summary, as Deutsch (1975) has finally concluded that the tendencies of applying different social exchange principles for the three of the most standard social conditions are: equity rule in economically-oriented society, equality rule in solidarity-oriented society, and need rule in caring-oriented society.

Chinese guanxi rules in social interaction and exchange

Compared with the western social exchange principles, Chinese society is not much of a system that heavily focusing and relying on equity, equality, need, or other social justice values as those western countries are.It has once been asserted by Chinese scholar that Chinese society is neither individual based nor society based; however, the personal and social relationships are constituted and functioned by guanxi (Liang 1974).It has been further enhanced by Liang (1974) that:

The focus is not fixed on any particular individual, but on the particular nature of the relations between individuals who interact with each other. The focus is placed upon the relationship.

The study of Chinese guanxi is basically divided into two interrelated directions: 1) one is focusing on the categorization and interaction of guanxi, which emphasizes the importance of certain obligations entailed by different roles in a given guanxi network; 2) the other one tend to pay more attention on guanxi

network as a whole, which also indicates the part of utilizing and maintaining guanxi in Chinese society (Zhu and Hong 2009).Nevertheless, the practice of Chinese guanxi in our real life has always entangled the application of rengqing and mianzi, regardless which study direction we are referring to. Because of the fact that having powerful or good guanxi in Chinesesociety means having the ability to directly obtain certain resources or to influence the way how resources are allocated, Chinese people would and would have to spare no effort seeking guanxi in order to be benefited from the very limited or disproportionately distributed resources. In this sense, if one could get strong guanxi in Chinese society, he or she would therefore get the access to resources.Nonetheless, to achieve or to be profited from guanxi, Chinesewould normally play with renqing and mianzi as opposed to solely dwelling on or wait for guanxi in an inactiveor even negative way. By pondering and applying renqing as well as mianzi, Chinese people get to influence and manipulate guanxi (or even establish new guanxi),and consequently the resource distribution process.

There actually are certain factors and ways that considered and practiced in connection with renqing and mianzi in Chinese guanxi-based society.Normally speaking, three aspects are always taken into consideration during the decision-making process, and if the prerequisites of renqing and mianzi are perceived or evaluated as important or necessary, the further benefit of guanxi will subsequently be applied in order to gain certain resources, otherwise, the potential advantage of guanxi will not appear.

1. *The cost*

   When an individual is asking another person for some certain favor or resource in a very generic guanxi relationship, the petitioner will have the possibility to get the help or to be turned down by the resource allocator. The odds of either potential result are pretty much depending on the cost of sending this kind of favor under such a general guanxi relation to the resource allocator.If the resource allocator calculates and considers the cost of a potential favor to the petitioner (a renqing to the petitioner) would overweigh the meaning or will to cherish and maintain the guanxi between them, he or she might just refuse the plea in order to avoid the possible loss or a certain level of risk (Kwang 1987);however, if the potential cost is barely to see or even none at all, the allocator might as well do the favor (send a renqing) by losing nothing but letting others owe him or her a renqing in their guanxi situation, in this sense, according to one of the natures of renqing rule, the petitioner would be feeling obligated to reciprocate continuously in the future, and the resource allocator could get an extra and free potential chance of being helped.

2. The expectation of reciprocation

In another situation, the anticipation ofa person's mianzi and future reciprocations could also play dominant roles between individuals in Chineseguanxi-orientated society. It has been pointed out that Chinese culture and society emphasize and advocate the value of repaying favors (Kwang 1987). Therefore, the expectation of getting (or returning) future reciprocations (as in helps or resources) has always been buried in Chinese people's mind. Nonetheless, it is also because of the nature of sending back renqing (reciprocation), the favor might not be returned in time nor be measured concretely (Kwang 1987), hence, an estimation of the petitioner's future ability to repay the help seems tremendously essential both in advance of accepting the plea and in the maintenance of guanxi afterwards between individuals. It is interesting to notice that this anticipation of one's ability to reciprocate could be reflected by a person's social status (mianzi): the returning of a favor (renqing) could be high and abundant provided the petitioner has a superior social position, huge possession of resources, or a good social reputation; but, on the other hand, if an individual has a mediocre social status, wields very limited resources, or has even been claimed to have a bad social reputation (as in being unreliable or stingy), the potential returning of renqing (reciprocation) would be expected to be seriously low, and thus,unlike the previous petitioner, the chance for this kind of person to get a favor would be extremely uncertain (Kwang 1987).

In a nutshell, the estimation of mianzi could help an individual to anticipate the degree of future reciprocations (repaying of renqing), which will in turn assist to make the decision of whether or not the allocator would be accepting the petitioner's plea and doing a favor to him or her, as well as the possibility for two sides of individuals to further benefit from their guanxi.

3. Social evaluations from other individual in guanxi network

In a relation-based society of China, a person's guanxi are seriously considered for all concerned,It has denoted that an individual should not only contemplate mianzi, renqing, and guanxi of the one who is encountering with, but also pay great attention to other people's mianzi, renqing, and guanxi related to the request seeker (petitioner) and try to figure out the extent to which those elements could directly or indirectly influence yourself (Kwang 1987). It has been further explained by Kwang (1987) that if a petitioner (P) relates closely to important people who have got great influence on the resource allocator (RA), in this sense, RA must have to take the guanxi between P and those people into consideration and be concerned about the possibility of losing something valuable or being

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negatively constrained by those influential individuals in the future because of the potential mianzi and renqing forces as well as other obligations between P and them. Hwang (1987) continues to elaborate:

> *Needless to say, if P's association with important people is strong enough to persuade one or more of them to request the favor directly from RA on behalf of P, RA will certainly be subjected to a much higher pressure of renqing and will be much more likely to grant the request. On the contrary, if P is only a person of humble origin and is devoid of "good guanxi", RA can easily justify a refusal.*

In summary, Chinese people think about guanxi, renqing, and mianzi between individuals during social interactions and personal encounters. Specifically, one would weigh the anticipated gain and loss and therefore calculate the cost of the further interaction (Kwang 1987). People make reasonable and favorable decisions by weighing up mianzi and related guanxi network from those with whom they are interacting, and relying on the fact that if the estimated future value (reciprocation to renqing) would be measuring up the initial cost of doing so; conversely, an ordinary person who doesn't seem to have powerful guanxi network or intimate association with the one who has it, would be perceived as an individual lacking the ability to make attractive reciprocation, and therefore it could be extremely hard for this group of people to interact or even live in Chinese society.

However, besides the previous three patterns, there is another very ambiguous way that also frequently employed during Chinese social interaction. People would be prone to delay a definitive answer to the petitioner if the resource owner fails to predict whether or not the potential reciprocation could be realized in the future.With this deferment, both sides would understand its subtle meaning of disapproval in Chinese culture; moreover, Chinese people sometimes would rather appreciate a tactfully euphemism than a straightforward rejection since it will protect people from losing mianzi and save future embarrassment.

4. Literature review on the study of social exchange and social relationship in western and Chinese societies

Western scholars put forward social exchange theory in order to explain social relationship. The theory has emphasized the core foundation of the balance between giving and returning (Homans 1958), in another word, social relationship in western culture is a rational calculation of balance between giving and returning, which is also heavily based on social justice (Zhu and Hong 2009; Hwang 1987). However,

Chinese people tend to depict and interpret Chinese social exchange and social relationship (guanxi) from a perspective of Pattern of Different Sequence in Confucius ideology; therefore, Chinese people are prone to behave as well as interact differently and apply distinct rules to various people according to the categories of relationship (which is defined by the closeness of the relationship between them) (Fei 2012; Hwang 1987; Zhu and Hong 2009). The following part is going to present a literature review of the relevant theories and studies regarding the rules and basis of western and Chinese social exchange and relationships.

4.1 Overall review on western side

Theories and researches about social exchange and social relationship are highly connected and mutually involved with social justice and distributive justice (Hegtvedt and Cook 2001). The general theoretical ideas concerning issues of distributive justice in sociology originated from Adams early work on equity theory (Adams 1965) and Homans's work on social behavior as exchange and distributive justice as a principle of dyadic exchange (Homans 1958). Later on, previous theoretical works from Adams (equity theory) and Homans's (distributive justice and social exchange) have been criticized by other scholars (Berger, Zelditch, Anderson and Cohen 1972; Jasso 1980, 1983, 1990) as too focused on contributions and the consummatory value of rewards, ignoring the status significance of rewards (Hegtvedt and Cook 2001). These scholars have provided alternative formulations that take into account more fully the role of status distinctions and the nature of more complex social comparisons that result in sentiments of inequity as well as collective reactions to injustice; also, the new formulations from these scholars have posed more general principles about the distribution of justice sentiments in a population and the determinants of reactions to injustice (Hegtvedt and Cook 2001). Lately, new theoretical perspective has been formed and claimed by Jasso and Wegener (1997), they have tried to "integrate under one theoretical umbrella issues of what is just, how people make justice assessment, and how they respond to injustice (Hegtvedt and Cook 2001)."

In the face of other possible justice or distributions rules (Reis 1986), it has so far been examined and widely accepted that according to different social circumstances (Leventhal 1976), justice principles of social exchange and social relationship are including the basis of need (Lerner 1975), equality, and equity. It has been concluded by Hegtvedt and Cook (2001) that, this insight has mitigated some of the earlier debate over the "one just way" of making allocations or of distributing value goods in social exchanges and interactions.

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Empirical studies and researches concerning social exchange, social distribution, and the basis of social relationship in western culture have typically focused on the distribution of rewards to a circle of recipients by a co-recipient or an outsider; researchers classify the final distributions in terms of the extent to which they approximate equal, equitable, or need-based distributions (Hegtvedt and Cook 2001). The purpose of these studies was to explore in what way individual characteristics, relationship factors, and situational conditions influenced people's choice through social interactions (Cook and Hegtvedt 1983). Although current trend of the studies and researches reflect more emphasis on cognitive dimensions and group-level factors, the traditional approach remains evident and sensible nowadays (Hegtvedt and Cook 2001). Besides the typical studies and researches, other paradigms, as in "resource sharing (Messick and Allison 1987; Samuelson and Allison1994)", which focusing on the allocation of unearned, public goods to a pool of recipients; and "expectancy value theory of allocation (Leventhal, Karuza, and Fry 1980)", which seem as an integrative attempt of allocation research, have also been developed (Hegtvedt and Cook 2001).

However, contemporary empirical researches about social exchange, social distribution, as well as the basis and rule of social relationship have enriched the study field and been vastly focusing on the factors or influences on people's choices and decisions among social interactions; the directions of these current works could roughly be divided into three streams: first, goals and motivations (Leventhal, Karuza, and Fry 1980), which assuming that individuals hold expectancies concerning how particular distribution rules will fulfill specific goals and that people hold multiple goals of varying importance. It has further raised three issues regarding this point: 1) as fairness and self-interest may dominate in allocations in workplace under normal circumstances, individuals might opt for other distribution rules; 2) social identities and intergroup relations also influence choices (Hegtvedt and Cook 2001); 3) potential conflicts between individual-level and group-level interests raise new concerns about the assumptions in distributive justice research (Tyler and Dawes 1993; Tyler, Boecmann, Smith, and Huo 1997); second, individual-level characteristics and cognitive factors, which could be the origin or starting point of people's goals and motives during social exchange and relationship (Hegtvedt and Cook 2001), it has been further studied and pointed out by Hegtvedt and Cook (2001) that, at individual level, the influences tend to include status characteristics as in age (Hook and Cook 1979; Moore, Hembree and Enright 1993; McGuillicuddy-DeLisi, Watlang, and Vincher 1994) and gender (Asdigian, Cohn and Blum 1994), personal values and attitudes (Feather 1994), as well as cognitive elements (Van Dijk and Wilke 1993);

third, relationship (Tyler and Dawes 1993) and situational factors (Griffith 1989), which influence people's choice and lead to decisions beyond the individual level; although the studies and researches are conducted and tested separately by different streams, they always are interconnected with each other (Hegtvedt and Cook 2001).

The origin

According to previous scholars' view, regardless of various circumstantial conditions, social exchange and interaction processes in western societies follow a set of values which are meant to be commonly shared among individuals (Deutsch 1975; Kwang 1987). These series of values, which have not only formed social, distributive, and exchange protocols but also largely influenced other aspects in western countries, are actually predicated on the idea of social justice (Deutsch 1975; McKee 1981). As we are approaching at this point, it is inevitable to raise the question of what the nature of social justice (or justice) is in western culture; besides, based on an ontological point of view, we also cannot avoid the further quest for the basis and origin of western social justice, therefore, the pursuing of the source of social justice becomes a pivotal crux of interpreting social exchange,interaction, as well as other relevant behaviorin western culture.

It is noticeable to see that no matter how social condition (economy-based or solidarity-based or caring/welfare-based) varies from one anotheror which rulesubsequently (equity or equality or need) is going to be the dominant one among social distribution, exchange, and interaction, the focus has always been put onto establishing a relatively most just society and satisfying as well as protecting individuals' need for being treated in a just way under different circumstances.Accordingly, discussions and advocacies concerning different forms of justice have never been stopped by numerous philosophers and scholars. The reviewing of these very original philosophical points would help us to have a deeper understanding of the development of western social justice value; also it could assist to compare the two counterparts of the origin of western and Chinese social exchange as well as social relationship, so that we are going to be able to further explain and answer the initial research questions.

It has once been claimed by utilitarianism that "in all this there is nothing but what the practice of mankind, wheresoever they have a clear view of their own interest, is perfectly comfortable to" (Bentham 2000). Bentham (2000) argues that:

> *Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is*
>
> *for them alone to point out what we ought to do… By the principle of utility is meant that principle*

which approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever according to the tendency it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question: or, what is the same thing in other words to promote or to oppose that happiness. I say of every action whatsoever, and therefore not only of every action of a private individual, but of every measure of government.

With the logic of Bentham as well as utilitarianism, what we should do or what is the right thing to do should be based on what will generate the greatest amount of happiness for the majority. Only in this sense could we achieve justice and morality. Deeply influenced by Jeremy Bentham, another British philosopher John Stuart Mill has developed the theory of utilitarianism by proposing the "great-happiness principle".Mill has pointed out that happiness should not be calculated by its quantity alone, however, the quality of the pleasure should also be taken into consideration, and thus happiness should havethe distinction between the higher and the lower (Mill 1998).The idea of Mill's has on one hand defended Bentham's utilitarianism,on the other hand contrasted Bentham's perspective of "pleasures are supposed to be equal", and helped depict the measurement and standard of what kind of pleasures we should be pursuing.As he has further enhanced that "it is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fools, or the pig, are of a different opinion, it is because they only know their own side of the question… (Mill 1998)".

Seen from another angle of justice, John Locke, as a libertarian, has noted the relationship between individuals and government. His social contract theory has proposed that, as individuals in a state of nature, they gather together with moral bound are not prone to jeopardize mutually; however, there would not be sense of security and stability provided a formed state (government) fails to protect them from being harmed (Locke 1988). Therefore, Locke (1988) has consequently argued this kind of contract between an impartial and objective state or government or authority which is agreed by the consent of its citizens upon the delegation of their right of self-defense and the gathered state-of-nature individuals (the citizens) has been formed.In this sense, justice has been perceived from the legitimacy of the selected government and the relationship between it and the free individuals, for example, the function and responsibility of preserving its citizens' properties from being damaged.Although the French philosopher Rousseau also agrees and advocates the theory of social contract, he has later developed the theory by putting forward the idea of "general will". He says social contract should be understood and interpreted as "each of us puts his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will; and in a body we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole" (Rousseau,1913); besides, it

has also been claimed by Rousseau (1913) that in order to realize the real liberty, people should be fully taken into the lawmaking process together with the inalienable popular sovereignty; but in the meantime, people usually do not know and see their "real will". In conclusion, putting aside Locke's thought, according to Rousseau's social contract theory, by participating into the civil society and subsequently giving up individuals' natural right, one could preserve themselves and stay free; the obedience of the authority of the general will of the people as a whole guarantees individuals against being subordinated to the wills of others and also ensures that they obey themselves because they are, collectively, theauthors of the law (Rousseau 1913).

As opposed to Bentham's utilitarianism, one of the greatest philosophers ImmanuelKant has proposed another interpretation of justice and what we ought to do in connection with the supreme morality and individual freedom. According to Kant, morality is not to choose a best means to a given end, but to choose the end for itself and for its own sake; insofar as we act autonomously based on a law we give ourselves, we do something for its own sake as in the end itself, therefore, when we act autonomously we are not instruments to the purposes given outside anymore, we then become as ends in ourselves (Kant 2002). In the opinion of Kant, it has denoted that the capacity of acting freely is what gives human life dignity, and respecting human dignity means regarding persons not just as a means, but also as ends in themselves, hence, this is the reason why it is wrong to use people for the sake of other people's well-being and happiness. Furthermore, he has also specified the principle of moral worth, which is also supposed to be the motive of rational being's actions. He has initiated the idea that human beings are rational beings, and therefore we should do the right things for the right reasons out of duty; and we ought to follow the categorical imperativesrather than the hypothetical ones (Kant 2002).

Greatly influenced by the forgoing philosophical points, various modern western social rules and protocols have been built up and developed. One of the most significant parts could be the western social exchange rules which have been obeyedamong different kinds of social relations and interactions. As Deutsch (1975) has pointed out that social exchange or distribution is concerned with the allocation ofconditions and goods which affect individual well-being, and therefore has its own rules; and the value (s) of those principles is (are) relying on the idea of justice. He has continued to say that justice issues may arise among various social relations, thus we need to accordingly consider and follow distinct justice values for the sake of the relationship between individual well-being and the well-functioning of the society under different circumstances (Deutsch 1975).In this sense, people could consequently behave

based on certain justice-related standard and principles during exchanges, interactions, as well as relationships. To be more specific, as Deutsch (1975) claimed different aspects of injustice issues as in the motive, the process, final outcome etc, which could in turn lead to dramatically distinct policies and acts. However, the cognition and development of those issues as well as the general acknowledged standard norms of western society have been echoing the very original values from previous justice-related philosophies.

4.2 Overall review on Chinese side

Theories and researches about Chinese social exchange principles and the basis of social relationship as well as interaction are based on the studies of mianzi, renqing, and guanxi in Chinese society (Zhai 1994, 2005). Because of the interconnection of these three particular social phenomena(mianzi, renqing, and guanxi) in Chinese culture, barely could the literatureson them be separated from each other.

The first contemporary academic study concerning Chinese social principles of mianzi, renqing, and guanxi was conducted by Hu (1944). She mostly focused on the history, usage, and interpretation of mianzi in Chinese culture and society and became the first person to perceive mianzi from an anthropological point of view (Zhai 1994). As Zhai (1994) continues to claim that the significance of Hu's study of Mianzi is not only because it had become the origin of this study field, but also of its intercultural methodology which allowed the study of Chinese mianzi to be viewed in a more socially and objectively perspective rather than too emotionally and national-prejudiced. Later on in 1950s, western scholar (Goffman 1955) began to work on Chinese social behaviors and social interaction rules. Goffman (1955) combined the ideas from Smith and Macgowan and viewed Chinese social rules and phenomena from a western point of view; as Goffman (1955) suggested that mianzi is a social principle which should be followed in Chinese society. Although Goffman didn't fully explain what exactly mianzi was in Chinese culture, he did successfully introduce this particular conception into western culture and social psychology study, the Chinese conception (s) relating to rules of social exchange and relationship had then become an important part of the study of social psychology in western societies (Zhai 1994). After that, Chinese scholars (Kwang 1987; King 2010; Zhai 1994, 2005) had deepened the study of Chinese social exchange and interaction principles of mianzi, renqing, and guanxi in a much more comprehensive way. It has been said that mainzi is one of the most important rules in Chinese culture, it is also the basis of establishing and maintaining social relationships in Chinese society; once you have mianzi, it will be much easier to deal with problems, however, it is very hard to move around inside Chinese society (Wu

1990). During the 70s, studies of Chinese social principles tended to bemuch clearer on different subjects as in: sociological level, psychological level, and anthropological level (Zhai 1994); two of the remarkable works from this period of time should be the analysis of the relationship of mianzi and other social relationships and groups (He 1974), and the study of social position, power and knowledge of mianzi from language and social perspectives (King and Myers 1977). Studies and researches after 70s have been mainly conducted by scholars (Kwang 1987; King 2006) from Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan, during this time, more specialized theories and works regarding mianzi, renqing, and guanxi have been provided. Achievements from the previously listed scholars have been seen as the most outstanding ones of the time. For instance, seen from the work of Bond and Lee (1981), it was the first empirical study of mianzi in the relevant field, it proves that the impression of mianzi between individuals is highly connected to the distance of social relationships of different people; the closer the social relationships people share, the higher chance for people to save mianzi for each other, therefore, the protection of mianzi in Chinese culture and society is out of the sympathy of people's close relationship. Also, another study (Chen 1982) has explored mianzi from a more psychological perspective; it has applied the social exchange theory to analyze Chinese social phenomena in daily life. Although the study tended to focus too much on psychology, it did offer us a picture of how Chinese social rules affect Taiwan students' daily life. Besides, Kwang (1987) has viewed Chinese social exchange and interactive principles in a three dimensional way, which are social-based, cultural based, and psychological based; it has broaden the view of Chinese social exchange and interactive rules into a wider social and cultural perspective by establishing a theoretical system of how mianzi, renqing, and guanxi affect each other and function in Chinese culture and society; it has also revealed the basis of Chinese people's social behavior by analyzing the social principle of mianzi, renqing, and guanxi. This study has then become one of the most comprehensive and important works in this field. Other Chinese scholars as in Zhai (1994, 2005) has also developed by integrating the study from a social psychology perspective, he has provided an exhausted and microscopic research on the definition, background, and social function of Chinese social exchange and interaction principles.

The origin

However, as many other scholars have suggested that, in contrast tothe foundation of justice-related value in western social relations and exchange rules, Chinese social relations (guanxi) and exchange principlesare heavily based on the concept of "injustice"; andthe "injustice" has been reflected in the great

disparity among different socially hierarchical structures and status as well as the disproportionate allocation of power and resource in Chinese society. (Kwang 1987; Zhu and Hong 2009).To be more specific, these unjust social relations (guanxi) and exchanges have embodied in the connections both between high social status people and high social status people concerning power establishment, exchange, and maintenance; as well as low social status people and high social status people seeking for favor, resource, interest, or even protection.Both Chinese and western scholars have further pointed out that although Chinese social relations and behaviors are distinctively unlike the West's, it does like the West at some point that social relations as well as exchange rules in China indeed have their underlying value and origin, which is the guide for various "Chinesephenomena" and the very essential account for this cultural difference between China and western countries (Zhu and Hong 2009; King 1991).

The idea of*the three cardinal guides and the five constant virtues*, which is originated from Confucianism, has been constantly claimed as the basic principle of value in Chinese social and political philosophies (Li 2001; King 1991; Zhu and Hong 2009). This traditional value has been adopted as well as developed through pretty much each of Chinese dynasties, and still dominating the current age in the aspects of morality, ethics, economy, politics, culture and so on (Li 2001) despite of the critiques doubting its validity in modern Chinese society.

The doctrine of *the three cardinal guides and the five constant virtues* has depicted a set of corresponding hierarchical relationships and the according code of conducts through all social communications and interactions. As *the three cardinal guides* points out that: the sovereign guides the subject, the father guides the son, and the husband guides the wife; consequently, the five constant virtues has given the behavioral codes of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and fidelity from subject, son, and wife to sovereign, father, and husband respectively (Li 2001).These particular relationships as well as social codes have presented the hierarchical status and principles in Chinese society; the concept of those have also been perceived as the tool of controlling people's minds, maintaining social stability, and protecting the rulers' sovereignty (Li 2001). From over 2000 years' continuity of feudalismin Chinese society, this hierarchical structure of traditional Chinese society has never been stopped but developed and reflected more intensively in modern Chinese officialdom, morespecifically, it is evidently to be noticed from the huge differences of power, privilege, and possession according to the disparity of individuals'official ranks; this part of Confucianism has not only

influenced people's mindset, but also deeply rooted and then formulatedthe way how Chinese people would expect and have to set up or manage certain relationships between individuals as well as to cope with various social interactions and exchanges. In this sense, this extremely strict rule of hierarchical relationships (three cardinal guides) and the unconditional obligation as well asobedience towards the relevant part (five constant virtues) have given the basis to the great disparity (including power, resource, etc) based on different social status and roles among modern Chinese social and personal relationships, and subsequently legitimized those social protocols (renqing and mianzi) which entailed by this particular "unjust" guanxi phenomenon in Chinese culture and society.

With the comparison of distinct literatures in connection with values and origins regarding the formation and functioning of social relations and interactions, it is apparent to see the causal-effect relationships between them in Chinese and western societies respectively. Chinese scholar has therefore claimed that cultural difference in terms of social relations and exchange principles is not merely a matter of the difference between Chinese and western social behaviors, but contributed to the contrast of the fundamental origin of principle of value; it has been continuously noted that while the western social exchange principles could nearly be universal (because of the same sharing of the basic social justice values among most of the western countries), they fall short of capturing the full richness of the behavioral quandaries faced by participants in Chinese society since the particularity of its hierarchical social-structure-related value(Kwang and Hu 2004; Kwang 1987).

Confronting the misunderstandings and conflicts of social relations, interactions, as well as exchanges between China andwestern countries, we have come to the question that in order to have a much better and more comprehensive understanding to each other, also to reduce potential cultural-related issues between these two parts of the world, should we just simply dwell on ascribing and complaining about the distinction of cultures from each other; or should we switch stands and try to consider and seek forthe reason why some certain group of people would behave according to some other set of rules.This article has perceived the latter more effective in pursuing the goal of "seeking common ground while accepting the existing differences"during intercultural communications under the current globalization trend. It has therefore believed that,just as how the underlying justice-related value has accounted for western social relations and exchange rules, the particularly Confucianism-based value could be taken as the ultimate reasonfor various social behaviors and rules in Chinese society.Hence, the forgoing literatures are of great significance in further discussing and analyzing the previous-raised questions of this study.

5. Data analysis

In this study, all data have been collected through qualitative interviews and then divided into two groups (Chinese and Australian). The comparison of the responses between Chinese and Australian hasproceeded after translating the answers from the Chinese group. Seen from the answers of interviewees from China and Australia, it has indicated that there are differences between Chinese and Australian young adults when being asked about principles and rules of social relationship and social exchange.Findings of the differences are basically categorized into three aspects: 1) Different views regarding the disparity of social status, which have revealed different effects (regarding how people would consider and react) on the disparity of social status in China and Australia, also indicated Chinese people's emphasis on mianzi (face or face work), which will be further explained later in the Discussion part of this study. In this case, due to this relevance between social status and mianzi, questions as well as replies of this section are of great value and capable of helping explore what mianzi really is, and how it works in Chinese cultural context; 2) Different views regarding favor returning, which have pinpointed the distinction of how Australian people and Chinese people perceive and conduct favor returning respectively; and different patterns as well as characteristics concerning favor returning, for example, "obligatory", "long-term" have been presented from Chinese interviewees, while "equal", "need" have been shown from Australian interviewees. Besides, questions as well as replies (from Chinese interviewees) regarding favor returning have also implied the unique functioning of renqing rules in Chinese social exchange and social relationship, moreover, the indication of Chinese renqing rule from answers of Chinese interviewees has displayed how Chinese people are influenced in their daily life. Therefore, apart from showing us distinct favor returning patterns from China and Australia, data from this section has also provided us an angle to analyze what exactly Chinese renqing rule is, and how it guides Chinese people in social interactions; 3) Different views regarding rules of social exchange and social relationship in general, which are quite general in terms of social exchange as well as social relationship between Australia and China. No matter the questions or the answers from interviewees have all touched upon the foundation of different patterns and rules in two societies, as Australian interviewees have pointed out that need, desire, or interest could be the very motive of social exchange and social relationship for them; whereas Chinese interviewees thought the basis for them should be Confucius, hierarchical social structure, or official-rank-oriented standard. Distinctions regarding this respect would trigger further discussion about the deeper values and origins of these different societies,

and subsequently lead us to solve the quest that why and how Chinese social exchange and social relationship are different from western countries (which is one of the main questions of this thesis). Also, seen from data in the above part, it also involved the actual functioning principles of social interactions among Australian and Chinese societies, for example, being equal, egalitarian in Australia; and rules of guanxi, which also combined with the functioning of renqing, and mianzi in it among Chinese society. At this point, since the representation and display of the practice of how Chinese social exchange and social relationship function, answers from Chinese interview group in this section would continue to be discussed later in order to explain what Chinese guanxi, mianzi, and renqing are; also, how they actually work. The following three sub-sections are respectively elaborating the details of data, including questions and answers from both Chinese and Australian interviewees on certain subjects.

5.1 Different views regarding the disparity of social status

The very first distinction to be noticed would be the replies concerning the power of social status and social relationship from these two groups. It has suggested that Australian people normally will not emphasize much or be largely influenced by the disparity of social status and social relationship in social exchange and interaction; specifically, when being asked "do you think differences in social class/power hierarchy have an effect on the way in which social interactions take place?", pretty much all the answers have implied that social class/power hierarchy does not necessarily influence the way how people behave in social exchanges and interactions. For example, as one of our interviewees said that "*in Australia everyone is seen as equal and of equal value no matter what their position is; one person may earn more than another but that does not make them above the person and have power over them*". In this sense "*Australians would still like to think of themselves as being equal and entitled to the same levels of respect*", says another interviewee. So it is common to see people normally do not consider and use higher class and position as an absolute power over the others through work and daily life, even if there are favors or requirements asked by people from higher class or position to the lower staff or worker, they should be "*reasonable and work related*", but the lower staff or worker could still simply reject by saying "*No, this is my day off or sorry I am busy*", says the interviewees. Whereas in Chinese group, people tend to perceive social class, social position, money, and social prestige as the very important elements to influence individuals' social relationship and the way how each person acts during social exchange. It has been noticed that the difference between social status (social class and social position) could seriously pressure and influence Chinese people's choice through daily life. One of our

Chineseinterviewees has said that:

"There are many factors could influence individuals' choice and social relationship in China, but I think the most important part is your guanxi network that connected to you and the social status pressure from different levels of people. For example … one would have to try the best (even though it is against his or her own will or if one could have take a huge risk to do so) to help or serve a person who has a higher social class/position; one would rarely turn the high social status people down because of the fear of their social power and potential disadvantages of damaging the relationship between them or the image of themselves in front of those high ranking people. Once you jeopardize the relationship with them or any other people connected to them by turning down or messing up the favor, it would have been very hard to live in Chinese society".

While other interviewees being asked about "what factors do you think could influence individuals' relations, choices etc with others in Chinese society?", "*money*", "*social status and social prestige*", and "*social power*" have also been mentioned. It has been explained by a Chinese interviewee that "*if a person has a higher social status, then he will have a greater influence and an influential social network, therefore, there must be a chance for him to possess large amount of resources and many accesses to obtain resources. This kind of people will be revered and awed by the others in Chinese society.*"Besides, there seems to have a very close connection between social status and success, as another Chineseinterviewee said:

"only having lots of money does not necessarily mean you are successful in Chinese society, one also needs to have a decent social status and social prestige;A higher social status brings you more social relations with other people, it helps you build up you guanxi network in China, meanwhile, other people will revere you and give you mianzi; being a successful person means you have plenty of resources and you will have more by exchanging them with your guanxi network."

Comparing these two groups of answers regarding social status in social exchange and social relationship, Australian interviewees do not consider so much on the difference of social status or social position among various people, and there seems no apparent influence or power from people who have higher status to those who have a lower status through daily work and life in Australian society, "a born to be equal" mind has always been emphasized during social exchange and interaction; as opposed to the Australian group, answers from Chinese interviewees are prone to be opposite; the actual Chinese social exchange and interaction do emphasize the influence and power of the disparity of social status (as well

as social position, social prestige, and capital, which are similar or connected to one's social status); the higher social status you are, the more resources,social influence, and power you have and/or will have in Chinesesociety; also, ordinary people get controlled and restricted by people who have higher social status.

5.2 Different views regarding favor returning

Another different aspect between answers from Australian and Chinese is related to favor returning in social exchange and social relationships. Admittedly to say, both of the Australian and Chinese interviewees have confirmed that favor returning is common to see among social interactions in Australia and China, however, Australian people tend to help or return a favor when someone is "*in need*", and they "*would not feel obligated*"to return the favor when it is not necessary; neither would they feel "indebted" after the favor has been returned, as two of the Australian interviewees have pointed out. Furthermore, people in Australia prefer to "*pay back favors quickly*" and stay "*to feel equal to each other*" as they don't like being "*in unequal relationships where one person continuously owes the other person*" or "*involved in a sticky situation*" in their future relationships.Also, sometimes people would not even "*expect a favor in return*" but *"feel gratitude"*between their relationships, "*doing favors can strengthen a relationship but the idea is not to do one a favor in order for the other person just to owe them*", says another Australian interviewee.However, on the Chinese side, quite contrasting perceptions and responses have appeared during the interviews. When comes to the question of "what kinds of person tend to be more socially welcomed and popular, and tend to have fewer obstacles in Chinese society (what qualities or characteristics do these people need)?", quite a few Chinese interviewees have mentioned the importance of knowing renqing (favor or favor returning) and the way how it works in Chinese society. Actually, one of the interviewees has pointed out that "*Chinese society emphasizes a lot on renqing. The most important thing to be successful is not about your intelligence, ability, or family background, but to understand renqing! Whether or not you know how to deal with people by using renqing decides your life to be prosperous or poor and miserable!*"In addition, it seems like there are different types of renqing relations and therefore the degrees of them are distinct from each other, as the same Chinese intervieweekeeps explaining that through most of the relationships,as in "*family and relative, friendship, teacher and student, comrade-in-arms*"in Chinese society, they are pretty much all "*maintained by 'renqing'*" to some certain extend.Also, when being asked about the "basis of the relations with friends family and society" and "the factors that could influence individuals' relations, choices etc with

others in Chinese society", answers from Chinese interviewees always tend to consider renqing and mianzi as a combined or tangled element which plays a paramount role in Chinese society. For example, one of the interviewees from Chinese group concludes the answer of "what do you think are thefactors that could influence individuals' relations, choices etc with others in Chinese society as follows":

"…No matter how, the phenomena of mianzi and renqing are always combined and entangled together, embedding in the Chinese particular social interpersonal relationships."

Another Chinese interviewee perceives the basis of Chinese relations with friends, family, and society as:

"… In Chinese society, individuals' relationships are mainly based on the Chinese special renqing and mianzi, as well as the complicated contacts between people."

From the interview answers, it also appears that unlike the Australian people, Chinese people would like to use renqing to set up guanxi (guanxi) in a continuously reciprocating and obligated way; elaborated by one of our Chinese interviewees that:

"generally speaking Chinese people like establishing guanxi network by treating people for meals and drinking together… people could set up further and firmer guanxi by sending precious presents or doing other difficult favors as renqing to each other, once you have this kind of relationship, individuals become close to one another, however, in the meantime, the guanxi which set up and maintained by renqing will keep people feel obligated and stuck in it, one would be extremely hard to jump out of it."

Besides, another Chinese interviewee has also mentioned:

"Chinese people emphasize so much on renqing and guanxi. Once you get help from other people, you should always try to return the favor back to him or her… to replay the favor is long-term obligation and responsibility; also this continuous obligation of paying back has always been reflected in Chinese hierarchical social structure and interpersonal guanxi."

In terms of the distinction of returning favors, Australian interviewees seem to consider doing or repaying favors out of individuals'"*need*"; also, people tend to "*return the favor quickly*" and "*stay equal to each other*"because they would not like being "*in unequal relationships where one person continuously owes the other person*" or "*involved in a sticky situation*" in their future relationships; moreover, people "*would not feel obligated*" to return the favor when it is not necessary or feel "indebted" after the favor has been returned during social interactions, also says a interviewee from the Australian group. In contrast with the Australian interviewees, different ideas have been presented among Chinese interviewees. It has

suggested that there are different kinds and levels of renqing in China, and people consider the understanding of renqing and renqing itself much more important than anything else in Chinesesociety, since most of the relationships in China are based and "*maintained by 'renqing'*.";furthermore, mianzi and renqing have always been mixed together in Chinese social exchange and relationship; last but certainly not the least, other features as in: long-term reciprocating and obligated, as well as the highly connectedto and reflected fromChinese hierarchical structure and guanxi have also been pointed out by Chinese interviewees.

5.3 Different views regarding rules of social exchange and social relationship in general

The last difference area has appeared in social exchange and relationship rules, as well as the foundation of them in a much broader perspective. Seen from answers from the Australian group, needs and personal interests have become the two most important things when people start to establish certain social relationships with other individuals. As one of the Australian interviewees says that:

"To build strong friendships or 'mateship' it is important for there to be some degree of shared interests or mutually beneficial outcomes from the relationship. Australians can often be quite individualistic and will often ask themselves the question 'what's in it for me?' when appraising social and interpersonal interactions."

In addition, another interviewee has indicated that need is not only the rules of starting social relationships but also what people will follow during the exchange of favors, as she says:

"The underlying basis of all interactions is needs and desires. Need and desires motivate a person to exchange favors and information with others in hopes to achieve their goal."

Another significant principle that has been emphasized by Australian interviewees is "being equal" through social interactions and relationships. It has been claimed by an interviewee that "*Australians like freedom, and they like feeling equal to others. This could explain why friends like to split the bill…Australian is more egalitarian, where relationships lean towards being (or appearing) equal.*"Besides, people think they "*should be treated equally…not matter how we look or our family background is*",says another Australian interviewee. As opposed to the Australian group, Chinese interviewees have provided us different thoughts regarding social exchange and relationship rules, as well as the basis of them. Viewing from the answers from the Chinese group, one interviewee has pointed out that "*In China, there are many rules among Chinese interpersonal interactions, but generally speaking, one is 'explicit rules' and the other one is 'implicit rules'…but majority of the social interactions and relationships are followed*

by the 'implicit rules', especially when people have guanxi with each other." These implicit rules of guanxi in Chinese society are "*invisible, unpublished, but conventional, much more widely acknowledged, actually functioning, and 'must-obey'*" compared with the explicit rules, further explained by the Chinese interviewee.Also, other interviewees have pointed out that in Chinese social interactions and relationships"*people emphasize and are deeply influenced by guanxi*",besides, they tend to follow rules of"*mianzi and renqing that are always combined and entangled together, embedding in the Chinese particular social interpersonal relationships.*", which are also known as guanxi in Chinese culture and society.Interesting to notice the way how one of the Chinese interviewees has stressed and concluded the basic social exchange and relationship principle:

"*Chinese people could ignore anything, except renqing; Chinese people could have nothing, except guanxi; Chinese people could give nothing, except mianzi.*"

When comes to the question about the origin or foundation of Chinese social exchange and relationship rules, quite a few Chinese interviewees have come up with "*Chinese culture*", "*Confucius*"; also the influence of "*strict hierarchical social structure*" and "*official-rank-oriented standard*" have been mentioned as two important factors leading to the modern Chinese social exchange and relationship principles of mianzi, renqing, and guanxi.

6. Discussion

6.1 Mianzi

Seen from the first comparison regarding the power of social status between Australian and Chinese interviewees in the previous data analysis, Australian interviewees do not consider so much on the difference of social status or social position from various people, and there seems no apparent influence or power from people who have higher status to those who have a lower status through daily work and life in Australian society, "a born to be equal" mind has always been emphasized during social exchange and interaction. As one of the Australian interviewees said that:

"*In Australia everyone is seen as equal and of equal value no matter what their position is; one person may earn more than another but that does not make them above the person and have power over them.*"

It has been claimed that society that emphasizes the value of being equal indicates social exchange and social distribution are preceded equally among individuals, and therefore this kind of society should be equal-based (Kwang 1987). Also pointed out by another interviewee that:

"Australians would still like to think of themselves as being equal and entitled to the same levels of respect."

Noticed from the answers, the idea of mutual respect has not only been mentioned by our interviewee, but also referred to as one important characteristic in equal-based society (Deutsch 1975). When a society is based on the equality value, it perceives mutual esteem and respect as priority; and individuals consider each other as an individual rather than as an incumbent of a social position in social interaction and relationship (Lerner 1975).In this sense, it is not hard to explain why social class (especially higher social class or position) is not an absolute power over the others through normal work and daily life, and why lower staff or worker could always simply reject the extra workload or order from higher position staff by saying "*No, this is my day off or sorry I am busy*", or if it is unreasonable and not work-related. This equality value which has been seen as a very essential foundation of Australian society and culture has not merely been put forward by contemporary scholars, but originated and developed from the spirit of social contract which once proposed by philosophers like John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau.The very original philosophical points had helped to formulate and establish the basic traits of society and the rules that individuals shall follow: All people were equal and independent, and each individual has a right to defend his life, health, liberty or possessions (Locke 1988);also, people were born free and equal (Rousseau 1913).

However, answers from Chinese interviewees tend to be contrary; the actual Chinese social exchange and interaction do emphasize the influence and power of the disparity of social status (as well as social position, social prestige, and capital, which are similar or connected to one's social status); the higher social status you are, the more resources, social influence, and power you have and/or will have in Chinese society; also, ordinary people get controlled and restricted by people who have higher social status. As a matter of fact, since Hu (1944) pointed out that mianzi is in connection to and highlyreflected by one's social status or prestige, which obtained through successfully performing certain social role (s) that is (are) publicly recognized by other members of the society, the emphasis on disparity or power of social status in Chinese society is actually a stress on mianzi and the distinct levels of mianzi on various individuals.However, representations of high social status are different in Chinesesociety; so this gives us more than one way to perceive what having mianzi means in Chinese culture because of the close interconnection between social status and mianzi. Previous studies have suggested that high social status could normally be achievedthrough a) personal qualities of knowledge, strength, ability, and so on;

b) social or non-personal factors of wealth, authority, social connections, etc (Kwang 1987; Ho 1976).Based on the connective relationship between social status and mianzi in China, these two aspects (previously-mentioned aand b) also help us to explain the two major channels of having mianzi in Chinese society.

However, here is another question, why would Chinese people care so much about mianzi? It should be noted that Chinese people usually take individual's guanxi (social connection or social relationship)into consideration when viewing one's overall social power or social influence, therefore when estimating how much social power an individual wields or controls, what kind of individual's guanxi network does one belong to and how comprehensive is it will make a huge difference in terms of the impression that one could leave on other people's mind (Kwang 1987). Kwang (1987) has further elaborated that:

"The larger (or smaller) one's social network is-and the more (or less) powerful the people connected with it are-the more (or less) impressive will be that individual's power image as perceived by others."

Seen from Kwang's point of view, the inter logic between mianzi and one's social power or social influence has shown that different degrees of mianzi represent distinct levels of individual's power and influence in Chinese society. At this point, weather having mianzi or not and weather one could or could not enhance mianzi is not only about the relativesocial position but also many kinds of privileges that could further improve the quality of life (Kwang 1987).Therefore, one of the reasons why Chinese people emphasize on mianzi is because that mianzi could help build up and improve one's public image and influence in Chinese society (Zhai 1994).Another perspective to consider the reason for Chinese people's emphasis on mianzi is from its relationship with renqing and guanxi in Chinese culture. As we stated before, mianzi is a representation of Chinese individual's social status and social influence, that makes it become a relatively reliable indicator of one's ability to reciprocate or be helpful in the future, as Kwang (1987) says that:

"In a culture that cherishes the value of repaying favors, RA can reasonably anticipate some reciprocation when he contemplates assistance to another. But, with no objective standard of measurement available, RA is incapable of either knowing the date or foreseeing the manner of reciprocation. RA can estimate approximately what P might repay only by knowing something about the reputation and power of P...the possibility of reciprocation would be high and the requital would be abundant if P occupies a significant social position, has large resources, and is well-known for being

generous in repaying favors. But, if P has an obscure social status, controls only meager resources, or is

widely and often reported to be stingy, then P's reciprocation may well be quite limited."

(RA refers to resource allocator, P refers to petitioner.)

Based on this anticipation of the "petitioner's" ability (social position, social power and social influence) to reciprocate, Chinese people will subsequently consider if it is worth doing a favor or establish and maintain a guanxi (social relationship) with him or her (Zhai 1994; Kwangand Hu2004). It is noticeable that the actual abilities, which are social position, social power and social influence etc, are the reflection of an individual's level of mianzi in Chinese society,as in "*occupies a significant social position, has large resources*" stands for a very decent mianzi or having mianzi in China; and "*has an obscure social status, controls only meager resources*" indicates one's lack of mianzi. Thus, the estimation of social power and social influence from one's mianzi has just unveiled another reason for Chinese people's care about their mianzi: in Chinese society, an imageof a person's mianzi could influence and manipulate other's choice of doing a favor or not and whether or not to establish and maintain a guanxi with you.Moreover, it has also been noted that renqing connotes a set of important social norms by which one has to abide in order to get along with other individuals in Chinese society (Kwang 1987); people need to keep the renqing interaction going for maintaining social guanxi with each other (Kwang and Hu2004, Zhai 1994). One of the most obvious and frequently-applied norms of renqing interaction in Chinese society is doing favors or sending favors, as in exchanging gifts, offering helps or sympathizing (Kwang and Hu2004), however, the turning down and failure of doing favors or sending favors continuously could not only break the interpersonal guanxi network but also severely damage mianzi of the one who requests for or seeks the favor (Kwang 1987).Instead, if the favor from person A has been offered to person B, then B will be feeling enhanced in social status and elevated in self-esteem, in this sense, B will gain mianzi from this interaction with A, in the meantime, with the mianzi now honored and glorified, B and A will be sharing a much closer and more solid guanxi with each other, and B will also have to appreciate and reciprocate the favor done by A in the future (Kwang and Hu2004; Hu 1944).Hence, the third reason for Chinese people's emphasis on mianzi should be relying on the need for renqing-guanxi-oriented culture as well as renqing-guanxi social interaction in China.

6.2 Renqing

Originated from mianzi, renqing is a special derivativeformed by Chinese mianzi mindset and behavior, at this point, since Chinese people emphasize on mianzi, they consequently have the social norm of

renqing (Zhai 1994).Having been mentioned by Chinese interviewees before, Chinese people consider renqing as one of the most important principles in social exchange and social relationship, it has been influencing the way how people interact with and treat each other (seen from interview data analysis). In the following part, the discussion of renqing is mainly going to be focusing on three aspects: 1) what are the characteristics of Chinese renqing; 2) why do Chinese people emphasize so much on renqing; 3) how does renqing influence Chinese people's social behavior and daily life.

However, before we start to discuss about Chinese renqing, I would like to talk about the favor returning pattern or process seen from interviews in the Australian group.Admittedly to see that, both of the Australian and Chinese interviewees have confirmed that favor returning is common to see among social interaction and social relationship. It has been pointed out by Australian interviewees that Australian people tend to help or return a favor when someone is "*in need*", and they "*would not feel obligated*" to return the favor when it is not necessary; neither would they feel "*indebted*" after the favor has been returned, as two of the Australian interviewees have pointed out. Furthermore, people in Australia prefer to "*pay back favors quickly*" and stay "*to feel equal to each other*" as they don't like being "*in unequal relationships where one person continuously owes the other person*" or "*involved in a sticky situation*" in their future relationships. Also, sometimes people would not even "*expect a favor in return*" but *"feel gratitude"*between their relationships, "*doing favors can strengthen a relationship but the idea is not to do one a favor in order for the other person just to owe them*", says another Australian interviewee. Based on the answers from Australian interviewees, it is conceivable to tell that the motive of social exchange and social relationship is pretty much predicated on need and interest. Actually, as Deutsch (1975) has said before, society that focusing on individual welfare tends to be based on a need value among social exchange and social relationship; within such type of society, people are likely to be mutually benefited from fostering of personal development and personal welfare, people living in such group or society feel obligated to give help and provide care to the one who is in need or jeopardy, without losing or risking his or her own interest. Besides, it is also noticeable that, equality value has been constantly applied during social interaction as well as in social relationship as people do not feel "*indebted*" after "*pay back favors quickly*" and would like to "*feel equal to each other*".

Now let us get back to elaborate how Chinese people perceive and practice favor returning. Noticed from previous interviews from Chinese group, when mentioning about the importance of Chinese renqing as well as renqing rules, one of the interviewees has explained that:

"Chinese society emphasizes a lot on renqing. The most important thing to be successful is not about your intelligence, ability, or family background, but to understand renqing! Whether or not you know how to deal with people by using renqing decides your life to be prosperous or poor and miserable!"

it has not only pointed out the importance of renqing and its rules in Chinese society, but also implied that Chinese people's emphasis on renqing tend to be emotional, and focus more on renqing itself rather than being based on objectivity nor rationality (Zhai 1994, 2005). However, this does not necessarily mean Chinese people have given up pursuing the actual rationality, but we might as well consider Chinese culture tend to lead Chinese people to use emotion (as in renqing) to control or decide rationalityas opposed to the other way around (Zhai 2005).Actually, the reason why Chinese people are prone to let renqing or qing (emotion) decide rationality is because of the protection of mianzi (or the tendency of saving mianzi) since the actual rational choice or thinking will have to need constantly pursuit ofright, truth, justice and the relevant, therefore it will onlyaggravate the chance to generate divergences and arguments among interpersonal relations, which is absolutely going to damage individuals' mianzi and be against the emphasis of harmony through interpersonal and social relationships in Chinese culture (Zhai 1994).In this sense, Chinese people pay heavier attention on renqing rather than rationality, or we could also perceive it as Chinese renqing is more emotional as well as irrational.

Also, seen from previous data analysis, Chinese interviewees tend to combine mianzi and renqing together when explaining answers regarding renqing as well as renqing rules. As one Chinese interviewee has said before:

"…No matter how, the phenomena of mianzi and renqing are always combined and entangled together, embedding in the Chinese particular social interpersonal relationships."

Besides, another interviewee from Chinese group has mentioned:

"… In Chinese society, individuals' relationships are mainly based onthe Chinese special renqing and mianzi, as well as the complicated contacts between people."

This seemingly coincidental consistency from the answers of our Chinese interviewees has actually touched upon another characteristic of Chinese renqing as well as renqing rules. Guided by the Chinese traditional ethical ideology (this ideology will be further explained later), Chinese renqing has already moved from an individual level to an interpersonal relationship level, and this change has become the reason why renqing and mianzi are always combined together in Chinese social exchange and social relationship (Zhai 1994). Consequently, the combination of renqing and mianzi makes them hold and

tangle with each other by the obligation and responsibility of protecting and saving mianzi in individuals' social relationship, which means in order to keep someone away from losing mianzi, people should keep the renqing interaction going continuously; hence, Chinese people will have to pay more attention about renqing and renqing interaction from an angle ofsaving and protecting each other's mianzi and maintaining social relationships with each other rather than caring about the real and original meaning of renqing (as in the real "favor returning" and help) among social interactions (Zhai 2005). This helps explain why contemporary Chinese people tend to send presents to each other and treat friends for meals in a constant way, even though the presents and meals are usually not necessary for our daily life. This change of renqing meaning or the combination of renqing and mianzi has formed the particular way of Chinese social exchange and social relationship (Zhai 1994).

When we look at the answers from Chinese interviewees, there is another point that is also worth noticing. One of the replies to the question of "how do Chinese people establish and maintain social relationships with the others" has been answered as the follows:

"…Chinese traditional society follows the principle of the three cardinal guides and the five constant virtues. Three cardinal guides means the sovereign guides the subject, the father guides the son, and the husband guides the wife, the five constant virtues means righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and fidelity. The three cardinal guides have indicated the hierarchical idea, whereas the five constant guides have connoted the behavioral codes between subject and sovereign, son and father, wife and husband. In modern Chinese society, people are still deeply influenced and following these traditional rules even though they have been developed compared with the original ones. For example, young generation should always show their complete respect and obedience to the senior people; the lower staff should unconditionally respecting and obeying their superior boss or supervisor. The young generation and lower staff are supposed to follow this way in order to give mianzi to the senior and superior. Also, only following this rules and principles could people set up and keep the so-called 'equality' and 'harmony' in Chinese culture and society."

As we mentioned before, Chinese renqing and renqing interaction are deeply influenced and guided by the particular Chinese ethical ideology (Zhai 1994), while the essence of the actual ethical ideology in China is based on *the three cardinal guides and the five constant virtues*from Confucianism (Li 2001; King 1991; Zhu and Hong 2009). The doctrine of *the three cardinal guides and the five constant virtues*has depicted a set of corresponding hierarchical relationships and the according code of conduct

through all social communications and interactions in China. As *the three cardinal guides* points out that: the sovereign guides the subject, the father guides the son, and the husband guides the wife; consequently, the five constant virtues has given the behavioral codes of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and fidelity from subject, son, and wife to sovereign, father, and husband respectively (Li 2001). These particular relationships as well as social codes have presented the different hierarchical status and principles in Chinese society (Li 2001). In this case, *the three cardinal guides and the five constant virtues* has already set up the way how social relationship, interpersonal behavior as well as renqing interaction should be among different roles (Confucianism reckons that sovereign and subject, father and son, husband and wife, brothers, friends are the five most typical and significant roles in Chinese society) in Chinese culture and Chinese society, and it also gives certain responsibility and obligation to those categorized people who belong to different roles (Zhai 1994, 2005). In addition, Confucianism has also provided us other explanations and further legitimized this point by its ideology. It has been claimed that Confucianism advocates people to consider and follow two dimensions when interacting renqing with other people: 1) the closeness of one's relationship to the other individual; 2) the hierarchical status and differences between each person, only when people interact by these two dimensions would the procedure and distribution be right and just (Kwang 1987; Kwang and Hu 2004).One should always interact or exchange renqing intimately with the one, who shares a closer relationship; and depending on the hierarchical relationship and difference between two people, one should also behave in certain ways in order to present benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, orfidelityrespectively (which is also considered as another particular way of renqing exchange in Chinese society); this kind of fixed, responsible and obligatory interaction has continuously influencedand finally given Chinese renqing and renqing interaction another very special characteristic of "being ethical"(Kwang and Hu2004).

Noticed from those three characteristics of Chinese renqing as well as renqing interaction we discussed and concluded before, we could have realized the actual emphasis of formality, redundant obligation and responsibilityamong Chinese social exchange and social relationship. However, it has been pointed out that it does exist a dramatic difference between the original meaning of renqing as well as renqing interaction and the modern ones in Chinese society (Zhai 1994; Kwang and Hu2004).Seen from Chinese history, ancient Chinese customs did focus more on the real exchange of favor and emotion during renqing interaction, whereas modern Chinese culture tends to emphasize more on pure materialized

gift-exchangeor interest-exchange (Zhai 1994). It is then inevitably leading us to the question of why there is such a change on the way how people perceive renqing and apply renqing in Chinese social exchange and social relationship, also what makes renqing have changed from the previous real-emotion-oriented style to the contemporary falsehearted-basedone.Chinese scholars (Zhai 1994, 2005; Kwang and Hu 2004) have pointed out that since Chinese society has been moving from the traditional to the modern,it causes the change of Chinese social interaction and social relationship pattern as the society is getting more mobilized. People are no longer restricted to interact in a family-based network as they previously were; instead, the interpersonal interactions as well as relationships have been extended into a social-based level (Zhai 1994). Consequently, as people tend to encounter and interact with more non-related individuals within the society, it subsequently generates discomforts when people firstly have tointeract with strangers by using "real-emotion-oriented renqing exchange" (which is previously usedonly between family members) in Chinese society; therefore, Chinese people have gone through a transformation from family-related (or blood-related) social structure and social relationship tostrangers-based social structure and social relationship(Kwang and Hu 2004; Zhai 1994).With the huge difference between these two social structures as well as relationship patterns, people, on one hand, have tried to embrace and accept modernsocial system; on the other hand, largely influenced by the traditional social relationship pattern, as in family-based social structure, people still expect and hold the old thinking of social interaction and relationship, in another word, the previous mindset of family-based social relationship and social interaction pattern (more specifically, the real-emotion-renqing exchange) has still been deeply branded in Chinese people's mind (Zhai 1994). With the hope of bearing the old psychology but in the meantime being involved in a complete modern social system, people maintain the formality of renqing in order to fit into the new standard,but leave out the real-emotion inside renqing and renqing interaction since the major interaction and social relationship areno more family-based; this phenomenon has changed Chinese renqing from a real-emotion focusing style to the current less sincere or falsehearted one (Kwang and Hu 2004; Zhai 1994). Hence, the aim of Chinese renqing and renqing interaction has changed from real-emotion-based as well as harmony-pursuing-oriented to a mianzi-enhancing-oriented, redundantly obligatory, and insincere situation inChinese social exchange and social relationship(Zhai 1994).

Accompanying with the move of Chinese society from the traditional style to a modern one, renqing and renqing interaction have been deeply influenced by this change and therefore have reflected in different

aspects in contemporary Chinese society. Firstly, as Zhai (1994) has pointed out that, since the formalization of renqing as well as renqing interaction in modern China, it makes renqing and renqing interaction function in two ways towards Chinese society: 1) positive function; and 2) negative function. The positive function is referred to the reciprocation under certain circumstances (as in desperate-need situation), which to some extent displays and maintains the original real-emotion renqing exchange style in Chinese society, this function has reflected the emphasis of morality and harmony among interpersonal relationships in Chinese culture and Chinese society;on the other hand, the negative function of renqing does not necessarily mean the opposition of helping people in desperate circumstances or the break of Chinese original convention, however, it connotes the extreme, formalized, hypocritical and crafty behavior or tendency in the practice of renqing among Chinese society, the functioning of this negative side of renqing has been dominant nowadays and is counteractive to the positive function as well as the whole society (Zhai 1994). Because of the formalization of renqing as well as the combination of renqing and mianzi (previously discussed) in modern Chinese society, renqing and renqing interaction have already become another form of mianzi, thus, the actual mianzi rule in China is also applicable in renqing and renqing interaction, in this sense, the indecent renqing exchange or the damage of renqing interaction could also be considered as the threat to individuals' mianzi (Zhai 1994, 2005), which is the last thing that Chinese people would like to do. Here is a real example regarding the negative function of renqing in Chinese society:

Two Chinese friends went to a wedding ceremony, when they arrived at the reception venue, they were about to send a little present money to the bride and groom. They walked to the accountant and one of guys said he would like to give 50 Chinese Yuan to the bride and groom. But, the one man said that 50 Chinese Yuan is way too less, and he intended to give 100 Chinese Yuan.

*"Didn't we plan together before? Each of us was supposed to give 50 Yuan to them!? How could you change your mind!? Since you are give more money, I would like to raise my present money to 200 Yuan", the first guy said angrily. Then, the other guy saw his friend raise the money to 200 Yuan, he as well deliberately raise the money to 300 angrily. In this way, they competed to raise the present money to a huge amount, and were finally cooled down by other people. At the end, they gave 500 Yuan each and did not talk during the whole wedding ceremony. The previous friendship between these two people was completely broken by this present money thing (*Zhai 1994,p. 197*).*

Seen from this example above, Chinese renqing has no difference with mianzi during social interaction

as well as social relationship, the actual renqing and renqing interaction do not really involve the exchange of real help or emotion whatsoever; on contrary, the formalization of renqing leads Chinese social exchange and social relationship to be extreme, competitive, hypocritical, and redundant. Besides, the unbalanced renqing exchange could cause the loss of individual's mianzi, and once people lose mianzi, friendship or social relationship between them will be damaged and terminated.This is how the negative function of renqing works in Chinese society and influence Chinese people's mind and behavior in social exchange and social relationship.

The way how people conduct themselves is another reflection of renqing in modern Chinese society. In ancient Chinese, the major goal of renqing interaction is to enhance and stabilize the relationship among all family members and relatives, in this sense, the minimum standard of renqing exchange is to be equal (Zhai 1994). As the old Chinese saying points out that: "if someone gives you a peach, then you should return a plum to him in return." Therefore, the recipient should return something equal (peach and plum are considered as equal level present in this context in Chinese culture) back to the person who helped you before. While influenced by the evolution of Chinese society and the change of renqing, the ideal renqing exchange pattern has turned into a reciprocation-emphasized style, which means people will accept and appreciate more when reciprocationweighs more than giving during renqing interaction within modern Chinese society(Kwang and Hu 2004). Just asanother Chinese saying goes: "if you have received a drop of beneficence from other people, you should return to them a fountain of beneficence (Kwang 1987; Kwang and Hu 2004)."Considering the whole changing process of Chinese society as well as renqing, Chinese people are used to maintaining social relationships by renqing and renqing interaction because of the old Chinese culture and tradition, however, the involvement of mianzi in modernized renqing has led Chinese people focus more on how to save and gain mianzi by practicing extreme and redundant renqing exchange (which explains why there is an emphasis on the "reciprocation more than receive pattern") during current Chinese social interactions (Zhai 1994).Therefore, a mental dilemma comes out of Chinese people's mind in terms of renqing exchange: on one hand, people do not want to get rid of renqing and renqing interaction in their social relationships since the long tradition of renqing exchange in Chinese culture, but in the meantime, people feel extremely tired and sick of being falsehearted and protecting mianzi during the obligatorily redundant and hypocritical renqing exchange (Zhai 1994).Individuals have to pretend to be sincere and generous in renqing exchange whereas they actually complain and sulk about how they behave in public since most

of the renqinginteractions are against people's original wills.

As we have already discussed and known that Chinese renqing and mianzi are always combined together among modern Chinese social exchange and relationship, it is worth further exploring how they actually work in Chinese people's practical life. It has been suggested by Zhai (1994) that modern Chinese renqing and renqing interaction are frequentlyaccomplished by treating people for meals, and the ostentation and extravagance degree of the meal has always been considered as a reflection of different levels of mianzi. The more ostentatious and extravagant the meal is, the higher level of mianzi will be rendered to either or both sides.Unlike other western countries, Chinese people tend to pursue mianzi by showing off and squandering during renqing exchange (as in treating people for meals or gift exchange), statistics have shown that it is undoubtedly to notice that the actual Chinese nationwide renqing expenditure of a single year could easily reach 50-60 billion Chinese Yuan, which roughly equals to 8-9.6 billion US dollars by a current exchange rate (Zhai 1994). However, the practical renqing interaction among average or under-average Chinese people would be slightly differentthough. To those people who are not capable of spending so much money on extravagance and ostentation, they would rather live in a simple or even stingy life in order to save up for being extravagant or ostentatious in critical and necessary renqing exchange, for example, average Chinese people would rather eat cheap and bad quality food at home, but treat people fancy meals in splendid restaurant that they will never even consider to go by themselves,however, by doing so, people could render and obtain mianzi during Chinese renqing exchange process, also only in this way would Chinese people expect and appreciate in social interactions (Zhai 1994).

6.3 Guanxi

Chinese scholars (Kwang and Hu 2004; Zhai 2005) have pointed out that the interaction of Chinese renqing and mianzi displays and forms interpersonal guanxi or guanxi network in Chinese society. It has been claimed that Chinese guanxi is inseparable from renqing and renqing interaction; furthermore, renqing is always combined with mianzi in Chinese social exchange and social relationship; therefore, we have realized that the actual functioning of mianzi will cause the practice of renqing, meanwhile, the function of renqing will subsequently generate the interaction of guanxi in Chinese society (Zhai 1994).In this sense, after discussing about mianzi and renqing in Chinese society, we will continue to talk about guanxi in Chinese society. Specifically, we are going to focus on and elaborate the practice of Chinese guanxi, which establish the basis of Chinese social exchange and social relationship.However, before we

get started, there is one point that needs to be clarified: social connection or social relationship in Australian society. Undoubtedly, people in Australian also have "social connections" as Chinese people have guanxi in social interaction. But, instead of having mianzi and renqing in it, social relationship and social relationship establishment seem really different from guanxi in Chinese society. Nonetheless, in order to compare with Chinese guanxi, we could consider social relationship in Australia from another two perspectives: motive and functioning. One of the Australian interviewees has pointed out that:

"To build strong friendships or 'mateship' it is important for there to be some degree of shared interests or mutually beneficial outcomes from the relationship. Australians can often be quite individualistic and will often ask themselves the question 'what's in it for me?' when appraising social and interpersonal interactions."

Seen from the answer above, needs and personal interests have become two important things when people start to establish certain social relationships with other individuals. Furthermore, having been claimed by another interviewee that:

"Australians like freedom and they like feeling equal to others. This could explain why friends like to split the bill…Australian is more egalitarian, where relationships lean towards being (or appearing) equal."

In this sense, the basis and functioning of social relationships are based on an equality value; and individuals are equal from the initial point of social relationship or connection establishment to the actual function process of social interaction in Australian society.

When we are now turning back to interpret Chinese social relationship (guanxi), unlike it in Australia, in contemporary China, guanxi or guanxi network has been defined as an improper way that people get social position or social power by using renqing; or an indecent channel to achieve what people want to pursue (Kwang and Hu 2004; Zhai 1994, 2005).The actual practice of Chinese guanxi is basicallyassumed by the exchange and reciprocation of resources and capitalin Chinese society (Zhai 1994).However, the types of resources and capital could be various and controversial in China. It has been concluded by Zhai (1994) thatChinese people have normally divided social resources and capital into two categories: 1) the inborn ones (as in blood, background, physical appearance, gender etc.); 2) the acquired ones (as in social status, social power, prestige, capital, personality, achievement etc). Even though there are various aspects to build up one's social resources and capital, but admittedly, the most common and traditional way for Chinese people to acquire social resources or capital is through

hardworking studying (Zhai 1994).However, the most common and traditional way might not be the most popular and efficient one in current Chinese social interactions. Instead, people tend to pursue and obtain what they want by picking up an improper and immoral way (which is through Chinese guanxi or guanxi network) since it is much easier and more efficient; consequently, this becomes a widely accepted and welcomed way to achieve individual's goals in Chinese society because as long as one could have guanxi or guanxi network, he or she does not have to be hardworking or talented in order to be successful and accomplished (Zhai 1994). With this logic, guanxi or guanxi network itself is indeed a powerful social resource (or capital) in China.

The functioning and interaction of guanxi or guanxi network would be working among people who actually have those social resources and capital by exchanging with one another. As one of the interviewees has said before, "*Chinese people could have nothing, except guanxi.*" It has also been pointed out by Zhai (1994) that one could have no money, no prestige, no ability, but he will still be very powerful and capable if he has guanxi or guanxi network in Chinese society. Here is an example regarding the realization of the social resource obtainment (money) through guanxi interaction:

One staff of public relations department has relied on the guanxi with xxx, helping our company raise 3 million dollars.

From the above example, we have noticed that the procurement of resource (here it refers to the money that raised by guanxi) is based on the condition that people have already got the guanxi with the ones who have certain resources and capital, so the exchange or obtainment of certain social resources will be realized through the interaction of Chinese guanxi afterwards. But it is certain that money or capital is not the only social resource that could be exchanged during guanxi interaction, on contrary, pretty much all different kinds of social resources and capital are available to be swapped. It has been said by Zhai (1994) that, in Chinese society, as long as a person possesses or owns one kind of social resource or capital (it does not necessarily to be money or authority), people could use that certain resource to change for other resource (s) through guanxi interaction, in addition, the social relationships that are formed by this pattern (guanxi or guanxi network interaction) will subsequently generate more chance to procure other resources and capital under renqing and mianzi principles, and this is also the reason why Chinese people would like to involve renqing and mianzi rules through the interaction of guanxi.

However, in terms of average Chinese people who do not really have anything to be considered as social resources or capital, they will then have to think about other ways through social exchange and social

relationship. As a matter of fact, if one has no power, no capital, no resource in Chinese society, he or she would normally choose to have renqing exchange with someone who has the relevant resources or capital that he or she needs; since the lack of useful resource for exchange, one will first have to set up guanxi with the resource or capital owner (s) by sending certain renqing or having renqing interaction; after establishing certain guanxi or guanxi network, one could use it as a social resource to pursue what he or she wants through the guanxi with the resource owner (s). This kind of renqing could be presented by certain gifts, treating meals, or money; and the renqing interaction is often taken place on certain occasions or events, as in wedding, birthday, promotion, Chinese Lunar New Year, or even funeral. The price or quality of presents or meals will absolutely reflect one's mianzi, and directly influence how stable and well the guanxi network would be established (Zhai 1994). And because of the characteristic of long-term responsibility and redundant obligation in Chinese renqing rule, it makes the functioning of guanxi have the same attribute since everybody will have to pursue relevant social resources or capital under renqing and mianzi principles in the actualsocial exchange and social relationship.

7. Conclusion

The previous interviews of Australian and Chinese people have presented the cultural differences regarding social exchange rules and social relationships. While the above analysis has suggested that we must pay attention to the distinctions as well as specific patterns of different social interactions. Based on what we havediscussed before in this study, we are now going to conclude the answers to the questions that we raised in the initial part.

As we have noticed, in Chinese society, norms related to reciprocity are more socially situated when compared with Australian context. More specifically, Chinese social exchange and social relationship contain a very important idea of renqing. In the playing out of renqing, obligations of reciprocity are heavily formed by the hierarchically structured network of guanxi in which one is involved, by the long time period over which these relations are expected to last, and by the public nature of the obligations incurred in continuing exchanges (Hwang and Hu 2004). Also, these obligations are usually connected to mianzi, and negotiated through the acceptance as well as refusal of the request that enhancingor weakening social relations (Hwang and Hu 2004).

Consequently, the actual mianzi, renqing, and guanxi rules in Chinese society have not only largely influenced Chinese people's mind but also guided the way how they behave in everyday life. As we've analyzed before, since the emphasis and combination of renqing and mianzi in Chinese social interaction,

people pretty much always focus on one's social status, resources possession, capital, social power, social prestige etc during social exchange and social relationship; besides, the formalization of renqing in Chinese society causes the redundancy, hypocrisy, and false-heartedness among Chinese social exchange and social relationship, people tend to care more about the exchange of interests, resources as well as power rather than real emotion and help, also, individuals set up and use guanxi or guanxi network to pursue and exchange social resources and capital by applying renqing and mianzi rules.

However, what are the sources that lead to the particular pattern of Chinese social exchange and social relationship or why would there be such an outstanding cultural difference between Chinese and western societymight be perceived from three aspects: living environment, social structure, and history.

From a geopolitical point of view, the distinct living environments between China and Europe (where Europe is the geographical origin of western civilization),have decided the cultural and social differences between them.Unlike China, the ocean civilization of ancient Europe had further formed the commercial civilization in western countries;consequently, the basic mode of production of trading and exchanging has therefore put forward and emphasized the principle of equity as well as equality, and the spirit of contract among social interaction and social relationship ever since the origin of western civilization, people would have to stick to the rules and be equal, equitable as well as democratic so that business could be proceeded in a mutually accepted way and same level.Whereas in ancient China, the typical continental civilization had subsequently generated the agricultural civilization, which heavily based on following and obeying the skills or experiencepassed down from previous generation to the next in order to keep productions going, people most likely tend to stay in the same community (since individuals are attached to their own land in agricultural society) taking orders and repeating what had been done by previous generations without going far away out or so many encounters with a wider range of other people. In this case, the two modes of production (of China and Europe) that are determined by different living environments have produced the value of democracy and social contract in western society as well as the principle of hierarchy and centralization of authority in Chinese society; the values have then derived into the rules of equity, equality, and need in western social exchange and social relationship; and the hierarchical and unbalanced social interaction and social relationship in Chinese society. They have also accordingly guided people's mindsets and code of conducts in those two kinds of societies respectively.

Social structure, which influenced by the geopolitical factors, has also played an important role in forming

and leading to different social exchange rules as well as social relationships in western and Chinese societies.Based on the commercial civilization background, western culture and society have long been infused the idea of equality, equity, democracy and social contract throughout the long-term social exchange as well as interaction. Therefore, individuals as basic units of the formation of society are meant to be equal to each other and having rights to protect their own properties from being jeopardized; in the meantime, the society is obligated to maintain justice and individual's rights. Sociologists (Fei 2012; Hamilton and Wang 1992) have termed this kind of social structure as the organizational mode of association: a certain group (with limit and boundary to other ones) is made of a number of individuals who were as if single straws tied up as a bundle, in this sense, each individual is equal to one another, and each one of them also has the same relationship to the group; should any "hierarchy" or different "classes" exist, it must have been set up beforehand. On contrary, originated from agricultural civilization, ancient and even contemporary Chinese people have both physical and emotional attachment to their soil. This attachment were very popular in the old Chinese society, people's need to exchange and interact with the others and outside world is way less than the dependency to their farmland since they could be self-sufficient by continuously working on their soil; in these circumstances, instead of going out for exchange and broadening social relationships (like what western people did before), each individual would probably just need different relationships under various conditions within the community, hence, as scholars mentioned, the differential mode of association is more applicable for Chinese social structure (Fei 2012; Hamilton and Wang 1992). Unlike the organizational mode of association, people's social relationshipor social networking is like thecircular water ripples that created by a stone, extending and fading away from the inside to the outside, every single individual in this social structure is the center of his or her own social relationship or network, same person could have different wave circles (social relationship or network) depending on time and place. Further wave circles represent people who have weaker social relationships with the central individual, and circles near the central point represent those who have a much stronger and more intimate social relationships with the center individual. People then use the same system (the differential mode of association) to distinguish different levels of social relationships as well as networking, and apply different code of conducts, manners, as well as rules based on this particular pattern of different sequence. Undoubtedly, different social structures generate distinct moral values, which subsequently become the faith or motive for people to follow and obey certain social manners, rules, as well as protocols. Therefore, social exchange and social relationship

under western social structure of "organizational mode of association" tend to live up to the principles of equity, equality and need (depending on different situations) in order to achieve justice by all means; on the other hand, social exchange and social relationship under Chinese social structure of "differential mode of association"are prone to focus on and pursue guanxi and renqing among interactions.

From a historical and cultural perspective, in accordance with the essence of western social structure, western religion and constitution are also another two significant factors for the establishment of social exchange rules as well as social relationships in western society. Admittedly, no matter Christianity or constitution law has advocated and protected justice, equality, and equity in society. They help form sort of a "universal" or very widely-accepted value of pursuing equality, equity, as well as justice through social interactions.In contrast, in the "differential mode of association" social structure of China, the self-centered relationship or network system requires individuals to think and behave for themselves but not others; also, every type of relationship in the whole network has almost been previously categorized and guided by a certain kind of morality (could be any one of the relationships and corresponding obligationsin the principle of the three cardinal guides and the five constant virtues of Confucianism). Furthermore, because of different circumstances, networks, and relationships among different individuals, seldom could all the people apply some general rule or value at the same time during social exchange and social relationship, let alone a "universal" standard concept for the whole society.At this point, the difference in history and culture background also becomes a reason for the distinction of social exchange rules as well as social relationships between western and Chinesesocieties.

Cultures are distinct from one another; however, the aim of exploring the differences among various cultures should not be focusing on assimilation or change but being understandable, multicultural, and how to reduce potential conflicts and misunderstandings in nowadays intercultural communication. We would do well provided not to use simple universalistic rules of personal interaction but to include more of the context of interpersonal obligations and how they are played out in daily life (Hwang and Hu 2004). We should also realize that the development and change of culture are taking place all the time, therefore studies related to this field should always keep pursuing and remain critical.

8. Reference

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9. Index

Interview 1

1. **What kinds of person tend to be more socially welcomed and popular, and tend to have fewer obstacles in Chinese society (what qualities or characteristics do these people need)?**

   (你认为在中国什么样的人在社会中能比较吃得开、受欢迎，并且社会阻力比较小（你认为在中国这样的人身上应该具有哪些特性或特点）？)

   中国是一个人情味很重的社会。在中国，成功的人士不仅要有才华、有能力，还要有一定的家庭背景，但最重要的是要懂得人情世故！从某种上说，是否懂得人情世故，决定一个人的一生是飞黄腾达，还是穷困潦倒！

   (Chinese society emphasizes a lot on renqing. The most important thing to be successful is not about your intelligence, ability, or family background, but to understand renqing! Whether or not you know how to deal with people by using renqing decides your life to be prosperous or poor and miserable!)

2. **Generally speaking, what do you think is/are the most important element (s) or part (s) in Chinese social relations and interactions?**

   (一般来讲，你认为在中国社会关系及社会交往中最重要部分或因素是什么？)

   中国经历了两千多年的封建社会，这种"上下尊卑"的等级观念深入人心，"官本位"思想根深蒂固。正是因为如此，人与人在实际交往中，非常讲究"人情"、"关系"、"面子"。中国人什么都可以不讲，但不能不讲"人情"；什么都可以没有，但不能没有"关系"；什么都可以不给，但是不能不给"面子"。

   (Feudalism has existed in Chinese society for more than 2000 years, therefore, the hierarchical mind and official-rank-orientated standard have deeply branded into Chinese people's heart. Just because of this, renqing, mianzi, and guanxi are very important in Chinese interpersonal interaction. Chinese people could ignore everything but renqing; Chinese people could have nothing, except guanxi; Chinese people could give nothing to other people but mianzi.)

3. **How would you normally establish and maintain your relations with other individuals through social exchanges and interactions?**

   (一般情况下，在社会交换以及社会交往中，你是如何建立和维系你与他人的关系的？)

   在现代的中国社会里，表面上讲的是人与人之间的"平等"，但是这种"平等"是建立在实际上不平等的基础上的。中国传统社会里遵循的是"三纲五常"。所谓的"三钢"："君为臣纲"、"父为子纲"、"夫

为妻纲"，所谓"五常"："仁、义、礼、智、信"。"三钢"所体现的就是这种"上下尊卑"的等级观念。"五常"是用以调整和规范君臣、父子、兄弟、夫妇、朋友等人伦关系的行为准则。当今中国社会，尽管传统中国思想随着时间的推移而有所改变，人们仍然深深地被这种思想所影响并紧紧遵循着它们。在实际的社会交往中，晚辈对长辈、下级对上级要给予充分的尊重和礼遇，也就是足够的"面子"。只有遵循这样的规则，才能与人"平等"、"和谐"的相处。

(In contemporary Chinese society, it seems like people advocate "equity", however, this kind of "equity" is based on "inequity". Chinese traditional society follows the principle of the three cardinal guides and the five constant virtues. Three cardinal guides means the sovereign guides the subject, the father guides the son, and the husband guides the wife, the five constant virtues means righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and fidelity. The three cardinal guides have indicated the hierarchical idea, whereas the five constant guides have connoted the behavioral codes between subject and sovereign, son and father, wife and husband. In modern Chinese society, people arestill deeply influenced and following these traditional rules even though they have been developed compared with the original ones. For example, young generation should always show their complete respect and obedience to the senior people; the lower staff should unconditionally respecting and obeying their superior boss or supervisor. The young generation and lower staff are supposed to follow this way in order to give mianzi to the senior and superior. Also, only following this rules and principles could people set up and keep the so-called 'equality' and 'harmony' in Chinese culture and society.)

4. **Do you think there are certain rules or principles among social relations, exchanges, and interactions in Chinese society? If there are, what do you think they might be?**

(你认为在中国的社会关系、社会交换和社会交往中，是否存在某些特定的规则或原则？如果有的话，那么它们是什么？)

在中国，人与人的交往中，遵循着许多规则。总的来说，一个是"明规则"，一个是"潜规则"。在明规则中也强调，人与人的交往要讲"平等、公平、公正"的一些规章制度，但更多的时候所遵循的是"潜规则"。在没有"关系"的时候更多的是讲"明规则"，在有"关系"的时候更多的是讲"潜规则"。

"潜规则"，是相对于"明规则"而言的。顾名思义，就是看不见的、没有明文规定的、约定成俗的，但是却又是广泛认同、实际起作用的、人们必须"遵循"的一种规则。创造"潜规则"这一概念的吴思先生说：所谓的"潜规则"，是指"隐藏在明规则之下、却在实际上支配着中国社会运行的规矩"。"潜规则"，既不公开，也不透明，也决不会将它的"规则"内容昭示于他人，但是，其"规则"的内

容谁都明白，它比明文规定的规章制度还要厉害，还要严厉，人们都在默默恪守、心照不宣地维护它，而且，谁不遵循这种"规则"，谁就会受到这种"规则"的排斥、惩罚，"潜规则"很具有"杀伤力"，所以，一般人都很是"惧怕"这种"潜规则"，然而，你必须要学会它、"尊重"它、实施它，不然你就根本进入不了你想进入的这个"圈子"中，即便是进入进去也会发现自己无法生存，无法为这个"圈子"所认同，很快就会被这个"圈子"所抛弃。

（There are many social rules to follow in Chinese interpersonal interactions. But generally speaking, one is "explicit rule", and the other one is "implicit rule". In "explicit rules", people would advocate and emphasize "equity", "equality", and "justice", but for most of the time, people would follow Chinese"implicit rule". When Chinese people do not have guanxi, they would always like to follow "explicit rules", however, when people have guanxi, they tend to follow the "implicit rules". As opposed to "explicit rules", "implicit rules" are invisible, unpublished, conventional, widely acknowledged as well as applied, and must-follow principles. It is said by Wu Si that the so-called "implicit rules" refers to the principles that covered underneath those "explicit rules", but actually dominating the functioning of Chinese society. Wu continues to say that "implicit rules" are unwritten, unpublished, and not shown to people, but the content of these rules are known and understood by every Chinese people, "implicit rules" are much stronger than "explicit rules", individuals are all following and protect them silently, whoever breaks the rules, he or she will be excluded and punished, people are normally afraid of "implicit rules" because they are very powerful, however you need to learn how to respect, practice them, otherwise, you would not be able to be involved in the rules; even if you step into the circle of "implicit rules", you will not be able to survive, and acknowledged, finally you will be abandoned by the rules.）

5. **What do you think are the factors that could influence individuals' relations, choices etc with others in Chinese society?**

(你认为那些因素可以影响中国社会中人与人之间的关系和选择？)

中国是一个没有宗教信仰的国家，人与人交往主要体现在利益的交换上。你懂得人情世故，你就能成功。成功不仅意味着你拥有更多的财富，较高的社会地位，同时还会有较高的社会声望。这种成功会使你有很多朋友、很好的关系和更大的社会圈子，同时别人就会更加尊敬你，会给你面子。作为一个成功的人，意味着你拥有更多的资源，然后通过社会关系与交换，你也将会获得更多的资源。

(China is a non-religious country, and the interpersonal interactions are mainly based on the exchange of interests. If you know the rules of renqing, you will be able to be successful. Being

successful does not only mean one would be wealthy, having high social position, and prestigious, but also brings you many friends, good guanxi and guanxi network, in the meantime, other people will be respecting you for more, and giving you mianzi. Being a successful person means you have or you will have more resources, after exchanging them through Chinese guanxi, you could obtain more.)

6. **What could you conclude as the foundation of the above social phenomena in Chinese society?**

(你认为以上所讨论的和涉及到的中国社会现象、规则、原则是源于什么？)

原因如下：一是中国有 2000 多年封建社会的历史，封建社会等级观念根深蒂固，"官本位"思想深入人心；而缺少平等、自由和人权的观念。二是中国长期处于以地缘和血缘为纽带的熟人社会，人情味很浓。人们重"人情"轻"理性"，重"关系"轻"原则"；而缺少理性思考、契约精神和法制观念。三是现代社会制度的缺陷。中国现在经济上成为了世界第二大经济体，但在政治体制上还存在着严重不足。特别是个人权力不能得到有效的监督，公权力还没有被关在笼子里。所以重人情世故、拉关系、讲面子，以获得更大的利益也就不足为怪了。

(The reasons are as follows: Chinese has a 2000-year history of feudalism, hence, the hierarchical and official-rank-orientated ideology have deeply branded in Chinese people's heart; furthermore, Chinese society lacks the real idea of equality, freedom, and human right. Secondly, because of the basis of geography and blood tie in Chinese society, people emphasize renqing a lot. Chinese people stress "renqing", ignore "rationality", emphasize guanxi, overlook principle, and lack rational thinking as well as the spirit of social contract. Thirdly, it is because of the demerits of Chinese modern social system. Although China has become the second largest economy, it still has so many downsides in terms of political system. Especially, individual power could not be supervised; public authority has not been restricted. Therefore, it is not weird to see Chinese people gaining interests by emphasizing renqing, guanxi, and mianzi.)

Interview 2

1. **What kinds of person tend to be more socially welcomed and popular, and tend to have fewer obstacles in Chinese society (what qualities or characteristics do these people need)?**

(你认为在中国什么样的人在社会中能比较吃得开、受欢迎，并且社会阻力比较小（你认为在中国这样的人身上应该具有哪些特性或特点）？)

我认为在中国社会中，首先具备一定社会关系，社会背景的人才能够在社会中游刃有余。其次由于中

国社会以及中国文化比较看重人情关系和人情的礼尚往来，所以懂得人情世故的人会比较收到大家的喜欢和接受。在这些人身上，多少都会具备如：家庭条件优越、有一定社会地位，人脉比较广等特点。

(I think people will have to have certain social guanxi, and social background in order to be successful in Chinese society. Furthermore, people who understand renqing will be welcomed and accepted since China emphasizes renqing very much. Also, you can always find some certain elements on these kind of people, as in: good family background, certain social status, and good guanxi network.)

2. **Generally speaking, what do you think is/are the most important element (s) or part (s) in Chinese social relations and interactions?**

(一般来讲，你认为在中国社会关系及社会交往中最重要部分或因素是什么？)

在中国社会中，人与人之间的关系主要基于中国特有的人情，以及面子人际之间的复杂往来。通常情况下，中国社会中人与人之间的关系建立开始于一方对另一方的帮助，从而，被施与帮助的一方会欠对方一个人情，由于中国社会的特殊性，人们会尽力换上之前所欠的人情（通过帮助对方）并使自己脱离欠人情的处境，人们在这样的持续不断的人情往来下维系着彼此之间的社会关系。如果一方不能及时地、持续地完成人情关系的转换，这回严重影响到彼此关系的继续和发展。

(In Chinese society, individuals' relationships are mainly based on the Chinese special renqing and mianzi, as well as the complicated contacts between people. Normally, people establish social relationships by sending favors, after that, people who gets helped would owe a renqing to the one who helps him or her before, because of the specialty of Chinese society, people would try their best to repay renqing (by returning the favor) and get themselves out of the indebted situation, consequently, people maintain their social relationships by continuous renqing interactions. Provided one side could not be able to exchange renqing in time and constantly, it would severely damage the development of mutual relationship.)

3. **How would you normally establish and maintain your relations with other individuals through social exchanges and interactions?**

(一般情况下，在社会交换以及社会交往中，你是如何建立和维系你与他人的关系的？)

是的。在中国社会中由于儒家思想和当今社会现状（资源占有分配不均、社会不平等不公平）的影响，有着其独特的出事原则和运转机制。例如前面所提到的人情往来、人情关系和面子对人们的影响。它们无处不在，并引导着中国人的行为和思想。

(Yes. Influenced by Confucianism and the current social situation (disproportional possession of

resources and social inequality as well as social inequity), Chinese society has its own principles and functioning systems. For example, renqing interaction, renqing relationship, and mianzi have influenced Chinese people. They are everything in Chinese society, and they are guiding how Chinese people act and think.)

4. **Do you think there are certain rules or principles among social relations, exchanges, and interactions in Chinese society? If there are, what do you think they might be?**

(你认为在中国的社会关系、社会交换和社会交往中，是否存在某些特定的规则或原则？如果有的话，那么它们是什么？)

人情关系，面子。

(Renqing relationship, mianzi.)

5. **What do you think are the factors that could influence individuals' relations, choices etc with others in Chinese society?**

(你认为那些因素可以影响中国社会中人与人之间的关系和选择？)

在中国社会中，一个人的社会地位、权利、社交网络会在不同程度上影响着人与人之间的关系和选择。如果一个人有较高的社会地位和权利，那么他就会拥有较大的影响力和社交圈，从而便会占有很多资源和拥有很多获取资源和权利的途径，这样的人在社会中会被人重视和敬畏，他们身上的地位和权利以及社交网络会无形的支配的其他个体的想法和行为。同时在社会交换中，人情的礼尚往来也会影响着人与人之间的关系和选择，比如人们会乐意与懂得人情事理的人交往；人情的施与和回赠会影响人与人之间的行为和决定，再具体说，如果一个人欠某人人情，那么，他会选择一切可能尽力去还这份人情，从而来保持与他人的关系。但不论怎样，这些面子和人情的现象都往往是交杂在一起蕴藏于中国独特的社会人际关系之中。

(In Chinese society, one's social status, power, and social network have different degrees of influence on interpersonal relationships and people's choices. If a person has a higher social status and power, he will then have a larger influence as well as social network, therefore, he will be able to possess more resources and get more access to obtain other resources and power, this kind of people will be respected and awed in Chinese society, the social status, social power, and social network on this kind of people will influence and dominate other people's thoughts and acts in a unconscious way. In the meantime, renqing interactions will also have an influence on individuals' relationships and choices, for example, people would like to interact with the ones who know and practice renqing rules; also, the sending and returning of renqing will also be influential in

interpersonal relations and choices, more specifically, if an individual owes someone a renqing, he or she will spare no effort to repay the renqing, so that they would keep this social relationship between them. No matter how, the phenomena of mianzi and renqing are always combined and entangled together, embedding in the Chinese particular social interpersonal relationships.)

6. **What could you conclude as the foundation of the above social phenomena in Chinese society?**

(你认为以上所讨论的和涉及到的中国社会现象、规则、原则是源于什么？)

我认为以上所提及和涉略到的中国社会中的人情往来，面子和人际关系，人际网络现象源自于中国传统的儒家思想。具体来说，这些社会原则和社会现象基于儒家思想中的等级观念。

(In my perspective, the above-mentioned renqing interaction, mianzi, as well as interpersonal guanxi and guanxi network are all originated from ChineseConfucianism. More specifically, they come from the hierarchical ideology in Confucianism.)

Interview 3

1. **What kinds of person tend to be more socially welcomed and popular, and tend to have fewer obstacles in Chinese society (what qualities or characteristics do these people need)?**

(你认为在中国什么样的人在社会中能比较吃得开、受欢迎，并且社会阻力比较小（你认为在中国这样的人身上应该具有哪些特性或特点）？)

有钱有势的人；处事圆滑，深知中国社会处事原则的人。

特点：家庭背景优越；有钱，有势力，有背景，有人脉；懂得并能够很好的运用中国社会中的游戏规则，例如，送礼，请客吃饭，办事儿，人情往来等。

(Wealthy and powerful people; sophisticated people, and people who deeply understand Chinese social rules.

Characteristics: having good family background; wealthy, powerful, having background and guanxi network; knowing and practice Chinese social rules sophisticatedly, for example, gift sending, treating people for meals, helping people deal with problems, renqing interaction.)

2. **How would you normally establish and maintain your relations with other individuals through social exchanges and interactions?**

(一般情况下，在社会交换以及社会交往中，你是如何建立和维系你与他人的关系的？)

普通情况下，中国人喜欢一吃饭、喝酒会友，建立与彼此的联系。但如果想建立进一步的社会关系和联系，往往需要彼此能够通过办事儿，帮忙解决某种问题或困难，或者更大程度上的送礼来建立响应

的人情关系和人情往来，一旦有了这样的关系，人与人之间便自然地变得"紧密"了，同时由这样的"礼尚往来"的人情关系而建立和维系的人际关系会使人们深陷其中，很难跳出。

(Generally speaking, Chinese people like establishing social relationships by eating together and drinking with friends. If one wants to further establish the social relationship with other people, he or she needs to achieve it by helping the other side solve problems, deal with difficulties, or sending gifts and renqing exchange, once people set up this kind of relationship, they will get "closer" to each other, meanwhile, social relationships that are established by renqing or renqing exchange will get people deeply involved and make it really hard to get out.)

3. **Do you think there are certain rules or principles among social relations, exchanges, and interactions in Chinese society? If there are, what do you think they might be?**

(你认为在中国的社会关系、社会交换和社会交往中，是否存在某些特定的规则或原则？如果你认为是，那么它们是什么？)

存在。

中国社会中比较讲究人情和关系。一旦得到他人的帮助，就会永远想要和试图回报他人。就像中国有句谚语所讲：滴水之恩必将涌泉相报。这不仅体现了中国人对"恩"的重视，也变现了对"恩"回报是一种长期性的责任和义务；同时这种长期的义务性的回报通常在中国等级观念极强的社会结构中和人际关系中得以体现。

(Yes, there are.

Chinese society pays attention on renqing and guanxi. Once you get help from other people, you will feel obligated to return to favor forever. Like the old Chinese saying says: "If you have received a drop of beneficence from other people, you should return to them a fountain of beneficence."This saying has not only indicated Chinese people's emphasis on "reciprocate", but also expressed the long-term obligation of Chinese"reciprocation"; also, this long-term and obligatory reciprocation is usually reflected in Chinese hierarchical social structure and interpersonal guanxi network.)

4. **Generally speaking, what do you think is/are the most important element (s) or part (s) in Chinese social relations and interactions?**

(一般来讲，你认为在中国社会关系及社会交往中最重要部分或因素是什么（是那些）？)

人情关系。

(Renqing relationship)

5. **What do you think are the factors that could influence individuals' relations, choices etc with**

others in Chinese society?

(你认为那些因素可以影响中国社会中人与人之间的关系和选择？)

一个人的社交网络；社会地位差异。

在中国，一个人的关系和决定会受到很多因素的影响，但我认为最重要的是你的关系网、你所能牵涉到的关系网和社会中来自不同社会等级人的社会地位差异压力。例如：一个人会选择去帮助另一个人，如果对方拥有和有影响社交网络，碍于对更大跟有影响力的人的畏惧；另外社会地位的不同也会影响人们的决定，因为社会地位高的人，有更大的影响力，更多的资源，更广的人脉，如果伤害了与这样人或群体的关系，一个人将很难甚至无法在中国社会中继续生存。

(One's social network; disparity of social status.

In China, there are so many factors could influence an individual's social relations and choices, but I think the most important thing is one's guanxi network, and the pressure you could generate from the disparity of people's various social status in your guanxi network. For example, one would choose to help another person because of the pressure or fear from some other powerful people which involved in this person's guanxi network; besides, the difference of people's social status will also have an influence on individuals'choices, because people with higher social status will be more influential, having more resources and guanxi, therefore, if someone damages the relationship with these kind of people or groups of people, he or she will not be able to continue to survive in Chinese society.)

6. **What could you conclude as the foundation of the above social phenomena in Chinese society?**

   (你认为以上所讨论的和涉及到的中国社会现象、规则、原则是源于什么？)

   从历史角度来看，这些中国社会现象和规则来源于中国根深蒂固的等级观念，不同社会等级的人有着不同的低位，权利和资源占有能力，这样就迫使中国人无法再一种平等的条件下进行交往交换;人们为了达到一定的目的，就必须通过一定的手段来建立和不同等级的人的联系，这些手段也就是我们常见的中国社会中的人情往来。

   从现实角度来看，中国社会仍然处于一种等级森严的状态之下，同时资源分配的严重不均导致不同社会地位的人占有不同数量的有限的资源，通常来讲，大量的权利和资源被社会极少数的位于顶端的人所控制着。所以这也是中国人不得不对资源占有者毕恭毕敬的原因和中国社会中的独特的社交、交换原则一致持续着根源所在。

   (Historically speaking, the previously-mentioned Chinesephenomenon originate from the

hierarchical mind in China, people from different levels have different social status, powers as well as the abilities to get resources, in this sense, Chinese people will have to have social exchanges under unequal situations; in order to reach the goal, people must set up guanxi with others by certain methods, the most common one to see is renqing interaction.

Seen from a realistic view, Chinese society is still under strict hierarchy condition, meanwhile, the disproportionate allocation of resources causes a difference regarding resource possession depending on what kind of social status one has, normally, the very few amount of people with higher social status will have and control a huge quantity of social power and resources. Therefore, Chinese people have to be very respectful and humble to resource allocators, and this is also the reason why the special Chinese social exchange rules exist.)

Interview 4

1. **What kinds of person tend to be more socially welcomed and popular, and tend to have fewer obstacles in Chinese society (what qualities or characteristics do these people need)?**

(你认为在中国什么样的人在社会中能比较吃得开、受欢迎，并且社会阻力比较小（你认为在中国这样的人身上应该具有哪些特性或特点）？)

我认为懂得人情和礼尚往来的人会比较受欢迎。不论是有求于人还是帮助别人，中国人都以这样的方式来建立自己的人际关系。特别是能在各种场合选择正确的礼物的人往往能在社会上取得成功。

(For my part, people who understand renqing and reciprocation in Chinese society will be very welcomed. No matter asking for help or getting helped, Chinese people always establish interpersonal guanxi with renqing and reciprocation. People will be much easier to succeed especially when they know when to send suitable gift on certain occasion or event.)

2. **How would you normally establish and maintain your relations with other individuals through social exchanges and interactions?**

(一般情况下，在社会交换以及社会交往中，你是如何建立和维系你与他人的关系的？)

我个人认为，社会交往当中，诚信是最基本的条件；多交流，多沟通是维系人际关系的重要部分。另外，尊重他人的决定和虚心听取别人的意见是维护社会关系的方法。

(I think trust is the most basic thing through social interactions; more communication is an important part in terms of maintaining interpersonal relationships. Also, respecting others and being humble to other people's opinions are the methods to protect social relationships.)

3. **Do you think there are certain rules or principles among social relations, exchanges, and**

interactions in Chinese society? If there are, what do you think they might be?

(你认为在中国的社会关系、社会交换和社会交往中，是否存在某些特定的规则或原则？如果你认为是，那么它们是什么？)

我认为中国的社会关系当中是存在一些规则和原则的。例如人情，礼尚往来。在人情往来，特别是送礼的过程中，对于被送礼的人来说，一旦接受了别人的礼物，就不能再推辞。利益没有单方面的，人际关系是可以用金钱来衡量的。

(I think there are certain rules and principles in Chinese social relationships. For example, renqing and reciprocation. During renqing interactions, especially the gift sending part, people who get gifts from others should not refuse to help. Interest is always a mutual thing, interpersonal guanxi could be measured by money.)

4. **Generally speaking, what do you think is/are the most important element (s) or part (s) in Chinese social relations and interactions?**

(一般来讲，你认为在中国社会关系及社会交往中最重要部分或因素是什么（是那些）)?

权力的拥有者往往掌控关系的持续和断绝，因为大多数人与权力的掌控者保持关系，往往都是为了相互帮助，相互利用。只有利益互通，事情才能办成。

(Peoplewho have the power will always be able to control the start and end of a certain social relationship or guanxi, the reason why majority of Chinese people try to keep guanxi with the power controller is because of the expectation or need of getting help, interest. Business could only be done if there is mutual interest existing.)

5. **What do you think are the factors that could influence individuals' relations, choices etc with others in Chinese society?**

(你认为那些因素可以影响中国社会中人与人之间的关系和选择？)

传统文化是一个非常重要的因素。送礼，敬酒，都是自古以来人们社交的一个形式，延续到当今社会。

(Traditional culture is a very important factor. Gift sending, drinking are old social interaction forms that continue to modern Chinese society.)

6. **What could you conclude as the foundation of the above social phenomena in Chinese society?**

(你认为以上所讨论的和涉及到的中国社会现象、规则、原则是源于什么？)

源于中国的传统文化。

(They are originated from Chinese traditional culture.)

Interviews from Australia people

Interview 1

1. **Do you think there are any differences betweenthe relationships you have with your family, friends and other members of society? Are there different rules or principles you follow when you interact with different groups of people (such as work colleagues, school mates, etc)? Please provide some examples.**

    Yes, I think the relationships I have with my immediate family and close friends are very different from the ones I have with, for example, my work colleagues and university friends. I feel that my family ties and close friendships are much stronger and more important to me than my other connections.

    In terms of giving/receiving favours, I think I feel much more comfortable asking for favours from immediate family, because:

    a) It is expected that you first ask for help from people you already have a solid, strong relationship with, such as your parents, siblings, etc.

    b) Generally speaking, there is less risk of rejection or embarrassment. Close family members feel obligated to help each other even if they don't want to. "Blood is thicker than water", and, in Australian culture, being there for your family in times of need should outweigh other commitments.

    c) Amongst close family members, favours do not necessarily ever need to be reciprocated. I don't think it's true to say that if you help a family member, they *owe* you. It doesn't work that way. Family members help each other when needed without expecting anything in return (besides what normally counts as help, friendship and love).

    I think this is similar with close friends, although friends tend to be more polite and more willing to pay back favours quickly. I think this is because friendships are less stable than family ties (unless the friendships are VERY strong, or life-long), so there is a greater risk of offence if the other person doesn't return the favour or act in an expected way (such as being gracious or apologetic).

    With people other than family and friends (like teachers and university colleagues), I don't believe it's appropriate to 'ask for favours' that fall outside of what is appropriate for that person's job description or expected role.

2. **How do you normally establish and maintain your social relationships with others in Australia? What kinds of rules and principles do you prefer to follow during the interactions?**

When making friends, it's important not to burden others or make others feel uncomfortable (it would be weird to buy new friends' presents or pay for their meals).

3. **Generally speaking, do you think Australians follow certain socially-based rules during their interactions with different types of people? (For example, how might an Australian return favors, establish and maintain his/her relationships with friends, etc) Please describe some examples from your experience.**

I think an Australian might maintain his or her relationships with family in a number of ways, such as through phone calls, family visits, meeting up on special holidays (it's generally expected to see family at Christmas and Easter, as well as on days like Mothers and Fathers day). Holidays are a good excuse to bring people together, and it's not unusual for families to meet maybe only two or three times a year. When families get together, it is common for only one 'side' to get together at a time. Both sides (the mum and dad's side) won't meet on the same day, and they might, for example, take turns every year to hold Boxing Day dinner (usually at the eldest person's house) --- I'm mentioning this because there are set days in Australia for 'family time', where it would be considered inappropriate to go out with your friends instead of spending time with your relatives. Our culture knows these rules and makes sure WE know them too through TV advertising and shopping discounts/specials (on the flip side, offering to meet with relatives weekly or monthly might work to ruin family relationships, as it is not expected or even desirable to meet up with family 'unnecessarily', as it encroaches on the other person's free time).

Social media websites are an excellent way for friends and acquaintances to establish and maintain their relationships (it's easy for groups of friends to create 'events', make group messages, etc), however, like with family meetings, it is socially inappropriate to continuously leave messages or create meeting times, events, etc. It's important to know when to be enthusiastic, when to pull back, and so on, where it's safer to be under-enthusiastic.

Recently I discovered that when friends haven't seen each other for a long time, it is expected that, once the returning friend makes contact with his/her friends by phone, he/she will be treated to dinner, etc as soon as possible (perhaps even that very same night - because the friend wants to show his returning friend his warmth and enthusiasm in showing he is free). In Australia, if this same situation occurred (where the returning friend made a phone call to his friend), it is FAR more likely that they won't meet until maybe the next day or second day after phoning. Why? In Australia I feel

that, in this case, it's rude for the host to assume that their returning friend is immediately free. Likewise, it's rude for the returning friend to assume that his friends will be able to immediately drop everything and make time for him. Instead, they should settle on a convenient time for them both sometime in the near future. This will ensure that both parties will not be inconvenienced.

4. **What do you think the underlying basis is behind individuals' social and interpersonal relations in Australia (ie. the principles or values of social exchange in Australia and Australian culture)?**

I think Australians like freedom, and they like feeling equal to others. This could explain why friends like to split the bill, and why the relationship between teachers and students at universities are usually always kept informal. Australia is more egalitarian, where relationships lean towards being (or appearing) equal. On the negative side, relationships of this kind might come across as lacking respect.

5. **Scenario: If somebody performed a significant and meaningful favor for you, how long is it appropriate for you to feel indebted to them?**

It depends. I don't think I would want to 'feel indebted' for long, I would want to return the favour as soon as possible, or at least offer something as a sign of gratitude (like a meal or gift). I think this is because, in Australia, people like to feel equal to each other - they don't like being in unequal relationships where one person continuously owes the other person.

6. **Chinese people often feel obligated to use favors as a way of establishing solidarity and/or maintaining relationships (for example, a person wishing to receive a favor from someone may first offer a favor, thereby making the other party feel obligated to offer something in return or stay in contact). How do you feel about this? Do you think similar rules operate in Australia?**

I think this is quite different from the Australian way, and, to be honest, it sounds a bit sneaky and insincere. It seems wrong to offer somebody a 'favour' with the hidden intention of asking for one in return further down the track. It's not very generous, and I feel it reveals the superficiality of the relationship. But, having said that, I can understand how it might work, and, to a certain extent, the same thing happens in Australia.

In general though, I don't think Australian culture works that way. If I want a favour from somebody, I will a) just ask, or b) ask while offering a favour in return. For b), I think this is far more common, as it

recognizes that favours should be reciprocal, and they should be returned within a short period of time. I think the mindset is "If you help me, I'll help you", while the Chinese mindset might be, "I helped you, so you should help me".

7. **In China, lower-middle class citizens are often forced by high-status members to obey social conventions (such as returning of favors) even if doing so will significantly disadvantage them. This has to do with the Chinese notion of 'face' (where higher status members have more power and influence). Comparing this with Australia, do you think differences in social class/power hierarchy have an effect on the way in which social interactions take place? Why or why not, please give the examples.**

I think China stresses hierarchy, class and power more so than in Australia. Although 'higher status members' with more power and influence still exist within Australia, I think Australians would still like to think of themselves as being equal and entitled to the same levels of respect. Whether or not this actually happens is another matter.

In terms of returning favours, I think Australians don't focus on this in the same way the Chinese do, and we certainly aren't familiar with this notion of 'face'.

Interview 2

1. **Do you think there are any differences betweenthe relationships you have with your family, friends and other members of society? Are there different rules or principles you follow when you interact with different groups of people (such as work colleagues, school mates, etc)? Please provide some examples.**

Yes I feel that I have different relationships between my family, friends and other members of society. The relationships we have with family can have a much deeper bond than with other people. This family bond does not necessarily have to be formed only by blood, such as adoption or when you begin a relationship with someone you love and they become a part of your family. This can run even deeper with the bond that you have with your parents.

Relationships with friends may be nearly as strong or just as strong as a family bond but normally friends are just for socializing. Also, a relationship with a friend may hold an issue of trust. The problem about a relationship with family is that there is no privacy. Rather than one member knowing a secret or private issue the whole family may know. It is a right for the whole family to know but with a friend you feel that they will only know what you have told them.

Relationships with work colleagues is very different and normally only revolves around work and is much more professional. People do not normally like to mix their social or private lives with their work lives. When this does happen it can jeopardize their careers, such as when you start a relationship with a colleague that goes unwell or a work colleagues see you drunk at a party.

For equality, in a family there is the feeling of equality but there are also levels of respect. For example, a child must respect their mother and father and abide by the household rules and what their parents expect of them. But that does not necessarily mean that your parents will approve of your career path or life goals and when you reach the age where you must make these decisions it is normally wise to move out and live your own life. If you live your whole life trying to achieve what people expect of you then it won't be a happy life of fulfillment. There are also social obligations with family, such as gatherings for Christmas, Easter, Fathers/Mothers day etc.

With friends there is a feeling of equality and age does not matter, especially if you are adults. This may be different for children or teenagers who have not yet reached that level of maturity. If your friend is younger or older than you it does not make a difference to your relationship and if a friend was older it does not mean that you must treat them with more respect. You are seen as and feel equal. Also their level of education, careers or income may not necessarily matter.

In work equality is hard to define. For example, a sales assistant who works at the cashier is seen as lower in terms of a supervisor, manager and then boss. And above else is the customer who must be treated with the most respect. To overstep these boundaries may cost you're your job. That is not to say we are all not equal as everyone has their own rights but when you are working there are professional relationships that need to be abided by in order to make the workplace run smoothly.

If a family member does ask a favour of you normally you will return the favour because they are your family. Favours from a family member can be taken for granted but it is also a duty. An example of a favour may be an older brother driving their younger sister to and from work. Although, it is a favour it is also a responsibility of the family member. One must be there for their family and look after each other's wellbeing. These things may not necessarily be seen as favours but normal acts of a family. But when a friend asks a favour of you it may be taken less for granted and they will be much more grateful for the act and the act of the favour will deepen the relationship with the friend. A friend will not necessarily expect the favour returned and will not be in dept to their friend for life. It is an act of good will. But this depends on the level of the favour. For example, when socializing and

eating out normally two friends will split the bill or pay for their own portion of the meal. It would be seen as uncomfortable if one party always chooses to pay and will also be seen as unfair if one party only pays for all of the meal when it is a cheap meal. But if a friend has forgotten their wallet or is low on cash a good friend will not mind paying for the meal and will do it as a favour. The friend may return the favour by shouting the next meal or something of equal value. Unlike family you may feel a little obligated the return the favour but this again depends on the level of friendship. Personally, I have a close friend whom I now see as family. We have been friends for nearly over ten years. We do each other favours but do not expect each other to return the favour. It is a natural bond of friendship. However, if I lended cash to a classmate from university I will expect them to return it later and as a matter of pride they will do also, otherwise they may be seen as scabby and a sponger. Money can be a soft issue with some people, but objects, such as giving an eraser or paper is not a big deal. The giver will be seen as "scabby" if they expect the other person to return them or give them an item of equal value later.

For work you may do someone a favour by covering their shift on a day that they are sick. The person does not necessarily have to return the favour but can choose to do so in the future if the same situation ever arises. However, if a boss asks a favour of you, then it will be wise to return the favour otherwise you may lose your job or any prospects at a raise. But it is not expected of you to return the favour. However if you keep doing favours for a person and don't expect anything in return people will see you as a pushover and most likely will take advantage of you.

2. **How do you normally establish and maintain your social relationships with others in Australia? What kinds of rules and principles do you prefer to follow during the interactions?**

Ways I establish relationships may be while studying at university, through the internet, such as email and facebook. While studying at university I may meet someone in my class and get talk about a topic for a particular activity. You don't really get to discuss things personally until after the classroom. I was able to make a new friend from class while chatting on public transport into the city. We discussed our thoughts, likes dislikes etc and personal interests. We then added eachother on facebook and exchanged mobile numbers when we wanted to meet up. We met up in the city several times to eat lunch and watch a movie and continued talking on facebook and through texts. We are now good friends. In Australia it is important to maintain social relationships by keeping in constant contact through either the internet or on mobile phones. We either chat on facebook

through messages or in person. We never chat on the phone. I only have one friend where if we can't meet up we will chat on the phone for several hours but we are very close friends and are quite oldschool. Otherwise we keep in touch constantly every day on email or through txts. I have noticed otherwise in Australia though that it is important to keep in touch personally and greet each other face to face. I have also noticed that in Australia you will hug with your close friends. It deepens the friendship and is a way of greeting and saying goodbye. This is what girls normally do but I suppose some guys will do it when you haven't seen someone for a very long time or are saying goodbye for a very long time. Guys don't normally do it often. On the other hand in my family, which is of Russian background when greeting my family we will not only hug but peck eachother on the cheek once. This is with either male or female. But when I meet a stranger for the first time or a male I will shake their hands. Hugging is not appropriate. If it is a male friend I will just say "Hi" or "how's it going." Maybe wave as a way of greeting. Another way to greet a person in passing is to say "Hello" or "Hi How are you?" and they can either smile, say "Hello" or "Good thanks" and keep walking. Also when hanging out with my close friends who are girls we will not hold hands. I have noticed this is a normal phenomenon among Chinese girls. In Australia that is seen as strange and hints you are in a serious relationship with that girl. Holding hands is to symbolize couples or what children do.

3. **Generally speaking, do you think Australians follow certain socially-based rules during their interactions with different types of people? (For example, how might an Australian return favors, establish and maintain his/her relationships with friends, etc) Please describe some examples from your experience.**

Honestly I don't know. It's not something that I really think about. I guess if a group of Australians went to eat out at a restaurant they may say 'Hi, how's it going' when greeting or 'good day mate.' They may shake hands or hug. Depends on level of relationship and gender. When eating food you chew with your mouth closed and making loud slurping noises or burping or farting is generally seen as rude. So is spitting. Due to technology now a lot of people have facebook and the internet on their phones and will tag themselves at the restaurant on facebook.

Returning favours is a tough one…it depends on the level of the favour…if borrowing cash they may return the cash borrowed but generally people don't if it is from family. The favour becomes a gift. When eating out the bill is normally split in half or people pay for their own meal. Not one person will pay for the whole meal. Too expensive plus people have pride and like to pay for their own food or at

least split it. It gives the feeling of equality and people don't like to feel in debt to others and it stops

sticky situations if the next time the meal if covered by the next person it is too expensive or cheap.

Maintaining relationships is when arranging to meet up with people you stick to that date arranged.

I've lost a few friends by cancelling out on an event in the last minute. Also when meeting up with

friends its fine for either friend to be running late. Not too late though! Say up to half an hour. They

can just text or call and say they are running behind schedule. They can then arrange to meet their

friend in a different location.

4. **What do you think the underlying basis is behind individuals' social and interpersonal relations in Australia (ie. the principles or values of social exchange in Australia and Australian culture)?**

In Australia we are all seen as equal and should be treated equally and we are all "Australian" no

matter how we look or our family background. One example is two workers have the same job and

same hours but even though one worker is really lazy and does less work they will both get paid the

same amount. Just because a person's career is a cleaner, it doesn't make them any less of a

person as an owner of a small business or large company. Yes, the owner earns more but both

people are of equal value. Australians all have rights to express our opinions, whether it concerns

politics, religion, marriage etc. It's hard to define…but I think the origin of these values…are passed

down each generation from parents, the government, the media, in schooling. The rules one must

not steal or lie and respect your parents also originates from the Bible. When Australia was originally

founded, the majority of Englishmen were Catholic or Christian, thus they not only brought the

beliefs from England and the Queen but also their religious beliefs. These ideals have changed over

time and instead of associating ourselves with the Queen of England, we believe we are all unique

individuals but also Australian. For example, the national anthem:

We are one but we are many

And from all the lands on earth we come,

we share a dream,

And sing with one voice,

I am, you are, we are Australian. Etc

We were brought up with this song and its meanings explaining the Australian history have become

impregnated into our brains. That is also why Australia is very welcoming to international visitors or

students and refugees. We were all once refugees, except the Indigenous Australians. There is still some rockiness with the topic of Indigenous Australians and it wasn't until a few years ago that the Australian government officially apologized to the Indigenous people.

5. **Scenario: If somebody performed a significant and meaningful favor for you, how long is it appropriate for you to feel indebted to them?**

I don't think that feeling indebted to them would be the right phrase…I guess thankful or grateful. In Australia when one does each other favours they do not expect a favour in return. They can feel gratitude but a feeling of indebt is bad. They don't have to return the favour but if they do feel indebted they may give the person a gift in order to repay their kindness or when they are in need of help in the future, the person feeling indebt can help them out.

6. **Chinese people often feel obligated to use favors as a way of establishing solidarity and/or maintaining relationships (for example, a person wishing to receive a favor from someone may first offer a favor, thereby making the other party feel obligated to offer something in return or stay in contact). How do you feel about this? Do you think similar rules operate in Australia?**

In Australia when one does a favour this does not necessarily mean that the other person has to return the favour. Quite the opposite. Doing favours can strengthen a relationship but the idea is not to do one a favour in order for the other person just to owe them. It is done out of kindness. For example, my friend is low on cash, yet we are hanging out in the city and we would like to have dinner together. I will gladly pay for the meal and not expect anything in return. Their thanks is enough. Another favour is a friend from university asks me to help out at an event by helping out at a stall for a few hours. If I accept, yes I am doing a favour but they will not owe me any favour. I am just helping them out and this deepens the relationship. What I am gaining though is a valuable experience, and helping out at such an event may give me further chances in the future, give me valuable experience and I may put it on my resume. But that person will not owe me.

7. **In China, lower-middle class citizens are often forced by high-status members to obey social conventions (such as returning of favors) even if doing so will significantly disadvantage them. This has to do with the Chinese notion of 'face' (where higher status members have more power and influence). Comparing this with Australia, do you think differences in social class/power hierarchy have an effect on the way in which social interactions take place? Why**

or why not, please give the examples.

No I don't think social class/power hierarchy has an effect on the way in which social interactions take place. In Australia everyone is seen as equal and of equal value no matter what their position is. One person may earn more than another but that does not make them above the person and have power over them. There are situations though, such as a lecturer and a student or a worker and their manager/boss. It is important for a student to respect their lecturer and act accordingly in order to get good grades and be a good student. Likewise for a worker, they must be respectful towards their manager/boss in order to keep a positive face and keep their job. It is beneficial to them in the long run. Especially if either party (student/worker) needs references in the future. But this is not always the case. I have seen students with their lecturer and do not care of the lecturers status and will act natural or speak their mind. Same for workers. The boss also does not have any power over the worker. For example, the boss calls the worker in to ask them if they can cover a sick person's shift on the workers day off. The worker can simply say "No, this is my day off" or "Sorry. I am busy" and the boss will say "Woops. Sorry mate." And that is that.

Interview 3

1. **Do you think there are any differences between the relationships you have with your family, friends and other members of society? Are there different rules or principles you follow when you interact with different groups of people (such as work colleagues, school mates, etc)? Please provide some examples.**

    I maintain very different relationships between my family and friends compared to other people, such as co-workers and strangers. The intimacy between family and friend relations allow for an individual's needs and desires to be considered in various contexts. Relations between co-workers and strangers, such as customers, usually remain professional and conservative until a level of trust is achieved.

2. **How do you normally establish and maintain your social relationships with others in Australia? What kinds of rules and principles do you prefer to follow during the interactions?**

    My relationships are normally established and maintained with exchanged favours and information, normally such actions are reciprocated and such begins a sense of trust.

3. **Generally speaking, do you think Australians follow certain socially-based rules during their interactions with different types of people? (For example, how might an Australian return**

favours, establish and maintain his/her relationships with friends, etc) Please describe some examples from your experience.

I cannot say Australians as a whole have a set code of conduct when relationships are involved as Australia is composed of many different cultures and groups, each with their own rules and regulations that are monitored by the law. However, in my personal experiences, I do follow a standard of social-based rules that are heavily influenced by what my mum raised me to follow.

4. **What do you think the underlying basis is behind individuals' social and interpersonal relations in Australia (ie. the principles or values of social exchange in Australia and Australian culture)?**

The underlying basis of all interactions is needs and desires. Needs and desires motivate a person to exchange favours and information with others in hopes to achieve their goal.

5. **Scenario: If somebody performed a significant and meaningful favour for you, how long is it appropriate for you to feel indebted to them?**

Depending on the context of the favour, I should think I would be indebted until I feel I have returned the favour in its entirety.

6. **Chinese people often feel obligated to use favours as a way of establishing solidarity and/or maintaining relationships (for example, a person wishing to receive a favour from someone may first offer a favour, thereby making the other party feel obligated to offer something in return or stay in contact). How do you feel about this? Do you think similar rules operate in Australia?**

This is different to what I normally experience. The person who seeks a favour initially will ask for it first and return it later usually, as opposed to doing a favour and expecting it later. The social 'area' I am involved with is not as sensitive to what people do for them as the Chinese seem to be, so relying on them to return my favour is not a reliable option. Favours are usually discussed with the return favour in mind, so usually the initial favour and the return favour are agreed upon within the same discussion and each party will finish their obligations at the same time if the agreement allows.

7. **In China, lower-middle class citizens are often forced by high-status members to obey social conventions (such as returning of favours) even if doing so will significantly disadvantage them. This has to do with the Chinese notion of 'face' (where higher status members have more power and influence). Comparing this with Australia, do you think differences in social**

class/power hierarchy have an effect on the way in which social interactions take place? Why or why not, please give the examples.

I would like to think that Australia doesn't have a similar power hierarchy. Unfortunately, we most likely do in areas such as politics, where such an option usually results in either 'disadvantage yourself' or 'disadvantage yourself even further'.e.g. either lose some money/stock/value, or lose it all.In other areas, such as customer service and retail, Favours asked by higher staff are usually reasonable and work related, such as being asked to do one task as opposed to another because one is more urgent or more important. Such favours are usually not reciprocated by the lower staff member unless they wish to be seen as demanding and unreasonable. As to ask a higher member to do something of their job or to do your own is considered lazy. The only exception would be to ask for staff obliged benefits, such as time off and paid leave, in moderation. Only in a manner that doesn't put excessive strain on other staff members.

Interview 4

1. **Do you think there are any differences between the relationships you have with your family, friends and other members of society? Are there different rules or principles you follow when you interact with different groups of people (such as work colleagues, school mates, etc)? Please provide some examples.**

    Absolutely. Varying on how close a relationship I have with the individual will alter the level of detail I entrust with each person. This is only slightly affected by whether the person is a family member, work colleague or friend. If I have a higher level of trust for a person I will be more open with them, in some cases being more trusting of friends over non-direct family members and so on.

2. **How do you normally establish and maintain your social relationships with others in Australia? What kinds of rules and principles do you prefer to follow during the interactions?**

    This will vary depending on the nature of the relationship I will have with the individual. Generally with friends we will establish and maintain communication at events (social gatherings, birthdays or concerts) via phone (calls, sms etc) or social media (facebook, twitter etc). Generally there is an unspoken agreement not to contact people late at night and early in the morning on weekends. Initially when first meeting someone for the first time there will be an 'ice-breaking' period where you will get to know the person, during which time I often would not divulge personal information other than my name, interests, professional background etc. Although as I get to know the person better

and feel they are trustworthy I will be more casual and willing to share more intimate details about my personal life.

3. **Generally speaking, do you think Australians follow certain socially-based rules during their interactions with different types of people? (For example, how might an Australian return favours, establish and maintain his/her relationships with friends, etc) Please describe some examples from your experience.**

Generally speaking yes Australians will follow principles of helping a friend in need or returning a favour in order to develop a relationship. For instance I grew up on a farm and when the owner of a neighbouring property was in need of assistance he offered spare materials my father needed for his business.

4. **What do you think the underlying basis is behind individuals' social and interpersonal relations in Australia (ie. the principles or values of social exchange in Australia and Australian culture)?**

To build strong friendships or 'mateship' it is important for there to be some degree of shared interests or mutually beneficial outcomes from the relationship. Australians can often be quite individualistic and will often ask themselves the question 'what's in it for me?' when appraising social and interpersonal interactions.

5. **Scenario: If somebody performed a significant and meaningful favour for you, how long is it appropriate for you to feel indebted to them?**

This would significantly depend upon the nature of the favour. If someone saved my life or the life of someone very close to me then I may feel indebted to the individual for the rest of my life. However if someone covered a shift for me at work I may buy them a drink or go out for lunch etc but then I would no longer feel a sense of needing to make it up to the other person.

6. **Chinese people often feel obligated to use favours as a way of establishing solidarity and/or maintaining relationships (for example, a person wishing to receive a favour from someone may first offer a favour, thereby making the other party feel obligated to offer something in return or stay in contact). How do you feel about this? Do you think similar rules operate in Australia?**

Yes although it would not be openly discussed in most instances. Again people will often ask what's in it for me. And at times this may require someone to take the first step in initiating the relationship.

Although the counter favour may or may not always be returned.

7. **In China, lower-middle class citizens are often forced by high-status members to obey social conventions (such as returning of favours) even if doing so will significantly disadvantage them. This has to do with the Chinese notion of 'face' (where higher status members have more power and influence). Comparing this with Australia, do you think differences in social class/power hierarchy have an effect on the way in which social interactions take place? Why or why not, please give the examples.**

Depending on the individual. If someone is aspiring to be like someone of a higher class i.e. a senior manager or mentor then they may be more likely to perform favours that may disadvantage them in the short term for a long-term reward i.e. a promotion. However if the lower class individual is satisfied with their current social standing and do not envisage a direct benefit to come about from performing the favour then quite often most Australians would not feel obligated to do the favour. Some people are kind-hearted and will perform the favour out of generosity; however I would suggest that this would occur in the minority of cases, most Australians would expect to attain an underlying personal benefit in most cases.

Declaration

I, the undersigned, _王春圭_____, declare that my

answers to these interview questions are my own, and have

been provided for the sole purpose of fulfilling the objective of

this study. If further verification is needed, I can be contacted

using the details provide below:

Email: _Wangcg350 @ nenu. edu. cn_

Phone/mobile: _8613944899108_

Signature:_王春圭_____Date: _03/11/2012_

Declaration

I, the undersigned, 杨子德 , declare that my answers to these interview questions are my own, and have been provided for the sole purpose of fulfilling the objective of this study. If further verification is needed, I can be contacted using the details provide below:

Email: talent.zide @ hotmail.com.

Phone/mobile:

Signature: 杨子德 Date: 05 / 11 / 2012

Declaration

I, the undersigned, _____ , declare that my answers to these interview questions are my own, and have been provided for the sole purpose of fulfilling the objective of this study. If further verification is needed, I can be contacted using the details provide below:

Email: yuliang_sam@hotmail.com

Phone/mobile:

Signature:_____Date:___09/11/2012_____

_____

Declaration

I, the undersigned, 赵雅婷 _____, declare that my answers to these interview questions are my own, and have been provided for the sole purpose of fulfilling the objective of this study. If further verification is needed, I can be contacted using the details provide below:

Email: cidan19630310@126.com

Phone/mobile:

Signature: 赵雅婷 _____ Date:__ Nov 06 2012 ___

Declaration

I, the undersigned,_____Jennifer Lokteff_____, declare that my answers to these interview questions are my own, and have been provided for the sole purpose of fulfilling the objective of this study. If further verification is needed, I can be contacted using the details provide below:

Email: jenlara25 @ hotmail · com

Phone/mobile: +61 413 192 167

Signature:_____Jennifer Lokteff_____Date:_____28/12/12_____

Declaration

I, the undersigned, _Rebekah Lokteff_ , declare that my answers to these interview questions are my own, and have been provided for the sole purpose of fulfilling the objective of this study. If further verification is needed, I can be contacted using the details provide below:

Email: cherryblossumgirl_204@hotmail.com
Phone/mobile: 0432238143

Signature: _____ Date: 11/8/2012

Declaration

I, the undersigned, _ADAM NORTON_ , declare that my answers to these interview questions are my own, and have been provided for the sole purpose of fulfilling the objective of this study. If further verification is needed, I can be contacted using the details provide below:

Email: _adam.norton@unisa.edu.au_

Phone/mobile: _0434 844 980_

Signature: _Adam Norton_ Date: _30/10/12_

Declaration

I, the undersigned,_____Bianca Sando_____, declare that my

answers to these interview questions are my own, and have

been provided for the sole purpose of fulfilling the objective of

this study. If further verification is needed, I can be contacted

using the details provide below:

Email: bsando267@yahoo.com.au.

Phone/mobile:

Signature:_____Date:_November /4th /2012.