

# A Long Journey

## *The History of the Chinese Immigration to Oslo*

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# **A Long Journey: the History of the Chinese Immigration to Oslo**

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# Abstract

This thesis is a historical analysis of the Chinese immigration to Oslo from the late 1960s to the early 1990s. It aims to identify the four main different waves of the Chinese immigration to Oslo — first wave (the 1960s – the 1970s): Chinese seamen working on Norwegian ships settled down in Norway; second wave (the mid-1970s – the 1980s): The families of the seamen immigrated as family reunification; third wave (the late 1970s – the 1980s): Chinese cooks immigrated as skilled workers; and fourth wave (the mid-1980s – the early 1990s): Chinese students who stayed and settled down.

The history of Chinese immigration to Oslo is rather short when compared to other Western European countries such as Britain, France and the Netherlands. Yet, the Chinese migratory route to Oslo is diverse in spite of its short history. To better understand how these waves happened in their particular timeframes, it is important to recognize the diverse factors that caused different groups of Chinese people to arrive in Oslo in different periods. The causes, processes and perpetuations of Chinese immigration to Oslo are the main subjects that this study has examined. In order to collect the main sources for this thesis, I have chosen oral history and textual analysis as the methodological approach. With a comprehensive discussion and presentation of my collected historical evidence, I have demonstrated how the history of Chinese immigration is well embedded with the immigration history in Norway.

The goal of the study is to provide a larger perspective of the immigration history in Norway and to present a group of immigrants that does not get much attention in Norwegian society today. Even though the number of Chinese immigrants is relatively insignificant in comparison to other immigrant groups in Norway, there are many things that is unknown regarding the Chinese community, including their history, culture and their adaptation to mainstream society. Hence this study has not only aimed to provide the initial start for more academic study on Chinese in Oslo or even in Norway, but has also aimed to strengthen the general Norwegian knowledge of Chinese immigrants.

# Acknowledgements

A Long Journey — the process of writing this thesis has been a long journey in itself. A journey that has been full of diverse emotions. I have been confused, inspired, frustrated, but on top of which, I have learnt immensely a lot throughout the years of studying in Norway. I would not have made it for what I have accomplished now if I have not received tremendous helps from all my wonderful teachers, friends and my family.

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# 1 Introduction

There is a famous Chinese saying, “Close to the sea, there will always be overseas Chinese” (*you haishui de difang, jiuyou huaren* 有海水的地方, 就有华人). This saying is maybe exaggerated, but somewhat illustrates a common phenomenon of the Chinese settlement overseas. Oslo, the capital city of Norway, has also become one of the destinations in which Chinese settlements can be found. However, with a population of slightly more than 10,000 Chinese immigrants and their descendants living in Norway,<sup>1</sup> they are considered diminutive in numbers when compared to the other larger Asian immigrant groups such as Pakistani and Vietnamese.

The Chinese are one of the oldest and one of the major ethnic minorities in several European countries, such as in Great Britain, France and the Netherlands.<sup>2</sup> The establishments of ‘Chinatowns’ in various major cities in Europe indicate the remarkable scope and development of Chinese communities in the host societies. On the contrary, such a case cannot be observed in the capital city of Norway. Chinese immigrants neither comprise one of the major immigrant groups in Oslo nor have they established any Chinatown.

The history of Chinese immigration to Oslo is short. This phenomenon can be explained as such - Norway, in a European context, is a latecomer when it comes to immigration. As a result of that situation, Chinese immigration also had a late start. This is a big contrast when compared to the Chinese immigration history in other European countries, particularly Chinese in Western European countries such as Britain, France, the Netherlands, Italy and Germany. In the scope of Scandinavia, historical evidence have shown Chinese arrival and their naturalization to the mainstream society already in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. There is however, no detailed written accounts that can be found regarding early Chinese immigrants in Norway within the same period. However there are some written accounts on the topic of Chinese delegations coming to European countries (including Norway) for visits in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century on behalf of the Qing Imperial government in order to get

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<sup>1</sup> Statistik sentrabyrå, ‘Innvandrere og norskfødte ned innvandrerforeldre, etter kjønn og landbakgrunn, 2013’ [Immigrants and their descendants, based on gender and country background, 2013] Statistics were retrieved from the *Tabel 05183*, I have aggregated numbers which China, Hong Kong and Taiwan are included. In 2013, 5,077,798 people live in Norway. See Statistics Norway, [www.ssb.no](http://www.ssb.no) (accessed 11.11.2013)

<sup>2</sup> David Parker (1998:67); Live Yu-Sion (1998:97); Frank N. Pieke and Gregor Benton (1998: 125)

inspiration from the West.<sup>3</sup> This group of Chinese did however not remain in Norway and are thus not considered as immigrants.

The first wave of Chinese immigration to Oslo started from Hong Kong in the late 1960s. Yet, there is no concrete historical research regarding their migratory route. How did the first Chinese immigration to Norway begin? When did they arrive here? How did they come here and end up settling down here? Did they all come from the same region in their homeland? How does the push and pull factors explain the perpetuation of Chinese migration from certain sending areas in certain periods? And why did different types of Chinese immigrant groups appear in various specific times? Finally, *what is the main migratory pattern of Chinese migration to Oslo?*

In order to answer these questions, I aim to look at the waves of Chinese immigration to Oslo in a historical perspective. By identifying how these waves happened in a particular timeframe, I attempt to recognize the diverse factors that caused different groups of Chinese people to arrive Oslo in different periods. The causes, processes and perpetuations of Chinese immigration to Oslo need to be explained under a specific historical timeframe, as some selected international migration theories will be used to help depict the pattern of their entries and arrival time to Oslo.

## **1.1 Research questions**

My main research question in this thesis is, *when and how did Chinese move to Oslo?* I will only concentrate on the timeframe from the late 1960s to the early 1990s. This is because the four main different waves of Chinese immigration happened within this particular timeframe. I have chosen to start the timeframe because there was no big scale of Chinese immigration to Norway before the 1960s. The reason why I have decided the 1990s as the ending timeframe for my study because I have mainly focus on the initial of the four main different waves, as the fourth wave began from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s. In addition, instead of emphasizing the migrants' motivation for leaving their homeland and move to Oslo, I have chosen to study how and when did they immigrated from different migrants-sending areas, and how their experiences represent the different waves of immigration history. More precisely, I attempt to study how, and which group of, Chinese people came to Oslo in certain

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<sup>3</sup> Mette Thunø (1997:84), (1998:172); Rune Svarverud (1997:7)

significant periods, by examining both major push and pull factors in Chinese immigrants-sending and receiving areas. Subsequently, how did the effect of migrant networks and cumulative causation reflect on the ways that Chinese immigrants moved to Oslo. These migration theories which I have chosen, attempt not only to examine the causes of Chinese immigration to Oslo, but also, most importantly, to identify the historical patterns of this immigration.

By recognizing the historical and social links between both sending and receiving areas, I have found that except the very first Chinese who arrived in Oslo in a rather coincidental way, the following Chinese immigrants in Oslo clearly did not move to Oslo purely by chance — Their knowledge about Oslo which they obtained through their personal migrant networks is the strongest influence behind the factors that made them move. As a result, how the migratory route for Chinese to move to Norway was created is questioned, and how the timeframe applied for those specific Chinese ethnic groups is therefore also crucial for my findings. For instance, there were predominantly Chinese people from Hong Kong who moved to Norway during the 1960-1980. However, the numbers of Chinese from mainland China increased rapidly during the late 1980s to the 1990s and onwards. Today, Chinese immigrants from mainland China is the dominant group among the Chinese society in Norway. In short, these are the factors which will be specifically analyzed from chapter 5 to chapter 7 of this thesis.

## **1.2 The importance of my study**

A vast amount of academic research exists regarding the historical patterns of the Chinese emigration to Europe. However, the pattern of Chinese emigration to Norway has barely attracted scholarly attention within the scope of the studies of overseas Chinese. There has been no concrete research concerning Chinese in Norway in a historical, economic, political or social perspective. It is possible that the reason for the limited research among Chinese in Scandinavia stems from their good integration and because they have found their own catering niche. A similar case has already been proved and studied by the Danish scholar, Mette Thunø in relation to Chinese immigrants in Denmark, with a particular focus on catering and ethnicity within the Chinese society in Denmark. She explicitly mentions, ‘in Danish eyes, Chinese exist only in relation to food as they are invisible as an immigrant

community.’<sup>4</sup> Later she stresses that ‘this stereotype of the imperceptible Chinese has been reinforced by Danish social scientists, which have never paid attention to this particular immigrant group.’<sup>5</sup> The same situation can be applied in the case of Norway.<sup>6</sup> Chinese restaurants are spread throughout Norway, and in Norwegian eyes, my preliminary findings suggest that Chinese restaurants are more visible to Norwegians than the Chinese people who run them.

As mentioned previously, I have chosen a multi-method approach (oral history and textual analysis) in order to find sources for my study due to the general lack of written sources.

The fieldwork was done between late 2012 and mid-2013, and consists of 17 formal interviews and numerous conversations with Chinese families in Oslo. My findings show that it is well known among the Chinese community in Oslo that most of the earliest Chinese restaurants which were established in Oslo in the early 1970s, were run by Chinese seamen who came from Hong Kong and used to work for the Wilhelmsen shipping company.<sup>7</sup> Based on my oral evidence and written sources, these Hong Kong Chinese seamen comprised the first waves of Chinese immigration to Oslo starting in the late 1960s. An important question to be raised is as follows: How and why did these Chinese seamen start to work on Norwegian vessels in the beginning? What made these Chinese seamen become the pioneer group of Chinese immigration? One might also ask, why is it so important to examine the earliest history of Chinese migrants in Oslo? This is because the earliest Chinese who migrated to Oslo, can be seen as pioneers and thus began to trigger the social network effect, eventually resulting in “chain migration”, as people from China started to immigrate to the destination after acknowledging their kinship’s recommendations. In my analysis chapter, I attempt to emphasize more on the first waves of Chinese immigration in Oslo and the following waves of this immigration will be presented in a smaller scope. I claim that this part of the Chinese history is an important part of Norway’s immigration history (not just Oslo), and one very important chapter in the relations between Norway and China, especially how the Norwegian shipping activities in China(including Hong Kong) had in fact triggered the first wave of Chinese immigration to Norway.

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<sup>4</sup> Mette Thunø, (1998:168)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> See Grete Brochmann and Knut Kjeldstadli (ed.) (2008) by comparing Pakistanis and Southern European immigrants, Chinese immigrants are hardly mentioned in the chapters of history of international immigrants during 1950s to 1990s, refer to pp. 179-266.

<sup>7</sup> Are Kalvø (2007: 51); Informats 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16.



The waves of Chinese immigration to Oslo are distinctive from other immigrant groups — their general means, residing duration and arrival time in Oslo differ from other immigrant groups. For instance, Pakistani and Turks began to come to Oslo mostly as ‘guest workers’ during the end of the 1960s to the early 1970s; Vietnamese began to come to Oslo as refugees in the 1970s and Iranian began to come as refugee in the mid-1980s. Chinese, however, began to come to Oslo by different means during different periods. In 2008, a report was published in association with the global attention on China in the year of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. The report provides a brief overview of Chinese in Norway. The interesting part of this report is that their roles/occupations and their duration of stay are more diverse than other immigrant groups.<sup>8</sup> The conclusions of this report is inspiring to my research and I hope that my findings can contribute to providing more comprehensive and detailed information about the historical waves of Chinese immigration to Oslo.

In short, my aim for this thesis is to outline a detailed historical account of Chinese in Oslo that can be considered as filling a gap into the consolidation of further research regarding studies on overseas Chinese in general. I argue that the history of Chinese immigration to Oslo not only being a starting point to Chinese immigration to other places in Norway, but most importantly, to a larger perspective, Chinese immigration to Norway is a part of the immigration history in Norway as well.

### 1.3 Definition of “Chinese” in this thesis

It is known that the usage of “overseas Chinese” (*haiwai huaren* 海外华人; *huaqiao* 华侨; *waiji huaren* 外籍华人) or vice-versa “Chinese overseas” has always been frequently debated by scholars studying Chinese in overseas.<sup>9</sup> Today, the Chinese term “*huaqiao* 华侨” only refers to citizens of the PRC residing overseas other than the mainland China. If a Chinese or his/her descendants have been naturalized into their place of residence, they will be refer to “*waiji huaren* 外籍华人”. However, Taiwan refers to the term “*huaqiao* 華僑” as all Chinese

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<sup>8</sup> See Lars Østby (2008). The Statistics Norway (*Statistisk sentralbyrå*) published a report regarding Chinese in Norway in 2008. It was however, rather than seen as a detailed statistical report, it can be only seen as a brief overview of Chinese immigrants in Norway in terms of by analyzing their gender, ages, occupation and duration of stay. Despite the limitation of the scope of the report, Østby provides short but fairly insightful demographic situation and behavior of Chinese immigrants in Norway. See ‘Innvandrere fra Kina- *Kinesiske innvandrere studerer eller jobber*’.

<sup>9</sup> See for instance in David Yen-ho Wu (1991) ; Adam McKeown (1999)

people who are residing overseas.<sup>10</sup> It is obvious that in terms of the definition of “Chinese”, this question can already be set up as a single scientific study in different perspective such as in anthropologic or sociologic aspects.<sup>11</sup>

The leading scholar in the field of studies of Overseas Chinese, Wang Gungwu noted that:

‘[S]ince 1945, the idea of the Chinese all being sojourners (*huaqiao* 华侨) has been challenged, especially in Southeast Asia. Many more have preferred to see themselves as having settled abroad as foreign nationals; if Chinese at all, they see themselves as descendants of Chinese (*huayi* 华裔)’.<sup>12</sup>

The Chinese-Malaysian anthropologist Tan Chee-Beng offers a comparative perspective on the anthropological field of studying Chinese worldwide.

[T]he non-Chinese citizens of different nationalities are referred to as ‘ethnic Chinese; and ‘Chinese overseas’ rather than the commonly used ‘Overseas Chinese’, which today refers more accurately to *huaqiao* 华侨, citizens of China residing overseas. Southeast Asian scholars writing in English generally prefer the label ‘ethnic Chinese’ as equivalent to *huaren* 华人, the label used by the Chinese themselves when writing in Chinese. Among the earliest to use this label in a book title is Yong (1981). Wang Gungwu (1977) is the earliest to discuss comprehensively the origin of the term *huaqiao*, which literally means ‘Chinese sojourners’.<sup>13</sup>

Tan later also stresses the difficulties of the widely applicable term when defining Chinese who live overseas:

It has been a dilemma for scholars writing in English to find a general term for *huaren* 华人 without using ‘overseas Chinese’. Historically, especially before the Second World War, most Chinese in diaspora did consider themselves *huaqiao* 华侨 or Overseas Chinese, but today they are mostly citizens of different nationalities. [...] Most scholars from the West generally continue to use the term ‘Overseas Chinese’ or the increasingly popular term in diasporic discourse, ‘Chinese in diaspora’.<sup>14</sup>

As for Tan, he claims that he prefers ‘ethnic Chinese’ (but he also uses the term ‘Chinese in diaspora’ if necessary.) He explains the reason of doing so is because he does not assume that the Chinese overseas still look at China as their homeland. He sometimes also refers Chinese overseas to the term ‘people of Chinese descent’ to give more generally meaning. He claims firmly that, ethnic Chinese are people of Chinese descent who still regard themselves as ‘Chinese’ in one way or another.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Li Anshan (2004:7)

<sup>11</sup> See for instance these three papers by Wang Gungwu “The Question of the ‘Overseas Chinese’” (1976) , “South China Perspectives on Overseas Chinese” (1985) and “Greater China and the Chinese Overseas” (1993)

<sup>12</sup> Wang Gungwu (1991:135)

<sup>13</sup> Tan Chee-Beng (2004:2)

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. (2004:2)

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

As I have demonstrated above, the discussion of ‘overseas Chinese’ can be studied in many aspects, but I intend not to go further into discussion regarding these issues, for instance ‘who is Chinese’ or ‘how to define Chineseness’ for my thesis. Rather than that, I shall present the definition of ‘Chinese’ for this thesis.

The Chinese immigrants who I have interviewed in my thesis are all first-generation. This means they were all born in China, Hong Kong or Taiwan, and later migrated to Norway by different means and in different time periods. They perceive themselves as Chinese, regardless of their citizenship. This thesis aims to identify the main waves from these areas (main China, Hong Kong and Taiwan). Although there are many immigrants from Southeast Asia, particularly Vietnam - most of whom are of Chinese descent, I have decided to exclude these groups from this research. This is because the Statistics Norway has no statistics on ethnicity, only statistics on country background. Since there is no concrete statistics on ethnicity, I found it problematic to identify the historical waves of ethnic Chinese immigration to Oslo, particularly those who were from Southeast Asia.

#### **1.4 Short outline of the thesis**

In chapter two I will present the background — a brief overview of studies on overseas Chinese in Europe that have been conducted, followed by an introduction of the immigration history in Norway. In chapter three I present the research methods that I have used for this thesis – oral history and textual analysis. I present the ideas of using the selected methods, as well as discussing various problems, limitations and solutions that matter to my research methods. In chapter four I discuss the theoretical basis for the analysis. In order to help explaining the ‘push-pull’ factors behind both sending and receiving areas, I use the theories of social capital, migrant networks effects, and cumulative causation. Chapter 5 is presented as the beginning of my historical analysis by discussing the early Chinese presence in Oslo. Chapter 6 discusses the first wave of Chinese immigration to Oslo. This first wave consists of Hong Kong Chinese seamen who had worked on Norwegian vessels for a long period and immigrated to Oslo due to certain factors. Chapter 7 discusses how the following waves occurred after the first wave had ceased — family reunification, Chinese skilled cooks and students were all intertwined throughout the 1970s to the 1990s. Finally, chapter 8 will be a conclusion of my historical analysis and the whole thesis.

## 2 Historical background of Chinese migration and Norwegian immigration

There are many reasons for people migrating from their home countries. There are also many factors that engender immigrants' various desires to seek starting a new life in another country. In the case of the Chinese, migration is an old tradition that the Chinese have been practiced since the time of the Ming dynasty.<sup>16</sup> There has been numerous academic research on Chinese migration, wherein transnational Chinese immigrants have commonly been referred to as the *Chinese diaspora*. The term "diaspora" has long been associated with Jewish historical experience, but can be applied to African-Americans and the Chinese as well.<sup>17</sup>

In this chapter, I will first discuss the existing research on the overseas Chinese in general, particularly in Europe. Secondly, I will provide a comprehensive account of the immigration studies on Norway, as well as introducing different immigrant types in Norway. The discussion of immigration types and other immigrant groups in Norway will help my readers to understand the situation of the Chinese immigrants in Norway, which has been neglected among the academic fields due to various reasons. This also highlights the importance of my research question — understanding the historical immigration patterns of the Chinese in Oslo.

### 2.1 Discussion of existing research on overseas Chinese in Europe

In order to address the studies of overseas Chinese, I shall first address the existing research on overseas Chinese in Europe.

People move for different reasons. It is also interesting to see how people move from a certain places to certain destinations within a specific period. Chinese migration history has been well known for having a long tradition. The history of Chinese migratory pattern has been well researched and demonstrated since post-Second World War.<sup>18</sup> Studies particularly focusing

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<sup>16</sup> See Wang Gungwu (2000).

<sup>17</sup> Refer to a review by Micheal R Codley (2000:232)

<sup>18</sup> More research on Chinese migration and the history of Chinese migration pattern can be seen in Wang Gungwu (2003) *China and the Chinese Overseas*; Philip A. Kuhn (2008) *Chinese among Others – Emigration in Modern Times*

on ethnological and anthropological perspectives have been conducted to a great extent. There has been an increase in studies regarding Chinese in Europe and I will provide a brief overview of some of the most prominent studies on this field that have been conducted below shortly.

Some historical research has been conducted and provides evidence that the Chinese arrived in Europe already as early as in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>19</sup> Since the 1880s, they started to immigrate to Europe on a certain scale. The groups came in significant numbers after the Second World War and with great intensity only since the early 1980s.<sup>20</sup>

As the result of the late formation of Chinese communities in Europe, particularly when compared to the history of Chinese immigrants in other parts of the world, such as Chinese people in Southeast Asia, North America and Australia, scholarly interest in the Chinese communities in Europe came later as well. Moreover, although there is existing research on the overseas Chinese in most European countries, particularly the ones that have a longer history of Chinese settlements, this research from the 1930s<sup>21</sup> were, however, likely ‘catering for narrow purposes of policy making, stressing fact-finding and description rather than comparison, analysis and theory-building.’<sup>22</sup> This situation changed later as more concrete scholarly research on overseas Chinese in Europe emerged in the late 1990s.<sup>23</sup> In this chapter, I have taken the first compiled academic accounts, edited by Gregor Benton and Frank N. Pieke *Chinese in Europe*<sup>24</sup>, as a departure to address studies which have been conducted with regards to Chinese communities in France, Britain, and the Netherlands. This is because these Chinese communities share a rather long history in terms of their scale and ways of establishing communities. Furthermore, several research on the Chinese communities have also been conducted in countries such as Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Romania and Russia.<sup>25</sup> As the research outcome shows, there is a rich diversity in terms of the pattern of Chinese emigration to Europe. This research on the history

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<sup>19</sup> Li Minghuan (2002:61-63)

<sup>20</sup> Flemming Christiansen (2003:3)

<sup>21</sup> Li Minghuan (2002: 36-37)

<sup>22</sup> Gregor Benton and Frank N. Pieke (ed.)(1998:3)

<sup>23</sup> Gregor Benton and Frank N. Pieke (ed.) The Chinese in Europe is the first book that has been compiled which include all of Europe. On the other hand, several scholars have addressed despite individual studies on Chinese in single country (eg. Italy, Netherland) do exist, but they had been done in Chinese and different Europe languages and the material is scattered. I have referred this information to Li Minghuan (2002:22-48) and Flemming Christiansen (2003: 2)

<sup>24</sup> Gregor Benton and Frank N. Pieke (ed.)(1998:3)

<sup>25</sup> Gregor Benton and Frank N. Pieke (ed.) (1998:3). Research on all these countries that mentioned are compiled into coherent chapters in this volume of book.

of Chinese immigrants in various European countries shed lights on the diversity of Chinese immigration in a global context.

There are also accounts about Chinese people in Europe which were either written by the Chinese imperial officials, such as officials of the study delegations from the Qing dynasty<sup>26</sup>, or Chinese scholars, journalists and students of the Republic of China in the early twentieth century. More reports on Chinese in Europe were published by the Overseas Compatriot Affairs Commission of Taiwan during the 1950s.<sup>27</sup> These Chinese accounts should be viewed as official records rather than as analytical academic research.<sup>28</sup> It was not until after the year 2000, a Chinese academic research with a particular focus on the history of Chinese immigrants in Europe was published. The publication *欧洲华侨华人史 Ouzhou huaqiao huarenshi* [A History of Chinese Immigrants in Europe]<sup>29</sup> was conducted by the Chinese scholar Li Minghuan 李明欢. Her early work on examining Chinese voluntary associations in the Netherlands<sup>30</sup> and this Chinese academic publication that is conducted by her, provide the majority of historical information for my analysis in the thesis.

There are also some scholarly researches which are based on certain sub-ethnic group<sup>31</sup> and focus on a single sending area. Ronald Skeldon and his colleagues have conducted a research with a particular focus on migration from Hong Kong and with endeavors to analyze the emigration from Hong Kong to different destination throughout the world. The study has been conducted with various approaches such as historical, socio-economical, and perspectives from social science.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, there is another study which particularly focuses on Fujianese-Chinese migrants in Europe, which is completed by four scholars' cooperation – Frank N. Pieke, Pál Nyíri, Mette Thunø and Antonella Ceccagno.<sup>33</sup> Both research projects with specific focus on Chinese migration from Hong Kong and Fujian, respectively, vividly outline the characteristics of Chinese migration patterns and how their transnational link intertwined in the age of globalization.

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<sup>26</sup> These various Qing imperial study delegations to Western countries were a part of the Self-Strengthening Movement (*yangwu yundong* 洋务运动 1861-1895).

<sup>27</sup> *Ouzhou huaqiao jingji* (1956). Cited in Li Minghuan (2002:32-33)

<sup>28</sup> See for example Dai Hongci (1986). See further discussion in relation to the history of European Chinese studies in Caoqian (1987); Li Minghuan (2002: 22-52)

<sup>29</sup> Li Minghuan (2002)

<sup>30</sup> See Li Minghuan *We Need Two Worlds* (1999)

<sup>31</sup> Refer to Flemming Christiansen's concept and definition of 'sub-ethnic' in the overseas Chinese context. See Flemming Christiansen (2003)

<sup>32</sup> Ronald Skeldon (ed.) (1994)

<sup>33</sup> Frank N. Pieke, Pál Nyíri, Mette Thunø and Antonella Ceccagno (2004)

The above mentioned studies have strengthened the studies of overseas Chinese in Europe, and thus shed more light on the studies of overseas Chinese in a global context. To put it more precisely, the diversity among Chinese communities in Europe is just as complex as the Chinese communities in Southeast Asia, North America and Australia. In addition to the historical investigations of Chinese in Europe, the studies of ethnicity in terms of Chinese identity among Chinese in Europe, have also been conducted. In relation to the studies on ethnic identity among Chinese in Europe, or how they perceive themselves in several European host societies, Flemming Christiansen has conducted a concrete research regarding the formation of the identity of the overseas Chinese in Europe and examined the main factors that may influence it.<sup>34</sup> Chinese in Europe have been interacting with their host countries depending on how these host countries have various perceptions towards their ethnic minorities, immigrants and ‘foreigners’ and so forth.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, it is clearly understandable that the British scholar Gregor Benton stresses that,

It was never possible to understand Chinese migration to Europe solely at the level of the individual European states. Their communities must be analyzed as an accommodation both to European national entities and to the wider European context, now institutionalized in the European Union. Chinese migrants have always shown scant regard for the lines drawn thickly and apparently at random across Asia’s European promontory. In that respect, they were Europeans before the Europeans. Their pan-European ties are another reason for the new interest in them.<sup>36</sup>

Similarly, the Danish scholar Mette Thunø also states her argument regarding the complexity of Chinese immigration studies in the Europe context:

Immigration research in Europe is thus conducted within diverse traditions and in several languages producing different discourses and epistemologies. Hence, the endeavor to integrate and compare the Chinese immigration process in different European countries demands attention to national conditions, the various research traditions, as well as semantic differences in terminology. Overcoming these differences would help integrate scholarship on the Chinese in Europe that is desperately needed unless we are to satisfy ourselves with merely national perspectives on Chinese immigrants that cannot encompass the supranational reality of their immigration experience.<sup>37</sup>

Just as these scholars stress, Chinese immigration research is growing rapidly and more concrete academic research questions regarding Chinese immigration are listed, awaiting scholars with various academic disciplines to examine. As contemporary Chinese migration is well embedded with the age of globalization today, a new compiled publication of contemporary Chinese migration was published in 2007. The editor, Mette Thunø and her

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<sup>34</sup> Flemming Christiansen (2003:Preface)

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Gregor Benton and Frank N. Pieke (ed.) (1998:Preface)

<sup>37</sup> Mette Thunø (1997:32)

associates have contributed a study of the new trend of the contemporary Chinese migration in relation to the global expansion of China.<sup>38</sup>

Yet, in the scope of Nordic countries, there is a scholarly study on Chinese immigrants in Denmark. Mette Thunø focuses on analyzing the development and formation of ethnic identities through the development of the Chinese catering business among Chinese in Denmark.<sup>39</sup> Her comprehensive historical account regarding Chinese immigrants in Denmark provides much insightful information. As a result, I have chosen to take her work as departure in order to help comparing the history of Chinese immigrants in Oslo.

## **2.2 Discussion of the history of immigration in Norway**

Emigration from the European continent constitutes significant historical evidence of international migration. Where international flows before were dominated by the emigration of people leaving Europe to start their new life in North America and Australasia, now the traditional countries of origin of migration in Europe are themselves destinations for migrants. Similarly, demographic changes also happened in Norway, where a significant number of migrants were made up of peoples from third-world countries. The public image of urban Norway has changed gradually and the Norwegians have realized that cultural pluralism has become a fact of life. As a result, Norway inevitably became similar to other Western European countries where the existence of diverse group of immigrants also is a part of the urban picture. I shall now briefly outline the development of immigration history in Norway.

When we come to the issue of the history of immigration in Norway, it is known that Norway was in many ways a latecomer as a modern immigration country in Western Europe. This is especially remarkable when looking back at the history of Norway during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when Norway used to be the sending country in the realm of migration as one-fourth of the population departed and left largely for the United States.<sup>40</sup> As the Norwegian historian Knut Kjeldstadli states:

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<sup>38</sup> See Mette Thunø (ed.) *Beyond Chinatown — New Chinese Migration and the Global Expansion of China*. (2007)

<sup>39</sup> Mette Thunø (1997:44)

<sup>40</sup> Grete Brochmann and Knut Kjeldstadli (ed.) (2008:11)



Immigration appears to be something that came to us with the labour migrants from distant lands, entering the country in the late 1960s and the early 1970s, when gates started to close in more attractive destinations elsewhere in Europe.<sup>41</sup>

Hence, in order to have a better understanding of the history of how Norway was heading toward what we now call the *multicultural society*<sup>42</sup>, I will introduce a brief history of other immigrant groups in Norway in the following part. This will serve as a comparative background for looking at how the differences of time and population factors on Chinese migratory patterns in comparison to other immigrant groups in Norway.

Instead of demonstrating various immigrants according to their countries of background, I found that it is more sensible to look at the types of immigrants in Norway and address their arrival to Norway from a historical perspective.

### **2.3 Labour immigration**

In the 1960s', the economic and social condition in Norway were considered rather unattractive to most immigrants compared to the neighboring Scandinavian countries. It was not until the late 1970s, after rich oil resources were found in the North Sea that the economic condition improved.<sup>43</sup> It is evident that the changes in the economic situation caused income differences between Norway and other countries. On the other hand, the labour market situation has also been important - lower unemployment in Norway has resulted in higher immigration, and higher unemployment in the country of origin has led to higher emigration to Norway.<sup>44</sup>

Unlike both predominantly receiving countries such as France, and sending countries such as Italy or Ireland, Norway, as a case, had a high level of both emigration and immigration during the nineteenth century in Europe.<sup>45</sup> When looking at the conditions of immigration in Norway in the twentieth century, there were already slightly over 10000 foreigners working in Norway during the year 1952.<sup>46</sup> News about foreign workers in Norway was already covered

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<sup>41</sup> Grete Brochmann and Knut Kjeldstadli (ed.) (2008:13)

<sup>42</sup> See for instance, Tariq Modood *Multiculturalism* (2007); Steven Vertovec and Susanne Wessendorf (ed.) *The Multiculturalism Backlash: European discourses, policies and practices* (2010)

<sup>43</sup> Hallvard Tjelmeland and Grete Brochmann (2003:151)

<sup>44</sup> Ådne Cappelen and Terje Skjerpen (2012:4)

<sup>45</sup> Grete Brochmann and Knut Kjeldstadli (ed.) (2008:112-116)

<sup>46</sup> *Arbeiderbladet*, 20.01.1951

by the Norwegian media at this time. Despite that attention, coverage of relevant news was mostly focused on foreign workers from other Scandinavian countries, as well as other Western European countries such as Germany, the Netherlands and England.<sup>47</sup> This is particularly due to the common Nordic agreement; Scandinavians have often enjoyed certain privileges in the working force market.<sup>48</sup> It is not a surprise that the data on foreigners in Norway indicate clearly that the majority of foreigners in Norway in the 1950s were from Sweden and Denmark.<sup>49</sup>

From 1950s onwards, an increasing number of immigrants from Southern European countries such as Spain, Italy and Greece made their entries in Norway. Even though many came, many also left for a third country, as statistic data shows that there were less than 3000 southern Europeans in Norway in the 1970s. This reinforced the fact that Norway was not an attractive destination for emigration at that time.<sup>50</sup> Following the growth rate and the expanding industry in the 1960s, more foreign labour force joined the labour market. This prompted concern regarding the treatment of foreign workers within the government and The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), but no questions concerning labour immigration was raised in the Parliament.<sup>51</sup> Hence, the concept of Norway being a receiving destination for immigrants seems to have been neglected until the epoch-making demographic changes of “guest workers” from the third world in Oslo began to capture public attention in the 1970s.<sup>52</sup> They originated from Turkey, Yugoslavia and Morocco first, more from India and particularly Pakistan reached the peak in the early 1970s. It is noteworthy that the pull factors from Norway provided potential migrants to seek for fortunes, both migrants from the other western countries and migrants from the third world. Both these groups of labour immigrants were economically motivated. However, the government started to make moves

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<sup>47</sup> News which concerned about foreign workers craft were clearly indicated that the majority of foreign workers during the 1950s were mainly workers from other European countries. See old-newspaper clips from *Arbeiderbladet* from 1951 to 1957. Archive from ARBARK.

<sup>48</sup> There were borders-control reforms and economic reforms between the Nordic countries since 1945. Most significant is that Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway agreed to establish a common labour market in 1954.

<sup>49</sup> Immigrants from these mentioned areas can be labeled as economically motivated immigrants. Due to Norway offered not just rich natural resources but also a stable and relatively liberal economic and political environment. The historical perspective of these groups of immigrants can be traced back in 1840s during the first Industrial Revolution. Refers to Grete Brochmann and Knut Kjeldstadli (ed.) (2008:117-118)

<sup>50</sup> Hallvard Tjelmeland and Grete Brochmann (2003:95-96)

<sup>51</sup> The White Paper (*Stortingsmelding*) concerning the entire labour market policy was first presented to Parliament in 1969 followed by the needs of labour force in the booming of industrial sectors. The White Paper was characterized by optimistic attitude to international labour migration and labour market prospects in general as even ‘stated that free immigration was established and that this should serve as a norm also for the future’. (Ibid. 188-189)

<sup>52</sup> Even though when the modern immigration started in the late 1960s, the prevalent perception of “Norway has not been a country of immigration” was frequently discussed; this is, however, evident that reliable historical accounts and statistics show that a considerable number of immigrants particularly Swedes dominated the majority of immigrants in Norway throughout the 19th century. Refers to Grete Brochmann and Knut Kjeldstadli (ed.) (2008:115)

of regulating the immigration policy only when the number of guest workers from the third world increased in the 1970s.

The demographic change of the guest workers from the third world led to the introduction of ‘immigration-halt’ (*innvandringsstopp*) in 1975.<sup>53</sup> The main purpose of the implementation of this immigration control was to restrict the unskilled foreign workers and hence ‘to give a breathing room to improve the condition for those foreigners who already were in the country, as well as to make the conditions more conducive for future immigrants,’<sup>54</sup> Ironically, the consequence of this new regulation was that the ‘guest workers’ became permanent residences, as stressed in this statement by Kjeldstadli:

The new restrictive regulations, which had been introduced just when the recession struck, made it less secure to travel back and forth between their home country and the country of settlement. Therefore, this led to it made better sense to bring in one’s family than to go back oneself: the children could have access to education and security, and the whole family could possibly save enough money to re-establish themselves more prosperously in the home country later in life.<sup>55</sup>

In short, this situation engendered the second waves of the immigration to Norway: family reunification (*familiegjenforening*)<sup>56</sup> Therefore, the ‘halt’ was not really affecting the flows, and the outcome of family reunification actually was reinforced by the increased number of inflow in Norway after the ‘stop’ was implemented.

## 2.4 Immigrants as refugees or asylum seekers

As I have discussed above, immigrants from neighboring countries first and foremost were/are from Scandinavian countries, as well as immigrants from nearby Southern European nations, were primarily economically motivated. In contrast, there was also another type of immigrants who came to Norway and settled down, namely refugees or asylum seekers.

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<sup>53</sup> 600 Pakistanis arrived in Norway, in compared to only 10 Pakistani were registered by Norwegian statistics in 1967. It is obvious that this triggered major attention in the press. – And all this happened in the spring 1971 after the immigration stop took effect in Denmark. See further detailed discussion in Grete Brochmann and Knut Kjeldstadli (ed.) (2008:196)

<sup>54</sup> The statement was stressed by the Department of municipal and employment of Norway. See Hallvard Tjelmeland and Grete Brochmann (2003:140)

<sup>55</sup> Grete Brochmann and Knut Kjeldstadli (ed.) (2008:201)

<sup>56</sup> The definition of ‘family reunification’ in this context is acknowledged as 1) For one who has already established family (with spouse and children) in their homeland, and applied them to reunion with one who was settled down in Norway. 2) For one who was newly-married and was wanting live together in a same country, in such case was/are also considered as a type of family reunification.

Despite the fact that the earliest record of refugees in Norway can be traced back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, it was Jews that constituted as the first refugee group that fled to Norway in more significant numbers, arriving from 1880s onwards.<sup>57</sup> Later Norway received a few groups of cold war refugees,<sup>58</sup> but many of them left Norway and re-migrated to other countries,<sup>59</sup> which again indicates that Norway was not people's first choice as their destination.<sup>60</sup> However, this situation changed in the 1980s, when the influx of refugees from African, Asian and Latin American countries raised the Norwegian authorities' attention again regarding their humanitarian aid and settlement in Norway. The Vietnam War (1956-1975) prompted numerous people to flee to different countries over the world. Norway was thus also one of the countries that provided humanitarian aids for these 'boat-refugees'<sup>61</sup> who began to make their arrival from the mid-1970s. The following wave consisted of Chileans and they made up another group of refugees/asylum seekers. These refugee groups came after the implementation of the 'immigration-halt' in 1975. This inflow of refugees was identified as the 'third wave' of the immigration pattern in Norway, after the 'second wave' which is characterized by family reunion with the 'guest workers' who had stayed after the 'immigration-halt'.<sup>62</sup> The arrival of these two refugee groups triggered debates on immigration policy and integration, and later also reinforced concern about refugees' identity and their living situation in Norway.

Following the large groups of refugees from Vietnam and Chile, a gradual increase of asylum seekers seeking for protection in Norway in the 1980s, which led to Norway become one of the receiving-states. As Grete Brochmann and Knut Kjeldstadli note,

The great increase in asylum immigration in the peak years at the time, 1987 and 1988, reflected the fact that Norway no longer lingered in the protected periphery, in the shadow of the great immigration countries in Europe, first and foremost France and Germany, but also Sweden.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Grete Brochmann and Knut Kjeldstadli (ed.) (2008:123-125)

<sup>58</sup> These cold war refugees were consisted of people from Czechoslovakia after the establishment of new communist government in 1948, as well as Hungarian refugees fled to Norway after the invasion of the Soviet Union in November 1956.

<sup>59</sup> In the 1950s and 1960s, many of the Czechoslovakia cold war refugees (nearly haft of them) used Norway as a stepping stone for re-emigrated to other continent such as USA, Canada and Australia. See Hallvard Tjelmeland and Grete Brochmann (2003:46-47)

<sup>60</sup> Grete Brochmann and Knut Kjeldstadli (ed.) (2008:179-181); Hallvard Tjelmeland and Grete Brochmann (2003:63)

<sup>61</sup> The term was called in relation to many Vietnamese refugees fled to other countries by crowded on boats, and also known as many of them were rescued by Norwegian vessels which sealed in the Asian region. After the US military arms withdrew from Vietnam in 1975, whereas engendered the massive flight of Vietnamese. The majority were ended up in the USA or other Asian countries in the region such as Hong Kong, Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia. A great deal of Vietnamese refugees other made their destination in several European countries.

<sup>62</sup> Grete Brochmann and Knut Kjeldstadli (ed.) (2008:213-214)

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. (2008:254)

As a result, Norway was a shelter for asylum seekers from 60 different countries already in 1987.<sup>64</sup> Two decades later in 2008, data from the Statistics Norway shows that persons with refugee background in Norway made up 2.7 per cent of the total population. It is evident that among the total immigrants, more than half of the first generation immigrants from non-Western countries had a refugee background. Most of these people came from non-western countries such as Iraq, Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iran and Vietnam.<sup>65</sup> Clearly, in the scope of modern immigration, the influx of refugees from different parts of the world has also diversified the image and perception of immigrants in Norwegian society. The ramifications of refugees reinforced the position of Norway in the context of modern immigration history. It was only toward the end of the 1980s that Norway was, in the eyes of Norwegian politicians and the public, after about 20 years of immigration from countries in the south, perceived as a multicultural society.<sup>66</sup>

## 2.5 What about Chinese immigration?

According to Gregor Benton and Frank N. Pieke, the Chinese migration to Europe can be divided roughly into two parts — before-and-after the Second World War can be viewed as a watershed of the major period of Chinese inflow to Europe.<sup>67</sup> Most of these Chinese who came to Europe before World War II were either temporary contract labourers, or peddlers from the Zhejiang province in China. This situation shows that the Chinese coolie pattern, as Wang Gungwu has defined, is being repeated in Europe as well.<sup>68</sup> However, it is not obvious that this timeframe also applies in the case of Norway – when we take the account of the case in Norway into consideration within the immigration history of the world. To put it more specifically, the history of immigration to Norway is rather short compared to other European countries.<sup>69</sup> Since the beginning of the 1970s, when migration surplus first occurred, Norway has become an immigration country.<sup>70</sup> However, due to the number of Chinese people is relatively diminutive, as well as their patterns of immigration were rather diverse in

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<sup>64</sup> Grete Brochmann and Knut Kjeldstadli (ed.) (2008:254)

<sup>65</sup> Gunnlaug Daugstad. (2008)

<sup>66</sup> Hallvard Tjelmeland and Grete Brochmann (2003:196)

<sup>67</sup> Gregor Benton and Frank N. Pieke (ed.)(1998:3)

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> *A Brief guide to living in Norway*, p.6.

<sup>70</sup> Kristin Henriksen, Lars Østby and Dag Ellingsen (eds.) (2010:6)

comparison to other immigrant groups, their conditions of livelihood in Norway were, therefore, rarely noticed and taken into considerable statistical accounts.<sup>71</sup>

Table 2.1 below shows that in 1970, 402 Chinese in total were registered in Norway. 369 persons have China (interchangeable with mainland China) as their country background, while only 33 persons have Hong Kong as their country background.

The number in the category of “China” and “Hong Kong” has to be analyzed critically – Apart from the possibility of intermarriage between Chinese women and Norwegian men, there were also some Norwegians who were born to ethnic Norwegian parents in China. In addition, as I have acquired/collected this information throughout my fieldwork, almost all of the Chinese seamen who moved to Norway during 1960s and 1970s, were born in mainland China, although they had lived in Hong Kong from 1940s onwards, they most likely were registered under the category of "China" in the official database. Same case can be applied on the spouses or their children of these Chinese seamen as well, as their birth place are also China instead of Hong Kong. This is why the number in the category of “Hong Kong” seems too low in the statistics because of the fact that the country background (or place of birth) of the first Chinese immigrant groups is mainland China, instead of Hong Kong. As the number of Chinese with Hong Kong as their country background accelerated in 1980, the statistics are more reliable as most of the second wave of the Chinese immigrants were born in Hong Kong.

**Table 2.1 Total number of Chinese and their descendants in Norway**

Country background	1970	1980	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
China <sup>72</sup>	369	683	1067	1215	1350	1582	1968	2273	2542	2800
Hong Kong	33	211	301	370	448	509	584	652	682	699
Taiwan	0	15	52	65	70	84	95	98	97	101
<b>TOTAL</b>	402	909	1420	1650	1868	2175	2647	3023	3321	3600

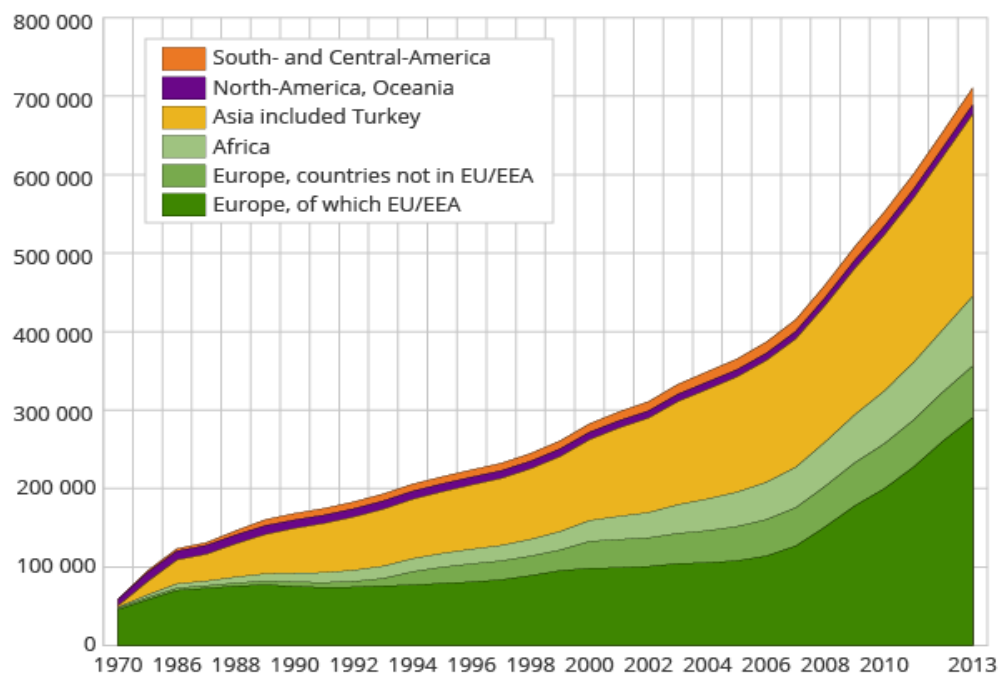
Source: *Statistic Norway*<sup>73</sup>

<sup>71</sup> When comparing to the numbers of Pakistan groups and Vietnamese groups in 1980 with total 6828 persons and 2072 persons, respectively; the historical statistic shows that it was only slightly more than 900 Chinese registered in the same year.

<sup>72</sup> Another statistic data in 1975 may sheds some light on perhaps more accurate figure in terms of registration of foreigner with China as country background: 147 persons were registered. See Jørgen Carling (1999:36)

Bigger Chinese communities were not formed until the late 1980s, when the inflow of Chinese immigrants to Norway increased. Due to the short history of immigration in Norway, as well as shorter history of Chinese immigration in comparison to Chinese communities in other Europe countries (even much later than Chinese immigration history in Denmark), more detailed and accurate statistics on Chinese emigration to Norway cannot be dated earlier than the 1960s.<sup>74</sup> This is because there were few detailed statistics on Chinese due to lower immigration level, as well as lower coverage of information on people born to ethnic Norwegian parents in China/ Hong Kong.<sup>75</sup>

Immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents, by country background. 1970-2013



Source: Statistics Norway.

<sup>73</sup> Statistisk sentralbyrå, 'Innvandrere og norskfødte ned innvandrerforeldre, etter kjønn og landbakgrunn, 2013' [Immigrants and their descendants, based on gender and country background, 2013] Statistics were retrieved from the *Tabel 05183*. I have aggregated the number of females and males together.

<sup>74</sup> This information is confirmed from a research at the Statistics Norway who I have corresponded with regarding the early statistics on people who has China/Hong Kong as country of birth.

<sup>75</sup> Regarding the written accounts of Chinese before 1960s (especially Chinese seamen on Norwegian vessels) on Norwegian data can be found in numerous written accounts such as archive from the General Consul of Norway in Shanghai (Archive nr: RA/S-2611) and the Norwegian seamen union (Archive nr: ARK-1158), however, no detailed or personal writings of these groups of people can be found in regard to their possible migranhood to Norway.

The above picture depicts the diversity of immigrants and their descendants who are living in Norway.<sup>76</sup> Today, immigrants account for 12 percent of the population in Norway, while Norwegian-born to immigrant parents account for 2 percent. Poles, Swedes, Lithuanians and Somalis comprise the largest immigrant groups.<sup>77</sup> Immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents from Asia (included Turkey) account 4.6 percent of the total population in Norway, of these, the Chinese population only account 0.2 percent of the total population in Norway.<sup>78</sup>

In the public sphere, little attention has been paid to the Chinese people's motivation and means of migration to Norway, and how they are coping within the Norwegian society today, except maybe only in connection with Chinese restaurants.<sup>79</sup> As a result of the shorter history of immigration, Norway was thus considered as a latecomer as a modern immigration country compared to other European countries (especially Western Europe).<sup>80</sup> In spite of Chinese immigrants coming to Norway in increasing numbers after the first wave of Chinese immigration the end of 1960s and stirred the effect of 'chain-migration', the population is still considered diminutive compared to other Asian immigrant groups. The Chinese immigrants in Oslo seem like a "hidden-community" as there is hardly any reports or statistics that has included this group in various general reports regarding immigrants in Norway. With one exemption, neither their means of entering Oslo nor their timeframe of arrival were analyzed.<sup>81</sup>

In comparison to other immigrant groups, it is evident that the studies on Chinese immigrants group are relatively insignificant. The increasing number of Chinese immigrants to Norway, which began in 1980s, and the lack of relevant research about the Chinese in Norway reflects the importance of my research questions. Even though my research scope is limited into urban studies in Oslo, the life experience of the Chinese people in Oslo can be viewed as partly representative for Chinese migrants in other regions in Norway. I believe this is noteworthy because it gives a potential for further studies on the same subject, but in larger scope.

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<sup>76</sup> This picture was retrieved from the SSB website regarding the population of immigrants in Norway (2013)

<sup>77</sup> See the statistic homepage of "Immigrants and Norwegian-born immigrant parents, 1 January 2013.

<sup>78</sup> Statistik sentrabyrå, 'Innvandrere og norskfødte ned innvandrerforeldre, etter kjønn og landbakgrunn, 2013' [Immigrants and their descendants, based on gender and country background, 2013] Statistics were retrieved from the *Tabel 05183*, I have aggregated numbers which China, Hong Kong and Taiwan are included.

<sup>79</sup> See for instance, Are Kalvø (2007)

<sup>80</sup> Grete Brochmann and Knut Kjeldstadli (ed.) (2008:13-14)

<sup>81</sup> The exemption which I mentioned here refers to this report 'Innvandrere fra Kina- Kinesiske innvandrere studerer eller jobber' *Statistics Norway*



## 2.6 Short conclusion

In this chapter, I have briefly introduced both the existing overseas Chinese studies on Europe and the short modern immigration history in Norway. The information serves as a comparative method when looking at the waves of Chinese migratory routes within Europe in historical context. As a student with a background study with history, I have therefore chosen a historical perspective to examine the Chinese in Oslo, especially since hardly any formal written documents exist. My aim with this thesis is to contribute to the historical research concerning the studies of overseas Chinese in Europe. I argue that this is not just because Norway undoubtedly is geographically a part of Europe, but also because of the similar circumstances for Chinese migrants all over Europe. Chinese immigrants in Norway share comparable migratory routes to Europe, particularly Chinese immigrants in Denmark.<sup>82</sup> The only difference is the particular timeframe, and how the first group of Chinese who came and settled, and later created opportunities for latecomers from those who are originally from Hong Kong, Taiwan and mainland China. I will further demonstrate and provide my analytical findings regarding this matter in the analysis chapters. But before that, I shall present the following chapters on research methods and theoretical framework of the thesis.

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<sup>82</sup> See Mette Thunø (1997;1998)

### 3 Research Methods

The aim of this chapter is to offer an overview of the methodology of my thesis. The goal is to write a history of when and how Chinese people moved from their homeland and settled down on the far side of the world, namely in the capital of Norway, Oslo. This prompted the selection of certain methodologies.

Within the scope of Scandinavia, similar to the case of Denmark,<sup>83</sup> there are hardly any written accounts in English, Norwegian or in Chinese about Chinese migration to Norway.<sup>84</sup> Therefore, in order to find sources for my study, I have chosen oral history and textual analysis<sup>85</sup> as the methodological approach for the thesis. Conducting oral history as a major primary source of this study is particularly important, because I have collected valuable memories of first generation Chinese immigrants in order to help my reader to understand and get an overview of when and how Chinese people migrated to Norway in the first place and settled down in Oslo.

On the one hand, as I have mentioned above, oral history interviews inevitably account for my first-hand sources for this thesis due to the scarcity of written accounts. On the other hand, before I started to set up my in-depth interview work, I have also learnt that I should be aware of the accuracy of my oral sources, since I depend upon living people sharing their memories and stories about their families' history.<sup>86</sup> As a result, I have collected relevant statistical data and archival documents such as old newspapers, official archives and statistics, local Chinese journals, photographs and so forth. They served as historical written evidence to verify the information which my informants provided; conversely, these oral accounts which I collected and transcribed also serve as gap-filling in written sources.

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<sup>83</sup> Mette Thunø (1997); (1998: 168-169)

<sup>84</sup> Lars Østby 'Innvandrerne fra Kina- *Kinesiske innvandrere studerer eller jobber*'. Chinese immigrants either studying or working (20. august 2008) [http://www.ssb.no/vis/magasinet/slik\\_lever\\_vi/art-2008-08-20-01.html](http://www.ssb.no/vis/magasinet/slik_lever_vi/art-2008-08-20-01.html) (Retrieved 28.09.2012)

<sup>85</sup> Regarding the method of textual analysis, by here I refer to analysis existing primary sources in written form such as existing but limited official and unofficial reports that related to Chinese in Oslo, whereas majority of written documents are old newspapers and companies reports. Further details will be shown in the Archives part in this chapter.

<sup>86</sup> Having conducted in-depth oral history interviews were no doubt that this put me into various challenges. I will further discuss this more detailed in discussion of limitation and challenges part of my interview experience.

### 3.1 Methods used for this thesis

#### 3.1.1 Oral history

Before the time when audio/video storage devices such as tape recorder or video camera were introduced to the masses, historical research has essentially relied on written documents, which generally dealt with politics and the history of rulers.<sup>87</sup> The life histories of ordinary individuals in the past were given little attention and barely any detailed account can be traced. In Paul Thompson's famous work *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, he first points out that the striking feature of oral history is the shift of focus in most kinds of history.<sup>88</sup> For instance, history no longer merely reflects the standpoint of authority, but voices from other group of people such as workers or immigrants can now also be heard.<sup>89</sup> Therefore, he believes that 'the process of writing history changes along with the content. The use of oral evidence breaks through the barriers between the chroniclers and their audience.'<sup>90</sup>

As a result, since World War II, oral history gradually became a widely-used historical research method<sup>91</sup> and has come to have a 'popular (vernacular) and an archival meaning.'<sup>92</sup> An oral history is what a researcher obtains when he/she interviews a person who has had direct or indirect experience with or knowledge of the chosen topic. As Donald Ritchie points out the essence of oral history approach in his book *Doing Oral History*, and stress that: 'memory is the core of oral history, from which meaning can be extracted and preserved',<sup>93</sup> which constantly reminds us that research materials are dependent upon living people's recall of memory, and that it is memories and personal commentaries of historical significance that the researcher collects through recorded interviews. Put more precisely, 'in oral history questioning with individuals, the "closed door" of the written record gives way to the "open door" of the interview.'<sup>94</sup>

Despite this, many social scientists were suspicious of the validity of oral sources as debates occurred among social scientists since the 1960s.<sup>95</sup> Concerns raised included, for instance:

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<sup>87</sup> Barbara Allen and William Lynwood Montell (1981:4-5); Paul Thompson (2000:6-7)

<sup>88</sup> Paul Thompson(2000:6-7)

<sup>89</sup> Ibid. (2000:7-8)

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. (2000:9)

<sup>91</sup> Barbara W. Sommer and Mary Kay Quinlan (2009:2)

<sup>92</sup> Ibid. (2009:1)

<sup>93</sup> Donald Ritchie (2003:19)

<sup>94</sup> Valerie Raleigh Yow (1994:18)

<sup>95</sup> Valerie Raleigh Yow (1994:4-5); Paul Thompson (2000:78-81); Donald Ritchie (2003:27-28).Regarding more detailed account of discussion of validity of oral sources for historical research purpose, see for example, Barbara Allen and William

since memory is ‘the core of oral history’,<sup>96</sup> to what extent can the accuracy of memory be trusted? <sup>97</sup> Another oral historian, Alessandro Portelli demonstrated the difference between oral history and traditional schools of historical research, by looking at features such as orality, narrative form, subjectivity,<sup>98</sup> the ‘different credibility of memory, and the relationship between interviewer and interviewee’. He concluded that oral history should be thought of ‘as strengths rather than as weakness, a resource rather than a problem.’<sup>99</sup>

After consulting a quantity of literature regarding oral history, I have therefore learnt that, although oral history clearly does not automatically yield entirely accurate descriptions of past events due to the nature of reliance upon memory, the limitations of human memory, and the characteristics of oral history,<sup>100</sup> oral history can nevertheless still be studied carefully within a discipline guideline.<sup>101</sup> The remainder of this chapter will further present my efforts in conducting oral history by acknowledging certain ethical issues and some outcomes of source collection work.

### 3.1.2 Interviews – “Why in-depth interviews?”<sup>102</sup>

The methodology of the in-depth interview enables the researcher to give the subject leeway to answer as he or she chooses. As mentioned earlier, there is a lack of well-written, organized accounts regarding Chinese immigration history to Oslo, which initially seems to be an obstacle to understanding their migratory experience. This, however, need not to be an impediment; by their very nature, written accounts ‘speak to the point of *what happened*, while oral sources almost invariably provide insights into *how people felt about what*

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Lynwood Montell *From Memory to History: Using Oral sources in local historical research* (1981:67-71)

<sup>96</sup> Donald Ritchie (2003:19)

<sup>97</sup> Alistair Thomson, Michael Frisch and Paula Hamilton (1994:33-34)

<sup>98</sup> Alessandro Portelli (2006:33)

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Regarding the terminology of ‘oral history’, Allen and Montell note that they have chosen to use ‘orally communicated history’ instead of ‘oral history’ due to their intention of avoiding the terms like ‘folklore’ and ‘oral history’, of which connotations they do not intend to distinguish in their book. See Allen and Montell (1981:23-24). However, I learned that their discussions in the chapter about characteristics of oral sources used in local history research, clearly explain when local historian bear in mind of acknowledging these issues, therefore will be helpful with their local historical research. Refer to Allen and Montell (1981:26-40); See also Paul Thompson discusses oral evidence in terms of validity and reliability aspects, in Paul Thompson (2000:118-172)

<sup>101</sup> For a series of thoughtful guides and manuals regarding conducting in-depth interviews, see Valerie Raleigh Yow *Recording Oral History: A Practical Guide for Social Scientists* (1994); Donald Ritchie *Doing Oral History* (2003); Barbara W. Sommer and Mary Kay Quinlan *The Oral History Manual* (2009)

<sup>102</sup> By here I mean ‘in-depth interviews’ as oral history approach as the usage of the word ‘in-depth interviews’ interchangeable with the word ‘oral history.’ Refers to Valerie Raleigh Yow *Recording Oral History* (1994:8)

*happened.*'<sup>103</sup> What makes oral sources stand out is the subjectivity, as Valerie Raleigh Yow demonstrates:

The in-depth interview offers the benefit of seeing in its full complexity the world of another. And in collating in-depth interviews and using the insights to be gained from them as well as different kinds of information from other kinds of records, we can come to some understanding of the process by which we got to be the way we are.<sup>104</sup>

Before letting my interviewees share their unique memories of migrating experience with me, I have listed a few essential questions to them; this is for collecting primary data which allows me to outline the essential time-frame and various factors of Chinese migratory history to Oslo. These questions are for instance: 1) When did you come to Norway? 2) Can you tell me how you came to Norway? 3) Did you know anyone who was already in Norway before you moved from your homeland? 4) Which part of China (incl. Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau) are you originally from?

These seemingly simple questions actually led to my research topic: The history of Chinese immigrants in Oslo from the 1960s to the 1990s. As I mentioned before, I am emphasizing the importance of historical aspect for Chinese immigrants in Oslo, with a particular focus on recognizing the diversity of “chain migration” theory. I hope to build on my historian background and both describe and analyze the question of their migration route from their homeland to the capital of Norway, Oslo.

### **3.1.3 Setting up interviews**

Some questions arise: how much does my informants' information reveal, and how accurately? What are the criteria for the interviewees I have chosen to conduct oral history interview with? To what extent can they be considered representative for the research outcome of my thesis? The following will discuss these questions.

As for the process of finding relevant interviewees, I was able to use snowball sampling techniques<sup>105</sup> to collect contact information about Chinese people who could be my informants: initially, I approached my informants with the assistance of several Chinese

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<sup>103</sup> Barbara Allen and William Lynwood Montell (1981:21)

<sup>104</sup> Valerie Raleigh Yow (1994:25)

<sup>105</sup> Rowland Atkinson and John Flint (2004:1044-1045)

restaurant owners and my advisor. Gradually, I have built up my own network in Oslo, by getting helpful advice from numerous Chinese people in Oslo, and eventually got a list of names of potential informants.

Regarding the process of selecting interviewees, I was inspired by the work of Mette Thunø in terms of how she selected relevant interviewees for gathering first-hand information for her study on the Chinese communities in Denmark.<sup>106</sup> In order to trace the earliest historical fact and earliest Chinese migration experience, I have therefore only dealt with first-generation Chinese immigrants,<sup>107</sup> particularly from mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong. I have excluded Southeast Asians, for instance Vietnamese, Thai and Singaporean, most of whom are of Chinese descent.<sup>108</sup> Furthermore, in order to gain more diverse perspectives instead of hearing only one-sided conversation from my Chinese informants, I have also conducted several informal interviews and had numerous daily conversations with several ethnic Norwegians, including scholars, as well as friends and acquaintances regarding their perception of Chinese immigrants in Oslo. Many of their oral accounts provided me with wider insights about immigrants' incentives of migrating to Norway, in particular the first wave of Chinese immigration that was associated with seafarers on Norwegian ships.

Throughout all my interview sessions with my relevant Chinese interviewees, I have successfully used Chinese language (either Mandarin or Cantonese<sup>109</sup>) as an essential language for conducting interviews. The advantage of using my fluent Chinese language skill has provided me with a much better understanding of their means of narration; as a result I believe that I came to collect all these invaluable oral accounts without any of the disadvantages of a secondary language which may lead to greater risk of misunderstanding.

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<sup>106</sup> See Mette Thunø (1997: 1998:169). See especially the methodology chapter in her PhD dissertation *Chinese migration to Denmark, catering and ethnicity* (1997).

<sup>107</sup> In some cases I had have to conduct interviews with the second generations (one case was with the third generation) of the Chinese immigrant families in Oslo because the first generation Chinese passed away.

<sup>108</sup> Due to the fact that the Statistics Norway has no data on ethnicity among immigrants in Norway, I have unfortunately no resource allow me to address the historical migratory route of ethnic Chinese groups particularly those who were from Southeast Asian countries.

<sup>109</sup> Cantonese (*yueyu* 粤语) or (*guangdong hua* 广东话), known as a Southern Chinese dialect which mainly spoken by people in the Hong Kong, Macau and Southern province of China, such as Guangdong 广东省 and cities like Shenzhen. In addition, Cantonese is also well known as a common language which spoken by most of the overseas Chinese communities for instance in most Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, North America, Western European countries and so forth. I was able to utilize my Cantonese language skill since my grant parents emigrated from Guangdong to Malaysia, and thus made me as an ethnic Chinese in Malaysia, and Cantonese is also a major dialect which spoken among my families in daily basis.

Before each interview started, I explained to the participants the aim of my research and asked them whether they agreed to participation and the use of tape recorder and my writing field notes. I also informed my interviewees of the mutual rights and responsibilities involved in oral history, namely that I had already obtained permission to research and received agreements with interviewees regarding the means of conducting interviews. Most importantly, I also explained to my interviewees that I am responsible for proper citation and that all their names will be anonymous.

### **3.1.4 My in-depth interview experience and outcome**

My oral sources were supplied by 17 interviewees. Initially, I was planning to carry out my historical survey in whole Norway. Unfortunately, due to the limited scope and time constraints of my MA thesis, I was only able to carry out my historical survey in Oslo. Despite of these limitations, this final decision was made not only due to my familiarity with this city, but also because the majority of Chinese immigrants to Norway are concentrated in Oslo.<sup>110</sup> To a certain extent, I believe focusing on Oslo entails an urban perspective in understanding the life histories of Chinese people in the capital city of Norway. In the end, I spent 5 months becoming incorporated into the lives of 5 Chinese families in Oslo and building up trust between me and my informants. As well as asking the essential questions with regards to their migratory routes, I managed to let them narrate freely for long while after each of the essential questions was raised. All the interviews lasted on average one to two hours of duration, which shows that these interviews provide significant family stories and life experiences of moving from the homeland and how life treated my informants after their arrival in Oslo. Furthermore, all the relevant information and experience also explicitly and implicitly explain within the historical context how social networks and other links develop between the two areas, providing prospective migrants with information, means of travel and the possibility of entry, and provides large-scale comparative historical information in the field of studies of Chinese immigrants in Europe.

Furthermore, I have made all the interview notes and transcription files which referred to this thesis anonymous. All personal names and information are marked by number accordingly.

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<sup>110</sup> According to SSB report by Lars Østby which published in 2008, among 5000 of Chinese immigrants in Norway, 1/3 of Chinese immigrants lived in Oslo.

## 3.2 Problems and limitations

Throughout the process of interview with these Chinese immigrants, I encountered the same challenges as Thunø, when she was conducting her field work among Chinese communities in Copenhagen.<sup>111</sup> Being alert of the same issue of possibilities of ‘being biased’ or influenced by the Chinese community, I therefore also kept in mind that I had to keep a certain distance in order to be objective and sensibly interpret their oral sources.<sup>112</sup> Nonetheless, this tended to be difficult, as I am ‘part of’ their community.<sup>113</sup> I also encountered some quandaries while I interacted with my informants. I was always alert about all the possible difficulties and limitation when I was conducting interviews with my interviewees. The following are a few major challenges that I encountered throughout these interviews:

### 3.2.1 Challenges

One of the challenges I faced while conducting interviews was that the narration of interviewees often departed from related topics and told me repetitive information. Angela Franks suggests that, ‘a chat beforehand about the topics to be covered helped the interviewee focus and avoid too much that was irrelevant or repetitive’<sup>114</sup>; nonetheless, although I applied this method, most of my interviewees shared their enthusiasms and were frequently interrupted by other action such as other people suddenly “crashed” into conversation between me and my informants.<sup>115</sup> I have also acknowledged that some of my informants meandered through their stories, and these challenged me to guide the interviewees to tell their memories in a way that meant their narratives more closely responded to my interview questions. Furthermore, several interviewees declined my request to use of digital audio recording, which meant that only notes that I took are available; this engendered insufficient

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<sup>111</sup> Mette Thunø describe explicitly about her methodological approaches such as conducting interviews with Chinese in Denmark, which mostly have been conducted in metropolis area in Copenhagen. She applied the work of A.L.Cohen, and notes that neither can she escape from ‘intimate relations between friends and subtler expressions of ethnic behavior revealed at home and at small social gathering easily escape the researcher’. Cited in Mette Thunø (1997:50)

<sup>112</sup> Ibid. (1997:50). I was influenced by the interview method approach by Mette Thunø as mentioned in footnote 20. The method of ‘go native’ as she states is simply not a neutral idea to analyze and interpret the fieldwork conversation.

<sup>113</sup> Based on my personal perception and experience, of being Chinese in Malaysia do not perceived as so ‘different’ with those who is Chinese in Norway. Their idea of ‘Chineseness’ clearly to certain extent, see me as part of their communities in Oslo, instead of perceiving me as ‘Malaysian’ due to my obvious ethnic Chinese characteristic. As a result, I am not truly an ‘outsider’ in their (Chinese in Oslo) perspectives.

<sup>114</sup> Angela Franks (2012: 137)

<sup>115</sup> There were several interviews were took place in public area and quite often that my interview session were interrupted in an unintended way. I admit that it was not an ideal place especially for taped-in-depth interview and thus caused time-consuming transcription where required me to go through the whole interview very carefully since background noise does affected the quality of recording and thus confused my informants’ voice.



collection of oral sources and made it time-consuming to sort out what my informants actually meant.<sup>116</sup>

### 3.2.2 Limitations

With the purpose of protecting my interviews' privacy, all my cited sources are anonymous. It must be noted, however, that anonymity engenders conflict with 'some of oral history's most fundamental objects.'<sup>117</sup> Ritchie took the warning from the oral historian William W. Moss in order to query the legitimacy of citing anonymous interviews:

“When sources choose anonymity, whether out of privacy, humility, or fear, the record produced not only suffers the loss of user confidence that accompanies any anonymous testimony, but the primary assertion of oral history that the individual indeed matters is also lost.”<sup>118</sup>

But I argue that the anonymity of my informants is necessary for my thesis not just for protecting their confidentiality, but especially because some of their testimonies, which contain bias or 'judgments', could be problematic for their counterpart or acquaintances, especially when the scope of social communication among Chinese people in Oslo is so limited. The anonymity including also some information and some particular names that were provided by my informants. The reason of doing so is because if I address the information and names directly, it might create some controversies and I am keen to avoid these potential problems.

Conducting oral history as the major research method of this thesis inevitably gave me a difficult and challenging task when time constraints were taken into consideration. As Linda Shopes puts it with regard to conducting oral history research project:

First, oral history is long-haul work. Making contact with community representatives, gaining entrée, cultivating trust, and then doing, analyzing, and presenting a body of interviews cannot be accomplished in one or even two semesters. It requires a commitment of years. Second, working with a community group to develop a public history project or program is complicated and at times contentious.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Donald Ritchie (2003:112)

<sup>117</sup> Ibid (2003:126)

<sup>118</sup> William W. Moss, "Anonymity of Sources in Oral History", *Oral History Association Newsletter* 23 (Fall 1989) 1, 8. Cited in Donald Ritchie (2003: 127)

<sup>119</sup> Linda Shopes 'Oral History and the Study of Communities: Problem, Paradoxes, and Possibilities. *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 89 (Sep., 2002:597)

### 3.3 Reliability

The question about story vs. history is rather like asking ‘what is the difference between oral history and folklore’.<sup>120</sup> People tend to glorify their story and bypass their rather insignificant or unpleasant life experience. However, this creates questions such as: what is my strategy to ensure the authenticity of their narratives? What is my experience when finding honest and reliable informants? Why is this essential matter? I will therefore address these issues in the following part. Since I have based most of my primary sources on getting oral sources from living people, the process of evaluating the credibility of all my relevant findings is an indispensable task when examining the historical events which came from my informants’ memories or “memories of others’ memories”<sup>121</sup>

Donald Ritchie also deals with the reliability problems that arise when using oral history in research and writing; he states that when people recall happenings in the past, they will quite often narrate them in dialogue form<sup>122</sup>. The interview relies on one side of this; he thus notes that interview should always be critical of interviewees’ account, especially interviewees who provide faultless statements. Ritchie adds ‘they may be recalling what they wish they had said or may be claiming credit for lines spoken to them rather than by them.’<sup>123</sup>

In my case, some potential interviewees have passed away, so I could only rely on their children’s reminiscences about their departed parents- this creates possibilities of refabricating a memory instead of reminiscence,<sup>124</sup> and it is possibly that certain parts of their oral accounts were glorified. As a result, I have not only consulted numerous written accounts<sup>125</sup>, but also used a triangulation method. This served as supplementary information in order to verify information that they provided. It is clear that, although ‘memories of others’ memories’ can to some extent shed some light on the detailed personal life stories in question, I must be aware of possible inaccuracies in their memories of their departed parents. Ritchie points out explicitly that ‘people remember what they think is important, not necessarily what

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<sup>120</sup> Donald Ritchie (2003:37)

<sup>121</sup> The problem also reflected in John Flower and Pamela Leonard’s work ‘XiaKou-Reflection on the old society’ in their digital ethnography project when they were conducting fieldwork in Xia Kou, a mountain village in Sichuan province. See John Flower and Pamela Leonard (2006) <http://xiakou.uncc.edu/chapters/work/work.htm>. (Accessed 29/8-2012)

<sup>122</sup> Donald Ritchie (2003:125)

<sup>123</sup> Ibid (2003:126)

<sup>124</sup> John A. Neuenschwander (1978:49)

<sup>125</sup> The term is referred to written documentation or other written channels. Details explanation regarding the use of written sources for collecting primary data for my thesis will be demonstrated in the archives part of this chapter.

the interviewer thinks is most consequential.<sup>126</sup> On the other hand, conducting interviews with elderly respondents led me to difficulties regarding the aging issue.<sup>127</sup> However, being aware of the characteristics of oral sources, I have acknowledged that most of my informants, with whom I conducted interviews of rather longer duration (often more than 2 hours), happened to be very frank and honest to me.<sup>128</sup>

### 3.4 Omissions

Although I guaranteed all my informants confidentiality and that their personal names would remain anonymous in this thesis, many potential interviewees were reluctant to provide information regarding their means of entry from their homeland to Norway. Through my interview process and numerous informal conversations with Chinese families in Oslo, I came to learn about the existence of irregular immigration pattern, which I have characterized as “fake marriage”.<sup>129</sup> As I got into the Chinese communities in Oslo and applied the participant observation method,<sup>130</sup> I was able to learn about some Chinese people who migrated in this way. This clearly exposes challenges and limitation to establishing historical sources for my study, given that their personal experience was something they probably considered rather ignominious and too sensitive to talk about it; this influenced their willingness to share with me in a comprehensive way. Fear of revealing difficulties has put me into the situation that I have to leave this area of study (historical research on Chinese irregular channels of entries to Norway) out of my historical survey. Therefore the issue has been excluded from the scope of my study. The mutual trust between researcher and interviewee need to be cultivated over a rather longer period, especially when the topic comes to the pattern of their irregular

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<sup>126</sup> Donald Ritchie (2003:32)

<sup>127</sup> Yue Long (1998:97)

<sup>128</sup> After finishing the transcription then evaluated these oral accounts by looking upon written accounts like columns on old newspapers, I have learnt that despite of some displacement of original actors in historical events and problems with disregard for standard chronology, in general, my informants provided a great deal of appealing oral accounts which absolute absent on relevant columns on old newspapers. See for instance, John A. Neuenschwander points out despite the way of people remember things vary with different reason, a skilled and well-prepared oral history interviewer can however successfully collect historical outcome. He further states that, ‘99% of what the interviewee does share should be accepted as an honest if not a wholly accurate account of what transpired. Experience has shown that the stronger the rapport between interviewer and interviewee, the richer the return in terms of source material.’ Cited in *The Oral History Review*, Vol.6 (1978: 47)

<sup>129</sup> *Beiou Huaren Tongxun* (北欧华人通讯) [Nordic Chinese Communication] Vol.7-8 (2005), pp.29

<sup>130</sup> I have been working part-time in a Chinese restaurant in Oslo, which allowed me to get the unique to observe the Chinese catering condition in Oslo. Despite of being aware and alert of ‘close’ relationship might affect the objective of my survey. This is however, due to my background as ethnic Chinese Malaysian, I admit that me as ‘part of’ Chinese community in Oslo to some extent has partly influenced some of my perception of Chinese. Nevertheless, I have tried my best effort to always bear in mind that I have kept certain distance from Chinese people who I approach at my work place, as well as not to ‘go native’.

emigration. I have unfortunately not been able to resolve such this problem by, for instance, researching the historical facts of irregular immigration patterns.

### 3.5 Archives

Due to various existed limitation and challenges of oral history, I have evaluated additional findings beyond oral sources - I have conducted textual analysis on both official documents and local Chinese magazines which target Chinese readers in Scandinavia. This textual analysis method served as verification and supplementary sources for supporting my findings from interviews and numerous conversations with Chinese people in Oslo.

#### 3.5.1 Official written accounts in Norwegian

Beside all the data which I have collected from fieldwork, I have also collected relevant written sources in Chinese, English and Norwegian. My efforts in finding primary sources such as official documents have been done by visits to several Norwegian official departments. These official Norwegian data on Chinese people, including some demographic data, are found in the Statistics Norway (*Statistisk sentralbyrå, SSB*); regarding historical sources for Chinese seamen, numerous visits were made in the Labour Movement Archive and Library (*Arbeiderbevegelsens arkiv og bibliotek, ARBARK*). A majority of the archives regarding Chinese seamen on Norwegian vessels were found in the Norwegian seamen union (Archive nr: ARK-1158: Archive files- Da 196, sak 88). In addition, I have consulted the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (*Utlendingsdirektoratet, UDI*), but received little information. This is partly because personal data is restricted for students. I have also consulted the National archive of Norway (*Riksarkivet*). The early records of Chinese people in Norway might be found in the *Sentralpasskontoret* and *Statens utlendingskontor*<sup>131</sup> (Archive files - RA/S-1561). However, most of them are restricted and the archives collection is enormous, which shows that it is impossible to find out relevant information owing to the time constrain of the MA thesis.<sup>132</sup> However, I did manage to gain access to the archives of the Ministry of Church Affairs and Education (*Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet*,

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<sup>131</sup> These are previous names of the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI).

<sup>132</sup> See the Riksarkivet catalog (2008) "Sentralpasskontoret/Statens Utlendingskontor, 1917-1987", nr. 1252.7/10.

*Kulturavdelingen*) during the 1980s. The archives provide some historical glances of Chinese student migrants to Norway during the 1980s.

Some private archives were also part of my written sources for this thesis. I have asked my informants for permission to use their personal archives as part of my evidence. And they kindly allowed me to use as references. Since I have discussed previously about my consideration of anonymizing my informants, I have not directly referred to private archives, instead, I have merged these private archives together with the oral evidence that the respective informants provided.

### **3.5.2 Chinese people in Norwegian official data**

When it comes to the written sources, Mette Thunø and Li Minghuan, both of them who are experts in studies of overseas Chinese in Europe, point out the limitation problem with regard to official documentation: the ethnocentric and functional situation reflected in policy reports on Chinese immigrants which written by European officials.<sup>133</sup> Similarly, there is a report which was published by SSB in association with the global attention on China in the year of Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, with a particular focus on Chinese in Norway and their roles/occupation in society, giving an overview of Chinese people in Norway.<sup>134</sup> On the other hand, the report draws simple conclusions on the basis of the duration of their stay in Norway, instead of drawing a bigger picture of Chinese immigrant groups in a historical context. As I have discussed previously in the background chapter, relevant statistics and reports about Chinese in Norway are limited due to the relatively small number of this population.

### **3.5.3 Chinese people on Norwegian media sources**

As a result of the limitation of Chinese accounts on Norwegian official data, my textual analysis of historical sources came to rely on old Norwegian newspapers, such as digitized old copies of *Aftenposten*, which helped me to draw bigger picture of the condition of Chinese people in Oslo during the past. Initially, my textual analysis has particularly focused on *Aftenposten*, since this newspaper has a long history and is by many considered being the

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<sup>133</sup> See Mette Thunø (1997:16); Li Minghuan (2002:26-27)

<sup>134</sup> See Lars Østby (2008). He is a scientist from The Statistic Norway (*Statistisk sentralbyrå*) published a report regarding Chinese in Norway in 2008. It was however, rather than seen as a detailed statistical report, it can be seen as a brief overview of Chinese immigrants in Norway in terms of by analyzing various statistic such as their gender, ages, occupation and duration of stay. Despite the limitation of the scope of the report, Østby provides short but fairly insightful demographic situation and behavior of Chinese immigrants in Norway.

leading Norwegian newspaper with a long tradition of serious journalism.<sup>135</sup> However, I realized that the articles regarding to Chinese people in Oslo are still few in number. As a result, after consulting with my advisor, I have visited the National library of Norway (*Nasjonbiblioteket*) and browsed through the digital collection in the library, and thus effectively discovered more relevant articles from digitized editions of old Norwegian newspapers.<sup>136</sup>

Although the whole process of reading old newspaper articles in Norwegian was slow and time consuming, I was able to discover numerous stories which covered news about Chinese people, with most of them related to seamen and Chinese restaurants. I was motivated by discovering increasing numbers of articles about these relevant subjects, and I have successfully turned these articles from dispersed fragments to a well-documented, cohesive body of work.

### **3.5.4 Textual-analysis on Chinese written accounts**

In addition to analyzing old newspapers, I have also analyzed local Chinese magazine and internet forums which cater exclusively for Chinese communities in Scandinavia.

Throughout the process of seeking potential Chinese written sources which related to Chinese community in Oslo, I have come to acknowledge that they do have some organized Chinese publications, although these are sparse and limited. Nevertheless, the existing 20 volumes of local Chinese journal *Beiou huaren tongxun* 北欧华人通讯<sup>137</sup> which was provided by one of my informants, allowed me to get more access to comprehension of their (Chinese) personal stories or life experiences, which can be read in these Chinese journals. These volumes were, and still are, targeted at Chinese readers living in Nordic countries<sup>138</sup> and essentially offer useful daily-life information and an ideal space for sharing their stories. Many of the articles in these journals seemed vague, or even rather far from the exact subject that I looked at, but several articles relating to the personal stories of the few elderly immigrants assisted me in

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<sup>135</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aftenposten> (Retrieved 18.01.2013)

<sup>136</sup> Besides *Aftenposten*, rest of the articles that I have collected are all relate to Chinese seamen on Norwegian ships, Chinese catering condition, and Chinese students and so for- they were found in the following digitized old newspaper in Norway: *Dagbladet*, *Hanugesunds avis* and *VG*.

<sup>137</sup> The Chinese journal *Beiou huaren tongxun* (北欧华人通讯) 'Nordic Chinese Communication' started established already back in 1986 by Maria Ho 沈秀芳. Since then, the journal has been circulating among Chinese communities in Nordic countries, namely Norway, Sweden, and Finland.

<sup>138</sup> *Beiou huaren tongxun* (北欧华人通讯) 'Nordic Chinese Communication' used to be more popular and widespread among Chinese communities in Nordic countries. It is however in recent years, the publishing condition of this journal facing various difficulties and consequently this led to decrease of publication.

tracing the major part of the history of Chinese seamen who worked on Norwegian ships from the 1950s onwards. More coherent details are provided in the chapter 6.

There are two web-based forums: [www.kina.cc/no](http://www.kina.cc/no) and [www.tongxun.no](http://www.tongxun.no) which both relate to the Chinese communities in Norway. These forums provide some general information about Chinese people living in Norway. Within these two Chinese communities' websites, I have chosen to prioritize analyzing the text published on [www.tongxun.no](http://www.tongxun.no), as it is one of the oldest and best-established networks for Chinese communities not just in Norway, but also in the rest of the Nordic countries. The website is an electronic extension from the Chinese journal *Beiou huaren tongxun*. Besides that, analyzing the comments of the forums provided some individual stories of Chinese's social network in Norway today, even to the extent of all of Scandinavia. This is as crucial as those interview transcriptions which make up my first-hand Chinese sources for this paper. The other website [www.kina.cc/no](http://www.kina.cc/no) was established in 2001, which was out of the timeframe that my thesis focuses on. In addition, most of the main topics of this forum lack direct relevance to the subject which my thesis deals with. Hence I have chosen to focus on analyzing the electronic extension of *Beiou huaren tongxun* instead of [kina.cc/no](http://www.kina.cc/no).

As I have discussed the reliability of my oral sources previously, I also need to be aware of the reliability of my written sources. The awareness of the reliability of sources is particularly important to my analysis when I have referred some interview stories from the previously mentioned local Chinese journals and local Chinese websites.

### **3.6 Short conclusion**

The idea of applying the concept of oral history on my research question, namely Chinese immigrants in Oslo, beside the circumstances (the lack of official or private written account) already existing, shows that their life experiences enhance an insightful understanding of the past and fruitfully reveal much about the history of immigration in Norway. To a certain extent, their mindful and straightforward memories and opinions turned into which I regard as firsthand evidence, especially that of those who were elderly and worked as seamen during the 1950s to 1970s, providing a vivid illustration of the historical context to Chinese immigration. Their oral sources matter a lot because their inside knowledge about Chinese

families in Oslo helped me to clear up some puzzles where their stories were basically absent from written documentation.

In short, their significant stories and experience are a part of the history of immigration in Norway. At the same time, what had they overcome and what made them leave their homeland in that period also tells us much about the history migration from Hong Kong, mainland China and Taiwan. This area of history will be considered in chapter 5 to chapter 7.



## 4 Theoretical approach

*“International migration is hardly ever a simple individual action in which a person decides to move in search of better life-chances, pulls up his or her roots in the place of origin and quickly becomes assimilated in the new country.”<sup>139</sup>*

Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller (2009)

Just as Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller state above, the nature of international migration is hardly easy to understand. In this chapter I will first give a brief introduction of the major theories of international migration. Subsequently, I will explain the theories of social capital, migrant networks effects, and cumulative causation. They play important roles in explaining the ‘push-pull’ factors behind both sending and receiving areas. These are the theories which I have chosen to examine the causes of Chinese immigration to Oslo, as well as to identify the historical patterns of this immigration.

### 4.1 Theories of migration

There have always been various factors that cause migration. People tend to move from where they originated for different reasons, and these different reasons depict the history of human migration. In 1866, Ernest Ravenstein introduced his study of *The Law of Migration*, which he called the “pull and push theory”.<sup>140</sup> “Push factors” means the conditions that drive people to leave their home, such as natural disasters, unemployment and political threats.

Correspondingly, “pull factors” means the conditions that attracts people to a new area, such as better living conditions, attractive working conditions, and so forth. However, when we attempt to understand contemporary international migration, the “push-pull” explanation seems outdated. This is because, today, the international migration no longer consists of two equally important push-pull forces. As a group of leading scholars of migration studies, Douglas Massey and his colleagues stress that this pull and push model does not constitute a

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<sup>139</sup> Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller (2009:20)

<sup>140</sup> Refer to Ernest Ravenstein, “The Laws of Migration”, *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 52 (1889): 241-301. Cited in Philip Q. Yang, “A Theory of Asian Immigration to the United States” *Journal of Asian American Studies*, Vol 13, No.1, (2010), pp. 1-34; Everett S. Lee ‘A Theory of migration’ *Demography*, Vol. 3, No. 1. (1966), pp. 47-57.

theoretical framework as a way of ‘classifying migration and ordering its determinants in space’.<sup>141</sup> It is particularly not convincing when one attempts to understand and predict the modern international migration. Many scholars question the ability of this theory to predict future migration simply as a list of pull and push factors of both sending and receiving areas. This list cannot explain why such determinants, processes and patterns of migration have occurred. Some criticize the push-pull theory for failing to consider the role of specific historical development in particular countries, such as why similar push or pull determinants have influenced large immigration flows, but do not reach similar outcome in different countries.<sup>142</sup>

As Stephen Castles and Mark Miller state: ‘International migration is part of a transnational revolution that is reshaping societies and politics around the globe.’<sup>143</sup> In order to understand the diversity of international migration trends, various major theories of international migration have been introduced by scholars from various social science disciplines.<sup>144</sup> Today, theories of international migration divided by economically based and sociologically based, and some are based on integration which is a theory that has combined both economic and social perspectives.<sup>145</sup> In the following part I will introduce the following theories such as *Neoclassical; new economics of labour migration; segmented labour market* and *World system*.

The *Neoclassical* theory is an economically based approach. This theory is based on potential migrants making their decision predominantly based on economic factors; the precondition is assuming that potential migrants have perfect knowledge of wage levels and employment opportunities in receiving areas.<sup>146</sup> Unlike the neoclassical theory, the approach of *new economics of labour migration* puts more weight on migration decisions that are made by the collective (i.e. families, households or even communities) instead of individuals.<sup>147</sup> Similarly,

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<sup>141</sup> Douglas S. Massey et al (2005: 12)

<sup>142</sup> Philip Q. Yang (2010:3)

<sup>143</sup> Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller (2009:7)

<sup>144</sup> Regarding the introduction of the major theories of international migration, I have deeply consulted Douglas S. Massey et al (2005): *World in Motions* and Castles and Miller et (2009): *The Ages of Migration*; while in terms of critical reviews of contesting theories of international migration, I have consulted Philip Q. Yang (2010) “A Theory of Asian Immigration to the United States” for assisting me to address various theoretical explanation of immigration.

<sup>145</sup> Refers to Philip Q. Yang (2010)

<sup>146</sup> Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller (2009:22)

<sup>147</sup> Ibid (2009:24)

this approach stresses that the international migration also seeks to improve income relative to other households.<sup>148</sup>

Both *Neoclassical* and *new economics of labour* approaches attribute migration to economic disparities between the sending and the receiving country in the labour market, thus resulting in wage difference. In addition, beneficial economic expectation of migration is not just limited to current actual income, but also emphasizes expected returns in the future.<sup>149</sup>

However, these theories are lacking consideration of the crucial role of immigration and emigration policies. The limitation of these theories is that they do not sufficiently explain why a particular migration flow happens at a particular point in time.<sup>150</sup> For instance, it cannot explain why the immigration of Chinese cooks to Norway began a few decades later than to other Western countries. In short, both these theories overlook other major determinants of migration that are noneconomic.

When the policy that triggers migration is taken into account, the *segmented labour market* theory explains both the timing of particular migration movements and their particular destination. This results in a more structural explanation of the important role of employers' intentional recruitment which initiated the international migration flows to developed countries.<sup>151</sup> However, the consideration of this theory is only limited to the demand for cheap labour from developing countries as the only major factor of migration movements. As more theorists attempt to work on a general theoretical framework of understanding migration not only economic based, the *World system* theory is developed as a sociological model. This theory contributes to mainly emphasizing the connection between sending and receiving countries as the most crucial in shaping international movements.<sup>152</sup> However, the world system theory is only limited to macro-level determinants and other micro-level determinants such as individuals' motivation are overlooked.

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<sup>148</sup> Philip Q. Yang (2010:6)

<sup>149</sup> Ibid (2010:5)

<sup>150</sup> Ibid (2010:4)

<sup>151</sup> Ibid (2010:6)

<sup>152</sup> Ibid (2010:8)

## **4.2 The theoretical approach for this thesis**

As I have discussed previously, the single ‘push-pull’ framework cannot help analyze my findings, and the other major theories that I have introduced mostly look upon macro-level determinants. It is difficult to understand individual-level migration if micro-level determinants matter more than macro-level determinants. As a result, I have hereby chosen the social capital theory among the significant amount of existing theoretical research on migration studies. I will particularly focus on migrant networks and the theory of cumulative causation to support my analysis. It is evident that the push and pull theory unveils the major factors in terms of disparities in economic, political and cultural dimensions. However, many of these push and pull forces do not explain how a certain volume of migration still sustains in a particular timeframe, despite both emigration and immigration policies creating various determinants of controlling outflow and inflow. Moreover, many of these major theories consider the migration issues on macro-level, which is why I have chosen the application of social capital theory, with a particular focus on migrant networks and cumulative causation, as they are dealing with micro-level. The reason behind this choice is because these theories can help explain the perpetuation of migration in the case of Chinese in Oslo. I am also keen to look at the perpetuation of this international movement, in order to see the contrasts between the first migrants and those that follow. Therefore, the social capital theory which focuses on the effect of migrant networks and cumulative causation turn out to be ideal theories that can be helpful for explaining and identifying the factors that influenced the migratory route.

### **4.2.1 Social Capital theory**

In 1977, the economist Glenn Loury introduced the concept of “social capital” to describe social capital as a set of resources that exists essentially in relationships of families and communities. This set of resources is to help promote social development of a child or young people.<sup>153</sup> Since then, the concept of social capital has been further elaborated by several scholars into different disciplines in various contexts.<sup>154</sup> While in the studies that relate to human society and further to international movement, Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc J.D. Wacquant define social capital as:

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<sup>153</sup> Glenn Loury (1977; 1987). Cited in James S. Coleman (1990:300)

<sup>154</sup> See Janine Nahapiet and Sumantra Ghoshal (1998); Lin and Vaughn, (1981); Massey et al. (2005:42)

‘[T]he sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition.’<sup>155</sup>

Meanwhile James Coleman states: ‘Social capital [...] is created when the relations among persons change in ways that facilitate action.’<sup>156</sup> He also stresses that social capital is the least tangible in comparison to physical capital and human capital because social capital is embodied in the relations among persons. Still, social capital is as productive as other forms of capital.<sup>157</sup> Thereby social capital is not only used as a metaphor to describe social ties as a form of capital, which is closely connected with social networks.<sup>158</sup> It can also be viewed as a core of migration networks, especially when the migration network is featured with ‘enforceable trust’<sup>159</sup> and facilitating international movement later with the help of social capital (especially family ties or kinship ties). The concept of social capital and networks effect is later pioneered by Douglas Massey and his colleagues’ studies, with a particular focus on the Mexican immigrants in the United States, and how their social capital as a resource which embedded in migration or potential migration.<sup>160</sup>

Hence, I am keen to learn that, by using the concept of social capital theory, how the migrants’ social capitals (such as their ties with earlier migrants or interpersonal connections) facilitate migration or potential migration. To what extent can the theories be used to explain other relevant links between the both sending and receiving areas, providing prospective migrants with information, means of travel and the possibility of entry (regardless whether it be legal or illegal entries)? These are the questions I will look further into.

#### **4.2.2 “Chain migration” and what are migrant networks?**

The term “chain migration” can be defined as a process of migration which often starts with one or a few members of a family, later expanding to other members of the family and to extended families and even to the entire community.<sup>161</sup> Migrant networks, according to Massey *et al*, can be defined as ‘sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship,

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<sup>155</sup> Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc J.D. Wacquant (1992:119)

<sup>156</sup> James S. Coleman (1990:304)

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Vertovec (2003).Cited in Sebnem Koser Akcapar (2009:162)

<sup>159</sup> The original term is derived from Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993)’s work. Cited in Zai Liang and Miao David Chunyu (2008:2)

<sup>160</sup> Sebnem Koser Akcapar (2009: 162)

<sup>161</sup> Philip Q. Yang (2012: 22); Douglas S. Massey et al (2005:46)

and shared community origin.<sup>162</sup> The important role of migrant networks is that international movement is likely increase as the networks lower the cost and risks of movement and increase the anticipated net returns to migration.<sup>163</sup> When one has a desire of getting out, the networks can function as ‘mitigating the hazards of crossing the border, with friends and relatives with previous migrant experience [...], and guiding the ‘preferred routes and techniques of clandestine entry.’<sup>164</sup> In short, the migrants’ social network theory explains how the perpetuation of migration functions. It particularly explains why migration flows continue even after the initial driving forces stop. This explanation also addresses the consequences of why migrants choose to move to specific places. Furthermore, family and community play a crucial role in migration networks, especially in the case of Asian migration.<sup>165</sup> Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller pointed out that many academic studies on Asian migration have shown that migration decisions are usually made not by individuals, but by families.<sup>166</sup> In order to maximize income and survival chances, each family might consider sending a household member overseas for seeking a better life. The migration decisions are often made by ‘elders (especially men), and younger people and women are expected to obey patriarchal authority.’<sup>167</sup> Although this explanation is initially applied for addressing the theory of *new economics of labour migration*, one can view the fact that when migrant decision is in progress, quite often it is decided by elders or head of the family.<sup>168</sup> Both migrant networks and the effect of chain migration were intertwined, as once a pioneer settled down at an ideal destination, relevant information about the destination would turn to migrants’ social capital and therefore trigger the chain migration, which is why the migration continuous itself in spite of the initial migration may has disappeared.

### 4.2.3 Cumulative causation

The term causation can be defined as such: ‘the action of causing something to happen or exist, or “causality”<sup>169</sup>. In Massey *et al*, the theory of cumulative causation is defined as such: ‘causation is cumulative in the sense that each act of migration alters the social context within

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<sup>162</sup> Douglas S. Massey et al (1993:448)

<sup>163</sup> Douglas S. Massey et al (2005:42-43); Douglas S. Massey (1990:8)

<sup>164</sup> Espinosa and Massey (1997). Cited in David McKenzie and Hillel Rapoport ‘Network effects and the dynamics of migration and inequality: theory and evidence from Mexico’ (2004: 3)

<sup>165</sup> Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller (2009: 28-29)

<sup>166</sup> This argument matches with my findings regarding the case of the Hong Kong Chinese (seamen) and mainland Chinese (cooks) who came with family reunion.

<sup>167</sup> Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller (2009: 28-29)

<sup>168</sup> Ibid. See also Janet W. Salaff, Siu-Lun Wong, and Arent Greve (2010)

<sup>169</sup> Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English 4 ed. (2010)

which subsequent migration decisions are made, typically in ways that make additional movement more likely.<sup>170</sup> The basic standpoints of the theory on migration sustains itself in a cumulative way through the expansion of networks, the distribution of income, the distribution of land, the organization of agriculture, the culture of migration, the distribution of human capital, and the social labeling.<sup>171</sup> The information which is provided by the pioneers of the migration can help prospective migrants when it comes to potential destination of emigration. The prospective migrants get to learn the necessary steps, whether it is where to departure from or who to seek out to get a job and accommodation, which are both steps necessary for successful immigration. So, once the perceptions of migration grow in prevalence within a community, chances of future migration can be increased.<sup>172</sup> Due to each act of migration creating additional social infrastructure to promote more movement, migrant networks also act as keywords to cause migration cumulatively.<sup>173</sup>

In short, cumulative causation is ‘the tendency for international migration to perpetuate itself over time, regardless of the conditions that originally caused it’<sup>174</sup>. Massey and his colleagues state that the cumulative causation theory is ‘readily testable using individual-level data.’<sup>175</sup> This statement therefore can be ideally fit into the analytical findings of my in-depth interviews, along with diverse textual-analysis with archives.

### **4.3 Limitation of selected theories**

The major limitation for both social capital theory and cumulative causation theory is that, firstly, these theories mainly focus on the perpetuation of migration, rather than the initiation of migration flows.<sup>176</sup> In this case, the historical background of migration policies and employment opportunities are overlooked. As a result, I have relied on some relevant historical sources from archives and oral evidence that can support my analysis.

Secondly, I have encountered shortcomings in collecting relevant data in terms of both quality and quantity for sending areas. In the case of my thesis, the scarcity of fieldwork research on

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<sup>170</sup> Douglas S. Massey et al (2005: 45-46)

<sup>171</sup> Ibid. (2005: 46-48)

<sup>172</sup> Ibid (2005:47)

<sup>173</sup> Ibid (2005:192)

<sup>174</sup> Ibid (2005: 192)

<sup>175</sup> Ibid (2005: 57)

<sup>176</sup> Philip q.Yang (2010:9-11)

the immigrants-sending area has limited the outcome of my research based on the cumulative causation theory. The fieldwork sources for this thesis are only obtained in the receiving area, in which unfortunately sources from sending area are absent. For instance, my in-depth interviews revealed that majority of Chinese immigrants originates from a certain area and that they came to Norway within a specific period. Unfortunately, due to my absence in the relevant migrants-sending areas, no reliable quantitative data allow me to access information on all individuals, which leads to the lack of information regarding the specific volume of the flows from sending areas. In order to deal with the shortcomings, I have therefore consulted many existing scholarly publications and intended to gain some relevant data regarding the conditions in immigrants-sending areas.

#### **4.4 Short conclusion**

By recognizing the diversity of international migration theories, I have chosen to use the social capital theory to help analyzing the waves of the Chinese immigration to Oslo. I have given a picture of when and how Chinese migrated to Oslo. The social capital framework provides me with a tool to better understand the linkage between the pioneer migrants and the subsequent migrants who were arriving Oslo later.

Despite the fact that these theories examine the perpetuation of migration rather than the initiation, they are helpful and convincing in the case of the history of Chinese people in Oslo. Initially I apply the push and pull model which can illustrate the initiation of Chinese immigration to Oslo historically, namely various conditions that spurred Chinese immigration. However, only the implication of the social capital theory can be of assistance to explain the development and perpetuation of social linkages between the sending and receiving areas. When one attempts to understand the following waves of Chinese immigration after the first group of migrants settled down in Oslo, the following migration needs to be examined analytically in an integrated model in the theories of migration.

Nonetheless, the causes, processes and perpetuations of Chinese immigration to Oslo need to be explained in a specific historical timeframe, as the selected theories will be used to help depict the pattern of their entries and arrival time to Oslo. In the case of Chinese immigrants in Oslo, my findings suggest that the Chinese immigrants gained their social capital through migrant networks (family ties, kinship or friendship ties). Therefore the movements from their



homeland was generated by the social capital and eventually triggered the “chain migration”. In short, the theories which I have chosen aim to examine these questions: How did the Chinese immigration to Norway begin? How does the push and pull factors explain the perpetuation of Chinese migration from certain sending areas in certain periods? And how did different types of Chinese immigration groups appear during different time periods? Finally, what is the main migratory pattern of Chinese migration to Oslo? These are the questions to which I now turn in the following chapters.

## 5 Early records of Chinese presence in Norway

The Chinese presence in Norway can be traced to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is when the Chinese delegation which led by the leader of Chinese board of Rites, Dai Hongci (戴鸿慈) and the general governor of Minzhe region(闽浙), Duanfang (端方) arrived in Oslo in April 1906. The Chinese delegation came with the purpose of studying Western technology, as well as European administration, constitutional government systems and education systems<sup>177</sup>. However, the delegation did not come specifically to Oslo but visited Oslo as part of a larger study tour to the West sent by Chinese imperial authorities. Besides taking inspiration from the West, Dai Hongci and his delegation members regularly met other Chinese people who were living in Europe. For instance, Dai Hongci met a Chinese immigrant during his visit to Copenhagen and acknowledged that they were three Chinese people in total living in Denmark at that time. Dai's brief description of this Chinese immigrant provided a glance of the earliest Chinese immigrants who lived and integrated into the Danish society.<sup>178</sup> On the contrary, this was not the case in Norway. There were no mentions either in Chinese or Norwegian sources regarding the presence of Chinese people in Norway. However, as Norway is considered a small country in the eyes of the Imperial Chinese high officer, Dai Hongci was impressed by the competency and relatively large number of Norwegian commercial vessels to China.<sup>179</sup> As this thesis will elaborate further, the link between Norwegian vessels to China indeed created a precondition and caused the first group of Chinese to immigrate to Norway during the 1960s.

There is a lack of sources in both Chinese and Norwegian which made it impossible to trace any specific Chinese presences during the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>180</sup>; it is possible that, there were Chinese women married with Norwegian traders or customs officials who had

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<sup>177</sup> Rune Svarverud (1997:7)

<sup>178</sup> Dai Hongci (1986:448); Mette Thunø (1997:84), (1998:172)

<sup>179</sup> Dai Hongci (1986:460)

<sup>180</sup> In search of the earliest Chinese arrival in Norway, it is possible that a handful of Chinese performing artists arrived in Oslo as early as in the 1900s. A Danish account remarked that a Chinese performing artist family who were involved in the Tivoli show and entertainment house in Copenhagen, and later made their departure to Norway for show tour back in 1903. See Mette Thunø, *Chinese Migration to Denmark: Catering and Ethnicity*, Ph.D. dissertation (1997:96-97)

connections with China at that time.<sup>181</sup> Likewise, cases of Chinese men married Danish women during this period were registered.<sup>182</sup> As such it is possible that this occurred in Norway as well; however, no concrete evidence has been found to back this up so far.<sup>183</sup>

## 5.1 Chinese presence in continental Europe prior to the Second World War

The lifetime scholar of studies of overseas Chinese, Wang Gungwu has marked two major Chinese emigration patterns, Chinese merchant (*huashang* 华商) and Chinese coolie (*huanggong* 华工), respectively.<sup>184</sup> These two patterns were not only reflected in Chinese emigration to Southeast Asia and North America, but also repeated in Europe.<sup>185</sup> In the very beginning of the twentieth century, in addition to the coolie pattern, Chinese emigration to continental Europe is also characterized by merchant pattern. In the case of Europe, the first Chinese curio and art shop was established by wealthy Shanghai merchants in Paris as early as in 1904.<sup>186</sup> Most of the commercial oriented Chinese immigration to Europe was not dominated by Shanghai merchants, but peddlers from southeastern Zhejiang around the area of Wenzhou, as well as of Qingtian County.<sup>187</sup> The causes and origin of Chinese emigration from Qingtian and Wenzhou to Europe started out with some legendary characteristics. Qingtian is located in the mountainous area where there is a lack of natural resources for farming, but it is famous for its production of soapstone, called “Qingtian-stone” (青田石). This kind of stone was well known as a fine material for artistic stone carvings during the Qing dynasty (1644-1911). This Qingtian handicraft was even offered to the Qianlong

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<sup>181</sup> The statistic data of Chinese women married to Norwegian men during the pre-war period might be found in the National archival, however, the archives information of the Norwegian Sentralpasskontoret and Statens utlendingskontor is enormous, which shows that it is impossible to find out relevant information owing to the time constrain of the MA thesis. See the Riksarkivet catalog (2008) “Sentralpasskontoret/Statens Utlendingskontor, 1917-1987”, nr. 1252.7/10.

<sup>182</sup> More comprehensive history of the early history of Chinese immigrants in Denmark is presented in Mette Thunø, *Chinese Migration to Denmark: Catering and Ethnicity*, Ph.D. dissertation (1997:80-88). In the case of searching for the earliest Chinese arrival in Norway, Mette Thunø mentioned about Chinese performing artists who were involved in the Tivoli show and entertainment house in Copenhagen and later made their departure to Norway for show tour back in 1903. See Thunø (1997:96-97)

<sup>183</sup> The archives information from the Oslo Archival indicates that there were registered 8 people whose place of birth is China in 1905 in Oslo. Despite of that, the outcome of my searching in the Oslo population registration in that year unveils that these people who had their birthplace in China had Norwegian names. This might indicate that these people were born in China with missionary parents or merchant parents who worked in China. As a result they were actually ethnic Norwegian born in overseas, not Chinese people who immigrated to Norway. Regarding statistics of foreigners in Oslo during 1905, see Ellen Røsjø in *Tobias* 1-2 (2005:45).

<sup>184</sup> Wang Gungwu (2003:3-21). Cited in Mette Thunø (1997:63)

<sup>185</sup> Gregor Benton and Frank N. Pieke (ed.)(1998:3-4); Mette Thunø (1997:63-64)

<sup>186</sup> Yu-Sion Live, “Les Chinois de Paris depuis le début du siècle. Présence urbaine et activités économiques” pp.158. Cited in Mette Thunø (1997: 65)

<sup>187</sup> Mette Thunø (1997: 65); Li Minghuan (1999: 31-32)

emperor (1711-1799) as a birthday tribute.<sup>188</sup> Later, as the value of Qingtian stone handicraft raised, many poor Qiantianese were encouraged to sell those handicraft to nearby cities, such as Wenzhou, Ningbo, Zhoushan, Shanghai, Nanjing, Wuhan, Tianjin, and even to nearby countries like Japan and Korea.<sup>189</sup> The Qingtian handicraft had even attracted the American and European audiences since they were introduced in the first World Fair in London in 1851 and awarded in the World's Fair in St. Louis, Louisiana in 1853.<sup>190</sup> In the following years from 1893 to 1899, Qingtian stone handicraft was also presented in exhibitions in Italy and France.<sup>191</sup>

As a result of the fame of Qingtian handicraft in Europe, there were some renowned stories of Qingtian Chinese individuals who had made their fortune by selling Qingtian carved stone in Europe. One such story of Qingtian Chinese in the Netherland follows as below:

It is said that in the spring of 1914, while selling Qingtian carved stone in Europe, a Qingtian man luckily had a chance to present a piece to the Dutch Queen: an incense burner with two lively lions playing with a pearl. The Queen liked the article very much and praised it highly. This set a fashion, and many Dutch aristocrats subsequently bought such Qingtian stone ornaments. As a result, this Qingtian man earned a lot of money and was regarded as a hero in his hometown.<sup>192</sup>

As Li Minghuan stated, the above story is most likely to be rumors, rather than definite facts, such a story had apparently influenced Qingtianese to fantasize about getting rich in similar ways in Europe, and particularly those who were keen to escape from poverty in their hometown were influenced by it. Without any accurate information, many stories about how Qingtianese got wealthy by selling Qingtian handicraft played as getting-out motivation to those in Qingtian area,<sup>193</sup> thus spurred emigration from the Qingtian area.

Prior to 1900, 2180 persons emigrated from the Qingtian area and many of them made their destination to Europe,<sup>194</sup> as France was one of the major destinations during the 1930s.<sup>195</sup> The number of Qingtian migrants increased so significantly that it propelled the creation of diverse agencies providing services such as obtaining travel documents, tickets as well as banking houses. The phenomenon of such service agencies flourished can be viewed as

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<sup>188</sup> Li Minghuan (2002: 93)

<sup>189</sup> Li Minghuan (2002: 93); Mette Thunø (1997: 65)

<sup>190</sup> Li Minghuan (2002: 93); Mette Thunø (1997: 66)

<sup>191</sup> Li Minghuan (2002: 93); Mette Thunø (1997: 66). As Mette Thunø stated, China was not officially participating in these exhibitions until 1904 in St. Louis, but was presented by European merchants and the foreign managed Chinese Imperial Customs.

<sup>192</sup> Lin and Chen, 1986. Cited in Li Minghuan (1999:31)

<sup>193</sup> Li Minghuan (2002: 98-99); (1999:31)

<sup>194</sup> Li Minghuan (2002: 94)

<sup>195</sup> Mette Thunø (1997: 66)

byproducts of the trend of emigration to continental Europe. Moreover, there is a degree of differences in Chinese and European sources about how many Chinese residing in Paris. The numbers of migrants from the Qingtian area varied from nearly 1000 to 10,000 persons during the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>196</sup> During these periods, these groups of Chinese migrants from Qingtian and Wenzhou gradually captured local's attention as they were basically hawking on small scale with a little knowledge about the language, and wandering in various countries without a clear destination. They started to establish themselves in major European cities such as Milan, Berlin, Hamburg, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Marseilles, Vienna, Barcelona, and Copenhagen.<sup>197</sup> So, did Oslo also meet the influx of these Qingtian migrants during the same period? Evidence indicate that the earliest recorded Chinese presence in Oslo was in fact also a Qingtian migrant; I shall present the history in the following part to demonstrate how he ended up in Oslo prior to the Second World War.

## 5.2 The Chinese presence in Oslo prior to the Second World War

Hitherto, the first recorded Chinese person in Norway was Chen Tehu (Chen Tehao 陈特皓) - He is the pioneer of introducing Chinese food culture into Norway. In 1963 he founded a restaurant named 'China House' (*Zhongguo fandian* 中国饭店/ *Zhongguo lou* 中国楼<sup>198</sup>) at Sofies gate 15 in Oslo. It is known as the first Chinese restaurant in Norway.<sup>199</sup> Moreover, he is one of the Chinese survivors of a concentration camp in Norway<sup>200</sup> during the Second World War.<sup>201</sup> Before he was imprisoned, he had also made his journey to Denmark but eventually he started up his own business in Oslo during the pre-war period. Originated from Qingtian, Chen Tehu travelled a long way with his fellow townsmen (*tongxiang* 同乡) by ship before finally making Italy his first country of arrival in Europe. He was a former secretary of

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<sup>196</sup> As Mette Thunø stated, despite the big differences in these numerical data, the numbers of Chinese emigration from Qiantian and Wenzhou had no doubt that reached a peak in the 1920s and 1930s. See Mette Thunø (1997: 66)

<sup>197</sup> Mette Thunø (1997: 67); Li Minghuan (2002: 91-92). Regarding more comprehensive research about Qiantian emigration to Europe, see also Li Minghuan (2002: 91-99)

<sup>198</sup> Some of my informants referred the mentioned Chinese restaurant to this name '*Zhongguolou*' in Chinese.

<sup>199</sup> Jon Gunnar Arntzen and Stig-Audun Hansen (2008:24); informant 1, informant 3, informant 11

<sup>200</sup> He was later transferred to a concentration camp in Germany from Grini prison camp in Norway. I will introduce his history below shortly.

<sup>201</sup> According to the *Norskfangleksikon*, two Chinese names registered in the record and showed that both of them were caught at Stavanger (A Southern west city in Norway), which indicated a likelihood that a few more Chinese presence in Norway before the Second World War. Unfortunately, no further information can be further investigated. See *Norsk fangleksikon: Grinifangene* (1946)

the Kuomintang's office in the Qingtian County (*Qingtian xian* 青田县)<sup>202</sup> before he left his family and joining the trend of 'heading to the West' (*fanbang re* 番邦热) to seek a better life in Europe.

Although he and his companions finally made their arrival in Europe, life was tough for them as they suffered from hunger and racial discrimination from the locals in Italy. Years later Chen and his two other companions peddled to Denmark and founded a Chinese restaurant together. The partnerships for the Chinese restaurant did not last long as they ended up each going their own ways.<sup>203</sup> As a result he moved to Norway as he, by a random chance, heard about Norway and that people over there are more kind and friendly.<sup>204</sup> He started his own business by selling goods from China such as silk, leather products<sup>205</sup> and maps<sup>206</sup> in Oslo.

During the period of the World War II, he wrote a letter back to embassy of the Republic of China in Norway in order to seek for aid for relieving his poverty as he faced some hardships in Oslo. Unfortunately the letter somehow was blocked by a German Nazi army. As the Nazis found his contact with the Kuomintang to be suspicious, he was taken prisoner.<sup>207</sup> He was sent to the *Sachsenhausen* concentration camp in Germany by 22 June 1943.<sup>208</sup> Chen Tehu spent two years in the concentration camp and was sent back to Norway 5 October 1945.<sup>209</sup> Despite his great desire to return to his hometown after what he had been through in Germany, he decided to stay in Oslo after evaluating the risks of heading back to China. China was at this time suffering from a horrifying and chaotic civil war between the Kuomintang Party and the Chinese Communist Party.<sup>210</sup>

It is worth noting that his voyage to Europe is an important aspect to look at when studying the emigration wave of Chinese people to Europe - especially during the Pre-World War II period. Chen Tehu's arrival in Norway in the 1930s is a classic example of the individual Chinese chain migrants from Qingtian in the early twentieth century. But why his presence in Oslo did not trigger the Qingtian chain migration prior to World War II? I shall discuss further shortly in the next part.

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<sup>202</sup> Informant 11

<sup>203</sup> According to the sources that provided by informant 11, one remained in Denmark and the other moved to Sweden.

<sup>204</sup> Informant 11

<sup>205</sup> *Aftenposten* 07.10.1939, pp.12; *Norsk fangeleksikon: Grinifangene* (1946:217)

<sup>206</sup> Informant 11

<sup>207</sup> Informant 11

<sup>208</sup> *Aftenposten* 25.10.1945, pp.2; *Grinifangeleksikon* pp.217.

<sup>209</sup> *Grinifangeleksikon* pp.217

<sup>210</sup> Informant 11

### 5.3 Were there more Qingtian migrants in Oslo?

Evidence has shown that some Qingtian hawkers even peddling their ways to Denmark from the late 1920s to early 1930s. They travelled from the southern Europe by following their pioneers who had already made their way to Denmark as early as in 1928. After several years, they were only ten persons who settled eventually in Denmark and became integrated by way of intermarriage with Danish women.<sup>211</sup> In the case of Chinese people in Oslo, it is only possible to trace back a single Chinese's personal history by available sources. After several years of peddling in continental Europe, Qingtian migrant Chen Tehu coincidentally settled in Oslo and subsequently started his trading business. A newspaper report stated that, including Chen Tehu, there were altogether four Chinese people living in Oslo in 1946. The other three Chinese were identified as one Chinese diplomat and two seamen.<sup>212</sup> However, their personal histories are absent due to the lack of evidence.

Moreover, the reason why I have introduced the history of the Qingtian emigration to Europe is because it can be viewed as a background history for the Chinese immigration to Oslo. The Qingtian Chinese's settlement in Europe during the postwar period caused some attention throughout the continental Europe because of the volume of their influx and their oddness of peddling. Nonetheless, such case cannot be identified in Oslo. This situation reinforced the fact that Norway were not well known and attractive destination for the majority of early Chinese migrants in Europe. In short, Norway was lacking many pull factors in comparison to other major European cities at the same period.

### 5.4 Short conclusion

As I have demonstrated above, due to the lack of pull factors for attracting Chinese migrants, it is possible that the numbers of Chinese people in Oslo were not more than 10 persons prior to 1950.<sup>213</sup> This situation contributes to the main reason why there is no Chinese enclave in Oslo. The diminutive number of Chinese presence in Oslo indicated that the fact that Norway

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<sup>211</sup> Mette Thunø (1998: 174)

<sup>212</sup> *Aftenposten* 04.02.1946, pp.4.

<sup>213</sup> 'Folkemengde' See <http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/tabeller/3-11.html> (accessed 04.10.2013)

might not be an attractive destination for Chinese immigrants – The first identifiable Qingtian migrant Chen Tehu did not trigger more companions to move to Norway from other parts of continental Europe. According to the effect of migrant's network and cumulative causation, more migrants would move to Norway subsequently, especially when the pioneer had settled down at the destination. It is possible that the Qingtian Chinese preferred to stay at the cities where the majority of fellow townsmen had already settled down. Besides, language barrier and discrimination in some local areas might also be factors which made them reluctant to peddle even further to the Nordic countries. Secondly, if we consider the likelihood of intermarriage between Chinese and Norwegian prior to the Second World War, these Chinese most likely became integrated into the mainstream society. Unlike the situation in Germany, there were no laws of prohibiting intermarriage with Chinese or discriminative actions towards Chinese people in Norway.<sup>214</sup> Under such circumstances, instead of being clustered in Oslo, it is likely that there may have been Chinese living in smaller places which scattered throughout Norway, and particularly those Chinese who married to Norwegians as some of my informants revealed to me during the interviews,<sup>215</sup> even though I have no concrete evidence to back this information up.

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<sup>214</sup> Li Minghuan (2002: 341); Erich Gutinger (1998:200-202)

<sup>215</sup> Informant 1, and informant 7. Both of them claimed that they knew some Chinese ladies who married to Norwegians and came to Norway already in the 1950s.



## 6 Pioneers – Chinese seamen on Norwegian ships

It was not until the late 1960s to 1970s the first wave of Chinese immigration to Oslo took place and consisted predominantly of seamen from Hong Kong. They were employed on Norwegian vessels and mainly worked as cooks or stewards particularly on the Wilhelmsen shipping company. What were the major factors behind this first wave of immigration history? Why exactly did the immigration take place at this timeframe? These are the major aspects I shall discuss more comprehensively in the following parts.

Today, the majority of Chinese immigrants who live in Oslo acknowledge that the earliest Chinese migrants who arrived in Norway were Chinese seamen. According to all my informants, the major remark that they revealed to me is that the Chinese seamen had no doubt established a solid base for the subsequent Chinese immigration to Oslo. This group is constantly regarded as “the pioneers” or “*di yi dai*” (第一代)<sup>216</sup> among the Chinese community in Oslo. The group merits special attention with regard to Chinese immigration history to Norway because their settlement created a primary foundation for the development of Chinese communities in Norway, especially in the case of Oslo. Because of their settlement, more Chinese people from Hong Kong, Taiwan and later mainland China began to make their voyages to Oslo by the effects of migrant networks and cumulative causation.

Before I begin to introduce the first wave of Chinese immigration to Oslo, I shall present a brief historical background of Chinese seamen in other European countries during the twentieth century in the following part.

### 6.1 Seamen turned immigrants in Europe

Apart from the Qingtian chain-migration as a form of merchant pattern in Chinese emigration, Chinese seamen also made up a big part of the early Chinese emigration pattern to continental Europe. Chinese seamen were also among the first immigrants to settle, they as well formed a solid base of earliest Chinese settlement in Europe.<sup>217</sup> The transformation process from Chinese seamen to immigrants started as early as in the early twentieth century in continental Europe. Many stranded seamen clustered in many major port cities and thus formed the first

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<sup>216</sup> The first generation

<sup>217</sup> Li Minghuan (2002: 84)

Chinese concentration. As early as in 1901, 60% of Chinese people in Britain were registered as seamen.<sup>218</sup> The Limehouse district of East London was already referred as “Chinatown” as early as 1902. The remark of “Chinatown” was made in connection to the permanent presence of Chinese seamen who came mainly from Guangdong.<sup>219</sup> In the Netherlands, the earliest Chinese concentration in Dutch sea ports appeared nearly a decade later than Britain.<sup>220</sup> In Germany from the 1880s, some Chinese seamen clustered in Hamburg waiting for job opportunities as stokers, trimmers or lubricators for British, Dutch or German ships. The first Chinese sailor’s recruitment agency was established in 1920 to provide services for Chinese seamen’s needs.<sup>221</sup> Seven years later, some 150 Chinese were registered as permanent residents in Hamburg.<sup>222</sup> In Denmark, Chinese seamen stranded in the port of Copenhagen can also be found in the early 1900s. Some of them married Danes and established families in Copenhagen,<sup>223</sup> but the numbers of seamen reached only a handful prior to World War I.<sup>224</sup> They were exclusively male and they arrived in Europe in coincidence.

The tradition of employing Chinese seamen to work on foreign ships has a long history.<sup>225</sup> Due to the dreadful conditions as stokers on steamships, the unions of European sailors were often on strikes for demanding better salaries and working conditions in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As a result of European shipping companies trying to minimize the unions’ influence, many Chinese seamen were recruited under such circumstances.<sup>226</sup> From the foreign ships owners’ aspects, the Chinese were more hardworking, more obedient than European seamen, and they were more willing to work as firemen despite the dreadful working conditions and poor salaries.<sup>227</sup> As for Chinese seamen, they often viewed these as a better job opportunities despite of dreadful working conditions. These Chinese seamen were mostly mustered through a Chinese agent or so-called “shipping master” in Hong Kong. As a result, most of the Chinese who were recruited on foreign ships originated from Hong Kong and the nearby Guangdong province. Between the late 1890s to early 1900s, some Bao’an<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Li Minghuan (2002: 203-204)

<sup>219</sup> Mette Thunø (1997:68)

<sup>220</sup> Frank N. Pieke, “Immigration et entreprenariat: les Chinois aux Pays-Bas,” *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (1992), pp.33-34, cited in Mette Thunø (1999:68).

<sup>221</sup> Li Minghuan (2002: 231)

<sup>222</sup> Erich Göttinger (1998:199)

<sup>223</sup> Mette Thunø (1997:86-87)

<sup>224</sup> Mette Thunø (1997:68)

<sup>225</sup> Evidence shows that this recruitment of Chinese crews started already since the 1860s. See Li Minghuan (2002:87-91)

<sup>226</sup> Li Minghuan (2002:88); Gregor Benton and Frank N. Pieke (ed.) (1998:3-4)

<sup>227</sup> Li Minghuan (2002: 88)

<sup>228</sup> Today, Bao’an is one of the district that comprising Shenzhen in the Guangdong province.

(宝安) Chinese established recruitment agencies (*xingchuan guan* 行船馆) in Hong Kong. They helped their fellow townsmen to get job opportunities as seamen on foreign ships from Hong Kong.<sup>229</sup>

During the 1920s to 1930s, some agencies, so-called “Chinese boarding-houses” also flourished in some major port cities in Europe along with the increased demand of Chinese crew on foreign ships.<sup>230</sup> The owners of these Chinese boarding-houses typically used to work as seamen on foreign ships themselves, but subsequently saw more lucrative opportunities if they worked as “contact person” for various foreign shipping companies. They provided various services for Chinese who were keen to look for jobs on foreign ships, and charged those Chinese seamen who got jobs later with some commission fees. Take Chinese seamen in the Netherlands for instance; since the first Chinese-boarding house was established in 1912 in the Netherlands, the number reached nearly 80 in total in Amsterdam and Rotterdam during the 1930s.<sup>231</sup> Many Chinese seamen awaiting job opportunities gradually clustered in these Chinese boarding houses. As a result, this clustering situation steadily became a solid base for the early Chinese settlement in various European countries.

The boom of Chinese boarding houses in various major port cities in Europe during the 1920s to the 1930s unveiled different layers of complexity in the relationship between the Chinese shipping masters and the Chinese seamen who were awaiting job opportunities in ports. Besides as being cheap labour for foreign ships, many of these Chinese seamen often faced various problems of being exploited by their Chinese shipping masters. Some Chinese shipping masters would rather save money than making improvements in the housing conditions of their Chinese boarding houses. As a result, many of these seamen were placed in poorly structured and suffered under bad hygienic conditions while they were hoping for being signed on foreign ships.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> Based on her fieldwork in Bao'an area which is located in Guangdong province in 1997, the scholar Li Minghuan revealed that, back in the early 1900s, there were trends of Bao'an men heading to Hong Kong to get a job as seamen on foreign ships in order to improve their livelihood. See Li Minghuan (2002: 88)

<sup>230</sup> Li Minghuan (2002: 169)

<sup>231</sup> Ibid. (2002: 171-172)

<sup>232</sup> Ibid. (2002:177-178)

## 6.2 The recruitment of Chinese crew on Norwegian ships

At the same period, Norway did not seem to share the same situation as the previously mentioned countries. No evidence indicates that there was a cluster of Chinese seamen in Oslo, unlike other port cities in Europe that I have mentioned earlier. There seem to be various reasons to explain this. First, prior to the 1850s, Norwegian vessels were only allowed to be manned by Norwegian seamen. The situation changed in 1854 after the implementation of a law which allowed a 1/3 rate of foreigners to work on Norwegian merchant vessels. Despite the employment of foreign seamen beginning as early as the mid-1850s, there are no detailed records on the numbers and nationality ties of foreign seamen on Norwegian vessels prior to the First World War.<sup>233</sup> It is therefore also impossible to trace a Chinese presence on Norwegian vessels before the 1900s. However, due to the lack of the historical evidence, it is still unclear that whether this law was also practiced in other European countries.<sup>234</sup>

The pattern of recruiting Chinese seamen on Norwegian ships seems similar to other foreign ship owners. The agent, (sometimes called “middleman” or “contact person”), who was also Chinese, played a significance role in recruiting Chinese crews for various foreign ships. But unlike the situation of Chinese boarding-houses in Netherlands, Britain or Germany, the “contact person” in Hong Kong in relation to Norwegian ships played a more significant role in terms of mustering Chinese crews from China and Hong Kong. I shall elaborate further in the following part.

After 1890, Norwegian sailing ships were gradually replaced by flat-bottomed steamers designed for trade in East Asia. This led to an increasing Norwegian shipping activity in China along with the gradual success of Norwegian steamers.<sup>235</sup> When shipping activity commenced in China, Norwegian ships would only be manned by Norwegian officers and Norwegian seamen. Fewer Norwegian seafarers were employed on the ships sailing to China and Chinese crews began to appear on Norwegian ships with Norwegian officer.<sup>236</sup> Such Chinese manpower appeared in connection to the difficulties of getting Norwegian seamen for

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<sup>233</sup> ”Utenlandske arbeidstakere i den norske handelsflåte” *NOU 1982:31*, pp.10

<sup>234</sup> Regarding the history of recruiting Chinese seamen in Europe, neither Li Minghuan nor Mette Thunø has revealed this information in their research. Hence I assume that it is possible this restrictive law might not be practiced in other European countries.

<sup>235</sup> Elisabeth Eide & Rune Svarverud (1999:51)

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.* (1999:16-17)

sailing long way to the East because of the climate difficulties. A Norwegian captain pointed out:

If a steamer is intended to sail out here for a longer period of time, you will find it advantageous to use Chinese crews. They will perform better as sailors and stokers in the summer heat than our Norwegian crews when they work in a longer time under the oppressive climate.<sup>237</sup>

Evidence indicates that the Chinese manning of Norwegian ships already existed in 1903.<sup>238</sup> More evidence also indicates that this manning of Norwegian vessels continued during the 1930s, even during the World War II.<sup>239</sup> So the question is how did these Norwegian officers recruit Chinese seamen from China? Similar to the way that other Western European ships did, they needed to rely on a Chinese agent who was able to speak foreign languages. The agents were responsible for filling up those positions and situations that native European seamen had a hard time coping with. If there were any staff changing of Chinese crewmembers due to sickness or deceased, it was the Chinese agent who was responsible to hire a new crew. The Norwegian officers would usually not participate in the Chinese crew recruiting process.<sup>240</sup>

It is evident that the employment of Chinese seamen on Norwegian vessels has had a long tradition. During the 1950s to the 1970s, the employment condition of Chinese seamen on Norwegian vessels gradually triggered various debates from different maritime sectors in Norway. The debates were first and foremost concerning the overwhelming numbers of Chinese crew on Norwegian ships, which many feared were taking over Norwegian seamen's jobs. Some had also criticized the Norwegian ship owners' primary motivation of employing Chinese crew simply to minimize their companies' expenses for employees.<sup>241</sup>

As I have pointed out previously, Chinese seamen from Hong Kong comprised the first wave of Chinese immigration to Oslo, but, why was the number of these Chinese seamen turned immigrants in Oslo so small when compared to the large number of Chinese crews employed on Norwegian ships especially during the 1960s? This is the main question which I shall discuss in the following part.

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<sup>237</sup> Marcus Bull (1892:156). Cited in Elisabeth Eide & Rune Svarverud, (1999:16-17)

<sup>238</sup> Elisabeth Eide & Rune Svarverud, (1999:17)

<sup>239</sup> It is possible that some relevant evidence can be detected in the archive files of the Norwegian General Consulate in Shanghai (1864 to 1966). Some files were titled with the enrollment and muster conditions of Chinese during the 1930s and 1940s. See particularly in the archive file RA/S-2611/D/Db/L0295/0002-0008. Due to the time constraint of the MA thesis, I decided not to look further as it might not be my direct interests of my research question.

<sup>240</sup> Elisabeth Eide & Rune Svarverud, (1999:17)

<sup>241</sup> Terje Halvorsen (2007:84-85)

### 6.3 “Collective contract” (*felleskontrakt*)

Instead of a normal one-person employment contract, Chinese seamen were usually subjected to a “collective contract” (*felleskontrakt*). A collective contract consisted of names, positions, and amount of salaries for a group of seafarers. The number of seafarers on this kind of contract could vary from one to around 30 persons.<sup>242</sup> The Chinese seamen who were enrolled through this type of contract would provide their signatures each time after they received their wages. There was usually one person – a “number one” or “boatswain” (some informants refer to this position as “bosun”, it means the head of deck) in charge of receiving wages from the Norwegian officers on behalf of all the crew members on the same collective contract. This person was responsible for distributing out the wages to the crew members.<sup>243</sup>

The Chinese crews who were hired by means of collective contracts should in principle only work on Norwegian ships where shipping activities only happened in the East.<sup>244</sup> Since it was difficult to find Norwegian seamen who would accept to work in the Far East, due in part to unfamiliar weather conditions, Norwegian shipowners began to employ local Chinese crews on collective contracts. The Chinese crews that were signed under collective contracts were generally exempt from an existing regulation prioritizing Norwegian seamen, and the law of 1854 restricting the percentage of foreign seamen on Norwegian ships. They were also exempt from the normal contract that other foreign seamen were subject to.<sup>245</sup>

But, there were in fact some shipowners continued to use the Chinese crews on collective contracts for shipping activities in other parts of the world such as Australia and the Americas. Shipowners argued that the reason for this manning was because of the difficulty of employing Norwegian seamen, and some further claimed that they should be free to select foreign seamen as they wished. However, the Norwegian Seafarers’ Union was skeptical towards the primary motivation of manning of these Norwegian vessels, because they suspected that Norwegians were in fact applying for the same jobs.<sup>246</sup> Several reliable sources unveil that it was possible that the recruitment of Chinese crews with collective contracts was mainly based on their advantages of providing cheaper labour.<sup>247</sup> As the Chief Cashier of the

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<sup>242</sup> Archive files from the General Consulate in Shanghai. Da 196, Sak 88/1964.

<sup>243</sup> Terje Halvorsen (2007:83)

<sup>244</sup> Ibid. (2007:83)

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid. (2007:84)

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

Norwegian Seafarers' Union, Thor Sønsteby stated once with regards to the case of discriminating of foreign crews, particularly when concerning Chinese seamen:

It became inexpensive to have people who were employed with one-third of a Norwegian wage and a little rice, [as well as] without social obligations and without much trouble with long working hours and overtime.<sup>248</sup>

These Chinese crews with collective contracts were not protected by any workers rights regulations. Their wages were only one third of those who received normal Norwegian wages.<sup>249</sup> They were neither subject to Norwegian employment laws, which meant that they did not pay taxes and relevant expenses to the Norwegian authorities, nor were they under the pension system.<sup>250</sup>

The same period when Chinese seamen were extensively hired, from the 1950s to the early 1970s, was a period when Norwegian shipping activities experienced a boom in Hong Kong. In 1958, 450-60 Norwegian ships docked in Hong Kong during the course of the year. After Britain, Norway had the second most foreign ships docked in Hong Kong.<sup>251</sup> Japan took over the second place five years later.<sup>252</sup> Still, the large numbers of Norwegian ships that docked in Hong Kong during the 1950s to 1960s undoubtedly played an important role with regard to the increased employment of Chinese seamen on Norwegian vessels in Hong Kong. Since the 1960s, the number of Chinese crews on Norwegian vessels increased significantly. In 1961, for example, 2612 Chinese seamen were mustered in Hong Kong. According to the record of embarking seamen from the Norwegian General Consulate in Shanghai from 1961 to 1964, the majority of Chinese seamen were mustered under collective contracts. Chinese seamen who were on Norwegian individual contracts comprised only 148 persons in 1961. The number of Chinese seamen with Norwegian individual contracts increased from 148 to 508 persons in 1964. But the number of Chinese seamen who were on collective contracts increased even more — 2710 persons were registered. The number of Chinese seamen that were mustered on collective contracts varied from around 2400 to 2700 persons throughout 1961 to 1964.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> ”Diskriminering av mannskaper den norske handelsflåten, av hovedkasserer i Norsk Sjømannsforbund”. (Medlemsbladet 4.4.1964) Archive Da 196, sak 88/1967 from ARBARK

<sup>249</sup> Ragnar Kvam (1971:44)

<sup>250</sup> This information was retrieved from a private letter from Norwegian seamen to the Norwegian Seafarers' Union in Sandefjord. In Archive file: Da 196, Sak 88/1965.

<sup>251</sup> *Aftenposten* 27.08.1958, pp. 8

<sup>252</sup> *Aftenposten* 07.09.1963, pp. 23

<sup>253</sup> Archive files from the General Consulate in Shanghai. Da 196, Sak 88/1964.

It is clear that the significant increase of Chinese crews on Norwegian vessels during the 1960s raised many debates. These debates were mainly surrounding concerns about the poor working conditions of these Chinese seamen who were on collective contracts. Their salaries were also very poor. In the eyes of the Norwegian Seafarers' Union, they were skeptical about the main motive of some Norwegian shipowners, as I have mentioned earlier. On the one hand, the Union doubted that the shipowners applied for dispensation for hiring Chinese seamen on their vessels because they were unable to find Norwegian seamen who were willing to engage in shipping activity in the Far East. The Union suspected that the shipowners were employing Chinese crews on collective contracts just to save expenses.<sup>254</sup> On the other hand, Norwegian seamen also started to fear that their preferential employment rights on Norwegian vessels were challenged by increased employment of Chinese crews.<sup>255</sup> It appeared that some shipowners chose to employ Chinese on Norwegian vessels instead of employing Norwegian seamen who were waiting to be employed. In 1964 the International Labour Organization (ILO) held an important meeting in Tokyo, where the enrollment practice of Chinese seafarers was addressed. During the meeting it was made clear that the existing practice of collective contracts was no longer allowed. The shipping masters would also no longer have exclusive chances to be in charge of mustering Chinese seamen and to gain profit by charging commission fees.<sup>256</sup>

In spite of the fact that thousands of Chinese were employed on Norwegian vessels, no concrete evidence indicates that these groups of Chinese seamen who were employed on collective contracts immigrated to Norway during the end of 1960s to 1970s. The Chinese crews were usually entitled to free repatriation to Hong Kong after termination of their collective contracts.<sup>257</sup> My oral evidence from in-depth interviews suggests that the Chinese crew who were on collective contracts and worked on Norwegian vessels, were unlikely to sail from Hong Kong to Oslo.<sup>258</sup> It is possible that, they did not have strong social capital, such as personal networks with those Chinese who had already settled down in Oslo. Most importantly, since the practice of collective contracts was not subject to the Norwegian

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<sup>254</sup> Terje Halvorsen (2007:88)

<sup>255</sup> This information was retrieved from a private letter from Norwegian seamen to the Norwegian Seamen Union in Sandefjord. In Archive file: Da 196, sak 88/1965

<sup>256</sup> *N.H. og S.T* 12.01.1966. Newspapers clip from archive files Da 196, Sak 88/1965

<sup>257</sup> This information was retrieved from "The Agreement between the master and the Chinese crew members". Archive files from the General Consulate in Shanghai. Sak 88 (1964), archive from ARKBARK.

<sup>258</sup> Informant 13.



employment law, therefore the practice did not provide a qualification for legally immigration to Norway.

My findings suggest that of the Chinese seamen who ended up as immigrants in Oslo were those that had their own Norwegian Sea Service Book (*sjøfartsbok*), and they had individual Norwegian contracts subject to the regular Norwegian employment law.<sup>259</sup> All these relevant documents provided a verification of their work records and performance on Norwegian vessels. It appears that the competences that they had gained on Norwegian vessels for a long period eventually provided them both resourceful human and social capital for gaining resident permits in Norway, and later they appeared as the pioneer group that comprised the first Chinese community in Oslo.

Before presenting the first wave of Chinese immigration to Oslo, I shall briefly introduce the historical conditions of the immigrants sending area, namely Hong Kong. This information is presented to shed lights on the push factors from the sending area, especially during the postwar period in Hong Kong. Moreover, the migrant networks in which kinship and friendship prompted chain migration from Hong Kong to Oslo also can be viewed in the case of Norway.

#### **6.4 Hong Kong- where Chinese seamen depart**

Since the sovereignty was taken over by the British colonial government in 1843, Hong Kong was placed into a role of acting as the bridge for overseas Chinese and their motherland.

Elisabeth Sinn studied the role of Hong Kong into this perspective by stating,

For many Chinese, who went abroad, Hong Kong was the first stop to the rest of the world, and the last stop before re-entering China. [...] Hong Kong was able to play this bridging role for many reasons. It was a free port with an open economy, and relatively free and fast access to information about China and the world beyond.<sup>260</sup>

The population in Hong Kong was highly mobile before the disruptions of World War II. Many people crossed back and forth, moving easily between the city and their homeland in

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<sup>259</sup> *Beiou Huaren Tongxun* (北欧华人通讯) [Nordic Chinese Communication] (2008) Vol 5, pp.30-33; Informant 1, Informant 3, Informant 9, Informant 10, Informant 13

<sup>260</sup> Elisabeth Sinn (1998:105)

China and hence they were mostly from Guangdong province.<sup>261</sup> After the communists took over mainland China in 1949, there was a massive influx of refugees to Hong Kong from different regions in mainland China. This influx had already started during the civil war in China and the flows continued after The People's Republic of China was established in 1949. This resulted in a population boom in Hong Kong, the official census marked two million people in 1950.<sup>262</sup> With China becoming increasingly inaccessible and inscrutable from the 1950s, Hong Kong's role as sending area assumed new dimensions. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, there was a major flow of migrants from Hong Kong to the United Kingdom. The significant emigration from Hong Kong owed to the Britain Nationality Acts of 1914 and 1948. This legislation guaranteed freedom of access to the United Kingdom for Commonwealth citizens.<sup>263</sup> Moreover, the boom of Chinese restaurants in Britain also spurred the chain migration from the New Territories of Hong Kong.<sup>264</sup>

In the case of Norway, the emigration from Hong Kong to Oslo first started with the connection between Norwegian shipping activities in Hong Kong, and manning of ships that consisted of Chinese in Hong Kong. As a leading global maritime industry group in Norway, the Wilh. Wilhelmsen shipping company (WW) has not only influenced and shaped the Norwegian maritime history, but it has also played an important role in connection to the employment of Chinese seafarers in Hong Kong. Apart from the fact that the WW had established its fixed schedule to Hong Kong,<sup>265</sup> a Hong Kong-based Chinese crew-agent (originally from Ningbo 宁波) also played an important role in employing Hong Kong Chinese on the Wilhelmsen vessels. Some of these Chinese eventually turned immigrants in Oslo after a long period of service. Throughout most of my in-depth interviews with Chinese immigrants in Oslo, I came to acknowledge that the majority of Chinese seamen who moved to Oslo were born in Ningbo, Zhejiang province. They moved to Hong Kong from mainland China during the 1940s to 1950s to seek a better life. Some of them has also served as Chinese crews who had worked actively on the Wilhelmsen vessels for more than a decade. But how did they end up having a job on Norwegians vessels during the 1950s in Hong

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<sup>261</sup> Ronald Skeldon (1994: 24)

<sup>262</sup> Ibid. (1994: 22)

<sup>263</sup> Ibid. (1994: 25)

<sup>264</sup> The estimated figure of emigrant flow was between fifty and sixty thousand throughout the 1950s and 1960s. See Ronald Skeldon (1994: 26)

<sup>265</sup> Informant 9

Kong? And how did their work experience on Norwegian vessels make Oslo as their destination of immigration by the end of the 1960s?

## **6.5 The role of the recruiting agency in Hong Kong**

When the Wilhelmsen lines commenced in Hong Kong during the end of 1920s,<sup>266</sup> there was naturally a demand for employing Chinese crew on their vessels. As a result, a Hong Kong Chinese crew-agent who was originally from Ningbo, began his cooperation with Wilhelmsen from the 1950s. It has been said that when this agent cooperated with the Norwegian shipping broker, Thoresen & Co., Ltd (as Thoresen was the agent for the Wilhelmsen lines), he saw the potential of brokers for Norwegian vessels, as such he established his own recruiting agency in Hong Kong.<sup>267</sup>

When a Chinese crewman secured a position on the Wilhelmsen ship through this particular Chinese crew-agent, the work contracts would all be under the Norwegian tariff, which is unlike the practice of a collective contract. The recruitment process began by each Chinese seamen first registering and signing an individual contract with the Chinese crew-agent, and the crew-agent would assign the person to respective positions on the Wilhelmsen ship. The crew-agent also had a responsibility to deliver wages to his respective Chinese crews monthly, and the crew-agent would also charge 10 percent from each of their monthly wages as his commission fee.<sup>268</sup> However, some other evidence claims different versions – some said that the first month of the salary, or half of the salary needed to be paid to the crew agency as their commission fee, and the recruited seamen would still need to pay a certain “membership fee” to the crew agency even though they had started working on the ships.<sup>269</sup> My interviews revealed that because this Chinese crew recruitment agency had basically monopolized the key to gaining a job on Wilhelmsen ships, some Chinese seamen bribed to the agent or employees who worked in that agency with giving gifts or cash.<sup>270</sup>

There are some variations of evidence from the interviews with regards to gaining access to

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<sup>266</sup> See Bård Kolltveit and Hans Chr. Bangsmoen (2011) regarding the historical background of the cooperation between the WW and Barber lines in Far East. pp. 168-170.

<sup>267</sup> Informant 13

<sup>268</sup> Informant 13

<sup>269</sup> *Beiou huaren tongxun* (北欧华人通讯) [Nordic Chinese Communication] Vol.5 2008, pp.31; Informant 8, informant 16

<sup>270</sup> *Beiou huaren tongxun* Vol.5 2008, pp.31; Informant 10; Informant 13; Informant 16.

Norwegian ships, but one situation is clear: Lucrative salaries (particular for those Chinese seamen on individual contracts) on Norwegian ships had no doubt attracted many Chinese people in Hong Kong, particularly those who escaped from mainland China and hardships in Hong Kong during the 1950s to 1960s. Take Ningbo-Chinese as for instance, before these Ningbo-Chinese secured a position on Norwegian vessels in Hong Kong, they typically worked as factory workers with poor salaries. Many of them were told by their Ningbo fellowmen about the person who had established a Chinese recruitment agency was also originally from Ningbo. An informant revealed that since the news about the lucrative jobs on Norwegian vessels spread amongst them, more people attempted to approach the Chinese crew agency, hoping to get a position on Norwegian vessels.<sup>271</sup> An informant recalled that during the 1950s an average factory worker earned 30-40 HK dollar, perhaps even less.<sup>272</sup> Another informant stated that even if one were on Norwegian vessels, they would still be on “Hong Kong standard salary” (*Xianggang Rengong* 香港人工), which was poorly paid.<sup>273</sup> Even so, if one secured a position on individual contract on Norwegian ships, it meant a better living condition for an average Chinese family in Hong Kong. One informant even claimed that he recalled his father telling him that his salary on Norwegian ships was three times higher than what a regular Hong Kong white collar earned.<sup>274</sup> The Norwegian wages on Norwegian ships thus appeared to be lucrative among Chinese in Hong Kong, just as one informant revealed, “It was like wining a lottery if one got a chance on either the Knutsen line<sup>275</sup> or the Wilhelmsen line!”<sup>276</sup> It has been said that if they were employed on individual contracts on Norwegian vessels, their wages could be five times, six times or even ten times higher than Hong Kong wages.<sup>277</sup> Despite of the numerical differences of how much exactly the Norwegian wages were higher than Hong Kong wages, there was no doubt that wages on Norwegian ships were way more lucrative than wages on Chinese ships during the 1950s and the 1960s. Their net-income after taxes made their job much more lucrative than any other jobs in Hong Kong.<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> Informant 13

<sup>272</sup> Informant 8

<sup>273</sup> Informant 10. I assume that the “Hong Kong salary” that this informant stated was related to a wage of a collective contract.

<sup>274</sup> Informant 1

<sup>275</sup> Apparently many Chinese seamen were employed on individual contracts on Knutsen line (another major Norwegian shipping company) throughout the 1960s to the 1970s. However, I did not come across Chinese immigrants in Oslo who had worked on Knutsen line before. See also *Haugesunds Avis* 06.11.1976, pp.5.

<sup>276</sup> Informant 10

<sup>277</sup> Informant 1, informant 10, informant 13 and informant 16.

<sup>278</sup> Since these Chinese seamen with Norwegian contract shared the same terms and condition at workplace, they would pay lesser taxes as their Norwegian colleagues did. Informant 3 and Informant 5 also revealed the same information regarding the

As previously mentioned, the founder of the Chinese crew agency was from Ningbo. This can, therefore be viewed as the major reason why most of the seamen who worked on Norwegian vessels came from the same region. As informant 13 stressed:

The head of the agency needed to know the personality and work performance of the person whom he would assign to various Norwegian vessels. He picked his fellow townsmen who were also from Ningbo. Many elderly Chinese seamen [turned immigrants] nowadays all went through the agent. [...] Ningbo-Chinese are also well known as their long tradition of sailing and their ability as seamen.<sup>279</sup>

Moreover, friendship or kinship ties proved to be criteria for gaining the useful information in terms of jobs and migration opportunities. Although, the importance of kinship was not revealed so explicitly by an informant, he stated, “Because people from Ningbo are very nostalgic, so if they are overseas, they can find that their fellow townsmen will give them a hand when they need help.”<sup>280</sup> But some informants did reveal clearly that the reason why the majority of the Ningbo-Chinese worked on Norwegian vessels, especially on the Wilhelmsen ships was because of the founder of the Chinese crew-agency was from the same region.

The kinship and friendship ties between the crew-agent and the Chinese crews on Norwegian ships played significant roles in their immigration history in Oslo. Because the owner of the crew-agency immigrated to Oslo in the 1960s to expand his recruiting business for Norwegian vessels, some Chinese would go on land and had gathering parties with their Chinese employer in Oslo.<sup>281</sup> As a result, it can be assumed that throughout the 1960s when these Chinese seamen were still in service on Norwegian vessels, they had not just interacted with their Norwegian colleagues, but they had probably also gained useful information about Norway. Some ideas of establishing a Chinese restaurant in Norway seemed like a reality as they gained more information about Norway.

The earliest group of Chinese seamen turned immigrants happened from the end of 1960s. That their arrival time happened at this particular time can be explained by a few reasons:

As I have mentioned earlier, the majority of these Hong Kong Chinese were born in mainland

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initial of their family members working as seamen on Norwegian vessels. Regarding more detailed information about seamen's tax regulation, see Terje Halvorsen (2007:116-117)

<sup>279</sup> Informant 13

<sup>280</sup> Informant 13

<sup>281</sup> Informant 13

China and moved to Hong Kong during the 1940s to 1950s. If we examine the time when the majority of these Hong Kong Chinese seamen who originated from Ningbo began working on Norwegian vessels, it is clear that they moved to Norway after at least a certain period of working to the Norwegian vessels. Many of these seamen who immigrated to Norway had working experience on Norwegian vessels with varying duration from 10 to 25 years. As the business of the Chinese crew agent dropped dramatically after the mid-1960s because of this: the establishment of the Seamen's Recruiting Office in Hong Kong. The objective of the Seamen's Recruiting Office was that all the registration of Chinese seamen in Hong Kong should be regulated, and to prevent various shipping masters to gain profit from the exploitation of Chinese seafarers.<sup>282</sup> This was inevitably an impact of the Chinese crew agent business.<sup>283</sup> Moreover, Norwegian shipping crisis and the regularization of Chinese seamen in Hong Kong during the mid-1970s created more impact on Hong Kong Chinese seamen's job opportunities.

Working as a seaman was always hard as one often encountered various hardships of the nature. One informant revealed how the first person in her family moved to Norway eventually:

In fact the reason why he decided to move here is because he had been working on Norwegian ships for a very long period, which made him decided to move to Norway naturally. [...] And because after a long period of working on a ship he started to get tired, so at last he thought about opening a restaurant here [in Norway].<sup>284</sup>

It is also possible that, these seamen might have been concerned about the fierce job competition back in Hong Kong, which meant that they might find it difficult to get a job that would earn them similar wages to what they had earned on Norwegian vessels. Moreover, some interviews also revealed that the shipping crisis from the mid-1970s effected their jobs opportunities on Norwegian vessels.<sup>285</sup> Still, I argue that the migrant networks and the cumulative causation can be seen as explanatory in this particular situation of how these Chinese seamen started to gain the idea of immigration during a particular period. It is therefore also possible that, the closer ties they had with the crew agent, the faster migrant information they gained, as the crew agent was already migrated to Oslo during the end of

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<sup>282</sup> *N.H. og S.T* 12.01.1966. Newspaper clip from archive file Da 196, Sak 88.

<sup>283</sup> Informant 13

<sup>284</sup> Informant 3

<sup>285</sup> Informant 1, informant 2, informant 10. Informant 16.

1950s.

Useful information tends to spread rapidly between fellow townsmen. One such piece of information which any of the Chinese who worked on Wilhelmsen ships for long periods learned was that, they were qualify to obtain a resident permit in Norway after their long term working contribution on Norwegian vessels. This information can be verified on a Norwegian Official Report (NOU) that was published in 1982 regarding the foreign seafarers on Norwegian merchant vessels. The NOU report states,

The possibilities of foreign seafarers to obtain Norwegian citizenship are based on rules that essentially give equal status to work on Norwegian ship and work on the land when it comes to qualifying for citizenship, pursuant to the Norwegian Nationality Act of 8<sup>th</sup> December 1950 no.3. Depending on the areas for ship activities, the government considers 9–11 years of time of service as equal to the of 7 years of continuing residency in Norway, which is one of the requirements to obtain citizenship.<sup>286</sup>

As mentioned previously, the majority of Chinese seamen who migrated to Oslo from the end of the 1960s, had a long period of work experience with a duration varying from 10 to 25 years. They had therefore qualified for obtaining a Norwegian citizenship based on the above mentioned regulation.

The Chinese emigrants did not leave China for random places; there was a pattern to their departing. Hugh Baker explains the Chinese emigration route such, ‘Later leavers tended to be attracted to the same overseas locations as were earlier migrants from their home area, and so chains of migration were set up.’<sup>287</sup> The earliest group of the Chinese seamen began to immigrate to Norway in the end of 1960s. It was the time before the implementation of the ‘immigration-halt’ (*Innvandringsstopp*) in 1975. The earliest group of these Chinese seamen were told and encouraged to immigrate to Norway by their Hong Kong Chinese colleagues who first moved there and later became the pioneer for Chinese immigrants. Later on, as the information about the livelihood in Oslo spread among Hong Kong Chinese seamen on Norwegian vessels, as well as the possibility of getting a better life in Norway, more Hong Kong Chinese seamen became positive toward the idea of emigration. Moreover, the fear of uncertainty of future in the 1997 handover also played a push factor that urged the

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<sup>286</sup> NOU (1982:31, pp.15)

<sup>287</sup> Hugh D.R. Baker (1997:19)

emigration.<sup>288</sup> Hence the effect of migrant networks started – more Hong Kong Chinese seamen immigrated to Oslo as one of the Chinese seamen had already settled down in Oslo and established the Chinese restaurant named “King & Ming” in 1969.<sup>289</sup> The founder of this restaurant played a key role in triggering more Chinese seamen to move to Oslo to start a new life after the jobs on Norwegian vessels had declined. My interviews revealed that this Chinese restaurant did not just engaged with catering business, but also served as accommodation for his fellow countrymen (who were generally also seamen) to settle and work.<sup>290</sup>

## 6.6 The Norwegian regulations on immigration from the 1950s to 1970s

In Norway, a new legislation (*Fremmedloven*) was established from 1957. This new legislation was characterized by a fairly liberal set of regulations on immigration. But this legislation was modified in 1971. The requirement for immigrant was that the immigrant had to have obtained a job and a place to live before receiving a residence permit.<sup>291</sup> In the case of Chinese immigrants in Oslo, some Chinese seamen who had already settled in Oslo played an important role in helping the subsequent Chinese seamen who also desired to move to Norway. Because of the requirement that immigrants had to have both jobs and accommodations before receiving a residence permit, some Chinese seamen were registered under the same address in order meet the requirement for place to live.<sup>292</sup> As mentioned earlier, the founder of “King & Ming” had assisted many Chinese seamen in the process of applying resident and work permit. In other words, the “King & Ming” restaurants also provided job opportunities and free residence for newly arrived Chinese seamen, thus the restaurant also served as a kind of dormitory for Chinese seamen (*haiyuan shushe* 海员宿舍).<sup>293</sup> My interviews also revealed that a few earlier Chinese immigrants also played a key role in assisting other fellow countrymen to apply for legal resident and work permit in Oslo.<sup>294</sup> Their proficiency of both Norwegian language and knowledge about the regulations with regards to residence in

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<sup>288</sup> Informant 2, informant 4 and informant 16.

<sup>289</sup> Informant 3. This is the second Chinese restaurant in Oslo, after the first Chinese restaurant which was established by Chen Tehu in 1963.

<sup>290</sup> Informant 2, Informant 3

<sup>291</sup> Ådne Cappelen, Jørgen Ouren and Terje Skjerpen (2011:4)

<sup>292</sup> Informant 9. This informant revealed to me that once it was altogether 50 Chinese seamen were registered under the same address in order to meet the requirement of regulation of immigration.

<sup>293</sup> Informant 3; informant 13

<sup>294</sup> Informant 2; informant 13



Norway mattered a lot – their assistance provided social capital to those Chinese seamen who were keen to immigrate to Norway.

## **6.7 Short conclusion for the first wave of Chinese immigration**

As I have demonstrated above, during the 1950s and 1960s, despite the fact that many Chinese seamen were involved in Norwegian shipping activities in Hong Kong, the majority of them were employed on collective contracts, which meant that none of their work and salary conditions were subject to the Norwegian employment law. No concrete historical evidence prove that Chinese seamen who were on collective contracts immigrated to Oslo. In contrast, the Hong Kong Chinese seamen who eventually immigrated to Oslo were all on individual contracts, and most of them had more than 10 years of work experience on Norwegian vessels, particularly the Wilhelmsen lines.

The Hong Kong Chinese crew-recruitment agency, which founder was originally from Ningbo, had monopolized the Chinese recruiting business for various foreign shipowners, particularly for the Wilhelmsen lines. The recruitment agent was one of the major factors behind initiating the first wave of Chinese immigration to Oslo. The wave was predominantly made up by Hong Kong Chinese who were originally from Ningbo. My findings also indicate that many of these Ningbo-origin Chinese seamen who immigrated to Oslo during the 1960s and 1970s had certain connections with the Chinese crew-agent in Hong Kong. This explains, how these particular Chinese seamen groups were employed under individual contracts, instead of being employed under collective contracts. As my finding suggest, their social capital which they had been carrying during their sea duties on Norwegian vessels, turned out to be a stronger social capital – after some of these earliest seamen immigrated and settled down in Oslo, more Chinese seamen followed after they obtained useful migration information through their social and personal networks of their pioneers.

After the earliest Hong Kong Chinese seamen had settled down, some of them established Chinese restaurants in Oslo. These particular Chinese restaurants not only served as restaurant, but it in fact often served as a kind of dormitory for other Hong Kong Chinese seamen who followed the migration chain to Oslo. Subsequently, after the first wave of immigration had

ceased and most of them had settled down with legal work and resident permits, their family members were brought over. Hence the second wave of immigration was characterized by immigration of family members of the first wave of immigrants. The perpetuation of this immigration to Oslo will be elaborated further in the subsequent chapter.

# 7 The following waves

## 7.1 The second wave: family reunification

*“So, the children of the first wave of seamen immigration took place around the 1970s, maybe from 1971 to 1978 to the 1980s, and then [they were] starting to study, or became restaurants workers”*<sup>295</sup>

The second wave of Chinese immigration to Oslo started from the early 1970s. It was characterized by seamen-family reunification primarily from Hong Kong. It was very often that the family members of these Hong Kong Chinese seamen arrived in Oslo only after the breadwinners had settled down with permanent residence/ Norwegian citizenship and an accommodation. As a result, the number of Chinese from Hong Kong also proliferated in this period.

Amongst the Chinese communities in Oslo, there is a unique term that the majority of Chinese people would know about – seamen’s children (*haiyuan de zini* 海员的子女). In general, they were born, and probably had spent most of their childhood in Hong Kong, before moving to Oslo reuniting with their fathers. This second wave perpetuated throughout the 1970s to 1980s as their families arrival times were highly depended on the seamen turned immigrants’ settlement time in Oslo. Moreover, these seamen’s children who immigrated to Oslo via family-reunification started already in the early or mid- 1970s were almost exclusively born and raised in Hong Kong.<sup>296</sup> But in some cases, there was also some Chinese seamen who left their family members in mainland China during the 1950s while they were employed in Hong Kong and worked on Norwegian vessels. Despite the fact that some family members were keen to have reunion with their fathers in Oslo, their passport application encountered problems from the PRC as the restrictive emigration control for regular citizens still existed in the 1970s.<sup>297</sup> As a result, this led to a different arrival time among some of the seamen’s children, in spite of the fact that their fathers began working on Norwegian vessels around the same period in the 1950s.

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<sup>295</sup> Informant 3

<sup>296</sup> Informant 1, informant 2, informant 3, informant 5, informant 12, informant 13, informant 16.

<sup>297</sup> This information is based on an informal conversation between me and a Chinese restaurant owner in Oslo who had shared some part of his family history to me. I had also heard some similar history regarding some other Chinese who had the similar family historical backgrounds. Hence I assume that this part of information can also shed lights the history of Chinese immigration to Oslo when in regards with family-reunification besides Hong Kong.

Except of a handful of Chinese females who had married Norwegians during the 1950s to the early 1970s, and with no concrete evidence regarding the numbers of these females, males were the dominated gender in the Chinese community in Oslo. Due to tough working condition on ship, equally on deck or kitchen, Chinese seamen clearly were dominated by men and thus the earliest group of Chinese who moved to Oslo were men.<sup>298</sup> This is somehow parallel with the male-dominated Chinese emigration in the early stage of Chinese emigration history. The increase in numbers of Chinese females thus happened later, after these married Chinese seamen whose are also father of their children, applied family reunification and brought their wives and children from Hong Kong to Norway.

Throughout the interviews with some of these so-called “seamen’s children” in Oslo, they all shared a similar challenge after they moved to Norway and reunited with their fathers in Oslo – the difficulty of language barrier and integration. One informant recalled that the Oslo authorities had no clue to place the Chinese immigrants’ kids into a proper Norwegian school, so they were all basically placed into a same classroom regardless their age differences.<sup>299</sup> This kind of classroom was, according to my informants, labelled as “Immigrants’ class” (*yinmin ban* 移民班) or “Chinese class” (*zhongwen ban* 中文班). They were taught by a teacher who was a native Chinese as well. This led to these Chinese immigrants’ kids speaking only Chinese (Mandarin or Cantonese) most of the time, instead of learning Norwegian language efficiently. This made it difficult to become integrated quickly into the mainstream society.<sup>300</sup>

Due to language barriers, many of these “seamen’s children” also encountered job constrains – many started helping out with their family business, namely Chinese restaurants during the early stages of their livelihood in Oslo. Some needed to work in Chinese restaurants when they would need to go to school. For those whose their fathers were also restaurant workers, they would usually help out where their fathers were working as well. But several years later, many “seamen’s children” have successfully made a better social mobility as they gradually have broken out from the Chinese catering niche and have become integrated into the regular Norwegian mainstream job market. Today, there are only a handful of those Chinese

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<sup>298</sup> Throughout my in-depth interviews and the process of searching data in archives, there is no indication of Chinese females working on Norwegian vessels. Hence I came with this male-dominated argument in this aspect.

<sup>299</sup> Informant 2

<sup>300</sup> Informant 2, informant 3

restaurant owners in Oslo whose fathers used to work on Norwegian vessels during the 1950s.<sup>301</sup>

### **7.1.1 Short conclusion for the second wave of the Chinese immigration**

As the pioneer of the earliest Chinese seamen turned immigrants formed a solid base for the Chinese community in Oslo, the immigration to Oslo perpetuated as such- the breadwinner of seamen families in Hong Kong settled down with good financial and job condition in Oslo after receiving migration help by the earlier-settled pioneer in their seamen group. This allowed them to apply for family reunification to bring their wives and children from Hong Kong, and start their new lives in Oslo. Despite in the beginning of their livelihood, many of the “seamen’s children” encountered various difficulties in regards with integration in the host society, today they mostly have achieved better outcomes in their lives as they are having more human capitals than their fathers.

## **7.2 The Chinese restaurant boom in Oslo**

A popular saying among Chinese people says: “Close to the sea, there will always be overseas Chinese” (*you haishui de difang jiu you huaren* 有海水的地方，就有华人). The concept which has been popularized later in relation to the development of Chinese settlement in various host societies, and gradually followed by this saying, as it relates to existence of Chinese restaurants all over the world: “Where there are Chinese, there will always be Chinese restaurants” (*you huaren de difang jiu you zhongcanguan* 有华人的地方，就有中餐馆). This Chinese saying can also be used to describe the case of Chinese immigrants in Oslo.

During the first phase of Chinese immigration to Oslo, beside the first Chinese restaurant in Oslo that was established by the Qingtianese Chen Tehu, it was very likely that from the 1960s to 1970s, the rest of the Chinese restaurants were established by former Chinese seamen, particularly seamen who had worked as cooks or stewards for the Wilhelmsen shipping company. Here are the examples of the earliest Chinese restaurants in Oslo which were established by seamen: “King& Ming”, as mentioned above, (1969). “Peking House” (1970), “Chung Ming House” (1974)<sup>302</sup> and “Nanking House” (1976). The majority of

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<sup>301</sup> Informant 1, informant 3

<sup>302</sup> Kina og Vi (nr.5-7 1974), pp.27

Chinese seamen who turned immigrants in Oslo were engaged in catering sectors, but everyone did not work in Chinese restaurants. Some worked as cooks in Western restaurant as well.<sup>303</sup> However, most of them preferred self-employed as to start their own Chinese restaurants because of the language barrier.<sup>304</sup>

The history of the Chinese catering boom in Oslo is quite similar to the history of the Chinese restaurant boom in other Western European countries<sup>305</sup> and particularly resembles the situation of the Chinese catering boom in Britain. As discussed earlier, Norway's immigration history is significantly shorter than most other Western European countries, and the boom in Chinese restaurants came a few decades later as well, in comparison to, for instance, Britain and the Netherlands. When the boom of Chinese restaurants in Norway took place during the late 1970s to the 1980s, Britain had already experienced the 'golden age' of Chinese restaurants – about 3000 restaurants (included some numbers of fast food stores) existed from 1965 to 1970.<sup>306</sup> In contrast, during the end of the 1960s, Norwegian people seemed to be unprepared to accept more Chinese restaurants in Oslo, as Norwegian newspaper reports revealed a skeptical opinion about whether one more Chinese restaurant in Oslo was necessary.<sup>307</sup>

The number of Chinese restaurants in Oslo comprised only 7 or 8 units during the mid-1970s.<sup>308</sup> This is the period when the first and the second wave of the Chinese immigration took place. As mentioned earlier, the majority of the Chinese restaurants which were established during this period were generally started by Chinese seamen who have obtained Norwegian citizenships. As these Chinese seamen had established their Chinese restaurant businesses, family members reunited with them and began to further develop their family businesses. During the mid-1970s to the 1980s, Norwegians started to experience various exotic foreign foods such as French and Italian cuisine. The Chinese restaurants stood out easily with its exoticness of Chinese food with lower price and longer opening hours (as they were open on Saturday and Sunday as well).<sup>309</sup> For many Norwegian people, going to a Chinese restaurant became trendy as Chinese food gradually became extremely popular

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<sup>303</sup> Informant 12

<sup>304</sup> Informant 3

<sup>305</sup> Gregor Benton and Frank N. Pieke (1998)

<sup>306</sup> Li Minghuan (2002: 422-423)

<sup>307</sup> Are Kalvø (2007:52)

<sup>308</sup> *Aftenposten* 30.07.1976, pp.9

<sup>309</sup> Informant 3

among Norwegians.<sup>310</sup> For Chinese immigrants in Oslo, operating their own Chinese restaurants appeared to be very lucrative as they faced very few competitors. As an informant stressed, “I remembered during the 1980s, running a Chinese restaurant business would be profitable, this is a definite fact.”<sup>311</sup>

Many Chinese acknowledges that in the Chinese community in Oslo, there were two families who were famous and respected since the end of 1970s. The Pan (潘) family established their Chinese restaurant branch under the name “Peking House”, and the Hang (航) family established their branch under the name “Nanking House”. The founders of the restaurants had both worked as cooks on the Wilhelmsen ships during the 1950s and 1960s. These two Chinese owners found their niche in the Chinese restaurants in Oslo and had great success during that period. Their great success with Chinese restaurants had also directly created a demand for more Chinese skilled cooks and thus triggered the third wave of Chinese immigration, as I will shortly discuss in further detail.

During the 1980s, many Chinese restaurants were firmly established and most of their owners were Chinese seafarers from Hong Kong. The success of Chinese restaurants in Oslo seems to have attracted some Chinese who came to Norway from other Western European countries. Such a case can be exemplified by Simon Yuan (*yuan wen'er* 袁文儿). He is the founder of the famous Chinese restaurant franchise named “Chinatown”.<sup>312</sup> Similar to the Pan family and the Hang family, Simon Yuen’s “Chinatown” had also created a demand for Chinese cooks and thus imported more Chinese labour to engage in his restaurant businesses. Many Chinese from the Zhoushan (舟山) area were brought over because of their kin ties or friendships with the founders of the restaurant franchises.<sup>313</sup> These three largest Chinese restaurants in Oslo were known as the major pull factors in initiating the third wave of Chinese immigration to Oslo, namely Chinese skilled cooks. As the increased popularity of Chinese restaurants created a demand for Chinese cooks, a third wave of Chinese immigration took place throughout the 1980s.

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<sup>310</sup> *Aftenposten* 31.01.2003, pp.4; Erik Leung: *zai nuowei de huaqiao* 在挪威的华侨. The author of this blog is a Norwegian Chinese whom his father came to Norway as skilled cook from Hong Kong during the mid-1980s.

<sup>311</sup> Informant 6

<sup>312</sup> Ou li (2008:135)

<sup>313</sup> “A successful life of the Norwegian Chinese entrepreneur” This article is published on the official website of Foreign and Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of The People’s Government of Zhoushan Municipality.

### 7.3 The third wave: Chinese cooks turned immigrants

This third wave was characterized by Chinese skilled cooks who were invited by Chinese restaurant owners in Oslo for coming to work for them. Unlike the first and the second wave, the third wave no longer primarily consisting of immigrants from Hong Kong, but from Taiwan and the PRC. Most importantly, the number of Chinese immigrants from the PRC increased significantly and accelerated from the mid-1980s to 1990s (see table 2.1). This is due to the fact that the demand for importing Chinese restaurant workers increased in Oslo, combined with the push factor that emigration in the PRC was legalized since in the 1980s, which made the exits for Chinese from the PRC easier in comparison to Chinese in earlier decades.

In Oslo, there were around 20 Chinese restaurants in the mid-1980s<sup>314</sup> and the number increased to around 30 Chinese restaurants by the end of 1980s.<sup>315</sup> Soon in the early 1990s, the number increased to 95 Chinese restaurants in Oslo and more than 300 Chinese restaurants spread across Norway.<sup>316</sup> As the boom of Chinese restaurants took off during the beginning of the 1990s, the demand for relevant work force increased as well. As a result, many Chinese restaurants started to import more Chinese skilled cooks. The earliest immigration wave of Chinese skilled cooks started to take place from the end of 1970s to the mid-1980s. These groups of Chinese skilled cooks came mainly from Hong Kong and Taiwan. The reason behind the immigration of this very concentrated demographic group, is that migration for Chinese from the PRC was basically restricted, although with a few exceptions.

Since there are no statistics on reason for immigration to Norway before 1990, it is also unclear how many Chinese skilled cooks migrated from Hong Kong and Taiwan to Oslo within this period. But according to my oral evidence from in-depth interviews, some vague figures indicate that there were over 20 Chinese who moved to Oslo from Taiwan between the late-1970s to mid-1980s.<sup>317</sup> The effect of migrant's networks can be reflected by the case of Taiwanese immigrants – many of these Taiwanese skilled cooks came to Norway in group by invitation from a Taiwanese restaurant owner named Yu Huairan (于怀仁) who had already settled in Oslo from the 1970s. He and other Chinese restaurant owners saw the demands for

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<sup>314</sup> *Aftenposten* 09.03.1985, pp.34

<sup>315</sup> *Aftenposten* 11.07.1988, pp.6

<sup>316</sup> *Verdens Gang (VG)* 27.09.1992. This number might seem slightly large as they might have different definition for places to serve Chinese food. It might include some Chinese fast-food stalls which were in smaller scales.

<sup>317</sup> Informant 14



more Chinese restaurant workers in Oslo and hence began to spread the relevant information through his personal network about recruiting cooks for Chinese restaurants.<sup>318</sup> As the information about working in Norway spread between some Chinese skilled cooks in Taiwan, many Taiwanese viewed this as a unique opportunity to go abroad. As an informant stressed:

Many of these cooks always wanted to go abroad for gaining life experience outside Taiwan. But they had no language skills, neither education background, nor overseas network (*haiwai guanxi* 海外关系). [...] After they had heard about the job vacancies here, they wanted to grasp this unique opportunity for going abroad.<sup>319</sup>

In the case of Hong Kong, apart from the Hong Kong Chinese who immigrated to Oslo via family reunification during the same period, the influx of Chinese from Hong Kong also accelerated because of the increased number of skilled cooks entering Norway. Their arrival time in Oslo varied from the mid-1980s to the late-1980s.<sup>320</sup>

The key factor here, as mentioned earlier, was that since the popularity of Chinese restaurants in Oslo increased and led to demand for skilled Chinese labour, the successful Chinese restaurant owners, particularly the “Peking House” began to import some manpower from Hong Kong during the mid-1980s. These restaurant owners recruited some skilled cooks by contacting various Chinese restaurants in Hong Kong. Similar to the case of Taiwanese skilled cooks, many Hong Kong skilled cooks had heard about the job offers in Norway through their workplace or friends in Hong Kong and viewed the job offers as their unique opportunities to go abroad. While these skilled cooks were waiting for application to Norway, some of them had in fact also applied work permit as skilled cooks to other more immigrants-attractive places such as Australia.<sup>321</sup>

But why did these Hong Kong skilled cooks chose Norway eventually? My findings suggest that Norway’s efficiency of processing working permit and residential permit played a key role in this matter.<sup>322</sup> The implementation of the immigration-halt in 1975 led to a more restrictive immigration policy – in principal work permit should not be given to foreigners, but some exemption criteria could be fulfilled if they were, for instance, researchers, artists, musicians, Norwegian-born foreigners, specialists, skilled persons or key persons who were

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<sup>318</sup> Informant 14, two informal conversation with Norwegian-Chinese restaurant workers also confirmed this information.

<sup>319</sup> Informant 14

<sup>320</sup> Informant 6; informant 17

<sup>321</sup> Informant 6

<sup>322</sup> Informant 6, Informant 17. Same perception regarding this matter also proved from my observation and numbers of informal conversations with these Chinese cook turned immigrants in Oslo.

essential for the business.<sup>323</sup> Clearly, despite of the restrictive immigration policy for labour immigration, these groups of Chinese cooks could easier qualify as either skilled persons, or key persons who were essential to the business, in terms of the exemption criteria that were set by the Norwegian government.

The large influx of Chinese immigrants from the PRC started around the mid-1980s, when more and more Chinese restaurants were no longer established by Hong Kong Chinese, but Chinese from the PRC, especially from Zhoushan (舟山) in Zhejiang province. Based on numerous anecdotal evidences and my in-depth interview sources, my findings suggest that today, there is a preponderance of people from Zhoushan in the Chinese community in Oslo.<sup>324</sup> The key factors to this demographic curiosity is because of Simon Yuen (*Yuan Wen'er* 袁文儿). He is the founder of the biggest Chinese restaurant franchise, “Chinatown”. Originated from Zhoushan, he managed to settle down in Norway after several voyages in Europe during the mid-1970s. Subsequently he established his Chinese restaurant business and received massive success throughout the 1980s.<sup>325</sup> As his catering businesses expanded and created a demand for Chinese cooks, he thus invited many fellow countrymen to join and work in his companies. As a result, several hundreds of Zhoushanese Chinese began to make their arrivals in Oslo after they gained their unique social capital in the migrants-sending area.<sup>326</sup>

My interviews also revealed that during and throughout the 1980s, many Chinese restaurant workers entered Oslo by manipulating the regulations of skilled cook visas and moved to Oslo. Unlike most of the skilled cooks from Hong Kong and Taiwan, many of the Mainlander Chinese who moved to Oslo were actually not skilled cooks at all. They made their entries to Norway by submitting fake documentation, such as fake diplomas and certificates. My interview sources revealed that many Chinese restaurant owners initiated such ways for “bringing over” their fellow countrymen out of China (*ba ren gei dai chulai* 把人给带出来). This is because it was the simplest way to make their regular entries to Norway. After their arrival, they instead starting to learn cooking in the restaurants, as well as doing menial tasks

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<sup>323</sup> Eva Haagensen, Laila Kvisler, Tor G. Birkeland (1990:72)

<sup>324</sup> Many of them reside in Oslo and most likely the majority of them rely on catering business, either they run their own family-based Chinese restaurant or work at Chinese restaurant as cooks or waiters. They were not necessary concentrated in Oslo- The fact that the dispersal of Chinese restaurants in Norway reflects the need for wider catchment of customers and also to move away from competitors, particularly when saturated Chinese catering business occurred in Oslo.

<sup>325</sup> *Aftenposten* 24.11.1982, pp.2

<sup>326</sup> “A successful life of the Norwegian Chinese entrepreneur”

like cleaning, washing etc. They were basically living in their limited Chinese restaurant communities as most of them were not well-educated and without proficiency of language. Some Chinese restaurant owners thus manipulated these Chinese restaurant workers by forcing them to work for them in a certain period and also paid them poorly.<sup>327</sup>

Combining several old newspaper articles and my in-depth interviews, it is clear that several Chinese restaurants not only offered bad working and salary conditions, but also committed a range of other crimes. Almost all of my informants, especially those who are restaurant owners or ex-restaurant workers themselves, revealed to me that the most common problem among Chinese restaurants was *tax-fraud*.<sup>328</sup> One of the most notable cases in Norwegian national media was when the Norwegian newspaper VG told the story about the Hong-franchise who was charged with deducting millions of kroner in 1992.<sup>329</sup> One informant revealed in an interview that it was quite common that many Chinese restaurant owners committed this tax-fraud action to maximize their net-profit from their catering business. They often did it without second thoughts as they simply viewed that the tax-fraud as a means of earning more profit, rather than a criminal action.<sup>330</sup> The tax-fraud did not just happen in Oslo, but the same story can also be found in other Chinese communities in other European countries.<sup>331</sup>

Another notable case of Chinese restaurant owners committing a series of crime was reported in Norwegian national media in 1979. The restaurant owner, Ho Chow was charged and convicted for a series of mafia-style crimes involving smuggling Chinese into Norway to work in her restaurants and then imprisoning them and not paying them according to their contracts. Several details of serious mistreatment of employees were presented in the media before and during the court case.<sup>332</sup> More similar crime cases were reported in the early 1990s, such as a Taiwanese-Chinese restaurant owner who was charged with procuring prostitution from the same building as the restaurant.<sup>333</sup>

According to my informants, the inflow of Chinese skilled cooks to Oslo gradually ceased because there was an overflow of Chinese skilled-cooks, even though many of them were not

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<sup>327</sup> Informant 2, Informant 6, Informant 7, Informant 14, Informant 16; *Aftenposten* 15.05.1991, p.3; VG 27.09.1992

<sup>328</sup> Informant 14; VG 27.09.1992

<sup>329</sup> VG 27.09.1992

<sup>330</sup> Informant 14.

<sup>331</sup> Wang Xiaoping and Liu Hong (ed.) (2011:18)

<sup>332</sup> VG 27.09.1992; VG 12.06.1979; VG 17.01.1987

<sup>333</sup> *Dagbladet* 29.07.1992, p.9; VG 27.09.1992

skilled cooks at all, as I have previously mentioned. It is possible that the Norwegian authorities started being aware that many Chinese were coming into Norway by manipulating the dispensation for skilled workers. An example of this is a story of a Hong Kong Chinese cook and his family who got expelled due to his employers' bankruptcy. Even though he actually got a new job as a cook, The Department of Justice (*Justisdepartementet*) rejected to renew his work permit because they said that there was a surplus of Chinese cooks.<sup>334</sup> As a result, the situation of Chinese skilled cooks obtaining residence permit was proved to be more difficult than in the 1980s. Today, according to UDI circulars, a stringent competence requirements shall apply to ethnic cooks.<sup>335</sup> Clearly, the more restrictive regulations for people who wanted to apply a residence permit as skilled workers, closed the door for most Chinese skilled (and unskilled) cooks who wanted to come to work in Norway.

### **7.3.1 Short conclusion for the third wave of the Chinese immigration**

The phenomenon of the boom of Chinese restaurants in other Western European countries, such as Britain and the Netherlands, was repeated in Norway, particularly in Oslo. The boom in Oslo happened a few decades later than other Western European countries because of the late formation of a Chinese community in Oslo. As the boom of Chinese restaurants took off during the beginning of the 1970s, the demand for relevant work force increased as well. As a result, many Chinese restaurants started to import more Chinese skilled cooks. Hence the inflow of Chinese skilled cooks took place from the mid-1970s. Due to the restrictive emigration policy in the PRC, these groups were mainly from Hong Kong and Taiwan. An increasing number of Chinese cooks started arriving in Norway after the legalization of emigration in the PRC from the mid-1980s. My findings suggest that many Chinese who came to Oslo during and throughout the 1980s, were not actually skilled-cooks. They were just using the dispensation for Chinese cooks in order to enter Norway for gaining work and residence permits. Upon their arrival, some of them were exploited by their employers. Several cases of serious mistreatment of employees were reported in Norwegian media during the early 1990s. As a result, in addition to the fact that there was a surplus of Chinese skilled cooks in Norway, stricter regulations were introduced on skilled workers. Comparing to the

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<sup>334</sup> *Aftenposten* 25.06.1992

<sup>335</sup> See the circular RS 2012-003: Førstegangs oppholdstillatelse og fornyelse til nasjonalitetskokker og lignende yrkesgrupper – utlendingsloven § 23 første ledd, jf. utlendingsforskriften § 6-1 annet ledd og utlendingsforskriften § 10-21 (accessed 20.11.2013)

1980s, it was now much more difficult for Chinese skilled workers to come to work in Norway.

#### **7.4 The fourth wave: Chinese students turned immigrants**

During the late 1980s to 1990s, the fourth wave of Chinese immigration can be identified as students turned immigrants. The picture of the Chinese community during this particular period had thus been diversified by the influx of Chinese students from Mainland China. I hereby have to point out that instead of viewing Chinese students as migrants, it is more sensible to view them as *potential* migrants who maybe turn their status into immigrants after a period.<sup>336</sup> In contrast to those Chinese seamen and Chinese cooks turned immigrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan and Zhoushan in Mainland China, most of these former students turned immigrants in Oslo were better educated than the usual immigrants of earlier periods.

The presence of the earliest Chinese students in Norway can be traced back in the 1960s. In 1964, the premier of the PRC, Zhou Enlai (周恩来) promoted a campaign in order to “cultivate talents for minor languages” (*chubei xiaoyuzhong waiyu rencai* 储备小语种外语人才) among young Chinese students. The campaign was in connection to a demand for more Chinese who can speak minor languages because they can help to develop the diplomacy of the PRC. About 1000 high school students were selected under this campaign and they were all sent to different countries all over the world from 1964 to 1965.<sup>337</sup> During this particular campaign, a small group of Chinese students were assigned to Norway to study Norwegian language. They probably all left Oslo and returned to Beijing to join the Culture Revolution.<sup>338</sup> Some of these Chinese students returned to Norway and worked as ambassador or diplomats in the embassy of China, or chief translator in the Norwegian General Consulate in China, for instances, Ma En’han (马恩汉)<sup>339</sup>, Liang Youping (梁友平)<sup>340</sup>, Wang Guisheng (王贵生).<sup>341</sup> These former Chinese students who arrived in the 1960s have later become important figures in developing the diplomatic and cultural relationship between China and Norway.

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<sup>336</sup> See more discussion regarding the phenomenon of the transformation from study to migranhood in Wang Gungwu (2007:165-177)

<sup>337</sup> ‘Zhou En’lai and the translators’ work at the foreign affair in the PRC’ <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/68742/69115/69120/4902709.html> (accessed 31.10.2013)

<sup>338</sup> *Aftenposten* 31.01.1967, pp.1

<sup>339</sup> ‘Interviews with Ma En’han the former Chinese ambassador of Portugal and Norway, regarding his perspectives of Nordic and Southern Europe’ [http://www.china.com.cn/news/2009-07/03/content\\_18065285\\_3.htm](http://www.china.com.cn/news/2009-07/03/content_18065285_3.htm) (accessed 31.10.2013)

<sup>340</sup> Archival files of *Norges kinesiske forening, kinesisk kulturfestival* (OBA/A-70094).

<sup>341</sup> See *Kina og Vi*. Nr.1 (1981) pp.24-25. Wang Guisheng came to Norway as a student as early as in 1961.

The flow of Chinese students studying abroad ceased since 1967, due to the Cultural Revolution; it thus only resumed at the end of 1970s and more than 3000 students were sent overseas in 1978 by the Ministry of Education in China.<sup>342</sup> During the late 1970s to early 1980s, these Chinese students were mainly sponsored by the PRC Government. In 1981, going abroad with a purpose of studying without state sponsorship became a legitimate means of exiting China after the self-financed overseas study was formally recognized by the PRC Government for the first time.<sup>343</sup> This policy thus played a key role in offering wider opportunities among young Chinese students to apply for various universities overseas. As mentioned earlier, since the PRC government began to send thousands of students to study abroad, Norway, as well, became one of the countries receiving Chinese students since the autumn 1977.<sup>344</sup> From 1979 to 1980, nearly 30 PRC-Chinese arrived in Norway and engaged in various levels of studies in the University of Oslo and the Norwegian Institute of Technology in Trondheim.<sup>345</sup> According to my informants, the majority of Chinese students who arrived in Oslo during the early 1980s were with state sponsorships, and most of them went home after their completion of studies.<sup>346</sup> Nonetheless, this educational exchange cooperation between China and Norway not just led to more Chinese students beginning to getting in touch with various Norwegian education institutes, but information such as study programs in various Norwegian universities and scholarships program were also introduced more widely in various universities and English improvement classes in the PRC. My findings proved that during the 1980s, English improvement classes (*yingyu buxiban* 英语补习班) in China represented a platform for Chinese undergraduate students to exchange information about studies abroad.<sup>347</sup> By that time, (and it still is today) many Chinese students went to intensive English improvement classes to prepare for the English proficiency test such as TOFEL. This is because they needed to pass the English language proficiency test in order to qualify for entering various graduate schools in North America. Apparently, many self-financed students had also learned about relevant studies from overseas information through

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<sup>342</sup> After entering the post-Culture Revolution period, Deng Xiaoping encouraged universities and the Ministry of Education to send more students overseas in order to learn advanced technologies. In 1979, a document was issued by both the Ministry of Education and the National Science Committee to address the regulation towards Chinese overseas students. See Xiang Biao (2003:29)

<sup>343</sup> Xiang Biao (2003:29)

<sup>344</sup> *Kina og Vi* (1977)

<sup>345</sup> 'Name list of Chinese persons studying in Norway.' In Archival files: Studentforhold. Utenlandske studenter i Norge. Spørsmål om studier i Norge. Kinesiske forskere. Archive nr.- RA/S-6142/D/L0342/0001 (1982-1983)

<sup>346</sup> Informant 7 and informant 15

<sup>347</sup> Informant 7 and Informant 15

social networks with classmates.<sup>348</sup> As a result, information about studying in Norway spread between classmates and gradually prompted some Chinese students to apply to study in Norway as well. Yet, studying in Norway was not many Chinese students' first choice, as I shall discuss below shortly.

It is evident that both the economic reform in the PRC, as well as the study abroad campaign which was urged by Deng Xiaoping (邓小平) during the same period, played a significant role in encouraging an increasing number of Chinese to study abroad throughout the 1980s. While in the case of Chinese students in Oslo, my findings suggest that the push factor gave way to the pull factor – many self-financed Chinese students made their eventual decisions to study in Norway after they did not receive scholarships in universities in North America, since, the Norwegian universities offered them both admission letter and a type of grant from the Norwegian government. Therefore, I argue that Norway played a key role for many Chinese students to pursue their dreams of studying abroad regardless of their desired countries. As one of my informant states:

[M]any Chinese had the urge and strong desire to leave China and study abroad, preferably study abroad in the United States and Canada. I did apply to study in the United States and Canada as well, and I have received admission letters, but the problem is, they did not offer me scholarship and the tuition fees are too high, I really couldn't afford that! That is why I came to Norway for study: Because of the benefit of free tuition and scholarships money which could cover my living expenses throughout my study period.<sup>349</sup>

Just as this informant stated, it is clear that the advantages of both free tuition and a grant that was offered by the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (*Statens lånekasse for utdanning*) at that time served as a financial aid for students especially from developing countries.<sup>350</sup> Hence, despite Norway not being these Chinese students' first choice in terms of destinations for studying abroad, they still made their path to Oslo for further studies because of the chances of gaining experiences of studying abroad. This situation was reinforced by one of my informants' statement:

The main objective of every Chinese students at that time was to be able to get out of China by means of studying abroad, since China has been isolated for so long and every young students just cannot wait to express their curiosity of learning about the other cultures.<sup>351</sup>

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<sup>348</sup> Informant 7 and Informant 15

<sup>349</sup> Informant 7

<sup>350</sup> Informant 3, Informant 7, Informant 15.

<sup>351</sup> Informant 15

After they had completed their studies in Oslo, many of these Chinese students turned their status from students into immigrants after they found out it was more advantageous to remain abroad, particularly when they found themselves a full time job and could make their temporary stays permanent. However, according to my informants, only a small percentage of these Chinese students eventually decided to stay in Oslo and become Norwegian citizens, as most of them left Norway. This particularly refers to those who came during the 1980s.<sup>352</sup> It is most likely that a majority left Oslo right after they had completed their studies and re-migrated to other more attractive countries among Chinese students such as the United States and Canada. Some of these students returned to their homeland when the economic situation back in the PRC turned better during China's economic boom, in spite of several years of remaining in Norway.<sup>353</sup> There was also some Chinese students who remained in Oslo by means of intermarriage with Norwegian and thus made their stay in Oslo permanently.

Yet, some cases show that a few Chinese students remained in Norway because of political reasons - due to their active participation in the student uprising. The main center of this movement was Tian'anmen Square in Beijing in 1989, but Chinese students and sympathizers were active in Oslo as well. These activists received rejection from the Chinese embassy regarding their application of renewing Chinese passport and thus became stateless.<sup>354</sup> My oral evidence revealed that a small percentage of these Chinese students became political refugees in Norway due to fear of being persecuted if returning to China.<sup>355</sup> Nonetheless, in general, the number of Chinese students who came to Oslo during the 1980s to 1990s increased gradually, only some of them were employed and thus transformed their status from students to specialists. The trend of Chinese student migrants turning immigrants began already in the mid-1990s, and this trend is still ongoing today.

#### **7.4.1 Short conclusion for the fourth wave**

With a particular focus on their patterns of exit, my oral history approach shows some reasons of Chinese students who entered Norway for studies in the certain periods. On the one hand, the push factors from the Chinese government played an important role for the nature of the

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<sup>352</sup> Informant 7 and Informant 15

<sup>353</sup> Informant 15

<sup>354</sup> The Chinese student, Wang Bo (王博) was the iconic and key person during the Chinese student uprising movement among Chinese student association in Oslo in 1989. He became stateless due to the Chinese embassy refused to renew his passport and thus he had chosen to become a Norwegian citizen. Through some private conversations with other Chinese and Norwegian informants also revealed that some other Chinese students faced the same situation as Wang Bo. See *Aftenposten* 16.11.1990, pp.4; Informant 7

<sup>355</sup> Informant 7, Informant 14



transformation of Chinese students to their migrant hoods. One of the key factors here is because many of them were affected by political instability in the PRC. On the other hand, the scholarships program in Norway played an even more decisive role in attracting Chinese students to make their eventual decision to study in Oslo – clearly, free tuition and Norwegian financial grant did make their dream of studying abroad come true. Some of these Chinese students made their stay permanent after they found a full time job and thus their status were transformed to specialists. Yet, a majority of these Chinese students, particularly of those who came during the 1980s, left Norway and went home, or re-migrated to North America.

## **7.5 The trend of Chinese immigration to Oslo from the 2000s**

The trend of Chinese student migrants turning immigrants is still ongoing even after entering the 2000s. Many Chinese students turned immigrants as they received relevant jobs as specialists in Oslo. Some cases also indicate that Chinese came to Oslo as research fellows and later transformed their stay permanently. The establishment of the organization Chinese Professionals in Norway (CPN) in 2003 can be viewed as a steady growing Chinese community with higher education in Oslo. The objective of this association is to ‘become an important communication platform between Norway and China, and between working immigrants with higher education and the Norwegian society.’<sup>356</sup> Indeed, since the 2000s, there has been a growth in the number of professionals moving to Oslo directly from mainland China. It has particularly been an increase inflow of Mainlander Chinese technical professionals to Oslo since the 2000s.<sup>357</sup> Even some Chinese professionals moved to Oslo for work after their completion of studies in other Scandinavian countries such as Sweden.<sup>358</sup>

As we experience a growth of Chinese middle class in mainland China, more Chinese parents can effort costly education fees in order to send their children for studying abroad, particularly to Western countries.<sup>359</sup> Norway, as well, will not just receive an inflow of highly-skilled Chinese migrants, but also an increased inflow of Chinese students. Being the only European countries that still offers free tuition to foreign students today, several distinctive higher educational institutes in Oslo still being attractive to many foreign students,

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<sup>356</sup> CPN. ‘10-Year Anniversary of Chinese Professionals in Norway, Bridging People and Business!’ (2013)

<sup>357</sup> Informant 7

<sup>358</sup> Informant 7

<sup>359</sup> Li Minghuan (2002:575-576)

and certainly also to Chinese students. Approaching the 2010s, the Chinese were approaching the largest community of the foreign students from non-Western countries in Oslo. The important aspect here is that, as the information which I have presented earlier, the potential of Chinese student migrants transformed to immigrants is foreseeable.<sup>360</sup> It is possible that, as long as they find a relevant full time job in Oslo they seem to have a tendency to remain and settle down in Oslo.<sup>361</sup> However, due to the restrictive immigration policy in Norway, many Chinese students leave Oslo when they cannot find a relevant full time job in a short period of time.<sup>362</sup> In comparison to North American countries such as The United States and Canada, the cases of students transformed to highly skilled workers in Europe generally were much difficult.<sup>363</sup> I argue that the same situation is reflected in Oslo because of the restrictive immigration policy in Norway.<sup>364</sup>

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<sup>360</sup> *DN* 'Over halvparten blir boende'

<sup>361</sup> *DN* 'Fra student til statsborger'

<sup>362</sup> *Aftenposten* 12.07.2006, pp.18-19

<sup>363</sup> Li Minghuan (2002:576)

<sup>364</sup> See the UDI circular *RS 2010-113*. Residence permit for skilled workers etc. – the Immigration Act section 23 first paragraph, cf. the Immigration Regulations section 6-1 first and second paragraphs.

## 8 Conclusion

*”I think that it is time to cheer for the Chinese restaurants’ contribution to make Norway become funnier, more international and more confusing.”*<sup>365</sup>

Are Kalvø

It began with this publication, Are Kalvø’s *Våre Venner Kinesarane*, a comedian’s book about him travelling to 158 communes in Norway, in search for tasting Chinese food in Chinese restaurants.<sup>366</sup> Although his book can hardly be seen as an academic work, his experience of eating in all these Chinese restaurants unveils many important perspectives for this thesis. His book seems to provide some impression of the Chinese immigrants are well integrated in the mainstream society in Norway. However, no detailed and explicit research has been done regarding the history of Chinese immigrants in Oslo. As a result, I have begun with the main research question of *when and how the Chinese people migrated to Oslo*. In order to identify their migratory route to Oslo with a historical perspective, I have therefore applied methods such as in-depth interviews for collecting the primary sources of this thesis. Subsequently, analysis of various archives and old newspapers thus served as verifying my oral evidence.

In this thesis I have discussed the main factors of Chinese immigration history to Oslo, with a particular timeframe from the late 1960s to the early 1990s. With a comprehensive discussion and presentation of my collected historical evidence, I have demonstrated how the history of Chinese immigration is well embedded with the immigration history in Norway. Norway is a relatively small country in terms of population when compared to its neighboring countries such as Sweden and Denmark. More than that, Norway experienced the impact of immigration much slower than other European countries. As a result, the arrival time of Chinese immigrants in Norway, as well as the establishment of a Chinese community in Oslo also appeared to be later in comparison to other Chinese communities in the neighboring countries.

In 1963 the first Chinese restaurant in Norway opened in the capital city, Oslo. The owner of the restaurant came to Norway before the Second World War, and was one of the typical chain-migrants from Qingtian, China. Following the opening of the first Chinese restaurant,

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<sup>365</sup> *Dagsavisen* ‘En hyllest til kinarestaurantene’ 10.24.2007

<sup>366</sup> Are Kalvø (2007)

Chinese seamen from Hong Kong gradually made their arrivals in Oslo. Before moving to Oslo, most of these seamen had acquired migration information through their personal networks (kinship or friendship ties). All the relevant information of living and working in Oslo turned into the migrant's social capital, as this migration pattern can be proved by the cumulative causation theory —The prospective Chinese seamen-migrants got to learn the necessary steps, such as where to departure from, how to make their arrival or who to seek out to get a job and an accommodation. The first wave of immigration to Oslo by the Hong Kong Chinese seamen shows that they had learned all necessary steps for successful immigration. After these seamen had settled down, their family members were brought over, and their arrival marked the second wave of the Chinese immigration to Oslo. Unlike the first wave immigrants, who were exclusively the breadwinner of a family, the second wave of immigration moved passively, as they started their moves because they had to reunite with the breadwinner of their families.

Norway shared the same Chinese restaurant boom experience as other Western European countries such as Britain and the Netherlands, the only difference being that it happened a few decades later. The Chinese restaurants which were established in the late 1960s and early 1970s were initiated by the first wave of Chinese immigration which consisted of Chinese seamen. Combined with the advantages of less competition and the exoticness of Chinese cuisine, soon all these Chinese restaurants became popular and were warmly welcomed by Norwegian customers as there were not so many other foreign restaurants in Oslo. The Chinese restaurants expanded their businesses very quickly from the end of the 1970s, and it created a demand for Chinese skilled cooks. The inflows of Chinese skilled cooks that started from the 1980s, marked the third wave of the Chinese immigration. As skilled cooks were under the dispensation from the immigration-halt in 1975, many Chinese, who were actually not skilled cooks at all, obtained their work and residence permit by submitting fake documents. Many Chinese had learned this means from their personal networks or kinship networks, especially from those who had earlier successfully made their entries to Oslo in such ways. The third wave of Chinese immigration slowly ceased in the beginning of the 1990s. In addition to the fact that there was a surplus of Chinese skilled cooks in Norway, stricter regulations on skilled workers were introduced.

The fourth wave of Chinese immigration took place in the end of 1980s, and consisted of Chinese students mainly from the PRC. In addition to the urge of studying abroad, free tuition

and Norwegian financial grant played a decisive role for attracting Chinese students to move to Oslo. Some of them married to Norwegians and stayed permanently, some of these Chinese students became specialists in their field of study and obtained residence permit after they had found a full-time job. Still, according to my informants, the majority of the Chinese students, particularly of those who came during the 1980s, left Norway and moved to other immigrants-attractive countries.

It is possible that, the destination did not create significant pull factors in comparison to other more immigrants-attractive countries. Instead, the social capital that these Chinese immigrants carried, particularly the third wave (Chinese skilled-cooks) and the fourth wave (Chinese students), played an important role in initiating the moves. As long as they had a chance to go abroad, regardless the means (skilled cooks, students), they would still eventually pursue their goal of migration. I argue that both skilled cooks and students shared the same desire of going abroad, preferably to a Western country, but without any particular priority.

### **Some further research possibilities**

I have chosen to study the Chinese immigration to Oslo in a historical perspective. The goal has been to provide a background for further studies on Chinese immigrants in Oslo or in Norway. Today, the majority of Chinese immigrants in Norway are still engaged in Chinese or Chinese-Norwegian catering businesses. I hope that my study can serve as a basis for further research on identifying the development of ethnic businesses, particularly Chinese catering business, as well as examining how Chinese immigrants integrated into mainstream society. Despite the number of Chinese immigrants is relatively insignificant in comparison to other immigrant groups in Norway, we have as much to learn from the Chinese community about their history, culture and their adaptation to mainstream society as about the diverse immigrants' history in Norway

It has been said that many second generation Chinese have gradually branched out from this ethnic Chinese business and have entered different work sectors in mainstream society. Their life experiences merit scholarly attention as well in order to understand the second generation of Chinese immigrants in Norway. Furthermore, there is also the inflow of students and highly skilled professionals from the PRC to Norway. This phenomenon can also be a potential subject of further research.

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