

Lei Zheng

Mellon Foundation Area and International Studies Fellowships for Incoming Graduate Students

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With the funding from Mellon Foundation, I spent 10 weeks on field trip across several big cities in China for my pre-dissertation project on the making of the “urban” “floating” “global” children as transnational discursive practices. My field trip was divided into two parts. The first part was about the history and the current practices of urban planning and birth planning, which intertwined together to produce and differentiate space and people. I visited Urban planning museum, National museum, railway station and metro stations in Beijing to observe how Chinese people were taught to think about “city and countryside” “modernization” “development” “danger” “threat” “science” “history” “*suzhi* (human quality) “nation” and “world” through their bodily participation. I also interviewed historians, educational researchers in universities and government-associated institutes, birth-planning administrator and school teachers in Nanjing, Xi’an, Shanghai and Hangzhou. The perspectives and information that they offered me are very important to my research. Some helped me understand how the differentiation and identification of children, parents and family were made possible through local policies on schooling and birth planning, which were also interrupted by “historical problems”, the tensions between local government and central government, between different local governments. Some helped me see the genealogy of the formation of social classification in the present society by introducing me related research and scholars. At the same time, I also attended the National Pedagogy Conference in Henan University to learn about the pressing issues that concerned Chinese curriculum and pedagogy researchers.

The second part of my field trip was about the development of international curriculum and schools in East China. I visited international schools and research centers that investigated and evaluated international curriculum in Shanghai and Hangzhou and interviewed school teachers and researchers from these schools and institutes. I found that it was trendy to introduce international curriculum and even teachers from the western countries such as the US, the UK, Australia into China or transnational institutes such as the UNESCO and integrate them with Chinese national curriculum. The selections of one international curriculum over the others were often times accidental and relying on the teachers these school recruited and the local actors who limited or opened international schools. Also, teachers who implemented international curriculum oftentimes had high autonomy in deciding what to teach, what kinds of materials, activities to use, and many schools were still exploring their own way of implementing international curriculum. The “advantages” of international curriculum, such as “general credits” “joyful education” “individualized pedagogy” “the integration of Chinese and western culture” “global competence” “international understanding” “scientific education” “low academic pressure”, deserve more historical and critical attention. The national project on making of a “global Shanghai” and a “global China” also highly related to the popularity of international curriculum and thus, it is also necessary to look at the historical development of the discourse on the relationship between China and *shijie* (world).

During the rest of the time in China, I also presented an academic report to the faculty and graduate students from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in Zhejiang University and took advantage of the databases of the libraries of ECNU, NJU and ZJU to collect historical materials for my research.

I really appreciate Mellon Foundation for supporting my pre-dissertation project and preparing for my dissertation questions on the boundary making and the systems of identification and differentiation in educational and other social fields.