The Spatiality of Social Identities:
Taiwanese Migrant Women Practice Everyday Spaces in Toronto

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Geography
University of Toronto

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Abstract

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Doctor of Philosophy 2008
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What part does migration play in the construction and reconstruction of social identity? What kind of social relations are produced and reproduced through the migration process? What are the manifestations of power involved in the process of constructing and negotiating social identities through space? These are the central questions in this research.

This research not only draws upon current literature on migrant women, but also expands it to address the complexity of construction of social identities and places through migration processes by incorporating critical social theories and feminist geography into the research. I examine embodied geographical experiences and the geography of emotions, by looking at current Taiwanese migrant women’s everyday practices in Toronto. This research provides concrete examples – from a substantial sample of individuals – to support feminist geographers’ arguments on women’s experiences in space. I employ Bourdieu’s concept of habitus to illustrate how personal and private space is constructed and reconstructed by a complex interplay between different discourses and practices, and how new spaces and practices are created for new identity claims. I also examine how the dynamics of habitus shifts through displacement. By looking at the generative aspect of habitus, this research extends the existing scope of the notion of habitus.
Collecting more than 125 hours of in-depth interviews with Taiwanese migrant women in Toronto, I examine multidimensional re-configurations of the everyday practices of Taiwanese migrant women in Toronto. Research findings regarding the hidden geography of everyday language practice, the reconstruction of food culture and the exploration of culinary practice, the negotiation of home practice, and the creation of new spaces for new identity claims provide a complicated picture that grasps the contingency and fluidity of identity construction.

In addition to concepts of ‘third space’ and ‘paradoxical space,’ my research shows that metaphoric expressions, what I call ‘glass wall’, ‘comfort zone’, ‘unlocked spaces’, ‘dialogical space’ and ‘provocative space’ are important to unveil dynamic pictures of geographical experiences along migration. Indeed, space plays an integral role in the making of social identity.
Acknowledgements

What a roller coaster ride! The ride took a little bit longer and was less smooth than I first anticipated, but it has proved to be a much greater ride than I ever imagined, not only because it broadened my horizons intellectually, but also brought incredible richness to my personal life. I would not exchange this life experience for anything else.

I am indebted to many people for making this journey possible. I owe a special debt to my supervisor, Sue Ruddick, who has not only provided me with thought-provoking commentary, but also emotional support over the past eight years. Her belief in me has been my biggest motivation to keep going and without her encouragement I would have jumped off the ride long before I got to enjoy the juicy part of the journey.

My thesis committee members, Gunter Gad, Emily Gilbert and Katherine Rankin have been remarkably patient and supportive over the years. They have provided valuable advice at the different stages of my studies. Their constructive comments on the earlier draft made the final thesis a better written and a more articulate piece. Geraldine Pratt engaged my work fully and provided me with invaluable comments as well as inspiring suggestions to move my work forward. Minelle Mahtani’s stimulating questions helped to push the research to a new level. I am thankful to have them as my external reviewers.

The Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Ethnic, Immigration and Pluralism Studies at the University of Toronto, McMaster Trust, and Chiang Ching-Kao Foundation, provided funding for this project, for which I am very grateful.

My deepest thanks go to the 57 Taiwanese migrant women who devoted their time to this research and shared their experiences with me. I want to thank Chi-Feng Lee, May Lee, Grace Shen, and Lu-Lu Liu for their help in finding potential participants for this project. In addition, I wish to recognize the assistance of Fei Wu, Mark Lin, Michael Lee, Li-Feng Lu, Sharon Liao, Chi-Hui Chiang, Emily Shih, Flora Chen, Rose Hong as well as my sisters, Shirley, Jenny, and Shu-Ping for their excellent interview transcriptions, and Tyrone for his technical support on the maps included in the thesis. Paula Willis’s careful editing of an entire draft helped to make the thesis readable.
I would like to thank faculty members at the University of Toronto who assisted me with their generous counsel in various ways over the years, including Kathryn Morgan, Michael Bunce, Ping-Chun Hsiung, Minelle Mahtani, Alana Boland, Ken McDonald and John Miron.

Marianne Ishibashi not only provided me with tremendous administrative support, but her positive thoughts completely changed my attitude towards the unexpected turn in my personal life when I entered the darkest tunnel of the ride in the spring of 2006. Without ‘the’ talk with her one beautiful afternoon that May, I would likely have remained sorry for myself and never realized that the end of the tunnel was only few steps away.

Friendship from Nerissa Ho, Kim Ha Nguyen, Fei Wu, Nathaniel Aguda, Ernest Opoku-Boateng, Linda Yang, Lina Samuel, Ni Zhu and Elisa Tseng made this journey joyful. It was very nice to share the ride with them. A special thank you must be given to Luisa Veronis, who has been my mentor and role model ever since I met her. She has inspired me greatly with her marked enthusiasm for research. Her continuous encouragement and generous advice has made all the difference.

Finally, I want to thank my parents and sisters for their continuous support and Tyrone, my soul mate, whose love and support gave me the strength and courage to face all the challenges. My baby Ammolite has been a great baby inside me over the past eight months. Together we have accomplished several projects already, and I thank her for her cooperation.

With Ammolite’s due date fast approaching, it is time to put closure to this wonderful journey. It has been a journey worth taking, and the joy and achievements I have acquired will last a life-time. Now I am going to start another passage of my life, and I believe it is going to be another breath-taking one.
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INTRODUCTION

I thought that if the essential question that America asks of every newcomer is, ‘What will you do with your future?’ Canada adds to it the more difficult one: ‘What will you do with your past? How much will you abandon everything that’s made what you are, and become a Canadian (Whatever that may mean)? How much will you drown your past in a sea of thousands of other pasts?’

- Pico Iyer, The Global Soul, 2000, p.138

The turn of the millennium marked a new page of my life adventure: I moved to a new country permanently, got married and attended graduate school abroad. I thought I knew the country, or at least the city well enough since I had visited Canada so many times before I finally settled down, thus the issue of cultural shock should have been minimal. Two months after I settled down in Toronto, I realized that living in, rather than visiting the city brought different equations into my life. There was nowhere to retreat. I found the challenge of everyday life tremendous. Different from many migrant women who have experienced huge financial downturn and struggled for everyday necessities, my challenge was more about how to make sense of my experience in Toronto. When everything I held for self-identity was put into question, nothing was left for me to hold onto.

Always dreaming of going abroad for higher education, I still remember how violently my heart was pounding when I attended my first class at University of Toronto. The classroom was full of passion and aspiration for knowledge, and there were enthusiastic interactions among students and instructors. I sat in a corner of the classroom and asked myself, isn’t this what I had tried so hard to get for a long time? Departing from the familiar culture and language system, my academic life in Canada looked so clumsy. I
experienced a serious identity crisis in the first semester. I felt I was a little mermaid\(^1\) who exchanged her voice to land on western soil. When I did make myself heard in Canada, I found my experience was often labelled as ‘interesting’—ironically the very polite way to express one’s disinterest—or exotic, and somehow irrelevant. I wondered if my intelligence had ever in reality existed. My whole world was shaking and shrinking, and I found it was hard to breathe sometimes.

Establishing a new life is full of challenges. But claiming one’s past is not without tension, either. On the one hand, born and raised in Taiwan for the first twenty-eight years of my life, I never thought that my identity as a Taiwanese woman could be challenged in Canada. On the other hand, when I introduced myself as a woman from Taiwan, I was always labelled as something other than the label I was familiar with. The new roles I have acquired over the past years, such as a city dweller in Toronto, a married migrant woman with a troublesome relationship with my in-laws, a daughter far away from my original family and so on, bring new social dimensions to my life, and I find myself continuously negotiating my own space within a complicated web of power relations.

It is this geographical experience that led me to ponder the migration experience in the micro-geographical scale and how it affects one’s well-being and identity claim, and it is where I start my project.

**Research Questions**

There are several reasons to choose Taiwanese women as participants in my research. Being familiar with the social environment and cultural practice of where they come from, I believe I have the advantage to undertake in-depth examination of the research subject. In

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\(^1\) It is a fairy tale by H.C. Andersen about a young mermaid willing to give up her life in the sea and her identity to gain a human soul and the love of a human prince.
addition, three premises in contemporary social theory that I explore in my project have a lot to do with this group of migrant women in Toronto.

First, I explore human agency, in this case the agency of migrant women. Migrant women, especially women from the ‘Third World’ are often portrayed as passive and victimized subjects of contemporary global processes; their agency is denied. In this project, I investigate various actions and strategies created and taken by Taiwanese migrant women, which range from coping strategies these women adopt to make their lives easier in the host society, to their active participation in the transformation of the social and political landscape in Toronto.

Second, I explore critical geographers’ arguments about women’s experiences in space. Gillian Rose and others (e.g. Rose, 1993; Dwyer, 1998) make strong arguments about women’s complicated engagement in space, however, most of the research is more subjective than conclusive. What is needed in the literature is a larger scale of qualitative studies and my project shifts the scales of these studies. My research tests their arguments by employing a qualitative study with a substantial sample of individuals to examine how individuals interact in terms of space and social identity. I also examine how migration processes affect the dynamics of intergenerational relations in order to investigate migrant women who come from the same cultural background but have different engagements in a place.

And last, I explore the premise of the dialogical nature of identity formation that many scholars have mentioned over past decades. I test how elements of identity surface in different places and capture the contingency of identity formation. For example, in terms of ethnic and cultural identity, the contemporary history between Taiwan and Mainland China
makes ‘the meaning of being a Chinese’ a problematic idea in the island of Taiwan. I would like to see how this idea shifts after migrants move to Canada and how it affects migrants’ performativity on a daily basis.

In order to explore these premises, I have divided the investigation into three distinct steps. First, how do recent Taiwanese migrant women construct and reconstruct space-time patterns of everyday activities in Toronto? How do these patterns change over time? The aim of this first step is to provide grounded and comprehensive information regarding geographies of migrant women and how they change over time. This step plays a significant role towards investigating what kinds of and in which ways discourses, practices and institutions are influential in shaping migrant women’s everyday life. By incorporating the concept of the spatiality of identity as a new analytic category, I look at how we can reveal previously hidden aspects of our cultures, particularly power relations and their capacities for shaping and being shaped by subjects involved in them (Kirby, 1996).

Second, what kind of social relations are produced and reproduced through the construction of these patterns? What does the role of space play in construction and maintenance of social relations/networks of recent Taiwanese migrant women? How are social identities constructed and performed through these social processes? The aim of the second step is to investigate the discourses, practices and institutions that have played significant roles in shaping migrant women’s experiences and to examine ways they reproduce or transform social relations.

Many scholars have argued that conflicts, contradictions and negotiations can be seen as distinctive features of the reconstruction of transnational migrants’ social identity in the late twentieth century (cf. Peake and Kobayashi, 2002). I identify the contradictions or conflicts
in the principles and practices of these discourses and explore the character of social identities that recent Taiwanese migrant women embrace in Toronto. I examine how migrant women relate their feelings, or emotions and everyday experience of spaces within their process of being in relation to these conflicts or contradictions. How do they interpret, respond and deal with the occurrence of conflicts or contradictions? By incorporating cultural studies, critical social theories and feminist practices into the conceptual framework, I would like to look into the complexities and contradictions of spaces women encounter everyday, the geographies of Taiwanese migrant women, in terms of how the fluidity and most likely contradictions of social identity are constructed, practiced and negotiated by active agents.

Lastly, can Taiwanese migrant women develop strategic sites to make new social claims and help them to negotiate power relations in other social and spatial contexts? If so, how will this make a difference? What are the manifestations of power involved in the processes of the construction and negotiation of social identities through space? How are these expressed? This analysis offers us insights on how powerful counter-hegemonic discourses and practices can be created and subaltern groups can successfully renegotiate their identities.

I search for potential openings for the formation of new social identity. I focus on how counter-hegemonic discourses and practices can be created and secured through alternative usages of specific places. Moreover, the fact that these negotiations are practiced at different scales inevitably will bear significant implications for how we think about the geographies of human agency in a continually globalizing world.
Situating the Research

This research focuses on Taiwanese migrants who migrated to Canada after the lifting of Martial Law in Taiwan in the late 1980’s. The number of Taiwanese migrants comprises only a small portion of the population of the three main groups of Chinese migrants in Canada. It composites an average 13.2% of the three main sources of Chinese migrants between 1971 and 2000 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 1971-2000), compared to 29.0% and 57.8% of migrants from China and Hong Kong respectively during the same period of time. However, Taiwan’s unique political, cultural and social situation and its relation to the rest of the world provide us a more complicated understanding of the identity politics.

There are several significant historical developments related to this group of migrants during this period of time, which provide a macro geopolitical picture of where this group of people is situated. First, with the lifting of Martial Law in 1987 there was a significant increase in the number of Taiwanese migrating to Canada. According to statistics provided by Citizenship and Immigration Canada 1971-2000 (Table 1.1), 76.8% of Taiwanese migrants came to Canada from 1991 to 2000. In fact, Taiwan became one of the top ten source countries of migrant population to Canada from 1992 to 1999 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2013).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>228,083</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>453,761</td>
<td>57.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>103,708</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>785,552</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1 The Composition of Chinese migrants from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan: 1971-2000

Data complied from Citizenship and Immigration Canada from 1971 to 2000.

Table 1.2 Taiwanese Immigrants to Canada at different time periods: 1970-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Taiwan</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1971-1980</td>
<td>9753</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-1990</td>
<td>14,339</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-2000</td>
<td>79,616</td>
<td>76.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>103,708</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data complied from Citizenship and Immigration Canada from 1971 to 2000

The lifting of Martial Law not only allowed Taiwanese to travel across national borders freely, but also released an unprecedented discursive energy in Taiwan that greatly impacted the interpretation of their linguistic situation, cultural heritage, and political history. Not only was the political goal of recovering Mainland China abandoned, but also the notion of Taiwanese-ness and Chinese-ness was questioned, explored and reinvented (Tu, 1998). Numerous women’s groups were also formed in the late 1980s after political liberalization accelerated on the island. Diversity issues, such as the struggle for women’s rights, the rights of women workers, and the expression of women’s identities and the recognition of homosexuality have been brought to the public since the 1990s (Castells, 1997, p.206-212).

Economically, Taiwanese migrants who migrated to Canada in the 1990’s have experienced rapid economic growth in Taiwan, the so-called ‘Taiwan Miracle’\(^2\). Unlike (im)migrants from Latin America (cf. Veronis, 2006) and Southeast Asia (cf. Preston & Giles, 1997; Majob, 1999; Pratt, 2004), this group of migrants have significant economic capital (cf. Mitchell, 1997a and 1997b; Ong and Nonini, 1997). Many have migrated to Canada through the so-called business class (Appendix D).

\(^2\) It is the term referred to Taiwan's quick industrialization and rapid growth during the latter half of the twentieth century (cf. Castells, 1998; Hsiung, 1996).
Second, globalization processes in the late twentieth century, including new forms of communication and technology, technological advancement in long-distance transport, an expanding international division of labour and global cultural forms, resulted in the intensification of transnational activities that range from economic and political connections to restructuring of transnational families. It challenged not only the traditional understanding of migration processes, but also the notions of citizenship, belonging and identity (cf. Peake and Kobayashi, 2002). It is observed that recent Taiwanese migrants are active participants of these transnational activities (cf. Mitchell, 1997a; Ong, 1999a; Waters, 2001a, 2001b, and 2002; Wang, 2002).

Third, at the national level, it was not until 1967 that the Immigration Act gave the Chinese the same immigration rights as other groups (Anderson, 1991). The ‘universal point system’ was introduced to facilitate the entry of skilled immigrants, and prospective migrants were now judged by their merits regardless of their country of origin or racial background. The racial barriers for Chinese migrants were fully removed\(^3\) (Anderson, 1991; Hawkins & Institute of Public Administration of Canada, 1988; Man, 1996). From that point on, an increasing number of Chinese immigrants have arrived in Canada from different cultural, political and social-economic backgrounds.

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\(^3\) Although the door to non-European migrants to Canada is open, it does not mean that everyone is qualified to be accepted as an immigrant. Points are based on: age; education; occupation (the one applicants intend to follow in Canada); education/training factor (ETF); arranged employment; work experience; language ability; demographic factor (as set by the Canadian government); and close relatives in Canada. The pass mark for independent applicants was 50 in 1967 and was increased to 70 in 1985. Most principal applicants for the independent immigration tend to be skilled and also highly educated. The 1967 selection policy and its subsequent revisions in 1978 and 1985 actually favor people from middle and upper-class backgrounds who have the opportunity to acquire the ‘appropriate’ educational, vocational, as well as language skills required by the Canadian government. Age discrimination is also implied in the selected system. Only wealthy people and their families are allowed to enter Canada through business immigration (Man, 1996).
Migrants from Taiwan are often categorized as Chinese immigrants, since they speak the same official language, and more importantly, they share similar cultural and social practices as well as some historical memories. However, the contemporary history of Taiwan distinguishes its people from people in Hong Kong and China in terms of their cultural and political identity as well as their migration history in Canada (Appendix E). Recent Taiwanese migrants, one subgroup of Chinese migrants, brought with them diverse socio-economic and educational backgrounds, cultural and political ideologies and opinions regarding gender politics. This subgroup distinguishes itself from migrants from Hong Kong and China as well as its earlier waves of emigrants. Conflicts, contradictions and negotiations can be seen as distinctive features of this wave of the reconstruction of social identity among Chinese migrants.

Finally, Toronto, the biggest city in Canada, has three times as many immigrants as the rest of Canada and a much larger share of recent arrivals. It has undergone rapid cultural, social and economic transformation over the past decade. Toronto provides a ground to examine how Taiwanese migrant women construct and reconstruct their social identities within the larger social context – the phenomena of migratory movement in the late twentieth century – in terms of their relations to other social groups.

**Methodology**

1. **Data Collection**

Two sets of data were collected to answer my inquiries regarding experiences of Taiwanese migrant women and their identity formation. Secondary data, such as archival data, census and statistical data, immigration bills, reports from governments, communities, newspapers and mass media helped provide the background information necessary to
historicize and contextualize the case studies.

Primary data, such as fieldnotes and transcripts, were collected through qualitative research. Drawing upon the information I got from the secondary data, I conducted qualitative research on the experiences of Taiwanese migrant women to explore specific issues. I further collected secondary data to elaborate my findings from the qualitative research. Multiple fieldwork strategies were employed to uncover the complexities and contradictions of the social spaces that Taiwanese migrant women inhabit. A detailed description of each strategy is provided as follows.

**Secondary Data**

I examined archival data, census and statistical data, and immigration bills. I also studied the history of Canadian immigration policy and its relation to various waves of Chinese migration and key moments in the Chinese identities and communities. The historical and social context of Taiwanese ‘home’ society – in terms of the complexity of their ethnic and political and gender identity – was also explored since it plays a critical role in the formation of communities and networks in Toronto.

Before the fieldwork took place, I already had a preliminary sense of the geographic distribution of Taiwanese migrants in Toronto, and of the organizations and networks in which they might participate. During the course of fieldwork, I continued to collect secondary data on Taiwanese migrants in Toronto. I kept working on collecting data on various communities, organizations and networks and tried to grasp the diversity of Taiwanese migrant women today.
Information about the nature of, membership requirements for, activities hosted by various communities, organizations and networks were collected as indicated by participants in the qualitative research. Related information in newspapers and broadcasted through mass media were also collected. Community reports, brochures, newsletters, newspapers and so forth regarding these issues were collected. Archive work was also conducted in order to examine relationships between various communities, organizations and networks.

Primary Data

Primary data were collected in order to investigate the micro-level of social processes. It was necessary to collect more descriptive, interpretive, narrative and contextual data than standardized data based on pre-given fixed variables (Jones et al., 1997; Moss, 2002). Qualitative research based on multiple fieldwork strategies was conducted.

(1) Snapshots of One-week Space-time Patterns of Everyday Activities

A snapshot of one-week space-time patterns of everyday activities provides a picture of how recent Taiwanese migrant women construct their social identities by positioning themselves with others they encounter in a specific time and space (Appendix A). Spatially and temporally fixed activities constitute fixity constraints, and might be associated with a woman’s gender role in the household and society as a whole. Of course, there are also other aspects that contribute to these constraints, such as language, availability of transportation and so forth. I asked every participant to keep a diary for one week before the in-depth interview was conducted. In so doing, I had a clear picture of the social activities in which these women participated.

The idea of this research design is derived from Hägerstrand’s concept of time-geography, which illustrates how a person navigates his or her way through the
spatial-temporal environment (Hägerstrand, 1976, 1984; also in Rose, 1993). Different from traditional social maps that only draw paths of the routine actions of individual human agents without accounting for the context of their experiences, I wanted to build a multi-dimensional analysis (Rose, 1993). The details of all activities and trips made by participants in the one-week period, such as street address, travel mode used, car availability, routes taken, primary purpose of activity, and other individuals present when performing each activity were recorded.

In addition, the emotions, passions, disruptions, and feelings, which are often changed by one’s relations to others, were recorded and discussed in the in-depth interview. Comparisons of time-geography patterns between different generations of migrant women were made to reveal the very specific social and cultural implications that underpin daily activities.

(2) In-depth Interview

Semi-structured interviews were undertaken to examine content focused issues relevant to the research questions. An interview guide was used as a checklist in interviews (Appendix B). I read the diaries prior to the interviews and I asked questions based on participants’ response to space-time patterns in everyday activities. The focus of the in-depth interviews was migrant women’s current life in Toronto. Most questions asked in the interview were designed for open responses, and participants used their own words.

The purpose in adopting this research technique was to explore a diversity of opinions and experiences regarding migration experiences as well as to fill gaps in knowledge that other methods, such as census data, were unable to bridge efficaciously. This technique allowed me to explore how meanings and experiences of migration differ among people.
Interviews were used to gain insight into different opinions, but never to claim that the ‘truth’ had been discovered (Dunn, 2000).

I interviewed mothers/daughters and mothers-in-law/daughters-in-law separately and in the places where they felt comfortable to talk about their experiences. Participants were encouraged to draw cognitive maps of their perception of the domestic environment, the community and the city at the end of the interview (Golledge, 1987).

(3) Life History Interview

Different from the in-depth interview, the life history interview focuses on how the participant’s life had unfolded. I carefully selected participants who were prepared to reflect on and discuss their life experiences and development. An unstructured interview style was employed in order to seek personal accounts of significant events and perceptions as determined by the participants in their own words. The great advantage of life history was that the researcher was able to gain insights into how individuals interact with society as their lives change (Dunn, 2000). I asked participants to talk about specific turning points or transitions in their life related to migration.

The fieldwork was conducted between November 2003 and July 2004. Interviews took from one hour to up to five hours, and more than 125 hours of interviews in total were conducted, recorded, transcribed and analyzed.

2. Recruitment Strategies

The ideal participants of this research are Taiwanese migrant women who have established life in Toronto. However, it is difficult to define what established life means, because first of all it is a very abstract term, and because settlement experience varies from individual to individual. Some scholars indicate that the first five to eight years are the
most difficult, after which life satisfaction issues beyond the economic begin to take on greater importance, while some simply define migrants who have lived in Canada more than five years as established migrants (Potter, 1999).

In this research, I recruited Taiwanese migrant women who currently live in Toronto, who had migrated to Canada between 1988 and 1999, and who have lived in Toronto for at least five years. I focused on first generation Taiwanese migrant women who live in either nuclear or extended families. Because of my interest in the intergenerational differences of migration experiences, I recruited adult daughters or daughters-in-law and their mothers or mothers-in-law as pairs of participants. My decision to choose adult daughters and daughters-in-law [i.e. at least 18 years of age] was to avoid the extremely uneven power relations between mothers and teenage daughters, even though the power relations between two generations are often uneven. I recruited participants from 28 households in total. There are two participants from each household, with one exception where I interviewed two daughters and the mother in one household. Thus, there are 57 participants in this project (Appendix C).

When Man (1996) was about to conduct her fieldwork on middle-class migrant women from Hong Kong in Toronto, she tried to recruit participants through writing an article about her research in community-based newsletters, such as CCNC Newsletter [i.e. Chinese Canadian National Council Newsletter] and Modern Times. She also posted flyers at churches. She found that both strategies did not work at all. In order to not make futile efforts, I employed more interactive and active ways to recruit participants.

It seemed to me that the most convenient way to recruit participants was to start with someone or some associations I knew, and then use the snowball sampling method to recruit
more participants. Prior to the fieldwork, I had already established personal connections with various Taiwanese communities in Toronto, such as churches, small business networks, social organizations for Taiwanese women, social networks of Taiwanese migrant women professionals and so forth. However, this might have lead to a homogenous sample of participants, which would eventually lead to the failure to recognize other important aspects of migrant processes. To avoid such a shortcoming, I tried to recruit participants who met the qualification described above through various ways in order to include diverse backgrounds of migrant women.

First, I posted my research interest and recruitment advertisement on the bulletin board system of several Taiwanese student associations such as the Taiwan R.O.C. Students Association at University of Toronto [ROCSAUT] and UTSC ROCSAUT. I also posted recruitment advertisements in the ladies’ washroom at the Metro Square. None of participants were recruited through this way; however, several migrant women were aware of my project when they were asked to be participants through other recruitment methods. Moreover, tips on how to recruit participants are received from the ROCSAUT bulletin board system. Second, I went to specific areas where Taiwanese migrants do grocery shopping on a daily basis, and tried to recruit participants. Three places were on my list: Metro Square, Finch Leslie Square, and the T&T supermarket in Promenade Shopping Center. I actively approached potential participants and asked for their participation. I did successfully recruit several pairs of participants through this method. Lastly, I attended specific social events held by Taiwanese communities, and tried to recruit participants. I grabbed every opportunity to get participants. From the mid-autumn festival to Chinese New Year – the biggest cultural and social event in the Chinese calendar– and later, the Dragon Boat Festival,
community celebrations provided me a chance to come in contact with more people. I looked for announcements of social events for Taiwanese migrants in community newspapers and I attended these events to recruit participants. I was given chances to introduce myself to various community groups during these public events.

Despite all these recruitment strategies, the snowball sampling method – which means I recruited participants from my own social networks first and let participants then introduce me to more participants from their own networks thereafter – was still the most effective method. I constantly paid attention to the nature of participants I recruited in order to avoid homogenous sampling.

3. Data Analysis

The snapshots of Taiwanese migrant women’s one-week space-time patterns of everyday activities provide many clues and insights into women’s everyday geographical experience. By the end of the research, the amount of data and the richness of the information gathered in the diaries (see Appendix A for a sample diary done by a participant) made it impossible to undertake a systemic analysis without running the risk of oversimplification and overgeneralization; however, before each in-depth interview took place, I read and analyzed each individual participant’s diary, and encouraged her to elaborate her thoughts on specific instances of development. Thus, in addition to general questions listed in the interview guide (Appendix B), I asked questions derived from their diaries and was able to collect valuable narratives of their space-time patterns of everyday activities.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed, and thoughts about fieldwork were recorded as fieldnotes. Based on all the data collected from qualitative research, I conducted critical content analysis.
4. Power Relations and Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is interwoven with relations of power. Without recognizing existent power relations in different stages of the research process, the relationship between the researcher and the participants can easily turn into an exploitative one. To avoid the occurrence of exploitative relations, feminist researchers suggest researchers be aware of, understand, and respond to the power relations in a critically reflective manner (Dowling, 2000). I collected a great amount of data through qualitative research, which typically involved interpersonal relationships, interpretations and experiences, and I was fully aware of and considered ethical issues constantly in order to not bring harm to the research participants. In addition to being critically reflective throughout the research process, I employed more collaborative and participatory methods, such as open-ended in-depth interviews, and life history interviews, to reduce the potential for exploitative relationships. In my research, I employed several strategies and techniques to reduce the uneven power relationship between the researcher and participants, as well as to protect their privacy and confidentiality.

First, I fully recognized participants as active social agents and valorized their knowledge. Second, in the interviews, memories recalled were sometimes be painful to participants, and I clearly reassured them that they had the right to refuse to answer any questions they chose during the interview as well as to withdraw at any time they wished. Lastly, I tried to provide information about social services or support networks that might be helpful for them after the interview was complete. I strongly believe participants did benefit from participating in this research because of the fostering and empowering environment provided.
In the long run, this project is a positive contribution to challenge and change the racialized and gendered stereotypes of ‘Asian’ migrant women. In addition, the project provides ideas of what kind of social services migrant women need which are not yet available. Thus, this project offers concrete examples of why certain services need to be brought into existence.

In addition to promoting social services for migrant women’s lives in the long term, I have also thought about what the intermediate contribution of this project could bring directly to the community. Given the fact that the final report of this research is a thesis dissertation, it is obviously impossible to write the final research project with participants collaboratively. However, I plan to publish some thoughts of migration processes collaboratively with participants in local newspapers or newsletters. In so doing, the participants’ experiences are recognized and shared by other migrants. They emerge as subjects and this might inspire them to take further action to negotiate their lives.

**Positionality**

The researchers’ status matters. The ability to achieve academic excellence is often admired in Taiwanese communities (see Chapter 4 for a detailed discussion). During the course of fieldwork, my background as an alumnus from the top girl’s high school and the top university in Taiwan as well as my status as a doctoral student at University of Toronto won me a lot of respect in these communities, and many were eager to help me for the project. I got tremendous support from informants and participants.

Migrant women in this research belong to the middle class. All of them are home owners. None of them accepts social assistance or lives in public housing. Most of them live in single-detached houses, and some live in condominiums or townhouses. They all
live in the relatively wealthier neighbourhoods of the GTA [i.e. Greater Toronto Area], such as east of Yonge Street in the North York area, the northeast Scarborough area adjacent to North York area, and newly developed suburban areas in Richmond Hill, Markham and Mississauga where a lot of luxurious condominiums and expensive single-detached houses have been developed over the past twenty years. Unlike participants in my masters research [where I interviewed homeless women in Taipei City], material or financial support was rarely mentioned during the course of fieldwork. Instead, advice or information about children’s education, social networks, and social activities was often sought; the kind of support I am more capable of providing.

My personal status as a married woman allowed me to discuss sensitive issues of married life as well as intergenerational relations without bringing too much discomfort. My social position on the edge of Taiwanese communities situated me at an in-between status of ‘eagerly devoted insiders’ and ‘absolute outsiders’. It allowed me to be critical and avoids the pitfall of being over-familiar or not familiar at all with study settings.

I communicated with participants in English and Mandarin fluently. I understand two popular local dialects, i.e. Min-Nan (Taiwanese) and Hakka dialects, spoken in Taiwan. Participants were encouraged to speak whichever language(s) they wanted to. Most interviews were done in Mandarin mixed with English and/or Min-Nan (Taiwanese) with two exceptions: one interview was done in English and the other was done entirely in Min-Nan. All translation was done by the researcher if original conversations were not in English.

**What Has Been Done?**

There is a proliferation of literature on (im)migration which conceptualizes the social processes of migration over the past few decades. On the one hand, concepts such as social
assimilation and multiculturalism are employed in order to tackle issues about social adaptation and social inclusion/integration regarding processes of settlement; on the other hand, some scholars look into the institutional and organizational processes of making migrant subjects. Both approaches are interrelated. They contribute significantly to our understanding of the social processes of migration; however, they tend to be locked into the researchers’ preferred and totalizing theories, limiting the scope and sophistication of knowledge formation.

The concept of social assimilation was first introduced by Robert Park in the mid-twentieth century and later perfected by Milton Gordon in American Ethnic Studies. It has had a strong influence since then. Adaptation had been seen as a unidirectional process, and it seemed inevitable that an ethnic minority group would eventually conform to and adopt the cultural standards of the dominant population and integrate into mainstream society (Heisler, 1992; Hirschman, 1982; Gordon, 1991). Scholars have addressed the issues of settlement experience in terms of identifying the needs of migrants, the barriers to integrating into ‘mainstream’ society in comparative studies of different ethnic groups, various sub-processes of assimilation and so forth over past decades (Alba, 1990; Alba and Nee, 1997; Alba et al, 1997; Morawska, 1994; DeWind and Kasinitz, 1997; Gans, 1997).

Although the concept of assimilation is often discussed in the American context, its impact on the making of social policy regarding migrant settlement in Canada has been influential.4

4 For example, the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) defines settlement as a process or a continuum of activities that a new immigrant/refugee goes through upon arrival in a new country and includes the following stages: (1) Adjustment: acclimatizing and getting used to the new culture, language, people and environment or coping with the situation; (2) Adaptation: learning and managing the situation without a great deal of help; (3) Integration: actively participating, getting involved and contributing as a citizen of the new country (Leung, 2000).
Research derived from the social assimilation model offers us a micro-level analysis of migrant communities and the economic, social and cultural challenges that they have to face; however, it is achieved at the expense of deepening stereotypes of both migrant communities and ‘mainstream’ society as a whole. ‘Mainstream society’ is treated as a default social condition, which creates the hierarchal relation between ‘migrant cultures’ and ‘mainstream culture’. Its assumption of the unidirectional process of settlement may not grasp the currently complex transnational circuit of people, goods, information, economy and power.

While the concept of ‘melting pot’ is still prevalent in the United States, Canada and Australia stand out among countries which made multiculturalism their policy. Prime Minister Trudeau proclaimed Canada a bilingual and multicultural nation in 1971, which entailed accepting and recognizing ethnical cultural minorities (cf. Mahtani, 2002). Different levels of government aim at supporting ethnic organizations and activities, providing chances for younger generations to learn the language of their heritage and so forth. While some scholars focus on exploring various ethnic/cultural communities in Canadian society; for example, scholars discuss the development of ethnic communities in Toronto (Harney & Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1985), others question the term’s basic meanings\(^5\) (Gordon & Newfield, 1996).

The concept of multiculturalism is problematic in many ways. Its uncritical assumption of cultural diversity consolidates the homogenous and unitary notion of ethnic/cultural identity (cf. Chauhan & Sylvestre, 1997; Mahtani, 2002). It also ignores conflicts, contradictions and negotiations of social identity within given groups and their

\(^5\) In the introduction of the book ‘Mapping Multiculturalism’, Gordon and Newfield (1996) have questioned conflicting accounts of the term’s basic meaning, such as: Is multiculturalism antiracist or oblivious to racism? Is multiculturalism cultural autonomy or common cultural revisited? And is multiculturalism grounded in grassroots alliances or diversity management? (p.2-10)
relations to other groups that already exist in most people’s everyday lives. Additionally, this literature treats ethnic identity as the primary identity marker (Mahtani, 2002), and does not pay enough attention to the politics of gender, of class or other identity sources and their intertwined relations with each other. It seems like a strategy of diversity management in the eyes of many scholars. It allows the preservation of a great diversity of cultures, but within certain, well-demarcated limits, and with no danger to disturb or threaten national unity (cf. Ang, 2001). Such an idea certainly could not convey the complexity of identity formation.

To catch the dynamic processes of migration in the late twentieth century, the notion of transnationalism has been introduced to foster recent epistemological debates of migration processes. It recognizes the spatial and scalar nature of contemporary social relations that are often maintained and created beyond national borders. Research has shown the impact of transnationalism on sending countries, such as the importance of remittances for their economy, the active participation of transnational migrants in the local politics of their home community and their influence in shaping its development through structures of decision-making from overseas (Smith & Guarnizo, 1998).

Moreover, transnationalism is seen as an alternative path to new adaptation possibilities for migrants and their offspring (cf. Portes et al, 1999). Recent research on Chinese transmigrants shows how this group of migrants influences the social landscape in Canada (Mitchell, 1997b; Ley et al., 2001; Wang, 1999). However, such a focus on the home/away transnational linkage often overlooks alternative connections that migrants have in their everyday life. Trotz (2006) shows that constant trips across the Canadian-US border made by Caribbean people plays an important role for them in reconstructing their families and
communities without immediate, direct connection with Caribbean locations.

Employing poststructural methodologies, other scholars focus on the power of the state in shaping the experience of migration and the settlement of migrant groups and deconstruct the institutional and organizational processes of making migrant subjects (Anderson, 1991; Bauder, 2001; Creese & Peterson, 1996; England and Stiell, 1997; Mitchell, 1997a and 1997b; Ong, 1999b; Razack, 1998). This literature looks at the ways that the apparatus of the state regulates, controls, and marginalizes ethnic groups, and through which the social and the spatial is constructed. Ong's (1999b) research on different groups of Asian immigrants, i.e. Cambodian refugees and Chinese cosmopolitans in U.S., shows how the universalistic criteria of democratic citizenship regulate different categories of subjects through schemes of surveillance, discipline, control and administration and how these subjects’ location within the nation-state and within the global economy, conditions the construction of their citizenship. Mitchell (1997b) examined certain programs, such as ‘Meet with Success’, as disciplining approaches that were introduced to shape the middle-class emigrants from Hong Kong. By showing the video entitled ‘Being Canadian’, which selectively shows various visual ‘images of Canadian life’, people who are accepted as Canadian immigrants in Hong Kong learn the cultural norms and unacceptable violations of those norms. Through the process of subject making and being made, newer Chinese Immigrants from Hong Kong negotiate their cultural citizenship in relation to the nation-state and transnational processes.

Anderson (1991), particularly, has paid attention to how dominant and subordinated (in this case, Chinese) ethnic subjects are differently situated in relation to spaces of production, distribution, and consumption and has showed how state policies and practices are implicated
in the politics of ethnic location. By tracing the century-long exercise of cultural
domination by white European community in Vancouver, Anderson examines the process by
which racial categories are constructed and transmitted and how the image of Chinatown has
been fashioned and recast in Vancouver society. England and Stiell (1997) investigate how
the practices of domestic worker placement agencies reinforce images about which national
identities supposedly have qualities that make them best suited to certain types of domestic
work, such as English nannies and Filipino domestic workers. They also show how foreign
domestic workers partly internalize these stereotypes about national identities. In a different
vein, Razack (1998) shows that women who seek asylum are easily denied if they cannot fit
their gender-based realities into an imperial frame. In refugee hearings, both female
incapacity (which reflects the victimized aspect) and Third World dysfunction are
reconfirmed and the cycle of imperialism continues uninterrupted. Both studies address
how racially oppressed women experience social institutions and social policy.

This literature critically examines the power relations between host societies and various
migrant groups; however, little consideration is given to how migrants respond to the
racialized knowledge produced in host societies and how powerful counter-hegemonic
discourses can be created and subaltern groups can successfully negotiate their identities.
Surely the possibility of counter-inventing ethnicity is not always already there and
sometimes it is difficult to negotiate an alternative sense of individual and collective
personhood. However, the strong ‘structuralist’ tinge to this literature gives readers the
feeling of being trapped in an unwieldy, deterministic straitjacket. The influences of the
institutional and organizational processes might be exaggerated.
It is feminist scholars that have provided critical insights and fruitful findings into migration literature over past decades (cf. Silvey and Lawson, 1999; Silvey 2004; special issue on The International Migration Review, 40(1), 2006). Feminists’ attention to the migrant women from developing to developed countries to fulfill jobs in low-wage sectors or as private domestic workers, can be seen as a first step to fill the gap of invisibility of women in migration literature (e.g. England & Stiell, 1997; Giles & Preston, 1996; Preston & Giles, 1997). This research shows how migrant women of different ethnic origins experience various forms of subordination in the labor market.

Increasingly research shows how women of diverse backgrounds are participating in international migration. Various issues are brought into discussion, for example, the racialized, gendered and classed construction of migrant women under national discourse, the power dynamics of gender and generation within households, social networking, family practices, religious practices and so forth (e.g. Chen, 2002; Creese et al, 1999; Man, 1996; Silvey 2006; Trotz, 2006; Pratt, 2004; Yeoh & Willis, 2005 and the special issue on Global Networks, 5(4), 2005).

Among them, Creese et al (1999) show how networks range from being densely organized, operating transnationally, to being constrained to the localized context, and sometimes nonexistent. Some of these social networks extend and blur the boundaries and meanings of family and put traditional concepts of family into question. Chen (2002) has argued that religious conversion can be seen as migrant women’s liberation from family in the United States. Through conversion to Christianity and Buddhism\(^6\), Chen finds that

\(^6\) She mentions that Christians compromise anywhere from 25% to 32% of Taiwanese population in the United States. However, Christians comprise only about 3% of the population in Taiwan. Many migrants (60% to 75%) convert to Christianity after migrating to the United States. Buddhism also experiences revitalization and intensification among Taiwanese migrants in the United States.
women emerge as subjects and power relations are gradually reconstructed within the immediate nuclear family and extended family. Trotz (2004) introduced an alternative connection to make transnational communities. Silvey (2006) has illustrated how Indonesian migrant domestic workers’ experiences intersect with national discourses on women, economic concerns of lower class families, and women’s own desires to consume certain goods and pursue their religious practices.

Intersection is the main theme in this literature because it not only addresses women’s unique experience of migration, but also attempts to open up insightful dialogue with current research on migration literature, critical social theory, as well as human geography. This research follows this literature and brings new elements into analysis to contribute an in-depth understanding of gendered migration process.

**Bringing New Elements into Migration Research**

My research reconceptualizes the complexity of identity formation by bringing displacement and its effects into consideration. Starting in the late twentieth century, when global migration occurred in diverse locations, migrants’ abilities to maintain multiple connections with different places and continuous negotiations and conflicts of migrants’ everyday life in the receiving countries became a new reality. I argue that Bourdieu’s ‘theory of practice’ which encompasses ongoing, practical everyday activities – articulated through bodies – contains prior cultural disposition (embodied disposition in Bridge’s term, 2004, p.59) and can be employed to understand the social processes of migration (cf. Friedmann, 2005). Several concepts introduced by Bourdieu are integral to provide a dynamic and complicated picture of social interactions.
First, ‘habitus’, is defined as ‘a system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that it, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations (Bourdieu, 1990, p.53)’. The dispositions of habitus serve to predispose actors to choose potential behaviours to achieve a desired outcome and these dispositions are constantly subjected to previous experiences. Actors also need to be aware of the resources available to them as well as the power relations in which they are embedded. Although Bourdieu did not consider himself a geographer, many agree that the concept of habitus explains one’s sense of place as well as one’s role in one’s lived environment (Hillier and Rooksby, 2005, p.21) which is a key theme explored in the discipline of Geography. Some attempts have been made to incorporate the idea of habitus into geographical writing over the past decade (cf. Hillier and Rooksby, 2005).

Second, ‘field’ refers to the ‘socially structured space in which actors play out their engagements with each other’ (Hillier and Rooksby, 2005, p.22). A field is simultaneously a space of conflict and competition (Wacquant, 1992). Third, Bourdieu uses ‘game’ and ‘a sense of the game’ to illustrate his idea of the sense of activity/ies within a field. In addition to understanding and following ‘the rules’ in a field, an actor needs to have a constant awareness and assessment of their own resources, strengths and weaknesses and also those of their opponents (Hillier and Rooksby, 2005, p.23). Finally, Bourdieu discussed ‘various forms of capital’ that actors acquired to exercise their power in a field.

Over the past few decades, major Canadian cities have undergone rapid cultural, social and economic transformation because of the increasing numbers of immigrants from all over the world, who chose Canada since the introduction of the point system in 1967 (Hiebert, 2000; Olson and Kobayashi, 1993; Veronis, 2006 on Latin American migrants in Toronto).
Evidently, there is a range of forms of habitus operating in a variety of the fields. Employing the idea of habitus and related concepts in migration research will provide an insightful way to look at how embodied dispositions are changed, maintained and transformed in different societies.

Bourdieu commented on the durable quality of habitus, but he also observed that habitus is not immutable. Neither are the field and the game. In my research one can see this in the introduction of a multicultural policy in 1971, which marked the historical reposition of governmental policy development. Although this policy is criticized by scholars as the government’s managerial strategy of diversity (see previous section for detailed discussion), it does open room for public debate on what are considered legitimate or acceptable activities in a given society (or field in Bourdieu’s term). In other words, game rules as well as social structures may have changed over time through various actors’ active engagement in the game coupled with their desire to rewrite the game rules to achieve their objectives. This is one issue explored in this research.

Emotions and embodiment are two other foci of this research. Building her critique on Hägerstrand’s time-geometry, Rose developed her argument on the disembodied, universal, individualistic, passionless, masculine, and public tradition in the production of geographical knowledge (Rose, 1993, p.29). This research pays special attention to the concept of time-geometry because it plays a significant role in understanding how time and space are bound to social life (cf. Hägerstrand, 1976, 1984; Lenntorp et al., 2004; Kwan, 1999; Ellegård and Vilhelmsen, 2004).

Some feminist scholars argue that time-geometry helps explicate the constraints of women’s live and reveal the map of everyday patriarchy by tracing the pattern of trajectories
in time and space (cf. Kwan, 1999; case studies mentioned by Rose, 1993). However, this model has the tendency to reduce social processes of time-geography to over-simplified maps that only draw paths of the routine actions of individual human agents. In addition, it does not account for the contexts of people’s experiences, the processes of negotiation, and different ways of experiencing lived spaces. Time-geography is not sufficiently sophisticated to understand the geographical experience of everyday life. For example, it is not able to address the dilemma Pratt (2007) encountered in terms of how to represent the experience of Filipino transnational families when their story is in part one of absence, longing and emptiness, and yet such an experience profoundly affects in each family member’s perception of everyday life and family life. The emotions, passions, disruptions, and feelings, which are changed by one’s relations to others in different social settings, are neglected in time-geography, but it holds the key to understand one’s sense of space as well as one’s sense of self.

Marilyn Frye discussed anger as a demand for respect, and the investigated limits placed on women’s expression of anger to illustrate the power relation in the domestic environment:

No two women live, in a daily and detailed way, in identical spaces created by identical ranges of the concept of Woman… For better or for worse, though, in each of our lives, other’s concepts of us are revealed by the limits of the intelligibility of our anger. Anger can be an instrument of cartography. By determining where, with whom, about what and in what circumstances on can get angry and get uptake, one can map others’ concepts of who and what one is. (Frye, cited in Rose, 1993, p.142)

Thus, a woman who is expected to be a housewife can challenge her husband and speak with authority in the kitchen; yet, she has no authority to speak independently in the bedroom. For women of colour part of their difficult experience of space is having to look white, to act
right, and sometimes to sound right (Rose, 1993, p.144).

Following Frye and Rose, we can explore women’s role in the domestic environment, and the community or society at large by tracing their feelings in these places. Evens (2002) in her work on negotiations of homosexual identity in school settings provides another example of how a lesbian teacher’s feelings of discomfort about responding to questions about her sexuality are related to larger social structures. Bih (1996) also illustrates the confusion, frustration, silence, and discomfort that married middle-class women in Taiwan most often mentioned when describing their experience in domestic environments. In these case studies, participants do not always undertake critical analysis to tackle everyday issues; emotions, however, are enacted immediately to reflect the power dynamic in a given environment. Anger and other emotional indicators play integral roles in exploring what we mean about negotiation of subject positions.

Emotions have been long denied, avoided, suppressed or downplayed in the production of geographical knowledge (Rose, 1993; Kwan, 2007; also Anderson and Smith, 2001; Davidson, Bondi and Smith, 2005). Leaving emotions unchecked, as Anderson and Smith (2001) pointed out, leads to ‘a gaping void in how to both know and intervene in, the world (p.7)’. Rather than treating emotions as individual and private mental play, I argue that scholars should look at emotions as relational plays, which reveal one’s sense of time and space as well as one’s relations with others. In Davidson, Bondi and Smith’s term, we should understand emotions in terms of their ‘social-spatial mediation and articulation rather than as entirely interiorized subjective mental states’ (Davidson, Bondi and Smith, 2005, p.3).

Moreover, as many feminist writings show, resistant identities are not only constituted through positions taken up in relation to authority directly, but also through being able to
express desire, anger, happiness and fear, which develop the capacity to form alliances for future negotiations of power in other places (cf. Collins, 1990; hooks, 1990; Pratt, 2004). Being able to express and share one’s feelings with others may be the first step towards subversion. In this research, I am attentive to ‘how emotions, spaces and social identity formation are mutually constitutive in particular places and at particular times’ (Kwan, 2007, p.24).

**Analytical Framework**

In order to critically analyze the everyday negotiations of recent Taiwanese migrant women, several analytical elements are employed throughout the project. First, concepts of habitus and emotion work play an integral role in connecting issues examined in the research.

A poststructural methodology is employed in this research to critically examine Taiwanese migrant women’s everyday experiences in Toronto. The approach of postcolonial studies and transnational feminist practices (Grewal and Kaplan, 1994) is particularly chosen as one of the analytic frameworks. This framework focuses on gender and travel in order to study the relations between women from different cultures and nations rather than focusing solely on the relations between women and men. This provides a powerful analytic tool to interpret the interlocking systems of patriarchies, capitalism, colonialisms, racisms, and other forms of domination that produce women migrants.

Social identity is spatially, socially and historically constituted and is constituted within the power relations within which one is embedded. Feminist scholars have already suggested that the impact of globalization creates unequal power geometries whereby some groups are increasingly empowered and others disfranchised (Massey, 1993; Nagar et al., 2002). There exist complexities and contradictions inherent in actors’ relationships to
globalization. Processes, flows and relations of the complexity of identity formation need to be addressed. By incorporating critical social theories into the analysis, I investigate how the geopolitics of social identity of migrant women changes over time through migration processes and I illustrate how certain identities are reinforced, while others fade away.

Massey (1993) has argued that a place has its specificity constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus. A large proportion of those relations, experiences and understandings are constructed on a far larger scale. Places are full of internal conflicts, and the identities and boundaries of places are not pre-given and fixed, but are contested, constructed and reconstructed all the time. Following her argument, I discuss social identity as constructed and reconstructed continuously. This concept provides one of the main points of my theoretical framework.

The fluid, hybrid, and ambiguous notion of identity has gained it currency since the 1990s, especially in cultural studies (e.g. Hall, 1996a and 1996b; Gilroy, 1993a and 1993b; Ang, 2001). Hall (1996b) has mentioned that there is no guarantee beyond the very reductionist biological racial category and we should be aware of the social and historical contexts in which people are embedded. In Black Atlantic, Gilroy (1993a) analyzes the continuous mobility, flows and exchanges between different sites of black diaspora concentration and emphasizes the instability and mutability of identities which are always unfinished, always being remade. Instead of taking a pre-given and fixed definition of identity as a point of departure, I constantly question the nature of my object of study.

The notion of social identity is far less abstract, but embodied, open, uncertain and dependent on particular contexts. Space needs to be taken into serious consideration since our sense of who we are is fundamentally related to where we are. I pay attention to how
new social identities are created by migrant women and how strategic sites in the city are constructed in order to maintain these new identities. The question is ‘How to investigate the formation of new identities?’ Work done by Butler (1990) and de Certeau (1984) provides us with some clues. Butler (1990) argues that identity is performatively constituted by the very expressions that are said to be its results. Social identities are performed and constructed in and through social actions. Social norms and identities are only secure when performed ‘correctly’ and repetitively, and this offers a great potential for subversion. For example, only through a repetitive and regulated performance of heterosexual acts, heterosexuality is established as the norm. Butler argues that ‘in imitating gender, drag (to create a unified picture of ‘woman’) implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself – as well as its contingency’ (Butler, 1990, p.175). In other words, the aspects of gendered experience are falsely naturalized as a unit through the regulatory fiction of heterosexuality, and imitation effectively displaces the meaning of the original and suggests an openness to resignification and recontextualization.

The distinction between strategy and tactics is central to de Certeau’s thought. Strategy refers to the top-down exercise of power to coerce compliance and to confine ‘others’ to their ‘proper’ places. Tactics refer to the opportunistic manipulations offered by circumstance. He emphasizes the importance of tactics – the way to escape the rigid differentiations imposed by complexes of power – by considering the concept of space seriously. In the influential chapter ‘Walking in the City’, he addresses the subtle ways in which ordinary people resist systems from within. He argues that the paths and trajectories of walking can be traced on city maps, but the act itself of passing by cannot. ‘The street defined and designed by urban planners is transformed into a space by walkers’ (de Certeau,
The walker at street level moves in ways that are tactical and never fully determined by city plans and transforms a spatial order into something else by increasing the number of possibilities [by creating shortcuts and detours] and prohibitions [by forbidding oneself to take paths considered accessible or even obligatory]. There is unlimited diversity. Following Butler and de Certeau, social identity can be understood as spatial practice; selectively constructed and reconstructed constantly by different groups of people according to different temporal-spatial settings. There are always openings for subversion.

Dialogical processes, that is the constant interactions of meanings achieved through the juxtaposition and co-presence of different cultural forces and discourses and their effects, need to be addressed and investigated to discover the potential and possibility for subverting or escaping social norms for forming new identities. Movement (real and metaphoric), encountering (real, imaged and symbolic) and specificities of place become extremely important because they provide people the chance to move across borders and boundaries in pursuit of a new sense of identity. The recognition of new spatiality is required for potential openness (Pile and Thrift, 1995).

In this research, spaces and places are seen as partial, provisional and as constituted through practice. The idea of everyday space in this research refers to the combination of material, metaphorical, real and imagined spaces controlled, perceived, practiced and created by recent Taiwanese migrant women in Toronto in order to form various social identities. Spatiality is not just the physical arrangements of things, but also the spatial patterns of social action and embodied routine as well as historical conceptions of space and world. With all these analytical tools in mind, I started my journey of exploring the production of spatiality and social identity.
Organization of the Dissertation

Apart from the introduction and the conclusion chapters, this dissertation contains four main chapters based on the substantial amount of in-depth interview work undertaken between November 2003 and July 2004. Each chapter can be read independently with its own brief literature review in the beginning and conclusion. The introduction and conclusion chapters provide a broader picture of the entire research as well as constructive threads that weave everything together. The themes of the main chapters began to emerge through the fieldwork and analytical processes and are important to how migrant women reconstruct their everyday life in Toronto. Letting women speak for themselves is integral to the entire dissertation. In the following chapters, I will examine embodied geographical experiences and the geography of emotions. I will illustrate how the dynamics of habitus shifts through displacement and how personal and private space is constructed and reconstructed through a complex interplay between different discourses and practices. Finally I will discuss how new spaces are created for new identity claims.
CHAPTER ONE

GEOGRAPHIES OF LANGUAGE

When we first arrived in Canada, it was winter and it was very cold. The sun looked so huge, so big, and it was supposed to be very hot; however, when I stepped out of the aircraft, I was shocked by the cold weather. It was such a shocking experience. At that point, you know things are going to be different from now on, that this is a big turning point… (Page, personal interview, May 3, 2004)

Having a similar experience to Lucy in Kincaid’s novel1 of the same name (1990), Page realized soon after she stepped out the aircraft that her common knowledge of how the world works might not apply in a Canadian context. She said: ‘Things are going to be different from now on.’ There must be something else though, other than merely ‘difference’ that migrants experienced, or they would not find themselves sleepless, anxious and insecure in the first few months or even first few years after moving to Canada. In this chapter, I will focus on migrant women’s geographical experience related to everyday linguistic practices.

Language and Geography

Linguistic exchange is a dynamic, dialogical and relational process of everlasting descriptions and redescriptions of the world (Bakhtin, 1981; Folch-Serra, 1990; Holquist, 2002). Linguistic practice is not just for the sake of communication, but more importantly, it is also about exercise of power on and by various actors. Many turn to Bourdieu (1977; 1991) for his insightful thoughts on the sociology of language. He has described in detail

1 Lucy is a novel written by Jamaica Kincaid (1990). It is the story of a young woman, Lucy, who she leaves her home in West Indies and moves to North American, a place she has always dreamed of. Along with her new life as an au pair for a seemingly happy family in New York, what was left behind emerges with the new experiences, and what was strongly believed is now questioned. Gradually, Lucy makes herself into a new person who is able to live her and there as well as the past and the present with passion and honesty to herself.
how symbolic power, carried through linguistic utterances, is crucial to negotiate one’s social space in the society. For example, his research on the town of Pau in Béarn, France, vividly describes how symbolic profit was gained when the mayor decided to speak Béarnais instead of French in public (p.68-69, Bourdieu, 1991). The ideas of market, capital, price, profit and exchange are brought into discussions, which illustrates how linguistic utterances are received and evaluated in particular contexts.

Moreover, Bourdieu pointed out the unequal accessibility to existing markets. While certain groups of people are privileged in a given market, others find they are disfranchised. This leads me to ponder the geography of language. Indeed, linguistic practices must happen in some particular place, and therefore language has a geography.

‘The ability to speak one language rather than another, to learn many languages or a single one, to make choices about what language to speak and when to speak it are literally an expression of one’s place, and placing, in the world. (Desbiens & Ruddick, 2006, p.4)

Geographers’ interest in language varies from linguistic mapping at various scales (cf. Johnston et al, 2001; Canning, 2004; Wagner, 1958 for a general discussion), to the change of language over time and space (cf. Withers, 1983). It is not until recently that critical geographers started to look at the centrality of English and seek for inclusiveness in the discipline itself (Minca, 2000; Ramirez, 2000; Samers & Sidaway, 2000; Desbiens, 2002; Desbiens & Ruddick, 2006). Such a critical analysis of the geography of language reveals the power relations inherent in a given social-spatial context.

To migrants, linguistic practice weighs heavily on one’s sense of belonging, national identity and one’s ability to access various resources. Two major themes emerge in current (im)migration research on language: one deals with (im)migrants’ labour market performance
and social participation (cf. Kossoudji, 1988; Dustmann, 1994; Dustmann & Fabbri, 2003; Mojab, 1999; Leung 2000; Florax et al., 2005); the other concerns (im)migrants’ social identity, sense of belonging and negotiation (cf. James, 2001; Blackledge and Pavlenko, 2001; Blackledge, 2001; Gianmpapa, 2001; Miller, 2000; ). Both address pressing issues closely related to (im)migrants’ well being; however, both have major flaws.

Research on (im)migrants’ participation in the labour market and social participation often takes a narrowly-defined language ability, namely linguistic competence, as an explanation for the challenge (im)migrants face in terms of job searching. This overlooks the symbolic, social and cultural aspects of language. Such an approach creates a profound impact on settlement services designed to assist migrants as policy recommendations are often made as a result of this type of research. However, without critically examining the social and cultural aspects of language practice, any effort to develop effective settlement services will be in vain.

On the other hand, scholars recognize the symbolic power of linguistic expression and focus on code-switching and fluidity of identity construction; but by mainly focusing on linguistic expressions this research pays less attention to other social challenges that (im)migrants have to face. It becomes a discussion that is located nowhere. (Im)migrants with the ‘right’ linguistic capital, i.e. multilingual or native English speakers, are promised with potential openings and those without ‘right’ linguistic capital have nowhere to go. However, as feminists have pointed out, our everyday life is constructed through the constant negotiation of interlocking systems of patriarchies, capitalism, colonialisms, racisms, and other forms of domination. Focusing only on one issue, this research has a great tendency to miss the bigger picture (cf. Grewal and Kaplan, 1994; Nagar et al., 2002).
Bearing in mind the critical analysis on linguistic practice, I have expanded the scope of research to include (im)migrants’ everyday living space in terms of how (im) migrants experience body space, home space, city life, and mobility related to language practices. In doing so, I shall not only provide concrete examples, to examine the geography of language in Canadian society critically, but also fill in a missing piece of current migrant research on the language issue.

Situating the Context

Migrant youth who are of school age, are often put into ESL [English as Second Language] classes in schools in Canada. For adults, there is the ‘LINC’ program (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada), introduced by the Government of Canada in 1990, which allows adult immigrants to obtain basic language instruction in order to facilitate the social, cultural and economic integration (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2002; Leung, 2000; Cleghorn, 2000). Prior to the LINC program, the federal program for language training was designed mainly for labour market purposes and citizenship preparation (Cleghorn, 2000). Provincially and locally, settlement services, including ESL programs, are provided through various non-profit organizations such as community-based service agencies and church groups (Leung, 2000; Cleghorn, 2000). High schools, community colleges, universities as well as private language schools also offer a variety of paid adult ESL programs. The assumption behind ESL learning is straightforward: if migrants acquire sufficient linguistic ability, the barriers for integration into Canadian society will be removed. However, as I will show in the following sections, this is not the case.

In Taiwan, the majority of people are able to speak Mandarin, the official language, while Min-Nan and Hakka languages are spoken at home and in some regions. Many of the
older generation, born before 1940, can also speak fluent Japanese as a result of half century of Japanese rule (Tu, 1998). English as second language class starts at the latest in grade seven in public school. Some start their English language classes much earlier because of their parents’ emphasis on extracurricular English learning. Generally speaking though, English is seldom spoken and heard outside the classroom. Thus, even top graduate students who are able to pass the English language test and successfully get admission to attend graduate school abroad find huge language barriers ahead of them (Taiwan Women, 2000)².

English fluency varies among participants in this research. Among the 57 participants, three migrant mothers and mothers-in-law had no previous English learning experience before migration. Most of them had about three to six years of English language class prior to migration, and one has a master degree from the United States. Migrant daughters who came to Canada as teenagers had at least a few years of English classes. Despite having learned English to a certain level, many found it did not help in Canada because of lack of practice outside the classroom. Children who came to Canada at the preschool age had very little knowledge of English upon arrival, but proved to be the ones who experienced the least language barriers because of their arrival at the young age.

In order to grasp the richness of everyday life, participants were encouraged to speak whichever language(s) they wanted to. In doing so, they were able to express themselves freely as there were no language barriers to block communication. As a result, most interviews were done in Mandarin mixed with English and/or Min-Nan (Taiwanese) with two

² Taiwan Women is a network founded in 1995 to facilitate communication and conversation among Taiwanese women studying or living in the U.S. who are interested in gender issues and the current social status of Taiwanese women. The group has held several winter camps to foster dialogues on various gender issues. Taiwan Women’s Boundary-crossing is the collaborative work of the group.
exceptions: one interview was done solely in English and one was done entirely in Min-Nan. These results reflect the comfort level of participants’ linguistic expression in ‘everyday’ English³.

One thing to keep in mind is that Toronto is by no means a purely English world. Based on the 2001 census, Toronto is home for 43% of recent immigrants⁴ living in Canada, accounting for 23% of the population in the city (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2005). In fact, Toronto is a place where 100 different languages are spoken every day (City of Toronto, 2005). In terms of the languages spoken within Chinese communities- with the increasing number of Chinese immigrants from Mainland China over past decades- Mandarin replaced Cantonese and became the dominant language in the Chinese community by the end of the millennium. In the Greater Toronto Area, the Mandarin speaking population increased from 42% in 1994 to 77% in 1999 (Leung, 2000). In Bourdieu’s terms, there are various existing markets where various linguistic expressions are performed, received and evaluated, moreover; some have to be created.

**Linguistic Competence and the Glass Wall**

The language barrier is first and foremost the thing that reminds Taiwanese migrants that they are far away from ‘home’. It remains one of the issues they struggle with even after many years of migration. Migrants worry before migration about not being able to communicate with others properly in English, and embarrassment is expected to happen sooner or later. What they do not expect the sense of inferiority or even humiliation that

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³ All translation was done by the researcher if original conversations were not in English.

⁴ Recent immigrants refer to immigrants who became permanent residents or ‘landed’ after 1985 and who were living in the country on May 15 2001, when Canada’s Census of Population was held. (p.X, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2005).
sometimes comes along with errors in English. The following long narrative illustrates the frightening geographical experience many migrants have experienced, although the degree varies from one to another.

My husband told me ‘Please don’t ask me, and you know I can’t even finish one full sentence in English’. What he said is true that he didn’t understand any English. I can’t depend on him. As I told you I don’t want my kids to learn Cantonese instead of English, so we decide to live in the area where the majority of the residents are native white Canadians. So, when I took a look at the left and right sides [of the street], all I can see is white people. I told myself, ‘oh my god, what can I do now?’ It’s our third day in Canada. I didn’t know how to say ‘washroom’ at that time. All I could say is ‘yes’, ‘no’ and ‘thank you’. That’s it and nothing else. But I couldn’t hold my bladder anymore so I went into a shop. There is a white lady standing there. I told her ‘W.C.?’ [water closet] but she replied to me by saying, ‘Pardon me?’ I was so confused that how come I got this answer? I didn’t really know what she was talking about. I kept asking myself in Mandarin how to say ‘washroom’ in English. It’s useless because you just had no idea of the term. The Chinese characters would transform English words no matter how hard I think about them. After some hesitation, I started to pose like I was sitting on a toilet. [Later on, I was thinking that] I should just pretend that I want to get hand washed [so I could avoid the possible embarrassment]. But I ran out of ideas at that time, and the only thing I can do is to do a half squat. It was an awful experience. There was nobody around who could give me a hand. It was so embarrassing. I was not able to say anything, but only use body language. The only thing I could do is to repeat my performance. Finally, the lady pointed out a direction, and I had no idea if she understood what I was asking for. But I decided to follow her direction. Fortunately there was a washroom. When I finished, I said to her, ‘Thank you, thank you.’ She replied, ‘You are welcome’. Still I had no idea what it meant at that time. On that day, I told my husband, ‘Nobody can’t stop me [to go to the ESL school], because I can’t stand this situation anymore. It is a big threat if I can’t even ask to borrow a washroom’. (May, my emphasis, February 16, 2004)
Linguistic competence is the fundamental element for delivering linguistic products, such as a successful conversational exchange. Lack of linguistic competence brings immediate shock, and creates one of the most intense and distressing moments in a migrant’s life. It shakes the very foundation of migrants who previously held themselves to be capable adults, caring mothers, competent students and so on. Such a jarring feeling is intensified by the way migrants are treated by others.

Many have experienced various degrees of humiliation and frustration when they interact with others because of their lack of linguistic competence.

I went to a pharmacy store to fill my prescription, and I did not know how to speak English at that time. The pharmacist simply waved his hand and left. It’s my first year in Canada. At that time, I had not acquired sufficient listening and speaking skill. It was difficult to answer and ask any question. He showed you that face, and he treated you as if you were an inferior species. He looked down on me. He waved his hand and just left like that. I was afraid to meet him again. But when I went to fill another prescription the other day, I met him again. Same person, same reaction. It really discouraged me. (Rose, personal interview, April 13, 2004)

The fear of being belittled and humiliated makes many migrants confine their activities to a limited spatial range in order to secure their sense of security. When they go out, they either travel with companions or they only make limited stops before heading home. Rose said, ‘Basically, I only went to three places [i.e. Fairview Mall, the Chinese Supermarket, and my sister-in-law’s place] over my first year in Toronto.’ Some become very timid and fail to see the resources that are available for them right away:

When we first arrived in Toronto, we lived in an apartment building. At that time, I did not dare to step outside the apartment building because I did not know how to speak English. One day, my daughter told me that she wanted some milk. I told her, ‘Mommy do not know where to buy milk, and can you
live without milk for few more days?’ He he… [laughing] I was a very shy person, and was not like other women who dared to speak poor English. In the first few months here, all I did everyday was drive my daughter to school, and then go back directly to my bedroom and sleep. The situation did not change until I went to ESL school. There was a field trip a few days after I started to go to school. We went to the [North York] city hall and visited the historical building there. I then realized that there were so many shops, such as grocery stores, pharmacy stores, and so forth in the basement of the building next to my apartment building. (Emily, personal interview, December 15, 2003)

Feminists use the term ‘glass ceiling’ to describe the intangible barrier within the hierarchy of corporations that prevent women or minorities from advancing to leadership positions (cf. Morrison et al., 1987; Griffiths, 1996, and so on; just to name few.); here I suggest the term ‘glass wall’ be used to describe the everyday geographical experience of migrants with little English competence. Instead of vertical segregation, there are horizontal barriers that separate people’s everyday living experiences in a given place. Soon after migrants arrive in Canada, they find that they can see things but can not read, they can hear voices but can not understand, and they tend to keep their mouths shut all the time.

Other than reading a map and having a bird’s-eye view of the city, their geographical experience in the city is constructed through several corridors which connect to several specific destinations important to everyday life. Real and imagined glass walls are the walls of the corridors and they look solid and unbreakable.

Migrants, in a sense, are not city dwellers, but silent passengers who are anxious and timid outside their domestic environment. An overwhelming sense of discomfort related to their language proficiency prevents them from going out. A migrant woman told me that after her husband’s death she felt so sorrowful and it was unbearable for her to stay at home the whole day thinking of her husband. She needed to go out. However, all she could do
was travel back and forth between different subway stations.

Without a doubt, acquiring linguistic competence, in this case in English, is one way to remove glass walls. However, it is not just about learning English, but also about having the courage to express oneself in English. If they do so, they then find corridors are actually permeable and expandable. Migrants have variable chances to use English in different situations on a daily basis; therefore, corridors are not expanded and barriers are not removed equally in every socio-spatial setting. The level of anxiety about unpredictable encounters in a given situation reflects the level of difficulty of linguistic barrier one anticipates. The higher the level of anxiety, the higher the difficulty one has in overcoming the barrier. Both Aggie and Rose both have acquired sufficient daily conversation skills at ESL class but neither of them dares to talk to Caucasians on the street.

You only learn this much, very little English. When you see a Caucasian on the street, do you dare to open your mouth and talk to him/her? Now when people talk to me, I can probably understand what they want to say and I can more or less talk to them after thinking a while. However, I can’t come out with any words at the exact moment, because I only learn this much. So I don’t dare to talk to Caucasians. If you don’t dare to talk to them, that’s the end of the story. (Aggie, personal interview, November 14, 2003)

Rose interestingly is able to communicate with her Greek neighbours, and their son-in-law because constant encounters with her neighbours and neighbours’ son-in-law reduced the level of the unpredictable. This offers her the chance to express herself more often in English.

I am not afraid to talk to them [Greek neighbours] now because I got acquainted with them. If I were not, the situation would be very much like my first time talking to their son-in-law. I wasn’t acquainted with their son in-law at that time, and I only waved my hand and said hi to him when he showed up at my
Greek neighbour’s house. I didn’t even say, ‘how are you’ to him. Last year, when I sat with my Greek neighbour and his wife in their porch, chitchatted and played with their granddaughter, their son-in-law drove by. *When his car was approaching, my first thought was to go home as soon as possible, or I would have to talk to him face-to-face.* That was my first thought. However, I could not run inside my house because it would be too rude to do so. I could only stay. He came to me and greeted me, ‘Rose, nice to meet you. I have heard about you for a long time, but never talked to you face-to-face…’ *It was April at that time, but I had sweat on my forehead. I had sweat on my forehead, and I could not speak even one word. He kept talking to me and asking me questions, but my brain turned blank and I had no idea of what was he asking. After talking to him several times since then, I am not nervous anymore. I still get nervous when I have to talk to somebody I don’t know.* (Rose, my emphasis, personal interview, April 13, 2004)

One’s geographical experience is also expandable through bridging work done by others, enabling one to move more freely, comfortably, and with less stress in the city, even if only for a short period of time. Native-English speaking neighbours can provide insightful information and offer immediate help when migrants encounter difficulties. Some migrant women depend heavily on their neighbours and even let their neighbours participate in some of their decision making processes.

My Greek neighbour was a construction worker, and he understands building materials very well. I asked him to represent us when the adjuster came from the insurance company. I let him decide everything. After the fire, he helped us rebuild our place. I basically have no idea. I have no preference in terms of colours of walls, and he and his daughter made decisions for me. As you can see the wall colour of the washroom on the ground floor, it is not the colour I want in the first place. I was thinking about the same colour as the one in the living room. So when I entered the washroom one day, I found it is extremely dark when I turned the light off. I turn the light on, and found the wall colour is dark. I was shocked by the dark colour. So I came to ask him, ‘How come the colour is so dark?’ He asked me, ‘So you don’t like it?’ I said, ‘I don’t
mind at all. It is totally different from what I have imagined. And do you pick the colour?’ He said, ‘Yes, and do you like it?’ I can only answered, ‘Yes, I like it.’ What else can I say? In fact, I like the colour very much after several looks. But I told him that the whole colour design of house is less Chinese, and it’s more a western style house. (Rose, personal interview, April 13, 2004)

Activities, such as ‘Doors Open Toronto’ Tour, downtown PATH Tour, and ROM [i.e. Royal Ontario Museum] Tour, are occasionally offered in Mandarin by Taiwanese youth volunteers, which allow migrants to explore the city without worrying about getting lost and feeling intimidated.

We just finished participating in the city’s ‘Doors Open’ activity. Basically we played roles as tour guides, and took them to different stops. We spoke Mandarin all the way through. Because a lot of migrant parents don’t understand English very much and some of they have just arrived in Toronto, it is our responsibility to take them around in the downtown area. A lot of them live uptown and they are afraid of the downtown area because they feel it is a dangerous place to go. Since they are not familiar with downtown, they do not dare to go downtown by themselves. We encourage them to participate in this type of activity. (Rebecca, personal interview, May 31, 2004)

In recent years, multi-linguistic services have started to be offered by service providers, such as banks, some governmental institutions and most importantly medical clinics and hospitals, and these changes have eased migrants’ life significantly. Without acquiring English skills, migrants find some glass walls can be removed temporarily, which makes

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5 Doors Open Toronto is an annual weekend event coordinated by Toronto Culture, City of Toronto. The program allows visitors free access to architecturally and/or culturally significant properties that are either not usually open to the public, or would normally charge an entrance fee (Doors Open Toronto, 2006). The downtown Toronto PATH is an underground walkway system linking 27 kilometres of shopping, services and entertainment. It is also connected to subway system (City of Toronto, 2006). During the SARS epidemic, a group of Taiwanese organized a non-profit organization called ‘I love Toronto’ to provide assistance and support for Taiwanese migrants. When the SARS epidemic was over, the focus of the organization shifted to bridging connections between the Taiwanese community and the mainstream society. (I Love Toronto, 2006)
them feel secure enough to settle down permanently in the city since their needs are recognized and taken care of.

Later I found that I don’t need to learn English anymore. Everything is convenient now. For example, some banks now provide Mandarin service. I also manage to speak Cantonese later on. I found I can live here almost without any difficulty. Right now some governmental institutions even provide Mandarin service. They also provide doctors who speak the same language as patients in the hospital, so I don’t feel the urgency to learn English. I often feel it’s not going to be fine if you can’t communicate with doctors. It is not like other things, because things won’t go very wrong if you make some mistake. It doesn’t work this way on the health issue. (Aggie, my emphasis, personal interview, November 14, 2003)

Taiwanese migrant women in Toronto, especially mothers, can function well in everyday life, such as grocery shopping, banking and participating in social activities, without speaking English since there are a proliferation of Asian theme malls and Mandarin-provided social services in the GTA (cf. Wang, 1999; Preston & Lo, 2000) as well as Mandarin services offered by various social providers. By no means has this made migrants feel Canada is home in the same way they feel about Taiwan as home. The sense of powerlessness, frustration and exclusion is still an everyday reality they have to face.

**Linguistic Product and Social Space**

The sense of the value of one’s own linguistic products is a fundamental dimension of the sense of knowing the place which one occupies in the social space.


The sense of powerlessness migrant women experience is closely linked to their struggles with language issues. Migrant mothers, who are not able to express themselves
effectively find it difficult to speak on behalf of their children and express concerns outside their domestic environment. More discouragingly, they feel misunderstood. Laura expressed her frustration on parents’ day; ‘I have so much to say, but I end up saying very little. *It doesn’t mean that I didn’t treat it seriously. We care about our child* [my emphasise]. However, it’s so difficult sometimes.’ Instead of speaking for their children, migrant mothers need their children to speak for them as translators. This puts mothers into an unbearable position. Because so many situations require English, the migrants’ very existence is lost in translation.

Once we moved to Canada, we realized that our parents could hardly help us with studying because basically we are learning different things here, and for everything English is required. We have to rely on ourselves. [any sense of loss?] I guess so. So my brother and I would tell them what’s going on at school and share some interesting things with them. We would tell them about our teachers. This makes them feel they exist. (Rebecca, personal interview, May 31, 2004)

The losses become more evident when dealing with health-related decisions.

My son was in critical condition at that time, and he still translated everything for me soon after we arrived in the hospital… But if he has to undergo a surgery, he won’t be able to help me at all. When I am thinking about this, I find that the only thing I can do is go back to Taiwan. You know that kind of feeling? Even with someone assisting you, the help is very limited. A few days ago, we were discussing should my son get surgery in Canada or in Taiwan if it is inevitable? I have no hesitation to make a decision right away, and the answer is going back to Taiwan. Our family doctor tries to convince us that the science of surgery originated from western science and Canadian neurologists have a great reputation. He suggests we stay here and he is right. But I found that I don’t care about the reputation stuff so much as other things. I found other things matter to me as well. (Norma, personal interview, March 22, 2004)
To be a capable mother and to be able to take charge are considered possible if migrant mothers can speak using their mother tongue. It is most likely that Norma would still have no clue about surgery, even if it was performed in Taiwan, but the linguistic barrier overshadow other obstacles and is seen as the only unsolved issue.

The ability to speak English is valued over writing or reading ability in daily life. It is not surprising to observe the switch of power relations within a household based on one’s ability to deliver valuable linguistic products.

I never thought that I could communicate with others and teach others in English. It is truly unbelievable. My husband wanted to pursue advanced education when he was still in Taiwan and he passed the TOEFL test. It means he reached a certain level of English proficiency. But after we migrated, I am the one taking care of everything in the household. When it requires listening and speaking, he is not able to handle it; but there is no way that I can pass TOEFL test.!! (Jenny, personal interview, February 24, 2004)

For migrant children, the language issue also plays a significant role in terms of how they reconstruct their everyday life after migration but it happens in a very different way than with grownups. To help their children escape from serious competition for higher education in Taiwan is often mentioned by migrant mothers as a major factor in their decision to migrate. Canada seems promising in providing a better learning environment. However, some challenges are underestimated.

Coming here, you experience difficulties. Dad is not here, mom is under a lot of pressure, all three of us have a lot of pride, and we would like to have good work, but then because of English competition, we can’t do that and we get mad, and we start to complain to mom. Everybody fights here, ’cause everybody is experiencing change. When we could not accomplish that, we start going against each other. The whole family was in trouble. (Page, personal interview, May 3, 2004)
It takes time to get familiar with the new learning environment and many learn to live with the language challenge. Taking courses that require minimal language engagement is the strategy used to survive at the post-secondary level of education. However, for those who came to Canada in their late adolescent, time is running out. Not only do they have to adjust to the new learning mode, but they also need to quickly develop a high level of language proficiency and perform well in other subjects so that they can successfully get into university. It is stressful, frustrating and not everyone can make it. Some who performed well at school in Taiwan found themselves in a big trouble in Toronto. Sitting in the classroom, their hearts were pounding, but their tongues were frozen. Their minds ran so well, but the rest of them looked so clumsy. They started to doubt if their intelligence had ever existed for real, and they saw themselves living in a different world from their peers.

To participate in conversation successfully, one has to develop other abilities in addition to sufficient linguistic competence. Bakhtin mentions that there exist different linguistic systems within one language (Bakhtin, 1981, p.295-296). Each linguistic system: conducting small talk, making formal speeches, being able to laugh at local jokes and so forth, requires various social involvements and has its specific social-spatial context. The topic, the gesture, the tone, the time and the space need to be taken into consideration to deliver successful conversation.

Moreover, one has to be familiar with the given social context. In fact, one is still far from being recognized as a local even when one acquires sufficient language skill. Emily complained, ‘I still don’t get some idioms. I have no idea of what they mean [even though I understand every word]. I don’t understand why they laugh.’ To blend in means one has to be able to participate in conversation. It is through daily conversations that one’s status
as a full Canadian is acknowledged or denied. With few exceptions, most migrants feel it is hard to blend in.

I wanted to fit in but I couldn’t. I was kind of a stranger. You know how people just come and they have a strange look on them. Plus I wanted to know what they were talking about but the kids were always talking about pop music and even in Taiwan I didn’t listen to that much pop music either. So that was another strange thing. So I don’t know. It was just altogether very hard to fit in. I was never... yes I do like sports but I was never a sports fan per se. Like I didn’t go out and watch all these different sports games. So I couldn’t fit into another one of the most popular topics in school and so I had a pretty difficult time trying to fit in. (Sally, personal interviewed, December 26, 2003)

Ironically, when they went back to Taiwan, many realize they did not fit in there either because they could not catch up with the latest topics of conversation. Their attitudes toward things and people had changed over time. They did not sense the inner change in themselves until they had conversations with their friends in Taiwan. It is through these conversations that they began to recognize themselves as Canadian.

When I went back to Taiwan, I found there was a gap between me and people there. All they talked about is money. I am also interested in making money, but they never change the topic. It’s all about money, money and money. They never discuss about kid’s education. When I started to talk about my Canadian experience with them, they felt that I was showing off. But when I was in Vancouver, we always phoned each other and shared our experience. I realize that I have changed unobtrusively and imperceptibly. I’ve also learnt to praise people more; whereas in Taiwan people always make criticism and make little praise. Now I am willing to praise people more. (May, personal interview, February 16, 2004)

Thus, to blend in, one is not simply doing translating. Instead, one has to make a lot of effort to deliver proper conversation. There exist huge differences in what can or cannot be spoken about in public based on whether one is in Taiwan or Canada. What is seen as
personal business in one society may be everyone’s business in another. The hidden rules in a given society are taken for granted and are not revealed until they are broken by ‘outsiders’. Take small talk for example. Migrant women find it difficult to talk about the weather; however, it is the most discussed topic in Canada. ‘Weather’ does matter in a Canadian context because it is a life and death matter when a severe snowstorm or heat wave is coming. Temperatures in Canada can change dramatically from one day to the next, whereas this rarely happens in Taiwan. In addition, the mythical snowy image of Canada, as well as its connotation for people’s livelihoods (whether they are defined as less civilized, backward, people with higher endurance and so on) plays a significant role in Canadian collective identity (Berland, 1994). It takes time to realize that people have developed more expressions for and stronger associations with weather in Canada than in other places.

More importantly, it is a tactic to create a temporary comfort zone. It is a comfortable topic to bring into conversation to avoid possible embarrassment and uneasiness, when strangers or quasi-strangers occupy a given place for a short period time, such as at parties, inside elevators or in hallways. It is one of the tactics that people adopt to create their comfort zone, because it makes possible ‘copresence without commingling, awareness without engrossment, courtesy without conversation’ (Lofland, 1998, p.30). However, such a tactic becomes a challenge to migrants.

I participate in social events at the YMCA very often, and we hold potluck parties regularly. Everyone seemed to enjoy the conversation very much, but I had nothing to say after asking and answering those basic questions. It feels like you finish all your homework and you don’t know what to do for the rest of time. [So do you feel upset after the party?] Right away…I feel upset right away. I want to express [my idea so much]… For example, people often asked me ‘How do you feel about the weather today?’, and I would tell them ‘It’s hot’
or ‘It’s humid’. Then I didn’t know how to keep the conversation going. They would tell me how they felt. I understood what they were saying, but I couldn’t say anything more. I had nothing else to say [in English]. I feel that I can only make friends within Chinese communities. (Teresa, personal interview, June 16, 2004)

One’s salary, educational history, body weight, marital status, parental experience, family disputes and so on are popular topics in Taiwanese daily conversation, which are seen as important elements to bring friends closer together within the community, but are generally treated as invasions of personal privacy in Canada\(^6\). It takes time and careful investigation to understand and get involved in everyday cultural practices. For many migrant mothers, they simply choose to stay in their ethnic social circuit after a few trials, to secure their sense of comfort. Migrant daughters, despite the fact that they have more chances to interact with mainstream society, still feel it is hard to blend in. Many end up hanging out with people from similar backgrounds, and continue to pay attention to the popular culture trends in Taiwan and Hong Kong (cf. Parker, 1998 on British Chinese identity).

I found it is impossible for people like me who came to Canada at such an old age [i.e. teenage] to develop deep friendships with Caucasian people. In addition to people who share a similar background with me, I can only develop deep relationship with CBCs [i.e. Canadian-born Chinese], but not Caucasians. I share some similarity with CBC, but [with Caucasians] I feel their thinking and lifestyles are so different from mine. It does not mean that I try to exclude them, but it’s hard to develop deeper friendship. I can’t blend in with local people. I really want to do it because I am in Canada now, and what’s the

\(^6\) I took a non-credit course called ‘Finding your academic voice’ when I first came to study at the University of Toronto. In the class, we were given a list of improper topics to discuss in social gatherings in a Canadian context. Class design is derived from several sources, such as *Cultures in Contrast* (Shulman, 1998) and *Intercultural Communication* (Scollon & Scollon, 2001). I thank Dr. Jane Freeman for her help for providing me the references.
point of being here if I still hang out with people with Chinese background? However, I don’t know how to blend in. (Rebecca, personal interview, May 31, 2004)

Christine is an exception, and her experience in the local horticultural society provides a great example of how people gradually get to know and be able to ‘Do as the Canadians do while in Canada.’ It took her years, first being a silent member, to become the leader of the organization.

[I paid the membership fee and join the club] I went there as a silent member in the beginning. I kept some distance, and I did not involve myself too much. When they held the fundraising activity in the spring, such as ‘sharing your green’ event where members sell their flower seedlings to help sick children during the Christmas time, I would just go to my backyard and get some flower seedlings and support the fundraising. I tried to be friendly. My English wasn’t good so I showed my support by actions I took. People might be afraid of me, and question about my intention to join the club. They would wonder what kind of person I am. Then they had potluck party, and I had to bring something there. They have flower exhibition every year, and ask you if you want to donate something. I had no idea what they were talking about the first time. They asked me ‘A loaf?’ ‘Whole wheat?’ ‘Egg?’ or ‘Tuna?’ By asking these questions, they meant if you want to bring a loaf of whole-wheat toast, then I would bring something else. If you bring something with egg, then I could do something with tuna. I did not figure out what this was for several years until we got to know each other more. In the beginning, it was very embarrassing because I did not know anything. They might wonder what I am doing here because I had no idea of what they were asking. Then I realized what all these questions were about by examining the food they prepared and ate. I also kind of figured out the playing rule of the annual exhibition, and I took one of my flower arrangements to participate in the annual event. I won the first prize. I paid attention to everything, year after year and they figured out what kind of person I am. (Christine, my emphasis, personal interview, December 20, 2003)
If one does acquire the ability to deliver valuable conversation, there is one last thing to be checked to verify one’s status. In Canada, non-Caucasian Canadians do not necessarily need to look white anymore under the rhetoric of multiculturalism; however, they definitely have to act right and to sound right to be recognized as full Canadians other than immigrants. In this respect, linguistic practice indeed serves as an indication to tell one’s status in Canada. One might not challenge the status of a third-generation Japanese-Canadian who can speak fluent Canadian English, but would wonder about the country of origin of a Caucasian with an unidentifiable accent.

In a way, one’s status for being a full Canadian is decided by one’s accent. The only exception is those people who have a British accent, a desirable accent admired by many Canadians. Their special accent does not undermine their being Canadians. However, a person of color who carries a non-Canadian English accent -which happens to most first generation of migrants- has to defend his or her Canadian-ness all the time. The question of ‘Where are you from?’, brings an uneasy feeling, and reminds people of their inerasable accent, no matter how long they have been in Canada.

Here if you have strong accent when you speak English, people sense something and they keep asking you what you are talking about. Then I feel I am incompetent, and I try very hard to be just like one of the local people. I want to be recognized as a Canadian. If I came here earlier, maybe I would be like them. I would feel that I am just one of them. (Linda, personal interview, March 2, 2004)

In the same vein, Emily, who already passed advanced English courses in continuing education, still feels shame about her ‘NOT’ being able to speak English.

Do you know that I feel so shameful about myself when people ask how many years I have been living in Canada. The longer I am here, the more shameful I
feel. Because I can’t speak English, I tend not to tell how long I have been here. I find it’s a shame that I cannot speak English. (Emily, my emphasis, personal interview, December 15, 2003)

Migrants are eager to acquire a Canadian accent; to be recognized as local and Canadian. To blend in, Sally said, ‘I listen very carefully when people talk, so I can somewhat learn how they talk, so I don’t sound like these foreign persons coming in with these weird accents.’ Tiffany’s husband decided not to attend the advanced English class because he would not learn Canadian English.

We had to get a language test first at ESL school. I was at level 2, and my husband was at level 7. He could not take free language courses because he was already at an advanced level. He had to pay 20 bucks to get enrolled [advanced class]. So he paid 20 bucks for a 3-month class. He stopped going after he attended the first class. Do you know why? The advanced class is more like a discussion course, so students have to discuss about newspapers or books in the class. He found that all his classmates were either Indian migrants or belonged to other minority groups. He said to me, ‘Those people have a weird accent. I am here to learn standard [Canadian] English, but all I hear is accented English. I am not going to learn anything from them.’ Thus, he decided not to go to the class anymore. (Tiffany, my emphasis, personal interview, December 18, 2003)

The hierarchy of different accents reveals how the hegemony of ‘standard’ English is ingrained in many Canadians’ minds, including migrants themselves, which devalues the very fact that the nation’s population is comprised of people from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds, carrying a variety of accents. Under such hegemony those who can speak standard Canadian English are more Canadian than others.
Interestingly, the linguistic identity struggle in post-martial law7 Taiwan has a lot to do with Taiwanese migrants’ strong feeling towards the power of language in Canada. ‘Official’ language(s) carries symbolic power when it comes to claiming one’s national identity and one’s belonging (i.e. Bourdieu, 1991; for situation in Taiwan, see Hsiau, 1997; Huang, 2000; Tse, 2000; Liao, 2000; Sandel, 2003). Both in Taiwan and Canada, the exclusiveness of language is over-emphasized, but the hybridity of languages is overlooked.

Language evolves over time and space. In Taiwan, daily conversation is comprised of Mandarin, Taiwanese (Min-Nan)8, Japanese and English, and only people in the island can fully understand the meaning of certain conversations. The standard Mandarin accent used to be seen as a merit, however, nowadays it is the Taiwanese Mandarin accent that is used to confirm one’s Taiwanese-ness. Ironically, the special Mandarin accent carried by Taiwanese migrants, no matter if they are labelled as native (bendi, including Hoklo, Hakka, and aboriginal groups) or Mainland (Wai-Sheng) Taiwanese9, is easily recognised by Chinese migrants from Mainland China or Hong Kong (cf. Kong’s (1999) research on Singaporeans in China and Chen’s (2002) research on Taiwanese women in Beijing).

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7 The martial law that was first imposed in 1947 by the Nationalist government and lifted on July 15, 1987.

8 Taiwanese has its origin as the local dialect from Fujian Province in Mainland China. Because the majority of Taiwanese speak Hoklo as their mother tongue, gradually the language of Taiwanese began to refer to the language of Hoklo.

9 People who migrated to Taiwan around the year 1949 (the rise of People’s Republic of China) and their descendants have often been referred to by Taiwanese locals as ‘non-Taiwanese’ or wai-sheng, meaning, among other things, they ‘come’ from other provinces of China. In recent years, as the Taiwan independence movement gains momentum, however, wai-sheng has gradually taken on the meaning of being ‘Chinese,’ as opposed to being Taiwanese, in the eyes of pro-independence Taiwanese (Tu, 1998). The population in Taiwan is comprised of four groups: Taiwanese (85%, including Hoklo 75% and Hakka 10%); Mainland Chinese (13%) and Aboriginals (2%) (Hsiau, 2005). However, such a categorisation is problematic because of intermarriage. It becomes even more complicated when dealing with the second generation of Mainlanders.
The island’s multilayered past (cf. Davison, 2003; Manthorpe, 2005; Rubinstein, 2007; Tu, 1998) complicates identity politics within Taiwanese communities in Toronto. Identity is not given and people have to discover, perform and practice in everyday life in order to secure it. One’s definition for being a Taiwanese can be easily challenged by other Taiwanese fellows who hold very different views of who Taiwanese people ‘really’ are.

Born in Taiwan and spending most of my life in the island, I define myself as a Taiwanese without any doubt. However, I found my belief was challenged when I was invited to attend a Taiwanese church to celebrate Christmas Eve in my first year of studying at the University of Toronto. On this special occasion, people were only allowed to speak one local language I partially understand and they later claimed that every ‘Taiwanese’ should speak this language, which made me feel totally excluded. Belonging to the Hakka group in Taiwan, I was denied the very legitimacy to be a Taiwanese in that situation. (Wu, 2002)

Language plays a significant and often coercive role in the current trend of re-mapping Taiwan. It also serves as an important clue to distinguish ‘us’ from ‘others’ among ‘Chinese’ communities in Toronto.

You can’t tell if people are from the Mainland from their look. But once they open their mouth, I have little interest to talk to them. When people talk to me in Taiwanese, I immediately develop a bond with them. I have sense of familiarity. I would chat with them in Taiwanese, and it doesn’t matter if they are from U.S. Do you know why? Because people from Hong Kong and China all know how to speak Mandarin, but only people from Taiwan know how to speak Taiwanese. So when people talk to me in Taiwanese, I treat them as fellows. (Cherry, personal interview, November 28, 2003)
Some learn to speak Taiwanese after migration in order to fit into the narrowly-defined notion of being Taiwanese: A Taiwanese should know how to speak Taiwanese\textsuperscript{10}.

There are many Taiwanese people who migrated to Canada during the time we migrated. Most of them are Taiwanese. I belong to the category of ‘Mainlander’. I grew up in an environment surrounded by Mainlanders. I have no idea of the language of Taiwanese. None of my classmates speak Taiwanese\textsuperscript{11}. I had no idea of what it is until we had TV at home. But I have no opportunity to learn it. It is not until I migrated to Canada that I got a chance to learn. You know we are away from home, and people tend to speak their home language when they get together. They told me, ‘A person from Taiwan who couldn’t speak Taiwanese? What a joke!’ They complain about me not being able to speak Taiwanese. One of my achievements in Canada is that I learned how to speak Taiwanese well. (Brenda, personal interview, November 27, 2003)

As mentioned earlier, not being able to speak Taiwanese, I was challenged as to whether I was a ‘true’ Taiwanese. I received friendly reminders such as ‘I know a Hakka Taiwanese who speaks perfect Taiwanese’ and ‘A Taiwanese should know how to speak Taiwanese.’ on different social occasions. It surprised me that such an essentialist notion of the ‘Taiwanese’ identity was widespread in Taiwanese communities. Of course, not everyone shares such a view, especially those who took different trajectories to settle in Taiwan. Being asked to speak only Taiwanese denies their very right to claim they are Taiwanese.

I phoned that women organization once. She spoke Taiwanese, and I spoke Mandarin. She gave me an address for a social event. I went there. However, I felt very uncomfortable when I found out that they only speak Taiwanese. I speak fluent Taiwanese, so speaking is not a problem to me.

\textsuperscript{10} The language of Taiwanese refers to Hoklo here, while Hakka is not recognized as legitimate ‘Taiwanese’.

\textsuperscript{11} Strict Mandarin Language Policy was imposed in schools throughout Taiwan from 1945 until 1987 by the Nationalist (KMT) government.
But I feel uncomfortable with their strong pro-independent tendency. I don’t want to get involved in such identity politics even when I am in Canada. I just want to have fun here. (Aggie, personal interview, November 14, 2003)

In Toronto, an often observed situation is that friends or families from the same ethnic group speak to each other in their mother tongue mixed with English on the subway, at restaurants, or in shopping malls, and they can switch to English if it is necessary, without any hesitation. Such a phenomenon reflects the heterogeneity of Canadian society and people’s comfort level for speaking their mother tongue outside private property, but at the same time it also reminds people of where they are every time they switch to English (cf. Goldstein, 1999 and 2000). Living with (at least) two languages at the same time is the reality of many migrants’ everyday lives.

In terms of switching languages, migrant youth are most likely to occupy the in-between-ness space of two linguistic cultures and practices. The change from feeling trapped in a confused space or getting lost in a space to being able to create one’s space marks the migrant youth’s deeper realisation of their social position.

I am not CBC, but I am not FOB [i.e. fresh off the boat] either. There are people like me, and we feel different. We separate ourselves from CBCs and FOBs. So we are our own group now. Before there is only CBC or FOB, and now you can choose, CBC, FOB, or the middle one. (Page, personal interview, May 3, 2004)

Many of them are aware of this social position, and embrace the notion of hybridity (Ang, 2001; Bhabha, 1996; Ralston, 2002). It is a social position that requires ‘complicated engagements rather than identity, togetherness-in-difference rather than virtual apartheid’ (Ang, 2001, p.3).
I kind of get used to it because I have many friends who are also caught in between generations. We are not second generation. We are the one-and-half generation [of migrants]. I communicate with people who are not from my ethnic group in one way, and I communicate with Taiwanese friends in another. I have a totally different attitude when I communicate with Caucasian elderly people versus Taiwanese elderly ones. If I only understand one side of the culture, I can only communicate with people in one style. Since I understand both, I can switch anytime. I gained confidence in my English communication skills since I started my first job which puts me in an advantageous position. I have begun to recognize the advantage in terms of boundary crossing of two cultures. The more I understand my own situation, the more I accept myself as a one-and-half generation of migrant. (Linda, personal interview, my translation, March 2, 2004)

The identity of being a one-and-half generation of migrant emerges along with linguistic utterances. These young migrant daughters differentiate themselves from the first generation and second generation peers through the quality of hybridity they possess. It is a quality described by Bhabha in this way (1996, p.58),

Hybrid agencies find their voice in a dialect that does not seek cultural supremacy or sovereignty. They deploy the partial culture from which they emerge to construct visions of community, and version of historic memory, that give narrative form to the minority positions they occupy; the outside of the insider: the part in the whole. (Bhabha, 1996, p.58)

Compared to monolingual speakers, these multilingual speakers have a better chance to clearly and deeply experience the enormous power of everyday language in their life. The power of everyday language emerges through the gradual process of inculcation of the value system and social implications behind the language; what Bourdieu called ‘dispositions’ (Bourdieu, 1991). People who speak more than one language often find that it is impossible to translate certain words precisely into another language. It is because at the same time,
language is a communication tool, a medium and product of social interaction. No two societies are the same and there is always something lost in translation.

A person who lives in more than one language system has a stronger potential for subversion because of his or her constant negotiation in different value systems. For example, to argue with her father, Peggy has to speak English to elaborate her thoughts, whereas there is less space for her to argue with her father in Mandarin.

When I hold different views from my father, I can only speak for myself in English. I can’t use Mandarin. When there is disagreement, I will switch to English. I can’t argue with Mandarin because there is no space in this language for me to argue with him. I found it’s too polite, and there is no way I can use that language to say something against him. There is nothing that I can use against him. Besides, I found it hurts more if I argue with him in Mandarin. (Peggy, my emphasis, personal interview, January 1, 2004)

The idea of equal rights and equal say is well accepted in Canadian society; however, it is seen as rebellion when children try to argue with their parents in Taiwanese society. Moreover, there are less words available for children to argue in this manner, but there are plenty of phrases for parents to discipline their children (cf. Pratt, 2004 for example of Chinese Canadians in Vancouver, p.134-136). No matter which language migrant daughters speak when they argue with their parents, it is clear that migrant daughters start to argue in Canadian ways. This brings migrant mothers a sense of loss.

I follow a traditional Chinese or Taiwanese lifestyle, and we respect our parents very much. But they [daughters] are different. Under such an educational system [i.e. Canadian system], they feel that are entitled to certain rights. So they often argue with me by saying that, ‘You have no right to ask me to do this or that, and you have ask for my permission.’ There is no way that my mother has to ask for my permission for anything. But they feel they have the right to do so. How dare we not listen to our parents? We feel that’s respect, but
they think this is nothing to do with respect. Sometimes I ask them to do something, and they dare to argue against me. They feel they are entitled to do so. I sometimes feel a sense of loss. I ask myself what I have done to myself by bringing them here. The sense of loss… I can hardly argue with them when they start to argue with me, because they get all these ideas from the North American educational system. I regret once a while about the decision to immigrate because there wouldn’t be such a problem if we were still in Taiwan. It’s very difficult to re-educate them now. There is a sense of loss. (Emily, personal interview, December 15, 2003)

Conclusion

To conclude, I would like to use my grocery shopping routine as an example to illustrate the open-ended and dialogical landscape constructed and reconstructed by migrant women through everyday linguistic practices. The fluidity and the dialogical nature of identity negotiation is revealed through my weekly grocery shopping in Chinatown. It takes two to three hours to finish this four-kilometre journey, including shopping time (Fig. 1.1).

Stepping out of my apartment unit (A), I am always prepared to initiate small talk in the elevator since the majority of people living in this apartment are friendly with each other. Weather, plants or health issues are safe topics to talk about. Vibrant Bloor Street (B) is just few steps away from the apartment and constantly reminds me of the city life I have always been fond of both here in Toronto and in Taipei, the city where I grew up.

Upon entering the property owned by the University of Toronto(C), a sense of belonging and seriousness starts to rise since I am a graduate student for a doctoral degree at the university. Being aware that I have a great chance of meeting faculty members and my fellow peers, I am not as relaxed as I would be if I chose to walk on the other side of street. I notice I talk to people in a more serious tone. The main library at the corner (E) often reminds me of the difficult days during the first two years of my studying here.
It is hard to not think about the steam room inside the Athletic Centre (D) every time I pass by. It is a place for which I have great affection. It was once the only place where I could have full relaxation at school. It is a place where I started to develop stronger friendships with other students, namely third world country women, in similar situations. By sharing our ideas and experiences through gatherings, we rearticulate our experiences and infuse them with new meanings which offer us potentially powerful tools to resist all kinds of discrimination and overcome the frustrations we met with on a daily basis.

As I keep walking towards Chinatown, I come across my friends from China. I switch to standard Mandarin. We can talk about food, exercise or school, but have to avoid sensitive topics like the wide social disparities and human rights issues in China or the ongoing independence issues in Taiwan.

When I walk into a bakery on Dundas street (F) run by Taiwanese Canadians, I can speak Taiwanese Mandarin to the cashier, in a more relaxed tone. The topic choice is very different from the talk with my friends from China; I can talk freely about weather, food and people in Taiwan as well as business and life in Toronto. We even exchange personal life histories. When I enter Chinese grocery stores (G), I often switch to English. Doing grocery shopping in Chinatown can be chaotic and I tend to distance myself from others by speaking English and pretending I have no idea of the languages they speak. I then walk north to two back-to-back tropical fruit stores (H), and notice every time in terms of how far the global economy has gone in this city. Seeing all kinds of fruit from all over the world—durian, leehee and dragon fruit from Thailand and Vietnam, banana, passion fruit and mango from Mexico, grapes and blueberries from Chile, gives me an illusion that I am somewhere else other than in North America. When I pick up a wax apple fruit imported from Taiwan,
my heart pounds, and I never feel so close to my other ‘home’. There is one more stop before I head home. It is a spice store at Kensington Market (J). My exploration of spices starts there. The street atmosphere changes dramatically and it is hard to believe I am only one block away from Chinatown. I am once again reminded of the diverse culture of (im)migrants in Toronto, and can actually track different waves of migration taking place in the neighbourhood.

Finally, it is time to head home. I have to pass by a street comprised of historical brick houses (K); and it is one of the oldest neighbourhoods in the city. Enthusiastic gardeners grow a variety of plants in their front yards: tulips, morning glory, cosmos, sun flowers, tomatoes, and grapes, so on and so forth. The list is endless. They shoot in the spring, bloom or yield throughout the summer, and then in the fall, their leaves turn into red, yellow and orange. Halloween and Christmas decorations are placed outside in October and December respectively. A white blanket of snow is often seen in the winter. It is a street full of reminders; reminding me of the history of the city and the seasonal changes throughout the year.

Massey’s walk on Kilburn High Road (1993), my journey home and migrant women’s geographical experience in this research have something in common: the open-ended and dialogical landscape constructed and reconstructed by women, and the fluidity and the dialogical nature of identity construction, which is revealed through the changes of emotions, passions, disruptions, and feelings in different social-spatial settings. Sameness and difference are stressed in different social contexts to gain strength and reconstruct power relations within particular social-spatial settings.
Fig. 1.1: My Journey Home

Linguistic practice is one of numerous practices employed to secure one's identity claim on a daily basis. Without a doubt, linguistic expressions carry enormous symbolic power that people can employ to exercise their power, seek identification and renegotiate their
social position in the society. Every linguistic expression requires physical articulations (of tongue and body language), precise comprehension, evaluation of the social setting, and the ability to communicate effectively. It is a contextualized and embodied practice and always involves the processes of negotiation and renegotiation of power.

To recognize the fact that unspoken or hidden geographies of language are coexistent with the spoken geography of English not only enriches our understanding of geographies of language, but also reveals the hegemony of English in the worldwide knowledge system. It has profound implication for the subordinated status of people who do not acquire this linguistic competence. In Toronto, multi-linguistic and non-linguistic practices exist in everyday life, which plays as important a role as English practice does in describing current Canadian society and defining who Canadians are. To recognize the geographies of everyday linguistic practice is the first step toward making space for multiple voices in a more inclusive society.
CHAPTER TWO

EATING CULTURE AND CULINARY PRACTICE

Authentic Ethnic Food?

The consumption of food is tightly linked to the ritual connection and the social context of specific locality (cf. de Certeau, 1998; Salih, 2003; Bell and Valentine, 1997). It is argued that for (im)migrants, food not only nourishes them, but that culinary practice is also a contested site for the negotiation of gender relations, belonging, and identity. In many ways, food carries symbolic and metaphorical meanings in terms of cultural continuity/difference, hybridity, and/or integration (cf. de Certeau, 1998; Lakha & Stevenson, 2001; Narayan, 1997; Mankekar, 2002; Threadgold, 2000). For example, Mankekar (2002) illustrates how Indian immigrant women in the San Francisco Bay Area attempt to retain their Indian culture through food consumption. By getting ingredients from Indian grocery stores and cooking at least one Indian meal a day, Indian immigrant women hope to maintain their Indian culture on American soil.

We are constantly drawing boundaries between insiders and outsiders through everyday activities related to our eating culture (Bell and Valentine, 1997). Moreover, through exploiting the food of others, people’s own prestige and sophistication is secured. Heldke identifies this social phenomenon as cultural food colonialism because it does not bring deeper understanding of the cultural context of ethnic foods, but instead serves the desire of ‘western eaters’ for culinary novelty of ethnic cuisines (Heldke, 2003; Narayan, 1997).

Such a colonialist attitude towards food is not only unique to western eaters, but also to immigrants themselves in contemporary Canadian society. What brings immigrants into a more complicated position is that immigrants are often ethnic cuisine providers. When
cultural difference is constantly emphasized under the rhetoric of multiculturalism, food with its symbolic meaning and substantial form serves a legitimate reference to distinguish one’s cultural heritage from others as well as to fulfill one’s cultural imagination of the Other. It is common to see many food festivals held to celebrate diverse cultures within the GTA, for example, Taste of Danforth, Taste of little Italy, Hot and Spicy Food Festival and so on.

Taiwanese migrants face a dilemma when it comes to identifying their authentic ethnic food. On the one hand, it is an extremely difficult task to identify a generic Taiwanese dish because the fascinating food culture in Taiwan is achieved through its heterogeneity, diversity and constant evolution. It is not extravagant to say that Taiwanese people’s geographical experience of the island is closely tied to their vibrant food culture. While traveling around the island, having local delicacies is a must; otherwise one is not recognized as being there. To identify just a few dishes to represent the island’s food culture is definitely a tough task. Taiwanese migrants feel that they have to come out with something identifiable or they will eventually run the risk of being invisible. For some, their biggest worry is being labelled under the category of Chinese. Bubble tea and Hsin-Chu stir-fried rice noodle, two of the well-known local delicacies in Taiwan, emerge as the representational Taiwanese drink and dish under this dilemma.

Bubble tea was invented in Taiwan to attract the younger generation to the alternative tea-drinking culture. It is a tea-based drink mixed with cooked tapioca. The variety of tea

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1 For example, fish ball soup and stuffed fried bean curd in Dan Shui, fried oyster pancake in Shi Lin night market, Chan-Hwa meat ball in Chang Hwa, so on and so forth. Local delicacies and specialty foods are strong selling points, and gourmet guides are often provided in the local official tourism information website.

2 After the lifting of Martial Law in 1987, the notion of Taiwanese-ness and Chinese-ness was questioned, explored and reinvented (Tu, 1998). The Taiwan independence movement aimed at reconstructing a Taiwanese identity, and it is not inconceivable that de-Sinicization becomes a pre-condition for a new Taiwanese cultural and political identity.
flavours is endless. Hsin-Chu stir-fired noodles can only be found at Taiwanese restaurants or at a Taiwanese potluck party. Both have their authentic value for food adventurers. By no means will people get confused about the origin of the drink and the dish.

By presenting bubble tea and Hsin-Chu stir-fired rice noodles as the representational Taiwanese drinks and dishes in the Canadian context, Taiwanese migrants do not run the risk of being labelled as inferior or even barbarian. Heldke (2003) has mentioned that there is a limit to food adventurousness. ‘…we like our exoticism somewhat familiar, recognizable, controllable. It needs to fit into some known category for us before we can even be fascinated by it (emphasis original).’ Such a notion of controllable food adventure and food diversity is well recognized by migrants when introducing their familiar food to others. Unlike other specialty foods which require special treatment of food or use unfamiliar ingredients [such as ‘deep fried stinky tofu’, ‘braised pig livers or chicken claws’ which can only be appreciated within the group], the ingredients used in bubble tea and Hsin-Chu stir-fired rice noodles are generic and safe for scrutiny.

With an increased number of Taiwanese migrants, there has been a proliferation of Taiwanese bubble tea houses or ‘Boba’ tea shops in North America cities since the 1990’s (Sun, 2001). While consuming bubble tea drinks at a tea house, one can also experience the alternative Taiwanese tea-drinking culture that belongs to the younger generation³. While bubble tea has gradually become part of popular culture among the younger generation of migrants, Hsin-Chu stir-fried rice noodles, has played an important role for adult migrants connecting them to the memory of home flavours.

³ With minimal purchase, consumers can spend as long as they want in the shop. There are comic books, magazines and poker playing cards available for consumer to use in the shops.
There is a practical aspect to having Hsin-Chu stir-fried rice noodles be a representational diaspora dish. Unlike other Taiwanese specialty dishes, it is possible to gather all the ingredients for Hsin-Chu stir-fried rice noodles in the GTA. By no means will this dish become too familiar and lose its exotic character. What distinguishes the stir-fried rice noodle dish from other similar Cantonese or Singaporean rice noodle dishes is the rice noodle itself. It is not just any kind of rice noodle. Taiwanese migrants only use Hsin-Chu rice noodles to make this dish. The specific social and cultural context of Hsin-Chu rice noodles makes it a representational food both outside and within Taiwanese communities.

In addition, with basic requirements in terms of cooking technique, this dish is easy to make. The replicability of this dish makes it a popular one. In fact, it has become the dish that Taiwanese migrant women must learn how to cook after migration. It is the dish that makes a party a ‘Taiwanese’ potluck party and migrant women are eager to exchange their secret recipes and cooking techniques as well as recommend certain brands of rice noodles or certain types of soy sauce to make the dish ‘authentic’. In these social events, migrant women construct and reconstruct their memories of the authentic flavours of the homeland.

The ideas one holds towards exotic food, authentic food and local food, mark one's power position regarding food culture. While some differences are marked and represented, others are erased. The concept of exotic food implies something unfamiliar or unknown, the idea of authentic flavour marks the authoritative speaking position and desire to control,

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4 The rice noodle has its unique form and taste attributed to the natural landscape and place of production – Hsin-Chu City, located in northern part of Taiwan. Because of its natural location, Hsin-Chu City is nicknamed ‘Wind Dance City’. Traditionally, rice noodle is made from the mixture of rice and cornstarch, and makers take advantage of the windy environment and air dry the cooked rice noodles during the winter season. Nowadays, some rice noodle makers increase the amount of cornstarch to reduce the expense. In order to make sure the quality of product that customers get, Hsin Chu Rice Noodle Business Association has developed its logo and evaluation system to distinguish its product from other rice noodle since August 2005. (Hsin Chu Rice Noodle & Meat Ball Association, 2005).
and the idea of local food marks one’s familiarity with a specific place and its food culture. Local food, despite representing daily food consumption and culinary practices in a specific location, may not be recognized as the representative food in the society as a whole.

I never tried stir-fried rice noodles until I went to junior high school. Belonging to the Hakka group, I hold very different memories about food than the Hoklo group for instance. Migrating to Taiwan later than the Hoklo group, Hakka people could only occupy the leftover land of the island. This leftover land was very poor so that Hakka people could only grow easy-grown vegetables, such as yam, radish, or leaf mustard, and preserve or sun-dry vegetables to ensure continuing food supply during crop failure.

Wild shell-flower is the only plant that can be found everywhere in Taiwan. My grandmother used to mix sun-dried shredded radish, dried soybean curd and minced pork together and then use wrappers made from mixture of glutinous rice and regular rice to wrap up the stuffing. She then placed them above the leaves of shell flowers, and steamed them. When the whole house was filled with the smell of shell flower leaves, we knew that we would have something wonderful to eat. After visiting her father in Miao-Li County, one of the major Hakka counties in Taiwan, my mother always brought dozens of them back to our home in Taipei city to fulfill our craving for our own ‘local’ food. Although this delicacy is a typical food for Hakka people, it is seen as an exotic food for the rest of the people on the island. There is no way that this delicacy can be recognized as typical Taiwanese food, and so once again, the existence of the Hakka group remains invisible5.

As a result – similar to what Heldke (2003) has pointed out – one’s search for authentic Taiwanese food often ends with a superficial and limited understanding of the food culture.

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5 For example, Taiwanese Hakka migrants belong to Taiwanese Hakka Association of Toronto, but Hoklo belong to Taiwanese Canadian Association of Toronto.
The deeper understanding of the cultural context of ethnic foods and the politics of representation is seldom mentioned. Moreover, the food culture a minority group holds is marginalised a second time in this global adventure for authentic ethnic food.

**Cooking in Toronto**

Many Taiwanese migrants have no hesitation in admitting that the vibrant food culture is what they miss most about Taiwan. Strong cravings for certain specialty foods remind them of the fun and joy of Taiwanese food culture that they have left behind. Many revisit the island simply because of its food culture. The exchange of experiences of food adventure offers as a social bond that ties Taiwanese migrants together.

In Taiwan, preparing local delicacies is a time and labour consuming task which is not usually done at home. Such a vibrant food culture is achieved by a huge amount of the labour force devoted itself to the food industry, making local delicacies both accessible and affordable. This industry is taken for granted until migrants move to Canada. The desire to bring the Taiwan street vendors and food into the home by preparing it themselves in Canada shows how migrant women try to create a sense of comfort in a strange land. Cooking courses focused on Taiwanese delicacies often attract eager learners.

Even though there is always a historical reference to the origin of a certain kind of food, the question of authenticity remains problematic. The flavour of food evolves over time and space and whether one dish is authentic or not is a reflection of one’s individual memory of and feeling for a specific food (cf. Heldke’s discussion on authenticity, 2003, p.23-44). Migrant women often find that the flavour of a dish does not turn out the same as expected although they followed every step of the recipe carefully.
Nowadays migrant women have less trouble finding ingredients needed but there is always something slightly different from what is available in Taiwan; for example pork for some reason is smelly, chickens are fat, and so on. Even if one gets everything made in Taiwan, the water, the cookware and the stove still turn the intended dish into something else. A typical example is that of stir-fried vegetables which often taste like steamed ones due to the lack of a powerful gas stove. A place’s entire ecological system is manifested in the taste of daily cooking.

The authentic taste of the food is not just about the flavour of the food itself. The place where you have the specific food matters a lot. Reconstructing Taiwanese food culture in Toronto will never be complete because it is impossible to duplicate an uprooted social atmosphere. Having Taiwanese specialty foods at home does fulfill migrants’ nostalgia but it also reminds them that they are truly far away from ‘home’.

However, stories about migrant women’s daily culinary practice do not end here. Instead of feeling rootless in a foreign land, migrant women learn to embrace what the city offers them. Gradually, they incorporate different culinary cultures into the existing one. With a population of 2.5 million people from 169 countries, Toronto is one of the most diverse cities in the world (City of Toronto, 2005). The substantive influx of immigrants over the past few decades contributes to the vitality of the food culture in Toronto. This influx not only manifests in terms of the diversity of restaurants available within the GTA but also in the accessibility of various ingredients which makes culinary experiment and adventure a reality of migrant women’s lives.

In addition to ginger, garlic, green onion and soy sauce, nowadays thyme, parsley, rosemary so on and so forth can be found in migrant’s kitchens. I was always amazed by
the creativity and innovation in terms of culinary production I witnessed when I made trips to participants’ homes to conduct my fieldwork. They do not just follow recipes [such as making classic Italian spaghettis or pizzas], but also try to understand the ingredients and social context of the existing dish to translate it into their own culinary vocabulary. With this approach, something unique is created.

One time when I visited one of the participants’ homes, I was surprised to find that medlar [an ingredient commonly used in Chinese medicine], mixed with bread, raisin and other materials served as stuffing for the Thanksgiving turkey dinner. Instead of French baguette or typical western bread, they served Persian bread. Thus, the final culinary product was a fusion of several culinary practices. Later this fusion became this migrant woman’s signature dish. Such a culinary practice can only happen when constant interactions with different culinary cultures are available and accessible. The GTA is such a place where many different culinary practices meet and interact, and opens unlimited possibilities for experiments with fusion cuisine. Instead of longing for the homeland flavour all the time, migrant women actually learn to create new home flavour in the new environment.

**Geographical Experience of Culinary Practice**

Home cooking differentiates itself from other housework because it requires a multiple memory, a programming mind, sensory perception as well as creative ingenuity (de Certeau, 1998). The cultural and social implications and emotional work involved in searching for recipes, shopping for groceries, preparing, cooking, and cleaning clearly go beyond the actual culinary production itself.
The process involved in culinary practice in Taiwanese migrant women’s daily life takes place in various spaces and across different scales. Many surf the web or attend cooking courses for new recipes and then go to supermarkets to collect all the ingredients. Food preparation, cooking and cleaning most likely takes place in the home kitchen. Moreover, as mentioned in the previous section, the memory of food and culinary practice can travel through time and space and at the same time keep evolving which makes migrant women’s geographical experience of culinary practice one of the most intricate experiences of the migration process.

To explore women’s geographical experiences at the community and city level after migration, one can examine concrete examples to see how one’s geographical experience is constructed around discourses and practices of class, gender, ethnicity and nationality. Migrant women’s geographical experiences are closely related to their grocery shopping experiences, an integral process of the culinary practice.

I like to explore, and I am not satisfied being constrained in one place. I read newspapers or commercials and I expand my territory from the place I have already known. I don’t like to take the same route from A to B again and again and I will try to find other ways to do it… If I happen to see a new place under my radar, for example, a new plaza, I will make a stop and explore. (Aggie, personal interview, November 14, 2003)

As mentioned in the previous chapter, many migrants in the beginning confine their activities to a limited spatial range in order to avoid potentially embarrassing situations outside the home. Among the limited activities, grocery shopping is top of the list because for many migrant mothers, culinary practice is considered as their sole responsibility. Grocery shopping, an essential activity in our daily lives, has been treated as a trivial event and is therefore very much neglected in academic dialogue. However, the cultural and
social implications of grocery shopping affect women’s daily lives profoundly in terms of household strategy, their well-being, as well as their sense of belonging in the city.

Imagine this, a Taiwanese migrant mother enters a local supermarket shortly after she arrives in Canada. She is very timid of the new environment because she can not yet manage to finish a complete English sentence, but suddenly, she finds something familiar. She recognizes a vegetable that was also consumed in her homeland. Such recognition carries significant meanings for her. First, a connection between her past, her present, as well as her future is immediately linked. She does not feel rootless anymore; instead, she can see the route she has taken. Secondly, the anxiety level of being in a strange land decreases. Unlike language, cooking ingredients have their physical forms that one can actually touch and feel. No translation is needed. No misunderstanding and no embarrassment. Instantaneously, she realizes, unlike other credentials, that her knowledge of food can be transferred into the new environment without too much difficulty. Finally, when she goes to Chinese supermarkets and finds ingredients from her homeland, she gains some confidence and strength to stay in the new environment which she calls home now.

The supermarket, which is often treated as an impersonal and indifferent space for people who prefer a more interactive shopping experience, actually serves recent migrant women as a ‘safe’ place for exploration and adventure. When they are not yet ready to participate in conversations with others, the supermarket is where they can capably use their other senses, i.e. sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch, to learn the essential skills and knowledge needed to establish their new life in Canada.

Migrant women learn new ways to do grocery shopping. First and foremost, they find that the price of daily necessities can fluctuate dramatically in Canada which is not the case
back ‘home’. There is always something on sale in Toronto all year round, either for promotion or clearance, even in the most upscale stores. Tiffany puts in this way, ‘Items in Loblaws are expensive most of the time, but sometimes they become crazily cheap.’ Migrant women, like many natives, start to pay attention to the sales cycle and watch for price cuts on almost everything – from a bunch of carrots to a luxurious car – in order to get good deals and make sure their household budget is on track.

There is a huge difference [in terms of ways to do grocery shopping]. A huge difference. I did not know or care about the price of the vegetables I bought in Taiwan. I just told the vendor I wanted to buy this vegetable, that’s it. I did not care how much did it cost per pound and how much I would pay for this or that. I just paid whatever the vendor said. But here, I read flyers and I go to wherever is cheaper. (Denise, personal interview, December 7, 2003)

Migrant women also found that prices for the same items also vary from store to store.

You have to buy western veggies in western supermarkets and sometimes they can be very cheap. It’s more expensive if you buy some of those items in Chinese supermarkets. (Cherry, personal interview, November 28, 2003)

Besides price, concerns about comfort while shopping and the freshness and availability of grocery items definitely affect migrant women’s decisions of where to shop. To some migrant women, shopping in old style Chinese supermarkets is very unpleasant because of the strong smell and the way goods are displayed. It also puts into question the quality of goods. Aggie said, ‘You can’t buy milk in Chinese supermarkets, because it is most likely spoiled.’ Many migrants actually turn to western supermarkets for certain items.

I buy romaine or other lettuces only in western supermarkets. We ate salad at that time and I was worried about residual pesticides. Consumers’ rights in western supermarkets are well taken care of so I like to shop there. Besides, you can pick whatever you like freely, and sometimes you cannot pick in
Although there are western-styled supermarkets available in Taiwan, most people’s grocery shopping includes shopping in the traditional open markets where vegetable stands, butcher’s shops and fruit stores are laid side by side and run by individual owners. Regular customers often develop interpersonal relationship with shop owners.

I was quite familiar with shop owners in the traditional open market. It's a very different shopping experience. I would just walk around in the market, and I did not need to touch anything. I would just tell the woman in the vegetable stand what I wanted. Then she would do the entire cleaning and preparation job for me. I just walked around, and grabbed something to eat. Then when I went back to her stand, everything was ready to go. I just needed to wash the stuff, and then start cooking. (Brenda, November 27, 2003)

For women who live in suburban areas, shopping in supermarkets becomes the only choice. As mentioned earlier, shopping in supermarkets provides migrant women a great chance to learn without being intimidated because of the impersonal character of the store. However, it also marks the permanent loss of the social interactions in the open market experience even when they are ready to interact. Gradually, grocery shopping is treated as an essential activity to run a household, rather than a social activity where people interact with others and see different things happening on the street.

During the past few decades, Toronto has undergone rapid cultural, social and economic transformation (Hiebert, 2000). For instance, the proliferation of Asian theme malls and supermarkets in the GTA, triggered by the continuing influx of Chinese migrants has significantly changed the social, cultural and economic landscape (cf. Wang, 1999; Preston & Lo, 2000). It is not an easy task for migrant women to describe the transformation of the social, cultural and economic landscape in the GTA over the past decades, but they can
provide some concrete examples when they talk about their grocery shopping experiences. It is through the interactive and constantly constructed and reconstructed mental map of grocery shopping that migrant women come to understand and explore the city.

To get a sense of how the social and cultural landscape of the GTA has been transformed by migrants and affected their everyday life, one has to check the residential distribution of Chinese migrants in the GTA (Appendix F and G) as a starting point. The Chinese population is not distributed evenly. According to Census Canada 2001, over 94% of three major groups of Chinese migrants chose to live in Markham, Mississauga, Richmond Hill, or Metro Toronto. Migrants from China have clusters in Scarborough, North York and the City of Toronto; migrants from Hong Kong have clusters in Richmond Hill, Markham, North York and Scarborough, and finally migrants from Taiwan have clusters in North York and Scarborough (Statistics Canada, 2001).

Fig.2.1 shows the historical development and spatial distribution of Chinese shopping malls and plazas in the GTA. There are several waves of development each of which echo various waves of Chinese migration to the areas in the twentieth century. With more and more Chinese migrants settling in the northern suburbs, it becomes evident that while downtown Chinatown remains important for ethnic shopping and other services such as banking, increasing numbers of Chinese style shops and services of all kinds in the northern suburbs are relied on to meet daily needs (Lary and Luk, 1994; Wang, 1999; Preston & Lo, 2000; Tompkins, 2002; Yee, 2005).

In addition to three historical Chinatowns located in the downtown area there have been numerous Chinese shopping malls and plazas established in the suburbs over the past few decades: Mississauga Chinatown, established since 1978, Agincourt Chinatown established
since the development of Agincourt's Dragon Centre Mall in the 1980’s, and malls and plazas developed along the Highway 7 corridor in Richmond Hill and Markham in the 1990’s, have altered the GTA shopping landscape.

Fig. 2.1 Historical Development of Chinese Shopping Malls and Plazas in the GTA, from the 1910’s to the 1990’s; Data compiled from Tompkins (2002), Yee (2005), and World Journal (2006)

Yvonne provides a vivid picture of the growth of economic landscape of Chinese business over time.

I found that old Chinese shopping plazas gradually deteriorated, and modern Chinatowns became prosperous. We stopped going to the old supermarket. Before we would go for Chinese food in the plaza at Sheppard and Midland, but
we haven’t been there for four or five years. We’ve shifted our map, and go for newer and bigger ones… Before, you had to go to Chinatown to get Chinese woks or other things. Nowadays, you can get things uptown and you can probably get much better and cheaper ones too. We don’t go to Chinatown anymore. (Yvonne, personal interview, June 22, 2004)

Grocery shopping, the essential activity to run daily life, is experienced in a totally different way under such developments. Those who came to Canada earlier still remember that certain ingredients were either too difficult to get or too expensive to buy ten years ago. Affordability and accessibility was an issue that was resolved by finding substitute items to partially satisfy one’s craving.

When we first arrived in Canada [in 1997], we still wanted Taiwanese or Chinese styles of food. My father asked people where to find Chinese supermarkets. When we made a trip to the supermarket, oh my god, this item was so expensive and so was that one. Take water celery for example, my goodness, it cost 4.99 CAD per pound. I almost fainted when I saw the price. Unless we had a strong craving for it, we would buy something cheaper instead. There is always something cheaper... Now I hate to eat baby bok choy very much because baby bok choy is the cheapest veggie in the supermarket. I have had baby bok choy almost everyday since I came here. (Vivian, my emphasis, personal interview, July 5, 2004)

Taiwanese migrant women have sensed the gradual changes in terms of convenience and affordability that have impacted grocery shopping. For example, a craving for a certain food can be satisfied under the current situation.

Guava cost 4.99 CAD per pound when we first arrived in Canada [in 1996]. I love to eat guava but I had to let go my craving until this year, when the price finally dropped to 1.99 CAD per pound. I was so happy that I bought one for each of us. (Tiffany, personal interview, December 18, 2003)
Fig. 2.2 shows the geographical distribution of Chinese supermarkets. It is hard not to notice that there is at least one Chinese supermarket in each block in some neighbourhoods in Scarborough and North York. Doing grocery shopping has never been so accessible and convenient for Taiwanese migrants living in that area.

![Fig. 2.2 Chinese Supermarkets in the GTA in 2006](image)


Again, Yvonne describes the change of the economic landscape of daily grocery shopping in this way:

One change closely linked to my life is that it is now more convenient to access Chinese supermarkets. Remember I mentioned to you last time, at Warden and
Sheppard, there is a Chinese supermarket. I can walk there and get Chinese vegetables... Before, there were very few different supermarkets for me to choose. Nowadays, there are more than ten. This is a big change. (Yvonne, personal interview, June 22, 2004)

Among all the grocery shopping experiences, a dramatic transformation was introduced when the T&T\textsuperscript{6} supermarket chain opened its first store in the GTA in 2002. T&T brought hugely impacted the existing Chinese supermarkets. It played an important role in Taiwanese migrants’ everyday life in many respects.

Firstly, T&T supermarket mimics the upscale supermarkets in Taiwan with its design, service and displays. It carries a number of well-known Taiwanese brand name products as well as providing various Taiwanese speciality foods. Suddenly the distance between Taiwan and Canada has shrunk considerably. Secondly, unlike other Chinese supermarkets – sometimes being described as ‘stinky’ or ‘unpleasant’– this supermarket franchise promises a comfortable shopping environment. This fact not only changes migrants’ feelings and experiences towards grocery shopping in Toronto, but more importantly, it implies an overall higher standard expected by Taiwanese migrants. Many are proud of this increased quality, and feel strongly that Taiwanese migrants/investors have contributed in creating a more desirable and positive image for recent Taiwanese/Chinese migrants.

You know T&T guarantees the freshness, cleanliness and high hygienic standard of its products. Plus, it sells everything. Everyone knows that. It’s not a secret between you and me; it is a well-known fact. It offers high quality products. (May, February 16, 2004)

\textsuperscript{6} Tawa, a California based Asian supermarket chain of 21 stores, and ‘Tung Yee’– Uni-President Enterprises Corp., a public company and one of the top 10 conglomerates in Taiwan, are two major shareholders of T & T Supermarket Inc., and this is where the name ‘T&T’ comes from. A number of Canadian investors are also shareholders (T&T Supermarket, 2007).
Current Taiwanese migrants are among those who have embraced and benefited from increasing global trade. They are active agents who have brought various ‘tastes’ to the existing cultural and economic landscape and contributed to the significant change of the economic landscape over the past decades.

**Politics of Culinary Practice**

When it comes to home cooked meals, women, especially wives and mothers, who are more likely to be the primary cooks in the domestic realm, are negotiating power relations through culinary practice. Culinary practice not only inscribes gender relation with the domestic environment, but also intergenerational relations. These differentiate the duty of being a wife and mother from that of being a daughter. There is a big shift in terms of cooking responsibility before and after marriage. A famous Chinese poem written in the Tang Dynasty exemplifies how nervous and timid a daughter in-law feels after marrying into the husband’s family.

I began my kitchen chores on day three.
Washed my hands and made the soup.
Not knowing my mother-in-law’s taste.
I gave it to my sister-in-law to sample first.

Wang Jian, ‘A Newly-Wed Woman’

A daughter is often treated as a secondary cook, while a daughter in-law is expected to be the primary cook at home. Through cooking, the hierarchy between a mother in-law and a daughter in-law is consolidated. This situation has been perpetuated for thousands years. It applied to rural Taiwanese families in the 1960’s (Wolf, 1972) and it still applies to contemporary migrant families in twenty-first century Canada.
My mother-in-law likes to invite guests over. There were about 20 to 30 people over every time and one time we had 50 guests. I had to keep working and working at that time, and I took on whatever had to be done. I felt so unhappy at that time, but I was playing a role as a docile daughter-in-law at that time. I did not complain at all. (Denise, personal interview, December 7, 2003)

Even when a mother-in-law loses all her ability to exercise power over her daughter-in-law, she can still simply disapprove of her daughter-in-law by not eating what she cooks.

My mother-in-law relies on me in almost every part of her life; for example, I have to help clean her discharging, help her take a bath and change her clothes. I am the one who does all these. However, when she wants to eat, she doesn’t want me to cook for her. She wants her son. I am thinking that she never likes my cooking, and it is still the case now. (Sharon, personal interview, December 13, 2003)

On the other hand, a daughter-in-law can demonstrate her cultural beliefs through certain culinary practices to ensure that tradition is well retained even after migration. In so doing, she provides the mother-in-law with a sense of control, comfort and security.

Before my mother-in-law passed away, we kept the habit of having rice or noodles for breakfast here in Toronto. I was always prepared for the times when she came to visit us so she would not feel left out. If my children were westernized and I let them have bread for breakfast, it would be difficult to ask them to revert back to the old habit. My mother-in-law would not feel comfortable with this change. Thus, I kept the habit of serving rice or noodles everyday, just like I did in Taiwan. No change is required when my mother-in-law comes since we did it all the time. I treated this issue very seriously although my children had a lot of complaints. I don’t care what they eat for breakfast anymore after my mother-in-law passed away. (Christine, personal interview, December 20, 2003)
The poem and narratives not only demonstrate the power relations between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law, but also presume the women’s role of taking charge of the home cooking. Although the kitchen, as a matter of fact, becomes women’s place, it does not necessarily mean that those who cook are always in a position of power. In-laws, as described above, can be very demanding. However, with less possibility for living in an extended family in Canada, it is husbands, or even children that make the demands. In many households, meals need to be served at certain time based on men’s schedules.

Sometimes, it is the menu and flavour that matters. After migrating to Canada, many people’s gastronomic habits start to change; however, not everything is negotiable. For example, Holly has no problem having cereal for breakfast or salad as an alternative vegetable dish; however, she requests meat, fish and cooked vegetables for dinner. This creates tension between her and her daughter-in-law, Jenny. Jenny and Holly live in an extended family setting once every three months and Jenny feels extremely stressed during the month when Holly stays with them.

She [mother-in-law] asks for meat, fish and vegetable for dinner. I have to cook. I have to follow her request. When she is not here, it is very easy to cook. We [my husband and I] are not young anymore. We are afraid of gaining weight so we do not eat too much. Besides, we are very easygoing in terms of what to eat. Sometimes we eat instant noodles; sometimes we put everything into the pot. We eat everything. But my mother-in-law wants fish, meat et al. I have to cook something for her specially… I am very tense during her stay, and I feel huge relief every time when she leaves. (Jenny, personal interview, February 24, 2004)

About eight years ago, Tracy’s husband made a vow to be a vegetarian when his mother was suffering from a health problem. Tracy has cooked vegetarian dishes for him ever since. Different from many vegetarians who will eat simple and plain dishes, he wants spicy and
flavourful ones. As Tracy said, ‘He doesn’t like to eat salad, and he said it’s like eating grass. Thus, the pan-fried tofu needs to be hot and spicy, otherwise he won’t eat.’ Because of her husband’s special request for food, Tracy feels the only place they can be is home.

We planned to go to Europe, but I said forget about it. I won’t be able enjoy any peaceful moment because he will complain about food. If we decide to go, I have to take vegetarian instant noodles and canned food with us, but we can only carry so much. It will run out eventually, and then he will have to compromise. But [he is so picky.] (Tracy, personal interview, June 23, 2004)

Aggie’s daughter and grandsons are living with her temporarily for economic reasons. Aggie, as primary cook, has to take care of everybody’s stomach. She feels cooking is extremely challenging since her daughter’s family converted to vegetarianism.

When we lived together before, they ate whatever I cooked and I felt less pressured. Of course it’s a burden, but it is totally different feeling. It’s not easy to cook vegetarian dishes because there are limited ingredients. If you restrict me to certain kind of dish, I find the box becomes smaller and smaller. If you ask me to change the menu every day, I would say that even Ms. Fu Pei-Mei7 couldn’t make it. (Aggie, personal interview, November 14, 2003)

In addition to the pressure of coming up with different vegetarian dishes, the strict requests made about how to cook have put more pressure on her cooking practice.

They are strict vegetarians, and ask that everything to be purely vegetarian, including the cutting board, cutting knives, and cooking utensils. It is impossible to do this in my place, so I wash them thoroughly before I start to cook. When I am cooking, I cook vegetarian dishes first, and then I cook dishes containing meat. I do not have enough space, so it is impossible to have a separate set of utensils for vegetarian dishes. (Aggie, personal interview, November 14, 2003)

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7 Ms. Fu, Pei-mei is a legendary chef who built a reputation as one of the world's foremost Chinese cooks through a 40-year career as a TV chef.
Most women accept the imposed responsibility for home cooking as a given and learn to live with it. Aggie and Tracy, mentioned in this section, complain a lot about how demanding their husbands are, but somehow feel there is nowhere to escape. It was also not surprising to find that Zoe [another participant] decided to take a cooking course rather than art courses, not because she wanted to learn more about cooking, but because it matched her duty as a mother.

It is well observed that cooking becomes a major activity for migrant mothers’ everyday life given the fact that many of them become full-time housewives after migration. It is even more apparent in those astronaut families\(^8\) where migrant mothers’ main responsibility is to take care of their children’s well being. As Teresa said: ‘driving kids to school or picking up them from school and grocery shopping became the focus of my life.’

By saying that migrant women take on the socially imposed role of primary cook at home, I do not mean that they are passive victims. Instead, they negotiate between the responsibility of cooking and the rationality of cooking, and their emotions reflect the contradictory and complicated situation in which they are embedded. Moreover, although authoritative figures at home are still insisting on the old ways of serving home meals, it becomes evident that women have developed strategies to make cooking an easier task. A kitchen revolution is going on in daily culinary practice, especially when the authority is absent. This releases a lot of stress and migrant women sense a huge difference in terms of their emotional feelings. When her husband is with her, Rose has to adjust herself to

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\(^8\) These families have migrated to Canada, Australia or New Zealand, generally as business migrants or professional migrants, with the husband – the astronaut returning to the country of origin to continue business. For extended periods of time, the family unit consists of a wife and children living in Canada or Australia, and a husband living in the country of origin and visiting when time permits. See detailed discussion in Chapter Three.
accommodate his needs. It is not just about how many times she has to cook, but also what to cook.

[When my husband is here], my life is busier. For example, the kids and I can eat pizzas or hamburgers, but he doesn’t like those foods… He will accept to eat won-tons, dumplings or noodles for lunch, but he won’t accept to eat won-tons or dumplings all the time. There was one time when he was here, we had won-tons, dumplings and noodles for two consecutive days. He told me that if I kept cooking these kinds of food, he would not come to visit us next time. He said this to me… Thus, when he comes over, I have to prepare special stuff to cook. (Rose, personal interview, April 13, 2004)

This not only makes Rose’s life busier, but also more stressful. The emotional work involved in the cooking process intensifies because her husband also scrutinizes and follows her when she goes grocery shopping. Once he leaves, cooking is reduced to a minimal level and she returns to her simple life style.

When the kids are at school and I am home alone, I just have a piece of toast and a glass of juice, milk or coffee for lunch. I don’t even bother cooking instant noodles. We have bagels now, and I just have toasted bagel as my lunch. (Rose, personal interview, April 13, 2004)

Instead of cooking three meals a day, migrant mothers mention that when their husbands are not in town, they just cook one meal a day, and have a lot more freedom in terms of what to cook. Emily cooks huge amounts of beef noodle soup and pours it into small containers to freeze. She and her daughters take the amount they need, when they want to eat. From cooking several meals a day, she now manages to cook several meals a week, which allows her to concentrate on her studies.

Rather than treating cooking as an introverted cultural practice, Taiwanese migrant women actively seek alternative ways to cook home meals, if such a responsibility cannot be
avoided. For example, they will selectively incorporate less familiar ingredients into their existing recipes. Pizza and spaghetti are gradually included in many households’ dinner menus, and again this significantly reduces the stress level. These changes might only exist sporadically, but women would never question authoritative rules of culinary production without the taste of freedom followed by these changes. Cooking under restrictive rules brings stress, resentment, and conflict, but being able to cook freely brings liberation and happiness. Women’s emotions, passions, and disruptions are closely linked to this practice. Most women live somewhere in between and keep negotiating on a daily basis.

The Kitchen

The kitchen, where food preparation, cooking and cleaning take place, not only serves as a functional site, but carries social and cultural implications as well as personal memories and political statements (Buckley, 1996; Bordo et al, 1998; also special issues on Gender, Place and Culture, 13(2) and 13(6), 2006).

In terms of food preparation, with large refrigerators and freezers available at home, many migrant women gradually modify their grocery shopping habits and cooking practices. Instead of shopping a few times a week, they go to supermarkets to buy food in bulk once every week or two which frees up time for other activities. Besides, they can stock up on pre-made food since there is plenty of storage space.

When I have time, I would prepare some pre-made food, like Chinese buns, dumplings, and just put them in the freezer. We do not have any specific plan in terms of what to eat every day. When my son comes back from school, we eat based on what's available in the freezer. We might just pan-fry the pre-made Chinese pancakes. Then I just perform simple cooking such as prepare soup or congee as well as some side dishes, and that's our meal. When it’s about meal time, we just look at what’s in the freezer and we take out what
we feel like for that day. All I need to do is simple cooking such as steaming buns, or pan-frying dumplings. It is very convenient. (Aggie, personal interview, November 14, 2003)

Migrant mothers cannot ignore the very different social relations the changed kitchen brings to their lives. After all, the kitchen is where they spend a fair amount time and have the most control. It is a place full of frustration, anger and burdensome feelings because cooking is seen as the migrant mothers’ sole responsibility, but they also talk about this place at home with assertion, authority and enjoyment (cf. Kong Fook Mental Health Association, 2003 on East and Southeast Asian immigrant women’s take on cooking and its relation to their migration experience). When asked where their favourite place at home is, the kitchen is mentioned most frequently by migrant mothers. For migrant daughters, the favourite place is always their own room.

[My favourite place at home is] the kitchen… I can stay in the kitchen for a whole day if I am in a good mood. I can make a lot of stuff. The sofa in our place is seldom used. My friends will sit here [kitchen]. (Teresa, personal interview, June 16, 2004)

As mentioned earlier, the majority of migrant women become full time housewives in Canada and the kitchen is one of the places is where they spend a fair amount of time. Migrant women state that they lose their social status in many ways after migration. Except for a few still working full-time in their area of expertise, most left the labour market or work on a part-time basis with mismatched skills requirements. It is difficult for them to provide guidance for their children’s education; moreover, because of cultural and language barriers in Canada, they feel that the chance for them to actively participate in mainstream society,
like when they were in Taiwan. They feel isolated and lonely most of time. For some of them, the kitchen provides a source of achievement in their life in Toronto, especially those who get praise from family members, friends or even their children’s friends for their cooking. Some spend a lot of time in the kitchen, and work hard on new recipes. When they are able to explore cooking as culinary art instead of simply fulfilling their responsibilities as mothers in the kitchen, their experience of being in the kitchen is often positive and empowering. If having a home of their own provides a sense of stability and permanence (cf. Supski, 2006 on Austrian post-war immigrant women), it is through the kitchen that they find the sense of belonging and satisfaction.

Home cooking in Taiwanese society can be seen as an extension of patriarchal control in many ways. As mentioned earlier, cooking brings a lot of stress when women have no control but still have to perform. The spatial design of the kitchen in Taiwan also reveals that women are put into a subordinated position in the domestic environment.

The kitchen design here makes you feel comfortable to stay there. Kitchens in Taiwan are less spacious and are always narrow. And [the relationship between] the kitchen and living room… It’s the style of our place. It is like when you want to make a stir-fry in the kitchen, you have to close the kitchen door. You have to turn on the exhaust fan or the smell would be around the whole place. The Kitchen becomes some place you won’t use unless you need to cook a meal. (Teresa, my emphasis, personal interview, June 16, 2004)

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*By saying that, one should be reminded that many Taiwanese migrant women participate in community activities at various scales. For example, many of them are members of the Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation, which is an international non-profit organization with its home base in Taiwan, while others focus on local ethnic communities. There are few community organizations doing bridging work between local ethnic communities and mainstream society in Canada; however, at this time, the main focus is to introduce the city to the local ethnic communities. This is exactly why some migrant women feel alienated from mainstream society.*
As Teresa described her kitchen in Taiwan, cooking there can be a very alienated and unpleasant experience. Even a woman interested in culinary art could not enjoy herself with such an unfriendly style of kitchen design. The problem is less about scarce land than about male-centered interior design. Actually, there is no formal kitchen design in Taiwan.

While the living room is treated as the center of the house and has the most square footage, the kitchen is seen as a working place, exclusively for women, and is not supposed to be a place for enjoyment. It uses the leftover space. It is always narrow and dark, in the margin of the typical Taiwanese home, and its size only allows one person in there at a time. Moreover, because of the possibility of spreading of greasy, hot air to other rooms when women are cooking – especially in the summer time – the solid door between the kitchen and the rest of the home is always closed during cooking. Social interaction with other family members is limited and the result is women working in the kitchen alone with a lot of heat.

The situation is dramatically changed when they move to Canada. The kitchen, once the most undesirable space in the home, becomes most migrant women’s favourite place.

When we just have few guests over, we have the party here [built-in dining area]. I find it is very inconvenient and tiring to have it there [formal dining room] because you have to move everything around and you have to clean both areas after the party. So I won’t move the party there unless I have more than 12 guests over. My friends also like to stay here. It’s very comfortable here.

(Tracy, personal interview, June 23, 2004)

Most of the kitchens I visited were of the so called ‘modern kitchen’ design based on the new concept that started with post-war suburban homes: the kitchen is no longer an enclosed space, but is now integrated into the rest of the home (cf. Saarikangas, 2006 on Finnish kitchen). It is usually spacious, and multifunctional.
The built-in dining area, which is rarely available in the Taiwanese kitchen, is one of the places migrant women love to stay in their Canadian homes. Unlike the formal dining room, it is cozy in size and convenient in location. It also creates intimate feelings between the hostess and guests, and it replaces the living room and serves an entrainment function for migrant women. It is the place migrant women have their afternoon tea with friends. In fact, most of my interviews with migrant mothers took place in the built-in dining area of their kitchens. Moreover, social interactions with family members are the norm because women no longer working alone in constrained and enclosed spaces anymore.

I love to sit in the kitchen…behind the window, so I can monitor everything at home. When I sit there I can see the door and I can check who is coming. Everyone uses the kitchen very often. [So kitchen becomes the focal point at home?] Yes, kitchen becomes the centre in my place. It is the centre (May, personal interview, February, 16, 2004)

A kitchen with windows is taken for granted by local residents, but it carries significant meaning for migrant women. They have more control of the surrounding environment through the window and it creates a sense of connection between the women themselves and the rest of the world.

I grow flowers [in the backyard] during the summer, and I look at my flowers when I am making coffee or tea. I enjoy watching the flowers. There is a big apple tree there. (Brenda, personal interview, November 27, 2003)

Despite having a spacious home environment in Canada, most migrant mothers still do not have their own room, or even their own desk. The eat-in dining table in the kitchen often serves as a reading desk for these women.

When they all leave home in the morning and when my husband is going for work, I can sing gospel songs here. Then I can read. (Tiffany, personal interview, December 18, 2003)
Similar to Tiffany, Emma is able to watch Dai-Ai Television\textsuperscript{10}, globally broadcast directly from Taiwan, with a satellite dish and a TV in the kitchen. She can learn Dharma Master Chen Yen’s lesson when she has spare time or when she is cooking. Thus, other than serving social and cooking functions, the kitchen also serves as a migrant mother’s reading and meditation space.

The idea of spacious space is often mentioned when talking about North American domestic life; however, there is something more than size, in the case of kitchen that migrant women enjoy very much in Canada. It is the possibility that migrant women can transform their kitchen to fulfill their desire for more social interactions, for more control and connection, and finally for enrichment of their spiritual and intellectual life which matters to them the most. In some ways, migrant mothers are trapped and oppressed in the kitchen, but the kitchen is also an important place that nurtures their everyday lives.

Conclusion

Scholars have argued that migrant mothers experience increased housework responsibilities, including cooking, after migration, due to the lack of help from extended family members or lack of an affordable house helpers (cf. Man, 1996 and Waters, 2002). However, cooking can be liberating. Making something happen itself brings satisfaction, especially when one is able to do it without constant scrutiny and restrictions. This happens when authoritative figures are absent in the domestic environment. Besides, migrant women gain great satisfaction through cooking and sharing food with friends. It is through

\textsuperscript{10} On December 1, 1995, Tzu Chi started to broadcast ‘The Tzu Chi World’ program on cable TV. Starting January 1998, Tzu Chi got its own channel, Dai-Ai Television, in Taiwan. Dai-Ai Television now broadcasts globally since October 1999. (Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation, 2005)
cooking that they rebuild their self-confidence and engage in more social activities.

What one usually cooks and eats echoes one’s life trajectory. Unlike Indian immigrant women who insist on cooking one Indian meal a day to retain their Indian culture (Mankekar, 2002), Taiwanese women, coming from a place where everyone celebrates the adventure of food, embrace the vibrant food cultures in Toronto. Indeed many learn how to make Taiwanese local delicacies in order to bring a sense of comfort by cooking familiar food in a strange land. However, not limiting themselves to Taiwanese cooking, migrant women invent fusion cuisine at home through the proper combination of different culinary practices.

Migrant mothers explore the new environment through regular grocery shopping. Their understanding of ‘multicultural’ Toronto comes from their adventure of discovering various cooking materials from various locations in the city. Their presence in the city indeed contributes to the current social and cultural landscape of the city.

In contrast to the design of a Taiwanese kitchen, the design and location of a modern Western kitchen introduces a very different picture of family life than what migrant women had before. Women are reconnected with their families and the rest of the world through their kitchens.

A Chinese proverb which said, ‘Seven necessities to run a house: firewood, rice, cooking oil, salt, soy sauce, vinegar, and tea.’ vividly describes the trivial, repetitive but integral practices that compromise everyday life. Food provides immediate comfort for gastric satisfaction, however, the profound meanings regarding food culture and culinary practice go beyond grocery shopping, food preparation, cooking, and eating. It actually provides an important element for migrant women to use in re-evaluating their social status and helps them reposition themselves in Canada.
CHAPTER THREE

HOME PRACTICES

Growing up in a male-dominated, southern, black, working-class household, we lived as though in two social spaces. One was a world without the father, when he would go to work, and that world was full of speech. Our volumes could be turned up. We could express ourselves loudly, passionately, outrageously. The other world was a male-dominated social space where sound and silence were dictated by his presence. When he returned home (and we would often wait, watch and listen for the sound of him coming). We would adjust our speech to his mood. We would turn our volumes down, lower our voices; we would, if need be, remain silent. In this same childhood world we witnessed women—our grandmothers, mothers, aunts—speak with force and power in sex-segregated spaces, then retreat into a realm of silence in the presence of men. (bell hooks, 1989, p.128)

Introduction

Home is a site full of disenfranchisement, conflicts, but also fulfillment, as many feminists have pointed out (cf. Domosh, 1998; hooks, 1989; McDowell, 1999). There is no doubt that home carries heavily-loaded meanings. Home space is both real and imagined space controlled, perceived, practiced and created by its members, and home practices refers to the everyday negotiation of one’s space within the domestic environment.

The power dynamics of gender relation and intergenerational relations within the domestic environment sets the basic tone of potential scenarios for home practices. Controls, strategies, tactics and emotional work employed by different members at home reflect the complicated power relations within the domestic environment as well as the specific social, historical and cultural context in which the various actors are embedded. For example, the complex feelings that middle-class married women have towards their
experiences at home in Taiwan (cf. Bih, 1996) are very different from that of Latino girls in Los Angeles (cf. Hyams, 2003) or southern, black, working-class households vividly described by hooks (1989).

It is argued that (im)migration unsettles family relations in multiple ways and gives rise to new forms of independence, dependence and identities (cf. Creese et al, 1999; Ong, 1999a; Pe-Pua, 1998; Wang, 2002; special issue on migrations and family relations in the Asia Pacific Region in Asian and Pacific Migration Journal, 11(1), 2002; special issue on Asian transnational family in Global Networks, 5(4), 2005). Creese et al (1999) have shown how networks can range from being densely organized, transnationally operated, to constrained in a localized context, or sometimes non-existent. Some of these social networks extend and blur the boundaries and meanings of family and question traditional concepts of family. Conflicts and anxieties are often involved in the processes of renegotiating the family life. At the same time, changes open the possibilities for one to recarve one’s social space (as Chen’s (2002) research on religious conversion as a strategy for migrant women’s liberation in the United State). In this chapter, I focus on home practices in one specific family structure – astronaut family and the way its transnational scope is complicit in home life.

Transnational family refers to the family where some or most of its members are spread across national borders, yet still bond in some kind of ‘familyhood’ (Bryceson and Vuorela, 2002, p.3). Such a family setting is by no means new (cf. Berger, 1975; Ho, 2002; Liu, 2005; Bryceson and Vuorela, 2002). Earlier Chinese migrant men who came to New Zealand as goldminers in the 1860s (Ho, 2002), male migrant workers in Europe (Berger, 1975) and, currently Filipino domestic workers in Vancouver (in this case women workers; Pratt, 2004 and 2007), all fall into this category. It is a great research topic to understand
the multilayered and complicated social processes of family construction, establishment of home practices, as well as meanings of parenthoods, gender relations and so on and so forth.

Over the past few decades, the astronaut family arrangement has become a phenomenon of Chinese family structure in the receiving countries such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Ho, 2002; Ong, 1999; Pe-Pua et al, 1998; Skeldon, 1997; Waters, 2002). Different from the traditional understanding of the transnational family setting, where migrant workers worked abroad and left their family behind in the homeland, astronauts (usually men) are actually the ones who stay in the homeland. It is migrant mothers and their child(ren) who have to go through the social processes of resettlement in a foreign land. This is opposite to what took place in the past within a transnational family setting.

These families have migrated to Canada, Australia or New Zealand, generally as business migrants or professional migrants, with the husband – the astronaut returning to the country of origin to continue business. For extended periods of time, the family unit consists of a wife and children living in Canada or Australia, and a husband living in the country of origin and visiting when time permits. Migrant mothers and their child(ren) in the astronaut family not only live separately from the immediate family member (usually the husband and father), but also live far from extended family members and friends who would have provided important support networks before migration.

1 With the rise of the Chinese economy, many Taiwanese are seeking for better opportunities in China. A transnational family setting is not uncommon with Taiwanese men working in China while wives and children remain in Taiwan (Wang, 2002).

2 In Chinese, ‘Tai-kong-ren’ (太空人) is appropriated as slang for migrant husbands to describe their situation – ‘men live without wives around’. The literal translation of ‘Tai-kong-ren’ into English is ‘astronaut’. When the term is translated to English, its meaning evolves. In addition to ‘men without wives’, it also carries the meaning of ‘an astronaut’ riding the trans-Pacific shuttles between the country of origin (where the business or job is) and the receiving country (where the rest of family lives) (Ong & Nonini, 1997, p.168-169).
The objective of this arrangement is to achieve maximum capital accumulation (Ong, 1999; Mitchell, 1997a; Waters, 2001a, 2001b). The responsibility for children is to accumulate cultural capital, which means learning Euroamerican culture, knowledge, skills, and credentials that enable the transposition of social status from one country to another (Ong, 1999a; Waters, 2005), while responsibility for Chinese transnational elites – most likely men – who are portrayed as being ungrounded and deterritorialized is to develop strategies to achieve flexible accumulation across national boundaries. This is the worldwide business network Ong and Nonini (1997) called an ‘ungrounded empire’.

However, it is believed that credential devaluation and downward occupational mobility for foreign-trained professional immigrants in Canada (cf. Li, 2001; Boyd & Thomas, 2001; Zong, 2004; Statistics Canada, 2007) is the main reason why immigrant families make this split family arrangement. Far from ungrounded empires, most migrant women and their child(ren) are grounded in specific places in Canada. This research found that it could take as short as a few months for families to reunite, although some had lived in transnational family arrangements for over ten years.

Despite scholars’ attention to this social phenomenon, little has yet been said about migrant men’s experience in such arrangements. Migrant children’s experience is rarely ever mentioned. Most discussions around the transnational family do include women’s voices; however, researchers have a very strong tendency to construct women only as passive victims in the migration process (Man, 1996; see also special issue Asian transnational family on Global Networks, 5(4), 2005). Domestic and parenting responsibilities, the sole burden of migrant mothers in the astronaut family setting, are among the most addressed issues (Man, 1996; Waters, 2002; Yeoh & Willis, 2005; and again the special issue on Global Networks,
Housework increases for migrant women. Many have concluded that the transnational family setting reinforces the traditional patriarchal norm for division of labour in the domestic environment. Only a few have provided a more dynamic picture in terms of the changing negotiation between husbands and wives; for instance, Waters (2002) illustrated in the power dynamics in Chinese astronaut families in Vancouver and Wang (2002) showed how Taiwanese migrant women in China started to question the traditional image of the nuclear family and look for alternative definitions of family after migration. However, most of this scholarship runs the risk of constructing life before migration as unproblematic because it overlooks the limitations, possibilities and experiences of everyday domestic life prior to migration. Pre-migration there already were socially constructed power relations among class and gender differences as well as established intergenerational hierarchies. Thus, without a more sophisticated and critical analysis to examine migrant women’s experiences, research on migrant women can easily lose its critical engagement. This chapter aims to broaden the current understanding about transnational families by introducing a dynamic and critical analytical framework into the discussion.

A number of scholars have focused on the experiences of younger or second-generation migrants in school and their struggles around identity politics (Creese et al, 1999; Goldstein, 1999 and 2000; Palmer, 1997; James, 2001; Waters, 2001a and 2001b). However, few address the power relations between generations. Recent research on changes in household structure has focused mainly on gender relations between migrant women and their husbands (cf. Man, 1996; Ong, 1999a; Waters, 2002; Wang, 2002). In Taiwan, the Confucian’s emphasis on social harmony and hierarchical order strongly influences society. The rhetoric of filial piety and the subordination of the daughter-in-law is prevalent. In this project, I
explored how migration process affects gender relations between migrant women and their husbands, and also how it affects intergenerational relations – in this research the relation between mothers and daughters, and mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law. In doing so, I examine how migration process affects the dynamics of intergenerational relations of migrant women who come from the same cultural background but have different social engagements in a new environment.

Although Bourdieu (1980) did not explicitly talk about the home environment and home practice in great detail, the concept of habitus may be useful to reconceptualise current home practices in transnational families. Home environment should be seen as a specific habitus constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations. Family members with different social engagements meet and interact at this particular locus. A large proportion of family relations, practices, and experiences are constructed within and influenced by a far larger scale. Bourdieu did not address the possibility of emergence and transformation of habitus because of displacement. In this chapter, I argue that displacement puts the existing home habitus into question and makes room for new practices and representations of home life. The spatial triad introduced by Lefebvre (1991) to illustrate the social production of space, is employed to explore the richness of various spaces controlled, negotiated, imagined, created and practiced by different members in the home environment.

Therefore, questions addressed in this chapter are: how do migrants experience home life along migration? How are power relations within transnational families shaped and reshaped along migration? Which kinds of home practices are carried over, and which are not? How do new practices emerge and what do these mean for migrant families? What are the children’s roles in such a family setting? What kind of role does space play in
shaping and reshaping power relations within the transnational family? And finally, how can we reconceptualise home space in a way that captures processes, flows and relations in the era of global (im)migration?

**Changes in Family Structure**

Taiwanese migrant families experience dramatic household restructuring along with migration (Table 3.1, and see Appendix H for types of family household in Taiwan).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.1</th>
<th>Changes in family structure along migration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in Taiwan change in Toronto</td>
<td>Remark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Nuclear Family</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married couple</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married couple and unmarried child(ren)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent with unmarried child(ren)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astronaut family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Extended Family</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grandparent(s), parent(s), and unmarried child(ren)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents and married child(ren)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Other Types of Household</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fieldwork in this research

In this research among various types of household settings one thing especially stands out: 10 households (35.7%) lived in the astronaut family structure during the time of the fieldwork, and another 9 households (32.1%) had lived in such a family setting in the past. This means about two thirds of participants had experienced this type of transnational family life, which suggests it is the most prevalent social phenomenon in Taiwanese communities.
Emotional Work

Sad stories have been told among close friends and relatives, which bring anxiety and worry to one’s own life in Canada.

His father was an employee of Petro China, and he was at the manager level. After he came to Canada, he couldn’t find a satisfactory job. They moved to a rural area, and he started to work in a supermarket as a butcher. His hair turned to grey a few months after he started to work as a butcher. Can you imagine how tough his life was? He had a great job at Petro China, but he couldn’t find any job here. My friend came to Canada when he was a teenage kid, so he did not feel as much as pressure as his parents had experienced. Now he understands it must have been stressful years for his parents. (Tiffany, personal interview, December 18. 2003)

With such an understanding of the labour market in Canada, the idea of the transnational family becomes more acceptable as it provides financial stability to the family. A participant, Emily, described how she and her husband came to the decision to have a transnational family arrangement: ‘There is no decision to be made. Because it is impossible... He is an architect, and he bears no chance of getting a license here.’

Although financial stability is secured by making such arrangements, there are complicated feelings and emotions involved in the everyday life of astronaut families. Inevitable questions regarding the definition and the meaning of family are raised. The possibility of either side of the couple having an extramarital affair – particularly the astronaut – is considered the most important issue that needs to be addressed.

It is well documented how women would react if their husbands had an extramarital affair in the movie ‘Migratory Bird’ (Ding, 2001), a film that features life of Taiwanese astronaut wives in Vancouver. Shen (2005) also addressed the social phenomenon of Chinese mistresses kept by Taiwanese businessmen in China. The intense emotions rose in process
of deciding to be a transnational family.

My father was against our decision and my mother kept crying and saying that nine out of ten families end up with some problem. I kept asking my husband, ‘My parents are against our decision, and how will you deal with the long distance relationship?’ He promised, ‘I won’t have affair [with other women]. How can I make you believe what I say?’ In the end, it is a test of the mutual trust of a couple. (Emily, personal interview, December 15, 2003)

Despite concerns many come to the conclusion that having a transnational family setting is their only option, an option where the family unit can maximize their chances to accumulate economic capital (with the astronaut taking advantage of global economic development in Asia) while also accumulating social and cultural capital (with migrant children getting a Western education). Until landing, many did not realize the challenges they would face and the price they would pay in order to achieve their goals.

My husband only stayed here for ten days after we landed, and I started crying the day before he left because I realized I would be the only one to deal with everything here. My English wasn’t good enough, and I had little information about this city. I had no idea how life would be. I started to cry when I realized that he would leave very soon…My husband told me not to cry, or he would worry about me very much, so I stopped crying. But on the next day, I started to cry again when my sister-in-law came to take him to the airport. After they left, I stopped crying, and I have not cried about this again. My sister-in-law cried for a whole year. She cried and phoned her husband in Taiwan everyday. (Rose, personal interview, April 13, 2004)

Most astronauts return once every few months and usually stay for short period of time – from a week to a maximum of a few months – because they have to go back to work in their country of origin or wherever they have their business or professional career. There is much intense emotion and mixed feeling toward this reality. As Brenda describes,
Days pass by without much feeling when we are apart. However, when he gets a chance to come over, I feel sentimental to tell you the truth. We haven’t seen each other for two years. I feel very sad that he can only stay for few days. He should either not come over or he should stay over for a longer period of time when he comes over. But he can only stay for few days. What is this for? (Brenda, personal interview, November 27, 2003)

Many try to maximize the time they can spend together. Astronaut wives withdraw themselves from social activities to maximize family time or take a family trip.

It’s very interesting that nobody attempts to inform me of any activities during his stay. It seems everyone is doing this with certain kind of consensus. There is no need to talk about it. We tell each other our husbands’ schedule. If I tell them that my husband is coming over next week, then everyone knows that I will disappear for a while. Everybody’s situation is quite similar. (Teresa, personal interview, June, 16, 2004)

With only a short stay in Toronto, astronauts follow their wife everywhere.

He only stays for short period of time, especially when he comes from Taiwan. He hopes to spend as much time with me as possible. This time he only stayed for six days… When I woke up at six to prepare breakfast for kids, he also woke up. I asked him, ‘Why did you get up so early? You should sleep more.’ He replied, ‘I only stay for a short period of time. There are only few days left. I want to spend time with you. When you get up, I get up. I want to be with you no matter what you are doing.’ (Rose, personal interview, April 13, 2004)

A migrant daughter also tries to accommodate her father’s return.

He came more often when I was younger, but now he’s much busier with his projects in Asia so he doesn’t come often. Now you start to cherish… You try to spend as much time with him and try to… try not to be a bad daughter. [What does that mean?] Just like you know… like try to accommodate for him you know… like whatever he wants… (Sally, personal interview, December 26, 2003)
Advanced communication technology makes frequent communication possible and affordable and astronaut families rely heavily on phone calls, online chatting and e-mail exchanges to maintain the long-distance family relationship. With spatial separation, married life is no longer taken for granted in the astronaut family. Everyday communication becomes necessary. Body contact is also appreciated during the temporary reunions.

We cherish the time when we are together. We were saying that we have to spend money if we want to talk to each other when we are apart. So when we have a chance together, we should talk to each other as much as we can. You can touch me as much as you want. There are some things that money can’t buy, such as hand holding. Don’t you think so? So when we are together, we hold each other’s hands most of time, our feelings toward each other are transmitted through body contact at body temperature. Body contact can’t be achieved when we are apart, so we hold each other’s hand when we sit on the sofa or in the car. (Christine, personal interview, December 20, 2003)

It involves intense emotional work to maintain long-distance relationships. Married couples are reminded they are not just parents, but their roles in married life.

I find our feeling towards each other intensified after migration. We live together everyday, and you know the intimate relation is taken for granted. Now we are back to dating mode. We did not hug each other in the past. You know hug means a very different thing to Chinese people. But now, I hug him as much as I can. I am quite pessimistic, and sometimes I scare myself with the thought that he might be gone one day because of plane crash. He can be gone next time he leaves us. I have some deep feeling at the moment when he enters the gate, I don’t dare to imagine what could happen to him. (Teresa, personal interview, June 16, 2004)

In addition to dealing with separation issues within their immediate nuclear family, migrants also need to deal with the separation from their extended family because of their decision to have a transnational family. Some migrant women may have a sense of relief if
they used to live with in-laws (as described in next section). The dynamics of filial practices does change for many migrants and adds pressure to already pressured lives. Being accused of not being filial to parents is considered one of the most serious accusations a person can receive in Taiwanese society. When it happens, it is hard to bear.

They feel that we want to get rid of our filial responsibility by immigrating to Canada. We do take responsibility [in terms of financial support], but… This time, we decided to go to China for few days during my trip back to Taiwan. My sister in-law kept asking me why we want to stay in China for so many days. She wants us to spend more time taking care of my in-laws. We were accused of not being filial to our parents when we decided to immigrate to Canada. [So your in-laws were against this decision?] Yes, they opposed our decision. After we migrated to Canada, I got their complaint phone calls or mails very often. It made me depressed. (Teresa, personal interview, June 16, 2004)

To others, being far away from the original family and not being able to ‘be there’ when one is needed is the consequence that migrants have to bear. Sudden loss of elder family members brings unfathomable mourning.

The biggest shock in my life was my father’s sudden death three years ago. It was a huge shock. I couldn’t believe my father passed away so fast since he was still young. My grandpa had lived to be more than 100 years old. My father was a decent person and he was healthy. One day, I got a phone call saying that he had passed away. He fell in the mountain, and lost a lot of blood. Nobody was around. He passed away in this way. I was very shocked when I got the news. I couldn’t acquire a peaceful mind over the past three years. I have sometimes blamed myself not doing enough. I could have been going back and spending more time with him. Or I could have introduced him to the world I live in Canada. It turns out that I never did. I often come to tears when I think of him when I am driving. I miss him very much. (Laura, personal interview, July 29, 2004)
An old Chinese phrase says, ‘The tree wants to stay still, but the wind keeps blowing. The son is ready to exercise his filial piety, but his parents have gone.’, which illustrates the greatest regret that a person can hold toward his or her parents, i.e. unable to exercise his or her filial piety because it is too late.

I miss her [i.e. mother-in-law] a lot ever since she passed away. I thought I had plenty of time to spend with her after I acquired my Canadian citizenship. If she was not coming over, I would go back to Taiwan. However, she passed away suddenly, and I can’t stand the fact that I will never see her again. My first time back to Taiwan after migration was for her funeral. Immediately, I bought four flight tickets for my parents and my dear uncle and auntie who are very fond of me. I wanted them to come to Toronto with me. I wanted them to see the house where I live, the life I have in Canada. I was telling myself that I shouldn’t wait anymore. I took them to the northeast United States too. My dad told me after the trip, ‘I have no regret in my life.’ He passed away in September of the same year, and I did not feel as shocked as I felt for my mother-in-law’s death. (Christine, personal interview, December 20, 2003)

Migrant daughters are well-sheltered by their parents in terms of the decision to have an astronaut family. Many come to agree that an absent parent is the only possible way to have a life in Canada with real financial security. Most have little say and minimal emotional reaction toward this decision and many are able to manage their everyday routine just as they did in Taiwan, i.e. going to school and studying hard. However, it is when talking about their relations with the grandparents that these migrant daughters start to show their strong affections for the home environment of their past, the one often overlooked by researchers.

Many migrant daughters have shared a similar childhood experience: instead of living with their parents, many spent the first few years of their lives with grandparents so that their parents could focus on their work. Thus, grandparents, rather than parents are responsible
for children’s early childhood development. Close relations between grandparents and
grandchildren often develop. It is their affection for their grandparents that shows their
feelings and reactions towards the transnational family setting because moving not only
separates the immediate nuclear family, but also the link between extended family members.

I lived with my grandparents before elementary school, and I visited them only
on the weekend after I moved back home. My parents they were busy with
business parties every night, and I was alone at home. I would phone my
grandparents and tell them that I was scared at home. I told them I want to go
to their place. They phoned my parents and lectured them right after my call.
My grandparents’ place is home, not my parents’. My dad got upset quite
easily when he was not happy with his work. Then he would shout and hit my
mom. Sometimes he even projected his anger on my brother and me. I
remembered that the only thing I did is hide myself in the room and cry. I was
so scared, and I was not able to help my mom. There are not many happy
memories. So when we decided to immigrate, I had not much feeling but I felt
sad because I had to leave my grandparents. (Sabina, personal interview, July
21, 2004)

In fact, some attempt to recreate the atmosphere of the past in Toronto.

I lived with my grandparents when I was a child. We had the habit of taking
afternoon tea. My grandma would ask me if I wanted to have anything to
drink. Grandpa, grandma and I would gather together, chat with each other and
have some snack and tea. I missed it very much. I missed the time when I
lived with my grandparents. So when I am doing it right now [i.e. have
afternoon tea with family members on Sunday afternoon], I relive the time in
the past. (Jane, personal interview, April 7, 2004)

Such a practice is easily overlooked when researchers only focus on the reconstruction
and renegotiation of the nuclear family. However, one’s affection for the home environment
is often beyond the domestic environment itself, and home life is always a combination of
various practices across time and space.
I guess I just followed what I was told. I knew that I was gonna go somewhere, you know. There is not much difference. You know, it’s just another place. But the day before we left for Canada, I went to the roof of our apartment. We went up for sunset quite often. We lived beside the Kaohsiung Harbour. We often went up to the roof for sunset, to enjoy the view. I remembered that we all went up for the last sunset. (Peggy, personal interview, January 1, 2004)

Surely, the separation of the immediate nuclear family is one of the most obvious results of having an astronaut family. It brings enormous emotional reactions as well as reflections on what marriage or family means. However, when talking about implications of such a family setting, one should go beyond the reconstruction of the nuclear family structure to grasp the deeper meaning of home, the more inclusive aspect of home environment, and profound implications of home practice.

**Taking Charge**

Tough challenges are often discussed when it comes to family restructuring (cf. Man, 1996; Ong, 1999a; Pe-Pua et al, 1998; Skeldon, 1997; Yeoh & Willis, 2005). However, migration also provides migrant women with a chance to get away from the hierarchal family structure and the patriarchal society as a whole; structures which put them in a submissive position. For those who used to live in an extended family setting, migration means the possibility of living in a nuclear family setting. This opens a new page to migrants’ family life and home practices, where family life is experienced in a totally different way. Zoe lived in an extended family while she was still in Taiwan, and now lives in an astronaut family setting. Her husband comes to Canada once every two months and stays for ten days. It is a tough adjustment, but at the same time she also enjoys this new setting. As she said,
My husband belongs to us fully when he comes over, and we don’t need to worry about pressure from the extended family. We can truly enjoy our nuclear family life. We have time to talk about our children, we do grocery shopping together, and we share our thoughts with each other. (Zoe, personal interview, April 16, 2004)

For some, this is the first time that migrant women take charge of their family affairs. It marks a new beginning, a life with some freedom and enjoyment. As Brenda described,

Let’s take the dinner on Chinese New Year’s Eve for example. We often had more than ten people gathering together, and you would think dinner would be ready faster if everybody shares some responsibility. No, it was not the case, and it was all my business. They all went to the living room for fun after dinner, and I, as a daughter-in-law, had to work until midnight. Until midnight, you know. It had always been the case for about ten years... I told myself I can tolerate any bitter time. One day I will suffer through all the difficult times. You see, didn’t I suffer through it? At least I only had that type of life for ten years, and then I started to enjoy my life in Canada. (Brenda, personal interview, November 27, 2003)

Home space in Taiwan is designed and built according to a patriarchal way of living (Bih, 1996). Women are often silenced in the process of home design, from the usage of different space and spatial arrangements to the home décor. The astronaut family setting allows some migrant women the chance to have their own ideas of home space become reality. For these women, the relationship between past, present and future is closely linked with their ability to design home space for the first time.

I moved from a rural area in southern Taiwan to Taipei City when I was in grade 3. On the first day I went to school, the teacher assigned me to sit with another student. You know that the school desks in Taiwan at junior level are designed for two students, sitting beside each other. The person who sat beside me pissed during the class. I was the newcomer to the class and no one knew me in the class. We two shared the same desk, and there was urine
underneath the desk. Who knows which one pisses, right? I felt that I should not tell others that it wasn’t me. But I don’t want people to think that it’s me, either. I was struggling and it’s a terrible feeling. So I skipped school for the next three days. I went to the pond near by the school and waited there until school was off. There were tadpoles, frogs, and lotus flowers there. So you can see there are so many frog decorations here, and I will buy lotus flowers during summer time. It makes me think about my childhood. It also reminds me of what my children might experience when we immigrate to Canada. I am worried that something will happen to them. So I took them to school everyday, and spent time talking about what happened in school. I don’t want them to keep things inside. I have to make sure that they are safe. (Christine, personal interview, December, 20, 2003)

Being the head of the household in Toronto, Taiwanese astronaut wives now decide when they want to do housework and how often they want to do it, which has been discussed in detail in the previous chapter.

When I lived with in-laws before, I had to wash dishes right after the meal. If I didn’t, my father-in-law would. Then he would say to me, do you want me to do the dishes? So I had to do dishes after meals. They watched TV in the living room, and I had to stay in the kitchen. Since we moved here [in Toronto], I can leave dishes in the sink if I don’t feel like doing dishes, or I would wash dishes later in the day. When my kids have night snack, they just leave dishes in the sink. I don’t need to wash them right away. I can leave them until tomorrow. The other difference is I couldn’t go out as much as I want in Taiwan. My friends would not be able to ask me to go out for dim sum or to a party as we are doing here. (Rose, personal interview, April 13, 2004)

Some even hire a cleaning maid for major house cleaning, while they had to do it themselves in Taiwan. The sense of freedom and control is manifested through a less rigid housework schedule, more open to alternatives (such as eating out instead of cooking at home and hiring a cleaning maid), and more non-family related social activities. It also
manifests in terms of the comfort level migrant women feel in their homes.

Astronaut wives have to learn to handle things independently to make sure the family in Canada can function well without the husband. They acquire power, ability and a sense of confidence through the migration process. Moreover, the social environment they used to live in is not available anymore, and they have to learn to do new things they have never imagined before, for the first time in their lives.

It was very difficult to adjust when I first came here. In Taiwan, we used to get full service when we purchased a product. When you buy chairs, people deliver them to your place and set up them for you. [If you buy a] Fax machine, people will test it for you at your place. Here, you have to get it home by yourself. You have to set it up on your own. You have to read an English manual, and I don’t do this in Taiwan. (Emily, personal interview, December 15, 2003)

Women make sure their voices are heard in order to run their households successfully since they are the ones who make decisions most of time. Gradually, they have more confidence to take the lead and they are not afraid of holding different opinions from their partner.

My husband feels I don’t listen to everything he says anymore. I used to follow whatever he said, but I do not anymore. We argue. [You gradually found you have different opinion?] Yes. (Patricia, personal interview, February 4, 2004)

Migrant wives are in the position of power in the family when their husbands are away. The familiarity with the local environment and the social network migrant women develop through migration gives them the power to take a lead when their partners return for a short stay. The Patriarchal norm on gender relations is questioned when husbands visit Canada. This is revealed through the frustrated feelings that migrant women have when facing
constraints on their freedom and the ability to control of their daily lives. Some migrant wives start to feel stressed, frustrated and exhausted when their husbands are around. Constant surveillance, the demanding patriarchal husband, as well as constrained freedom, are overwhelming; the comfort level of domestic life deteriorates dramatically once the astronaut is back. Some actually long for longer breaks.

During his absence, my mom and I felt it’s like heaven!!! My mom said it to me in this way. When my dad was about to come back, she told me, ‘How come happy days go by so fast?’ We both have the same feeling. When my dad is home, my mom doesn’t have so much freedom to do what she wants to do. (Sabina, personal interview, July 21, 2004)

**Space Clash**

Migrants’ stories fascinate scholars because they often reveal hidden assumptions of taken-for-granted everyday life, which evoke critical debates on issues regarding cultural heritage, social belonging, and institutional processes (cf. Anderson, 1991; Mitchell, 1997b; Ong, 1999b). In many studies of the transnational family experience, focus is often put on the wives’ experiences and changes in the receiving country. Studies fail to see that husbands also undergo a lot of changes (cf. Berger, 1975 on migrant men), which may bear great impact on the renegotiation of gender relations and family life within the domestic environment. In this research, questions regarding astronauts’ experience were asked, which reveal missing pieces of transnational family reconstruction.

Scholars have argued that astronaut wives acquire independence through migration; however, they overlook that astronauts also acquire independence:

One change I have sensed is that my husband has become more independent. He relied on me before. Now he has learnt how to cook. He didn’t even know how to fry an egg before we migrated. Not even frying an egg. He
learned how to do it, and he even knows how to clean a fish. He would tell me how to avoid a messy situation when I clean fish. (Christine, personal interview, December 20, 2003)

New social and work routines and habits are established on both sides and in different ways because the spouses are absent from each other. The longer a couple separate, the further they may go diverge paths.

It was his idea to go for a transnational family setting. He thought, it’s not a big deal. He is an architect, and is not at home most of time because of his business. He felt that there would only be minimal impact on his life. He did not realize the profound impact until we left for Canada. He still works until very late, which is nothing new to him. However, he found there is nothing at home for him after work. The home is empty. He started to feel lonely and found it very difficult to adjust. At that time, people started to work only five days a week, and it was very difficult to kill time. Everything was prepared for him in the past. But he had to rely on himself after we left. He wouldn’t get anything if he didn’t go to get it. Home is an empty castle. He felt empty, lonely and restless. He has gradually leant how to adjust. He likes to listen to public talks. He joins the audience for talk shows on TV. We live close to a music hall, so he goes to listen to operas or concerts as well. He also spends his leisure time playing golf with friends. All these make a couple go divergent routes, which leads to a weaker bond between the two. (Emily, personal interview, December 15, 2003)

Although looking forward to reuniting with their spouses, migrant women know that with joy comes challenge as well. When the two are together again, whether it is in Taiwan or in Canada, constant negotiation and readjustment is needed if both the astronaut and wife want to find a common ground. It takes time to figure out the new rhythm of everyday life.

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3 In Taiwan, working people only got one day off per week before 1998. A two double-day weekends every month policy was not implemented until the beginning of 1998. It was not until 2001 that working people may enjoy two days off per week.
When I went back [to Taiwan] this past summer… You know, he used to live by himself. In the beginning, we had to readjust ourselves to each other. He told me that it’s hard to readjust. I said to him, ‘Yes. I have the same feeling. It’s hard for me to readjust too.’ By the time we find some balance, one of us has to leave again. (Brenda, personal interview, November 27, 2003)

Reunion means one has to share again. Clashes over personal space constrain their bodily movement and impact the comfort level at home. Learning to share space again can be extremely distressing.

Here I enjoy the big bed by myself. Not like him, I don’t roll too much when I sleep. I only stay on my side. But when he comes over, I kind of feel the bed shrinks, and it becomes crowded. He snores, and rolls a lot. He would roll over to my side. I end up curling up on my side. In addition, he snores. He snored before [in Taiwan], but now I feel bad to wake him up. When I felt I couldn’t stand his snoring anymore, I would ask him to sleep on the side. It’s indeed hard to sleep [with him together]. (Rose, personal interview, April 13, 2004)

Here is another example.

We have both become more self-centred. I want to do things my way, and it’s hard to change. An excellent example is sleeping. I used to sleep in the master bedroom by myself. When we have to sleep together, we can’t tolerate each other. He complains about my snoring, and I complain about his. Over the past few days, he just slept in the other room. He didn’t want to sleep with me. It’s hard to imagine couples like us. When he comes over, we can’t sleep together. It’s unbelievable. (Emily, personal interview, December 15, 2003)

When it comes to the home space, many families simply take whatever space arrangement given to them. A typical Canadian home is designed to accommodate traditional nuclear families, which require family members to constantly carve out their own space. However, it is not the case in the astronaut family. Without their constant presence,
astronauts have no space at home. Although they can occupy any space at home, they belong nowhere. For astronaut wives, they feel their personal space is invaded and shrinks when their male counterparts come over because astronauts occupy space that used to belong to them solely, such as the bedroom.

Without constant participation in the creation of home space, it is difficult for an astronaut to imagine what his life will be once he permanently settles down in Toronto.

My biggest dream right now is to spend time with my husband. When we were talking about our future plans, he often ended up suggesting the delay of permanent family reunion. To keep his job is one reason. But I can feel that he is afraid of the adjustments in the new environment. He often asked me to make the decision for him. I told him that I will never make a decision for him and he has to make his own decision. We have not yet to made any decision. [What if he decides to stay in Taiwan?] Then I will move back to Taiwan. (Christine, personal interview, December 20, 2003)

Many astronaut wives I interviewed mentioned that their friends move back to Taiwan once their child(ren) finished university education since it is a relatively familiar environment for both the astronaut and the wife.

We migrated to Canada at the same time. They all lived on the same street. They all moved back to Taiwan after their children graduated from university. If I did not have my youngest daughter, I might have moved back already because my second daughter already graduated from university. I am the only one left on this street. They all sold their houses and moved back to Taiwan. (Brenda, personal interview, November 27, 2003)

Hence, when an astronaut wife works actively to create a space for her spouse, she provides a vision of family living during the periodical reunions and more importantly, a possible life style for the future reunion in Toronto.
Fig. 3.1: Bringing Outdoor Inside (Photo taken by Chin-Yen Wu)

Fig. 3.2: Imaging Households behind Doors (Photo taken by Chin-Yen Wu)
The original idea of this space is to accommodate my husband’s interests. You know it snows a lot during the winter, and he is not a person who likes to participate in a lot social activities. I am the one who loves nature and likes to go out. What can I do to meet both our requirements? I come out with this idea to make the indoor space feel like outdoor space. Do you know what I mean? I treat the space behind doors as different households. I imagined how this family looks and how that one looks and so forth. When I sit here, I am imagining I am sitting outdoors, not indoors. So I don’t care if it is snowing outside, I just turn the heat higher if I am imagining it’s summer now. I sit here and have tea with my husband. (Christine, personal interview, December 20, 2003)

A room need not to be solely dedicated to the astronaut, but it is the effort to incorporate his personal habits, interests and preferences into the space design that makes the space meaningful to him (Fig.3.1 and Fig. 3.2). The sense of belonging is created.

**Performance and Performativity**

To accommodate astronauts’ returning home, astronaut wives come up with various practices based on their ideal of family life. The increased amount of housework taken on by astronaut wives is often observed and seen as an indicator of a return to patriarchy. However, the significant meaning of the performativity, and how migrant women and men are negotiating the power relation within the family in a more creative and dynamic way are often overlooked.

Describing social interactions as some sort of theatrical performance, Goffman (1959) used the terms ‘front-stage’, where particular roles and rules must be observed (cf. Gregson and Rose, 2000 and McDowell, 1995), and ‘back-stage’, where one can relax, and behave in a familiar manner that may not be acceptable elsewhere. Goffman illustrated that different social practices occur in different but related spatial settings where behaviours of individuals
are often contradictory. There exists an active, prior, conscious and performing self behind Goffman’s analysis on social interaction (Gregson and Rose, 2000).

On the other hand, in Butler’s notion of performativity, the citational practices that could reproduce and/or subvert discourse, emphasizes the instability and contingency of identity claims. Butler argued that social identities are performed and constructed in and through social actions. Social norms and identities are only secure when performed ‘correctly’ and repetitively, and this offers a great potential for subversion (Butler, 1990). Here, I argue that both concepts of performance and performativity are useful to understand complicated home practices in astronaut families, and more importantly, both theories offer us insights to understand the construction of social identity, social difference, and social power relations and the way space might articulate all of these (Gregson and Rose, 2000).

It is evident in this research that astronaut wives enact certain performances to show appreciation for the astronaut’s sacrifice to the family when he comes over.

I treat him as a guest ... I don’t let him wash dishes, or do anything like that. I manage everything myself and let him enjoy ten days of comfortable stay. He is the only bread-winner in this family, and I don’t want him to overwork here. So I treat him as a guest and try my best to serve him. (Rose, personal interview, April 13, 2004)

Here is another example.

When he comes over, I do more [cooking] as compensation. For example, we spend more money on groceries, and my kids are very aware of this and they ask if their father is coming home? I asked them why they think this way and they say the refrig. is full of father’s favourite food. (Teresa, personal interview, April 13, 2004)

Astronaut wives here actively and consciously create the ‘imagined family image’ that fits their husband’s expectation in order to recognize his past sacrifices and to secure his
future commitment, both financially and psychologically, to the family. By putting her husband in the centre during his stay and providing him with special treatment, his position in the family is reassured. The stage performance of family life enacted by migrant women consolidates the ‘ideal/imagined’ normative family practices. Migrant women consciously comply with the traditional image of being a docile and lovely wife, and the subordination re-emerges when the family is reunited. There indeed exists a conscious and performing self, but such a self is heavily regulated and guided by the dominant discourse.

However, such a theatrical performance is far away from wives’ regular routine during the absence of the husband. Here the front-stage and back-stage is not divided by different places, such as a kitchen and dining room in as Goffman’s research, but rather, it is divided by different intervals. There is not much difference between front-stage and back-stage in terms of home practices when the astronaut is away since the astronaut wife has tremendous autonomy to decide what she wants for her everyday life. Once the astronaut comes to visit, the family practices she enacts are always put aside or back-stage and she adjusts her performance to meet her husband’s needs as well as social expectations.

A Goffmanesque performance can only be achieved for short periods of time since it requires a lot of effort to sustain. Once the husband returns more frequently or stays longer, the switch back and forth between ‘back-stage’ and ‘front-stage’ becomes chaotic and impossible.

Now there is a need for us to learn how to live together. Before he only stayed for two weeks, and I could cover everything well. I have three months to recover after his two-week visit. [How did you cover up?] How? I can do things that meet his expectation. I can achieve it without any difficulty. I would put aside all activities and devote two weeks to him. After he left, I can resume my life again. It’s different now. It’s more chaotic now because he
comes over once every two weeks instead of once every three months. I used to make a lot of preparation for his short stay. He comes over again before I can resume my life. Now we have to find a life that meets both our expectations. *I have to come out with a real life that meets both our expectations.* (Norma, my emphasis, personal interview, March 22, 2004)

Both the astronaut and his wife are in the process of redefining family life. Housework is performed with a very different meaning when the astronaut comes. Being able to share domestic responsibility means one is recognized as a member of the family. Astronauts actually start to take domestic responsibility during their stay. Doing grocery shopping and cooking meals with their wife become two common things they do during the stay, and some even go further.

I don’t need to cook, and don’t need to worry about anything. He does everything. He does all the cleaning and cooking. By the time I get up and finishing bath, everything is ready. (Cherry, personal interview, November 28, 2003)

Some wives create tasks for their husbands, which makes their husbands feel needed and wanted instead of being a disturbance.

I only make dumplings when my husband is here because he has a lot of patience. I make the fillings before I leave home, then he does the rest of the job. He makes chicken rolls as well, and I just need to prepare the fillings. I plan ahead to give him something to do. He knows that I like to read the ‘home’ column in the Chinese newspaper. I start to accumulate newspapers before he comes and he will do the clippings for me. In fact, I never read these clippings. *He often asks me ‘does my visiting disturb your life?’ I will say that ‘you really help me a lot’. Actually these things are not a must, but I want to make him feel like a member of the family so I make them sound important.* (Christine, my emphasis, personal interview, December 20, 2003)
Through participating in housework, an astronaut’s status at home – i.e. how he sees himself as a full member of the family through these acts rather than a special guest – is consolidated. More importantly, these new citational acts highlight the potential rupture of the normative family practices. Here, migrants do not have a picture or script of a pre-defined family life that leads to new divisions of labour at home. It is through ‘acting out’ that gender roles are redefined and family life starts to take on a different shape. Such a transformation is best understood with the notion of performativity in mind.

Negotiating

In many ways, the change of power relations between two generations is similar to the change of gender relations between a migrant husband and wife. It is observed that migrant children obtain power after migration by sharing the responsibilities of running a household, such as assisting their parents with banking, answering phone calls and preparing official documents, which used to be the parents’ responsibility. Rebecca said, ‘I feel I grew from a baby into an adult within a short period of time. My opinion is valued and I enjoy more autonomy now.’ Besides, parents have less control over children’s school work due to unfamiliarity with the educational system, and migrant children are on their own most of time, which also gives them a certain level of autonomy.

Once we moved to Canada, we realized that our parents could hardly help us with studying because basically we learn different things here and everything is in English. We have to rely on ourselves. [Do they feel any sense of loss?] I guess so. My brother and I tell them what’s going on at school and share some interesting things with them. We tell them things about our teachers. This makes them feel they exist. (Rebecca, personal interview, May 31, 2004)

Migrant children experience fundamental transformations. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the hierarchical family structure is well established in Taiwan, which gives parents
absolute power over their children. In Canada, this belief is challenged, and migrant children learn to embrace the notion of equal rights (see detailed discussion in Chapter Four).

Definitely I didn’t think I was equal to my mom when I was in Taiwan. I mean here I kind of learn like, well, you know… everybody has the same rights sort of and no matter how young you are you’re still a person and your opinion counts. So yeah that was a big difference. I think my own way and you can’t tell me what to do. But with Chinese parents they always…they suggest things…Yeah they think they have more experience. (Sally, personal interview, December 26, 2003)

However, when arguments and conflicts happen, the final conciliation is not necessarily reached as a result of mutual communication, but through a return to the norm of filial practice since it is still the operating principle in the negotiation of intergenerational relations within Taiwanese migrant families. Migrant children have to back down and soften their arguments or being accused of being disrespectful.

I always have my own opinion about something. I felt like I was on equal ground with my mom and dad. Eventually I soften a little, like I mean, you know, when your mom is like crying … she was upset about how I behave. I mean you start to take a step back a little and think about how to reply. I mean you know she’s always been there for me and I mean at least if I’m not grateful, I should be respectful. (Sally, personal interview, December 26, 2003)

Migrant daughters are aware of the idea of filial practice, and recognize the fundamental difference between themselves and CBCs, the term referred to Canadian-born Chinese.

I want my children to grow up in Taiwan. When I compare myself with CBCs, I find they don’t respect their parents, and they don’t listen to their parents. They think their parents should not try to teach or discipline them once they are 18. Parents are only responsible to provide them a place to stay and stuff to eat. But children in Taiwan are different. You still need to show your respect even when you grow up… They [CBCs] enjoy a lot of freedom and
they can hang out with friends as much as they want…. But children who
grow up in Taiwan are docile, and care about other people’s feelings. It’s very
different, so I don’t want my children to grow up here. (Page, personal
interview, May 3, 2004)

Filial piety obligations, curfews, choice of friends, invasion of privacy, as well as
constant surveillance are available discourses and strategies parents employ to exert power
over their children. Discipline in the home environment is often achieved by controlling
and monitoring the space and time of children’s activities (cf. Sibley, 1995; Wood & Beck,
1994).

Despite having larger living spaces in Canada, some migrant daughters still feel
confined at home. Without one’s own lockable space, diary, letters and so on are opened
and checked.

You know our house is not a home. It’s the house my father bought for my
mom, and the house is named after her. I do not have my own room, and there
is no point in having your own room in my family. This is something that is
not going to happen in my family. It won’t be mine even if I have my own
room; my family will invade my privacy anyway. I only have a drawer
belonging to me, where I can put my favourite stickers. Other than that, my
mom can touch anything she wants… (Nancy, personal interview, January 16,
2004)

The subtle tactics in which ordinary people resist systems from within, as de Certeau
(1984) described, are adopted to create one’s space at the home level. Manipulating and
appropriating what is considered right practice on the surface to achieve what is actually
happening underneath is a good tactic to escape from the rigidly controlled space. For
example, playing piano is considered an excellent hobby in the eyes of the parents and it is a
highly encouraged activity at home. When a migrant daughter focuses on thinking about
other things during piano practice, she carves out mental freedom. Similarly, one can enjoy
his or her own time and space (even just for temporary moment) in the toilet since no one disturbs these most private moments of the day.

When there are people around the house, I play piano but actually I am thinking…. I don’t feel comfortable for them to know. They probably wouldn’t feel comfortable to know it either. I end up making noise to cover up. When I’m playing piano, I can think. I don’t have to say what I am thinking out loud. I just think and then just play whatever, you know, and that helps as well. Now when I’m at home, I don’t get to go out and walk as much. Then I spend a lot of time playing piano and that’s the time for me to think. Sometimes when sitting on the toilet, it’s funny ‘coz I think I developed this habit, not a good habit. Just sit in the washroom and just start thinking. (Peggy, personal interview, January 1, 2004)

Switching to English is another effective way to avoid conflicts. In many cases, it simply takes too much effort for migrant parents to catch up with their daughters’ English conversations with others. Control is loosened in this way. In one particular case, despite being asked not to disturb the interview, a migrant mother kept spying on the conversation between her daughter and me. I felt uncomfortable in this situation; however, the daughter simply switched to English to elaborate her points regarding family relations and power struggles at home. Finally, the mother stopped spying and our conversation continued. My uneasiness lifted at the same time.

Telling a lie is another commonly used tactic to obtain temporary freedom without creating tension.

I still go clubbing, but I have to lie about it. I just tell them that I am traveling somewhere with my friends. They have strict rules, but you want to do it [i.e. go clubbing] so much, and then you come out with ideas. Definitely you can’t tell them the truth, so you have to lie. For example, I would sleep over at my friend’s place, but I have to lie to them by saying that I am going to travel somewhere else. All my friends couldn’t understand why my parents allow
me to travel, but not to sleep over. They don’t allow me to go home too late and they don’t understand why I need to sleep over since I have a home to stay in. They ask me why don’t I just go home to sleep? So if I tell them that I want to go clubbing, there is no way that I can go out. But if I tell them I am going to travel with friends, they let me go. (Sabina, personal interview, July 21, 2004)

Hiding things is the most used tactic to gain more freedom and control of one’s life without causing too much conflict.

Hide stuff. By now, I know what she doesn’t like, so I only let her know about my work and school, but no friends. Friends, I keep on my own… My friends all stay out late, but she wouldn’t let me... And there is a trouble. My friends say why I am being a wimp, why can’t I not stay home, I am twenty, blah blah blah, and then my mom says, why am I hanging with these friends, they are bad people, people who stay this late are bad people. But if you look at my friends, they all smart, GPA 4 people, they know how to play hard and work hard. But my mom doesn’t see that, she thinks people who stay out that late are bad, that sort of stuff. (Page, personal interview, May 3, 2004)

A migrant daughter makes adjustments to cover up what she has been doing outside the domestic environment.

I wear tight tank tops in my residence. But I dress much more properly if I am home. Because at home…. I want to reassure them that I am still their child. I have to cover up, and part of being me never gets to show when I am home. (Nancy, personal interview, January 16, 2004)

Parents are seen as the major obstacles hindering their migrant daughters from pursuing their goals. Withholding the information that could cause an endless convincing period is proven tactic.

Not everything she says is right. She was bigger than me in the past, and I was protected under her wings. I am a grown up now, and I see more things. Moreover, the whole world is changing; everybody is changing. There are
decisions I can make now, that she wouldn’t know best about, but I know. I have to try to convince her first, and then get on, but convincing her part really, really takes a long time, so I just don’t talk to her. (Page, personal interview, May 3, 2004)

However, hiding also means one has to juggle different social-spatial settings without leaving any trace. It can be very exhausting. In one case, Madeline’s parents tried to discourage her relationship with her boyfriend by totally excluding him from the family picture: he was not allowed to come to their house and family members were not allowed to hang out with him. The attempt to please both sides can be a tiring task.

I want to spend time with my sister and my boyfriend at the same time. But I am not allowed to do so. When we go to comic bookstores to read comic books, you know I don’t talk to others, neither my boyfriend nor my sister, because I am reading comic books. Everybody is like a stranger to each other and we just sit there and read comic books. My schedule is tight, and I hope I can spend time with as many people as possible. For example, I don’t want to go to the comic bookstore with him or with my sister separately. I don’t need to go there twice. I wish my boyfriend could be there with me when I spend time with my sister. I am not the type of person that just wants to spend time with my boyfriend alone. It’s torturing. (Madeline, personal interview, April 5, 2004)

Confrontation does occur; however, the unequal power relation between parents and children leaves little space for radical transformation. Tolerance becomes the best strategy to maintain the peace at home. Once in a while, anger and the desire to resist surge, and a confrontation becomes unavoidable. Most quarrels end with migrant children backing down so underlying tension persists. Then there begins a new cycle, and it is an almost unwinnable battle for most migrant children. To repeat the cycle over and over without any breakthrough is exhausting and meaningless. To express her opinion toward her parents, Madeline came up with the idea of writing a play with the hope that changes would occur.
I started to write a script. It’s the story of my own experience. Basically it’s a story about an immigrant family. They have been in Canada for many years, and the youngest sister is a CBC. However, the parents are still very conservative. Unlike me, the girl in the play has boyfriends from different ethnic backgrounds, from France, Japan and Hong Kong. The mother wants her daughter to have a Taiwanese boyfriend. There is one Taiwanese guy around, and the mother and the rest of the family favor him. So when the daughter goes out with her boyfriend, the parents ask if she has sex with the boyfriend. The girl says nothing happened, and asks her parents not to take it so seriously. Then the mother, like many typical Taiwanese mothers, says, you want to wait until you get pregnant, then you will call it serious? You know, things like that. Those very toxic and harmful words. Sometimes they don’t even know what they are talking about. This is big problem of Taiwanese parents that they use very harmful words when they make accusations, but they don’t mean it. You know they don’t mean it, however, you still get hurt deep inside your heart. They don’t know that you are hurt by those words. (Madeline, my emphasis, personal interview, April 5, 2004)

The play was performed on stage for the public by a drama club under ROCSAUT [i.e. Republic of China Student Association at University of Toronto] at the University of Toronto in 2003. Although it was performed by amateur student performers and some humorous scenes were put in, to lighten up the play, it actually carried deeper meanings. Through regular meetings and discussions, the final product of the play was a collective creation of participating students. Various scenarios that happened between students and their parents in real life were incorporated into the play. The play might have been exaggerated to a degree; however, the unbreakable power relations between parents and children were vividly illustrated.

The desire to escape home signifies tightened control in the domestic environment. Migrant daughters find things to do in order to not stay at home, for instance, going to summer school or going for walk everyday. Some choose to attend school far away from
home so that they can get away. This moving away provides a great opportunity to critically examine the power relations between parents and children. Moreover, children come to realize that it is the place outside the home that gives them the homey feeling; the home feeling they always dreamed of. It is a place where they can find a sense of comfort and freedom. To decorate a place the way one wants as well as move one’s body freely the way one wants are achieved when one enjoys some autonomy over space.

I feel very comfortable here in the residence. This is my place. When I phone my parents, and tell them ‘I am going home [which refers to residence] soon.’ They correct me and say, ‘What are you talking about?’ I treat the residence as my home. My mom doesn’t allow us to hang posters or things like that on the wall, but I can do whatever I want here [in the residence]. I can turn on the music, and dance in the room. I can open the door and wave to my friends, and ask them to watch us dancing. I can listen to pop music here, but I would not able to do so at home. They know I like quick music, but I just can’t listen to it at home… (Nancy, personal interview, January 16, 2004)

Mobility is notably increased. Children get a chance to explore different spaces they would not be able to experience if they were at home, for example, go clubbing, which is seen as a dangerous activity through parents’ eyes, but becomes a great adventure for migrant daughters to explore life outside the sheltered home environment.

My suitemates took me to a lot of places. For example, we went clubbing. I had never been before, so I kept alert. But I find life is quite boring if you never try and restrict yourself in the small box. You will never grow up if you do not explore enough things. When we pass by the club, my parents will talk about how dangerous it is and laugh at the people lining up there. I just think it’s not that scary and I have been there already. (Nancy, personal interview, January 16, 2004)

Moreover, migrant daughters come to reject the unitary and unproblematic notion of the ‘Asian family’ and they start to see their unique position in the family relation. This
realization gives them a powerful standpoint to critically examine power struggles between two generations, which fosters more rounds of renegotiating one’s space at home.

They probably still feel that I am like a baby who needs to be protected. However, when I went to university [and lived on my own], I started to develop my own life style. I have my own way of organizing things; I set rules to manage my life. I do not lose stuff as often as before. I have also learned how to cook and manage my own life. I have learned to be independent, and I have learned that I have the ability to do things. I have also developed stronger self-esteem through this process. Moreover, I came to realize that my father and my mother belong to one unit, but my brother and I should belong to two individual units. My brother and I came to this conclusion. (Linda, my emphasis, personal interview, March 2, 2004)

Conclusion

There is no doubt that family life carries significant meanings and has great impact on one’s development in life. This chapter aimed to examine how home practices are shaped and reshaped along migration processes. Drawing on the notion of habitus by Bourdieu (1980), I extend the concept by considering the possibility of emergence and transformation of habitus because of displacement. The in-depth analysis of the social production of home space was inspired by Lefebvre (1991).

My analysis began with the elaboration of an often overlooked element of family life, i.e. emotional involvement. Through examining a person’s emotional reaction toward family life, researchers can reveal one’s affection towards family life. Physical contact and passionate expressions of love between astronaut couples not only give couples emotional satisfaction, but married life is also re-invented, practiced, and remembered.

A migrant daughter’s idea of home may be closely linked to her childhood living experience with grandparents, even though she currently lives in style of nuclear family
setting. In addition, one’s affection for home is not limited to the physical boundaries of home. The surrounding environments of home and extended social networks that go beyond the home environment need to be taken into account for any quality analysis of home life.

Instead of taking ‘family’ to be a relatively stable institution, I argue that home life is full of emotions, conflicts, contradictions and confrontations, and that home practices are controlled, negotiated, imagined, re-invented, and practiced by members with different life trajectories. The discussion of home practices in Taiwanese astronaut families further exemplifies this idea.

Migrant families come to reconstruct, reinvent and recreate the family life. Not only migrant mothers and children who are left behind in the new environments get opportunities to pursue their imagined home life, but also astronauts who stay in the homeland learn to understand and experience home life without family members around. Once they reunite, whether temporarily or permanently, the cycle of negotiation and renegotiation begins. Home practices reveal how home spaces are actively produced by different members to negotiate their positions at home.

Although prior operating principles are not fully erased, new habitus with new set of practices start to emerge. Home life is imagined and practiced in very different ways. Conflicts over control of home space and everyday routine, new meanings given to allegedly trivial housework, ideas of performance and performativity, and tactics employed by migrant daughters are brought into discussion to understand new spatial patterns of social actions and embodied practices at home.
There is no fixed scenario for astronaut family life. What is certain is that family life is not a continuum of previous one. The research findings not only destabilize the unitary assumption of family life – in this case, Asian or Chinese family life – but also reveal the fluidity of home practices and various social positions occupied by different members at home. As scholars point out, migration unsettles family relations in multiple ways and gives rise to new forms of independence, dependence and identities. Migration also brings existing home practices into question and divergent life trajectories after migration make the (re)negotiation of home life a complicated one. Each member in the family carries his or her complex understanding, emotions and memories of home life, and various practices are made to sustain one’s claim at home. New elements are brought to the surface of continuous (re)negotiation of home meanings and making space at home is an integral part of the (re)negotiation. One comes to understand his or her position at home by the control and usage of home space, the feeling of being at home and the various activities undertaken at home. To carve one’s space at home requires tactics to manipulate the current dominant operating principle.

The family as a very old social institution has proved durable across time and still exists as an very important social institution at present. However, when looking into actual home practices, one finds that the home is indeed a battle ground for competing ideas and imaginations of home life. Family structures may not have changed dramatically over the past one hundred years, but home practices have. Endless exercise of power is evident on a daily basis. Migration and its impact on home life provide us a great opportunity to examine the fluid and undetermined quality of family relations. Finally, home life, rather than given, is created, invented and practiced.
CHAPTER FOUR

SPACES/IDENTITIES IN THE MAKING

I had the same dream over and over again when I was still in Taiwan. I told my husband about it. It’s a very interesting dream. In the dream, I was driving a car, but I didn’t remember if it was a convertible or not. I was driving on a straight road, stretching into the horizon, and I could not see the end of the road. I kept driving and driving. Blue skies with white clouds… Wow, I was in a great mood. After we moved here and we drove the car around, my husband reminded me of the dream and the feeling I had told him about. One day if I have full control of my life, I will drive my car and go on an adventure. (Aggie, personal interview, November, 14, 2003)

Introduction

Women’s everyday life is constructed through a diversity of discursive practices. Home rules, religious beliefs and practices, educational systems, workplace culture, a range of social policies and schemes as well as feminist movements, all contribute profoundly to how women think about who they are and what they can do. In other words, a multiplicity of ‘symbolic orders’ and social orders are articulated in the formation of social identities.

Social identities, as many scholars have pointed out (cf. Hall, 1996a; Mouffe, 1993; Butler, 1990), should not be understood as static, pre-given and pre-determined, but are instead, always in the making. As Stuart Hall pointed out, there is no guarantee of who one is or will be beyond the very essentialist notion of social identities because ‘we all speak from a particular place, out of particular history, out of a particular experience, a particular culture’ (Hall, 1996b, p.447). Social identities can never be fixed, because they are constructed through constant tensions between overdetermination and displacements of a diversity of discourses (Mouffe, 1993; Hall, 1996a). Conflict, plurality, and fluidity are the main ingredients in the process of making social identities.
In this chapter, I explore the constant negotiations of competing discourses that strive for the excise of power in a given social context. I will also examine how they are manifested in everyday lived spaces and spatial practices. And most importantly, I reveal radical potentials for new social claims through everyday spaces.

A change of life style is expected along with migration process. In most cases, (im)migration agencies provide settlement services. They serve as an important source of information for newly arrived to Canada, but once ‘settled’, migrants are left to their own devices. Only a few have extended family members or friends who have already settled in Toronto. Traditional family-oriented social support networks (though oppressive at times) are no longer available and migrant families are most likely on their own in the new environment (Man, 2004; Salaff and Greve, 2002). While migrant parents have limited social networks in the new environment, migrant children have more chances to make friends at school. Alternative networks need to be established to get through everyday challenges after migration.

In terms of social service providers, a number of social service organizations –such as the Chinese Information and Community Service [CICS], the Toronto Chinese Community Services Association, and the Chinese Family Life Service of Metro Toronto – serve the needs of Chinese migrants and help with their integration into Canadian ‘mainstream’ society and their use of public social services. There are organizations that aim to promote the rights of all individuals, and in particular, those of Chinese Canadians and encourage their full and equal participation in Canadian society. The Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter [CCNC, Toronto Chapter] is one of the most important organizations pursuing this aim. Others, such as the Taiwanese-Canadian Service Association of Ontario
(TSCAO) specifically provide assistance to new Taiwanese immigrants.

Many have agreed that various religious organizations have profound influence on migrant communities as well. In terms of Christian churches, many have observed (Lary and Luk, 1994; Nipp 1985) that Toronto’s Chinese migrants were well received by, and responded to favourably by, missionary and other church outreach workers. By offering English classes and introducing migrants to Christianity, the churches helped the community identify with Canadian society. Nowadays, there are a number of churches established by Taiwanese migrants themselves throughout the GTA. Worship services in English and Mandarin/Taiwanese are offered at different times on Sunday to best serve all parishioners.

Eight of 28 households in this research have either a migrant mother, daughter or both attending church regularly. Compared to a Christian population of 4.5% in Taiwan, the migrant percentage of 28.6% marks a significant change in terms of religious practice. Many convert to Christianity after migration (cf. Nipp, 1985; Chen, 2002).

There are also Buddhist and Taoist organizations in Canada. They are not as systematically organized as the various denominations of churches are, but their temples are well attended on feast days. Two Buddhist associations – founded in Taiwan originally but now international – established their Toronto chapters in the late 1990s and have influence on migrants’ lives as well. The Fo Guang Shan Temple of Toronto has provided local and migrant Buddhists a home for spiritual development and cultivation since its 1997 inauguration. The Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation, Toronto Chapter established in 1995, has quickly grown to be one of the largest charity groups among ethnic Chinese in Ontario.
In addition, more and more ‘modern’ and secular social organizations have been established by migrants in order to re-establish social, political, business, and professional networks. There are associations based on shared professional skills or interests. A number of business associations [such as The Taiwan Merchants Association of Toronto and Taiwan Entrepreneurs Society Taipei/Toronto (TEST)] have been founded since the 1980’s to serve the interests of their members. The Taiwanese Association in Toronto was organized by pro-independence Taiwanese migrants actively involved in the political struggles in Taiwan. Several Taiwanese student associations such as the Federation of Taiwanese Student Associations of Canada, Taiwan R.O.C. Students’ Association at University of Toronto (ROCSAUT), UTSC ROCSAUT, Ryerson Taiwanese Student Association, York University Taiwanese Student Association and so forth were also established during the 1990s. There are also some social associations that are primarily for Taiwanese migrant women, such as North American Taiwanese Women’s Association, Toronto Chapter [NATWA, Toronto Chapter] and the Canadian Taiwanese Women’s Association in Toronto. All of these organizations play important roles for migrants to reconnect with each other, but especially for business people and migrant children at college or university. There also exist numerous informal social networks.

With the gender discrepancy among Taiwanese migrants in Toronto due to the significant number of astronaut family settings (see Chapter Three for a detailed discussion), migrant women are the major organizers and participants of many social organizations and events. Reorganising not only means migrant women have to establish social networks in the new environment, but it also gives them the opportunity to figure out and transform the social position they now occupy within existing power relations.
The questions explored in this chapter are: How does women’s status or social practice change when they migrate? What are Taiwanese migrant women’s opinions regarding the allegedly more promising and just social environment in Canada? Are there any strategic sites available for Taiwanese migrant women to make new social claims as well as negotiate power struggles in other social and spatial contexts? How can differences be made? What manifestations of power are involved in the process of reconstructing and negotiating social identities through space?

**Space of Exclusions: Metro Square**

Migrant mothers bond with others through everyday encounters. People in the same ESL class or people who live in the same neighbourhoods are the source of their new social network, which expands like a snowball when extended linkages are brought together. Informal networks bring a sense of comfort and familiarity to migrant mothers who are in the same boat. Many obtain useful information and support through networking. Without a doubt, it is very important to form these support networks.

At that time, we would visit each other’s houses and have afternoon tea to kill spare time. We prefer a small group. And few of us who share common interests would get together and talk. Sometimes we had Karaoke. We all met each other at ESL class. We found that our kids went to the same school and that we lived in the same neighbourhood. We got to know each other this way. (Brenda, personal interview, November 27, 2003)

The feeling of confinement is overwhelming when migrants first arrive in Canada. They are desperate to search for places to connect. Some places in the city, other than those offered by service providers, become meeting places for rootless Taiwanese migrants. Metro Square is one such place for Taiwanese migrants.
We formed a line dance club. We have been volunteering for seven years. We go to Metro Square everyday, except Christmas Day, no matter how bad the weather is. It’s something like this. We don’t want people to go through the same experience as we had when we came. We were so depressed when we first came here that we would stay at home the whole day because we didn’t know anyone here. It was so tough that I wanted to go back to Taiwan just a few days after we came here. (Carol, personal interview, November 21, 2003)

Ever since its inauguration in 1997, Metro Square has played an important role as a meeting place for Taiwanese migrants to establish a new life in Toronto. Although its physical appearance is not much different from thousands of shopping plazas in the city, what distinguishes Metro Square from the proliferation of Asian-theme malls and shopping plazas in the GTA is the social functions it offers that make it a quasi-community centre and not just another mall.

First, there is a room in the plaza devoted to public usage— the public space of the Formosa Cultural Society of Ontario. Workshops, public speeches or classes are held there. Besides the room, the corridors and the lobby are used for group exercise in the early morning by the line-dance club and the Tai-Chi club. During the summer and on special occasions, the parking space is used for the annual Taiwanese Festival and the Asian Night Market. Migrants go to Metro Square not only for familiar Taiwanese goods and to hear the Taiwanese accent, but also for the variety of activities provided. Wives of the owners have played significant roles in making Metro Square what it is today. The wife of one owner told me during her personal interview,

Back then we had too many rooms, and it was not a good idea to let a room go empty in a plaza. This is how the public space in Metro Square was created. We attempted to transform the space into a public space so that we could have studying groups, educational lectures and activities. Ever since then, we have devoted ourselves to the public space… We had the idea to add some cultural
and educational atmosphere to Metro Square. It is related to my background. The wife of the other owner was interested in self-growth education. She was also interested in adult education, and she has delivered her vision. We are willing to give our support. We wanted to create Taiwanese community atmosphere in Metro Square. We are willing to support. You can not just keep taking without giving. We are willing to support social activities.

Various fundraising or social activities are held at Metro Square. In fact, a non-profit organization called ‘I love Toronto’ was founded by Taiwanese youth and supported by Metro Square during the SARS\(^1\) outbreak in 2003. Various activities, such as the ‘Doors Open Toronto’ Tour, downtown PATH Tour, ROM Tour and Summerlicious and Winterlicious Experience, are offered in Mandarin by Taiwanese youth volunteers in the group, which allow migrants to explore the city life with ease (see Chapter One for detailed argument).

The recent 6180 support line program provides a great example of how active and resourceful these wives have been to bring a cultural and educational atmosphere to Metro Square. 6180, sounds similar to ‘I am willing to help you (樂意幫您)’ in Mandarin and Taiwanese, is a multi-year volunteer counselling training program, which aims to provide counselling service in the community. It is a program sponsored by a local community organization- Kong Fook Mental Health Association and the Taiwanese governmental sector-Taipei Economic & Cultural Office, Toronto, designed and executed by Life Choices, Canada Chapter with a transnational linkage. Finally, the training space is provided by the Formosa Cultural Society of Ontario at Metro Square. Moreover, the Tzu Chi Foundation, Toronto Office, strongly encourages its members to participate. In addition to providing training for

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\(^1\) Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) is a respiratory illness. Toronto and many other cities around the world were hit by SARS in the spring of 2003.
counselling services, some of its classes are open to the general public. Migrant women are able to utilize their personal networks to invite visiting scholars from Taiwan to provide lectures. The support line was officially opened in January 2005.

Unquestionably, Metro Square has its own economic concerns, and needs to be profitable. In this respect, wives try various ways to develop strong social bonding with business owners, from supporting their products or services to greeting and gift exchanges on special occasions. They focus on bringing more people to the plaza. There are not as many stores in Metro Square compared to other plazas, but the influx of people for various reasons (workshops, exercise, festivals and so on) makes it profitable.

A few food service providers (restaurant, bakery and frozen food suppliers) started their franchise businesses from scratch in Metro Square. In fact, Denise, one of the migrant women interviewed for this research, got her career started through Metro Square. She now owns a small diner selling Taiwanese food and she also supplies various Taiwanese delicacies in local Chinese supermarkets and bakeries.

At the time, she [the wife of the owner of Metro Square] said she would give me a space to demonstrate my product. She encouraged me to sell my product. My career started from there. That was my first step. Then, you know more people, and they recognize your product. Gradually people recognize you through word of mouth. They then offered a cooking workshop and invited me as an instructor. I have taught for half a year. When there were festivals, I set up a table to promote my product. After four or five years, I started to market my product by going to the bakery store. Since I have been there for a while, we already knew each other, so they allow me to put my product inside their store. When T&T supermarket opened last year, I started to sell my stuff to them. (Denise, personal interview, December 7, 2003)

The fact that the Tzu-Chi Foundation Toronto Office has had an office on the third floor of the plaza since 1995 and the Formosa Evergreen Adult Learning School has had its Metro
Square campus there since 2005 to offer retired migrants various classes, demonstrates that Metro Square is not just an ordinary plaza. Its social function sometimes overshadows its economic function, and it is truly a place in the city which most Taiwanese migrants can associate with.

How is a migrant woman’s status affected by a place such as Metro Square? In a way, it serves as a gathering place for people to meet, a place to get some satisfaction from the familiar flavours and atmosphere of home, but what about social implications the various kinds of events and activities have brought to women’s lives? To explore this issue, one has to critically analyze these social events and social gatherings, and examine how women are portrayed in given social settings; home, community and society as a whole. I want to start with the Shearwater\(^2\) Reading Group.

Shearwater Reading Group was a women’s support network organized by migrant women themselves. Established in the late 1990’s, it represented the significant influx of Taiwanese migrants, and it expanded to thirty members by 1999. Women in the Shearwater Reading Group met once every month. Members took turns being host of the gathering. The gathering was divided into two parts with a lunch break. The first part was where the host shared her professional knowledge or hobbies with the rest of the members. Talks ranged from water colour painting, photography, flower arrangement, health advice to environmental conservation. The second part was devoted to sharing thoughts on specifically chosen books. By the time Metro Square was developed, group meetings were held in the public space on the second floor, since wives of owners were also members of the group.

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\(^2\) Shearwaters are long-distance migrants, which resonates with many migrant women’s own situations of having two ‘homes’ across borders.
The Shearwater Reading Group published monthly newsletters and a book of selected essays with an introduction and sketch of each member, to mark the third anniversary of the group. The special edition comprised one hundred and forty writings from its members. Through writing, migrant women (re)interpret, (re)invent, and (re)discover their life history and share their thoughts on migration.

Such a strong desire for self-improvement is no accident. It is deeply inscribed in these women’s belief system through various mechanisms. For a long time women have been portrayed as responsible for the well-being of the family and wider society. Hsiung (1996) has argued that women’s status in Taiwan, rather than simply a continuation of traditional values, is actually an intentional product of patriarchal capitalism actively promoted by the state. Two major campaigns of the Community Development Programs introduced by the Nationalist Government in the 1960s – ‘Living Rooms as Factories’ program and the ‘Mothers’ Workshops’ – have actively promoted women’s subordination in Taiwan. They not only attempted to incorporate married women into productive labour, but at the same time, they also instructed married women to remain morally obligated in fulfilling their traditional duties in the family as wives, mothers and caretakers. Women who grew up under such a regime were less likely to develop the concept of gender equality. The importance to incorporate women into the nation-building project is well documented.

The real essence of the program is to educate mothers to help their husbands and teach their children and to train them to be dutiful wives and loving mothers. It also tends to advocate knowledge of homemaking so that we will positively promote progress, harmony, and solidarity in the family and society. … After all, if we have educated a qualified mother, we have actually taken care of a whole family. If every family is being taken care of, the whole society will be prosperous (Xie, 1989, p.2, cited in Hsiung, 1996, p.49).
In the 1990’s, a range of self-growth or self-management programs were initiated by schools or private sectors to attract middle-class married women. Traditional feminine ethics and family values were reinforced. Women got together not only for mutual support, but also for the purpose of becoming better and more knowledgeable mothers. Women respond positively to this type of social group, especially when it is linked to their children’s well-being.

The counsellor office has a parents’ growth group. If you join the group, you have more ideas about what your kid is doing at school. We have about two to three hundred members. It is a big group. It is called Xin Yun - Melody from Heart. It started as a Xin Yun mothers’ group. We invited experts to share their professional knowledge with us every Friday. We had writers, doctors, marriage consultants, or experts on children’s education over to give us a talk. I miss that group a lot, and the Chinese name of my business is devoted to that group. (Christine, personal interview, December 20, 2003)

This learning mania is reproduced in Toronto. Reading groups, such as the Shearwater Reading Group, are prevalent within the community. More than half of migrant mothers in this research were affiliated with at least one learning group during the period of my fieldwork.

Our group has no affiliation with any organizations. We are just friends, and we have about eight people… We pick books to read. One of our friends’ brother is a bookstore owner, so we can check book lists through him. We either pick books together or someone recommends a book or articles she read before. It is flexible as long as we are reading something. We also invite people to give talks. You know we eventually encountered some health issues, such as back pain or post-menstruation syndrome. We invited a gynaecologist to give a talk. One of my clients happens to be a massage therapist, so I asked him to give a talk. It is a win-win situation, since we get the knowledge we want and they can advertise their business. (Tracy, personal interview, June 23, 2004)
Wherever public workshops or speeches related to health, financial management, family life or children’s development are held, migrant women are among the first to participate. In 2001, Kong Fook Mental Health Association organized a workshop\(^3\) to improve migrant women’s mental health, which was well received in the Taiwanese community (Kong Fook Mental Health Association, 2003). This also led to the development of the 6180 support line program\(^4\) mentioned earlier.

In addition to self-management and self-improvement workshops, migrant women are drawn into various charitable activities, held by either the church or charitable foundations. Many have affiliations with the Tzu Chi Foundation\(^5\). Six of 28 households are active and official members of the foundation and others participate in their activities occasionally.

Migrant women are on the front line of the Tzu Chi missions\(^6\). They play volunteer roles such as for fundraising, Chinese language teachers, and being the Tzu Chi mothers of Canada Tzu Chi Academy of Humanistic Studies in Toronto\(^7\). Some of them also engage with the Tzu Chi sign language group. It provides a chance for migrant women to connect

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3 The program is named Women’s Holistic Health Peer Leadership Project. It was a two-year project starting in 2001 (Kong Fook Mental Health Association, 2003).

4 The main goal of the program is to provide training so that these volunteers can serve as hotline counsellors, however, to migrant women, it is a chance to make sense of their own life experience and get advice to solve problems they encounter. Becoming a hotline volunteer is secondary.

5 The Tzu Chi Foundation is a non-profit organization founded in 1966 by Dharma Master Cheng Yen in the impoverished east coast of Taiwan. Focusing on better social and community services, medical care, education and humanism in Taiwan in the first place, now the Tzu Chi Foundation has chapters in over twenty countries. With over 5 million supporters and over 30,000 certified commissioners around the globe, it is indeed one of the largest charity organizations in the world. Instead of charity, Tzu Chi has set other missions: culture, medicine and education. It has its own high school, college, university, hospital and its own broadcast centre (i.e. Dai-Ai Television).

6 In Toronto, the Tzu Chi Foundation Toronto Chapter offers Chinese school for youth with textbooks based on Dharma Master Cheng Yen’s teachings, and the satellite TV program keeps broadcasting around the clock. There is also local Tzu Chi Youth Group under the Tzu Chi Foundation Toronto Chapter.

7 The Tzu Chi mothers serve as a teacher’s assistant in the classroom
with the local society since they are volunteers for various local activities, such as visiting nursing home regularly and cleaning the street in the GTA. Moreover, through various international fundraising activities, migrant women acquire a sense of being global citizens. Like Metro Square, the Tzu Chi Foundation provides migrant women an anchor to hold onto.

Self-management and self-improvement workshops as well as the Tzu Chi Foundation – along with variety of charitable activities and non-profitable organizations – are organized under the rhetoric of being grateful, self-content and giving good will. Critical issues regarding migrant women’s well-being are overlooked and remain invisible. Take family disputes and domestic violence for example. Women are asked to forgive and compromise for the sake of their children and the harmony of the family. Even the 6180 support line – a hotline designed to provide counselling service for Taiwanese migrant women who encounter hardship after migration – still treats family as the primary unit for analysis over individual need. Self-reflection is first and foremost mentioned when domestic conflicts occur, but there is a lack of critical consciousness on how a woman’s individual well-being should be taken care of and it is unlikely there will be any collective initiative to fight back in the near future. Taiwanese supportive social network groups do provide a nurturing space for migrant women, but how far they can go remains a question.

There is a deep reason for the lack of collective resistance. The strong belief in the idea of fate or karma, which is deeply ingrained into Taiwanese women’s way of living, serves as a powerful guide when they encounter any obstacles in life, and eventually leads them to become compliant subjects. A famous novelette, which was later converted into a movie, adopted as its title an analogy commonly used to describe the fate of women over the past hundreds of years. In the novelette, Liao (1982) illustrates the situation of suppressed
women in Taiwanese families, which somehow reflects her own situation. A mother told her daughter, ‘A woman is like a seed of rape plant drifting in the air, and wherever she settles, she takes roots and grows (p.35).’ Also, the father told his daughter,

> A woman’s life is similar to the life of rapeseed. As a father, I tried very hard to find a reliable husband for you at that time [i.e. for the marriage], but it is out of my anticipation. I picked the wrong one. My care for you becomes torture for the rest of your life. It is your fate. I am over 70 years old, and there isn’t much time left for me to care for you. You have to accept it. A husband is not like a father, and he won’t pamper you. (p.17-18)

That a woman must understand and accept her destiny is the dominant theme of the entire novelette, and is reinforced by other women members in the family. The mother in the novelette who suffered from poverty, her husband’s betrayal, and physical and mental anguish is actually the one who upheld the patriarchal family values that privileges sons over daughters. Moreover, she is also the one who sticks with the Taiwanese teaching about the women’s attitude toward marriage – a woman should follow her man wherever and whatever he turns. To marry the right person is the only advice she could give to her daughters. There is no return from the marriage. As a result, marriage becomes a gamble and one has to accept their fate no matter how bad it goes.

Migrant women’s strong belief in karma also plays a significant role in terms of dealing with family disputes or even domestic abuse. Moreover, when the idea of karma is incorporated with the idea of reincarnation, its time spectrum is extended through one's present life and all past and future lives, which has an even stronger influence on women’s reception and reaction to their current living situation.

Women seem to be caught in a dilemma between fighting back instantly for temporary victory or seeking for eternal relief from intertwined power struggles that span over different
lives. However, many make a decision to take whatever is brought into their life. Instead of fighting for equal treatment in this life, migrant women accept suffering in order to achieve their final release from samsāra\(^8\). This might seem foreign to western feminists, but it is practiced in many migrant women’s daily lives and is recognized as an active approach to achieve eternal relief. For example, one woman had had a long history of conflicts with her mother-in-law over ten years, but treated it as something she owed her husband because of her previous life.

My husband phoned me and asked me how he can pay me back for all the sacrifice over the past years. I said I am not going to make any commitment for my next life. It is enough for this life. It’s better that there is nothing for the next life. I said I already pay you back what I had owed you in my previous life, and that is enough. I told him not to make any commitment for the next life. I don’t need that. I said maybe I said something to you in my previous life, and I actually come to your life and pay you back. Everything will be over in this life. (Brenda, personal interview, November 27, 2003)

Women are well aware of the systematic oppression they suffer in terms of gender inequality in their current social conditions; however, collective resistance is not seen as a solution. Instead, women see this oppression as a personal issue, and have a strong tendency to accept the status quo. A woman who was suffered from domestic violence often stops fighting back, and simply waited until the day that her husband has had enough and stopped hitting her.

He [the husband] treated me badly before, and he hit me very often. I did not fight back in the beginning, but then we hit each other. After I went to worship Buddha more often, I fought back less and less. I let him hit me and yell at me. He could not start a fight since I did not fight back. He could

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\(^8\) Samsāra refers in Buddhism to the concept of a cycle of birth and consequent decay and death, in which all beings in the universe participate and which can only be escaped through enlightenment. (“Samsāra”, 2008)
only be angry alone. I still run the house well... I clean the house, and I cook for him. Although I am a strict vegetarian, I still cooked meat for him. Then he started to feel something, and stopped yelling at me. One day, he hit me badly, but he never hit me again. This is probably the bad karma carried over from the previous life. You owe him so much, and you wait until you pay off your debt. Then he starts to treat you better. (Beverly, my emphasis, personal interview, November 14, 2003)

Women who sacrifice themselves for unfair treatment at home are often the ones who get the most applause in Taiwanese society. The state apparatus intentionally appropriates the idea of karma and fate to escape social responsibilities such as providing adequate childcare, proper long-term health care and elderly care. Women are expected to improve themselves constantly in order to perform proper care for family members and they are also expected to be selfless and grateful all the time. Those who see themselves as independent individuals and have their own opinions regarding women’s status in Taiwan are considered aggressive and threatening to societal harmony. They are often the source of sexist jokes. Critical review for the social policy and discrimination against women has rarely emerged as a serious problem that must be solved.

Metro Square could become a paradoxical space, a space that Gillian Rose (1993, p.150-155) believes has the strong potential to subvert the hegemonic discourse on the subject of women (see Mahtani (2001) on racial remapping). Metro Square is a space that is simultaneously inclusive and exclusive, liberating and disciplining, open and confining, provocative and conciliatory. It could be a strategic site for women to reorganize themselves with critical insights regarding the interlocked oppression women suffer; a resistant space from within (Desbiens, 1999). It could be a place where migrant women can rearticulate their experience and glean new meanings to subvert the current hegemonic
discourse on women. Collins vividly describes such a nurturing and exiting place,

Taken together, Black women’s relationships with one another, the Black women’s blues tradition, and the emerging influence of Black women writers coalesce to offer an alternative worldview to that embedded in institutional locations of domination. These three sites offer safe spaces that nurture the everyday and specialized thought of African-American women and where Black women intellectuals can absorb ideas and experiences for the task of rearticulating Black women’s experiences and infusing them with new meaning. More important, these new meanings offer African-American women potentially powerful tools to resist the controlling images of Black womanhood. (Collins, 1990, p.103-104)

Metro Square is presently a place where traditional normative values from back home have been successfully transplanted to the new environment. As a result, it is a space of exclusion enacting the interlocked oppressions of migrant women. It does provide a channel for migrant women to reconnect with the society, locally and globally, and it offers numerous assistance and information to help migrants settle down in the new environment; however, at the same time, women are expected to act, look, and think properly, following traditional normative practices for being caring mothers or filial daughters while also becoming proper Canadians. This leaves little leverage for allegation of a more promising and just social environment of Canada to bring any impact on critical engagement and radical action against the domination on women at this scale. Consequently, migrant women remain docile and disciplined.

**Dialogical Space**

So far, I have demonstrated that the deep structure of the previous habitus is not and will not be fully erased in the processes of migration (cf. Friedmann, 2005), and sometimes it is even rejuvenated; however, alternative social practices are emerging. The following
discussion regarding the dialogical processes involved in the negotiation of power relations between different generations in the home environment marks a potential opening for resistance when juxtaposition and co-presence of different cultural forces and discourses and their effects becomes one of the realities in their everyday life. Moving to a new place, migrants enter a new social field with its attendant habitus. The discrepancy between the two habitus leaves space for counter-hegemonic discourses and practices.

In her book ‘Women and Family in Rural Taiwan’, Margery Wolf (1972) described the power relation between a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law in this way:

A Taiwanese marriage is not conceived of in terms of a man taking a wife, but a family calling in a daughter-in-law, and every bride is well aware that pleasing her husband is the least of her concerns, that it is her mother-in-law’s face she must watch. In the first few years of marriage a woman spends far more of her time interacting with her mother-in-law than with her husband…. The honeymoon period, which for Westerners is a husband-and-wife phenomenon, occurs in China between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. (p.142)

Although Taiwanese society has moved from an agricultural society to an industrial one, and the extended family structure has become less popular, their attitude toward marriage and power relations between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law has not changed as dramatically as the economy has over the past few decades. The tension and social hierarchy between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law that Wolf described still exist in contemporary Taiwanese families (cf. Bih, 1996).

Speaking out is seen as an action that ruins family harmony and harmony is considered the most important operating principle for running a family in Taiwanese society. However, whether the harmony ever exists in the first place remains questionable. In most cases, superficial harmony is performed between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. Power
struggles between them occur on a daily basis, especially when they live under the same roof.

Often it is the mother-in-law who occupies a powerful position in the family and has no problem letting her voice be heard. Unspoken resistance and silent demonstrations are employed by the daughter-in-law to express one’s frustration. Speaking out marks one’s attempt to openly challenge the authority. Such a rebellious action is unacceptable in the patriarchal family where social hierarchy within the family is well-defined. When a daughter-in-law decides to speak out, she is often prepared to accept the worst possible scenario.

I had been doing this for over ten years. I took on all the blames and I had enough. I did not see any future for this kind of life. I decided not to take on all the humiliation anymore. I already had three kids at that time, and I decided to speak out. I told her something that made her very angry. I told her, ‘We are in equal positions in this family. You are married into this family, and so am I. I call you mother because you are senior and you are the mother of my husband. But this is too much. We are supposed to be equal…’ She became very angry and accused me of rising in rebellion against the family. Then she phoned my husband and told him what was going on. I was thinking that I’d had enough over the last ten years, and that I would sign the divorce paper if my husband decided to divorce me. (Brenda, personal interview, November, 27, 2003)

For various reasons, some migrant families actually start to live in the extended family setting after migration. Many still follow traditional practices. Participants admit that they will not run the risk of being labelled as selfish or called trouble maker and so many tend to avoid saying anything.

After all, she is not my mother, and I am not her daughter. There are many things that you can’t talk to her about. [Why do you think this way?] That’s the way it is. You should not talk to her about certain things, such as to criticize her. My daughter knows this precisely and she is only 18. She
already knows the boundary. She reminds me not to talk to my mother-in-law with certain words. If she was my mother, I would tell her and correct her if she did something improper and provide some suggestions. But to my mother-in-law, I say nothing. I say nothing even she does something wrong. (Sharon, personal interview, December 13, 2003)

Some are caught in a dilemma between telling their true feelings and covering them up. They are afraid of serious consequences if they speak their true feelings, but they feel resentful if they keep quiet. It is always those allegedly trivial incidents that trigger the conflict and daughters-in-law run the risk of being called trouble-maker even when they feel that they have the right to express their point.

I don’t think I have mysophobia but I love to keep things neat. I feel moody when things are not well organized. The old place we lived in before was not big enough, and they [in-laws] stayed on the first floor more often. My father-in-law likes to read newspapers and he would just leave them in the living room. Or he would just put his own stuff there. I don’t like clutter, and I feel upset and uncomfortable when I see clutter in the house. But then I don’t know if I should touch them or not… If I put them back where they belong, I might offend my in-laws, but I feel upset when there is clutter. (Denise, personal interview, December 7, 2003)

Eventually, some are able to move away from the conflicting logics and attempt to fight against their submissive situation by creating a constructive and open-ended dialogical space for negotiation. Instead of talking about selflessness, obligation and sacrifice for the family, migrant daughters-in-law in Toronto adopt concepts such as mutual respect and understanding to renegotiate their role in the family. The following narrative illustrates a migrant daughter-in-law’s attempt to redefine her role in the extended family.

For the first few years, my sister-in-laws’ family came to our place for meals three to four days a week. They never informed me ahead of time and just showed up suddenly. My mother-in-law told me, ‘I don’t mind if you don’t
share food with me when you make something delicious, but I will be angry if you don’t share food with them.’ I felt so unhappy, but I was playing the role as a docile daughter-in-law at that time. I didn’t complain at all. In addition, my mother-in-law likes to invite guests over. There were about 20 to 30 people over every time, and there was one time that we had 50 guests. You know, I had to keep working and working in the kitchen all the time, but I took on whatever I was told to do. One day I just felt that I could not take it anymore. I started to let her know my point of view. Take my sister-in-law coming over for meals for example, I would argue that you should take them to eat outside. If she argued with me, I would tell her that ‘It is your responsibility because she is your daughter, not mine. If you want to share her responsibility in terms of cooking, then it is you who needs to take the responsibility, not me.’ Of course there is uneasy feeling between us in the beginning. She felt so uncomfortable when she listened to all this. But I find that a lot of things become your responsibility if you don’t speak out. Now she realizes that it’s her responsibility to handle her guests. Before she would just tell me how many people will come over the next day, and then I had to take care of everything. I think this is a process of reassigning the responsibility. When she thinks this is her responsibility, she will take care of it. (Denise, my emphasis, personal interview, December 7, 2003)

From acting like a docile daughter-in-law to please her mother-in-law, to clarifying each other’s responsibilities and asking for mutual respect, it is evident that Denise was able to mobilize different discourses and practices for the renegotiation of her position in the extended family. To redraw any boundary in the family is not an easy task. Instead of being selfless in the family, a migrant daughter-in-law actually has to recognize herself as an independent individual who has ideas, expectations, desires and emotions toward family life. This is the first step toward fundamental changes. It is only possible when one is in a situation where alternative discourses and practices exist and are considered legitimate and well-accepted in the society. A dialogical space thus can be created.
Speaking out is not encouraged in a well-defined hierarchical society since it is seen as a challenge to authority, for children to parents, a wife to a husband, a daughter-in-law to her parents-in-law, a student to a teacher, a junior member to a senior member in workplace and so on. A person living in this type of society is taught to anticipate that there will be no point of return if they speak out: harmony to be ruined and relationships destroyed.

However, this is not necessary the case. Some gradually find out that constructive debates or speaking one’s mind are encouraged in a Canadian context. This provides one an opportunity to demonstrate one’s competence and it can bring positive outcome.

At CityTV it took me several years to understand that I can disagree with others, disagree with my boss and elders, but at the same time respect them. This was a very difficult thing for me to understand. In Taiwan when I went to my father’s company, he saw disagreement as a sign of disrespect, as insubordination, but at CityTV where I worked, I was surprised to find that my boss view my opinion as a sign of strength and character and competence. (Lin, my emphasis, public speech, December 6, 2003)

Here is another example.

When I started a co-op job a few years ago, I tried to apply the Taiwanese way in treating my boss. I told myself I can’t talk to my boss in the same way I talk to my friend and I have to show my respect. Then I found that it was not the case at all. You have to show your respect not because they are senior to you, but because you can learn something from them. Besides, you can express your opinion to your boss. You can share your experience. It’s ok, and you don’t need to be afraid of anything. (Page, personal interview, May 3, 2004)

For those who are forced to recognize and accept that it is a different social habitus from the one they used to live with, there is a sense of loss. Such bitter feelings coincide with the loss of absolute power they used to wield.
Under such an educational system, they [daughters] feel that are entitled to certain rights. They often argue with me by saying that, ‘You have no right to ask me to do this or that, and you have ask for my permission.’ There is no way that my mother has to ask for my permission for anything. But they feel they have right to do so. How dare we not listen to our parents? We feel that’s respect, but they think it is nothing to do with respect… It’s very difficult to re-educate them now. There is a sense of loss. (Emily, my emphasis, personal interview, December 15, 2003)

Marilyn Frye has suggested that other’s concepts of us are revealed by the limits of the intelligibility of our anger. She says,

By determining where, with whom, about what and in what circumstances one can get angry and get uptake, one can map others’ concepts of who and what one is. (Cited by Rose, 1993, p.142)

I would argue that in the case of migrant daughters in-law, to express one’s anger and speak with authority not only reveals the power geometry in that social setting, but it marks a step further: it implies the production of a dialogical space for renegotiation of the power relation in the social setting. In addition, women come to recognize themselves as independent individuals with their own emotions and opinions. Potential subversion is revealed because expressing one’s anger and speaking with authority requires being an active agent and finding the possibilities of resignification through constant interactions and dialogues between different discourses that are available for the exercise of power in a given social setting. Finally, they have to overcome the fear and anxiety of being marginalized if they dare to speak out. A constructive dialogical space is achieved and boundaries are redrawn.

Folch-Serra (1990) explored the concept of dialogical landscape by linking Mikhail Bakhtin's work on dialogism (Bakhtin, 1981) – which refers to open-ended possibilities
generated by constant interaction between meanings – to geographical inquiry. She argued that dialogical landscape is a place where different discourses all attempt to account for human experience. Each landscape has its own particularity and its dialogical nature based on the specific historical moment and situation [i.e. time and space] of a dialogue. Building on Folch-Serra’s concept of dialogical landscape – I argue that the production of dialogical spaces allows different voices to express themselves differently than they would under any other conditions. It requires human agencies to reinterpret the past experiences and explore the possibilities of the future in a new context for renegotiation. It is a space full of emotions, tensions and potential. A dialogical space created by a migrant daughter-in-law in Toronto is one example. There are many other dialogical spaces created by various actors.

**Unlocked Spaces**

In Taiwan, everything is set for you. Mom is directing you. The teacher is there to tell you what to do. It’s very straightforward. It’s very peaceful. At that point, there was no change in my life, and I did not want to explore. Everything was set for you. I was quite happy with stableness, routine, and schedule then, but now I am not. (Page, personal interview, May 3, 2004)

Children’s life in Taiwan is very straightforward. Everything is set, as Page said. This straightforwardness is driven by one operating principle: namely high rewards for those who achieve academic excellence and consequently, harsh punishments for those who do not. A plausibly fair policy for a once-a-year universal entrance examination⁹ intersects with discourses and practices across multiple scales, and eventually becomes one of the most powerful mechanisms guiding everyone’s daily life.

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⁹ Nowadays, there are multiple ways for students to get into high schools and universities. However, the majority of students still need to take standardized examinations.
Fixed dates are set for both high school entrance examination and the university entrance examination every year. High school exams are regional but the university one is a national. Once the entrance examination is over, students get their scores and figure out their rank in their specific exam result. The ranking not only determines which school a student can attend, but follows them for the rest of their lives. It is said that the ranks serve as a strong indication of how intelligent one is, despite the fact that the exams and ranking system are superficially and narrowly defined. Without doubt, results profoundly affect one’s self-esteem, as Victoria said,

I feel they judge how a person is solely based on his or her academic performance. I was not a good student… When I took the entrance exam to high school, I failed. That’s why I went to private school. The test is easier. It’s a big shock. I found it’s a big shock because I spent as much time as my classmates at studying, so why didn’t I make it to public school? (Victoria, personal interview, July 27, 2004)

For the sake of their own reputation, schools – both junior and senior high schools – explicitly or implicitly classify their students in order to concentrate most resources on those who have the highest possibility for getting into the top schools. Students are labelled based on their academic performance; those on the top of the ladder enjoy all the glory and privileges within the school system while others bear shame and humiliation throughout their school life. Children learn this at a very young age, and the situation gets more serious when the competition for higher education becomes fierce during their teenage years.

At home, parents are intensely involved in their children’s academic achievements, not only for children’s sake, but also for their own sake. It is because the family is treated as a collective unit. As a second generation Taiwanese Canadian puts it,
In the Taiwanese culture we’re so connected. One person’s happiness depends on another person’s happiness. We are happy together. We’re sad together. And in the same way, one member can bring shame to the whole family and another can bring pride. (Lin, public speech, December 6, 2003)

Following this logic, an individual’s academic performance can bring shame or pride to parents, sometimes even the whole family.

My brother-in-law’s son is two weeks younger than my eldest daughter, and they went to elementary school together. My brother-in-law would come to our place and compared his son’s grade with my daughter’s. Everything was fine until grade 5 when my daughter and his son were put in the same class. My daughter did not perform well in math after grade 5. My brother in-law kept coming to our place and showed off his son’s grade. After showing off, he took his son home. Then my in-laws would start to ask my daughter why couldn’t she get a better grade since her cousin could do it. Then my husband would start to use abusive language at her, and then he would hit her. But the more you hit her, the less interest she had for math. All kids are the same. They became afraid of math, and they eventually fail and withdraw themselves. Thus she did not perform very well in school. She was not happy in Taiwan… I did not like that. She was very upset, and she would hide in her room when we had relatives come to visit us. (Rose, personal interview, April 13, 2004)

Great reward for academic excellence and consequently, harsh punishment for those who do not succeed is a social phenomenon existing in every aspect of life in Taiwan. Children’s life experiences are reduced to a list of scores and schools. They have no face and voice. This situation in Taiwan is realized because various dominant discourses and practices across multiple scales are so tightly intersected with each other, and they leave little space for subversion. After migrating to Canada, things are slightly different. It is not to say that academic excellence is not as important per se; but children are able to make different choices. Some choose to go to college instead of university. In contrast to their
counterparts in Taiwan who are saddled with a strong sense of inferiority, these migrant daughters dare to dream differently.

I am going to Seneca College after high school. I want to study travel and tourism, because I am thinking about going back to Taiwan or China as my father suggested. You know there is hotel management under travel and tourism, right? I found the hotel service was awful when I went back to Taiwan last time. There is a huge difference between the service here and there. Of course, they won’t be able to keep business. If I am going to back to Taiwan, I want to be a hotel manager and let them know what the difference is. (Rosemary, personal interview, May 27, 2004)

For those who decide to go into the university stream, they enjoy more autonomy in terms of choosing their subjects. For example, Vera chose to major in fine art and music, which is one of the most undesirable subjects to Taiwanese parents. Her father was reluctant to support her in the beginning; however, he had to settle with her decision in the end.

Migrant parents’ attitude towards children’s academic performance does not change as drastically as their children’s along with migration. Despite having limited knowledge of the educational system, many parents still try to exercise power over their children in this direction.

He [my father] still forces me to study, but he has no idea of how he should force me because he doesn’t know what I am studying most of time. If we were still in Taiwan, he would know what I was doing. Since we are here, he has no idea of how to force me. But he still pushes me, and asks me to study all the time. (Peggy, personal interview, January 1, 2004)

Moreover, parents’ choice of residential area is mainly based on the reputation of the high school in the area, and they want to place their children in high schools that emphasize intellectual development or offer talented programs. 38.1% of Taiwanese migrants,
compared to 12.3% of the overall population in Metropolitan Toronto (Statistics Canada, 2001) choose to live in the North York area mainly because of a few high schools there, such as A.Y. Jackson Secondary School and Earl Haig Secondary School, are highly recommended and have great reputations in Taiwanese communities.

However, things are definitely different in Canada. Even though some universities are considered more prestigious than others, there is no universal ranking system made available for everyone’s comparison. Moreover, job requirements are different as well. In Taiwan, it is easy for a person to get a job offer if he or she is from one of the top schools. But in Canada, the degree becomes a minimal requirement, and it is work experience and professional skill that becomes the determinant factor of whether one can get a job offer. A summer job, whether it is a part-time job or volunteer work – which is never considered as a valid learning experience for parents in Taiwan – is re-evaluated in Canada.

Now my eldest daughter has a part-time job, and she is not afraid to have social interaction with others. She has become more active and knows how to ask people questions. So I told her that this is a social university and you wouldn’t learn these things from a regular university. I found it is very important for her to take part-time job, and she learned lived experience from the real society. (Teresa, personal interview, June 16, 2004)

Although not without bitterness, parents have to let their children decide whether they want to pursue higher education.

Take educational levels for example. If we were still in Taiwan, I would ask her [i.e. the daughter] to get a master or PhD degree, right? She chose to work after she graduated from university, so I had to tell myself maybe this is it, and this is the highest educational level she can achieve. It’s up to her if she wants to pursue higher education or not, although I really want to [push her] (Christine, personal interview, December 20, 2003)
It is fair to say that Canadian society provides a more promising environment for young migrant daughters to explore. It is the dramatic reconstruction of the power geometry one is deeply embedded along with migration process that makes change possible. One dramatic change is that children’s voices and opinions count and they are encouraged to speak for themselves and entitled to have a voice.

Their laws, the way they treat their children. For example, one of my friends was teaching a kid and that kid was eating like a wolf; so she took the plate away, making her cry. The mother came and said: why did you do that to my child? Children have a lot of power here, that’s the difference. Children have a lot of power. (Page, personal interview, May 3, 2004)

In Taiwan, individual resistance against power domination is already happening on a daily basis. There is no shortage of alternative discourse and practice regarding education system reform in Taiwan. For example, some parents now put their children in less pressured learning environments so that their children can explore their potential other than only focusing on academic excellence. However, subversion will not happen unless the tight knot between personal self-achievement, family values, school reputation, job hiring preference, and finally the education system, is untied. Migration brings a new set of challenges to everyday life. Migrant children have to deal with language barriers, racism, identity and family reconstruction, and so on, but at the same time migration provides an opportunity to loose up previous power dynamics and leaves space for negotiation.

**Provocative Space**

In 1928, Virginia Woolf (2001) addressed the connection between a room of one’s own and women and fiction. Her famous quote, ‘a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction’ (p.6), has been adopted by numerous feminists to illustrate the importance of being financially independent and having a room of one’s own for women to
pursue any activity, not just for writing fiction. Her words still hold true for women who want to enjoy liberty at the present time. The fact is that the majority of women, especially married ones, do not have the luxury of having either one of them. Moreover, a woman may have experienced multiple subordinations in the contemporary system not only coming from patriarchy, but also from racism as well as her relation to employment and politics.

To pursue liberty and equality, a provocative space needs to be created for the renegotiation of power relation in a given social setting, even if it only exists contingently. It is a space for one to be able to express one’s desire, anger, happiness and fear as well as to develop the capacity and ability for future negotiation of power in other places. To rearticulate, according to Mouffe (1993), is the key to radical democratic politics. Various subject positions through the constant effort of rearticulation are linked contingently. This has the potential to transform the very subject position that one occupies at the moment.

New subject position emerges when space is used and imagined in a different way. A personal space for a married woman at home is a great example.

When my kids and in-laws went to sleep, I then had my own time. I need time for myself. It is very important for me to have my own time every day. I would stop everything, and have music playing. My husband would bring a glass of wine for me, and then he would read his book on the bed. Everyone knew not to disturb me during this period of time. I would read a book, listen to the music, or I would meditate. I just feel that I am busy, starting in the morning, and up until the bedtime. I always think about what others want, for example, to cook something to please the family members. And I think very little about myself during the day. So I need that time for my own. I often tell my friends that they have to treat themselves well in order to acquire a peaceful mind. (Christen, my emphasis, personal interview, December 20, 2003)

A nest for a migrant daughter away from home is where she figures out what kind of home space she is longing for (see detailed analysis in Chapter Three). It can be a
paradoxical space where one occupies the outsider within position (Rose, 1993; Desbiens, 1999).

Starting with my second year in the University of Toronto, I formed several informal networks with other ‘Third World’ women graduate students in order to create a place to nurture our everyday lives. By exchanging our ideas and experiences through e-mails, phone calls and social gatherings, we rearticulate our experiences and give them new meanings, which offer us potentially powerful tools to offer counter-hegemonic discourses about our lives and our experiences. The steam room in the Athletic Center is one of gathering places. We hung out there after swimming on Tuesdays. Being able to hang out with other ‘Third World’ women graduate students, nakedly, on a particular corner of the campus, I started to ponder that the construction of spatiality can be an important element in building social identities (Wu, 2002).

Among all kinds of changes, nothing is more dramatic than a migrant woman transforming from a passive citizen into an active one. In addition to voting, migrant women have shown a deeper desire to be involved in public affairs. The feeling of being a member in a civic society highlights a fundamental change in migrant women’s role, from an introverted and family-focused dweller, to an extroverted and active civic participant. Compared to the relatively homogeneous social environment in Taiwan\textsuperscript{10}, the social atmosphere where migrant women are embedded in Toronto provides them a great opportunity to explore the diversity, as well as discover the similarity of people from various backgrounds.

\textsuperscript{10} Despite people with Chinese heritage are still comprised of the majority of the population in the island, over the past decade, Taiwanese society has experienced a dramatic change in terms of its demographic structure. Increasing number of foreign workers from Southeast Asia and international marriage with brides coming mainly from Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia and Mainland China mark the significant demographic as well as cultural change of the island. In 2004, one out of every 7.5 children born in Taiwan is from international marriage. They are called New Taiwanese Children (Huang, 2005).
I acquired a different lens to see this world. Before in Taiwan, we only see Taiwanese people and Taiwanese lifestyle. Here you meet people from Hong Kong, Romania, so on and so forth. I had no idea of a lot of things before, and now I’ve got a chance to learn, to talk to these people. Then you realize the world is comprised of people with various backgrounds. Sometimes there is not much difference between us and others. You have a totally different lens to see this world. (Teresa, personal interview, June 16, 2004)

Migrant women positively identify with so-called ‘Canadian values’, which are broadcast on daily media as well as taught in various ESL classes. They are also reminded of these ‘values’ on the citizenship test. In A Look at Canada, a booklet produced for people applying for Canadian Citizenship, various ‘Canadian values’ are listed, including equity, respect for cultural differences, freedom, peace, and finally law and order. The importance of sustainable development is also mentioned in the booklet (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2006). It is argued that these programs, such as the ‘Meet with Success’ program discussed by Mitchell (1997a), are working as disciplining approaches to shape immigrants’ subjectivity, and in many cases it works. Many migrants accept these values and try to act properly in the public.

You know right now you can hear Mandarin everywhere, at the supermarket across the street, Costco and Home Depot. They talk so loud, which makes me very uncomfortable. Why do you need to talk in such a loud voice? You know people speak Cantonese across people on the bus. Why don’t you sit beside each other? Everyone has to tolerate the noise and I feel shamed. I feel shamed because I know that people categorize us into the same group. I just feel that we accept the fact that we are the outsiders, and I have no idea what they [i.e. Caucasian Canadians] think and feel about us. We are in another people’s land, and you have a kind of bitter feeling toward it. You feel that you are just a secondary citizen. (Aggie, personal interview, November 14, 2003)
However, when one sees social justice is not just a slogan, but is practiced on daily basis; when one can actually feel and experience social justice in the making, it brings a different perspective of how an individual’s life is linked with the larger political process.

There are many things that money can’t buy. I can feel it here [in Canada]. I enjoy the social services provided by the government. You know we have to pay higher tax here, but I am willing to pay it here. Because I can see the government provides us infrastructure as well as various social programs. I can see it happening. It is amazing here… For example, we don’t need to pay extra fees for children’s education, and teachers give students pencils and erasers. Besides, we can find everything in public libraries. It is very convenient. You feel respected. (Teresa, personal interview, June 16, 2004)

The belief on social systems is observed and illustrated through daily experience.

I found something interesting when I walked to the YMCA last night. I was wondering why they make a curve on the side walk, and I found out the reason yesterday. Six chairs are set there for pedestrians to take a break. And they plant some flowers and trees behind the chairs. You know it is a small action, but I feel that I am willing to pay higher tax because I do get some benefit. There is a lot of social injustice in Taiwan, but I was forced to comply and compromise anyway. Here I can see my tax money at work, and I feel a sense of fairness. (Teresa, personal interview, June 16, 2004)

Such an experience is encouraging, and it in fact provides migrants a chance to critically reflect and rearticulate their life history. A radical subject position starts to emerge.

I didn’t care for politics when I was in Taiwan. It was not until I came to Canada that I started to pay attention to political events, and at the same time, my Taiwanese conscience started to grow. I started to read more about historical events that happened in Taiwan. I didn’t care who was in power because I thought politics is dirty. But after I came to Canada, I noticed on some change. I spent time understanding how people in Taiwan were disfranchised because of government policy. My Taiwanese consciousness started to grow ever since. I started to read the history of Taiwan. I acquired
a different lens to examine my own life history. I undertook some investigation on government policies and their impact on people in Taiwan. (Christen, personal interview, December 20, 2003)

Some believe that differences can be made and are willing to take initiatives, which is a great breakthrough for potential subversion of dominant discourse. Their actions may seem trivial, but an active agent in fact, is in the making. A provocative space not only implies the process of rearticulation, but also the action of making new social claims achieved through a temporarily fixed intersection of subject positions and specific forms of identification.

I couldn’t believe my eyes when I saw people lining up for the bus at the bus station shortly after I arrived in Canada. You know people don’t usually line up for the bus in Taiwan. And sometimes you end up being the last one who gets on the bus even you are the first one lining up at the bus station… There is a huge difference. And it provides me a chance to grow. You know the greeting between strangers… I also try to imitate it. I found it’s a nice thing to do. When I had a coffee at the coffee shop the other day, I saw an old lady who had difficulty walking. I wouldn’t poke my nose into others’ business in the past, but I took her across the street. I think I learned something new, and it is a positive change. I met an old lady when I went to the mall yesterday. She complained to me that greeting cards are so expensive in the shop. She told me that she wanted to buy a birthday card for her friend. But it’s too expensive to buy. I patted her shoulder and talked to her. You know I would never do that in the past. You know, to pat a stranger’s shoulder and talk to a stranger! I told her there is a dollar store nearby, and she can get nice cards there. She said it’s a good idea! (Teresa, personal interview, June 16, 2004)

Provocative space is a space full of emotions, reflections, inspirations, sparkles and potentials. It may be contingent and fragmented, only emerging once in a while, or it may be intentionally and carefully maintained and guarded. It is a place of possibilities with all its limitations. However, without such a space, limitations will never be removed, and
boundaries will never be redrawn. It is a space where radical social claims are being made and it is the starting point for subversion and social change.

**Conclusion**

Coming back to the excerpt from Aggie’s interview at the beginning of the chapter, it is clear that she is longing for a place where she can fully control her life, and Canada is where she is trying to make her dream come true. Compared to Taiwanese society, Canada provides a more promising and just social environment in terms of gender equality; however, this does not necessarily mean that Taiwanese migrant women are ‘liberated’ or ‘saved’ by progressive Western systems (cf. Razack, 1998) and that therefore they are able to enjoy a life of freedom on western soil. Multiple suppressions, old and new, still exist in migrant women’s everyday life. Instead, it is through the experience of displacement that migrant women obtain a chance to rearticulate their lives. Radical subversions and transformations become possible.

Along with migration, some subject positions fade away, while others are reinforced. Moreover, various new positions start to emerge. Different spaces that migrant women encounter everyday provide them with clues on how to rearticulate various discourses that play integral roles in shaping subject positions they occupy contingently and precariously.

Without a doubt, various ‘old’ discourses are transplanted in migration to the new environment, and play influential roles in terms of guiding women’s everyday life. The society in Metro Square provides the best example. Various agents/agencies strive to reproduce a familiar social atmosphere based on the normative discourses as practiced in Taiwan. Although this provides migrant women with a familiar space outside the domestic environment, it forecloses other possibilities and silences all alternative voices.
On the other hand, it is observed that a highly interlocked system starts to loosen up when displacement takes place in the case of the Taiwanese migrant women in this research. The discursive practices constructed were based on the belief on the academic excellence and the hierarchical power relations between a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. Displacement releases an unprecedented discursive energy that greatly impacts the re-interpretation of self-achievement and family life. Dialogical spaces are created for the negation of power relations when contesting and competing discourses are co-existent in a given social setting.

The solution, to promote an equal and just environment for women, is not to create a fully inclusive community. This goal can never be reached, since the very notion of community is constructed through plays of power and the action of exclusion. Instead, the key is to allow various competing discourses to enter the existing discursive practices. A provocative space is a place where the rearticulation can start, and it bears the potential for penetrating, destabilizing, and subverting existing dominations as well as bringing new identifications to the surface.
CONCLUSION

This research explores geographical experiences that are overlooked or taken-for-granted in the discipline. It employed a qualitative study with a substantial sample of Taiwanese migrant women to examine how these individuals negotiate their social identities through space. The entire research starts with this central question: How are social identities negotiated, constructed, practiced and performed through space along migration process? The themes I address emerged out of more than 125 hours of in-depth interviews with Taiwanese mothers and daughters or mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law and their one-week diary of the space-time patterns of everyday activities.

In Chapter One, I examined the geographies of language, which illustrated the geographical aspects of linguistic practice. Rather than focusing on how to remove the language barrier that most migrants experience after migration, it examines the social implications and hidden assumptions of linguistic practices.

Chapter Two follows migrant mothers’ steps in everyday cooking and its related practices to reveal alternative and sophisticated ways to understand the concept of homeland as well as the experience of city life in the new environment. How the ecological landscape and one’s memory of home are ingrained into the process of doing cooking and the taste of food itself is illustrated. Moreover, it is demonstrated how migrant women’s lives are shaped and reshaped alongside migration. Their contributions to the transformation of the economic, cultural and social landscape of the GTA over past decades are recognized. The new experience of kitchen space, new strategies of doing grocery shopping and new adventures of exploring various ingredients and cuisines, mark migrant women’s unique steps towards integration.
Chapter Three examines various home practices that are shaped and reshaped along migration processes. It starts with the elaboration of often overlooked elements of family life, i.e. emotional involvement to reveal one’s affection and imagination towards family life. It then demonstrates how migrant families come to reconstruct, reinvent and recreate family life.

Finally, Chapter Four provides critical examinations of various spaces that migrant women have encountered along migration and how spaces enclose, exclude and open up possibilities for identity claims.

My research findings echo with feminists’ claims (Rose, 1993; Silvey, 2004) on women’s complicated engagements in space. In addition to the concepts of ‘third space’ and ‘paradoxical space’ introduced by Bhabha (1996) and Rose (1993) respectively, my research shows that metaphoric expressions, what I call ‘glass wall’, ‘comfort zone’, ‘unlocked spaces’, ‘dialogical space’ – building on Folch-Serra’s (1990) concept of dialogical landscape – and ‘provocative space’, are important to unveil dynamic pictures of geographical experiences along migration.

Displacement unveils what has been taken for granted in the society left behind as well as in Canadian society, i.e. the unspoken geography of the everyday routine. As many have mentioned, daily routine has influential implications for our apprehension of time and space (cf. Thompson, 1967; Harvey, 1996) and strong associations with our identity formation (cf. Foucault, 1977; Butler, 1990). It is an embodied experience that involves the constant negotiation and exercise of power (Sibley, 1999) through which identities are performed and secured.

Migrants inevitably occupy a paradoxical space (Rose, 1993; Desbiens, 1999). This holds the key to revealing the essentialist assumption of the society and identity and pre-given social hierarchy. Unspoken rules to conduct meaningful conversations, to
manage daily culinary practices, to run family life and social life that are integral for
everyday routine become salient after migration. It is this hidden geography of everyday
practice that plays a significant role – rather than spoken and written rules – in
determining one’s comfort level in a given environment. To examine the idea behind
‘comfort zone’ unveils how taken-for-granted daily practices help one to position oneself
as an ‘insider’ in the society. Being able to conduct small talk in the hallway or elevator,
familiarize oneself with vocabulary related to weather and sport, acquire a Canadian
accent and so forth all contribute to one’s perception of being ‘local’. Without properly
establishing one’s ‘comfort zone’, one experiences numerous ‘glass walls’ outside the
familiar environment that cause a lot of discomfort and anxiety. Rather than seeing
oneself maneuver around the city freely, one actually sees limited corridors to choose
from in order to accomplish necessary daily travel. Glass walls are removable when one
acquires sufficient linguistic competent and obtains knowledge of local practices,
sometimes with the assistance of other members. The flux time marks the most intense
period of migrants’ life in the new environment.

Rather than providing a unidirectional scenario – be it a successful Canadian dream
or migrants with broken hearts – as many government policy makers propose, I reveal a
more complicated picture that grasps ‘the expression of contingency and fluidity’
(Harrison, 2000) that reflects the multifaceted experiences of everyday life. It shows
that far from a unidirectional and fixed scenario, migrants actually encounter countless
conflicts, contradictions, potentials and openings that are present at the same time.
Rediscovery, rearticulation and re-invention of practice happens on daily basis. New
practices are brought into everyday life; some are contingent and only exist for a short
while, but others stay and play important roles in terms of subverting previous hegemonic
discourse.
Bourdieu’s idea of habitus proves to be a powerful analytical tool to tackle various issues migrants encounter along migration processes. Habitus as embodied disposition has its social, historical and cultural aspects inscribed in it, but at the same time is an open-ended concept to be modified and transformed by its actors. It is a dynamic concept to understand the social interactions. In this research, I examine the interplay and competition of various habitus experienced by different actors in a given environment. Social, cultural, economic, and linguistic capitals are mobilized for the exercise of power by different actors.

My research looks at the concept of habitus beyond its original scope, i.e. the shift of habitus, which was under explored in Bourdieu’s own work. I argue that while some habitus obtained in the previous field/society do not necessarily apply to the new field, others remain strong and transport into the new environment easily. While paying attention to the transformation and change of habitus, this research illustrates both the durable and the generative aspects of habitus. The research findings reveal how migrants construct their sense of place in the new environment as well as reinterpret their previous lived environment. The connection and tension between the past, the present and the future, as well as the relation between here and there without privileging one over the other are established. This is one of the key themes of this entire research. First, questions of authenticity, of being Taiwanese, surface in Toronto in ways that would not occur in Taiwan. One’s birth place and educational background is no longer enough to secure one’s Taiwanese-ness, but the ‘right’ language spoken and the food consumed in a given occasion instead speaks for one’s Taiwanese status. Second, I demonstrate how the power relation between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law, previously rigidly defined in Taiwan, often undergoes a dramatic overhaul in Toronto. New discourses and practices are brought into the existing habitus, but also transform it into something totally
different. Last but not least, in the case of migrant daughters’ social status – derived from the result of the academic performance – I illustrate that once ‘locked spaces’, i.e. inscribed spatial practices and identity formations that are highly regulated and monitored by dominant discourse and through different strategies, are unlocked. Numerous ‘dialogical spaces’ start to emerge, where previous dominant discourse clashed with new ones. Academic excellence is no longer weighted as heavily as it was before, and tensions, frustrations and embarrassments are eased.

Instead of constantly moving forward, the rhythm of migrants’ everyday life is also comprised of numerous pauses and waiting periods (see Pratt, 2007 on Filipino transnational family). Waiting for Canadian citizenship to be granted, waiting for family reunions as well as for child(ren) to grow up and so on are aspects of the everyday reality of Taiwanese migrants women’s life. These experiences mark how migrant women’s everyday life is intersected with immigration policy, global economy and the life course development of family members. There is little room for migrant mothers to maneuver because of they are the primary caregiver in the ‘new’ household.

Grounded most of the time in Canada, Taiwanese migrant women’s everyday reality is far from what Ong and Nonini (1997) have portrayed as ungrounded empire. They are not the ones who initiate migration and fall in the middle of the power geometry (Massey, 1993) of global migration. In contrast to their limited autonomy at the global scale, migrant women are able to mobilize their resources, use their imaginations, reconstruct their memories and renegotiate their subject positions into new practices at different scales. This is what I find most intriguing about the migration process. Different discourses are in a dance with each other, opening up new possibilities and new forms of practices.
I have explored new spaces created for new identity claims: the ‘third space’ (Bhabha, 1996) occupied by the one-and-half generation of migrant youth to negotiate their unique position of in-between-ness, and ‘proactive space’ initiated by migrant mothers to claim their social citizenship, which marks one’s positionality in the larger society. The concepts of ‘dialogical space’, ‘unlocked spaces’ and ‘provocative space’ illustrate how migrants rediscover their subject positions along migration, and how they renegotiate their identity among the complicated and intertwined pasts, the present and the future. In spite of dominant discourses and practices, actors also strive to carve their own space for identity claims.

However, it does not mean subversion will definitely occur. Sometimes spaces can be foreclosed for potential subversion, and Metro Square (see Chapter Four for detailed analyses) is one of these spaces. In these spaces, previous habitus often remain strong and so some women are be put in a subordinate position despite Canadian society providing women a more promising environment. Moreover, some Taiwanese migrant women’s current autonomy and financial security in Toronto is achieved through a social agreement with their male partners. Once the original condition for this social agreement changes or does not exist anymore, new dimensions will emerge and affect the current status of negotiation. There are constant battles among different discourses and practices and identities are subject to change. There is no guarantee for subversion.

Interestingly, critical race theorists’ work on racialization process and racism barely appeared in this thesis. In fact, the words ‘race’, ‘racism’, and ‘racialized’ are rarely mentioned in the diaries and interviews. Was this because the rhetoric of difference and diversity adopted by official multiculturalism effectively serves to mask the continued salience of race and racism in the lives of many Canadians? Following this line, we could speculate that migrant women did not consider race and racism a factor as they
themselves adopted the idea that their exclusion from Canadian society or the barriers they faced were their own personal issues – such as their lack of language skills – rather than a systemic racism. Or was this because I have adopted to ‘white’ thinking so well over the years – despite the fact that I am a woman of colour, coming from the so-called ‘Third World’ – and have failed to recognize important clues to tackle issues on race and racism (c.f. special issue on race, racism and geography in The Professional Geographer, 54(1), 2002)? These are serious questions and they require further investigation and critical engagement.

Emotions matter (cf. Davidson, Bondi, and Smith, 2005; Kwan, 2007; Rose, 1993). Emotions and feelings are indispensable for understanding the social processes of displacement and resettlement. Displacement brings all kinds of identity crisis for new immigrants. Humiliations, tension, insecurity, depression, frustration, embarrassment, anger, shaming, pride, greed, love, hate, hope, passion, so on and so forth are experienced through migration processes. Emotional work plays a significant role in determining the overall well-being of migrants’ everyday life and the complexity of the re-configuration of everyday life along migration will be overlooked if emotions are downplayed or denied as valid knowledge claims.

To pay attention to emotions is not just to identify emotional reactions involved in the migration processes, but to articulate emotional reactions with one’s identity claims in a given space, and how they reflect the social power relations in which one is embedded. For example, the ‘glass wall’ experience, not only illustrates migrants’ feeling of confinement, but also shows migrants’ marginal and vulnerable social situation in the city. The absence of some emotions also helps to mark the changing landscape of everyday life. More work needs to be done in order to grasp a fuller picture of migration processes.
Throughout the entire project, I insisted on looking at the ‘messiness’ of everyday practices rather than providing a simplified and streamlined story of migrant women. When thinking about the multiple subject positions that migrant women occupy simultaneously and the spaces perceived, created and controlled to realize these multiple subject positions, I found it was impossible to make sense of the complicated social processes of identity formation without getting ‘messy’. Multidimensional reconfigurations of social identities can only be understood through exploring the interplay of discourses and practices that profoundly affect the possibilities and limitations of negotiating one’s identity. Conflicts, contradictions and disruptions are inevitable in the process of reconfiguration. I believe this research grasps the complexity and dynamics of this process.

This research project addresses several pressing issues regarding social processes in the contemporary world. There are different levels of contributions that my research makes. Practically, since adaptation and integration issues are addressed in this project, it bears significant implications for contemporary social services that assist migrants and for the role that migrants play in shaping the development of social services. Different from the conventionally-believed unidirectional adaptation process, there are various factors that affect migrants’ well-being in the new environment that need to be addressed to effectively assist migrants’ relocation processes.

Methodologically, by incorporating various research techniques properly into one research project, this research leads to a better understanding of the experiences of relatively invisible groups, in this case Taiwanese migrant women, which are overlooked in contemporary literature. It also helps build grounded and contextual understandings of experiences of migration processes that often intertwine and interplay with multi-layered and multi-scaled forces. This research provides insights into how to
conduct social research that attempts to deal with processes, flows and relations of the complexity of social phenomena.

Epistemologically and theoretically, this project makes contributions to critical geography and migration literature through a critical qualitative study on a substantial sampling of individuals. It also explores the intersection of spatiality and identity by bringing new elements into analysis, i.e. the concept of habitus and the geography of emotions, less addressed in human geography, and it helps reconceptualize contemporary social processes.

Finally, by conceptualizing Taiwanese migrant women as active social agents, this project offers insights on how to subvert the rigid differentiations imposed by the complexes of power relations. This will push us to reconceptualize the geographies of human agency in a continually globalizing world.
Appendix A: Space-time Patterns of Everyday Activities 每日活動模式記錄

1. Background Information 背景資料
   (1) Participant (Pseudonym) 參與者（假名）：_____________________
   (2) Age 年齡：_____ Years old 歲
   (3) Socioeconomic Background 社經背景
      1. Educational Level 教育程度：
      2. Place lived in Taiwan 之前在台灣住在哪裡？
      3. Occupation 職業：
   (4) Immigration History 移民史
      1. Immigration class 移民類別：
      2. Citizenship status 是否是加拿大公民：
      3. When did you immigrate to Toronto？您什麼時候移民到多倫多？
      4. Where have you lived since you migrated to Canada？移民到加拿大後，您曾經在哪些城市或地區住過？
      5. Current Residence Area 目前居住的地區：
   (5) Type of Household（請勾選家戶的型態及並列出家庭成員）：
      □ Astronaut Family（太空人家庭，指至少一方的父母長期居住在多倫多以外的地區）：
      □ Nuclear Family（小家庭）：
      □ Extended Family（大家庭）：
      □ Other（其他）：

2. Diary 活動記錄：

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Transportation Tool and Routes</th>
<th>Place, Events and with Whom (if applicable)? Frequency</th>
<th>Feelings, Emotions…</th>
<th>Anything else you want to write down</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003/09/15</td>
<td>9:00-11:00</td>
<td>TTC, 從 Downtown 到 STC，再換公車</td>
<td>去趙媽媽家，給趙媽媽活動紀錄表，說明研究進行的方式，並約定下次見面時間及訪談時間</td>
<td>活動進行順利，原本緊張不安的心情，終於放鬆下來</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3. Sample Diary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Transportation Tool and Routes</th>
<th>Place, Events and with Whom (if applicable)? Frequency</th>
<th>Feelings, Emotions… Why?</th>
<th>Anything else you want to write down?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday Dec 15</td>
<td>4am</td>
<td>Computer room in the house with my dad (not a regular activity); Dad is reading magazine and I’m making a model</td>
<td>Thought it was really homy, my dad and I were chatty, talking about life he has in China.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday Dec 15</td>
<td>7am</td>
<td>Took my dog out to do his business outside</td>
<td>Sooooo cold! But seeing him so full of energy, somehow feels the day has brighten up.</td>
<td>Met another dog who was being walked, Morgan. Wow, ppl wake up really early to walk their dogs!!!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday Dec 15</td>
<td>10:30am</td>
<td>Car, driving Fairview Mall &amp; Canadian Tire: X’mas shopping, X’mas lights, gifts for mom with my dad (not a regular activity)</td>
<td>When it comes to shopping, there’s no “NO”! But I desperately want to sleep because didn’t sleep the night before.</td>
<td>Why do I always like the more expensive things?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday Dec 15</td>
<td>1 pm</td>
<td>Home: my dad and I put up X’mas light in the glass room. (never before)</td>
<td>I love X’mas, and I just become so jolly at heart thinking of X’mas decorating.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday Dec 15</td>
<td>2pm</td>
<td>Sleep</td>
<td>Good old sleep!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday Dec 15</td>
<td>5pm</td>
<td>Eat dinner with the whole family (only when my dad comes to Canada)</td>
<td>It feels cozy to eat with the whole family with x’mas light so bright and colourful.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday Dec 15</td>
<td>6pm</td>
<td>Earl Haig Field: Walk dog with dad. Taking pictures with his G2 camera.</td>
<td>It’s pretty outside but my feet were frozen!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday Dec 15</td>
<td>9~10pm</td>
<td>Chatting with friends on ICQ (whenever I have nothing to do)</td>
<td>Casual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Transportation Tool and Routes</td>
<td>Place, Events and with Whom (if applicable)? Frequency</td>
<td>Feelings, Emotions…</td>
<td>Anything else you want to write down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues. Dec 16</td>
<td>9-12 am</td>
<td>Subway</td>
<td>Volunteering at Leadership Sinai Diabetes centre: exchange holiday gifts and help out with clinics (confidential) (weekly)</td>
<td>So happy this is the last day at Hospital. I can get really depressed by patients.</td>
<td>But at the same time, it was really inspiring to see how the doctor deal with sick people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues. Dec 16</td>
<td>12~3 pm</td>
<td>Subway and walk</td>
<td>Eatons: x’mas shopping for mother and sister with my dad (not a regular activity)</td>
<td>I LOVE shopping, even though most of the time it’s just window shopping.</td>
<td>I love how Eaton’s has decorated its interior. Garland for 15 bucks a piece?!?!?!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues. Dec 16</td>
<td>6~12</td>
<td>By Car</td>
<td>Marlena’s house (Royal York): X’mas dinner with Marlena and her family</td>
<td>Her house, not a mansion, is so exquisitely decorated! I wish I would one day have my house to decorate!</td>
<td>Her whole family is so nice to me! Great food, great sites. Rachmaninoff concerto is soooo beautiful, especially when it’s played by Peter Donohoe. We had fun dreaming on about our Trin Ensemble!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed. Dec 17</td>
<td>1am~</td>
<td>My Room</td>
<td>Making friend’s x’mas gift, a Ferrero Rocher snowman in a Godiva Box =)</td>
<td>I always prefer to make gifts for others. Because it shows that you really put in efforts.</td>
<td>However, I despise using glue gun, I always burn myself!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed. Dec 17</td>
<td>12:30 pm</td>
<td>Friend Drove</td>
<td>Yorkdale Silversity: Lord of the Ring: Return of King</td>
<td>I should’ve finished reading the 3rd novel, didn’t catch everything. But Gollum was the best character I found, and Sam!</td>
<td>Haven’t watched movie for such a long time!!! But this one was really really long!!! 3H30min!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed. Dec 17</td>
<td>6pm</td>
<td>In the Car</td>
<td>Gave Jack his X’mas gift =P And abuse him with camera!</td>
<td>I’m always so excited to give ppl gifts, to see their surprise and appreciation (if they like it =P)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs. Dec 18</td>
<td>morning</td>
<td>Walk</td>
<td>Around the neighbourhood: Walking Renoir with dad (once every few days)</td>
<td>Renoir’s always so excited to go out =P. I guess that’s worth getting myself frozen outside.</td>
<td>I should really train him not to get so excited and pull so hard when he finds exciting things!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Place, Events and with Whom (if applicable)? Frequency</td>
<td>Feelings, Emotions…</td>
<td>Anything else you want to write down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs. Dec 18</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>Home: Vacuum and Rid Renoir’s hair everywhere (every week at least)</td>
<td>Sigh, I wish I have tiles floor instead of carpet; so hard to vacuum Renoir’s hair off the carpet.</td>
<td>No no, must NOT complain. I love my doggie!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs. Dec 18</td>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>By car</td>
<td>Exchange money and deposit with my dad</td>
<td>Wow, the Canadian dollars have risen quite drastically these days!!!</td>
<td>Wonder whether it would adversely affect Canadian export? (haha economics!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs. Dec 18</td>
<td>Late afternoon</td>
<td>By car</td>
<td>Drug store: buy vitamins and others with my dad (not a regular activity)</td>
<td>The pharmacy owner is funny!!!! He said, “My wife said I have a big heart, just not the right colour!”</td>
<td>Well, a little too bad =D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs. Dec 18</td>
<td>5:30pm</td>
<td>By car</td>
<td>Rogers Video (The infamous Rogers!!!): rent two videotapes with dad (not a regular activity)</td>
<td>Was excited to watch the Lora Croft II and The Italian Job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs. Dec 18</td>
<td>9:30pm</td>
<td>By car</td>
<td>Rogers Video: want to refund because our vcr couldn’t play the tapes</td>
<td>The employees there were really rude and blamed us for our vcr. Insisted that they were going to rip us off our 12 bucks!!!!</td>
<td>2 Video tapes for 12 bucks for 2 day rental???? AND WORKER talking on cell phone while working??? So pissed off! Never again am I going to go rent video at Rogers! Such bad services!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs. Dec 18</td>
<td>10 and on</td>
<td>Home: chatting with friends on internet</td>
<td>So so pissed at Rogers… but after talking to friends, feel a little bit better. HA none of my friends have good experience with Rogers!!!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri. Dec 19</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>Home: sleeping till 12pm. And cook lunch for dad. Beef noodle!</td>
<td>Sleeping in is heavenly!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Transportation Tool and Routes</td>
<td>Place, Events and with Whom (if applicable)? Frequency</td>
<td>Feelings, Emotions… 你對這個活動的想法及感受</td>
<td>Anything else you want to write down 任何你想紀錄的事項</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri. Dec 19</td>
<td>Early afternoon</td>
<td>Home: making X’mas gift for Ron</td>
<td>Home: making X’mas gift for Ron</td>
<td>So much fun making things! The little snowman playing saxophone is so cute! =P I hope he likes it!</td>
<td>Reminder: Must not get burnt by glue gun!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri. Dec 19</td>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>My room: cleaning my room, move old textbooks down to basement, shelf my new books for the coming term.</td>
<td>My room: cleaning my room, move old textbooks down to basement, shelf my new books for the coming term.</td>
<td>I HATE cleaning my room. Why do I always keep so much junk?</td>
<td>Haha! Precious little things… well off in the garbage can they go!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri. Dec 19</td>
<td>11:30 pm~1:15 am</td>
<td>By car</td>
<td>Cummer Ravine area: Walking Austin and Renoir with Ron (when we have time) On the way to the ravine in the car, Austin was soo excited that he kept “whining”… and Ron had to calm him down by saying.. we are almost there Austin. And because Austin was really excited… Renoir, who were put at the back of the car behind the bar decided to ram the gate… and jumped to the front to sit on my lap. Man he’s sooo heavy! And my white pants!</td>
<td>I wore the wrong pair of shoes!!! We were walking up and down the ravine with our dogs crossing river. It’s all really fun UNTIL you are walking on your high heel boots!!</td>
<td>Ron’s leaving tomorrow for Dominican Republic.. wish I could go too! Must be so relaxing. We were just chatting about everything.. how I got disturbed by Yuko Ono’s (John Lenon’s widow) art works.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat Dec 20</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>Sleep</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat. Dec 20</td>
<td>Noon</td>
<td>Home: preparing potluck dish for tonight with my mother, spiced bacon with asparagus!  Yum!</td>
<td>Home: preparing potluck dish for tonight with my mother, spiced bacon with asparagus!  Yum!</td>
<td>Mom is soo sick! Kind of wish I could ease her coughing a bit!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Date       | Time               | Transportation Tool and Routes | Place, Events and with Whom (if applicable)? Frequency
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sat. Dec 20</td>
<td>6pm and on</td>
<td>Viv came to pick me up</td>
<td>Lisa’s Place: X’mas get together with my high school friend (Viv, Marvin, Lisa, Pat, Kitty, Linda, Diana, Vickay, Stef, Peter, Jack)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Haven’t seen everyone in such a long time!!! Had so much fun making the funny looking chocolate fondue and playing Uno. Good thing I only came 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; in the loser’s rank =D!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun. Dec 21</td>
<td>12am</td>
<td>Vickay drove me home</td>
<td>Lisa’s Place: I learned how to play guitar from Pat and Jack. Exchanged gifts!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yet another x’mas gone by just like that. I wonder how many more years all of us will still be in Canada.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun. Dec 21</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sleep &amp; Home: Putting up a mirror on my closet door with my dad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yeah!!! Finally, I have my big mirror in my room! And plus a little detachable clip-on light to facilitate making up =P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun. Dec 21</td>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td></td>
<td>Home: finish cleaning out my mess in the room. Vacuum again the 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; floor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hate cleaning… I promise when I become rich, I’ll hire a servant =D!!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun. Dec 21</td>
<td>8:30pm</td>
<td>By car</td>
<td>Amy’s Church: attend the X’mas celebration with my family. Video taping her programs. (every X’mas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Heehee… their play is about to change the history… OR NOT! Can’t imagine Jesus having a twin brother/sister =D!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun. Dec 21</td>
<td>11 pm and on</td>
<td></td>
<td>Home: chatting online with friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Heehee, you can probably tell already that I’m not a phone person. Internet is the way to go!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: In-Depth Interview Guide

Adaptation Issues

1. Who is the principal applicant? Your role in the finial decision to migrate to Canada

2. Sources and content of information and services got before migration to Canada (lawyers, relatives, friends, newspapers, social organizations and so forth)

3. Sources and content of information and service got after migration to Canada (relatives, friends, newspapers, social organizations and so forth)

4. Housing decision; Language; ESL class; Employment history and career Development; Transportation; School/ Education; Consumption Issue; Financial Issue

5. Most familiar places in Toronto, how?

6. The most difficult part of adaptation

Communities and Networks

1. Is there any organization and/or network that plays influential role in your everyday life? How does it affect your everyday life? How did you get entered into the organization?

2. What kind of information and service you can get through the organization(s) and network(s)?

3. What is your role in those organization(s) and network(s)?

4. Specific events celebrated/organized in the organization(s) and network(s) you participate, and how do people celebrate/organize these events? What is your role in celebrating and organizing these events?

5. Relationships with your neighbours?

6. Contact with family in Taiwan? How often?

Household Structure

1. Astronaut Family? If the answer is yes, then how and when is this decision made? Your thought and feelings about this decision?

2. Spatial layout of the household; Labor division of housework; Household finance; Language spoken at home?

3. The relationship between two generations; what are issues that most likely discussed/ avoided between the two generations?

Anything else you want to tell me?

---

1 Some questions will be asked according to participants’ response to space-time patterns of everyday activities.
### Appendix C: Brief Description of Participants during the Course of Fieldwork

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Year of Immigration</th>
<th>Immigration Class</th>
<th>Household Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beverly</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td>Business</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brenda</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Astronaut family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audrey</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>1992 1993</td>
<td>Retirement Family Class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denise</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Extended family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Astronaut family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christine</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Astronaut family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Skilled Worker</td>
<td>Astronaut family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Extended family; astronaut family before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabel</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Skilled Worker</td>
<td>Nuclear family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peggy</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Nuclear family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rita</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joyce</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Single parent family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polly</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Astronaut family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holly</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>1990 1995</td>
<td>Family Class</td>
<td>Nuclear family; extended family periodically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Nuclear family, an extended relative living with them during the course of fieldwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madeline</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Family Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norma Marian</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Astronaut family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diane Pamela</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Skilled Worker</td>
<td>Astronaut family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kay Jane</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Skilled Worker</td>
<td>Nuclear Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lydia Page</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Skilled Worker</td>
<td>Nuclear family; astronaut family before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose Vera</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Skilled Worker</td>
<td>Astronaut family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoe Rebecca</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Astronaut family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma Irene</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Nuclear family; astronaut family before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura Wendy</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Nuclear family; astronaut family before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martha Tina</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Skilled Worker</td>
<td>Nuclear family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruby Victoria</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Nuclear Family; astronaut family before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teresa Rosemary</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Astronaut family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophia Xenia</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Nuclear Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoebe Vivian</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Skilled Worker</td>
<td>Married daughter live with the mother; astronaut family before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracy Sabina</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Nuclear Family; astronaut family before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gail Yvonne</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Skilled Worker</td>
<td>Nuclear Family; astronaut family before</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D: Source Countries of Business Immigrants: 1986-2000-Landings by Country of Last Permanent Residence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Source Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>24,404</td>
<td>33.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>11,330</td>
<td>15.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>6,203</td>
<td>8.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>2,826</td>
<td>3.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1,995</td>
<td>2.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>1,545</td>
<td>2.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
<td>1,503</td>
<td>2.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>1,433</td>
<td>1.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>1,327</td>
<td>1.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>1,235</td>
<td>1.68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Top Ten**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>53,801</td>
<td>73.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td>19,785</td>
<td>26.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>73,586</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source:
Appendix E: Different Waves of Chinese Migrants from Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan in Toronto

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Waves of Migration</th>
<th>Gold Mines and Canadian Pacific Railway Wave</th>
<th>The Exclusionary Period</th>
<th>The Lull</th>
<th>The Hong Kong Wave</th>
<th>New Waves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political and Social Events in ‘Home Societies’</td>
<td>1. Political strife in China</td>
<td>1. Political strife in China</td>
<td>1. Taiwan returned to China as one province of China after WWII; ‘The Question of Taiwan’ emerged in 1950s</td>
<td>1. Taiwan was expelled from the United Nations in 1971, Japan and the United Kingdom severed diplomatic ties with Taiwan in 1972, and the United States followed suit in 1979.</td>
<td>1. The lifting of Martial Law in Taiwan in 1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. The Treaty of Nanking in 1842 ceded Hong Kong to Britain in perpetuity. The Convention of Beijing, signed in 1860, granted the British a perpetual lease on the Kowloon Peninsula.</td>
<td>2. Taiwan and Pescadores ceded to Japan after the Sino-Japanese War in 1895; Taiwan as a colony for the next fifty years</td>
<td>2. People’s Republic of China established in 1949.</td>
<td>2. PRC: The Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976; economic reform started in 1978</td>
<td>2. Student movement calling for democracy in Tiananmen square, Beijing, in 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. In 1898 Britain acquired the New Territories on a 99-year lease.</td>
<td>3. After being defeated by communists in China, Chiang Kai-Shek and more than one million followers fled to Taiwan.</td>
<td>4. Martial law was imposed in Taiwan in 1949 and travel abroad was prohibited.</td>
<td>3. Rapid economic growth both in Taiwan and Hong Kong</td>
<td>3. The first direct presidential elections by Taiwan's voters held in 1996; large military exercises 100 miles across the Taiwan Straits taken by PRC to warn Taiwan against independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Qing dynasty overthrown and Republic of China established in 1911</td>
<td>4. Taiwan government released the restriction of number of people going abroad for education and the regulation for family reunification abroad in the early 1980s.</td>
<td>5. WWI and WWII</td>
<td>4. On July 1, 1997, the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong becomes the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.</td>
<td>4. On July 1, 1997, the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong becomes the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. WWI and WWII</td>
<td>5. China indicated at the United Nations that it regards Hong Kong as part of its territory in 1972. The Joint Declaration signed in 1984 by Britain and China agreed that the sovereignty of Hong Kong would revert back to China in 1997.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waves of Migration</td>
<td>Gold Mines and Canadian Pacific Railway Period</td>
<td>The Exclusionary Period</td>
<td>The Lull</td>
<td>The Hong Kong Wave</td>
<td>New Waves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Canadian Social Situation and Immigration Policy** | 1. Gold found in the Fraser River canyon, and news of ‘mountains of gold’ released  
2. Canadian government sought the necessary labour force for the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway between 1880 and 1884. | 1. $10 Head tax was imposed on all Chinese entering Canada (with some exception) in 1885, later increased to $50 in 1896, $100 in 1900, and $500 in 1904. Monthly average wage was about $25. Merchants, diplomats, and university students were exempt of the head tax.  
2. The Chinese Immigration Act of 1923 excluded all Chinese from entering Canada was not repealed until 1947. | 1. The separate treatment of Chinese migrants subsumed the category ‘Asiatic’ or Asian, continued in the 1950s. There were tight restrictions on the categories of relatives whom Asian could sponsor as migrants.  
2. The immigration legislation in 1962 removed all the vestiges of a colour-conscious policy, but at the same time the authority was granted to the govern-in-council to restrict the admission of persons by reference to ethnic group, nationality, geographic area origin and so forth. | 1. 1967 Immigration Act removed the barrier to non-European immigrants. The ‘universal point system’ was introduced and three categories for admission were created: independent applicants, sponsored dependents and nominated relatives. Certain immigrants, including refugees, persecuted or displaced persons, were given admission for humanitarian or compassionate reasons.  
2. The pass mark for independent applicants was 50 in 1967 and was increase to 70 in 1985.  
3. The business immigration program was introduced in 1978. | 1. The pass mark for independent applicants increase to 75 in 2001.  
2. The components of business immigration were redefined in 1984.  
3. In the mid-1980’s, the Canadian government increased its annual targets for immigrants as well as introduced a policy of five-year plans for immigration. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Waves of Migration</th>
<th>Gold Mines and Canadian Pacific Railway Period</th>
<th>The Exclusionary Period</th>
<th>The Lull</th>
<th>The Hong Kong Wave</th>
<th>New Waves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Demographic Characteristics | 1. Some 4000 of Chinese gold miner first coming from the United State  
2. 2000 Chinese labourers imported from Hong Kong in 1881  
3. 17000 Chinese migrants, mainly men, from the Pearl River Delta area of Guangdon province and Fujian in southern China, brought into the country to raise the necessary labour force for the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway between 1882 and 1885. | 1. Between 1923 and 1947, only special privileges, such as wealthy Chinese merchants and their wives were allowed to enter Canada.  
2. The number of Chinese migrants effectively controlled, especially women. The ratio of Chinese women to Chinese men in Canada hence remained disproportionate. | 1. Most of Chinese migrants came through the sponsorship system during this period of time.  
2. The illegal and well-established movement of Chinese migrants from Hong Kong  
3. First wave of Taiwanese Migrants to Canada: Most of them came abroad for advance education and did not return. | 1. Migrants during this period of time mainly come from Hong Kong. Cantonese became the lingua franca in Chinese communities.  
2. The second wave of Taiwanese emigration to Canada with slightly increasing number than the previous period.  
3. Only people from middle and upper class backgrounds are most likely able to qualify the minimum points for independent applicants.  
4. Mandarin replaces Cantonese as the dominant language spoken in Chinese Communities. | 1. Hong Kong and later China become the top source of migrants.  
2. Migrants who come to Canada during this period of time are more diverse in terms of spoken dialects, social and cultural life and the communities.  
3. The third wave of emigration from Taiwan to Canada with significant increase in terms of the number and the diversity of migrants. |
Appendix F: Geographical Distribution in Census Metropolitan Area Toronto: Migrants from China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Population in the given area</th>
<th>Distribution of population</th>
<th>Migrants from China</th>
<th>% of total population in the given area</th>
<th>% of Total Migrants from China</th>
<th>Migrants from Hong Kong</th>
<th>% of total population in the given area</th>
<th>% of migrants from Hong Kong</th>
<th>Migrants from Taiwan</th>
<th>% of total population in the given area</th>
<th>% of migrants from Taiwan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Markham</td>
<td>208,615</td>
<td>4.23%</td>
<td>14,305</td>
<td>6.86%</td>
<td>10.46%</td>
<td>27,780</td>
<td>13.32%</td>
<td>25.09%</td>
<td>1,305</td>
<td>0.63%</td>
<td>8.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississauga</td>
<td>612,925</td>
<td>12.43%</td>
<td>8,900</td>
<td>1.45%</td>
<td>6.51%</td>
<td>9,565</td>
<td>1.56%</td>
<td>8.64%</td>
<td>2,165</td>
<td>0.35%</td>
<td>14.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond Hill</td>
<td>132,030</td>
<td>2.68%</td>
<td>6,255</td>
<td>4.74%</td>
<td>4.57%</td>
<td>12,940</td>
<td>9.80%</td>
<td>11.69%</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>0.73%</td>
<td>6.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Toronto</td>
<td>2,481,494</td>
<td>50.32%</td>
<td>102,370</td>
<td>4.13%</td>
<td>74.85%</td>
<td>55,610</td>
<td>2.24%</td>
<td>50.23%</td>
<td>9,535</td>
<td>0.38%</td>
<td>64.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>3,435,064</td>
<td>69.99%</td>
<td>131,830</td>
<td>3.84%</td>
<td>96.39%</td>
<td>105,895</td>
<td>3.08%</td>
<td>95.64%</td>
<td>13965</td>
<td>0.41%</td>
<td>94.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total in CMA</td>
<td>4,930,990</td>
<td>136,765</td>
<td>2.77%</td>
<td>110,720</td>
<td>2.25%</td>
<td>14,830</td>
<td>0.30%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data compiled from *Census Canada 2001* (Statistics Canada, 2001)
Appendix G: Geographical Distribution in Metropolitan Toronto: Migrants from China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Population in the given area</th>
<th>Distribution of population</th>
<th>Migrants from China</th>
<th>% of total population in the given area</th>
<th>Migrants from Hong Kong</th>
<th>% of total population in the given area</th>
<th>Migrants from Taiwan</th>
<th>% of total population in the given area</th>
<th>% of migrants from China</th>
<th>% of migrants from Hong Kong</th>
<th>% of migrants from Taiwan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Toronto</td>
<td>676,352</td>
<td>13.72%</td>
<td>31,235</td>
<td>4.62%</td>
<td>5,410</td>
<td>0.80%</td>
<td>1,280</td>
<td>0.19%</td>
<td>8.63%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NorthYork</td>
<td>608,288</td>
<td>12.34%</td>
<td>22,865</td>
<td>3.76%</td>
<td>17,865</td>
<td>2.94%</td>
<td>5,650</td>
<td>0.93%</td>
<td>38.10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scarbrough</td>
<td>593,297</td>
<td>12.03%</td>
<td>40,630</td>
<td>6.85%</td>
<td>29,850</td>
<td>5.03%</td>
<td>2,225</td>
<td>0.38%</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York</td>
<td>150,255</td>
<td>3.05%</td>
<td>1,325</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>0.19%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0.02%</td>
<td>0.20%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EastYork</td>
<td>115,185</td>
<td>2.34%</td>
<td>3,485</td>
<td>3.03%</td>
<td>805</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
<td>0.24%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etobicoke</td>
<td>338,117</td>
<td>6.86%</td>
<td>2,830</td>
<td>0.84%</td>
<td>1,390</td>
<td>0.41%</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>0.09%</td>
<td>2.12%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Toronto</td>
<td>2,481,494</td>
<td>50.32%</td>
<td>102,370</td>
<td>4.13%</td>
<td>55,610</td>
<td>2.24%</td>
<td>9,535</td>
<td>0.38%</td>
<td>64.30%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data compiled from Census Canada 2001 (Statistics Canada, 2001)
Appendix H: Types of Family Household in Taiwan

Types of family household in Taiwan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Household</th>
<th>At the end of year 1990</th>
<th>A the end of year 2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of Household (%)</td>
<td>No. of Household (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Nuclear Family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married couple</td>
<td>339,477 (6.9)</td>
<td>504,128 (7.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married couple and unmarried child(ren)</td>
<td>2,515,520 (50.9)</td>
<td>2,683,982 (41.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent with unmarried child(ren)</td>
<td>285,627 (5.8)</td>
<td>374,295 (5.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Extended Family</td>
<td>801,768 (16.2)</td>
<td>1,013,811 (15.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparent(s), parent(s), and unmarried child(ren)</td>
<td>601,461 (12.2)</td>
<td>681,104 (10.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents and married child(ren)</td>
<td>155,002 (3.1)</td>
<td>257,458 (4.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparents with unmarried grandchild(ren)</td>
<td>45,305 (0.9)</td>
<td>75,249 (1.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Single Person Household</td>
<td>664,571 (13.4)</td>
<td>1,392,293 (21.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Other Types of Household</td>
<td>336,294 (6.8)</td>
<td>501,716 (7.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related</td>
<td>297,724 (6.0)</td>
<td>420,568 (6.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-related</td>
<td>38,570 (0.8)</td>
<td>81,148 (1.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,943,257 (100.0)</td>
<td>6,470,225 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, Executive Yuan, R.O.C (Taiwan)
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