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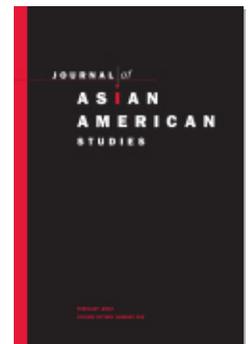
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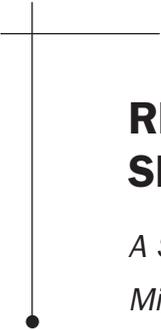
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# RETURN MIGRATION AND SELECTIVE CITIZENSHIP

*A Study of Returning Chinese Professional  
Migrants from the United States*

Lisong **Liu**

IN A POSTING ON MARCH 31, 2006, ON HAIGUINET, ONE OF THE LARGEST ONLINE communities of Chinese returning migrants, a man sought advice on whether he should return to China. He had been in the United States for ten years and was then working in Silicon Valley. A company at the Zhangjiang High-Tech Park in Shanghai offered him an attractive managerial position with an annual salary of US\$50–63,000 besides other benefits (quite high compared to the local salary level). While earning a stable yearly income around US\$80–90,000 in Silicon Valley, the man found his career limited and his life in the United States monotonous.<sup>1</sup> Numerous comments poured in with advice from both returnees and nonreturnees, mostly encouraging him to return to China. One important question raised by several respondents, however, was about citizenship. “If you are not an American citizen,” one respondent warned, “with that high salary, I guess it will be embarrassing after one year, as some Chinese can do the same work (with a lower salary). Why just pay you that high? . . . Thus, better get American citizenship before returning (so as to be paid differently).”<sup>2</sup> Another respondent added that an American passport would also secure his easy return to the United States without worrying about the tedious American immigration requirements and paperwork.<sup>3</sup> There were also notes of caution that with American citizenship, the returnee would face many restrictions in living and working in China as a foreigner and might even risk deportation if things went wrong.<sup>4</sup>

The active discussion on Haiguinet illustrates both the rising tide of Chinese professional migrants (particularly students turned migrants) returning to China and the critical role that citizenship status plays in migrants' plans of returning and in their complex relationships with both the homeland and the country of immigration as they navigated in between. The return migration of mainland Chinese professionals has gained increasing public attention and has been highlighted in recent years against the backdrop of China's robust economic growth in contrast to the economic recession in the United States and around the world.<sup>5</sup> Most reports and studies have focused on the demographic profiles of returnees, patterns of return migration, treatment and adjustment of returnees in China, and their contributions to China's economic, educational, and scientific development.<sup>6</sup>

Based on a comprehensive ethnographic study of the online Haiguinet community and on interviews of returnees,<sup>7</sup> this article explores returning migrants' choices and interpretations of citizenship. It revises the anthropologist Aihwa Ong's provocative concept of "flexible citizenship," which describes the transnational mobility of Hong Kong business elites who accumulated multiple passports and embodied the prevalence of flexible accumulation and the power of global capitalism.<sup>8</sup> In comparison, this article proposes the notion of "selective citizenship." First of all, unlike Ong's study of a small group of "globe-trotting managerial elites," this article looks at ordinary migrants (including middle-class professionals) to see how they negotiated complex immigration laws and citizenship requirements to gain their transnational mobility in the first place. It shows migrants' careful choice of citizenship based on a historically formed unequal international system in which different passports and citizenship carry different privileges and prestige. Second, while Ong shrewdly illustrates Asian corporate elites' dancing to the tune of global capitalism and profiting from flexible and commodified membership, this article highlights the varied and nuanced understandings of nationality and citizenship among ordinary migrants. For them, nationality is in fact questionable for the underlying agenda of nations to claim subjects and loyalty. Therefore, selecting or changing nationality is a way for migrants to claim their own identity and autonomy.

The concept of “selective citizenship” also complicates the meanings of “dual nationality” and “dual citizenship” that have been often celebrated as a reflection of eroding national boundaries under globalization and as the embodiment of migrants’ transnational or even postnational identities and rights.<sup>10</sup> Discussions on Haiguinet, along with the general debates on “dual nationality” in and outside of China, reveal wide variations in the attitudes of migrants and returnees toward “dual nationality” based on their location, socioeconomic status, and understanding of Chinese history and politics. At the same time, a careful study of the origin of Chinese nationality laws, the recent development of Chinese green card policies, as well as the insistence of the current Chinese government on the single-nationality principle, shows that nation-states do not necessarily yield to the popular trend of “dual nationality” but remain proactive and selective in refashioning national boundaries. Utilizing the concept of “selective citizenship,” this article captures the selective nature on both ends of the negotiations between nation-states and migrants. It cautions us against a universal and idealized “dual nationality” model and reminds us of the importance of full considerations of historical and local contexts.

### **THE TIDE OF RETURN**

From 1978 to 2008, China sent 1.39 million students and scholars to study abroad, and the majority stayed abroad and adjusted their immigrant status.<sup>11</sup> However, since the mid-1990s, with China’s remarkable economic reform and steady rise on the world stage, increasing numbers of Chinese student migrants have returned to China. In 1990, 1,593 students returned; the number increased to 5,750 in 1995, 9,121 in 2000, 34,987 in 2005, and 108,300 in 2009.<sup>12</sup> The total number of returned students and scholars was more than 632,000 in 2010.<sup>13</sup> The return rate of students in the United States, which has hosted more than half of Chinese students abroad, was estimated at 18.8 percent in the 1980s and 1990s, and the American economic recessions in the 2000s have triggered more interest among student migrants to return.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, a large number of student migrants returned without settling down in China as they frequently traveled between China and the country of their immigration. A survey

conducted in 2000 by China's Ministry of Education showed that only 44 percent of 551 returned students who had set up enterprises in thirteen industrial parks were living in China on a regular basis.<sup>15</sup> Another survey in 2008 of 614 returnees from the United States showed that 34 percent of them held American green cards or citizenship.<sup>16</sup>

Returnees have concentrated in major cities like Beijing and Shanghai. A survey of 185 returnees in Shanghai in the early 2000s showed that the majority were men (81.1 percent) and held master's or doctoral degrees (91.4 percent); the first eight most popular countries where the returnees came from were the United States, Japan, Britain, France, Canada, Germany, Australia, and Russia; and 72.4 percent of the returnees had working experiences overseas (with an average of 4.36 years, and the longest being 14 years).<sup>17</sup> Most returnees chose to work in business and private-owned enterprises or in public enterprises such as universities and research institutions. A small number of returnees worked in government. A survey of returnees in Shenzhen in Guangdong province in 2000 showed that returnees in business comprised 61.4 percent, those in public institutions 27.2 percent, while those in government only 5 percent.<sup>18</sup>

The tide of return of mainland Chinese professional migrants reflects the historical reforms and changes in China, which can be best illustrated by two surveys. One was conducted by David Zweig, Cheng Changgui, and Rosen Stanley in the early 1990s in the wake of the Tiananmen Square Incident, when most Chinese students and scholars on U.S. campuses chose to stay abroad considering the unsettling political environment in China and better career opportunities in the United States.<sup>19</sup> In contrast, the survey conducted by Vivek Wadhwa and his associates in 2008 demonstrated the surging waves of returning Chinese professional migrants and raised concerns about the decreasing American competitiveness with the loss of these highly educated talents. This survey pointed out the major reasons for professional migrants' return, such as career opportunities, family ties, and the quality of life in the homeland.<sup>20</sup> My own interviews and study of the online returnee community indicate similar reasons, especially returnees' preference for more cultural comfort and better career opportunities back in China in comparison with the glass ceiling and cultural alienation in the United States. As a returnee in Shanghai noted in his response to the

Silicon Valley migrant introduced in the beginning of this article, there were significant benefits of returning, such as “a faster career track,” “start your own business in the future,” “visibility and view from the top in a company,” “higher social status,” “close to family and childhood friends,” “more lively and dynamic environment,” and even “find your ideal soul mate.”<sup>21</sup>

Though China’s booming economy and profound social changes have provided ample career opportunities for returning migrants, migrants’ role in Chinese society and their choice of citizenship seem to be a different matter and have been largely shaped by the distinct political and legal conditions of mainland China. This can be easily seen by comparing them with their Hong Kong and Taiwan counterparts. While many returnees to Taiwan have been promoted to the highest government offices (including the current president, Ma Yingjiu) and helped establish Taiwan’s high-tech parks and design important policies,<sup>22</sup> mainland Chinese returnees have hardly gained any significant political clout, and returnees often needed to avoid politically sensitive issues. The online Haiguinet community, for example, had to follow government regulations by self-censoring certain words and discussions. With its Internet service station relocated to China after 2006 and as one of the few popular websites among Chinese overseas that has not been blocked by the Chinese government, this self-censorship can be seen as a tactic of the online community for more audience and space rather than a surrender of independence. At the same time, Haiguinet members often outwitted the government by using alternative expressions of sensitive terms, such as replacing “democracy” with “MZ” (the initials of the Chinese *pinyin* of the English word) and the “Tiananmen Square Incident” with “Guang\*Chang” (the two separated Chinese characters of “square”).

Moreover, unlike migrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan who can possess multiple nationalities, mainland Chinese have to choose one nationality because mainland China’s nationality law does not allow dual citizenship.<sup>23</sup> The lack of flexible citizenship, together with discriminatory treatment of different groups in China (including the different treatment of mainland Chinese from that of Taiwan and Hong Kong residents), deeply frustrated mainland Chinese migrants and returnees and led to

their sharp criticisms of the insufficient citizenship rights in China, on the one hand, and their careful calculation of the costs and the gains of different citizenship, on the other.

### **WHY U.S. CITIZENSHIP: SELECTING CITIZENSHIP UNDER AN UNEQUAL INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM**

While the British sociologist T. H. Marshall identified citizenship as a process of the enlargement of rights in a homogeneous Western society, immigration scholars in recent years have increasingly viewed citizenship as a social category and a site of negotiation and contestation.<sup>24</sup> Immigrants' choice of citizenship, scholars have noted, is often based on their cautious consideration of the boundaries citizenship entails and their careful calculation of the costs and the benefits of naturalization.<sup>25</sup>

An important reason for returning Chinese migrants to apply for U.S. citizenship is the advantageous position of a U.S. citizen in the global labor market. Besides the online advice quoted in the beginning that highlighted the necessity of U.S. citizenship to justify a high salary, a more vivid example is my interview with a returnee in Shanghai. Zhang returned to China in 2001 and worked as a senior manager for an American company in the Zhangjiang High-Tech Park. His company had 400 employees; among them, about twenty people had U.S. passports, and thirty people had overseas experiences without naturalization or had passports of foreign countries other than the United States (such as Canada and Australia). As Zhang said, for the same position in his company, the salary of the second group was about twice that of local people, while the salary for employees like him with U.S. citizenship was four times the local package. Zhang told the story of a talented Chinese who first worked at the headquarters of his company in the United States and then was sent back to China before obtaining American immigrant status and citizenship. Soon, the managers of the company lowered his salary because they assumed (subconsciously and unanimously, as Zhang said) that this man could not easily go back to the United States again and therefore was not worth the American-level payment. Zhang stressed that in his own case his U.S. citizenship—and his family still in the United States—ensured his mobility and helped him

bargain for an ideal payment package. He called this a “potential” or a “tension” (original English words used by Zhang), which in fact not only included advantageous payment but also his “confidence level.”<sup>26</sup>

Zhang’s case illustrates the role of U.S. citizenship in bargaining for privileged economic status or for a so-called expatriate compensation package, which is usually far better than local-level payments. Among expatriates, those with Western nationalities often dominate the top positions, and their salary levels are far higher than those of local employees or returning Chinese students who have not changed their citizenship. According to a survey of expatriates in China conducted in 2005 by the Hewitt Associates (now renamed Aon Hewitt), the world’s leading human resources outsourcing and consulting services provider, Westerners formed the highest percentage of top executives in the survey (54 percent), and the highest percentage of expatriates at the managerial level were either Westerners (29 percent) or China-hired foreigners (27 percent).<sup>27</sup> Another study in 2004 showed that while the salary level for senior expatriates ranged between US\$160,000 and US\$320,000, compensation packages for China-hired foreigners dropped 20–30 percent below the expatriate pay and those for mainland Chinese returnees (most likely without Western nationalities) 60 percent below.<sup>28</sup> As a result, for many returning Chinese migrants from the United States, obtaining U.S. citizenship and retaining a base in the United States had played a critical role in getting assigned an advantageous compensation package. In fact, as Zhang’s case revealed, U.S. citizenship even outplayed other Western nationalities. This attests to the varying capitalization of different citizenship in a highly unequal international economic order, in which the United States occupies the core and U.S. residence and legal status are viewed as the most beneficial, as Xiang Biao also illustrates in his study of the global body-shopping of Indian IT workers.<sup>29</sup>

As professionals who often traveled internationally, returning Chinese migrants also valued the advantage of the free access to most countries provided by a U.S. passport. Almost all my interviewees in China gave the convenience of international travel with a U.S. passport as one of the foremost reasons for applying for U.S. citizenship. On Haiguinet in 2006, an online member posted an article that had been widely circulated on

the Internet. The article listed the numbers of visa-exempt countries for different passports. The United States ranked among the top of the eighty-three countries listed: U.S. citizens could enter about 130 countries or territories without the need to apply for an entry visa. In contrast, Chinese passport holders could only enjoy this visa-exempt privilege in around eighteen countries, better only than passport holders from North Korea, Pakistan, Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan. The posting immediately aroused complaints among Haiguinet members about the difficulties in traveling internationally with a Chinese passport.<sup>30</sup> While it is hard to trace the original source of this passport ranking, a check with official sources confirms the remarkable difference. About 130 out of the 200 states listed by the U.S. Department of State do not require visas for U.S. citizens traveling for tourist or business purposes from thirty days to a few months. As for China, while there are sixty-nine countries listed by China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs that waive the visa requirement for Chinese passport holders, most of them apply this privilege only to Chinese diplomats and government officials. Twenty-three countries allow Chinese citizens without a visa to enter if they hold ordinary passports but visit for state-related businesses. Only one state (the Republic of San Marino, a small republic completely surrounded by Italy) waives the visa requirement for Chinese citizens with ordinary passports regardless of the nature of the visit.<sup>31</sup>

The difference in international travel between Chinese and U.S. citizenship (or, more accurately, Chinese and U.S. "passports") again reveals the unequal status of nations in the interlocking international system of nation-states. In his discussion of the historical development of passports, John Torpey argues that the "invention" of the passport illuminates the "institutionalization of the idea of the 'nation-state' and its efforts of regulating people's movements."<sup>32</sup> Studying the globalization of borders spearheaded by the widespread exclusion laws of Asians in the late nineteenth century, Adam McKeown further argues that the usage of passports and the institutionalization of border control practices embodied the self-claimed autonomy of nations and constituted the international hierarchy of nation-states justified by (and further justifying) the racialization of non-Western nations.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, the effectiveness of passports is based on a historically formed unequal international system in which the European

and American states enjoy greater privileges in gaining access to the main regions (and resources) of the world. The sharp contrast of the prestige of U.S. and Chinese passports cannot be understood without this historical background, which continues to impact the contemporary international system as well as migrants' choice of citizenship.

Returnees also compared social and familial conditions and political systems in different national contexts in making their choice of citizenship. Many returning migrants based their applications for U.S. citizenship on careful considerations of family interests, especially children's education. In a family story told by a man on Haiguinet in 2006, he was offered a position in China, but his wife preferred to live in America and have their six-month-old child educated in the United States. They had had green cards for two and a half years, and his wife suggested he wait and get American citizenship before returning.<sup>34</sup> Concerned with the quality of life and the stressful schooling in China, as well as the painful cultural transition of a U.S.-born child brought back to China, many returning migrants opted for U.S. citizenship to secure family reunion in the United States and to keep children there for better educational and career opportunities.

For some returning migrants, U.S. citizenship also served as a shelter protecting them from political uncertainties in mainland China. These returnees were concerned with China's problematic legal system and the rule of the Chinese Communist Party. Though a significant motivation, political protection was not mentioned by returning migrants as frequently as the other reasons discussed above since the majority of returnees have been pursuing opportunities in economic, social, or cultural fields rather than engaging in political activities.

While U.S. citizenship has been used by returning Chinese migrants for economic gains, travel convenience, children's education, and political protection, to list just a few major reasons, obtaining U.S. citizenship is no easy work; there is a wait of five years after being granted lawful permanent resident status (LPR, or a green card). Applicants must stay in the United States for at least half of the five years and should not leave the United States for more than half a year at a time. If green card holders leave the United States for a trip between six and twelve months, they might break or disrupt their "continuous residence" unless providing evidence to

prove they continue to “live, work and/or keep ties to the United States.” If they leave the country for more than one year, they should apply for a Reentry Permit to avoid losing permanent residence.<sup>35</sup> For many returning migrants, maintaining their green cards and accumulating the required time of residence in the United States for future citizenship application have been a big challenge (or an “immigration imprisonment,” as dubbed by many migrants).

The online Haiguinet community has been a wonderful space for returning migrants and potential returnees to share experiences and strategies of maintaining immigrant status and transnational mobility. Founded in 2003, Haiguinet had a membership of around 30,000 in late 2006 and more than 74,000 in late 2011. It was founded by returnees in business and high-tech industries to exchange information for business opportunities. With roaring membership and diverse interests, the returnee community developed many subforums such as the Returnees’ Tea House (*haigui chaguan*) to address broader and more practical issues, including how to understand citizenship requirements and deal with immigration officers, where to live and find friends after returning, how to deal with children’s education in China, and how one felt about China’s increasing influence in the world. The transnational access of the Internet also enabled returnees, potential returnees, and nonreturnees from various countries (the United States, Canada, Australia, China, and so on) to gather in this virtual community to exchange information and strategies and share happiness and sorrows.

In December 2004, an online member forwarded to Haiguinet a document of legal advice from an immigration lawyer named Zhang Zherui on how to deal with U.S. immigration laws and maintain immigrant status. Zhang came to study in the United States in 1985 and then stayed and founded his immigration law firm. He provided returnees with several suggestions such as paying tax to the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, retaining real estate in the United States, keeping U.S. credit cards and driver’s license, and getting certificates of the nature and duration of the overseas employment.<sup>36</sup>

Besides such postings providing formal legal advice, Haiguinet members also posted and shared their own strategies. A common strategy

recommended is “one family, two systems,” that is, one spouse retaining Chinese nationality while the other applies for American citizenship in order to secure a base in the United States. While the fact that most mainland Chinese returnees are men seems to leave women in the passive role of waiting for American citizenship in the United States as a backup for men’s returning and mobility, it is not simply a “reinvented” patriarchal family structure portrayed in Ong’s study of Hong Kong business migrants but more resembles what the sociologist Chan Kwok-bun describes as the time-honored “family dispersal” strategy of migrants to procure a better family future.<sup>37</sup> Gender stereotypes still exist, such as returning men being viewed as more “career-oriented” while staying women are viewed as “content with comfortable American life.” However, as many mainland Chinese students turned migrant families are formed with spouses both highly educated and independent, women are often on an equal footing with their male partners in designing career paths and deciding whether to return. The “one family, two nationalities” strategy therefore represents the active choice of citizenship of migrants, both men and women, to circumvent U.S. immigration laws and maximize their family interests and transnational mobility.

There are also tips and suggestions on Haiguinet by returning migrants based on their direct encounters with U.S. immigration officers. With no stamp of the exit date by U.S. customs officers, many returnees could obscure the exact length of their absence from the United States. On Haiguinet, returnees discussed this strategy in direct and indirect ways. For example, on October 28, 2003, a returning green card holder asked for advice about how often to return to the United States to maintain his green card. A respondent replied that one had to stay at least six months in the United States each year. The respondent continued: “But you know that there is no record when you leave the United States. I am not telling you to lie, but you know what I mean.”<sup>38</sup> Considering the lack of privacy on the Internet, many online members decided to form offline groups and discuss strategies with each other via email. While migrants’ negotiations with nation-states were not new in history, the Internet and the virtual community have provided migrants with new opportunities for sharing information and dealing with immigration laws and bureaucrats.

The pressure on returnees to meet residence requirements and to apply for U.S. citizenship highlights the distinction between U.S. lawful permanent residents and U.S. citizens. It has been often understood that U.S. lawful permanent residents enjoy most of the rights of citizens with only a few exceptions, such as the right to vote and to be elected for public office. However, such conventional understanding has focused on the rights of lawful permanent residents *inside* the United States, and there has been little attention to the fact of migrants' constantly leaving the United States and accordingly to their rights *outside* the United States. In fact, the differences between permanent residents (still an "alien") and citizens become more explicit and distinct outside the United States: even the immigrants' right of reentry into the United States becomes vulnerable. In other words, while permanent residents to a large degree enjoy benefits similar to those of citizens, the boundaries between citizens and permanent residents are salient once migrants step outside national territories. This reveals the resolution and power of nation-states in reconstructing and claiming "citizens-to-be" based on state-designated territories and boundaries, a process termed by the anthropologist Donald Nonini as the "localization of disciplinary subjects" by nation-states.<sup>39</sup> Nation-states have reserved the supreme authority to select their subjects and define their rights based on an unequal and racialized international system. Ironically, migrants in turn selected and used citizenship to outmaneuver and de-localize nation-state boundaries and to gain transnational mobility.

It is necessary to note here the difference in the meanings of "naturalization" in English and in Chinese. While in English a migrant is to be "naturalized" to become a citizen of the receiving society, the literal translation of "naturalization" in Chinese is "*guihua*," which keeps the passive tone of "being" naturalized or assimilated. However, "*guihua*" has been seldom used by returning Chinese migrants and Chinese migrants in general. The most common word used is "*ruji*," which literally means "entering the register or joining the nationality." This in fact shows that instead of viewing themselves as *objects* to be "naturalized," migrants placed themselves as *subjects* who managed the issues of nationality and citizenship.

While "*ruji*" indicates migrants' active role in obtaining the citizenship of the receiving society, migrants and returnees have shown strong discontent with "automatically" losing their Chinese nationality after

obtaining foreign citizenship, as ordained by the Chinese nationality law. To fully understand how migrants and returnees calculate the costs and the gains of naturalization and select their citizenship, we need to consider China's nationality policies.

### **DEBATING “DUAL NATIONALITY” AND RESPONSES TO CHINA’S GREEN CARD POLICY**

The meanings of citizenship and the implementation of citizenship laws vary considerably in different national contexts. Studies of citizenship and immigration, however, have usually focused on the receiving society and neglected the impact of the sending society on migrants' understanding and choice of citizenship. This lack of attention to “emigrant citizenship,” as the anthropologist David Fitzgerald suggests, may be caused by the fact that “the dominant organs of international academia are located in the countries of immigration.”<sup>40</sup>

However, the trend of “dual citizenship” or “dual nationality” adopted or acknowledged by increasing numbers of nations (especially sending nations) in the last decades has caught scholars' attention. While seven of seventeen Latin American countries allowed dual citizenship in 1996, by 2000 the number had increased to fourteen, and the total number of countries in the world allowing dual citizenship directly or indirectly by 2000 was about ninety-three.<sup>41</sup> The Council of Europe had revised the 1963 Convention on Reduction of Cases of Multiple Nationality and Military Obligations in Cases of Multiple Nationality, and the 1997 European Convention on Nationality accepted multiple nationalities and recognized the rights of people with dual nationality.<sup>42</sup> In Asia, the Republic of the Philippines passed a new nationality law in 2003 to recognize dual citizenship, and 3.5 million Philippine emigrants regained their Philippine citizenship, which allowed them to vote and even to be elected for public office (except those serving in foreign governments or armed forces).<sup>43</sup> In 2004, a new Indian Nationality Law allowed dual citizenship of Indian emigrants in sixteen Western developed nations. In 2005, India extended dual citizenship to all Indians who left India after 1950 as long as the receiving country also allowed dual citizenship.<sup>44</sup> The United States

in recent decades has also solidified the right of its nationals to possess and retain American citizenship even after obtaining foreign citizenship. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1967 that de-nationalization must be based on voluntary and explicit renunciation of one's American citizenship, a principle reinforced by Congress in 1986.<sup>45</sup> In addition, while not encouraging dual nationality, the U.S. government recognizes it exists and does not require a person (including immigrants) to choose one citizenship or another.<sup>46</sup>

As for Chinese migrants, the dual citizenship issue seems to be more complicated. Article 9 of the Chinese nationality law of 1980 provides that "any Chinese national who has settled abroad and who has been naturalized as a foreign national or has acquired foreign nationality of his own free will shall automatically lose Chinese nationality."<sup>47</sup> This "single-nationality" law frustrates migrants and returnees with many restrictions on entering and living in China and has led to vehement discussions of a possible change to allowing "dual nationality" of Chinese overseas.

The "dual nationality" question in China in fact should be traced to the origin of Chinese nationality laws. The first Chinese nationality law was launched in 1909 by the late Qing government for the purpose of retaining its Chinese subjects abroad, after it became known that the Dutch were to include Chinese in the Dutch East Indies as Dutch subjects. The law was based on the principle of *jus sanguinis*: though conceding that Chinese in the Dutch East Indies could become Dutch subjects, the law assured that these Dutch subjects were still Chinese subjects whenever they returned to China, and that Chinese nationality could be passed on to all persons abroad born of Chinese parents.<sup>48</sup> This principle of *jus sanguinis*, or citizenship based on descent or blood, was continued in the nationality laws of the Republic of China (first in the mainland and then in Taiwan after 1949), often leading to "dual nationality" conflicts with other countries.<sup>49</sup> In 1955, to improve diplomatic relations with neighboring states in Southeast Asia that only recently gained independence and worried about the allegiance of the large number of ethnic Chinese in their territories, the People's Republic of China (PRC) signed a treaty with Indonesia, declaring that Chinese could only have one nationality, and overseas Chinese should choose either Chinese nationality or the nationality of the residing

country.<sup>50</sup> After the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), the Nationality Law of 1980 reaffirmed this single-nationality policy.

Calls for dual nationality began in the late 1990s. In the second session of the Ninth National People's Political Consultative Conference (NPPCC) in 1999, twelve representatives signed and submitted a bill (No. 2172) proposing the revocation of the single-nationality law.<sup>51</sup> Similar bills (No. 0222 and No. 0320) were submitted in 2004 in the second session of the tenth NPPCC and suggested revising the nationality law so that Chinese citizens who had obtained foreign citizenship could decide whether to retain or renounce Chinese nationality.<sup>52</sup>

More appeals came from Chinese abroad. In 2003, an online survey was conducted by the Canadian Mandarin Chinese Association and the Toronto Information Harbor (*duolunduo xinxiang*). It took eighteen days with the participation of 1,888 Chinese abroad, and 92.6 percent of them agreed that the Chinese government should allow dual nationality for Chinese migrants in countries that also allow dual nationality. This survey was reported to Chen Yujie, director of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council (*Guowuyuan qiaoban*), when she visited Canada in 2003.<sup>53</sup> In June 2004, a seminar was held in Paris titled “The Twenty-First Century China: Chinese Students Abroad and the Exchanges between China and Other Countries.” Representatives of Chinese student migrants in Europe met Chinese officials and expressed their support for dual nationality of student migrants abroad.<sup>54</sup>

While most media reports tended to categorize “new migrants” (*xin yimin*, here referring to post-reform mainland Chinese migrants and especially students turned migrants) as one single group advocating and embracing dual nationality, there were indeed various views among new migrants regarding the desirability and feasibility of dual nationality, indicating their diverse understandings of nationality and citizenship as well as their distinct class and social status. In April 2008, a Haiguinet member posted a survey online to find other members' attitudes toward the dual nationality proposal. Among the sixty-one online members who participated, 13 percent voted against the proposal.<sup>55</sup> Similar to the dual nationality advocates mentioned above, Haiguinet proponents emphasized the advantages of dual nationality, such as easy entry to China and less

restrictions on housing, employment, and children's education in China. However, many Haiguinet members, including a few senior ones, cautioned against the negative side of dual nationality, such as double taxation by the United States and China, jurisdictional conflicts, and possible harassment by Chinese officials. Opposition to dual nationality also came from some returnees who were conscious of their class status and who preferred the advantages and benefits a foreign national (particularly an American citizen) could enjoy in Chinese society. As an online member remarked, "most time I prefer to enjoy the treatment as an American in China."<sup>56</sup>

No matter what positions returnees took regarding the dual nationality issue, they challenged the Chinese state's nationality policy or its justification for maintaining that policy. For those who supported dual nationality, their anxieties and anger about losing their Chinese nationality and the resulting inconvenience in returning to and living in China were obvious and strong. These proponents questioned the role of the Chinese state in "automatically" stripping them of Chinese nationality only because they became naturalized in another country, and they frequently cited examples of other nations recognizing dual nationality to prove the fault and obsolescence of China's nationality law.

On the other hand, opponents of the dual nationality proposal were not necessarily defending the Chinese government; instead, they doubted the Chinese state's willingness to change the law or to open its gate wider to include Chinese overseas with various backgrounds, and they questioned the desirability of retaining Chinese nationality that would place them again under China's troubling legal and political systems. The most vigorous opposition to the dual nationality proposal came from Chinese in Southeast Asia and returnees from that region who had experienced the ordeal of suspicion and persecution by indigenous Southeast Asian states founded after World War II. While they were generally not represented on Haiguinet, which is an online space mainly for recent Chinese students turned migrants in Western nations, their voices could not be easily ignored. In 2005, Zhou Nanjing, professor of Southeast Asian history at Peking University, edited a book collecting the different voices about the dual nationality proposal, including strong objections from ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia. Himself a returnee from Indonesia in the 1950s, Zhou

opposed the proposal, pointed out the fact that the Chinese in Southeast Asia were still the majority of Chinese overseas, and reminded readers of the persecution the Chinese overseas had suffered historically and the very limited support they had received from Chinese governments, which always placed migration policies under the needs of foreign relations. Zhou sharply criticized a senior Chinese official for silencing different opinions and promoting dual nationality without thinking responsibly about the interests of the majority of the Chinese overseas.<sup>57</sup>

Debating the gains and the risks of dual nationality and frequently referring to citizenship laws in other nations, Haiguinet discussions often led to sharp criticisms of the insufficient citizenship rights in China and raised enlightening suggestions regarding China's political and social reforms. In December 2008, an online member who had naturalized abroad raised a provocative question: as the Republic of China (ROC) in Taiwan recognizes dual nationality and constitutionally claims itself as the government of all Chinese (including all Chinese overseas), why should mainland Chinese migrants not apply for a ROC passport? The purpose is to apply to the mainland Chinese government for a "Certificate of Fellow Chinese from Taiwan" (*Taibao zheng*), as this certificate would provide what mainland Chinese abroad most cherish: "the convenience and freedom of entering and leaving one's homeland." According to this migrant, this action might even contribute to the reunification of Taiwan and mainland China. Moreover, it would pressure the mainland Chinese government to address its unequal treatment of citizens of Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the mainland. While Hong Kong residents could retain their Chinese nationality after acquiring another country's citizenship, why shouldn't mainland Chinese migrants enjoy the same right even though they had lived in and paid direct taxes to mainland China? Mainland Chinese had been treated by their own government as "second or third class citizens," the author protested.<sup>58</sup>

The Chinese government's responses to the dual nationality proposal have been ambiguous, precarious, and often conflicted. As new migrants (especially students turned professional migrants) have been viewed as a most important group with the technology and capital needed for China's development, government leaders have shown interest in their concerns,

and there have been reported attempts to adopt the dual nationality proposal.<sup>59</sup> However, the official position has persisted, and national interests have retained “resilient supremacy.”<sup>60</sup> In 1999, the bill (No. 2172) submitted by the twelve committee members of NPPCC was forwarded to the Ministry of Public Safety (*Gonganbu*), which responded by stating that the nationality law had been based on historical wisdom dealing with China’s relations with Southeast Asian countries and “still applies to China’s current situation and suits fundamental national interests.”<sup>61</sup> More recent reports cited Chinese officials who announced that China would maintain the single-nationality policy, though more flexible policies on Chinese overseas’ visiting and staying in China would be considered.<sup>62</sup>

As the historian Philip Kuhn noted, Chinese migration policies have historically swung between national security and economic interests.<sup>63</sup> The current Chinese policies on nationality and migration echo such a historical pattern with contemporary characteristics. The Chinese state always turns to national security when designing its nationality laws and migration policies, placing the former as the first priority. National security concerns involve two aspects: international position and domestic stability. The PRC government diverted from the dual nationality policy of the late Qing and then the Republican governments and changed to the single-nationality law in 1955 with the primary purpose of building relationships with neighboring states and ensuring China’s security in the Cold War. International relations and geopolitical considerations therefore have been the priority in constructing China’s nationality laws and continue to be so. On the one hand, the majority of Chinese overseas are still in Southeast Asia (more than 29 million in 2009, or 75 percent of the total population of Chinese overseas),<sup>64</sup> where the “loyalty question” has always been a sensitive issue. On the other hand, with the increasing economic, political, and military power of China, “China threat” sentiments have been on the rise.<sup>65</sup> A profound change of China’s nationality law would have easily contributed to such sentiments and would be viewed by the Chinese government as detrimental to China’s national security.

The Chinese government might also have based its nationality law on its concerns about domestic stability. Emigration was often prohibited, and Chinese abroad were viewed as “traitors” and foreign agents by China’s late imperial dynasties.<sup>66</sup> Though the Qing government in its last decades and

the following Chinese states (Republican governments and the early PRC government) had generally embraced migrants as contributors or patriots, the images of “traitor” and “threat” lingered in the minds of China’s rulers and became dramatized in turbulent times such as the Cultural Revolution when returnees and any ties with Chinese abroad were viewed as vicious and dangerous. Though currently the Chinese government again identifies Chinese abroad mainly as contributors, it remains concerned about infiltration and subversion. For those who retain Chinese nationality and are viewed as detrimental to national security, the Chinese government prevents their reentry to China by denying the renewal of their passports.<sup>67</sup> The weight of national security can also be seen in the recently increasing control of traditional media and the Internet, a step to reinforce the virtual national boundaries and to safeguard domestic Chinese’ ties and exchanges with the outside world.<sup>68</sup>

With consolidated borders, the Chinese government has also paid more attention to attracting highly skilled and wealthy Chinese migrants for China’s economic and technological development. New policies were launched in a few big cities first. In November 2001, proposals for Chinese “green cards” were discussed in a meeting of the Ministry of Public Safety. Soon after large cities like Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou launched policies granting long-term residence permits to foreign talents. On August 15, 2004, with approval from the State Council, the Minister of Public Safety and the Minister of Foreign Affairs cosigned the “Policy regarding the Approval and Management of Foreigners Residing Permanently in China,” or the so-called Chinese green card policy.

These new policies about foreigners’ visiting and staying in China had developed in the early 2000s along with China’s increasing integration into the world, such as its entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 and the then-expected Beijing Olympics in 2008. Chinese media hailed these new policies as symbols of China’s growing openness to the world and as opportunities to enhance China’s confidence as a “big power,” and foreigners granted Chinese green cards were expected to be pioneers in the “internationalization of Chinese people and Sinicization of people around the world” (*Zhongguo ren guoji hua, shijie ren Zhongguo hua*).<sup>69</sup>

However, these Chinese green card policies do not offer foreign nationals permanent residence but instead just the permit to live one to five years with the convenience of “one visa, multiple entries.” The qualification requirements for green card applications are also very high, thus setting new boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. The 2002 Shanghai policy of granting foreigners long-term residence, for example, was a point system with detailed preferences based on age, education, profession, employment title, work schedule, the amount of investment, and the applicants’ family situation. It ranked on the top the applicants between twenty-five and fifty-five years old, possessing Ph.D. degrees, with expertise in the fields deemed as most desirable by the government (such as information technology and biological pharmacy), with senior positions in internationally renowned institutions in the past, applying for full-time work in Shanghai, serving as principal directors or managers in major state-sponsored projects or in corporations with an investment of US\$50 million or more in China, and with family members who were also highly skilled professionals. The maximum points would qualify the applicant for a five-year residence permit.<sup>70</sup> The 2004 green card policy further formalized the three categories of desired applicants: investors with an investment of at least US\$500,000 in China, extraordinarily talented professionals, and immediate family members of Chinese citizens or permanent residents. As a result, there were 1,460 applications submitted in the first three years after the policy started, and less than half (686) were accepted.<sup>71</sup>

Returnees and potential returnees have been largely dismayed by the symbolic Chinese green card policy. In late 2004, a Haiguinet member posted a Chinese official’s statement of possible adjustment of the nationality law to recruit “excellent overseas talents.” The immediate response questioned: “But what is their definition of ‘talent’? Prominent? Affluent? Or rich and famous?”<sup>72</sup> The report of the official’s statement was posted on Haiguinet again in January 2006, and respondents again found the official’s use of “talent” problematic. One commentator asked: “Who said that everyone is equal before law?”<sup>73</sup> Adding to this criticism, another commentator pointed out that U.S. immigrant visas were also granted to preferred groups, and the United States did not want ordinary people either. “It is the same everywhere,” the commentator sighed.<sup>74</sup>

Disappointment with the green card policy again led returnees and migrants to challenge the insufficient citizenship rights in China. Zhang Daqin came to study in the United States and then stayed and became an immigration lawyer. A licensed lawyer in both the United States and China, he is a member of the legal consultant committee of the Entrepreneurs Association (*qiyejia xiehui*) at Guangdong Province and has written extensively for Chinese legal journals, newspapers, and popular websites. In an essay forwarded to Haiguinet in 2006, Zhang noted that some Chinese had complained that Chinese green cards offered more rights to foreigners than to Chinese citizens and that foreigners enjoyed an “ultra-citizen treatment” (*chao guomin daiyu*) in China, such as no restrictions on house registration or residence location. Indeed, Zhang argued, “it is not that we give too many rights to foreigners but that we give too little rights to our own citizens.” As he wrote, “the household registration system (*hukou*), the pass to border cities (*bianjing zheng*), discriminations based on origin, and the gap between cities and the countryside have let hundreds of millions of citizens fall to the status of strangers in their own land.” With the new green card policy, Zhang hoped, “China could also import more ideas of human rights and humanitarianism, and the ruling class should be modest in exerting power and should treat Chinese citizens with dignity.”<sup>75</sup>

### **THE LAND, THE CULTURE . . . NOT THE PAPER: FLEXIBLE NATIONALITY AND SELECTIVE IDENTITY**

Besides careful calculations of the gains and risks of different citizenship and vigorous negotiations with both U.S. and Chinese immigration and nationality laws for transnational mobility, “selective citizenship” for migrants and returnees also means the flexibility in changing nationality, on the one hand, and the capability and resilience in selecting one’s own identity, on the other. The decoupling of individual-oriented identity from state-designated nationality and loyalty is the key to understanding migrants’ identities.<sup>76</sup>

For many migrants and returnees, nationality is a simple product of the political world in which one is to be registered and administered (*guanxia*), and it is not identical with their personal identity and cultural

belonging. For example, a Haiguinet member noted, “I only care about what I am, and it does not matter in which administrative district I live.”<sup>77</sup> This administrative unit could refer to either the United States or China, though many migrants particularly refuted the idea of retaining Chinese nationality to prove their cultural identity. For them, the Chinese nationality is mainly a tool of the Chinese state in administering the population, similar to the notorious house registration system (*hukou*). They also showed strong discontent with the government indoctrination they received in their education in China that their nationality be completely identical with personal identity. As one active female Haiguinet member pointed out, “I have been taught since primary school to believe that our motherland is identical with my own mom, but I have always been doubtful about that equation.”<sup>78</sup>

Therefore, for migrants and returnees, losing Chinese nationality does not mean losing their Chinese culture or Chineseness, and being naturalized as an American citizen and staying in the United States does not mean they are to be Americanized. Similarly, one does not need to stick to Chinese culture if one is more attracted to American culture, and one has the right to select his or her own identity. In February 2009, a Haiguinet posting attracted heated discussions of the meanings of nationality and nationality change.<sup>79</sup> The author came to the United States more than ten years ago but had not changed nationality for the fear of becoming no longer a Chinese. Immediate responses challenged this link between nationality and identity. “No matter which nationality you acquire, you can always claim yourself as a Chinese. China refers to the land, the people, not the state,” a senior member wrote. Noting the facts that there were many dynasties and states in Chinese history and that the current Chinese state is only temporarily administering the land, this respondent argued that there was no need to care about the title of the state (*guohao*) and that the only need was to identify with the land.<sup>80</sup> Another senior member asserted that the issue of nationality was all about convenience, and “the true identification is in fact based on the native language and family affections, and we don’t pledge loyalty to a paper.” Citing the impact of the 2008 global financial crisis on foreign employees in the United States, this member suggested that holding what passport depend on which society was the primary place

of employment, considering the different treatment between green card holders and citizens.<sup>81</sup>

There were also strong voices against changing nationality only for convenience, and they presented nationality as a legal obligation and moral responsibility. Disagreeing with the statement of one of the most senior online members (the so-called headmaster of the online community, a well-known Chicago-based male financier frequently returning to China) that “a passport is only a travel document,” a discussant reminded him of the oath of allegiance one needed to give during the U.S. naturalization ceremony.<sup>82</sup> Pasting the complete oath statement (in both English and Chinese), the “headmaster” emphasized his identification with the Constitution and laws of the United States and his wholehearted dedication to defending them. Responding to another discussant’s question about which side he would support in case of war between China and the United States, the “headmaster” replied that he would be against any war.<sup>83</sup> Another respondent then added:

If China invaded the United States, I would fight for the United States, as here are my home and my ideals; if the United States invaded China, I would fight for China, as my hometown, my relatives, and my culture are there. If there were a war between a third country and the United States, I would flip a coin (to decide which side to support), just kidding, I am definitely against war.<sup>84</sup>

Such debates, common among returnees and migrants and often without a consensus, revealed the complex meanings of citizenship and nationality and the critical reflections of migrants and returnees on their own identities. The emphasis on the moral responsibility of naturalization and the criticism of pragmatic nationality change were in fact more about reaffirming personal choices (with the resulting responsibility and the expected active civic participation) rather than confirming the unconditional allegiance of individuals to the nation of immigration. The question of naturalization became an issue of loyalty to one’s ideals of justice and freedom rather than an issue of blind allegiance to one specific state. Personal and cultural identities were also viewed as an issue of individual choice rather than as primordial with no possibility of change. Following the above discussions of passports as travel documents or as responsibili-

ties, another regular online member emphasized that individual choices of identity should be respected and tolerated. If a mainland Chinese immigrated and naturalized as an American citizen and viewed himself as an American instead of a Chinese, it most likely meant he identified with American history, culture, and system, and had accordingly given up those things he had learned in mainland China. This was “an individual choice doing no harm to others” and was just fine, he asserted.<sup>85</sup>

Migrants’ and returnees’ understandings of nationality and personal identity have been further complicated by the surging power of China in recent years, revealing the intricate implications of China’s rise for Chinese abroad. To a large degree Haiguinet discussions of identity echoed and continued the discussions in the early 1990s, as epitomized in the influential anthology *The Living Tree*, which looked at the exodus of Chinese intellectuals after the 1989 Tiananmen Square Incident and redefined the meanings of Chineseness not within China but in the “peripheral” and more diverse and dynamic Chinese communities abroad.<sup>86</sup> Many of the active Haiguinet members in fact have been known as participants in the democratic movements in the 1980s. Then how would they respond to China’s development and increasing power and identify themselves in this new historical context?

On the last day of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the founder of Haiguinet posted a passionate note, arguing that though China might now have become a nation strong in sports, politics, and economy, it is still far from a strong nation based on civic values (*wenmin daguo*). He maintained that China needs to be more open to learn from other nations and to develop political democracy and economic freedom.<sup>87</sup> The many postings that followed generally presented two opinions: China does need to strive for more reforms as contemporary prosperity and progress have been based on high ecological and social costs and have concealed serious problems; or China’s progress does constitute a sort of “Chinese model” that challenges the Western model based on liberalism and democracy. Again without reaching a consensus, the heated debates highlighted the serious concerns of migrants and returnees about the nature of China’s rising power and accordingly the meanings of being a Chinese. As the founder keenly pointed out, to see whether one really identifies with a country

(even with a strong China now) one can see how one “votes with feet,” as many Chinese still prefer to come to the United States.<sup>88</sup> Echoing the founder’s sentiments and reaffirming China’s need for more opening and reforms, a respondent applied the same need to Western nations: “Only by opening to other countries can the United States/Britain/Germany have a future, only by humbly learning from all other countries and cultures can the United States/Britain/Germany make achievements, only by respecting others and following basic values and ethics of human civilization can one be respected by others.”<sup>89</sup>

Remaining critical about both the homeland and the country of immigration, migrants and returnees selected useful parts of both cultures to construct a new culture and a new identity for themselves. A returnee I interviewed in Shanghai obtained his Ph.D. in the United States, acquired U.S. citizenship, and then returned to Shanghai and founded his own company. As he stated,

We [Chinese students turned migrants] have our own and independent perspective, which is not the same as that of Americans, nor the same as that of the Chinese. . . . [We] comprise a unique group with our educational background and social status. What we learned in the later stage of our formative years (i.e., the time of studying and living in the United States), such as democracy and freedom, are close to Western culture, while our understanding of peoplehood, religion, and belief are profoundly influenced by Chinese culture. Therefore, we have a unique way of thinking, a combination of the strength of both the East and the West.<sup>90</sup>

The selective approach of Chinese migrants and returnees in constructing their identities echoes the hybrid and “translated” identity of international migrants discussed by the political scientist Thomas Faist. Faist argues that migrants are “continually engaged in translating languages, culture, norms, and social and symbolic ties.”<sup>91</sup> As Peter Kivisto further elaborates on this “translated” identity, “transnational migrants forge their sense of identity and their community, not out of a loss or mere replication, but as something that is at once new and familiar—a *bricolage* constructed of cultural elements from both the homeland and the receiving nation.”<sup>92</sup>

Faist draws a corresponding model between migrants’ different types of adaptation, their different identities, and the different types of

citizenship: assimilation corresponds to a unitary national citizenship, ethnic pluralism corresponds to multicultural citizenship, while syncretist cultural practices and translated identities correspond to transnational or dual citizenship.<sup>93</sup> Similarly, many scholars have welcomed dual citizenship and even postnational citizenship and viewed them as promising manifestations of the fading national boundaries under globalization and as effective tools to uphold migrants' own cultural identity and to enlarge migrants' rights beyond national contexts.<sup>94</sup> For example, Stephen Castles and Alastair Davidson argue that "in view of the mobility intrinsic in modernity and globalism," "a notion of porous borders is required . . . such a system would break with the outmoded norm of singular membership in a nation-state and recognize the growing prevalence of dual or multiple membership."<sup>95</sup> In a more cautious review of the prospects and risks of dual nationality, David Martin concludes that "the status of dual nationality should be explicitly accepted," and "it usually reflects the reality of complex loyalties and allegiances in an increasingly interconnected world, marked by a growing circle of democratic states with converging interests."<sup>96</sup>

The case of Chinese migrants and returnees cautions us about the universal applicability of dual nationality. First of all, the immigration and nationality laws based on the transformed rather than eroding national boundaries, together with the different privileges and prestige of nationalities entrenched in the historically formed international hierarchy of nation-states, led migrants to be highly selective in choosing nationality and citizenship. Second, there is no definite correlation between dual citizenship and translated identity. In other words, a hybrid and translated identity does not need to be embodied in or guaranteed by dual citizenship. Migrants and returnees construct their hybrid identities while remaining flexible and selective with nationality and citizenship in order to maximize their transnational mobility and individual autonomy. Moreover, dual nationality does not necessarily work in the best interests of all migrants, and migrants' attitudes toward dual nationality have been far from unified but instead widely varied. There are new migrants who feel uneasy about the overhanging Chinese state power that would accompany the dual nationality status, and the long-established Chinese communities in Southeast Asia have remained highly alert and strongly opposed to dual

nationality based on their past and present experiences under the shadow of the pernicious “loyalty question.”

This article examines the various factors that shaped returning migrants’ choices and interpretations of citizenship. It highlights migrants’ “selective citizenship”: while nation-states have often selected migrants and citizens, as immigration scholars have underscored,<sup>97</sup> migrants have also actively chosen nation-states and citizenship, though their choices have to be based on existing immigration and nationality laws and on the historically formed international hierarchy of nation-states in which different nationalities and passports carry different privileges and prestige. Illustrating the selective nature of both migrants and nation-states, “selective citizenship” shows that multiple nationality or citizenship is neither desired by and suitable to all migrants nor embraced and practiced by all nation-states. The dual nationality issue is destined to be a contested terrain with different groups and institutions negotiating their interests in a complex power structure, and it has to be discussed in historical and local contexts.

“Selective citizenship” also symbolizes migrants’ determination to detach individual and cultural identities from state-designated nationality and loyalty. The dual nationality debates lacked consensus precisely because, for migrants, nationality and citizenship were selectable, and there should be no single interpretation of nationality and identity imposed by nation-states or charted by nationality laws. The shrewdness of migrants in distancing themselves from state-claimed loyalty and their emphasis on their own choices and lives are common and comparable among different national and ethnic groups. For example, the Mexican population in the United States responded with “minimal interest” in submitting paperwork to (re)gain Mexican nationality offered by the Mexican government in 1998.<sup>98</sup> For most ordinary migrants and returnees, it is better to remain cautious about states’ agenda, and nationality and citizenship are sites of negotiation and tools for the fulfillment of their own dreams.

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## Notes

1. Laokele, posting to Haiguinet, March 31, 2006. <http://www.haiguinet.com/forum/viewtopic.php?t=915721&start=0&postdays=0&postorder=desc&highlight=&treeview=1>.
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7. I conducted a systematic survey of the archived online discussions (from 2003 when Haiguinet was founded to the end of 2009) with several key words: "lùka" (green card, 519 entries), "Zhongguo lùka" (Chinese green card, 88 entries), "rujì" (naturalization, 150 entries), "gongmín" (citizenship, 372 entries), "shuangchong guoji" (dual nationality, 111 entries), and "aoyun" (the [Beijing] Olympics, 301 entries from August 2008 when the Olympics took place to December 2009). My formal interviews with thirty returnees in three Chinese cities in 2005 (Beijing, Shanghai, and Wuhan) and continual informal talks with returnees supplement the analysis.

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9. Most times this article uses “nationality” and “citizenship” (and accordingly “dual nationality” and “dual citizenship”) interchangeably in the sense of state-designated legal status and membership in comparison with migrants’ own choices and personal identities. Scholars sometimes emphasize the nuances between nationality and citizenship, with the former more based on a common national identity and the latter on rights and civic engagements. Stephen Castles and Alastair Davidson, *Citizenship and Migration: Globalization and the Politics of Belonging* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 1–25; Linda Bosniak, “Multiple Nationality and the Postnational Transformation of Citizenship,” in *Rights and Duties of Dual Nationals: Evolution and Prospects*, ed. David A. Martin and Kay Hailbronner (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2003), 27–48.
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16. Wadhwa et al., *America’s Loss*, 11.
17. Luo, Guo, and Huang, “China,” 95–96.
18. Lin Zhuji, “Shenzhen xila liuxue ren yuan huiguo chuanguye de shijian yu sikao,” *Qiaolian dongtai* 8 (2000): 20–22.

19. David Zweig, Chen Changgui, and Stanley Rosen, *China's Brain Drain to the United States: Views of Overseas Chinese Students and Scholars in the 1990s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).
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