New Chinese immigrants in Singapore : barriers of integration

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2017

Qian, L. (2017). New Chinese immigrants in Singapore : barriers of integration. Master's thesis, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

<http://hdl.handle.net/10356/72530>

<https://doi.org/10.32657/10356/72530>

**NANYANG
TECHNOLOGICAL
UNIVERSITY**

**NEW CHINESE IMMIGRANTS
IN SINGAPORE:
BARRIERS OF INTEGRATION**

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SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES
2017**

**New Chinese Immigrants
in Singapore:
Barriers of Integration**

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A thesis submitted to the Nanyang Technological University
in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of
Master of Arts

2017

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to convey my sincere gratitude to several individuals who have provided help and guidance to me during the previous two years. I should state from the outset that any errors contained in this work are my own.

I am sincerely grateful for the supervision of Associate Professor Yow Cheun Hoe. His overseeing of my work and his careing have enabled me to be clearer with my own research progress. He has made me known to the true value of paying one's due diligence in work and being helpful to the work of others. I significantly profited from his supervision and profound knowledge. For this, I am truly indebted to him.

A significant portion of this thesis contains responses from my informants. Without doubt, I owe particular thanks to all my respondents. I am extremely grateful to all informants who took the time to meet me and share with me their experiences as new Chinese immigrants in Singapore. It has been a great pleasure to meet these lovely individuals and I wish them all the best in their future endeavors. Without the generous help from you, this thesis could not materialize.

I want to thank my family members for their support and indulgence. Thank you for giving me the luxury of time to work on my interests. To my dearest wife, Chen Ying, your encouragements have always been my pillar of support throughout this journey. To my mother, mother-in-law and father-in-law, who took turns and flew from their cozy hometown to Singapore to take care of my three years old son.

Very special appreciation also goes out to Professor Liu Hong, Professor Zhou Min and Assistant Professor Zhan Shaohua, Assistant Professor Ong Soon Keong and Senior Lecturer Dr. Helena Hong Gao, for your kindness to allow me to sit in your regular lectures and seminars as well as advices during the preliminary stage of this research. Thank you for allowing me to sit in during the meetings with your research teams. The experiences have been extremely useful in guiding my conceptualization in this research. To Siew Hong, Wai Han, Christina and Ivy, thank you for rendering the administrative support during my two years of candidature.

To friends who always make these journeys more enjoyable: I am appreciative for the proofreading given by Edward, Wei Yang, Peipei and Soon Vin. I also wish to convey my gratitude to the graduate students in the fields of Sociology, Public Policy, Economics, English, History and Chinese as we work under the same roof. They are Cheng Wei, Chia Tsun, Darlene, Edward Halim, Gayathri, Jia Qi, Jie Xin, Shah Salleh, Si Rui, Yang Hui, Yang Wei, Yan Bo, Zhi Feng, Zhi Tian and many others. Thank you all for always providing a stimulating research environment and for the friendships which make these postgraduate years so memorable.

Last but not least, I would like to thank two anonymous examiners who gave out very thoughtful comments and advices. It enables me to further sharpen my arguments and present this work in front of you.

SUMMARY

This study explores three key propositions through analyzing how language, sentiment and policy barriers are involved in the integration process of New Chinese immigrants. Based on the empirical data gathered from them directly in addition to online news reports and forum comments, this study makes the following arguments.

Firstly, this study analyzed the ongoing failure of pervasive English training in immigrants sending country caused the existence of English language barrier when many new Chinese immigrants entering the Singaporean host society. To better tackle the English language barrier, this study suggests both the new Chinese immigrants and the host society should work together to locate a bridging channel to enhance immigrants' English proficiency while allowing them speaking Chinese as their main communicative vehicle before well equipped with considerable English competence. To make it happen, the Singaporean authority needs to appropriate public funds for subsidizing English class which can be taken up by all the residents and non-residents with Long-term Visiting Pass (LTVP). At the end of the day, this study believes to achieve linguistic integration, immigrants whether seek for renewal of Employment Pass, permanent residency or naturalized citizenship of Singapore, they must show their proficiency of English, at least they need to prove that they have such potential to acquire this language within a stipulated time. In one word, it is the Singaporean multilinguistic landscape calls for immigrants' integration through the enhanced English proficiency.

Secondly, as this study concluded, the anti-immigrant sentiment was most probably

overestimated the perspective of my designated population: highly educated new Chinese immigrants. Because it is largely based on media reports and online forums and partly due to the *New Racism* ideology went viral with the pressure both covertly and overtly brought in to host society by the immigrants. My in-depth interviews have also shown these group of people are not bothered by the anti-immigrant sentiment. More importantly, the unique residential patterns of Singapore further provided a workable platform to promote intra-ethnic communication both at neighborhood and community level thus would help to decrease of the anti-immigrant sentiment rather than growing. Resident community is a feasible platform to engage the new immigrants. When it comes to integration, immigrants can be educated and their commitment to be part of the community can be nurtured. To many new Chinese immigrants, kids are one of the main reasons why they choose to settle down in Singapore. Successfully engaging immigrant kids into resident community, in the meantime, their parents will join in together. In addition, having new immigrants as volunteers and grassroots leaders would help to enhance the community interaction and at the same time served as an essential pillar to alleviate the sentiment of anti-immigrant with the unique residential pattern that has been discussed early.

Thirdly, even the "Singaporeans-first" policies pervasively affected the life the new Chinese immigrants including but not limited to immigration, education and housing rights and benefits, the new Chinese immigrants generally understand and support the rationales behind the "Singaporeans-first" policies. Nevertheless, for new immigrants with school age kids, the "Singaporeans-first" policies would most probably act as the catalyst that motivate non-PR immigrants pursue PR status and PRs turn themselves into naturalized citizens so as to be fairly treated under the

“Singaporeans-first” policies. As for the “highly selective strategy” which considered as the byproduct of the “Singaporeans-first” policies, it has pervasively affected the lives of the PR and non-PR new Chinese immigrants, and it has the potential to disintegrate the commitment to be an integral part of the host society that many non-PR and PR uphold in terms of the failure of their parents’ LTVP application, the immigrants’ family planning and many others. Although there is necessity to employ the “highly selective strategy” to screen PR application, the responsible authority needs to be reminded that it has the potential to backlash the social integration as the effect of this strategy could easily come across the country border for some transnational families. Besides, it also discourages the immigrants’ family planning in some circumstances. Therefore, it is better for the immigration authority to humanely calibrate the application of the “highly selective strategy” when necessary. Regarding the emergent citizenship dilemma, it can be argued that with the implement of the “Singaporeans-first” policies, PR immigrants soon realize that they have to deal with a citizenship dilemma. This is because the “Singaporeans-first” policies aiming to largely constrict the benefits that PRs have been entitled for years. Unlike other nations, the most distinction is voting rights between PR and citizen. To most Singapore PR who face housing, child education and many other needs, they have less choice but to consider to be naturalized citizens rather than staying on their PR status comfortably as the latter almost cut the chances for their children to enter the public school, hard to bring their parents to take care of kids and so on and so forth. In addition, one cannot denial that not all PR immigrants are affected by the “Singaporeans-first” policies. To this group of immigrants, they seem to be comfortable whether to be naturalized Singapore citizens thus falling into a much pragmatic category which have little to do with their integration. Therefore, I use the notion of emergent citizenship dilemma with a question mark to

differentiate the consequence of the “Singaporeans-first” policies as only those who pervasively affected by the policies would possibly backlash the integration into the host society.

In one word, barriers in terms of English language, anti-immigrant sentiment and the “Singaporeans-first” policies which impeded progress of integration for new Chinese immigrants in the past would be alleviated if not collapse as time goes by. And more importantly, reviewing the barriers of integration is worth doing constantly with the ever-changing immigration and integration practice in Singapore as the immigrants’ host society.

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ABBREVIATIONS

DP	Dependent Pass
EAI	East Asian Institute
EEA/EFTA	European Economic Area/European Free Trade Association
EF-EPI	Education-First English Proficiency Index
EIP	Ethnic Integration Policy
ELT	English language teaching
EP	Employment Pass
GLC	Government-linked companies
HDB	Housing & Development Board
IMD's 2016	Deloitte's 2016 Global Manufacturing Competitiveness Index
IPS	Institute of Policy Studies
LTVP	Long-term Visiting Pass
PMET	Professionals, Managers, Executives and Technicians
PR	Permanent resident
PRs	Permanent residents
RSIS	Rajaratnam School of International Studies
SC	Singapore Citizen
SP	Special Pass
SPR	Singapore permanent resident
SPRs	Singapore permanent residents
WP	Work Permit
WPL	Workplace Literacy

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

1.1.1 New Chinese Immigrants Redefined

Immigrant, as defined by the dictionary, is a person who comes to a country to take up permanent residence (Merriam-Webster, 2016). Obviously, it is based on Euro-centric which applies to large number of Europeans moving across Atlantic Ocean to North American in the history instead of being treated as travelers. Unlike Europe and what we understand today for Southeast Asian particularly in Singapore, Wang (1991a, p. 166) reminds us that, before 1950s, someone arrived on an alien shore for whatever purpose was not called immigrant. But today, as long as someone has an unfamiliar face and does not speak Singlish, he/she may be perceived as foreign immigrant (BBC News Singapore, August 6, 2015). In connection with this, new Chinese immigrants (*xin yimin* in Mandarin Chinese), are people “who were born in Mainland China and started emigrating from China in the early 1980s while their preferred destinations are North America, Europe, and Australia, Japan and Singapore are their main choices within Asia” (Liu, 2012b, pp. 49-50). However, new Chinese immigrants discussed in this study are confined to Mainland Chinese who came to Singapore after the establishment of diplomat relationship between China and Singapore in 1990 and have obtained permanent resident (PR) status and/or Singapore citizenship (SC); as well as Chinese overseas students and other Mainland Chinese in Singapore who hold various long-term visiting pass and seek for permanent residency by the time of this study. Mainland transient workers who hold work permit (WP) are excluded from this study only because

they have very little chances to be granted PR status under the current Singaporean immigration practice and thus are not expected to integrate into the Singaporean society. In other words, what this study examined the barriers of integration that new Chinese immigrants encountered and responded would only be applicable to settlers and quasi-settlers rather than sojourners.

1.1.2 Background of Homeland

In addition, new Chinese immigrants whether who first came to study as overseas students later joined the various profession or directly came to work as a professional, they are the self-driven people in this island-state Singapore. These self-driven younger generations ranging from their twenties to thirties are no longer tracing their individual success within China soil only. This is due to the prevalent economic success and the trend of marketization and privatization across China soil in the past 30 years, the “market was not just an economic, but also a moral force, penalizing the idle and incompetent and rewarding the enterprising and hard-working, for the greater good of society as a whole”(Clarke, 2005, p. 51). Therefore, with most people deinstitutionalized from *Danwei* (单位, literally means unit or company where Chinese people have their life employment) and thrown out of their working stations, some of them choose to migrate from village to city for a better life at their own wishes. Many of them are even more eager to go across the country border than in any time of the history, so as to upgrade their academic qualification in internationally recognized educational institutions before they seek for any possible employment opportunities, which followed by their soonest graduation or directly come over for better paid professions by all means. It needs to be mentioned here that before 2010, international graduating students even could

be invited to apply for permanent residency which would accelerate their job searching from market and help them to settle down as Singapore permanent residents more quickly comparing to other new immigrants who had no local education experience; therefore, they need more time and efforts to receive permanent resident benefits (Lianhe Zaobao, January 9, 2012, May 24, 2010) through existing normal channel that requiring one to have an employment pass for a considerable periods before s/he can lodge his/her PR application. It is no wonder that a large number of new immigrants who successfully obtained permanent residency even citizenship in a later stage are former Chinese overseas student.

An online source (Ministry of Education China, March 16, 2016) discloses that China has been sending out a record of 4.04 million students overseas during the year 1978-2015. To one's surprise, 3.11 million out of the aforesaid was sent out only from 2006-2015. Other report (Ministry of Education China, March 16, 2016; UFEIC 诺加学友会, 2016) shows that 520 thousand more students embarked on their overseas study in year 2015. To a country with 1.33 billion population and 230 million students in total by 2010 (Xie, 2011), 520 thousand students studying abroad a year would not create any significantly negative impact to their country of origin. But to many a country, when 3/4 of these 520 thousand students only choose United States (37%), United Kingdom (25%), Australia (14%) and Canada (12%) as their destination, such a big number of students' migration would most probably bring in potential collision against the local socio-cultural picture of the destination countries in one way or another. This is especially relevant for the United States, which hosts 975 thousand international students in the academic year 2014-15 as reported (See Table 1-1), however, nearly one third of whom are originally from China (Institute of

International Education, 2015).

Table 1-1 Top places of origin of international students from Open Doors 2015 in the United States. (Part)

		2013/14	2014/15	% of total	% change
	World Total	886,052	974,926	100.0	10.0
1	China	274,439	304,040	31.2	10.8
2	India	102,673	132,888	13.6	29.4
3	South Korea	68,047	63,710	6.5	- 6.4
4	Saudi Arabia	53,919	59,945	6.1	11.2
5	Canada	28,304	27,240	2.8	- 3.8

1.1.3 Background of Host Land

As for Singapore, coincidentally at the same period, although a little more than 18,000 students which equals 3.49% (UFEIC 诺加学友会, 2016) of total students abroad of China from aforesaid report (See Table 1-2) as well as other unknown but relatively large number of skilled/unskilled workers on yearly basis whom come to Singapore and join its 5.61 million population pool (See Table1-3) inclusive of its 1.67 million non-residents pool (Department of Statistics Singapore, 2016) which from one single country, has already caused discontent in terms of the overwhelming volume and growth rate rather than the numbers of foreigners who entry *per se* (Koh, Soon, & Yap, 2014). On the other hand, it is not a surprise that online anxiety over international student especially from Mainland China outnumbering local student in local autonomous universities by anonymous netizen(s) could go viral through online channel (STOMPer, 2010) and ignite less friendly comments over the inflows of international students

which could possibly impede their progress of integration here in Singapore.

Table 1-2 Top 10 Countries/region of destination of Chinese students' study abroad in 2015.

Ranking	Country	Percentage
1	United States	37.34%
2	United Kingdom	25.11%
3	Australia	14.19%
4	Canada	12.66%
5	Switzerland	12.01%
6	New Zealand	5.46%
7	Germany	3.49%
8	Singapore	3.49%
9	France	3.06%
10	Hong Kong	2.84%

Table 1-3 Singapore Population Size and Growth by Residential Status

Year	Number ('000)					Average Annual Growth ¹ (%)				
	Total Population	Singapore Residents			Non-Residents	Total Population	Singapore Residents			Non-Residents
		Total	Citizens	PRs			Total	Citizens	PRs	
2010	5,076.7	3,771.7	3,230.7	541.0	1,305.0	1.8	1.0	0.9	1.5	4.1
2011	5,183.7	3,789.3	3,257.2	532.0	1,394.4	2.1	0.5	0.8	-1.7	6.9
2012	5,312.4	3,818.2	3,285.1	533.1	1,494.2	2.5	0.8	0.9	0.2	7.2
2013	5,399.2	3,844.8	3,313.5	531.2	1,554.4	1.6	0.7	0.9	-0.3	4.0
2014	5,469.7	3,870.7	3,343.0	527.7	1,599.0	1.3	0.7	0.9	-0.7	2.9
2015	5,535.0	3,902.7	3,375.0	527.7	1,632.3	1.2	0.8	1.0	-	2.1
2016	5,607.3	3,933.6	3,408.9	524.6	1,673.7	1.3	0.8	1.0	-0.6	2.5

Singapore has caught academic attention as one of the main sojourning/transiting destinations for Mainland Chinese since early 19th century followed by the British established it as a free port (Wang, 1991b, p. 166). As a city-state located in the south point of Malay Peninsula, Singapore achieved full independence in 1965. Although Singapore inherited English from the British, “it was the People’s Action Party (PAP) government that had made a pragmatic decision to choose English as the polity’s common language alongside the major local languages” such as Chinese, Malay and Tamil (S. K. C. Chua, 2011, p. 126). With regards to its population, Singapore accommodates the highest percentage of ethnic Chinese in the world which recorded 74.3% out of its nearly 4 million resident populations as in June, 2016 (Department of Statistics Singapore, 2016, p. 5) other than the Mainland China and its hinterland, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. Even until today, new Chinese immigrants’ inflow to Singapore is still on going with a considerable amount of them under the name of “foreign talents” which can be traced back to then Prime Minister’s Goh Chok Tong’s National Day Rally speech 1999. It says: “As in everything else, it is talent that counts. We can be neither a first-world economy nor a world-class home without talent. We have to supplement our talent from abroad” (Goh, 1999). This is therefore the reason why Singapore keeps adopting relatively liberal immigration policy to attract new immigrants from elsewhere. In addition, as the quasi-immigrants, international students who enrolled in local approved Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs) can enjoy an instant 50% Tuition Grant given the circumstance that they sign a service agreement which require them to work in a Singapore-based company for 3 years after graduation (Nanyang Technological University, 2016). However, after 2011 general election, changing polity and politics led to the implementation of the “Singaporeans-first” policies (Yahoo News, August 14, 2011) that further tightened immigration, education and housing policy (Liu,

2012a; Yow, 2013), non-PR new immigrants' applying for work pass and permanent residency become never ever as easier as before; And for PRs, Ironically, applying to be a naturalized Singapore citizen emergence as a pragmatic solution for new immigrants with permanent residency to be fairly taken care under the "Singaporeans-first" policies. Therefore, when it comes to the consequences, to immigrants themselves, they need to take the risks of having their renewal of work pass or permanent residency rejected, and thus their foreign family members might not be allowed to fly over and reunion with them. Furthermore, they might need to wait for 3 years to be eligible to buy a resale Housing Board flat from open market and to one's heartbreak, their school age children are most probably denied a place closer to their home by the public education system due to the Singaporean first initiatives. There is also corresponding impact to the whole nation- as reported by the most recently newspaper while this study being written, Singapore tumbled five places to 15th in the World Talent Report 2016 released by IMD (Deloitte's 2016 Global Manufacturing Competitiveness Index) in earlier December, 2016 - largely due to lower scores in appeal to overseas talent, and investment and development of home grown talent (TODAY, December 2, 2016).

1.2 Research Questions

In this study, I would address three main questions through the new Chinese immigrants' perspective to analyze their barriers of integration in the particular context of Singapore as the host society. (1) How do contexts of Singaporean language environment affect the new Chinese immigrants' language use comparing to their homeland? How do English shape their way to be engaged

and accepted by the host society? (2) How do new Chinese immigrants adapt to the anti-immigrants' sentiment and immerse themselves to the host society by their individual experience? (3) What effects do "Singaporeans-first" policies have on new immigrants' integration into host society?

1.3. Contribution and Chapter Brief

When it comes to the contribution of this study, I agree with the arguments that the image and assimilation of new Chinese immigrants are largely shaped by changing polity and politics in the host society in recent years (Liu, 2012b; Yow, 2013). However, how new Chinese immigrants' response to the newly evolved immigration policies and practices in the context of Singaporean society are relatively insufficiently discussed in the literature. Therefore, this study has taken a step further to close the knowledge gaps by placing the critical role of new Chinese immigrants at the center of our analysis while also paying special attention to re-examine the barriers of the integration in terms of language, sentiment and policies, so as to shed new lights on the theorization of the challenges on immigrants' integration that both new Chinese immigrants and Singapore as the host society faced in the post-2011 era. More importantly, this research seeks to raise the awareness of relevant authorities and reduce the backlash of current "Singaporeans-first" policies. They can recalibrate their integration policy-making process with the special attention to those who arrived before the policies being implemented and continuously contributed to the society, as they are the more qualified sources of the new citizens and PRs that could add on to the existing naturalized Singaporean and PRs pools.

Chapter 1 served as the introduction of the whole study which comprises of the research background, research questions, contribution and chapters preview. In background section, an updated definition of new Chinese immigrants will be given out so as to confine the scope of the research. Then a brief discussion regarding the background of homeland and host land where the new Chinese immigrants from and settled will be brought in for subsequent development of the study.

Chapter 2 served as the theoretical discussion and methodology of the whole study which comprises of the literature review section, problems statement and gaps, data, sampling and methods and the ethical and political issues. The relevant literature review will first cover the integration theory and transnational theory as this study adopts the stand that the assimilation and transnationalism processes can be in coexistence. And whether virtual or practical, immigrants transnational practice would not harm to their integration into host society. Next will be the discussion of the linguistic integration and the landscape which target other societies and Singapore respectively. Last but not the least, the current immigrants' integration practice in the context of Singapore will also be introduced to spur further analysis of the effect of the implementation of "Singaporeans First" policies. In the next section of methodology, I will discuss the sources of data, sampling and methods that I intend to use in this study. The data used in this study mainly come from interviews, ethnographic and documents. There are 40 participants in total contributing their minds and thoughts through the in-depth interview to this study. And qualitative based methods like content analysis and case study would be used to elucidate the arguments which have been articulated through the identification of the problems and gaps of the previous research.

Chapter 3 focuses on language barriers and comprises of Mandarin speaking hallucination; mode of “Mandarin speaking plus one” and English for linguistic integration. It would firstly identify the language problems behind immigrants’ integration in terms of the ethnic based hallucination that Chinese must and are able to speak Mandarin Chinese. It was a bitter reality for newly arrived new Chinese immigrants to accept that their linguistic competence became one of the main reasons caused them being denied into host society which yet to be sufficiently discussed particularly in Singapore context. As Mandarin is a less prestigious language in Singaporean multilingual society, it would not contribute to a better engagement with new immigrants’ co-ethnic counterparts in the host society. Therefore, I will propose a new mode of “Mandarin speaking plus one” in the subsequent section. It is necessary for Mandarin speaking new Chinese immigrants to acquire English as an essential linguistic competence so as to integrate into host society, qualitative data drawn from interviews would be used to support this argument. Last but not least, in the section of English for linguistic integration, it is meant to give out a solution that make the new Chinese immigrants have the basic skill to harness English language so as to further promote new Chinese immigrants’ integration into Singaporean society. A highly subsidized English language training program targeting at new immigrants would be called upon and with a limited time frame all immigrants are expected to show their acceptable level of English proficiency when updating their work passes and lodging applications for PR and citizenship.

Chapter 4 argues that the sentiment of anti-immigrant can be well contained under the unique Singapore residential pattern and ways of interacting with the resident community which built through the precise social engineering. It can be

considered as the insurance that prevent virtual online xenophobia turning into physical collisions in the host society. It comprises of the sentiment of anti-immigrant; the residential patterns and interacting with resident community. In the section of the sentiment of anti-immigrant, this study argues that most reported anti-immigrant sentiment was basically virtual and arisen from local medias and online forums; data from in-depth interviews have shown that the sentiment was most probably overestimated and it was not of interest but only of awareness of the new Chinese immigrants at large. In many a time, it was the local media featuring negative sides of new immigrants that turned out igniting online xenophobic comments and went viral by the local netizens. Next, by using the interview data of new Chinese immigrants being well co-habitant with local residents, I also intend to argue that the underlying reason is partly due to the public housing schemes that act as influentially residential patterns which enhance the intergroup contact (Fong, Chiang, & Denton, 2013; Douglas S Massey & Fong, 1990) as well as the intragroup contact. For the section of interacting with resident community, a small case study which comes from one interviewee would then help to showcase how new immigrant voluntarily works as grassroots leader and contributes to her resident community in terms of building co-ethnic integration and alleviating the sentiment of anti-immigrant on the other hand at the host society.

Chapter 5 mainly discusses the third barrier of integration which is the effect of the “Singaporeans-first” policies and comprises of three sections namely “Singaporean-first” policies; PR through highly selective strategy and an emergent citizenship dilemma. In the first section, I will analyze how “Singaporeans-first” policies pervasively affect New Chinese immigrants, and what is the consequence to their integration in the Singapore host society, in

order to raise the awareness of relevant authorities to reduce the backlash of current “Singaporeans-first” policies and shed new lights on the theorization of the challenges on immigrants’ integration both the New Chinese immigrants and Singapore face in the post-2011 era. In the next section of PR through highly selective strategy, I try to argue that as the byproduct of the “Singaporeans-first” policies, the “highly selective strategy” has pervasively affected the lives of the PR and non-PR new Chinese immigrants, and it has the potential to disintegrate the commitment to be an integral part of the host society that many non-PR and PR uphold in terms of the failure of their parents’ LTVP application, the immigrants’ family planning and many others. For the last section of an emergent citizenship dilemma, although not all the PR and non-PR new Chinese immigrants are necessarily affected by the “Singaporeans-first” policies, nevertheless, to many PR immigrants, they have to consider speeding up their naturalization process to become Singapore citizens as a pragmatic solution to be taken care of the entitlements that exclusively reserved for citizens if they do not opt to leave Singapore.

Chapter 6 served as the conclusions of this research which comprises of limitation of the study and closing remarks. One of the limitation is the sampling, with a limited resource being invested into this study, there are only 40 new Chinese immigrants has been successfully approached, future study may set a workable plan to reach more immigrants as well as ethnic Chinese Singaporeans so as to provide more ground data with varieties of points of views from participants. As for the conclusions, with the analysis and suggestions to three barriers in terms of the languages, sentiment and policies, barriers which impeded progress of integration for new Chinese immigrants in the past would be alleviated if they did not collapse as time goes by. And more importantly

discussing the barriers of integration is worth doing constantly with the ever-changing immigration and integration practice in Singapore as the immigrants' host society.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Discussion and Methodology

2.1. Review of Relevant Literature

2.1.1 Integration versus Transnationalism

Since integration serves as the center of gravity in this study, what is integration by definition? A panel of leading researchers consist of Mary C. Waters and Richard Alba on the Integration of Immigrants into American Society brought us an up-to-date definition of integration, which is “the process by which members of immigrants groups and host societies come to resemble one another” (Waters & Pineau, 2016, p. 2). This panel further confirms that “integration is a two-way process: it happens both because immigrants experience change once they arrive and because of how native-born Americans change in response to immigration”(Waters & Pineau, 2016, p. 2); more importantly, the process of integration takes time whether refer to the 1st generation immigrants that this research focus on or the 2nd generation immigrants and thereafter. However, one may be confused why I choose the term “integration”; does it contain any distinctions compare to “assimilation”? Or any other words that might be often used by precedent scholarly discussion. The answer is positive, and one of the reason is that the term “assimilation” “in recent decades has come to be viewed by social scientists as a worn-out theory which imposes ethnocentric and patronizing demands on minority peoples who are struggling to retain their cultural and ethnic integrity”(Alba & Nee, 1997, p. 827). On the other hand, assimilation is not dead (Glazer, 1993) and is still “a key concept for the study of intergroup relations” as it is a “social process that occurs spontaneously and often unintendedly in the course of interaction between majority and minority

groups” (Alba & Nee, 1997, p. 827). It is necessary to reiterate here that “in the English literature, terms like assimilation, acculturation, incorporation, adaptation, integration, and accommodation can all be understood as social integration; although researchers define these concepts in slightly different ways, but more often than not, they are interchangeable in a general sense” (Yue, Li, & Feldman, 2016, p. 25).

The notion assimilation evolves as time goes by. However, back to the day of the initial study of assimilation which was done by the Chicago School of Sociologists, Robert E. Parker upheld “assimilation as the end stage of a race-relations cycle of contact, competition, accommodation, and eventual assimilation, a sequence that, in his best-known formulation, was viewed as apparently progressive and irreversible” (Alba & Nee, 2003, p. 20). This is how Parker’s contribution later being regarded as the Straight-line assimilation (Gans, 1973) as it is inevitably bringing ethnic group into mainstream American life (Chan & Plüss, 2013). After the World War II, a multidimensional concept of assimilation was developed by Milton Gordon with the notion of acculturation being introduced to the assimilation literature. Gordon further viewed acculturation as a largely one-way process and “the specific cultural standard that represented the direction and eventual outcome of the acculturation process which was the middle-class cultural patterns of, largely, white Protestant, Anglo-Saxon origins that he called the core culture” (Alba & Nee, 2003, p. 23). With the implementation of the 1965 Immigration Act, unlike the previous mass European immigration entering America around 1901-1930 and hiatus of limited movement between 1931 to 1970, large scale non-European immigration that began to immigrate into United States since 1970 (Douglas S. Massey, 1995, p. 633), an advancement of the assimilation theory thus was called upon. It was John Berry who advocated

the view that acculturation involves mutual accommodation and led the widely use of bidirectional model of acculturation thereafter (Berry, 1974, 1980, 1997). Through Berry's work, four acculturation strategies and two dimensions have been identified considering the migrants' different attitudes towards acculturation (See Table 2-1), they were: integration which means that individuals were "willing to maintain their original culture while adapting to the host culture"; assimilation means "individuals rejected their original culture and were only willing to adapt to the host culture"; separation shows "individuals were only willing to maintain their original culture while rejecting the host culture" and last marginalization in which "individuals rejected both their original culture and the host culture and isolate themselves from others" (Yue et al., 2016, p. 31). To further access the process of immigrants' integration into the host society, it is therefore necessary to distinguish the generation of immigrants and thus introduce the segmented assimilation theory and transnationalism which applies to the second-generation immigrants and the first-generation immigrants, respectively.

Table 2-1 A Bidirectional Model of Acculturation of Migrants

Are you willing to maintain the cultural characteristics of your ethnic group?		
Are you willing to adapt to the host culture?	Yes	No
	Yes	Integration
	No	Assimilation
	Separation	Marginalization

In 1990s, with more immigrants from Asian and Caribbean countries, Portes and Zhou (1993, p. 75) believe past researcher focused almost exclusively on the first

generation which comprises of “adult men and women coming to the United States in search of work or to escape political persecution”, must acknowledge “the fact that the foreign-born inflow has been rapidly evolving from single adult individuals to entire family groups, including infant children and those born to immigrants in the United States”. Therefore, what is important to understanding the adaptation of migrants in United States is in which echelon of the stratified American society that they will locate themselves rather than whether they will be able to fully assimilate to American society (Chan & Plüss, 2013, p. 52). And it was therefore Portes and Zhou Min developed the segmented assimilation theory that based on the differences among migrant groups in terms of acculturation and economic adaptation (Yue et al., 2016, p. 38). Although one may doubt that all the immigrants would be automatically involved into different segments of assimilation, at least, the segmented assimilation theory recognizes the fact that the new second generation of contemporary immigrant being absorbed into today’s segmented American society that could be ranging from wealthy middle-class suburb area to the poorest inner city ghettos (Zhou, 1997).

Another notion “Transnationalism” by definition is “the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement” (Basch, Schiller, & Blanc, 1994 p. 8). It is because with the trends of globalization, “the existing models do not adequately capture the complexities of contemporary international immigration and integration” (Rahman & Kiong, 2013, p. 80), transnationalism as an emergent paradigm explicitly critiques the traditional immigration models that have posited a “straight-line” trajectory for assimilation that starts with migration from the country of origin and ends with settlement in the destination country (Wong, 2008). However, it is still worth to reiterate that not all migrants are

transnational migrants as “most migrants are occasional transnational activists who are more focused on their countries of origin at some stages in their lives while others might be more involved in their countries of reception” (Levitt, 2004, p. 2). Therefore Levitt (2004, p. 2) argues that based on U.S. experience, “transnational migration would not be a long-term threat to assimilation, nor does it take away from migrants' ability to contribute to and be loyal to their host country”. One distinction that could be noted here is that the second generation immigrants who are mainly based in the host society and the first generation immigrants that this research focuses on may “climb two different social ladders namely moving up, remaining steady or experiencing downward mobility in various combinations with respect to both sites” (Levitt, 2004, p. 2). Lima (2010, p. 8) acknowledged the viewpoints of Morawska (2004) that it is the traditional assimilation theories advocates who believe that there are great disparities between transnationalism and integration; however, “contemporary transnational theorists understand these processes in terms of multiple combinations of transnational and integrative practices”. Morawska (2004, p. 1373) further pointing out “a growing recognition among immigration scholars of the coexistence of the assimilation and transnationalism processes” at the beginning of the 21st century, there are 40 factors generated from “seven-group comparison revealed more than contributing to immigrant assimilation and transnational engagements” (Morawska, 2004, p. 1404). Therefore, Lima (2010, p. 8) concludes that transnationalism and integration “are simultaneous processes in which immigrants forge relationships with sending and receiving countries, with integration reinforcing transnationalism and transnationalism creating a basis for successful integration”. Levitt (2001) coins the notion “social remittances” linking the sending and receiving societies where social remittances is the fact that, in addition to money, migrants export norms,

practices, identities and social capital back to their sending communities. Social remittance exchanges occur not only “when migrants return to or visit their communities of origin”, but also occur “through the exchange of letters, videos, cassettes, e-mails, blog posts and telephone calls when non-migrants visit those in the receiving country” (Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011, p. 3). Therefore, “transnationalism online” has been proclaimed and discussed by some scholars who specialized in Indian diaspora (Goel, 2014). Portes (2007, p. 84) believes that “it is the better educated, more comfortably established, more secure, and better-connected migrants who are most likely to participate in organizations linking them to their home countries” no longer exclusively existed. With the development of technologies which “have made transportation and communication infinitely more accessible and affordable”, the foremost driver of transnationalism has “thus dramatically changed the relationship between people and places, it is now possible for immigrants to maintain more frequent and closer contact” “through the dramatically increased forms of correspondence such as emails, online chat sessions, telephone calls, cassette tapes, and traditional letters” with their home societies than ever before (Lima, 2010, pp. 3, 5).

2.1.2 Linguistics Integration

As a part of the social integration, Linguistics integration, by definition, refers to immigrants obligation to learn the language of the receiving society for practical but also for ideological reasons (Beacco, Little, & Hedges, 2014). It also expects immigrants to acquire a good knowledge. And they are also sometimes expected to become indistinguishable from speakers of the majority language, or to differ from them only minimally through their accent. In addition, major theories of

immigrant assimilation “namely classic, bumpy, segmented, or neoclassical”, all “recognize proficiency in the language of the host country as a critical step in the process of integration among immigrants who are not themselves native speakers” (Akresh, Massey, & Frank, 2014, p. 201).

After achieving full independence in 1965, with the implementation of the English-knowing bilingualism (Pakir, 1991) as the cornerstone of the educational policy, an island wide language shift happened through the education system in terms of all three ethnic languages Chinese, Malay and Tamil which used to be the medium of instruction before being gradually replaced by English in 1987. New Chinese immigrants who have not been fully aware of the notion “English-knowing bilingualism” and witnessed this great language shift may often overestimate the applicableness and acceptance of Mandarin when verbal communication with Chinese Singaporean was deemed necessary. “English-knowing bilingualism” brings in a very important point which needs to be carefully served as Pakir (1991) concluded that English prioritizes Chinese in every aspect of the society.

In addition, with the Singaporean home language environment changing and becoming more diverse, the percentage of incoming Primary 1 (P1) Chinese students “with English as their most frequently used language at home rose from 28% in 1991 to 59% in 2010” (Mother Tongue Languages Review Committee, 2011, p. 29). Further academic inquiry also disclosed this phenomenon partly as a result of the “Speak Mandarin Campaign”, with most Chinese vernaculars speaking shift to Mandarin, “English have increasingly displaced the Chinese vernaculars within the Chinese community” (Bolton & Ng, 2014, p. 313). This helps to explain why Chinese language is widely used within

a relatively limited vocabulary but hardly being admitted as a language for serious occasions. Even if turning back to the era while Chinese language officially appointed as the mother tongue for the ethnic Chinese Singaporean in 1950s, it was not the default mother tongue for all Chinese Singaporean (Shouhui Zhao & Liu, 2010, p. 237) which are often ignored by the new Chinese immigrants who especially come from big cities as they bluntly presume that one must be able to speak Chinese and/or has a Chinese ancestor to be regarded as same kind as in China, thus preventing new immigrants from any ill-treatment here in Singapore, not to mention about being victim of discrimination. This is why Yang (2014, pp. 350, 367) reports PRC scholars inflow to Singapore on the one hand are relatively homogenous and endow considerable privileges and opportunities of “foreign talents” policies; on the other hand, ““foreign talents’ encounter certain local discourses of discrimination and exclusion” in terms of their Mandarin accents sometimes tinged with dialect influence.

Although recent study shows that Chinese Singaporean undergraduate are in favor of Mandarin accent rather than Singapore colloquial Chinese (Chong & Tan, 2013), however, as claimed by the researcher that this was not what they expected and could be largely due to sampling issues where the perspectives the university student takes may be different from the general public outside the campus. Shang and Zhao (2012, p. 5) propose that a classification of Standard Singapore Mandarin (SSM) and Folk Singapore Mandarin (FSM) co-habited as the two major varieties of Chinese language used in Singapore. FSM, by and large, is the Mandarin vernacular used by Chinese Singaporean daily, it is the same variety as this research calls Singapore colloquial Chinese. However, as SSM was used in areas such as mass media, textbooks and formal contexts (Shang & Zhao, 2012, p. 6), it is obviously not a spoken variety which ordinary

Chinese Singaporean would not use in their everyday life. Instead, Mandarin does exist which needs to be regarded as a rising and manifest variety that spoken by the influx of new Chinese immigrants. No matter how well trained in English reading and writing in China or Singapore, these new immigrants are predominately Mandarin speakers. However, past research shows the born and bred Chinese Singaporean who are predominately Chinese speaker have clear correlation with the lower socio-economic status (Aman et al., 2009). To most new Chinese immigrants, English as a *de facto* second language which is only learned in school and seldom used in their daily life (Tsang, 2001), therefore, it is unfortunately placed into that stereotype and headed to be distinguished from the mainstream English speaking society.

2.1.3 Immigrants' Integration in Singapore

Researches on Chinese immigrants are nevertheless vast. Unlike the Immigrants' integration that progressed in America society from the very moment in early 20th century when they arrived as settler as mentioned above, Chinese immigrants treated their time in Singapore and Malaya as sojourning rather than settling and "those who succeeded in making enough money might return to China while others continued to travel overseas to try their luck" (Yen, 1987, p. 417). Therefore, along with their inability to be considered as part of local society, even as early as in the turn of 20th century, when many more thousands of Chinese who were totally new to the region arrived and threatened not only by the authority of the British but also the authority of the local Chinese leaders, combined efforts put in to keep the increasing numbers of new Chinese under control would be hence taken by the British officials and the upper-class Chinese settlers in Singapore (Wang, 1991a). Followed by the founding of the People's

Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, a thirty-years virtually suspension of inflows of new Chinese immigrants pushed the settled and local-born generations of ethnic Chinese to become politically oriented toward the host societies. It is because their linkage with China was viewed as a liability, especially in a nationalistic Southeast Asia which embarked on its nation-building projects (Liu, 2011).

Since the late 1970s, the Reform and Opening-up Policy has been adopted in China, and for many Mainland Chinese immigrants who seek opportunities in foreign countries, Singapore became a natural choice. Tsang (2001, p. 348) attributed this phenomenon to the cultural homogeneity between Singapore and China that can help them to “blend into society more easily” as compared with the western countries. Interestingly and necessarily, Tsang (2001, p. 352) does not take the generally perceived cultural similarity for granted and further proclaims that Singapore and China are very different in political and economic systems and that Mainland Chinese immigrants “need to undergo an adjustment process when settling down in Singapore” as well. Unfortunately, it might be too general to reach out to the fundamental disputes in terms of how new Chinese immigrants struggle to integrate to Singaporean society. What is fortunate as B. H. Chua (2009, pp. 240, 248) reminds us is that the reasons behind the “very different” is that there is “an increasing proportion of the ethnic-Chinese population born in Singapore”, grown up with relatively lesser “knowledge of the traditional culture of their ancestors and have no truck with the contemporary China” in that sense “became formally named *Huaren* and the language, *Huayu*, to signify the difference in national identity between themselves and the citizens of the PRC” who are working in Singapore. These PRC citizens are just economically necessary and invariably seen as foreign

workers and therefore are meant to “be tolerated rather than accepted as fellow Chinese”. Another point is that the “term “Chinese” continues to be used in Singaporean English unnecessarily to include the emotional link to China as homeland”. Ironically, “the overwhelming majority of the contemporary” ethnic-Chinese population “are local born and for whom Singapore is home for sure”. And even some may be proud of the “Chinese” achievements if they take the “spectacular show of the opening of the 2008 Beijing Olympics” as an example, but “they were also very self-aware that it was the achievement of the PRC and has little to do with themselves as Singaporean” (B. H. Chua, 2009, pp. 240, 248).

Inherited from the colonial practices, every Singaporean is a member of one distinct racial group and thus is also classified as Chinese, Malay, Indian or others of the multiracial nation (CMIO Model). What is important is that this demographic reality has to be served with multiculturalism as the ethnic Chinese “is defined by language, the Malays by religion and the Indians by geography” (Tsang, 2001, p. 240). Liu (2014, p. 1) therefore, believe new Chinese immigrants were perceived to be not only “socially and culturally different” from earlier immigrants and the Singaporean mainstream, but also as contributor to the “intensified competition for scarce resources”. Their “politically attachment to China” as she “rises as a global power only serves to reinforce such linkages”. As such, Liu (2014, p. 1) further calls for an alternative way that beyond co-ethnicity perspective because the “co-ethnicity and common cultural heritage” has been superseded by the changing practice, which supposed to be shared by new Chinese immigrants and local Chinese community so as to integrate the new immigrants into the host society. On the other hand, with large number of immigrants to join the local demographic landscape, it is necessary to carefully develop the mode of integration which fit for Singapore. Rahman and Kiong

(2013, p. 81) summarize that the traditional four models of integration namely “differential exclusion, assimilation, pluralism and trans-state spaces” which used “to explain the integration outcomes in the immigration process”, may now no longer be the appropriate one “for mapping the evolving relationship” of new immigrants and their host contexts as the nation-state-transcending ‘transnational’ actors and forms of organization, in place of traditional ‘nation-state-society’ paradigm. As such, they further develop a mode of transnational inclusion which aims at overseas Singaporean and PR who have been connected through many proactive policies and programs due to the increased emigration trend (Rahman & Kiong, 2013, p. 84). However, it would be better if this article would have an additional mode of integration which aims at incoming PRs and naturalized citizens in terms of language adaptation and even some drawbacks with supporting data directly from those people who undergoing their way to be integrated.

The yearly updated Population Trends released by the Department of Statistics, Singapore could be a good illustration to show the importance of the approaches chosen to manage immigration and integration. “A ‘closed-door’ approach to immigrants in the long run” would not work as it would ultimately destroy the country given the reality that the total fertility rate (TFR) is far below the substitute rate; “a fully ‘open-door’ approach is also not the way to go as it will put tremendous pressure on Singapore’s scarce resources and on social integration issues”, as shown by the below “Compound Annual Growth rate” of population which from 2.5% to 3.2% before 2013 (Chart 2-1); therefore “finding a balanced approach to immigrants “smart and managed growth” would be the key to the success of the population strategy” as shown below that remaining from 1.3% to 1.6% from 2013 to 2016 (TODAY, February 2, 2013). This helps to

explain why local people protested against the government initiative to cap the population at 6.9 million by 2030 (The Straits Times, February 16, 2013) echoing the research finding that discontent in terms of the overwhelming volume and speed rather than the numbers of foreigners who entry *per se* (Koh et al., 2014) as the former the capped population can be easily translated to a higher volume and speed of incoming immigrants yearly.

Chart 2-1 Total population growth rate per year, as of June (%)

The “relentless increase in non-native residents, especially among PRs and transient” labor, “has led to heated debates on issues related to immigration, integration, and the meaning of citizenship” in Singaporean society (Leong, Rueppel, & Hong, 2014, p. 60). Mieriņa and Koroļeva (2015, p. 184) reported that “economic insecurity (resource stress and perceived competition) is one of the most important factors behind xenophobia and they are at least partly responsible for the comparatively high prevalence of anti-immigrants’ sentiments in East-Central Europe”. This perfectly matched the situation in

Singapore in the recent decade. In the year 2009, there was a high level of publicly expressed unhappiness with the influx of immigrants and their impact on the country's cultural landscape, the level of physical congestion and the competition for jobs with the locals. That leads to a gradual build-up of anxiety about the physical and the social capacities to absorb immigrants (Koh et al., 2014).

In addition, Mieriņa and Koroļeva (2015, p. 198) pointed out that media further worsen attitudes towards minorities and immigrants. It is understandable that unlike Singapore, media industry like TV and newspapers in United States and other countries may relatively have more free wills as they may be controlled by different stakeholders. In Singapore, as local media giants like Singapore Press Holding and MediaCorp are both government link corporations and the only dominant actors participated in the real world, it would not be desirable for them to invoke anti-immigrants sentiment but coincidentally, there were some negative news reports featuring new immigrants that turned out ignited online xenophobic comments went viral by the local netizens (Liu, 2012a; Yow, 2013). Gomes (2014, p. 21) gives us more evidences on how "Singaporeans have been incredibly critical of new immigrants entering their country and have been expressing their anger through xenophobic comments online. Despite strict laws against racial vilification, these comments can be seen in online forums such as those from *Asiaone.com*, *the Online Citizen*, *Sam's Alfresco Haven* and *the TR Emeritus*, in personal weblog entries and on social media platforms".

As integration is a two-way process, some believes that Singaporeans have to unlearn to be more open to immigration, which will in turn facilitate immigrant integration (Mathews & Zhang, 2016). However, as "the "Singaporeans-first"

principle has engendered the impression that Singaporeans receive more state subsidies” and being “accorded higher status and priority than PRs and non-residents” which forms of “positive differentiation even inevitable, there is a concern of over-reliance in using this framework to promote integration” (Leong et al., 2014, p. 69). It is with the implementation of the “Singaporean-first” policies, new immigrants integrate to Singapore society in the dimension of legal status highly driven by policy, are therefore accelerated in terms of a large number of them unrecorded striving to compete for permanent residential status, and sooner become naturalized Singaporean so as to be treated as fairly as citizens are. However, with lesser cases of PR approval compare to the year 2007-2009 (Chart 2-2) and lower inflow rate of new immigrants (Chart 1-3), the number of work pass holders who striving for PR and PRs who going for citizenship still remain in a very high level inevitably which not officially publicized but can be testified through a minimum of six months’ time to lodge a timeslot to submit a PR application over the counter at Immigration and Checkpoints Authority, Singapore. It therefore implies that the process of integration is the one that needs further investigation.

Chart 2-2 Number of SCs and PRs granted

2.2. Problems Statement and Gaps

Existing research recognizes “proficiency in the language of the host country as a critical step in the process of integration among immigrants who are not themselves native speakers” (Akresh et al., 2014, p. 201). Therefore, “fluency in the language of the destination country and the ability to learn it quickly play a key role in the transfer of existing human capital to foreign countries and generally boost immigrant’s success in destination countries’ labor markets” (Adserà & Pytliková, 2015, p. F49). Unfortunately, this has to be challenged inasmuch as Singapore context. That both Chinese and English are official languages and being widely used, however, means that Singaporean who are proficient and predominantly in Chinese language have clear correlation with lower socio-economic status (Aman et al., 2009). Chinese language’s being recognized as one of the official languages were due to the pragmatic decision and inability to reverse the situation that English usage is prioritized over Chinese in every aspect of the society (Pakir, 1991). New Chinese immigrants, no matter how well trained in English reading and writing in China or Singapore, many are still predominately Mandarin speakers. This suggests their failure to show their English competence as the instrument of inter-ethnic communication would probably become a barrier of their integration into Singaporean society.

However, online forums demonstrate that the anti-immigrants’ sentiment was played a negative role for immigrants’ integration in Singapore. In many a time, it was the local media featuring negative sides of new immigrants that ignited online xenophobic comments before going viral by the local netizens (Gomes, 2014; Liu, 2012a). This in turn echoed Barker’s theory of *New Racism* that depicting immigrants as a threat (Barker, 1981). To address these concerns, the

Singaporean government kicked off the “Singaporeans-first” policies in August, 2010 (H. L. Lee, 2010) which enhanced “preferential treatment for citizens over permanent residents (PR) and this might have created unintended hurdles for social integration” (TODAY, December 15, 2015). This helps to explain why new Chinese immigrants are more likely to maintain and sustain their associations with the Mainland in various forms. And therefore, even naturalized Mainland Chinese Singaporean tend to consider both Singapore and China as their ‘homes’ to which they are simultaneously tied (Zhou & Liu, 2016, p. 39).

These debates demonstrate the complexity of the immigrants’ integration into Singaporean society in terms of languages, sentiment and policies. However, the literature reveals three important gaps. First, it is not clear in the context of a multilingual society like Singapore, whether proficiency in one language of the host society still boost immigrant’s success and integration if they are the native speakers. Second, while studies on the anti-immigrants’ sentiment tends to be based on the data from online forums and local media that are voiced by ethnic Chinese Singaporean, it is equally important to examine how new immigrants experience and respond to the anti-immigrants’ sentiment. It has received insufficient attention as compared to the voices projected by ethnic Chinese Singaporean. Third, the effects of “Singaporeans-first” policies on new immigrants’ integration and how new Chinese immigrants’ response to the newly evolved immigration policies and practices in the context of Singaporean society are understudied as well.

2.3. Data, Sampling and Methods

2.3.1 Sources of Data

As a social research project, there are three main forms of data collection, namely survey and interview, observing and studying document (Flick, 2015). To facilitate the analyzing and discussion of facets identified on the process of new Chinese immigrants' integration into host society, I have collected data by all three ways in terms of ethnography, interview and published documents through the guideline of the aforesaid. For ethnography in this study, the research subjects are a family of three consisting of the father, the mother and a fourteen-year-old daughter in primary six, all of whom came from a northeast city named Dalian of Mainland China in 2008. I knew the family through my wife and became familiar with each other through a series of assisting work on submitting an application to participate in the Direct School Admissions - Secondary (DSA-Sec) Exercise 2015 for the girl. They have shared with me their lives in homeland and Singapore, the reasons they immigrated to Singapore, how they interact with ethnic Chinese Singaporean, and how they struggle for the PR status and many more. That translates to more than 100 contacting hours and all the information provided by this family would then be regarded as the ethnographic data for later analysis and discussion. I should say it was not a planned or conventional ethnographic study as I did not take any physical record of their life until I took my 1st interview of 2016 with the mother of the family. Since then, they have been assured that their personally data would be kept strictly confidential. And all the info they shared with me in the precedent year has been double confirmed through the interview. Unlike other one-time only interviews taken during February to May, 2016, I still have an ongoing closer

contact with the family by visiting each other's flat, cooking, eating, chatting, texting and watching TV together. To uphold the objectivity of the research, I shall not have any conflict of interest with the family and it is therefore I prefer to treat it as an ethnographic study as the research data generated from everyday interaction that kept in my memory but I intend to consolidate them through further recorded interviews where necessarily.

For a semi-structured in-depth interview, Flick (2015) believes that a few questions need to be prepared to cover the intended scope of the interview as well as to develop an interview guide as an orientation for the interviews. In this study, it was implemented while collecting new immigrants' points of views regarding the local language environment and their individual immigration experience in terms of coming, staying and integrating to the host society here in Singapore. In total, I have managed to complete 21 interviews which include 1 group interview with 8 females participates from the below mentioned the first group in March, 2015 and 20 other interviews with the rest 32 participants from the second group from February to April, 2016. All the interviews are designed to be the semi-structured interviews and conducted in Singapore soil subject to interviewees' availability. Each of the interview lasts from one to two hours with digital recorded. The recordings were then reviewed and all the sections of the interviews were transcribed for later discussion. In total, I have managed to retrieve more than 300,000 words transcripts from 1,600 minutes long interview recordings. To better facilitate interviewees in expressing their thoughts, as long as the talk is ongoing and mainly around the given topics, the interviewer chose to minimize his interference so as to encourage the interviewee to express at his/her own pace. Again, all the interviews were conducted in Mandarin as the interviewees are all predominantly Chinese

speakers. All the data collected will then be coded according to the research concerns stated above so as to fulfill the research goals.

Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 61) define “document as any written or recorded material not prepared for the purposes of the evaluation, or at the request of the inquirer”. In other words, these documents must be collected before the study starts. Therefore, this study would use e-newspaper and online forums to carry on document studies. To the best of our knowledge, local newspapers such as *The Straits Times*, *Today* and *My Paper* published a lot of articles concerning new immigrants and their points of views regarding recent change of immigration, education and housing policy and their stories of integration process in the past few years. Besides, local Chinese written online forums like *SGCN* and *Huasing* would also be included and regularly visited for this study. Through key words searching such as “foreign talent”, “integration”, comments regarding the local language environment and their individual immigration experience are evaluated. We also differentiated comments that made by new immigrants and local netizens, and categorized them for later analysis with e-newspaper and cross reference with the data we have from in-depth interviews.

2.3.2 Sampling

Research subjects come from two group of participants and there are no incentives being given to attract them. The first group of participants are 8 adult students from a local tertiary institute where they pursue a diploma course named diploma in professional Chinese teaching and business Chinese on a weekly basis. Students are working professionals from Mainland China. Their age and education background vary as their age around 20 plus to 50 plus and

their education history range from secondary school to university degree. The second group of participants are of 32 in total and recruited through the personal network of my family and myself. These participants are born from 1960s to 1990s, share the same country of origin which is China and all of them have gone through tertiary education in China as well. There are 21 out of 32 participants continue to study rather than starts working immediately after their arrival in Singapore. Among the aforesaid 21 participants, besides 1 participant currently pursues PhD, 9 of them have obtained PhD, 7 of them have obtained M.A. or M.Sc. and the rest 4 of them have obtained B.A. or Diploma aiming to be a Chinese language teacher and they are the Chinese language teacher by the time of this study.

2.3.3 Methods

Regarding the methods, qualitative based methods in terms of content analysis of interview transcripts and case study of ethnographic data would be used to elucidate the arguments which have been made through the problem statement and the knowledge gaps of this study. To answer the questions and close the knowledge gaps, this research intends to explore three key propositions through analyzing how language, sentiment and policy barriers involved in the integration process of new Chinese immigrants, which is based on the empirical data gathered from them directly in addition to merely online news reports and forum comments.

First, proficiency only in a less prestigious language of a multilingual society would not contribute to a better engagement with their co-ethnic counterparts in the host society. Data extracted from group interview would be used to

support this argument. Both the new Chinese immigrants and the government agencies are to share the responsibilities to enhance the immigrants' English competence so as to bridging them to be accepted by the host society. Second, by and large, there are new Chinese immigrants showing their willingness to interact with neighboring people, or even registered as a grassroots leader voluntarily working with other native grassroots leaders so as to integrate themselves into the local society. A case study of a new Chinese immigrant later became naturalized Singaporean whose personal experience as a grassroots leader would be introduced to strengthen how individual efforts could ease the stereotype against the new immigrants. Third, with the implementation of the "Singaporeans-first" policies, many early arrivals of immigrants are ruled out of PR application as the "highly selective strategy" continues being adopted. On the other hand, the speed of new immigrants' integration to host society deliberately accelerated in terms of a large number of them unrecorded striving to compete for permanent residential status, and sooner become naturalized Singaporean. A citizenship dilemma thus being created that PRs have to become naturalized Singapore citizens as a pragmatic solution for them to be taken care under the "Singaporeans-first" policies, or else to take various inconvenience that has been emergent and responsible for a backlash for the integration of new Chinese immigrants into host society. Besides analyzing the interview transcripts, the ethnographic data regarding the above-mentioned family of three would also be used to illustrate how new Chinese immigrants' eager to integrate, however being trapped by the policy which could backlash the social integration.

2.4. Ethical and Political Issues

In general, I, as the researcher needs to be aware of ethical and political issues as this study involves human beings. It is therefore necessary for me to prepare and apply for IRB approval before this study starts. Even the field of social sciences research does not intend to harm the research participants physically or psychologically like many biomedical and psychological research projects do; however, it is my responsibility to be more cautious when handling participants' personal information as well as various forms of information that this research has taken from the participants from time to time. For example, I need to get used to ensuring anonymity and confidentiality and do not disclose any information with strong personal tags to any of my friends or family members of mine.

More specifically and first of all, as the researcher, I must always uphold professionalism while carrying on any phases of this study. On the other hand, as the research participants of this study are new immigrants, it is necessary for me to be aware of the fact that they are coming to help my research voluntarily, therefore the researcher cannot make any vicious judgement while new immigrants share their own thoughts concerning language, sentiment and policy barriers and their integration process during the interview. Secondly, I should pay essential respect to my research participants no matter how they dress and how they response to our queries. Thirdly, no matter how hard to look for a research participant, we need to verbally inform him or her that they have rights to reject any questions and they can quit the interview at any time provided they do not feel comfortable with the interview. Fourthly, at the end of the interview, I also need to appreciate participants' kindness to take on the interview and

could provide them some token of appreciation if possible. Last but not least, even while drafting the research report, it is not ethically justified to manipulate the unwilling data as all the results should be reported, regardless of whether it positive or negative; as well as to admit existing limitations and problems of the study.

For political issues in general, as the researcher, I need to treat sensitive political comments more seriously and makes sure the sensitive data and personal data would not be shown in one piece of paper, so as to prevent others from access the information and disclose it accidentally. Specifically, as the interviews would be all recorded in this study, it is the researcher's responsibility to make sure those interviewees who have claimed their own thoughts concerning language, sentiment and policy barriers and their individual immigration process would not be identified and handed to their employer and governing authorities like Immigration and Checkpoints Authority, as it could potentially affect their jobs and renewal of Permanent Residents status in the future. Furthermore, as the issue of new immigrants and their integration process still considered politically sensitive, I need to be vigilant when preparing interview questions and interviewing new immigrants regarding their points of views concerning language, sentiment and policy barriers and their individual integration experience.

Chapter 3. Language Barrier

3.1 Mandarin Speaking Hallucination

In this section, Mandarin speaking hallucination refers to inbound new Chinese immigrants mistaking Mandarin as their predominant communicative vehicle thus resulted in losing motivation to improve their English competence voluntarily in the host society as this study defines. Unfortunately, they have only noticed one side of the situation where Mandarin is widely used in the Singaporean society and it is not that difficult to find people having Chinese face to communicate in Mandarin with as many more newly arrived immigrants experienced. Ms. Zhang, one of my interviewee who was an English major but works as a Chinese language tutor and has been in Singapore since 2011 told me:

... It is the same as my friend coming to Singapore, we can speak Mandarin here, (with) a lot of Mainland Chinese, (and) many ethnic Chinese Singaporeans, so I feel at home. (Ms. Zhang, 30, Educator)

However, what they do not know on the other side is Mandarin was not the mother tongue by default for all Chinese Singaporeans (Shouhui Zhao & Liu, 2010, p. 237), and the Singaporean unique multilingual environment made the Chinese Singaporeans' multi-code use (use of two or more varieties) of language as a common phenomenon become possible (Xu, Chew, & Chen, 1998). Therefore, in view of the lack of competence in English and other southern China dialects for most new Chinese immigrants, the topics that ethnic Chinese Singaporean and Chinese immigrants can communicate about are largely

confined to the simple everyday life conversation. More importantly, the pervasive language shifting in terms of non-English to English speaking is still ongoing. Existing literature has already documented that with most Chinese vernaculars speaking shift to Mandarin, “English have increasingly displaced the Chinese vernaculars within the Chinese community” (Bolton & Ng, 2014, p. 313). As an influential indicator, Chinese students entering local primary school grade one “with English as their home language rose from 28% in 1991 to 59% in 2010” (Mother Tongue Languages Review Committee, 2011, p. 29). Although I do not have an updated figure as in the year 2016, one can expect this tendency would not be turning back easily despite of many immigrants giving birth in Singaporean host society. It is clear that with the demise of the elder generation who were Chinese educated and speak Chinese Mandarin and vernaculars for their life, the younger generation as early from 1987 are all equipped with English as their most fluent language and inherit it to their own sons and daughters. Therefore, as the time goes by, immigrants need to be worried whether they have enough local counterparts who can effectively communicate in Mandarin with provided their English competence still doomed and at the same time they are meant to integrate themselves into the Singaporean society.

The Mandarin speaking hallucination held by newly arrived immigrants and their counterparts in China can be linked to their traditional feeling of closeness with Singapore and vice versa. It is also because of Singapore accommodates the highest percentage of ethnic Chinese population in the world with a record of 74.3% out of its nearly 4 million resident populations as in June, 2016 (Department of Statistics Singapore, 2016) other than the Mainland China and its hinterland, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. Many Mainland Chinese insist to claim that Chinese, wherever they are, must be able to speak Mandarin and

obliged to host them as the guests from afar by nature. It is not difficult to speak out the rationale behind is that they perceive human being inherited Chinese blood must be alike, no matter which country s/he from and which passport s/he holding. A commentator from online media China TENCENT exactly uncover the myth:

... Many Mainland Chinese still treat ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asian as Chinese nationals. That might lead to some misunderstandings. It is the Chinese Singaporean, who most truly want to be treated as Singaporeans rather than Chinese nationals among the others... Nevertheless, there have been more than 30 years since the implementation of the Reform and Opening-up Policy, and Mainland Chinese are showing themselves all over the world while many of them still do not have enough knowledge about the outside world. (Pang, April 07, 2011)

The commentator, who is a professor of International relation, Renmin University, China and has been visited many academic institutes including EAI and RSIS in Singapore also argued that Chinese nationals need to update their knowledge of the outside world and be prepared for potential gain and lost if they want to go abroad. As a consequence, Chinese people have paid big price in Africa as well as being denied by the people who are perceived grown up with the influence of the Chinese civilization, in particular the ethnic Chinese from those countries. To answer why many Mainland Chinese people still claim ethnic Chinese as one of their own, it is most probably due to the pragmatic political practice in terms of mobilizing Chinese overseas to voluntarily contribute to their homeland since the early 20th century. And to make it happen, it was

reasonable to depict ethnic Chinese all over the world as the same people in Mainland China through various propaganda apparatuses. What is more, the political movements in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s also led to a gap in understanding the dramatic changes in the world, including those in nearby regions such as Southeast Asia. Several decades of the reform era have made progress in bridging that gap, but there is still the remaining assumption of Singapore as another Chinese state bound to mainland China. In addition, Professor Tommy Koh, Singapore Ambassador-at-large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs recently wrote to the local Chinese and English newspapers and expressed his point of view regarding the long existing misunderstood between China and Singapore which echoed the aforesaid *Prof. Pang's comments* revealed 5 years earlier:

The fact that the majority of Singaporeans are ethnic Chinese is both an asset and a liability in the bilateral relations between Singapore and China... It is, however, also a liability because it has given rise to unreasonable expectations on the part of China towards Singapore. Many friends in China mistakenly perceive Singapore as a Chinese nation, describing us as "kith and kin". They feel that since Singaporeans are fellow Chinese, we should have a better understanding of China's policies than the other ASEAN countries. They also expect Singapore to support China's policies. I believe that this is one source of misunderstanding between us. China has to understand that Singapore is a multiracial and not a Chinese nation. Further, as a sovereign and independent country, Singapore's interests are not always similar to those of China. (The Straits Times, October 21, 2016)

Another reason could be due to the relatively lower standard of English language training in Mainland China compares to other regional countries which had a long colonial history. Even after China entered the WTO while English language teaching (ELT), “in turn, is experiencing a similar period of new development, however, in spite of the great achievements in statistical terms, the current status of ELT is far from being satisfactory in terms of either national or international standards”...The “commonly felt ‘deaf-dumb’ English among English learners has become one of the key concerns of the whole society” (Luo, 2007, p. 13). Besides, the situation of in-service education in China “is equally problematic as most in-service programs have been put in place only to help teachers obtain paper qualifications” (Hu, 2005, pp. 19-20); Hu (2005, p. 21) further exemplifies the regional disparities of English education in China by pointing out “if even the most successful students from the under-developed areas have been denied effective English instruction, it is not difficult to imagine what the situation is like for the majority of students who fail to enter university”. A recent survey regarding the country based English proficiency done by the 2015 Education-First English Proficiency Index (EF-EPI) released on November 3 proclaimed “China ranks 11th out of sixteen Asian countries. More concerning, China placed 37th overall in English proficiency in 2014, and dropped ten places to 47th (out of 70 countries)” in 2015, “several spots behind fellow BRIC countries like Russia (39th) and Brazil (41st) respectively. All three however, are classified as having ‘low proficiency’ in English” (gbtimes, December 14, 2015).

Coincident but sadly, with the well-informed rise of China, there is no surprise that Chinese authority would be more interested in promoting Chinese language and culture to the world rather than investing in better solution to raise the English language proficiency for its general public. Therefore, by and large, it is

much common to see new Chinese immigrants speaking Mandarin all the time when abroad. It is also impossible for most of them to come through the English language barrier and confidently turn to use English when necessary.

3.2 Mode of "Mandarin Speaking Plus One"

The previous discussion has been shown us the reason why the failure of pervasive English training in immigrants sending country, in order to explore what immigrants' receiving country can do to raise up the English proficiency of the new immigrants, this study tries to coin the mode of "Mandarin speaking plus one" as it is necessary to be differentiated from the regular terms such as bilingualism or multilingualism, because in most cases, it emphasizes the equal importance of two or more languages and rarely being used to discuss the language problems that the immigrants faced in particular host society, not to mention my targeted group of people the new Chinese immigrants who would be probably resulted in their failure of integration partly due to the hallucination of their Mandarin speaking in the so to speak bilingual Singaporean host society. Therefore, what this mode means to call for a bridging channel for new Chinese immigrants to enhance their English proficiency while keeping Chinese as their main communicative vehicle before well equipped with considerable English competence that can be regarded as achieving linguistic integration.

The reason why this study does not totally discourage new Chinese immigrants to keep using their predominantly language Mandarin lies on the ground that Chinese is still regarded as one of the linguistic vehicle to impart the ethnic culture to the next generation of Chinese Singaporean and form the cornerstone

education policy in terms of “English knowing bilingualism”. Nevertheless, scholarly findings have been revealed that not only the “number of Chinese users in steady decline, but the prestige of the Chinese language has also fallen far behind English, as manifested in the division between those in the higher socioeconomic brackets who mainly use English and those in the lower brackets who prefer Chinese” (C. L. Lee, 2012, p. 287; Shouhui Zhao & Liu, 2007). C. L. Lee (2012, p. 287) further pointed out while “English has become the dominant language in Singapore”, Mandarin has been widely promoted; nevertheless, the qualitative standard of Singaporeans’ Mandarin seems to be on a steady decline. Therefore, it is not surprised to see language disputes in terms of in what extent certain language can be used surfaced in the workplace where new Chinese immigrants involve, Ms. Yao, an interviewee of mine, shared her story as below:

... Talking about my previous job, my boss used to say we must speak English at the workplace, it’s a shame to speak Mandarin... I strongly disagree and argue with my CEO, there are ethnic Chinese who need our services and some of them do not speak English ... Later, they (the company) explained to me, many Singaporeans complained about our staff by saying as a service provide, if we do not speak English, the customers need to adapt to us by speak Mandarin to us, in that case, why they need us to be here to provide services? After that, I realized why the company discouraged us to speak Mandarin at the workplace, however, I still believe it’s subject to the customer’s language preference instead of speaking English at all time. (Ms. Yao, 28, Married with an Australian, Housewife)

Obviously, this is not an isolated case that only happens to certain people in

Singapore. As the workplace has been treated as formal occasion where a working language may be used as an appropriate manner, immigrants staff need to be aware of the public expectation by showing considerable English competence at workplace—the working language cum administrative language in Singapore other than their dominant language. Therefore, to the first-generation immigrant group, English is much more important in the Singaporean host society for sure. Otherwise, one may take risks to be discriminated in one way or another as Ms. Tian told me:

Although the Prime Minister and the Education Ministry encourage people to speak Mandarin, it is not that easy to fit into the real life... In many times, if you speak Mandarin with local Chinese people, they would let you feel some sense of discrimination; even if you speak English with them, they might know you are from Mainland China (through your accent). However, they would probably treat you with slight respect, especially at the workplace, you would not be discriminated that much. when you need to deal with the government agencies, you may have better experience if you can speak English, and things would be gone through easily. (Ms. Tian, 40+, Study Mama)

It is no wonder new Chinese immigrants really need to be equipped with considerable English competence. To make it happen, it is necessary for the Singapore authority to step in and initiate the subsidized English programs for the new immigrants. This is because the course fees are high enough to kill the motivation of lower socioeconomic new immigrants comparing to those middle or upper middle socioeconomic immigrants who generally already have better English proficiency through deliberated continuous education. Source from

YAGO Languages, a local company providing English classes for adults, it offers non-subsidized full-time based English classes from 9am to 1pm or from 2pm to 6pm every weekday; nonetheless, as this kind of class involves many teaching hours, the price is relatively expensive and students are expected to pay between S\$ 1200 – 2700 for one month of tuition (Yago Singapore, December 19, 2014). It is less doubt for such a full-time based language program to enhance the immigrants' English competence, however, as these immigrants lie in relatively low socioeconomic status, many of them might be neither have the time nor the budget for full-time based English classes. Besides full-time English classes, there are other training providers who offer non-subsidized part-time based adults English classes. For example, the Certificate in Business English courses offered by Singapore Chinese Chamber Institute of Business consists of Foundation, Introductory, Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced level (SCCIOB Singapore, December 14, 2016); each level has 10 sessions over 10 weeks long with each session comprises of 3 hours contacting time, and student needs to pay S\$ 535 for every 10 sessions which is not that costly, however, course fees may be the prime barrier for new immigrants to raise up their English proficiency but definitely not the all. It is therefore, without extra incentives and/or pressure imposed by the Singaporean authority, how would the less English proficient new immigrants be convinced to attend English classes during workday nights and weekends?

Nevertheless, the Singapore authority has been putting efforts to enhance the English proficiency of two groups of people: the first group is its existing and newly granted citizens and PRs, their course fee will be heavily funded provided they can successfully complete the designated English classes; the second group is migrant workers holding work permits, their employers are encouraged to

sponsor them for designated English classes so as to qualify for higher skilled worker levy rate that lead to a total saving of up to S\$200 per worker per month (Ministry of Manpower, 2016). In detail, the first group can sign up for heavily funded English classes in evenings or weekends as the course provider clearly stated that the authority will pay 70-90% of the cost and there will be 1-2 lessons per week after work hours or on Saturdays; to further secure the subsidy, one needs to take a proficiency test before and after the course as well as attend at least 75% of the lessons (Yago Singapore, December 19, 2014). For the second group, one training provider NTUC Learning Hub listed the course objectives at its website as below:

This specially crafted program equips work permit holders in the service industries (hotels, retail, and food and beverage) with English communication skills essential for better overall service quality and also prepares them for the Literacy Assessment administered by the Singapore Workforce Development Agency... Since 2010 work permit holders in the service industries must obtain level 4 of the Workplace Literacy Listening and Speaking Assessments to qualify or continue to qualify for skilled levy status, in addition to existing skilled status requirements mandated by the Ministry of Manpower (NTUC LearningHub, 2010).

However, it is necessary for the authority to recalibrate the existing policies in terms of raising up the English proficiency of incoming new immigrants. As I pointed out in the first chapter that Mainland transient workers who held Work Permit (WP) have very little chances to be granted PR status under the current Singaporean immigration practice and thus not expected to integrate to the

Singaporean society, workers who benefited from the government workplace literacy regulation ended up with recognizable English proficiency would ultimately return to their country of origin thus leave little impact in terms of the immigrants' integration at the host society. To take a step up, first of all, the authority needs to take the responsibility to set up a clear guideline with respect to the minimum level of English proficiency required when immigrants applying for various work passes, PR and citizenship in addition to *de facto* acquainting one of the official languages or completely leave it to the market and potential employers. Next, the authority needs to appropriate public funds for subsidizing English class which can be taken up by all the residents and non-residents with Long-term Visiting Pass (LTVP). I will discuss the reasons in the next section, nonetheless, the Norwegian subsidiary case below can be adopted as a good example for Singapore authority's further reference.

Since September 2005 it has been compulsory for newly arrived adult immigrants to participate in 600 lessons of instruction in the Norwegian language and social studies. Beyond the compulsory instruction, those who have further need for instruction have the opportunity to take more classes (up to 3,000 lessons, depending on the needs of the individual). This system applies to those who are refugees, persons granted humanitarian status, persons who have collective protection and family members of these categories. It also includes persons who have been granted family reunification with a Norwegian citizen. Persons who come from outside the EEA/EFTA area and have a work permit are entitled to take part in 300 lessons of instruction, but have no legal right to receive the courses free of charge (Sbertoli & Arnesen, 2014, p. 133).

In other words, what Singapore authority can learn from the Norwegian case is, the Norwegian policies favor the immigrants (settlers) rather than guest workers by offering the former free language lessons. What difference is, the Singapore government has only funded free English lesson to immigrants (PR and new SC) and guest workers through their employers, however left the quasi-immigrants (EP, DP, SP and LTVP holder) unattended. In addition, these quasi-immigrants are likely to be accepted as PR and SC rather than WP holder (mainly guest workers). Therefore, this study suggests to learn from Norwegian model and fund quasi-immigrants' free English lessons so as to promote linguistic integration.

3.3 English for Linguistics Integration

Since Linguistics integration refers to immigrants obligation to learn the language of the receiving society (Beacco et al., 2014). It also requires immigrants to show a high level of proficiency in the dominant language, which is perceived as a demonstration of their loyalty and allegiance to the host society (Council of Europe, 2016). The reason why I propose English for linguistics integration into Singapore host society is this study's aiming at challenging the existing theory which concerns the immigrants' language competence and their social integration. As I referred in the section of the problem statement and gaps of the chapter 2, which says "proficiency in the language of the host country as a critical step in the process of integration among immigrants who are not themselves native speakers" (Akresh et al., 2014, p. 201); and "fluency in the language of the destination country and the ability to learn it quickly play a key role in the transfer of existing human capital to foreign countries, and generally boost immigrant's success in destination

countries' labor markets" (Adserà & Pytliková, 2015, p. F49). Although Akresh et al. (2014) mentioned the importance of the English language acquisition in the host society, it is still necessary to be cautious when it comes to Singapore which has a much complex linguistic landscape in terms of its multilingual contexts in the region. Among its four official languages Chinese, Malay, Tamil and English, it is the English language not the Mandarin "was chosen as its *lingua franca* because of its importance as a communicative tool in world trade" (S. K. C. Chua, 2010, p. 413) on which almost the whole economy of the city-state ever relied, not to mention of its pragmatic function in terms of uniting all races participating in the process of the nation building.

On the other side, Mandarin and its vernaculars can only be used within the ethnic Chinese Singaporean community with the Chinese language being recognized as the mother tongue for ethnic Chinese at the most, never ever had a chance to replace English in the post-1965 era. It needs to be aware by Chinese new immigrants that government initiative to promote Chinese is aiming at creating local bilingual individuals who are also proficient in English rather than displacing the English language (Wee, 2003), it is designed for locals to catch the economic development in China and bring in more Mainland tourists to spend on Singapore services and commodities rather than signal the new Chinese immigrants to stop their English learning and keep speaking Mandarin Chinese. Even while the city-state entered the 21st century, English as the language barrier still a reality among the older generation, it is nevertheless fast disappearing among the younger generation; and English, instead of being a mark of the highly privileged group, is increasingly widely spoken and the local variety of English, Singapore English, is viewed by the young with pride and as a mark of national identity (Kwan-Terry, 2000). In recent years, there are voices from

academia gone viral and suggesting that “English in Singapore has to be re-conceptualized as a new mother tongue and should be thought of as a mother tongue for Singaporeans” (Tan, 2014, p. 319).

In view of that, English becomes the only language that can be picked up by the new Chinese immigrants to achieve linguistic integration. Therefore, for immigrants who seek for permanent residency and citizenship of Singapore, even if English may not be necessary used as their main vehicle of communication, nonetheless, they must show their proficiency in this language, at least they need to prove that they have such potential to acquire this language within a stipulated time. More importantly, if “the host society was hostile to immigrants” who are not good at English and “was not willing to invest in English training programs”, “immigrants who lacked English fluency would be probably pushed further into linguistic isolation and took shelters in ethnic enclaves” (Xi, 2013, p. 1120). Obviously, it leaves little choice for new Chinese immigrants to ignore their poor English competence and return to homeland since most of them have made their decision to settle down in host society. In addition, it is less feasible to persuade the host society to suit new immigrants’ language preference, either. Ms. Feng, another interviewee, shared her views of how important of English proficiency to new Chinese immigrants in Singapore:

... Even till now, I feel I still speak more Mandarin than English, but if you really want to survive in Singapore, find decent job, want to earn higher salary, you must be able to speak English, and your English need to be fluent; otherwise, even if you have higher academic qualification, say a PhD, if you are not good at English, you cannot secure a good job with sound salary in Singapore. I think if you want to have a happy life in

Singapore, in terms of comparing English with Mandarin Chinese, Mandarin is inferior while English must be proficient; it is ok if your Mandarin is not good, but you must be proficient in English. (Ms. Feng, 30+, married with ethnic Chinese Singaporean).

Since English is so important to achieve linguistic integration in line with other forms of social integration, it is necessary for the Singapore authority to step in and take down the barrier to achieve English proficiency that most non-English background immigrants encountered. As appealed in the second section, the Singapore authority needs to appropriate public funds for subsidizing English class which can be taken up by all the residents and non-residents with long-term visiting pass (LTVP). However, as this study finds that the current government subsidy for English class only cover the residents of who are Singapore PRs and citizens and foreign workers held Work Permit in different methods but leave those none English background “Sandwich” immigrants so to speak unattended. The “Sandwich” immigrants are basically formed by two groups of people, one group of people who have been married with Singapore PRs and citizens but still in the process to have their PR approval; while the other group of people are those who have been recognized as PMET (Professionals, Managers, Executives and Technicians, especially mother tongue related industries) thus disqualified themselves from the mandatory English training comparing to WP holders. It is justifiable for the authority to heavily subsidize the English class for those non-English background “Sandwich” immigrants, not only as they are expected to integrate into host society as well comparing to immigrants who have already been granted PR or citizenship, but also due to their less affluent socioeconomic status that resulted from their relatively disadvantaged English competence.

Nevertheless, one cannot expect with the government funded English class being implemented, new immigrants would voluntarily enroll themselves to the aforesaid courses. Norwegian case has shown with the new rules declared as the motivational measures in place that “no application for permanent residence in the country will be accepted unless the applicant has attended Norwegian and Social Study courses and taken the corresponding tests” (Sbertoli & Arnesen, 2014, p. 133). Although as Sbertoli and Arnesen (2014, p. 133) admitted that the “progress is slow, but Norwegian policy and practice in this field does seem to be developing in the right direction”. That is to say, the mandatory corresponding tests served as the doorkeeper to promote an effective social integration through PR application. However, what Singapore can learn is that the less discriminative social welfare system mitigated the aforesaid motivational measures and resulted in slowed the progress. In other words, to make the government funded English class count so as to achieve linguistic integration at a later stage, Singapore authority also needs to differentiate the benefits (discussed in Chapter 5) and set up a correspondent minimum level of English proficiency for entry immigrants who seek for renewal of their Employment Pass as well as send in fresh application for PR and citizenship respectively. In that case, immigrants should take up a designated test to show their minimum level of English proficiency as echoed by the United States case that tells us:

You may apply for naturalization when you meet all the requirements to become a U.S. citizen... You need to...demonstrate a basic knowledge... as well as an ability to read, write, speak and understand basic English...You qualify for an exemption from the English language

test based on your age and how long you have lived in the United States as a lawful permanent resident, for example, you are 50 years of age or older and have lived in the United States as a permanent resident for periods totaling at least 20 years. (Department of Homeland Security, 2016).

As a conclusion, even if there are concerns that some of the tests may be in fact hindering integration and leading to exclusion as aforesaid European practices shown, there is no doubt that an ability to master a language can contribute to successful integration (Committee on Migration Refugees and Displaced Persons, 2013). However, it is the Singapore multilinguistic landscape calls for immigrants' integration through enhanced English proficiency first and foremost, especially for new Chinese immigrants who seek for permanent residency and citizenship at a later stage so as to integrate into the host society. Since bringing in quality immigrants to compensate its low fertility rates still on track, it is important for the Singapore authority to invest into subsidized English class and set up minimum level of English proficiency for entry immigrants when they send in fresh application for PR and citizenship as well as renewal of their Employment Pass so as to substantially facilitate immigrants' integration into Singaporean host society.

Chapter 4. Overestimated Anti-Immigrant Sentiment

4.1 Sentiment of Anti-Immigrant

This section intends to argue that the sentiment of anti-immigrant against the new Chinese immigrants in Singapore was most probably overestimated as this notorious sentiment has been perceived as another barrier for integration that was hotly debated in recent years' scholarships (Liu, 2012a, 2014, 2016; Zhou & Liu, 2016). It is worth to be emphasized that the current debate regarding the anti-immigrant sentiment in Singapore are generally based on intra-ethnic relations rather than interethnic relations. In other words, the sentiment of anti-immigrant that I am going to revisit is arisen mainly between new Chinese immigrants and ethnic Chinese Singaporeans that was borrowed from a large literature on interethnic relations in terms of native-immigrants relations (Liu, 2014) that rooted in a multidimensional social setting. For example, economic and social competition between outgroups (based on foreign country of birth instead of citizenship) might "play a lesser role in the explanation of cross-national differences in anti-immigrant attitudes than often assumed" (Schneider, 2008, p. 53) while Zamora-Kapoor (2013, p. 3) believes that "anti-immigrant sentiment will not be exclusively manifested in one form or another; quite to the contrary, natives who view immigrants as a material threat are likely to view them as a cultural threat as well". Back to the context of Singapore, the literature has been shown the anti-immigrants' sentiment was basically arisen from local online forums and played a negative role for immigrants' integration; furthermore, it needs to be mentioned that the local media are responsible for featuring negative sides of new immigrants and turned out ignited online xenophobic comments went viral with the help of the local netizens (Gomes,

2014; Liu, 2012a).

But having checked with the existing data like media reports and polls; the anti-immigrant sentiment portrayed by media reports are mostly to include all foreign-born population because it is hardly for the general public to discriminate who is naturalized Singaporean and who is not thus not fit for this study. For example, Gallup poll on Potential Net Migration Index (PNMI) declines in Singapore from 219% to 129% in 2014 as well only shows the points of views of migrants who yet to be in Singapore (Esipova, Pugliese, & Ray, January 17, 2014). And the local think tank the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) survey across Singapore & integration of immigrants 2014 as well target at all the foreign-born population in Singapore (Mathews & Zhang, 2016). To this cause, I must confess that the new Chinese immigrant in this study has been confined to settlers or settlers to be rather than all China born population in Singapore. To make it clearer, most of these people are talented migrants and do possess advanced degrees even naturalized Singapore citizenship because they are the ideal population that Singapore wants to integrate. To study how these people would be affected by the anti-immigrant sentiment may be shed new lights to the immigrants' integration in Singapore.

Since most reported anti-immigrant sentiment was basically virtual and arisen from local medias and online forums that happens to echo the Mieriņa and Koroļeva (2015) viewpoint that media further worsen attitudes towards minorities and immigrants, therefore, it leaves us a puzzle that the media industry of Singapore should be unlike those in United States and other countries where TV and newspapers often have been caught expressing more controversial points of views regarding the sentiment of anti-immigrant as they

may be controlled by different stakeholders. However, local media giants like Singapore Press Holding and MediaCorp are both government-linked companies (GLC) and the only dominant actors participated in the real world, it would be the last thing for them to invoke anti-immigrant sentiment but coincidentally, there were some negative news reports concerning new immigrants that contribute to the online xenophobia which have been recorded by existing research (Liu, 2012a; Yow, 2013). As an example that has been mentioned in the background chapter, online channel like STOMPer could easily contribute to anti-immigrant sentiment by posting news feed anonymously stating international student from Mainland China likely outnumbering local student in local autonomous universities (STOMPer, 2010), which could possibly impede their progress of integration after graduation here in Singapore.

As it is not fair to blame the media for initiating the sentiment of anti-immigrant because they are considered to be still bounded by the media's principal as well as their professionalism in terms of "Journalistic Objectivity" (Boudana, 2011; Thorsen, 2008), unfortunately, fell into what Barker's theory of *New Racism* that depicting immigrants as a threat (Barker, 1981) may be acted as a plausible explanation. Under the ideology of *New Racism*, "even potentially neutral topics, such as immigration, housing, employment or cultural immigration, soon tend to have a negative dimension: immigration may be topicalized as a threat, and most ethnic relations represented in terms of problems and deviance if not as a threat as well" (Van Dijk, 2000, p. 38), Van Dijk further concludes:

The New Racism of western societies is a system of ethnic or racial inequality consisting of sets of sometimes subtle everyday discriminatory practices sustained by socially shared representations...

This is especially the case for media discourse in general and the news in particular. Systematic negative portrayal of the Others, thus vitally contributed to negative mental models, stereotypes, prejudices and ideologies about the Others, and hence... is able to provide insights into the discursive mechanisms of this role of public discourse in the reproduction of racism, and how also the news systematically conveys positive images (mental representations) of Us, and negative ones about Them (Van Dijk, 2000, pp. 48-49).

Nevertheless, it has been clearly claimed that the source of the sentiment of anti-immigrant is based on the comments left on the online forums and negative sides of new immigrants featured by local media. But, what this study intends to investigate is how new Chinese immigrants act towards this sentiment on their way of integration into Singaporean host society? Through the data gathered from in-depth interviews, it helps to draw out many facets that how new Chinese immigrants interact with their ethnic Chinese Singaporean counterparts. Regarding media reports featuring new immigrants, Dr. Shang, one of my interviewee, shares his viewpoint below:

... of course, they [ethnic Chinese Singaporean] will be influenced by some media reports, for example, a China billionaire drove a fancy car but hit people to death on Singapore road and another China tour guide scamming incident. Through the media's series reports and commentating, it was no wonder local people would generate negative impression against Chinese immigrants in Singapore. (Dr. Shang, 37, Researcher).

As the media has the rights to choose what to report and who it reports to, the readers have their rights to decide what to believe and to what extent the article can be trusted. Mr. Zhao, 48, came from Northern China and works in Singapore since 2004, he is a researcher and a naturalized Singapore citizen. He talked about the news reports over how opposition parties attacked new Chinese immigrants during the last two general elections: "I did not believe those media stuff, it was just the opposition parties' political tactics to attract votes; and I guess, they are smart enough and understand very well why the ruling party continues to bring in new immigrants. How would this country survive in the future without us immigrants?" Clearly, new immigrants like Mr. Zhao does not worry about those political nonsenses against new Chinese immigrants in Singapore because he is pretty sure about the Singapore's political system that those anti-immigrants to some extent even xenophobic discourse proclaimed by the opposition parties and diffused by the media would not become policies in his lifetime. In addition, Mrs. Zhang, a new Chinese immigrant who graduated from NUS with a master's degree, further confirmed Mr. Zhao's point of view with her own elaboration in relation to media's depiction of new immigrants in Singapore:

... News reports often magnify certain issue, dilate on the voices coming out from few people because it is the so to speak typical or representative voice. Therefore, it makes the new immigrants themselves believe that they are not welcomed by the mainstream host society. Nevertheless, in the real life, you won't have many chances to have many locals dislike you whether you go out for shopping or take a taxi... While you met with local people, many even will show you Singapore's scenery spots, bring you to the scene... I might not know

what is in their mind, however, at the bottom line, they are friendly and easy to approach... on the contrary, I often read many more negative reports from TV and newspapers, only few people's unhappy voices being reported, magnified, I haven't seen kind of phenomenon in my real life. (Mrs. Zhang, 27, Educator).

Another interviewee who is a linguist, attributing the sentiment of anti-immigrant or little bit unfriendly attitude as she spoken to excuses that made by local people so as to ask for more benefit and welfare from their government:

In fact, there is basically nothing about he (local people) does like me just because I am a new immigrant stuff. The only reason he might say so is the inflows of the new Chinese immigrants as a community, changed his life in one way or another that he does not like. Fortunately, one thing is really good is they, the local ethnic Chinese community, they will turn to their government to express their concerns and wait for their government to work out a solution rather than directly against me as the new immigrant. They trust their government, and I don't think there are any big conflicts happening between the two communities in real life. (Dr. Li, 34, Researcher).

With respective the sentiment of anti-immigrant, Ms. Yang, a Beijing local who chose to spend 4 years at a northwestern university in China, joined her husband in Singapore in 2009, left for postgraduate study in Hong Kong in 2011, and working in Beijing for another 2 years until she decided to pursue her PhD back in Singapore in 2015 gave us an unusual perspective that could probably ignite the anti-immigrant sentiment:

My teacher used to remind me that as a matter of fact, Singapore is an economically north country however a culturally south country. It means some new Chinese immigrants would voluntarily treat Singapore as a culturally inferior country rather than a representative of western civilization. More or less, it represents a civilization of Southeast Asia. In that case, some Chinese immigrants might become arrogant when interact with local community which in turn being hostile by the locals. (Ms. Yang, 30, PhD student).

Along with the high economic performance in China, there are many more Mainland Chinese people come across the country border and be exposed to the whole world as this study discussed in the introduction chapter, whether jealousy or discontent, any errant comments or behavior done by Chinese national would be soon put under the media's spotlight and being accused in the name of their country which has been ranked No. 2 in the world. "Unlike in 1990s, while China still less developed, new immigrants kept humble", Ms. Yang further added, "but now, things have changed, some of the new immigrants even treat immigration as consumption, they are proud of being coming from China, in a very high pitch. I have no idea where on earth this sense of proudness came from? They speak anything they want, make fun of Singapore, the little dot. They live in this country, but in a very high profile. They speak Mandarin to everyone they met, not feeling ashamed of their inability to speak English. Although they were able to speak English. I think their attitude changed."

Nevertheless, Dr. Long's experience tells us a refresh story concerning how ethnic Chinese Singaporean helps her while she was uncomfortable:

Personally, I don't have any feelings of unwelcome from Singaporeans around, or any maliciousness. I do not have any bad feelings, on the contrary, in many a time, while I felt nauseated, there were many Singaporean aunties coming to help me out. Sometimes I forgot to bring the EZ-link card, I have had Singaporean uncles to give me a favor... I think it looks like everyone welcomes me here. However, from news reports and TV, there are points of views shows the locals do not like us, or some others opinions alike. I do not have kinds of stuff in my life, really seldom to witness kind of situation. (Dr. Long, 31, naturalized Singapore citizen).

In summary, what I claim the anti-immigrant sentiment was most probably overestimated in the perspective of my designated population: highly educated new Chinese immigrants, settlers or settlers to be, holding EP, PR even naturalized Singapore citizenship did earn its reasons. I discussed the reason that the anti-immigrant sentiment from the literature does not fit into my population when it comes to integration. My in-depth interviews have also shown these group of people are not bothered by the anti-immigrant sentiment that largely based on media reports and online forums and partly due to the *New Racism* ideology went viral with the pressure both covertly and overtly brought in to host society by the immigrants. More importantly, the unique Singapore residential pattern and ways of interacting with the resident community built through the precise social engineering can be considered as the insurance that prevent virtual online xenophobia turning into physical collisions in the real world which will be discussed in the next two sections.

4.2 The Residential Patterns

As discussed in the previous section, anti-immigrant sentiment against new Chinese immigrants was mostly exaggerated by the media reports and online forums rather than physical collisions between the new Chinese immigrants and the ethnic Chinese Singaporean in the real world. In this section, I intend to bring in another perspective which contributes to alleviate the so to speak anti-immigrant sentiment. It is as I argue that new Chinese immigrants are well co-habitant with local residents and the reason behind is partly due to the public housing schemes that act as influentially residential patterns which enhance the intergroup contact (Fong et al., 2013; Douglas S Massey & Fong, 1990) as well as the intragroup contact. However, my discussion would only focus on the latter as the new Chinese immigrants and the ethnic Chinese Singaporean are nevertheless considered having the same ethnical origin.

When it comes to the residential patterns, it is better to have a quick review of some precedent cases before Singapore. As one may be well informed as the Chicago School claimed in 1920s, immigrants might be living separately from the host society and “via recurrent cycles of migration into peripheral areas and the progressive movement of upwardly mobile groups from those areas to better locations in town”, while new immigrants took their place (Tomba, 2004, p. 12). It is no wonder “Denmark’s immigrant families are concentrated in larger urban municipalities with 61% living in public rental accommodation compared to 17% of the general population” that have potential being marginalized (Harrison, Law, & Phillips, 2005, p. 64). Nevertheless, with the government intervention in Finland, as Harrison et al. (2005, p. 28) further report, regardless of the citizenship or employment status, housing in Finland falls under the “social

security system and residence-based”, which means “all residents are guaranteed equality, democracy, human rights and basic social security”. Clearly, it is the social engineering behind the scene which “through the allocation of housing to new migrants in order to achieve an acceptable social mix” (Bolt, Phillips, & Van Kempen, 2010, p. 131). The German case which demonstrated by Bolt et al. (2010, p. 131) reveal that for a better integration of the immigrants, German housing and urban policies therefore have fostered housing market aiming at “achieving desegregation and including local quotas for non-German households for many housing estates”.

Back to Singapore, it needs to be mentioned that with 90% for resident households are homeowners, 77% of housing which usually being called Housing Board flats are developed and dominated directly by the Housing & Development Board (HDB) of Singapore (Phang, Lee, Cheong, Phoon, & Wee, 2014). Since 1989, HDB implemented an Ethnic Integration Policy (EIP) and under which racial limits in terms of “the Chinese, Malay, Indian/Others limits at 84%, 22%, and 10% respectively were set for the HDB blocks and neighborhoods”(Phang & Helble, 2016, p. 17). This helps to enhance the intergroup contact as the “HDB’s objective has always been to integrate the various income and racial groups within the public housing program and to avoid the emergence of low-income or ethnic ghettos” (Phang & Helble, 2016, p. 17). For intragroup contact, as Phang and Helble (2016, p. 18) further add that starting from “March 2010, in response to the increase in the number of SPRs living in public housing estates, the HDB introduced a new SPR quota for non-Malaysian SPR families buying flats to facilitate better integration and to prevent new SPR enclaves from forming in public housing estates where the SPR quota is set at 5% and 8% at the neighborhood and block levels, respectively”. With

the institutional establishment in housing supply and management, intragroup contact between the new Chinese immigrants and the ethnic Chinese Singaporean become available, as Dr. Shang shares with us:

Since you live in the Singaporean society, it does not matter whether on residing, studying or working, you are always together with Singaporeans. Let me take my living estate as an example, I am surrounded by Singaporean, and it is quite common for me to interact actively with fellow Singaporeans and it is unavoidable as well. It is impossible to integrate into this society without interact with local Singaporeans... Another example is about taking care of my kids. As my parents cannot come to Singapore to take care of my kids, we have got our neighbor to help to take care of the kids for nearly two years. I sent the kids to her flat every morning and she took care of the kids from morning to evening. We have built up very good relationship with Singaporean neighbors around and we have a lot of Singaporean friends as well. (Dr. Shang, 37, Researcher).

Although Dr. Shang still holds PR status, not yet prepared to be a naturalized Singapore citizen, he has shown a full appreciation to his local neighbors and willing to be part of the local community through various activities whether private or public. It is the establishing residential pattern made him surrounded by local residents become possible, and through the mutual help and communication, he is totally immunized from the sentiment of anti-immigrant. Another interviewee, a government primary school teacher shares a similar experience regarding how she mingles with her local neighbors because they live in the same block:

... of course it is possible to talk a little bit with local neighbors while I bring my kid to the attached playground. I think it is much easier to chat with ethnic Chinese Singaporeans. We would talk more if we often meet at the same playground. As I have been taking care of my kid for 3 years as a home maker, I often bring her to the block playground. It is quite natural to talk with local neighbors as all our children are from the same residential block. I was even not aware that they are Singaporean Chinese, and I really don't care whether they are the new Chinese immigrants or the ethnic Chinese Singaporean. (Ms. Shen, 35, Educator).

Nevertheless, based on the EIP, the Singapore's residential pattern is not perfect and it has "rightfully drawn criticism for being too prescriptive that was deliberately engineered by the government's intrusive housing policies"; as the Deputy Prime Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam further added: "If we believe in social inclusion, if we believe in opportunities for all, we have to accept it doesn't happen automatically because of the invisible hand of the market or the invisible hand of society (Quartz, June 24, 2015). Therefore, it is hardly to deny that the Singapore's residential pattern does provide the opportunities for interpersonal communication especially between the new Chinese immigrants and the ethnic Chinese Singaporean as once they live together, "they're not just walking the same corridors every day, they're not just taking the same elevators up and down, their kids go to the same schools... and they grow up together" (Quartz, June 24, 2015). Ms. Zhou, one of my interviewee, a kindergarten teacher, provides another example to echo the aforesaid policy vision behind the unique Singaporean residential pattern that local Singaporean neighbors may also take initiative to communicate with the Chinese immigrants:

As my flat locates at the corner of the corridor, we need to walk through many other flats along the long corridor. Just after we moved in, we found that one family in the middle was truly friendly.... The hostess was very kind, and she came to tell me where to buy cheaper vegetables.... We have talked about education as I knew she nurtured a very successful kid. A few days before, she even advised me not sending my kid to a tuition center named "I Can Read", the reason was my kid was too young to receive the instructions from the tutors. She asked me to read my kid stories instead. And if I did not have enough confident on certain topic, I could bring my kid to attend reading activities at National Library. (Ms. Zhou, 35, Educator).

In a word, with the admittance of the residential patterns of Singapore still being questioned as a controversial matter as the EIP "works on the assumption that by living in close quarters, residents of different ethnicities will be forced to mingle and interact with each other, thereby strengthening the racial harmony and unity in Singapore" (99.co, December 1, 2016), this study prefers to take on its positive stand which definitely not comprehensive but to some extent promotes intra group contact at a slow pace. Even for one of my interviewee, Dr. Feng, 37, who usually has a really busy schedule thus does not have much time to interact with his neighbors, still values the occasions to communicate with his neighbors rather than his relatives at Mainland China. He has experiences of neighbors distributing gifts which they had a newborn baby. And while Dr. Feng's family need to travel abroad together, he would even leave his keys to Singaporean neighbor and ask them to take care of his cat. And this made him felt necessarily to keep helping each other when possible. Therefore, by and

large, it can be anticipated that most probably the residential patterns would hardly contribute to the growing of anti-immigrant sentiment rather than decrease.

4.3 Interacting with Resident Community

In this section, I shall continually focus on the discussion of new Chinese immigrants interacting with the ethnic Chinese Singaporean in the level of community that act as another pillar to prevent the virtual online xenophobia turning into physical collisions in the host society. In addition to the evidence quoted from in-depth interviews, I also intend to bring in a small case study which comes from one of my interviewee, which would then help to showcase how new immigrant voluntarily working as grassroots leader and contributing to her resident community in terms of building co-ethnic integration and alleviating the sentiment of anti-immigrant on the other hand at the host society. Unlike other societies that a resident community may tend to be self-organized; community in Singapore is well-established and highly organized in line with the unique residential pattern. The community entities like community clubs in Singapore generally under the leadership of the Peoples Association (PA) which chaired by the incumbent Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong. It was established on 1 July 1960 as a statutory board to promote racial harmony and social cohesion in Singapore and has a network of 1,800 grassroots organizations (GROs), over 100 Community Clubs and five Community Development Councils (The People's Association, 2017a); more importantly, community based grassroots organizations not only help new citizens and PRs settle in the community, but also provide platforms to bond immigrants with the local residents (The People's Association, 2017b). Therefore, it is essential to mobilize new Chinese

immigrants to interact with their designated community where various programs and interesting activities have been held from time to time.

First of all, new Chinese immigrants need to be educated the importance of involving themselves into the community and have such sense of willingness to be part of the resident community instead of sedentary at home after work. With such willingness in the mind, as a new immigrant of Singapore, it is worth of embracing the large local community like community club and public library by all means so as to take a step-up of integration into the host society. Dr. Lu, one of my interviewee, appeals to his fellow new Chinese immigrants as follows:

In fact, I have a strong feeling that the cultural activities in Singapore would be considered much affluent. You'd better make good use of these opportunities.... It is an open society, as a new immigrant, you should actively participate in the activities rather than stay at home and complain about Singapore's inferior to China. Nevertheless, you may still be able to recall in what percentage of the public activities really open to the members of the public in China. In Singapore, including the public libraries, all they want is to persuade your presence there and browsing books. In what reason you don't want to come down to the libraries to borrow some books home from the beginning of the year all the way to the end of the year? Why not? Therefore, new immigrant really should readjust their mindset as the whole society is open to them. Better go out to participate, make out some time, do not just stay at home. (Dr. Lu, 50, adjunct lecturer).

Obviously, the resident communities neither have the authority nor necessary to force their immigrant residents to attend the activities. However, they can

appoint individual immigrant like Dr. Lu to encourage his fellow friends to participate in the event. The difficulty lies on how to identify a great many of “Dr. Lu”. Next, interacting with the Singaporean community requires new immigrants’ commitment to the host society which regard as a step-up in comparison to the simple sense of willingness being part of the community. However, it needs to be mentioned here that this commitment would not last long if it is driven by political propaganda that treated as an obligation over the inflow of new immigrants. Rather, it is better to be built through time, skill and hundred percent voluntarily based as Dr. Zhang shares her experience with us:

I often participate in the activities host by the community. To be honest, I was not forced to attend, rather, I really believe I would be benefit from those activities. Of course, those activities were really interesting too.... As you live your life in this place for quite a long time, you have already treated this place as part of your life. You are neither purposely to segregate yourself from the society, nor participate in the society; you have regarded here as home of your life. There are no different for me to attend activities in China or Singapore, the way I made friends in China, the way I can do it in Singapore too... Sooner or later, you would slowly integrate into the host society instead of purposely to show others that you are not local. (Dr. Zhang, 37, Researcher).

Admittedly, not every immigrant has the same commitment like Dr. Zhang does. New Chinese immigrants came from many non-traditional immigrant homelands as in Fujian or Canton. Many new immigrants do not have blood ties in Singapore. It is not realistic for immigrants to treat Singapore as their permanent home instantly. To integrate these settled new immigrants, what the

community can rely on is time, skill and many others. Thirdly, new immigrants' interacting with resident community could be motivated by their kids. That is to say the motivation behind immigrant parents' involvement in the resident community is to find local friends for their young kids. It is nearly a common sense that unlikely parents from other countries, parents who from mainland China would sacrifice much more of self so as to benefit their kids. Mr. Qi, father of two school age sons, stressed that children could act as a catalyst for their parent to build good relationship with the local community:

... To me, interact with the local community became more necessary after I have kids. Wishes of becoming part of the community were not that strong while I had no kids or kids were really young. After you have kids, and as the kids grow, they need friends. Therefore, you have to help to find friends for the kids. While your kids successfully having local friends from the same age group, you would become a friend of their parents.... Recently, I feel comfortable to have local friends through this way. And I come with them to participate in the activities that hosted by the community. I used to bring in two of my kids to attend the activities, and in most of the time, only we three can play with each other. Now, things have changed as my kids' friends, their parents and us three are able to play together.... What's more, the parents of my son's friend who know more Singaporeans, and they are all locals, so I also have the opportunities to know more locals with time goes on. (Mr. Qi, 43, Educator).

Comparing to educating immigrants and commitment building up by the resident community that hardly to reaping the harvest in a short period, what

Mr. Qi has told us may be inspiring. One brings in kids, bringing their parents too. It is feasible for the resident community to facilitate more kids-involved activities and invite immigrant kids to join in. If the immigrant kids can bond with the local kids, so can their parents, the immigrants themselves. Last but not least, I intend to discuss why the community should put in efforts to attract new immigrants to serve as a volunteer even grow him/her to be a grassroots leader in a later time. According to the official definition, Peoples Association (PA) grassroots volunteers are people who want to make a difference in the community and contribute to the lives of the people around us (The People's Association, 2017c); and grassroots leaders (GRLs) are volunteers appointed by the PA to serve in various grassroots organizations (GROs), as at July 2016, there are about 38,000 GRLs. (Government of Singapore, 2017). By and large, one cannot denial that a new immigrant volunteer would be easy accepted by his/her fellow immigrant. I have many interviewees who are aware of volunteering stories, some have been served as grassroots leaders for years, while some prefer to stay on as a normal volunteer only as the former will be formally appointed by the Chairman of the Peoples Association (PA), the Prime Minister of Singapore thus symbolically involving into the local politics. I quote Ms. Shen's words as follows:

I believe being a volunteer for the resident community is a good channel for me to better integrate into this society. However, what I mean is not purposely to join the so-called local mainstream society, instead, as I have been living in Punggol for many years, I like this place. And I will really happy if I can do something for my community as well as help out some people in one way or another. This is the reason why I applied to be a volunteer....I also attend the scheduled committee meeting with other volunteers, and help out during the community events as assigned.

(Ms. Shen, 35, Educator)

Similarly, a grassroots leader will shoulder more responsibilities in community maintenance, budget management and events planning. This requires effective communication with other local grassroots leaders of the resident community so as to discharge their duties. Therefore, it can be expected to have both inter-ethnic contacts and intra-ethnic contacts to emergent between the new immigrant and the local ethnic Chinese Singaporeans. Below is Ms. Ma's experience as an immigrant grassroots leader:

I have been appointed as a grassroots leader since I became a Singapore citizen many years before. I was asked to be in charge of finance matters, and even sent for formal training so as to be qualified to conduct the duty.... I still help out the events hosted by the community... Being a grassroots leader, it helps me to better understand this society. I even brought my daughter to help out in the "Meet the people session" where the designated Member of Parliament came down to meet with public who need certain help. Some of these people were from the bottom of the society, and some were encountered financial embarrassment. It made me realized that the Singapore government has been doing a lot of work in relation to those less fortunate. (Ms. Ma, 47, educator).

For example, she continuously to add while the grassroots leaders met to discuss how to improve certain facilities like added in a small lane in their community, they really meant it and would carry on the job until it has been done. Why this society become so sophisticated? Because there are voluntary grassroots

leaders who really concern their community and willing to rectify anything imperfect. What they did made her trust this society more. It is therefore when they need her, she is more than happy to contribute her time and efforts to the community. Since she has the ability to serve, why not to make this society become much better through her own efforts.

In conclusion, resident community is a feasible platform to engage the new immigrants. When it comes to integration, immigrants can be educated and their commitment to be part of the community can be nurtured, however, it takes time, skill and many others. To many new Chinese immigrants, kids are one of the main reasons why they choose to settle down in Singapore. Successfully engaging immigrant kids into resident community, in the meantime, their parents will join in together. Last but not the least, having new immigrants as volunteers and grassroots leaders would help to enhance the community interaction and at the same time served as an essential pillar to alleviate the sentiment of anti-immigrant with the unique residential pattern discussed early.

Chapter 5. Effect of the "Singaporeans-first" Policies

In this chapter, I intend to study how "Singaporeans-first" policies pervasively affect New Chinese immigrants, and what is the consequence to their integration in the Singapore host society, in order to raise the awareness of relevant authorities to reduce the backlash of current "Singaporeans-first" policies and shed new lights on the theorization of the challenges on immigrants' integration both the New Chinese immigrants and Singapore face in the post-2011 era. With the data generated from the in-depth interviews with the new Chinese immigrants, I try to argue that as the byproduct of the "Singaporeans-first" policies, the "highly selective strategy" has pervasively affected the lives of the PR and non-PR new Chinese immigrants, and it has the potential to disintegrate the commitment to be an integral part of the host society that many non-PR and PR uphold in terms of the failure of their parents' LTVP application, the immigrants' family planning and many others. In addition, although not all the PR and non-PR new Chinese immigrants are necessarily affected by the "Singaporeans-first" policies, nevertheless, to many PR immigrants, they have to consider speeding up their naturalization process to become Singapore citizens as a pragmatic solution to be taken care of the entitlements that exclusively reserved for citizens if they do not opt to leave Singapore.

5.1 The "Singaporeans-first" Policies

Regarding the "Singaporeans-first" policies, one cannot find a clear black and white version, however, it can be traced back to the National Day Rally Speech conducted by the Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and were later

implemented by various government agencies. he said, "The basic principle for us is always citizens come first and that is how our policies are designed – citizens before PRs, PRs before other foreigners and non-residents. Last year, we reviewed the policies, we changed the subsidies to make this distinction sharper. So, education fees, healthcare subsidies, housing subsidies, all adjusted so that it is quite clear that the Singaporeans get the best deal" (H. L. Lee, 2010). It aims to provide of the subsidized housing, education, healthcare and keeping jobs for Singapore citizens, no matter by birth or newly naturalized. However, it excluded PR to be benefited as usual one round after another, not to mention other foreign nationals without PR status. For example, regarding education, "we need to make some adjustment is university education, university places.... By 2015, universities will take in 14,000 Singapore students, more than ever before.... But while we do this, we will cap the foreign enrolment at the present levels and therefore gradually the mix will shift and the proportion of foreign students will come down" (H. L. Lee, 2011). As a subsequent tightened measure for PRs to buy Housing Board flats from open market, the Housing & Development Board (HDB) announced a major policy change on 27 Aug 2013 with immediate effect that "PR households with no Singapore citizen owner should wait three years from the date of obtaining PR status before they can buy a resale HDB flat". The new policy supersedes the current policy that they "may buy resale HDB flats as soon as they acquire SPR status" (Housing & Development Board, 2013; Zaobao.sg, August 27, 2013).

In relation to the media reports about "Singaporeans-first" policies, one may be familiar with the comments about these policies outlining many new measures to relieve citizens from the pressure of the influx of foreigners (Yahoo News, August 14, 2011), and it enhanced "preferential treatment for citizens over PR

might have created unintended hurdles for social integration” (TODAY, December 15, 2015). This helps to explain why new Chinese immigrants often maintain their relationships with their homeland Mainland China; and therefore, many naturalized new Chinese immigrants still consider both Singapore and China as their ‘homes’ to which they are simultaneously tied (Zhou & Liu, 2016). Nonetheless, with the relation to the new Chinese immigrants respond to the “Singaporeans-first” policies, what I want to argue is whether those responses from in-depth interviews are all as negative as the media reports and the conclusions drawn by the existing literature? Ms. Zhou, the kindergarten teacher who has expressed her idea regarding local Singaporean neighbors taking initiatives to communicate with the Chinese immigrants in the previous chapter, once again shares her viewpoint about the “Singaporeans-first” policies:

..... As we later became naturalized Singapore citizens, contrarily, it shows the various welfare that a state could give out to its citizen... and what I understand about the policies is that it made many PR like us to think seriously whether we really want to choose this country as our permanent home, even being citizens of this country.... I don't think we could blame the government for implementing the “Singaporeans-first” policies. As a government, it must protect its own citizens, I think the Singapore government did a better job than China as China always gives out various benefits to foreign nationals instead of its own citizens. (Ms. Zhou, 35, Educator).

To my surprise, whether an interviewee talks about school age kids largely shapes his/her point of view of the “Singaporeans-first” policies. I asked much general questions like “how do you view the “Singaporeans-first” policies”

instead of “how do the “Singaporeans-first” policies affect your child’s education”? It might not be methodologically accurate; however, my concern lies on the interviewee’s first response. It has to be mentioned that whether interviewees are naturalized Singapore citizen, PR or work pass holder, they all understand and support the rationales behind the “Singaporeans-first” policies and turn back to comment on how China ignored the interests of its own citizens. I quote Ms. Wu’s words as follows:

I believe a country really should protect its own people... Singapore government uses the “Singaporeans-first” policies to protect its citizens. Just like parents having the nature to protect their kids, I fully understand and give my consent to these policies. (Ms. Wu, 30, PR after married with an ethnic Chinese Singaporean).

For non-PR interviewees, as discussed, it is no wonder why they have certain discontent about the “Singaporeans-first” policies, however, what inspiring is that they can see through the positive side of the policies instead of the negative side as many people enjoyed the benefits from these policies. For example, Ms. Mu, 26, a tutor acknowledges that these policies put people (Singaporean) first ; Ms. Yuan, 24, Ms. Mu’s colleague also agrees that every nation needs to protect its own people and it was the duty of the leadership of the state nevertheless she felt unpleasant while the public museums only gave free admission to Singapore PR and citizens; Mr. Zhang, 28, an engineer by train links the “Singaporeans-first” policies to the long run cohesiveness that a nation-state like Singapore needs to keep developing so as to refrain from an erosion of the national identity; and his wife, Mrs. Zhang, 27, an educator who believes it is reasonable for the Singapore government to enforce the “Singaporeans-first”

policies, as it is probably due to the watershed General Election 2011, that the ruling party needs to win back the future votes, however, the subsequent policies like housing rolling out with immediate effect adding to the “Singaporeans-first” policies further cut the benefits shared by PR and work pass holder really annoys her.

However, when it comes to the education with relation to the “Singaporeans-first” policies that I mentioned early, my new immigrants’ interviewees with school age kids expressed their deep concerns regards to the education opportunities which shared by PR kids before being comprehensively constricted by the “Singaporeans-first” policies. And more importantly, these policies act as the catalyst that motivate non-PR immigrants pursue PR status and PRs turning themselves into naturalized citizens if their school age kids want to regain the benefits they used to have.

For non-PR immigrant like Mrs. Jiang, 48, Vice Principal of a local private education group, has a 14-year-old school girl, I will further discuss her case in the next section. As the “Singaporeans-first” policies being implemented since 2011, she accepts the new school fee scheme that cost \$800 per month for her Secondary one school girl, however, what she cannot accept is even she pays hundreds of times more than common Singaporean kids, her daughter still being excluded of school based overseas immersion programs as citizenship prioritize merit. She further adds, the “Singaporeans-first” policies could be worked as a double-edge sword, there are governments schools have vacancies, however, these places are reserved for potential Singapore citizen and PR kids; even the parents can wait for years to have their PR approved, their kids cannot wait for school places as they grow up. Many of them cannot afford the international

schools running in Singapore for sure, as a result, they have to leave Singapore just because of a school place.

For naturalized new Chinese immigrants' interviewees, whom chose to be naturalized Singapore citizens with their kids as the "Singaporeans-first" policies tremendously affected their kids' education opportunities. Dr. Yao and Dr. Long, a PhD couple both in their early 30s, complain that they specifically took one day leave to look for a place for their 3-year-old boy to be registered at a kindergarten around Punggol, unfortunately, they have been turned down by all mainstream kindergarten as they are PRs. As Dr. Yao further adds about the change made to the Primary One Registration Exercise which would largely limited the chances for the kids to be enrolled in the nearby Primary Schools. Even if they remain as PR, they probably need to send their kids to international schools in Singapore. Mr. Qi, 43, an Educator frustrated about failure to send his elder kid to an ideal school as he was PR 3 years ago, that made him even no chance to attend the ballot. Another interviewee, Dr. Feng, 37, a Researcher who has just become a naturalized Singapore citizen one year ago, to one's surprise, expresses his worries like common ethnic Chinese Singaporean that if the policies open to PR, it would definitely enhance the competition for a Primary School place, how could he deal with it? He further claims that he certainly wants to have more "Singaporeans-first" policies as he has become a naturalized Singapore citizen. It obviously shows the limitation of the "Singaporeans-first" policies which gave the citizens uneven benefits, however, overlooked to remind the locals to embrace PR and non-PR immigrants who truly want to be an integral part of the host society rather than drew a line to showcase their superior status.

In a word, the “Singaporeans-first” policies pervasively affected the life the new Chinese immigrants not only limited to immigration, education and housing rights and benefits. Nevertheless, what this study found is the new Chinese immigrants generally understand and support the rationales behind the “Singaporeans-first” policies with comparison to China’s ignorant of the interests of its own citizens. However, when it comes to the education opportunities, new immigrants with school age kids expressed their deep concerns, which shows how important education means to the new immigrants and it would most probably act as the catalyst that motivate non-PR immigrants pursue PR status and PRs turn themselves into naturalized citizens so as to be fairly treated under the “Singaporeans-first” policies.

5.2 PR through Highly Selective Strategy

As mentioned in the literature chapter and previous discussion, Leong et al. (2014) have discussed the priority status that the “Singaporeans-first” policies gave Singaporeans more state subsidies comparing to PRs and non-residents, it motivates a great number of non-PR immigrants pursue PR status and citizenship thereafter. To better manage the inflow of the immigrants, it is no wonder with the implementation of the “Singaporean-first” policies, lesser cases being approved to PR compare to the year 2007-2009 (see Chart 2-2) as the “highly selective strategy” which is positioned as part of government migration policies can be traced back to 1990s that used to select high skilled migrants for their permanent settlement in Singapore (Hugo, 2005). In 2010, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong once added, “We are very careful whom we accept. Not only must they contribute to our economy but they have also got to integrate with

our society and strike roots here” (H. L. Lee, 2010). It continues being adopted right after the General Election 2011, and new immigrants integrate to the host society highly driven by the government policies are therefore deliberately accelerated in terms of a large number of them unprecedentedly competing for PR status, and even take one more step up to be landed with a Singapore passport so as to be benefited from the “Singaporean-first” policies. To find out how “highly selective strategy” affect the new Chinese immigrants and how they deal with the issue of PR application through highly selective, I will discuss the points of views conveyed by my immigrants’ interviewees that based on ethnographic data and in-depth interviews.

First of all, it has to be noted that it is necessary for the responsible authority to impose a “highly selective strategy” towards PR application, however come with a clear guideline under current circumstance. For example, Dr. Zhang, 37, a researcher who obtained PR in 2008 advises, the authority should give out a very clear guideline for approval a PR application instead of its own discreet at all circumstances, it’s acceptable for them to control the foreign population growth through immigration as she believes, however, it needs more humane consideration for those applicants who stay in Singapore for many years. Ms. Yang, 30, a PhD student who took this interview with Dr. Zhang adds:

I don’t think the “highly selective strategy” for PR application can last longer, because Singapore faces challenges like ageing population and low fertility rate. Anyhow, Singapore must attract many more foreign brains to be settle down here. Slowly, chances to be PR would grow....however, Singapore must understand those high-ranking professionals may not want to stay permanently, and people who want

to settle down permanently might only hold middle-ranking work passes therefore rarely can be awarded PR status under the current highly selective strategy. (Ms. Yang, 30, PhD student).

Next, with regard to the humane consideration for specific applicants, the approving authority needs to improve their services through efficiency and various appealable mechanism. What if they are really short of manpower to process the cases, they can always employ more capable staff to the scene. For example, Mrs. Jiang, as mentioned above in her late 40s, she had 18 years teaching experience in China and has been working in Singapore since 2007 with a monthly salary \$5000. Till the day we conducted the interview, her PR application has been rejected for 4 times and the latest time even enclosed with a recommendation letter issued by a member of Parliament. As she further shares her viewpoints:

My family and I was told during a meet up session with the member of Parliament to show more sincerities to the authority by sending out fresh PR application one after another. It might be having some successful cases but I really cannot agree to such moves. Ultimately, we have no idea how the authority evaluates our case, we have been working in Singapore for 8 years and we spent all our money in Singapore.... I think the government needs to put in some efforts to let us see some hope, otherwise, it is simply impossible to get the PR status anyway. (Mrs. Jiang, 48, Educator).

Another case about PR application, Ms. Zhang, 30, an educator who I interview, tells me based on her two previous failure applications that the waiting time was

really long and one can only send out a PR application in one year and a half interval. Her third-time application is right undergone processing. She nevertheless expresses her discontent against the “highly selective strategy” that being taken against PR application. She claims that it is unfair for people like her suffering from PR application only because they came to Singapore in 2011 and thereafter. And she believes that it is a loss for Singapore if those people willing to stay but later leave the country when their PR application failure.

Thirdly, the highly selectivity strategy used in PR application could extend to any application submitted by a PR and the effect of this strategy could come across the country border as well. Dr. Xiang, 39, majored in electronic and computer engineering shares with me a story of his friend. Let me call him Mr. Wang for narrative convenience. This Mr. Wang came to study and had his PR application approval after graduation while the authority still sending letters to invite foreign graduates to apply for permanent residency (Lianhe Zaobao, January 9, 2012, May 24, 2010). Right after the “highly selective strategy” being implemented for PR application, Mr. Wang’s intension to apply a dependent PR and dependent pass for his China wife and planned to starting a family in Singapore but unfortunately being rejected after rounds of appeals. Under this circumstance, his wife can only be allowed to stay with him in Singapore for 3 months before next visit. Mr. Wang felt heart-broken and said to his friend Dr. Xiang that he contributed best years of his life to Singapore but being unfairly treated as he married with a China wife before he gave up his 10 years Singapore career permanently. However, as a matter of fact, no one knows the exact reason of rejection as the authority never ever gives out and there is no guarantee for any PR application even with excellent qualification to be approved successfully. One may attribute to the applicant just had a bad luck.

Another one may advise Mr. Wang needs to try one more time, besides, the Mrs. Wang may be needed to seek for decent employment before lodging a second application.

Dr. Xiang's wife, Ms. Shen, 35, a naturalized Singapore citizen further adds, when she was a PR, she tried to apply Long Term Visit Pass for her parents to be here to take care of her kid, but failed in the end. She complains the "highly selective strategy" and its extended effect that the authority encourages the housewife to take full-time job, on the other hand, they do not issue the Visit Pass to the grandparents, so who else can help to take care of the kid as both parents taking full-time employment? She believes that even the government knows it is not feasible to hire a foreign domestic helper to take care a little baby. Anyway, what makes her most confused is technically, the grand parents are not coming to take other people's job and therefore grabbing the social resources, on the contrary, they have to spend their savings here, giving them Long Term Visit Pass does not affect the total foreign manpower here. However, to one's surprise, it is common to see the same PR has his/her parents LTVP approved once he/her becomes naturalized Singapore citizen. Therefore, it is no wonder PR immigrants view the "highly selective strategy" as an incentive to attract new citizens.

Fourthly, the "highly selective strategy" being used in PR application would affect the immigrants' family planning in some circumstances. Similar to Ms. Shen, Mrs. Zhang, 27, an Educator shares her point of view from a woman's perspective as she claims. In a word, current foreign manpower policies largely restrict people in her age to consider giving birth in Singapore as the authority set a very high salary curb for foreign professionals to bring their family into Singapore with a Dependent Pass. As both Mr. Zhang and Mrs. Zhang are not PR

yet, and Mr. Zhang, 28, a young professional graduate from NUS, it is almost impossible for him to earn at least \$5000 a month (Ministry of Manpower, 2015) so as to allow Mrs. Zhang to expect their baby without quitting her current job. In that case, one may suggest Mrs. Zhang could choose to go back to work after maternity leave, however, it turns back to the awkward situation as Ms. Shen describes above that even for PR, it is still very hard to get their parents coming to take care of the baby, not to mention non-PR couple like Mr. and Mrs. Zhang. As Mrs. Zhang further adds:

Many of my friends have no choice but to go back to their country of origin because they are pregnant. You cannot ask a woman to keep waiting for a PR at her 30s as she might be losing her fertility. As for us, the reason we still yet to decide in terms of stay or leave is we are still young and not yet to over 30. However, if we still have no idea whether we can have PR once passes 30 years old, we are in the trap and we may have no choice but to decide anyway. This is because we cannot wait anymore, even if we want to stay, we cannot... To me, 30 years old is a hump. When you reach 30 years old, you'd better make some sacrifice for your coming kid, for the health of the wife, you cannot let your wife become a woman of advanced reproductive age. I have known a lot of people who want to stay and integrate well to the Singaporean society, including many from our church, but they're "forced" to ...Because they are pregnant. (Mrs. Zhang, 27, Educator).

Nevertheless, with the implementation of the highly selective strategy, I have also seen positive response from the non-PR immigrants as well as PR immigrants. For example, Ms. Liu, 31, also an Educator whose viewpoint

apparently not in favor of Mrs. Zhang's as discussed above. She claims of course she wants to be a PR, but if not now, life still continuous, she feels she is just bonded by the PR status as with the PR at hand, she will feel like being set free and stay in Singapore as she wants. She believes she would be finally given PR if she can keep contributing to the society and upgrade herself. To her, it is just a matter of time. It is because she was majored in education and Singapore values education in general, therefore, it is not a big issue for her to have PR in the future. What is important is whether she has that perseverance to uphold her faith of PR by the end of the day. Mr. Qi, 43, another Educator who agrees to the "highly selective strategy" and regards it as a form of caring that Singapore government to its people. Because these immigrants are mostly adults and directly import from foreign countries, they could potentially become the burden of the society if they are not highly qualified. There is nothing wrong to implement this policy.

Last but not least, I would like to look at the points of views that naturalized Mainland Chinese immigrants held regarding the "highly selective strategy" which being adopted against PR application. It is not surprisingly, to protect their portion of entitlements as the naturalized Singapore citizens, they mostly support the government initiative to tighten the PR application as I called the "highly selective strategy" that largely restrict the chances for new Chinese immigrants become PR as easy as pre-2011. However, some of their viewpoints may be less considerate and compassionate. For example, Dr. Feng, 37, a Researcher who admits his sense of exclusiveness against entering new immigrants, because he believes the limited resources that Singapore has fundamentally affect the provision of public transportation, healthcare etc. therefore he objects the government population policy in terms of increasing

the population to 6.9 million and even more in the future. He further adds that if a new PR or citizen is not an elite intellectual that recognized by the authority, he or she probably would have high chance to be excluded by the fellow Singaporeans. And Ms. Zhou, 35, an Educator who has been a naturalized citizen since 2012 also agrees to the current highly selective policy by criticizing the pre-2011 liberal immigration policy that allowing the Study Mama to be granted PR status therefore devalued the permanent residency of Singapore by and large. It has to be mentioned that it is still necessary for the concerning authority to put in more efforts to integrate these “elites” new citizens into the host society, so as to decouple themselves from the aforesaid superior status.

As a conclusion, this section discussed how the “highly selective strategy” as the byproduct of the “Singaporean-first” policies has pervasively affected the lives of the PR and non-PR new Chinese immigrants, and it has the potential to disintegrate the commitment to be an integral part of the host society that many non-PR and PR uphold in terms of the failure of their parents' LTVP application, the immigrants' family planning and many others. Although there is necessity to employ the “highly selective strategy” to screen PR application, the responsible authority needs to be reminded that it has the potential to backlash the social integration as the effect of this strategy could easily come across the country border for some transnational families. Besides, it also discourages the immigrants' family planning in some circumstances. Therefore, it is better for the immigration authority to humanely calibrate the application of the “highly selective strategy” when necessary.

5.3 An Emergent Citizenship Dilemma?

Existing research regarding citizenship dilemma was portrayed as a situation at the immigrants homeland that the Mainland Chinese returnees from Canada faced that “they have limited rights” as foreigners in China, “whereas their status as Canadian citizens living abroad simultaneously removes them” from the social security provisions given by the Canadian state (Ho, 2011, p. 643). However, in the context of Singapore, the notion of the emergent citizenship dilemma does exactly show some new patterns that based on the conventional concepts like instrumental citizenship, pragmatic citizenship or flexible citizenship (Ip, Inglis, & Wu, 1997; Mavroudi, 2008; Ong, 1999). In this section, I shall discuss the consequence that the “Singaporeans-first” policies bring into the host society as mentioned in the previous chapters. In other words, what I try to find out is whether the “Singaporeans-first” policies and its subsequent measures speed up their intention to be the naturalized Singapore citizens thus create the citizenship dilemma and lead to backlash the social integration or just as simple as a matter of instrumental citizenship to the Singapore host society. When it comes to the citizenship dilemma, one needs to understand the background that China is on the way to be a rising superpower in the coming decades which made Chinese citizenship no longer valueless, and as both governments of China and Singapore intransigently against the dual citizenship, new Chinese immigrants need to renounce their Chinese citizenship before naturalize to the Singapore citizenship. Therefore, citizenship dilemma only occurs while PR immigrants need to join the naturalized Singapore citizenship so as to be included of the inseparable entitlements that exclusively for citizens or have to leave for endeavors elsewhere. Otherwise, if PR immigrants voluntarily choose to be the naturalized Singapore citizens, it is just considered

as a private decision and a matter of instrumental citizenship which have no harm to the integration in the host society.

First, with the implement of the “Singaporeans-first” policies, PR immigrants with preschool kids are fundamentally affected and choose to be naturalized Singapore citizen which probably contribute to the emergent citizenship dilemma. It is true that not all the PR immigrants would be necessarily affected if they have grown children. But to many young PR immigrants from Mainland China, education matter is one of the key concerns that they would not want to compromise as I discussed before. Therefore, they have to apply for naturalized citizenship only to avoid the potential loss of their kid’s education opportunity in the host society. I quote Dr. Long’s words as follows:

... Because of these policies, a school place does matters, I made this very pragmatic decision to be a naturalized Singapore citizen. Unfortunately, it won’t help to build my Singaporean identity. On the contrary, I can feel some sort of backlashes when it comes to integration of the society... I used to like Singapore very much, but now, I feel I was forced to become Singapore citizen. (Dr. Long, 31, naturalized Singapore citizen).

Second, naturalized citizenship guarantees the right to bring grandparents to take care of grandkids in Singapore. For example, like a Mainland immigrant couple, Dr. Xiang, 39, engineer and Ms. Shen, 35, Educator are both naturalized Singapore citizen. Speaking about the reasons for them to become Singapore citizens, Dr. Xiang attributed to housing and Ms. Shen’s intension to bring her parents to take care of her kid as both of them need to go out for work.... Dr.

Xiang further admits that the “Singaporeans-first” policies are very stiff, as the most probable consequence, either you try every possible to be a naturalized Singapore citizen, or you may choose to leave the country permanently, I have been seeing people made these choices. Fortunately, Ms. Shen, reviews her naturalization process as a positive one. She adds:

I cannot say the society forced me to make this decision. If it is not that attractive, I won't choose to be a naturalized Singapore citizen.... In fact, I have been a PR for many years. And we have thought of change our citizenship before I help my parents to apply for the Long-Term Visit Pass. I probably had such thought before, maybe I was still wondering about back to China in the future. The second reason being my laziness as well as the fear of the troubles to go through the application process, I almost forgot it. However, because of my parents' visa issues this time round, I finally decided to change my citizenship. (Ms. Shen, 35, educator).

Third, Fears of PRs might not have their Re-Entry Permit renewal. Ms. Zhou, speaking about her reason to be a naturalized Singapore citizen. She still remembered as in the year 2012, rumors being spread that PRs might not have their Re-Entry Permit renewal. Coincidentally, her husband and her had been PR since 2007, and were due for renewal exactly in 2012. Her husband told her one of his colleague had his PR renewal failed thus had to sell his HDB flat and went back to China. It made them really nervous as they had been in Singapore for 5 years which cost all our personal networks in China. Both of them were aware that without a network, they can do nothing in China. Neither were they the people with high academic qualification and competitive competences, nor

practical to start over again in China. Therefore, they chose to be naturalized Singapore citizens for a stable and foreseeable life here.

Obviously, the above three scenarios show the emergent citizenship dilemma that can be considered as the consequence of the “Singaporeans-first” policies. If the previous liberal immigration policy was at the expense of the benefits of the born and bred Singaporeans, the “Singaporeans-first” policies are at the expense of the PR immigrants in terms of the kids’ education rights and grandparents caring grandkids rights. Since these PR immigrants are to some extent forced to be the naturalized Singapore citizens, it is realistic for them to choose not integrate into the host society. As I was told by many interviewees, there are a great number of PR immigrants chose to start their new lives back in China or elsewhere.

However, it is no wonder other PR immigrants may have more choice when it comes to joining the Singapore citizenship. In next scenario, it tells us money wise to fund kid studying in U.S. can be the reason for a PR to take up Singapore citizenship. For example, Mr. Zhao, 48, a naturalized researcher who has a son studying in a U.S. college and has been staying in Singapore since 2004, saying the reason he chose to work in Singapore is he needs to finance his son’s college education as comparing to work in China. However, while his son graduate from college, he would be in his 50s. As a man is his 50s, even he chooses to return to China, he can do nothing but retire and spend his rest of the life there. In viewing of that, keeping his Chinese citizenship does not matter anymore. In other words, he would most probably choose to keep staying in Singapore rather than go back to China after his son’s graduation. Therefore, he chose to be a naturalized Singapore citizen.... He still remembered the moment he received the approval

letter of his citizenship application, although he murmured better rejecting me...better rejecting me, he still wanted his application being approved from his heart.

Fifth, PR immigrant becomes naturalized Singapore citizen because of the academic environment that having him the rights to express thoughts freely. For Dr. Feng, 37, a researcher who works in the field of humanities. He shows us another story of being a naturalized Singapore citizen. He received his academic training in Singapore and continuously works as a researcher since his arrival in Singapore in 2006. He believes he probably would not go back to his country of origin permanently as he has a little bit disappointed by the academic environment there. He worries about not having the rights to express his thoughts freely and treats it as one of the most painful things if he lives there. Although Singapore is a small city-state, it has equipped with an international horizon.

Lastly, I shall discuss some PR immigrant may stay put with the implement of the "Singaporeans-first" policies. Clearly, those PR immigrants who still want to keep their PR status are probably not affected by the "Singaporeans-first" policies. This is because their loved ones and kids have already been naturalized Singapore citizens. As such, these PRs are nothing to do with social division or backlash the integration in the host society either. For example, Mr. Tao, 40, a veteran semiconductor technician has been a Singapore PR since 2004, both his wife and daughter are naturalized Singapore citizens. He is fully aware of all the benefits that entitled to the citizens, however, as he claims he wants to keep his Chinese passport by the end of his life as he sacrificed all his career and life to bring his family here but he rather to stay in China till his last day. To one's

surprise, he has no complaint to the host society, on the contrary, he has been enjoying the good environment here and trying his every best to keep his Chinese identity through his Chinese citizenship.

As a conclusion of this section, I argued that with the implement of the “Singaporeans-first” policies, PR immigrants soon realize that they have to deal with a citizenship dilemma. This is because the “Singaporeans-first” policies aiming to largely constrict the benefits that PRs have been entitled for years. Unlike other nations, the most distinction is voting rights between PR and citizen. To most Singapore PR who face housing, child education and many other needs, they have less choice but to consider to be naturalized citizens rather than staying on their PR status comfortably as the latter almost cut the chances for their children to enter the public school, hard to bring their parents to take care of kids and so on and so forth. In addition, one cannot denial that not all PR immigrants are affected by the “Singaporeans-first” policies. To this group of immigrants, they seem to be comfortable whether to be naturalized Singapore citizens thus falling into a much pragmatic category which have little to do with their integration. Therefore, I use the notion of emergent citizenship dilemma with a question mark to differentiate the consequence of the “Singaporeans-first” policies as only those who pervasively affected by the policies would possibly backlash the integration into the host society.

Chapter 6: Concluding

6.1 Limitation of the Study

As mentioned before, one of the limitation of this study is the sampling. This is because with a limited resource in terms of the time and money incentives could be invested into this study, there are only 40 new Chinese immigrants has been successfully approached to participate the group interview as well as the in-depth interviews. As I adopted snowball sampling, all 40 interviewees were recruited through the personal contacts of my wife and myself. Therefore, one may be easily noticed that many of the interviewee were from same occupation, namely, educator. In other words, many of them were teachers by the time of the interviews, nevertheless, they taught in different schools, including but not limited to kindergarten, government schools, private institutes and universities. However, as I cannot provide reasonable incentives, I cannot directly tease out interviewees with much similar backgrounds but try my luck and pray to have their interesting story so as to be worthy of my time and energy put in. With more research funds being allocated, future study may set a much workable plan to attract more new immigrants with more diversified professions so as to retrieve more unknown patterns of immigrants' integration into host society and other designated research purposes.

Another limit is this study does not include the viewpoints made by ethnic Chinese Singaporeans with regard to the barriers of integration in terms of the language, anti-immigrant sentiment and "Singaporean-first" policies that new Chinese immigrants faced. The reasons are almost the same as mentioned above. Again, with more time and funds, viewpoints made by ethnic Chinese

Singaporeans can be used to compare and contrast with those made by new Chinese immigrants so as to provide more insights and possibly generate new knowledge through the entire research progress.

6.2 Closing Remarks

As for conclusions, this study successfully explores three key propositions through analyzing how language, sentiment and policy barriers are involved in the integration process of new Chinese immigrants. Based on the empirical data gathered from them directly in addition to online news reports and forum comments, this study makes the following conclusions.

First, the ongoing failure of pervasive English training in the sending country has caused the English language barrier when many new Chinese immigrants enter the Singapore. To better tackle the English language barrier, this study suggests both the new Chinese immigrants and the host society should work together to locate a bridging channel to enhance immigrants' English proficiency while allowing them speaking Chinese as their main communicative vehicle before well equipped with considerable English competence. To make it happen, the Singapore authority needs to appropriate public funds for subsidizing English class which can be taken up by all the residents and non-residents with Long-term Visiting Pass (LTVP). To achieve linguistic integration, immigrants, whether they are seeking renewal of the Employment Pass, permanent residency or naturalized citizenship of Singapore, they must show their proficiency of English, or at least they need to prove that they have such potential to acquire this language within a stipulated time. It is the Singaporean multilinguistic landscape

calls for immigrants' integration through the enhanced English proficiency.

Secondly, as this study concluded, the anti-immigrant sentiment was most probably overestimated the perspective of my designated population: highly educated new Chinese immigrants. Because it is largely based on media reports and online forums and partly due to the *New Racism* ideology went viral with the pressure both covertly and overtly brought in to host society by the immigrants. My in-depth interviews have also shown these group of people are not bothered by the anti-immigrant sentiment. More importantly, the unique residential patterns of Singapore further provided a workable platform to promote intra-ethnic communication both at neighborhood and community level thus would help to decrease of the anti-immigrant sentiment rather than growing. Resident community is a feasible platform to engage the new immigrants. When it comes to integration, immigrants can be educated and their commitment to be part of the community can be nurtured. To many new Chinese immigrants, kids are one of the main reasons why they choose to settle down in Singapore. Successfully engaging immigrant kids into resident community, in the meantime, their parents will join in together. In addition, having new immigrants as volunteers and grassroots leaders would help to enhance the community interaction and at the same time served as an essential pillar to alleviate the sentiment of anti-immigrant with the unique residential pattern that has been discussed early.

Thirdly, even the "Singaporeans-first" policies pervasively affected the life the new Chinese immigrants including but not limited to immigration, education and housing rights and benefits, the new Chinese immigrants generally understand and support the rationales behind the "Singaporeans-first" policies.

Nevertheless, for new immigrants with school age kids, the "Singaporeans-first" policies would most probably act as the catalyst that motivate non-PR immigrants pursue PR status and PRs turn themselves into naturalized citizens so as to be fairly treated under the "Singaporeans-first" policies. As for the "highly selective strategy" which considered as the byproduct of the "Singaporeans-first" policies, it has pervasively affected the lives of the PR and non-PR new Chinese immigrants, and it has the potential to disintegrate the commitment to be an integral part of the host society that many non-PR and PR uphold in terms of the failure of their parents' LTVP application, the immigrants' family planning and many others. Although there is necessity to employ the "highly selective strategy" to screen PR application, the responsible authority needs to be reminded that it has the potential to backlash the social integration as the effect of this strategy could easily come across the country border for some transnational families. Besides, it also discourages the immigrants' family planning in some circumstances. Therefore, it is better for the immigration authority to humanely calibrate the application of the "highly selective strategy" when necessary. Regarding the emergent citizenship dilemma, It can be argued that with the implement of the "Singaporeans-first" policies, PR immigrants soon realize that they have to deal with a citizenship dilemma. This is because the "Singaporeans-first" policies aiming to largely constrict the benefits that PRs have been entitled for years. Unlike other nations, the most distinction is voting rights between PR and citizen. To most Singapore PR who face housing, child education and many other needs, they have less choice but to consider to be naturalized citizens rather than staying on their PR status comfortably as the latter almost cut the chances for their children to enter the public school, hard to bring their parents to take care of kids and so on and so forth. In addition, one cannot denial that not all PR immigrants are affected by the "Singaporeans-first"

policies. To this group of immigrants, they seem to be comfortable whether to be naturalized Singapore citizens thus falling into a much pragmatic category which have little to do with their integration. Therefore, I use the notion of emergent citizenship dilemma with a question mark to differentiate the consequence of the “Singaporeans-first” policies as only those who pervasively affected by the policies would possibly backlash the integration into the host society.

In one word, barriers in terms of English language, anti-immigrant sentiment and the “Singaporeans-first” policies which impeded progress of integration for new Chinese immigrants in the past would be alleviated if not collapse as time goes by. And more importantly, reviewing the barriers of integration is worth doing constantly with the ever-changing immigration and integration practice in Singapore as the immigrants’ host society.

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