

MIGRANTS FROM THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
TO AUSTRALIA: A STUDY OF FAMILY PRACTICES

By

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Abstract

Since the late 1970s, dramatic social changes in the People's Republic of China have led to a sudden emigration of Chinese from China to Australia. Given the obvious social and cultural differences between the two societies, what has been the impact of this cross-country migration upon the migrants' family lives in their new country of residence? How do they cope with the changing social context? Are there patterns within their family practices which are distinctive from those of the mainstream society?

This study has examined family practices through in-depth interviews of 40 Chinese migrants who immigrated to Australia in the past two decades. The study is intended to be broadly contextualized and historical in scope. Hence, overviews of family traditions, culture and contemporary changes in both the home and host countries are elaborated. An analysis of the informants' motivations for migration and perceptions of the host society are also examined in significant detail, as the respondents' motivations and perceptions have implications for the ways they have chosen to reorganize their lives in a new country. Family life including marriage, attitudes towards sexuality, child rearing and the division of labour at home were probed among this sample within broad frameworks utilizing scholarly perspectives of immigration, ethnoculture and gender relations.

The findings of this study suggest that the emigration of the Chinese from China to Australia may be best seen as historical, contextualized and personalized in response to the various social changes which have taken place in both the home and host countries. The patterns and trajectories of family practices as well as the perceptions of the host country among these migrants strongly suggest that the social context in the country of origin and cultural beliefs play significant roles in family practices. Family practices carried over from the home country were obviously observed, while changing views of child rearing and attitudes towards sexuality and certain behaviours were also noticeable but personalized. Gender role-playing at home was found to be less traditional, but rather flexible and creative to meet the needs of individual households, including such innovations as cross-country childcare arrangements. This study showed that men faced greater challenges to their gender roles at home compared to women after migration. Men's sharing of housework also corresponded to region of origin, raising a topic for further investigation. Higher expectations for the school performance of children and the greater investment Chinese parents made in their children's education were compelling findings and may indicate a future trend among the Chinese diaspora.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The List of Tables	iv
Preface	vi
Acknowledgments	viii
 PART I. INTRODUCTION	 1
 Chapter One. Setting the Scene	 2
Why Study Migrants from China	2
The History of Chinese Migrants in Australia	6
Related Studies of Chinese Migrant Families	16
 Chapter Two. Conceptual Approach	 29
Introduction	29
Families from an Immigration Perspective	30
Families from an Ethno-cultural Perspective	37
Gender Relations within the family	42
Summary	46
 Chapter Three. Method	 47
Research Design	47
Fieldwork	50
Data Analysis	56
 PART II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: FAMILY PRACTICES IN TWO SOCIETIES	 60
Introduction	61
 Chapter Four. The Changing Family Practices in the People's Republic of China	 62
Introduction	62
Family Traditions	63
Influences of the 1911 Republic Revolution	72
Political Impacts upon Family Life during Mao's Regime	75
Trends since the 1980s	82
A Family Profile in the Pearl River Delta Region	89
Summary	94
 Chapter Five. Dynamics and Diversity of Family Practices in Australia	 96
Introduction	96
Family Practices before WWII	98
Contemporary Changes in Family Practices	100
Cultural Diversity: Major Ethnic Family Practices	108

Summary	112
PART III. A SAMPLE PROFILE	113
Chapter Six. A Social Profile of Respondents	114
Demographic Data	114
Marital Status and Family Structure	118
Education and English Level	120
Employment and Occupational Status	123
Income and Remittance	126
Religion and Socialization	128
Summary	129
PART IV MOTIVATION AND PERCEPTION	130
Chapter Seven. Motivation for Migration	131
Introduction	131
General Comments on the Reasons Stated for Migration	132
Social and Political Impacts	137
Influences from the Family on Migration Decision-Making	140
Educational and Occupational Advantages	142
Summary	145
Chapter Eight. Perceptions of Australian Society and Family Practices	146
Introduction	146
An Overview of the Perceptions	147
Perceptions of Sexuality/Family Practices in Relation to Sex and Social Class	149
Perceptions of Welfare and Tax Policy in Relation to Social Economic Status	154
Perceptions of Education in Relation to Cultural Beliefs, Occupation and Local Training	159
Perceptions of Australian Society in Relation to Motivation for Migration	163
Summary	167
PART V. FAMILY LIFE: MARRIAGE AND CHILD REARING	168
Introduction	169
Chapter Nine. Marriages in Cross-Cultural Transformation	171
Introduction	171
An Overview of Marriages and Related Emerging Issues	172
The Impact of Spousal Separation on Emotional Relationships	175
Changing Marriage Expectations and Gender Norms	180
Changing Constructions of Sexuality	190
Cultural Patterns in Marriage: Greater Tolerance and a De-emphasis of Personal	

Desire	193
Summary	196
Chapter Ten. Child Rearing Practices: Expectations and Cultural Beliefs	198
Introduction	198
Changing Views of Children and a Decline of Expectation of Children to an Economic Return	199
A Tendency towards Having a Second Child	203
Mother Tongue Language Maintenance and Ethnic Identity	206
Cultural Beliefs Related to Strictness in Child Rearing Practices	210
Greater Investment and Expectations Regarding Children's School Performance	216
Summary	221
PART VI. DIVERSITY AND DYNAMICS OF HOUSEWORK DIVISION	223
Introduction	224
Sample Context and Related Issues Derived	225
Chapter Eleven. Regional Culture and Division of Housework	228
"I Am a Shanghai Man" - Families from Shanghai	228
"Wife in Charge of Housework" - Families from the North	235
A Complex Mixture of Tradition - Families from the South	239
Summary	245
Chapter Twelve. Family Structure and Dynamics of Housework Division	246
Introduction	246
The Two-Job Nuclear Families and Childcare Novelty	247
The Division of Housework in the Extended Families	253
"Astronaut" Families and the Division of Housework	262
Summary	268
PART VII. CONCLUSION	270
Chapter Thirteen. Summary and Implications	271
A Summary of the Findings and Contributions	271
Implications of Findings for Theoretical Framework and Research Method	279
Implications for Future Studies	284
Bibliography	287
Appendix I	305
Appendix II	309

THE LIST OF TABLES

Table 5.1 Australian residents by birthplace (country), by sex, 1996 census	97
Table 5.2 Australians (persons aged over 15 years), by registered marital status and sex, 1996 census	104
Table 5.3 Australians' educational institution attending, by sex, 1996 census	106
Table 6.1 The age distribution of the sample on arrival, by sex	114
Table 6.2 Home origin of the sample in China	115
Table 6.3 Year of arrival of the sample, by sex	116
Table 6.4 Year of arrival of China-born population in Australia, by sex, 1996 census	116
Table 6.5 Passport and visa categories of the sample	117
Table 6.6 Overseas networks for migration of the sample	117
Table 6.7 Marital status of the sample, by sex	118
Table 6.8 Marital status of China-born population (persons aged over 15 years), by sex, 1996 census	118
Table 6.9 Family size of the sample, by number of children	119
Table 6.10 Family Structure of the sample	119
Table 6.11 Educational qualifications of the sample earned from China and Australia, by sex	120
Table 6.12 Educational qualifications of China-born population (persons aged over 15 years), by sex, 1996 census	121
Table 6.13 English level of the sample, by sex (self-reporting)	122
Table 6.14 Proficiency in English of China-born population (persons aged over 5 years), by sex, 1996 census (self reporting)	122
Table 6.15 Percentages of non-English speaking population of Chinese groups (persons aged over 15 years) by country of birth, 1991 census	122

Table 6.16	Employment status of the sample before and after arrival, by sex	123
Table 6.17	Employment status of China-born population (persons aged 25-54 years), by sex, 1996 census	123
Table 6.18	A comparison of occupational status of the sample in China and Australia, by sex	124
Table 6.19	Occupations of China-born population (persons aged over 15 years), by sex, 1996 census	125
Table 6.20	Individual and family annual income of the sample, by sex (self reporting)	126
Table 6.21	Median individual and median family annual income (A\$) of Chinese groups, by country of birth and sex, 1991 census	126
Table 6.22	Remittances of the sample	127
Table 6.23	Religious practices of the sample before and after arrival in Australia, by sex	128
Table 6.24	Religious practices of China-born population, by sex, 1996 census	128
Table 6.25	Socializing	129
Table 7	Reasons stated for going abroad, by sex	132
Table 8	Positive and negative views of Australian society (numbers mentioning specific points), by sex, occupation, income and entry visa category of the sample	148
Table 9.1	Self-perceived marriage satisfaction of respondents, by sex	173
Table 9.2	Self-perceived marriage satisfaction of respondents, by age at marriage and sex	173
Table 9.3	Self-perceived marriage satisfaction of respondents, by length of marriage (year)	173
Table 9.4	Self-perceived marriage satisfaction of respondents, by length of spousal separation (year) in the process of migration	174
Table 10	Views of physical punishment to children, by sex	211
Table 11	Type of housework divisions, by home regions of respondents in China	227

PREFACE

The end of the Cultural Revolution and the introduction of the Open-Door policy in the People's Republic of China have led to a sudden exodus from the People's Republic of China since the 1980s. An outflow of Chinese from P. R. China to Australia has been observed as one part of the Chinese diaspora on the global scene. Given the differences in cultural heritage and social systems between China and Australia, what has been the impact of this cross-country migration upon the family lives of the migrants in their new country of residence? How have they coped with the changing social context and cultural differences? These issues intrigued me and led to this study.

How Did My Interest Develop?

The idea of writing about the Chinese family was originally inspired by Professor Hedley Beare, my supervisor while I was studying for a MA degree at the University of Melbourne, in 1994 - the International Year of the Family. In the process of writing a thesis on *The Family Values of Chinese Immigrants in Australia*, I was, for the first time, acquainted with Chinese immigration history in an Australian context, about which I had known very little. The history of Chinese migrants in Australia both astounded and touched me deeply.

My interest in the acculturation of Chinese migrant families within a Western society was increased by my personal experience and observations of many families of my own ethnicity going through the processes of migration and settlement. Many families I observed had sadly broken up as a consequence of migration, and many people I knew felt frustration in the process of acculturation to another society, as they faced challenges and dilemmas in their lives. The obstacles these Chinese families and individuals encountered and their frustrations can hardly be understood unless one has also gone through this experience. Cross-country migration is not easy for anyone from any country;

yet it certainly makes a great difference if one's home country's social and cultural context has some similarities with the country to which one immigrates. Writing about Chinese migrant families, however, has been motivated by a broad range of my previous experiences. Studying for a doctorate has provided me with the opportunity to write about many issues I have long thought about.

What Issues Are Covered in This Thesis?

This thesis is organized into seven parts and thirteen chapters. The first 3 chapters serve as an introduction, which provide an account of why I am studying Chinese migrant families, along with the conceptual frameworks and methods I utilized to research this topic. The second part serves also as a background, in which family traditions, cultural origins and contemporary changes in both China and Australia are elaborated to help explain the differences in family practices between these two countries. Part three presents the characteristics of the sample, while situating the informants within the larger China-born population. The fourth part, which includes chapters seven and eight, will analyse the motivations for migration and the perceptions of Australian society held by these migrants. These factors have potential implications for the ways the informants have chosen to reorganize their lives in a new country. Part five, which includes chapters nine and ten, will examine marriages and child rearing practices to discern the impact of immigration upon the migrants' family lives. Part six, including chapters eleven and twelve, will examine the division of housework, classified by home region in China and family structure, to discover the pattern of gender relations within the informants' families. The last section is a conclusion.

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PART I

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE

SETTING THE SCENE

This chapter is in three parts. The first will introduce the reasons why I have focussed my attention on migrants from the People's Republic of China ("China" hereafter), and will discuss the changing social contexts in China and Australia which have caused the diaspora of the Chinese. The second portion will consider the history of Chinese immigration within the Australian context which will be helpful for understanding the current diaspora and contemporary social changes. This historical review considers first the Chinese migrants of the nineteenth century, and secondly, the diversity among Chinese immigrants during the twentieth century. The last section of the chapter will examine related studies pertaining to Chinese migrant families nationally and internationally.

Why Study Migrants from China?

Emigration of Chinese to Australia and the Social Context

The significant influx of Chinese from China into Australia is a very recent phenomenon which began in the 1980s. It has been observed as the second wave of migration from China to Australia since the nineteenth century. In 1983 there were only 38 self-paying students from China, but the number of students went up drastically to more than 15,000 in 1990 (Fung & Chen, 1996, p. 5). The total China-born population in Australia reached 19,542 in 1976, 37,469 in 1986 (Australian Bureau of Immigration and Population Research, 1994, p. 4), and 111,009 in 1996 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1999). The China-born population is growing rapidly in Australia. By 1997 it was the seventh-largest overseas-born group and the second-largest Asian ethnic group, in terms of country of origin, after the Vietnamese, estimated by Australian Bureau of Statistics. The 1996

census revealed that about 60% of the China-born population resided in New South Wales (NSW), accounting for 1% of the population of NSW. According to the Australian Statistic Bureau, the estimated resident population of Australia that was born in China was 135,345 in mid 1997, 149,101 in 1998 and 156,767 at 1999.¹ Furthermore, Chinese made up 5% of the foreign-born population of New South Wales (NSW) at the 1996 census and it was assumed that five out of every six Chinese resided in Sydney. Thus, the total population of the Chinese in Australia is still small, but is increasing nonetheless.

The sudden flow of the Chinese from China to Australia has been tied to the social contexts in both countries. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the country had little contact with the Western world due to the government's policy of self-reliance and an ideology which resisted influences from the West, along with some other complex historical reasons. Going abroad during that period had been rigidly controlled, and it was impossible for individuals to migrate to other countries. Knowledge and impressions of the West were limited by the resources available to Chinese. An Open-Door policy in the 1980s brought many Western visitors, while thousands of scholars were sent abroad for advanced study and expected to make a greater contribution to the country on their return. The Open-Door policy reestablished many overseas links between individuals and their overseas relatives that had been forcibly cut off during the Cultural Revolution. Restrictive policies at various levels were gradually relaxed, including the migration policy, which allowed ordinary people to go abroad for various reasons. Generally

¹ See Australian Demographic Statistics Quarterly (catalogue No. 3101.0), March Quarter, 2000, p. 22.

speaking, changing social policy played a positive role in facilitating the emigration of Chinese from China to Australia.

Social policy in Australia, on the other hand, was also favourable to the reception of Chinese in Australia. Since the 1980s, Australia has actively promoted an education export program. Various courses for overseas students are provided. China is seen as a huge market for this program.

Although higher tertiary education fees for overseas students were introduced in 1980 (Crissman, 1991; Fung & Chen, 1996), they did not constrain overseas students' flow to Australia. In reality, this program provided opportunities for Chinese to go abroad. According the program, fees charged for an undergraduate course were \$2,500 in 1985, and went up to \$4,000 by 1988 (Crissman, 1991, p. 28). By comparison, tuition fees for English language courses were lower. For example, the fees for a short term language course were about \$1,400 in 1987. Though tuition fees for various language courses were increasing every few years, they were still lower than the fees for a standard university course. In addition, there was no particular prerequisite for attending such an English language course. These two factors played an important role in attracting thousands of Chinese to Australia rather than the US, the UK or other English-speaking countries where language courses were limited. However, coming to Australia as language students seems to have been a practical choice for Chinese who wanted to realize their "dreams".

Imperatives of the Migrants from China

One of the obvious influences on the experiences of migrants from China is their home country's social context, which is distinct from Australia and many other countries in terms of its social system. The existing socio-political system determines various policies concerning welfare, education, employment and economic status, which are different from those found in the West. The

impact of these policies and political movements over the lives of the individual in China is most obvious (Bonavia, 1980; Brugger, 1971; Chen, 1996; Davis & Harrell, 1993; Evans, 1995; Freedman, 1979; Goode, 1963; Parish & Whyte, 1978; Wolf & Huang, 1980).

Another influence which must be considered is Chinese cultural tradition. "Confucian" culture is fundamentally different from the general orientation of the West in terms of its origin and practices. Confucianism, which is seen a major feature of Chinese culture, is influential among Chinese communities throughout the world. Yet Confucianism under the Communist system was publicly attacked because it was viewed as contradictory to the central ideology of the government. Hence, Confucian practices in China are likely to be more complex, subtle and diversified than those practised among Chinese communities outside China. This background implies that Chinese migrants from China are likely to demonstrate some traits which are distinctive from ethnic Chinese who come from other countries.

In addition, migrants from China to Australia have been highly educated, compared with the total population in China and to the Chinese migrants of the nineteenth century. A survey of 200 Chinese who emigrated from China to Australia during the early 1990s showed that about 60% of the sample held BA degrees and graduate diplomas, while 30% were university students and 10% possessed qualifications equivalent to Technical and Further Education (TAFE) in Australia (Fung & Chen, 1996, p. 4). An official figure indicated that about 18.9% of China-born population had post-secondary qualifications (including qualifications gained from China), which is well above the average for the total Australian population, which was 12.8% (Bureau of Immigration and Population Research, 1994, p. 18).

Migrants from China have certainly produced important changes within the well-established

Chinese communities in Australia. According to Shu (1995, p. 47), the average age of the Chinese community, for example, was 46.5 in 1986 but had been lowered to 38 in 1991. The vitality of the Chinese community in Australia is visibly reflected in education, language, business and socialisation. Considering all these elements, how will this group of Chinese migrants cope with their lives in Australia? This is a major concern for this study.

The History of Chinese Migrants in Australia

Australian written history started with the arrival of British imperialists in 1788 who brought the first transported convicts, and was then followed by pastoral settlement, and massive flows of settlers to the gold fields in the mid nineteenth century (Bottomley, 1979; Sherington, 1990). The discovery of gold attracted thousands of migrants into Australia from all over the world. The earliest gold diggers included Chinese, Germans, Jews, Italians, Greeks, Americans, Hungarians, Swiss and Pacific Islanders. Immigration has been an integral part of the country economically, culturally and politically, and it influences the nation's policymaking at large. The immigrant component of the total population is significant. According to the 1996 census, there were about four million migrants in Australia. These immigrants had come from every part of the world, and made up more than one fourth of the total Australian population (more than 17 million) at this time.

Chinese Migrants of the Nineteenth Century

"Gold rush" and Earlier Pioneers

The Chinese diaspora has a long history, and it may be traced back to the thirteenth century during which time many Chinese left home and settled in the Southeast Asian countries, including

Malaysia, Thailand, Laos and Vietnam; later in Europe and Latin America (Choi, 1975). According to the Australian Bureau of Immigration and Population Research (1994), the earliest Chinese came to Australia in 1827, having arrived as domestic servants and labourers. The first large immigration wave from China to Australia occurred in the mid nineteenth century.

Gold fields discovered in the states of Victoria and New South Wales in the early 1850s attracted thousands of Chinese who came with the goal of making a fortune. The Victorian census reported that about 2,000 Chinese arrived in 1854, and four years later the Chinese population reached 40,000. In New South Wales, the number of Chinese gold diggers had reached 15,000 by 1861. The discovery of gold fields in the state of Queensland in the 1870s brought in another large flow of Chinese, and it was reported that the Chinese population reached 20,000 in 1877 (Elsom, 1994, pp. 1-4). The Australian Bureau of Immigration and Population Research (1994, p. 1) estimated that the total number of Chinese entering Australia during the second half of nineteenth century was around 100,000.

Historically, some obvious factors in China played a push role influencing this migration. One factor related to the poor and unstable economic conditions in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in China, which resulted in social unrest and civil wars, including the White Lotus Revolt (1796-1797) and Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864). Most of the rebellions took place in the southern rural regions, but their influence reached wider. These civil wars and famines led thousands of peasants away from their homes as they sought better lives in other places.

The invasion of Western imperialists during the mid nineteenth century was another factor leading to the development of the Chinese diaspora. Due to the loss of the Opium War (1840-1842) the Chinese government was forced to sign a number of inequitable treaties with Western countries.

These treaties opened major seaports along the southeastern coast of China to European imperialists including Guangzhou (Canton), Xiamen, Fuzhou, Ningpo and Shanghai. Hong Kong was ceded to the British Empire in 1897. At the beginning of the twentieth century, China was under heavier Western colonial influence than at any other point in its history. Labourers were exported to Britain, France, Spain, America, New Zealand and Australia. The Western invasion influenced later policies adopted by the Chinese government for the purpose of excluding and resisting Western influences.

It is true, as indicated by Chinese anthropologist Fei (1989), and Australian scholars Choi (1975), Sherington (1990) and Gittins (1981), that the earliest Chinese migrants were primarily illiterate peasants, from the regions of Guangdong, Fujian, Hainan and Yunnan in China. Migrants from Guangdong made up the majority, and the Cantonese dialect was the major spoken language used in the region. This background is helpful for understanding why the Cantonese dialect is the predominant language spoken within Chinese communities outside China, a fact that often misleads those in the West to regard Cantonese as the major language spoken in China.

The Emergence of the "White Australia" Policy

A White Australia policy was introduced in 1901 to restrict non-European migrants. This policy significantly impacted on Chinese migration to Australia. The policy emerged through several stages over a number of decades. Restrictions upon non-European migrants started as early as the 1850s, and were first targeted towards the Chinese. The initial discriminatory policy introduced in Victoria mandated that all the Chinese who landed at ports were to be charged a 10-pound head tax per person, while entry was also to be limited. This policy did not work as well as expected, but set a model for other states to follow. Various Acts were introduced in the other Australian colonies from the 1850s until the 1890s. This legislation gradually formed a group of uniform measures,

which served to limit the entry of Chinese. Discrimination against Chinese was not only expressed in immigration policy, but also existed in many other forms. An official source reported that a "most notorious riot" against Chinese occurred in 1857 at Buckland River in Victoria. A series of mob attacks on the Chinese also occurred in New South Wales during this period. The discrimination towards the Chinese continued even after Chinese diggers left the gold fields to start businesses in towns during the late nineteenth century (Choi,1975; Elsom, 1994; Gittins, 1981).

Australia formally announced a homogenous population policy - the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901- when it became an independent Federation. This immigration policy applied to all non-European migrants. Under this policy, immigration officers could purposely require non-Europeans to take a test in any European language, including French and German, even if they had passed the English test. Other kinds of restrictions followed which were intended to limit the population of non-Europeans, such as the Nationality Act of 1903 and 1905 which prevented spouses and dependents of non-Europeans from entering. Only merchants were allowed to bring their wives to stay with them for six months. The Baby Bonus introduced in 1912 was offered only to Europeans. Even the Defence Act of 1909 excluded non-Europeans from making contributions to the country. During the early twentieth century, only certain categories of people were permitted to arrive as immigrants. These included male students, café workers and gardeners, but men in these classes were not allowed to bring their wives with them. It was expected that a long separation from their families would make Australia unattractive to non-Europeans.

Nonofficial discrimination against Chinese also existed during this period. Chinese were more or less excluded from various local clubs and unions, which diminished their access to employment opportunities. The unfavourable and hostile environment resulted in Chinese either

leaving Australia or living clustered in various neighbourhoods. For example, there was a large Chinese community in Darwin, which was separated from the rest of society socially and economically. It is clear that discrimination towards Chinese in the Australian context was institutionalised and systemic (Choi, 1975; Loh, 1988).

Why Were Chinese Migrants the First Immigrant Group to Be Discriminated Against in Australia?

Why were Chinese the first immigrant group to be discriminated against in Australia history?

Reviewing existing documents and literature, explanations have been offered which are varied and complex, and several of these will be discussed below.

The first explanation for discrimination against Chinese has been tied to a perceived threat of economic competition. The Chinese were hard working, thrifty, and earned higher incomes than others, particularly during the 1870s to 1880s when the gold fields were nearly exhausted, and the incomes of gold diggers decreased. In this situation, the Chinese diggers came to be regarded as major economic competitors by the other ethnic groups. Again, during the 1890s until the early twentieth century, Australia experienced economic decline. The potential accumulation of capital among the Chinese diggers indeed caused fear among British Australians. The already existing conflicts were elevated, and contributed to the formation of the White Australia policy (Choi, 1975; Elsom, 1994; Gittins, 1981; Sherington, 1990).

A second explanation emphasizes that racial and cultural differences were crucial in contributing to the nationwide discriminatory policy against Chinese. Physically distinct traits set apart the Chinese including skin colour, hair, physical size, and language as well as their style of dress, particularly the baggy pants so unfamiliar to Europeans at the time. The behaviour of these Chinese diggers was also deemed unacceptable, including their misuse of water because they were

not familiar with the Australian climate and the scarcity of water in the goldfields. The result was enmity with the other groups of diggers. In addition, Chinese males who came to Australia without spouses were often interpreted by Europeans as homosexual. Some of the Chinese diggers also were involved with gambling and smoking opium. Language created a communications obstacle between Chinese diggers and other ethnic groups. In short, from the very beginning, the attitudes of Australians and other Europeans to these Chinese were rather negative. These earliest Chinese were regarded as not only racially and culturally different, but also less civilised and inferior (Elsom, 1994; Gittins, 1981; Loh, 1988; Sherington, 1990).

A third explanation of the discrimination focuses upon the increasing population of Chinese migrants who were perceived as presenting a potential threat to European migrants. For example, in 1875 at the Palmer goldfield in Cape York Peninsula, Queensland, there were 6,000 Chinese and 1,900 European diggers. Only two years later, the Chinese population reached 17,000, and the European numbers had decreased to 1,400. This situation created worries among local government officials (Elsom, 1994, p. 4).

This last explanation may be tied to the sojourner nature of the Chinese gold diggers. From the very beginning, these Chinese had no intention of settling down. This is because the head of the village usually recruited them. Migration for these labourers was seen as a collective rather than individual decision, and they perceived themselves as representing their family or village fellows. In addition, the cost of the trip to Australia was collected from their relatives or village fellows. Remittances from their earnings were anticipated, and they were also expected to come back for family reunions. Consequently, there were good reasons for these Chinese to work hard and frugally. European migrants had little understanding of this situation.

There were some other worries. For example, Chinese were suspected of causing a smallpox outbreak in Sydney in the 1870s, and also in 1880; during this period, 11 Chinese were also identified with leprosy (Elsom, 1994, p. 6).

However, reviewing the history, discrimination against the Chinese seems to have resulted from a more complex context than offered by any of these explanations. The "gold rush" brought Chinese and Europeans face to face in Australia. Differences between these groups of people were found in their social systems, culture and levels of economic development. Racial biases and a system of perceived racial hierarchy obviously existed, and these were associated with an anthropological discourse of organic hierarchy during the nineteenth century, which claimed for instance that the white man's brain was more developed than those of the yellow and black "races". The racial hierarchy was also demonstrated in the conquest by North Atlantic powers of indigenous peoples across the world. Crucially, the racial hierarchy and its associated biases emanated from the Western central ideology of "progress" (Connell, 1997).

Looking at Chinese immigration history within the US, Canada and New Zealand, similar discriminatory policies against Chinese were also enacted in these countries. In Canada, for example, there was a mass flow of Chinese which began arriving in the mid nineteenth century, attracted by gold mining and employment as labourers in the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railroad. An Immigration Act against Chinese was introduced in Canada in 1885, and until 1923 only four classes of Chinese were allowed to enter Canada - students, merchants, Canadian-born Chinese and diplomats. This policy was in effect until 1947 (Zhang, 1995). The US also passed the Chinese Exclusion Law in 1882, which was followed by several other discriminatory policies against the Chinese (B. Wong, 1978). Clearly, the discriminatory policies against Chinese in

Australia history are just one of many examples of hegemonic racist collective actions against particular immigrant groups in Western societies.

The Impacts of the White Australia Policy on Chinese Migrant Family Life

The Chinese population dropped gradually after 1881 (Choi, 1975), as many of the migrants returned to China. There were two reasons for this. By this time, the old gold fields were exhausted, while discriminatory policies also played a role. The full-blooded Chinese population dropped from 30,000 in 1901 to less than 10,000 in 1947, while there were less than 3,000 mixed-blood Chinese in Australia (Mak & Chan 1995, p. 77).

Before 1901, about half of the earlier Chinese migrants were miners. The rest engaged in occupations such as cabinetmaker, gardener, general labourer, domestic servant, merchant, greengrocer, storekeeper and the like. The occupations of Chinese started to change in the early part of the twentieth century. A 1911 census illustrated that about 35% of Chinese migrants were engaged in market gardening, 40% in agriculture, 4% in pastoral industry, 7% in mining and the rest in various commercial occupations (Choi, 1975, pp. 30-31). Considerable changes in occupations occurred between the 1910s and 1940s. During this time more Chinese entered professional jobs such as administration and clerical work, and communications and transportation, though official figures are not available (Choi, 1975). Though Chinese origin residents made obvious contributions to Australia in agriculture and business as well as the nation's war efforts, they were ignored to a great extent.

Family life was almost impossible for Chinese during this period. Chinese women traditionally were not encouraged to travel. Immigration policy also prevented them from coming, unless they were wealthy. So the earliest migrants were mainly single males. In the 1850s, a

Victorian census recorded only three women among 25,421 Chinese men, and 20 years later, the census counted just 31 women in Victoria. In 1901, Chinese women accounted for only 1.6% of the Chinese population (Loh, 1986, pp.1-2). Crissman and associates (1985, p. 182) also provide evidence that there were less than 500 females among 30,000 Chinese men in 1901.

Marriage, consequently, for the remaining Chinese was problematic due to the imbalanced sex ratio. Most intermarriages were between Chinese men and Australian wives (Inglis, 1972). The 1911 census showed that among the 801 married Chinese men, only 181 had wives who had been born in China, while the majority were married to women who had been either born in Australia or Europe. Intermarriages were discouraged. Many Australian brides were blamed for disgracing their families and experienced discrimination in their communities. The Australian-born Chinese population grew, but at a very slow pace. Many of these families were large, including 7 to 11 children as Giese's (1995) study revealed. Marriages involving Chinese men and White women began to decrease as the population of Australian-born Chinese grew. It was no longer necessary for Chinese men to marry Australian women. Chinese migrants began to settle down and seemed to assimilate well (Choi, 1975; Inglis, 1972).

Chinese Migrants of the Twentieth Century: Variety and Diversity

Australia changed its attitudes to non-European migration after the Second World War. Taking account of the country's pace of economic development, the nation's leaders decided it would be necessary to facilitate the growth of the population. Furthermore, as a result of the collapse of the colonial system in Asia during the 1940s and 1950s and the shifting world geopolitical and social context, Australian migration policy was pressured to change. First, the permanent settlement of migrants was encouraged, and immigrants were permitted to bring their spouses and children. Many

migrants from eastern and southern Europe arrived through kinship chain networks. There were a series of other changes in immigration policies. For example, the dictation test was abolished in 1958, and naturalisation after five years of residence was introduced in 1966 to replace the previous 15-year rule of 1956. The White Australia policy was completely abolished by the early 1970s (Choi, 1975; Crissman, Beattie & Selby, 1985; Sherington, 1990).

These dramatic changes in immigration policy resulted in a sizable increase of Asian migrants coming to Australia. The number of Asian-born increased from 79,056 in 1961, or 0.8% of the Australian population, to more than 1.3 million in 1996, 6.2% of the total (Mackie, 1997, pp. 10-14). A dramatic change in the composition of migrants also occurred. Among Australia's Asian population, persons of Chinese origin account for the largest component. As noted in the beginning of this chapter, the Chinese population increased from just over 6,000 in the 1940s to about 100,000 in the 1996 census.

The increasing population of Chinese in Australia consisted of several major flows due to socio-political changes, including those arriving from Papua New Guinea in the mid 1970s (Inglis, 1991), the Indo-Chinese refugees of the 1980s, and migrants from Taiwan and Hong Kong who began arriving in sizable numbers during the 1980s. There was also a small population of China-born Russians who emigrated from China to Australia from the 1950s until the 1970s as a result of the 1956 United Nations Refugee Policy. During the civil war of 1918-20, some Russians escaped to China for political reasons, and there were also Russians who came to China due to Stalin's political purges in the 1940s. About 12,300 China-born Russians came to Australia before 1979 (Crissman et al., 1985; Da, 1994). A large flow of migrants from China took place in the 1980s. These persons came as students, and the majority of them possessed university degrees (Fung &

Chen, 1996). The birthplaces of the Chinese migrants in Australia are found on every continent of the world, including southern, eastern and northern Europe, North America, Latin America, South and East Africa and the Pacific Islands, apart from Asia.

What is known about Chinese in Australia is that they are a remarkably diverse collection of people, having come to Australia from all over the world, quite literally (Crissman, 1991, p. 25).

The Chinese population in Australia demonstrates diversity and variety, while constituting a colourful motif. The diversity of Chinese by home country origin poses challenges to scholars who are interested in Chinese migrants. How should one define a person as Chinese? Should it be by home origin or by country origin or identity, or by physical appearance and cultural values?

Related Studies of Chinese Migrant Families

The existing literature pertaining to Chinese migrant families is limited in numbers, scale and depth. Colonial discrimination against Chinese in historical research is the cause of this. Not surprisingly, the bulk of migration studies conducted in the West at first focussed upon European migrants. However, interest in studying Chinese migrants began to grow after the 1960s and corresponded with the changing immigration policy in the major immigrant receiving countries. Chinese migrants were seen as one of the fastest growing ethnic groups. In particular, their social and cultural traits have drawn the attention of scholars from various disciplines.

The section below will review some of the research which is most relevant and pertinent to this study of Chinese families. The major studies reviewed here are about Australia, but some other studies conducted in North America and other countries will also be included in the discussion. This

section is in three parts. The first part will examine studies conducted in the 1960s and 1970s; the second part focuses on studies within the context of multiculturalism; the third part discusses some studies directly related to migrants from China.

Segmentary Approach

Many studies treat Chinese migrants as one homogeneous group, sharing the same values and beliefs, with little regard to where they came from and where they came of age. The segmentary approach proposed by Crissman in 1967 had important implications for later studies of Chinese migrants because it stressed the differences of home country origins among Chinese migrants. The differences among Chinese were directly associated with home country context (Crissman et al., 1985). In 1991, Crissman pointed out that the cultural background encountered in their countries of birth or rearing was more influential than their ancestral origins in China. For example, Chinese from Hong Kong educated in English are not particularly "Chinese" in any traditional sense, but they demonstrate a certain level of complexity in their beliefs. Chinese families from Hong Kong also presented utilitarian traits in their family practices (S. K. Lau, 1981). The Chinese from Singapore and Malaysia, as Crissman (1991) described, were not only Westernised, but also possessed some of the characteristics of wealthy and educated people. Chinese from Vietnam were acculturated and displayed some French influences. The New Guinea Chinese had their own obvious culture, which displayed certain elements of Melanesian ancestry and Melanesian language; Chinese from Cambodia and Laos represented some other characteristics.

The diversity of Chinese in terms of country origins and other differences has also been noticed by other scholars. For example, Huck (1967, p. 8) stated:

Nor can retention of Chinese cultural behaviour serve as a reliable guide. Several

million overseas Chinese can neither speak nor understand Chinese, and some groups among them are so un-Chinese as to prefer matrilocal marriage, to eat with a spoon and fork rather than chopsticks, and to worship indigenous spirits or the Christian God in preference to Chinese deities.

Choi (1975) also provided more evidence to support a segmentary approach to studying the Chinese, which was based on his study of three Chinese communities in Melbourne. He found that:

...the relationship between them, especially the question of whether they identify with each other as parts of a common community, is of considerable importance. In terms of marriage pattern, intermarriage tendency, and occupational mobility, these three groups were shown to be distinctly different (p. 111);

As Choi concluded, "The possession of one common ethnic background is sometimes not strong enough as a binding force to produce a corporate organized community" (p. 111).

In sum, the segmentary approach has merit for this study of Chinese migrant families. Just sharing the same ancestry seems to be inadequate for interpreting the complex diversity of the Chinese.

Studies of the Chinese under Assimilation Policy

Studies of Chinese migrants before the 1970s placed most emphasis on how these Chinese assimilated into the host society. Intermarriage was seen as the crucial factor accelerating the process of Chinese acculturation into mainstream society. Given the fact that Chinese culture has long emphasised family lineage, intermarriage would no doubt be viewed as a step away from this tradition. Here I will discuss some earlier works by Huck (1967), Choi (1972; 1975) and Inglis (1972).

Huck wrote one of the earliest studies of the Chinese in Australia. In his conclusion, he stressed the possibility of the Chinese being assimilated into mainstream society just like everyone else. He observed that the third generation regarded themselves as Australians and showed no

concern with China. However, he also found traditional views of marriage among the Chinese, and most of the Chinese population opposed intermarriages. Therefore, the rate of intermarriage was relatively low before the 1960s. There were more Chinese men going home to marry, and then bringing their wives back to Australia. The necessity of assimilation was implicitly indicated in his conclusion.

Things changed over time. Choi's (1972) study indicated that Chinese assimilation was most apparent through intermarriage. Later in 1975, he found a high ratio of intermarriage among the Chinese, especially among the half-blooded Chinese compared to the full-blooded Chinese. His findings also pointed out that migration often caused a delay of age at marriage among the Chinese. Overall, male Chinese migrants were found to encounter difficulties in finding marriage partners. This study also offered a comprehensive picture of Chinese migrants in Australian history and their settlement patterns.

Inglis' s (1972) study further supported the view that Chinese could be assimilated, and become widely accepted throughout Anglo-Australian society. Regarding Chinese family life, she found that, "Worship outside the house in a clan or community temple is less important than the family group which is of prime importance in Chinese society" (p. 273). She further indicated that Chinese cultural traits that were related to domestic activities were likely to be retained. These traits included food habits, values and attitudes. Other cultural traits such as style of dress or leisure activities were more likely to shift. Regarding marriage, Chinese women, similar to many other ethnic groups, were likely to marry non-Chinese. Finally, she argued that "complete assimilation is unnecessary for social harmony" (p. 279), directly challenging assimilation theory and relevant policy.

In the US, B. Wong's (1978) comparative study of the assimilation of the Chinese in New York city and Lima, Peru found that Chinese migrants in Lima showed a higher rate of assimilation than their counterparts in New York city. As measured by the rate of intermarriage, he confirmed that the Chinese were assimilable. Wong believed that the rate of assimilation was affected by host country immigration policies and other negative or positive factors emanating from the larger society. To some extent his findings refuted arguments that Chinese migrants were unwilling to assimilate into the mainstream society.

Studies of the Chinese under Multiculturalism

Studies of Chinese families focussing on cultural traits in the process of migration and settlement have been increasing. A relatively recent work related to Chinese families is Mak and Chan's (1995) study. This work provided a comprehensive picture of Chinese families regarding traditional and modern practices in the Australian context, and addressed many issues surrounding family life. The study concluded that the Chinese, though representing a diverse array of countries of origin and social economic backgrounds, still retained many of their original cultural beliefs. Yet these scholars also pointed out, "Respect for the elderly, filial piety, and patriarchal authority and emphasis on harmony within the family are being eroded in the face of Australian values of individualism, egalitarianism, independence and assertiveness" (p. 94). This work pointed out the impacts of migration upon family life, including their role in creating marriage crises, parent/child conflicts and adaptation issues for the elderly. However, a weak point of this study is a lack of solid data to support the author's views. In some sections, Chinese families are still described using stereotyped images. The data in this study were derived from interviews with 14 families of primarily Hong Kong origins; many families from Hong Kong represent the characteristics of

"astronaut families" ² with a high incidence of marital crisis and interfamilial conflict. However, the authors of this study usefully pinpointed some cross-cultural barriers identified by Chinese migrants, including a lack of access to various social services such as counselling and social welfare assistance, which might be productive topics for future study.

There is little research on the domestic roles of Chinese migrant women. Inglis's (1991) research on Chinese women in Papua New Guinea did make some contributions in this area. Inglis found that Chinese women played an active role in domestic economic activities, which empowered them to take control over some of the family's economic resources. Inglis concluded that the women's level of power is an unintended consequence of economic changes. By contrast, women who worked outside the family had less power in managing family resources and making decisions. She found that kinship patterns and women's economic roles within domestic businesses and trade diverged from traditional patriarchal patterns towards a more bilateral pattern. Inglis' study indicated that Chinese migrant family practices were more flexible in responding to changes in a new context, and traditional practices of a hierarchical and patriarchal nature were less common within these migrant families. Women's participation in trade was significant. "Eroded" patriarchal and hierarchical family practices have also been found within other migrant families including Greek-Australian families (Bottomley, 1979) and Latin American families in Australia (L. Amezquita, R. Amezquita & Vittirino, 1995).

The process of migration directly impacts on gender roles within families. A Canadian study

² The term "astronaut" family has appeared in the literature since the early 1990s. The "astronaut" family means a migrant family in which one spouse leaves the host country after settlement, and returns to the home country to work or continue with business. He or she periodically pays a visit to the family in the country of immigration.

by Man (1995b) of middle class Chinese women from Hong Kong provides evidence derived through extensive interviews with a group of 30 women from Hong Kong. The author found that middle-class Chinese women, particularly those living in the pattern of an "astronaut" family structure faced greater difficulties in struggling between paid jobs and childcare given the absence of their husbands as well as a kinship network. Their loneliness in the new environment, and their lopsided performance of housework within families, were particularly striking.

The impacts of migration upon family life and family functions have been observed as pervasive. The changing family functions and parental behaviours of the Chinese have been indicated by several studies. For example, Rosenthal and Feldman's (1989; 1990) studies of Chinese adolescents in Australia and the US in relation to family functions found acculturation of the first-generation Chinese towards the more autonomy-promoting, individualistic and self-oriented norms in the two Western societies. The subjects of this sample were migrants residing in Australia, the US and Hong Kong.

Portes (1995) examined the assimilation of the second generation of migrant children in the US and found a segmented pattern of assimilation. It used to be taken for granted that the second generation of migrant children would become acculturated to the host society more quickly than the first generation. Yet Portes found that the ethnic community played an important role in determining the pace of acculturation. A tightly knit community environment and higher social status families were often found to more effectively shield second generation children from communication with those outside the ethnic community. In such a case, children felt less discrimination from outside the community, but consequently their assimilation was slow.

K. L. Dion and K. K. Dion's (1996) study of Chinese adaptation to the foreign culture in

Canada showed that the social context in both the origin and host country was a significant factor. They also supported the view Yao (1985) raised in her U.S. study, which stated that some characteristics of Chinese families could be sources of conflict and stresses within migrant families adapting to a new social context.

There have also been an increasing number of studies stressing the family's role in relation to school performance of children among ethnic families (Chao, 1996; Fan, 1996; Hagan, MacMillan & Wheaton, 1996; Marjoribanks, 1980; Yao, 1985). It is believed that differences of family background and family influences play a critical role in producing differences in achievement at school. Fan's (1996) study of family relationships, stress levels and academic achievement among Chinese immigrants in Australia concluded that the stress level was negatively related to Chinese identity; while parent/child conflicts were not associated with the length of residence in the host country or the migration process, but were related to whether a child's ethnic identification was the same as their parent's. This study was based on a sample of 99 Chinese-speaking girls who came from at least 11 countries of origin, including Hong Kong, mainland China, Vietnam, Taiwan, Singapore, Thailand and other Asian countries. The authors of this study also found that immigrant girls were more likely to experience stresses and pressure compared to the refugee girls in the sample. This finding was likely related to their social status in the home country. A girl who came as a refugee is perhaps more likely to enjoy her life in the host country as a result of negative experiences encountered in the home country. Fan suggests the need for further study of the experiences of each Chinese ethnic group.

In the US, there have been some comparative studies of parental roles in relation to children's school performance between Chinese- and Anglo-Americans. These studies unanimously

identified the differences between the two groups of parents. Chinese parents were found to provide more direct assistance with their children's schoolwork. Yao's (1985) study of the family characteristics of Asian-American and Anglo-American high achievers questioned whether Asian children could have realized such achievements without their parents' assistance. R. K. Chao (1996) conducted an interesting comparative study of the roles that Chinese- and European-American mothers' beliefs about parenting played in their children's success. It pointed to a number of traits of Chinese parenting: a high value placed on hard work; an emphasis upon school performance and results; the child's education viewed as a central facet in family life; a more direct approach in assisting children with their studying and a willingness to invest time and money in education. However, the results of this study cannot be generalized to a larger group because of the high educational level and economic status of the mothers in these two sample groups. For instance, the years of education Chinese-American mothers received was 16.58 years on the average, and the European-American mothers possessed 17.76 years. The Chinese mothers in the sample all migrated from Taiwan.

Generally speaking, the process of acculturation among migrants is very complex. Four factors are important: the social context in the host country, the host country's policies and the attitudes of natives towards migrants, the social capital that migrants bring with them, and the ethnic community environment.

Recent studies of Migrants from China

Studies focussing on migrants from China have been growing since the 1990s in Australia, the US and Canada, but are still limited. There is still little research pertaining to marriages, sexuality and domestic roles among this group of Chinese. In Australia, three recent studies are significant.

Penny and Khoo's (1996) study of intermarriage among the Chinese from China in recent decades pointed out the significance of the social context migrants experienced in the home country for examining their family practices in the host society. The authors interviewed seven Chinese migrants, five from China and two from Singapore. The findings pointed to several distinctive characteristics of the Chinese partners from China. Their values of family and domestic roles were more modern and egalitarian compared to those of the other migrants. This finding showed the influence of the social context encountered in China. These scholars also observed that these Chinese parents tended to "spoil" their young children. Several cultural traits of the Chinese migrants studied were also identified. For instance, the Chinese partners "tended to bottle up their feelings, and refused to discuss issues of differences" (p. 190). Close family ties were expressed in remittances to support family members in the home country. Though this study did not solely focus on the Chinese from China, the data provided are informative. However, this study said very little about the impact of migration upon migrant family life. Marrying an Australian-born partner may have provided more benefits which facilitated settling down in a new country.

Fung and Chen's (1996) study of the changing perceptions of Chinese towards the host and home countries is more relevant to this study. The data for their study came from surveys of several hundred Chinese students who arrived in Australia in the early 1990s. The study identified the social contexts in both countries which contributed to the emigration of Chinese from China to Australia. The study outlined the general social characteristics of migrants from China, including their level of education and primarily urban backgrounds. Fung and Chen's work concluded that the new migrants from China seemed to follow the footsteps of the older generation of migrants who arrived in the nineteenth century; yet, major differences were apparent in the educational

qualifications and urban background of the two different generations of migrants. The authors call the modern emigration of the Chinese from China to Australia the "Second Gold Rush"(p. 15). They also argue that the full integration of these Chinese into the Australia mainstream society is not an immediate possibility. The temporary four-year visa due to the impact of the 1989 Tiananmen tragedy led to many of the migrants experiencing long periods of separation from their spouses and children. This situation combined with uncertainty about the future, unrecognised qualifications, a lack of local work experience and language inefficiency placed many of the migrants into an extremely difficult situation. Many of them were employed in manufacturing and the service sector, taking lower level or unskilled jobs compared to jobs they would have had in China. The problems that Chinese migrants encountered have also been identified in some Canadian studies (X. F. Liu, 1997; Tian, 1999; Zhang, 1995).

Fung and Chen's study told readers that the Chinese diaspora was driven by a "beautiful dream". However, their experiences in the host country, and the obstacles and barriers they confronted not only broke their dreams, but led to a shift in their perceptions of China and Australia, that is, they held more positive attitudes about China and expressed disenchantment about their life in Australia. The shift of their perceptions lies not only in the hardships they experienced, but also in the rapid economic development they heard about in China. Many Chinese have stated that they would return to China if given the opportunity. Thus, the future prospects of China are seen as more attractive to overseas Chinese than was the case several decades ago. Though this study did not offer much information about the migrants' family lives in Australia, it raised some issues related to family life, including migrants' perceptions of Australian sexual practices, and changing attitudes toward sexuality and marriage. This study offered a fuller picture of the social context in the two

countries, and the background of the particular group of Chinese studied has implications for this study.

Hon and Coughlan's (1997) study, based on 1991 census data, offered a social and demographic profile of the China-born population in Australia in comparison with groups of Chinese from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia and Macau. The study illustrated that Chinese migrating from six places to Australia "are not homogeneous between or within birthplace groups" (p. 165). This study pointed out that the China-born population was the least well-educated group compared with the other five groups. This finding may have reflected the effect of the family reunion program, through which many elderly family members and children came to join their families in Australia. A more detailed assessment of this study will be incorporated into Chapter Six, where I examine the social profile of my sample.

In the US, some recent studies have probed Chinese family life. Florsheim (1997) examined the psychological adjustment of Chinese adolescent immigrants, based on a sample of 113 Chinese who emigrated from China to the US. This study found that immigrants who spoke Chinese at home reported less psychological adjustment than those who used English. Hwang and Saenz's (1997) study of Chinese women's fertility found that women from China showed a tendency to have a relatively higher fertility in the post-migration stage of settlement. In this case, the one child policy can be seen as having had a major impact on the fertility rate of women in China. Fong's (1997) study of migrants from the People's Republic of China also noted that some of the social terms used in the West were conceptually ambiguous to migrants from China, and served to block their access to relevant social services.

In Canada, Tian's (1999) study of refugees from mainland China highlighted the functions

of family and kinship relations in the process of migration. Tian pointed out that the family patterns of Chinese migrants are very much shaped by the immigration and social policy contexts in both their home and host countries. Tian also pointed out that kinship networks were not always used by migrants from China. Tian believed that family dislocation contributed to the overall stresses experienced by this group of Chinese migrants in their post-migration settlement in Toronto.

To sum up, contemporary Chinese migrants present greater diversity and complexity in their social contexts, cultural practices, social capital and economic status compared to the pioneers of the nineteenth century. It is clear that Chinese migrants, as Hon and Coughlan (1997) and Fan (1996) concluded, should not be treated as one homogeneous group. Morrissey (1991) in particular indicated that there was a need for systematic and in depth study of the Chinese family, and particularly of new arrivals. This is the task undertaken in my study.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

Introduction

What frameworks are appropriate for the researcher to utilize to conduct this study of migrant families within the Australian context?

There are many social theories that apply to the study of the family; there are also many intellectual works theorising gender roles within family and society. Taking a broad view of the literature, it is easy to notice that since the 1970s and 1980s there is a powerful influence of feminist approaches in shaping current debates around issues of the family, division of labour and gender relations both at micro and macro levels among Western society. These approaches have challenged conventional social theories about families and gender relations dominated by male perspectives (Connell, 1987; Eichler, 1980; Hertz, 1986; Hochschild, 1989; Hood, 1983).

There is also a growing interest in the study of families and women that puts emphasis on the social and cultural diversity of the family coming from societies other than the West (Bottomley, 1983a; Inglis, 1991; Mandell, 1995; Martin, 1991). Recent scholarship has argued that previous studies of the family tended to be ethnocentric and androcentric in their approaches, and has also challenged previous theoretical work by posing questions that stem from migration.

Given the complex nature of the family itself, the dynamic movement of the family as well as the distinctive cultures and social contexts of China and Australia, a study of migrant families must consider the impact that migration may produce on the family. A study of migrant families must also take account of cultural differences between the home origin of migrants and the host

country these migrants move into. A study of migrant families must also deal with gender relations and the domestic division of labour.

For this particular study, I will not attempt to go through all the theories concerning families, but will rather take a more practical and direct way to explore the frameworks that could be used for this study. This chapter will outline some general perspectives of immigration, ethno-culture and gender relations within the family which are particularly relevant to the study of migrant families. Some relevant social theories regarding the family will also be incorporated throughout the chapter.

Families from an Immigration Perspective

Migration Models in Relation to Families

According to Lee (1996), "Migration is defined broadly as a permanent or semipermanent change of residence. No restriction is placed upon the distance of the move or upon the voluntary or involuntary nature of the act, and no distinction is made between external and internal migration."

Lee further states, "No matter how short or how long, how easy and how difficult, every act of migration involves an origin, a destination, and an intervening set of obstacles" (p. 49).

Migration has been of concern to many disciplines. Geographers are concerned with spatial change as it affects landscape, use of land, social and economic development. Economists analyse it because it relates to labour markets and economic development. As for demographers, they look at migration because it relates to fertility, mortality, distribution and growth of population.

Anthropologists show interest in ethnic and race traits. Educators think it important as it relates to the quality of education. Medical scientists may worry about migration, because migrants might

bring in certain diseases, including those locally extinct. Historians are interested in migration's relation to a historical period, linking political and social events (Sinha & Atallah, 1987). Among these disciplines, sociology has the most direct association with this study as it focuses on human beings and the causes and effects of migration produced on human lives in both sending and receiving countries.

From a sociological perspective, a study of immigrant families must take account of migration models. This involves questions such as why some people migrated into another country and some others did not; and how a migration decision was made within a family. Migration models are varied in their focus, but they all have implications for family practice among migrants. Family function and gender roles as well as gender relations may be significantly impacted during the process of migration.

There are various migration models. E. G. Ravenstein, an early migration theorist, proposed "The Law of Migration",³ in which he pointed out that motives for migration predominantly stem from urban-rural differences and economic interest (Castles, 1998; Lee, 1996). The function of the family in assisting the individual's migration was neglected in this Law. A "kinship chain" migration model that is widely used emphasizes the function of the family in keeping a succession of relatives migrating (Zubrzycki, 1966). The kinship chain migration model seems to be suited to apply to families with a large size and extended structure in the rural areas, and it also indicates a

³ E. G. Ravenstein's (1885) *The Laws of Migration*, summarized seven characteristics of human migration movement, which includes: migration and distance, migration by stages, stream and counter-stream, urban-rural differences in propensity to migration, predominance of females among short distance migrants; technology and migration and dominance of economic motive (Lee, 1996, pp. 47-48).

local cultural tradition. But the kinship migration model appears too narrow to interpret current worldwide migration movements particularly from urban areas. A widely used “push and pull” model stresses the macro changes in both sending and receiving countries as the major causes for migration. This model is useful for interpreting how a large migration movement take place in a specific context, but it has less usefulness for explaining how a migration decision was made at a personal level or within the family.

Robert E. Park’s “Race Cycle” model, another early theory developed in the US, defines the process of assimilation as a transition including stages of contact, competition, conflict, accommodation and assimilation. Choi (1975) argues that this Race Cycle model failed to distinguish human differences and the uneven pace of acculturation. Choi’s study of Chinese immigrants in Australia provided evidence that the assimilation of Chinese who had intermarriages did not follow Park’s Race Cycle. This Cycle, as Choi argued, did not take account of the size of the migrant group. In his sample of Chinese, the small size of the ethnic group may lead to a period of acculturation shorter than that of a larger group of Chinese who were able to form a sizeable influential community. Nevertheless, traditional migration models all presume that migration movements are from rural to urban, or from small town to metropolis, and that economic interest was the major motive. Migrants were also predominantly seen as less educated males.

A recent model provided by Castles (1998) stresses a combination of “macro- and micro-structures”. The macro-factor refers to large-scale institutional factors like world market, inter-state relationships, and laws. The micro-factor means individuals’ circumstances including overseas connections, kinship ties, educational qualifications, family background, personality, adaptation ability and marital status as well as personal access to information etc. This approach offers a fuller

explanation of current migration complexity. Migration has witnessed dramatic changes in the past several decades. The composition of migrants entering Australia has shifted from mainly European to non-European, and there has been a rise in highly educated people with urban backgrounds; female numbers are also increasing (Boyd, 1996; Castles, 1998). The massive changes indicate that contemporary migration can no longer be interpreted on the basis of previous models.

Motivations for migration are nowadays seen as more complex than they used to be (Castles, 1998). The economic factor is only one among others. Soriano's (1995, p. 96) study on Filipino families in Australia indicates that "unemployment and underemployment, graft and corruption, high population density, pollution and a perceived unpromising future for children - seem to be stronger motivating factors than the "pull" factors of economic advancement and opportunity to join relatives". The rural-urban pattern has declined. Kinship networks for migration are still important, but friendship and community networks are also seen relevant (Boyd, 1996; Castles, 1998).

However, different migration models imply different modes a family goes through to enter another country. A family that came as refugees will exhibit family practice different from a family that comes as an immigrant family or business immigrant family in the way they organize their lives in the host country. A study of the migrant family must take into account the mode in which a family makes its entry to the host country. Furthermore, what does the process of migration do for one's family life? In the process of migration, how does a family maintain its function to meet individuals' needs?

Families in the Process of Migration

The family plays an important role in the process of migration and settlement. Kin and ethnic networks frequently open up new avenues for migration, by providing information and financial

assistance to potential migrants (Tian, 1999). The family has an influence in decision-making at an initial stage of migration to provide financial support for the individual. The family also provides emotional and material support to its members in the process of settlement. It may indeed be conducive to facilitating adaptation and settlement through united efforts of the family members. But the family is also a source of conflicts and pressures on its members. The family thus has positive and negative consequences for its members.

Migration has a direct effect on family life in many ways. Zubrzycki (1966) pointed out that two different modes of migration, voluntary or involuntary, have important consequences on the later settlement. For a married person who came as a voluntary migrant, migration may be a family decision, or a family strategy to overcome economic constraint at a certain life cycle stage (Boyd, 1996). Family separation, in this case, may not be as much of a disaster as it is for a refugee who was forcibly obliged to leave the homeland, and separated from his/her family members. In such a situation, separation from spouse, rupture of culture and dissociation from one's own community could result in a permanent trauma that affected a person's whole life.

Immigration policy is also seen as a direct factor affecting family life. As I noted in Chapter One, discriminatory immigration policy had great impact on the family lives of early Chinese migrants in Australia. Even now immigration policy determines how migrants come and when they come, whether they are permanent or temporary, and if they are allowed to bring spouses and relatives.

Zubrzycki (1966) pointed out that family structure also underwent some changes due to migration. The factors vary, including improved living conditions, influence of individualism in the host country, relative freedom, and changing values and attitudes to family life. Changing attitudes

and behaviours are also required for a family to adapt to the new environment. Isolation and lack of knowledge and access to social services would increase the insecurity of migrant families, particularly aggravating the tension and conflicts between parents and their children.

Bottomley (1979, pp. 88-89) basing her study on Greek migrants in Australia found that the migrant family played more comprehensive roles, including economic and religious support, training and educating the young compared with mainstream Australian families. Boyd (1996, pp. 300-301) indicated that the function of the migrant family is fourfold in the process of migration. First, families serve as "sustenance units". "As sustenance units, they have their own structural characteristics which condition the propensity to migrate and the pattern of migration". Second, migrant families are "domestic units" which "are socializing agents and are the foundation for family and household based networks". Third, "families represent a social group geographically dispersed. They create kinship networks which exist across space and are the conduits for information and assistance which in turn influence migration decisions". Lastly, "families are migratory units. Families may migrate together or individuals can be sent out with the clear expectation that other members will be sent for". These functions that immigrant families exhibit are not what we normally observe among non-migrant families. The changing function of the family may generate some other changes among migrant families which we need to investigate.

Zubrzycki (1966) indicates, "These consequences arise basically from the fact that the immigration of the family means also the immigration of traditional patterns of family relationships which may differ markedly from those of the country of settlement" (p. 61). Zubrzycki further indicates,

The difficulties and tensions of the process of adjustment are also aggravated because

the immigrant must not only acquire new patterns of behaviour, but must also rearrange his [sic] whole hierarchy of needs and activities, and re-define his [sic] conception of himself [sic] and his [sic] social status (p. 66).

Families in the process of social and cultural transformation in a new context can expect further change in pattern and structure as well as change in values. The family, already a complex and sensitive domain, becomes more complicated as the consequence of human moving.

The changing social context leads to ruptures of culture, which add destructive elements to the individual's life. The obstacles a family confronts in a new context can be huge, which would not only affect the individual, but also the function of a family as a whole. Therefore, family conflicts, marriage crisis, depression and frustration are likely, and are commonly found among new migrant families. Studies on Chinese, Vietnamese and Latin American families in Australia provide more evidence on these issues. For example, the broken family structure, "culture shock" and disturbed behaviours of children and adolescents have been seen as the most serious concern among Vietnamese migrants (Nguyen & Ho, 1995). The phenomenon of "astronaut" families and dynamics of division of housework observed among Chinese migrants (Mak & Chan, 1995) as well as challenges to parental authority and men's roles in families that came from Latin America (L. Amezquita et al., 1995) have also been indicated as an effect of migration and changing social context. The impacts of migration on family life vary according to each family's background and each individual's flexibility.

Conflicts are common among families in all societies. As Sprey (1979, p. 133) puts it, "The processes of marriage and the family are viewed here as systemic ones, within which members and member categories are facing the perpetual problem of coming to terms with each other's conflicting interests." For migrant families, the degree of conflict may be elevated by the disparity of cultures between the old and the new.

Marriages among migrants are also threatened and complex. For a migrant, marriage for love is often ambiguous and doubtful. When a migrant comes on a temporary visa, often the first priority is to obtain a permanent residence. Marital life is also threatened by changing attitudes towards sexuality, given the different views of sex and different social norms about sexual conduct.

Children may face two sets of norms, one at home, and the other outside home. This can make it difficult for them to make an adjustment, and to resist delinquency. For children to grow up in such a contradictory environment may influence their adult life (Zubrzycki, 1966).

In sum, migrant families must be seen in dynamic terms, rather than in a still state. As Bottomley (1992, p. 4) criticizes, "Studies of relatively static populations, as many anthropological works have been, are brought into question by migration." Most social theories of the family therefore have limited application to migrant families.

A question now is how a migrant family or a migrant copes with the social and cultural transformation. Bottomley (1992, p. 4) further argues, "But frameworks used to study migration - derived from demography, political economy, political science, or the sociology of minorities - generally fail to cope adequately with the complexities of culture." The following section will explore the framework for studying migrant family from an ethno-cultural perspective.

Family Studies from an Ethno-Cultural Perspective

This term ethno-cultural combines two words - ethnicity and culture. Culture is broadly defined as a set of "values, norms, beliefs, and expressive symbols" (Denton & Hunter, 1996, p. 13) which are shared among a group of people who have the same social context. Ethnicity is a term introduced in the 1930s in the US. Some scholars define it by religion, norms of behaviour and

language; some emphasize the country of origin, race, or a combination of several of these (Penny & Khoo, 1996, p. 4). However the core concept of ethno-culture is the issue of culture.

At this point, Bottomley (1992, p. 3) argues that

Culture is one of the most commonly used concepts in studies of migration, yet it is curiously unexplored. The notion of culture as a way of life of a particular group of people is obviously central to the process of migration, whereby people leave one set of social and historical circumstances and move, or are moved, to another. By this very movement, migration challenges the idea of a distinct way of life.

It is true that many social theories are difficult to apply in studying families that came from a culture that is different from that of the investigator.

Cultural Diversity in Family Practice

What people perceive as a family in one culture may differ from what people who come from another culture perceive. Goode's (1963) worldwide survey has documented a variety of family practices among different societies in Asia, Africa and Arabic and Islamic regions, which are obviously distinct from what people practice in the West. In Western society, a child may perceive a pet animal as a member of his/her "family". For Aboriginal people, a "family" may refer to several hundred relatives who may or may not have blood ties (E. Bourke & C. Bourke, 1995). In Chinese society, the concept of "family" often includes grandparents or relatives who reside under the same roof. Klein and White (1996, p. 24) have listed various kinds of household formation in which people live: they include heterosexual couples, same sex couples, one adult and offspring, biological or non-blood generations, father/daughter/grandchildren, and so on. How to define a family has challenged sociologists since late last century (Eichler, 1988; Gilding, 1991).

Gender relations and attitudes towards sexuality may also vary among different social and cultural context. In China, for example, gender roles within the family have been strongly shaped by social policy since the 1950s. Women are supposed to join the work force as much as men are supposed to. By contrast, family policy in Australian context before the 1960s encouraged women to take responsibility for domestic work, and men to work outside as the breadwinner. In the construction of gender, Gilding (1991) provides evidence that, for example, women in the Nayar of south-west India were allowed to take lovers. Boys in the Sambia of Papua New Guinea were taken away from their mothers at the age of 7 to receive homosexual experience till they reached the age for marriage. There is great variety of family practice in the world.

The implication here is that studying migrant families must take account of social and cultural contexts in their country of origin. At this point, Parsons' well-known functionalist sex role approach, as Gilding (1991, p. 2) criticises, "was insensitive to cross-cultural variation and the potential for change in the family".

Deciding from what perspective to study migrant families is also an issue of the normative stance a researcher takes in analysing the data. This normative stance will no doubt determine the quality and credibility of the findings. In child rearing practice, for example, beating children is seen as unacceptable "child abuse" in contemporary Western society, yet this behaviour may be seen as an accepted pattern of parenting in another cultural practice.

Ethnicity is also more complex than its definition suggests. For example, though the Chinese share a common ancestry, their ethnic traits are enormously different between different regions of China and different areas of settlement overseas. For instance, Chinese from Vietnam display religious practices influenced by France, Portugal and Spain apart from Buddhism and Taoism

(Nguyen & Ho, 1995). Chinese from Indonesia are influenced by hundreds of local languages and by the variety of religions (Penny & Khoo, 1996).

Social Capital Characteristics of the Migrant Family in Child Education

The concept of “social capital”, according to Kilbride (2000, p. 5), began its wide use in the late 1980s in studying the influence of migrant families on their children’s school performance. Coleman publicized this idea of social capital. He believes that family differences had a stronger role in creating differences in children’s school achievements than the school did (Majoribanks, 1980, p. 15). According to Coleman (1990, p. 300), the original usage of “social capital” was “the set of resources that inhere in family relations and in community social organization and that are useful for the cognitive or social development of a child or young person”. Coleman adds:

Social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities having two characteristics in common: They all consist of some aspect of a social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure. Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that would not be attainable in its absence (p. 302).

However, Portes (1995) defines social capital “as the ability to command scarce resources by virtue of membership in networks or broader social structures”(p. 257). Portes also indicated that there were often two sets of social capital provided by the migrant community: one for parents and the other for children. Social capital for parents includes the ability to obtain assistance from people of the same ethnicity to strengthen their position vis-a-vis their children and to take control of their behaviours. Yet the social capital of parents, as Portes warned, “dissipates when communities become less cohesive”. Social capital for children “consists of the ability to command resources controlled by the ethnic community” (p. 257). This theory puts emphasis on parental cultural beliefs

and the networks within their communities, which are supposed to elicit a set of actions they perform at home in educating the young. So parents' cultural values and beliefs determine how they socialize their children within the family in ways they believe benefit their children.

On the other hand, the absence of social capital may produce negative effects on migrant children. Hagan and Associates' (1996) study on Canadian migrant children indicated the negative impact of migration on children due to diminished social capital, uninvolved fathers and unsupportive mothers. Zhou and Bankston's (1994) study on Vietnamese in New Orleans examined the function of social capital, social structure and cultural values within these Vietnamese families that had a positive role in helping children make a success at school.

The idea of social capital stresses home country culture, that is, what values and beliefs migrants bring with them into the new social context and how these values work in their settlement process. Social capital varies among migrants from different societies. Portes and Zhou (1993) found that the difficulties migrants meet are various, and depended both on the characteristics of social capital these migrants brought from their home countries and on the social context in the host country.

In sum, the effect of the social capital characteristics and cultural beliefs that a migrant family possesses may have a critical role in their family practice in the host country. Again most traditional social theories of family may not be able to interpret the interactions of two cultures among migrant families.

Studying family life cannot neglect gender relations within the family. The division of labour at home is an important area in family studies, but it needs depth and scale. The following section will offer a framework for exploring gender relations.

Gender Relations within the Family

Challenges of Feminist Approaches to Social Theories

The influence of feminist approaches to the field of sociology and family studies has been strong. There are a variety of feminist approaches, and each has its focus distinct from another based on a different philosophy and ideology. Yet there are central concerns shared by all feminists. According to Elliot and Mandell's (1995, p. 4) work, the central concerns are four. First, all feminists try to have a better understanding of the gendered nature of all social and institutional relations. Second, they question the construction of gender which was influenced by class, power and race in our society that lead to inequality between two sexes in society. Third, they assume that gender relations are not fixed, but dynamic and socially constructed. Fourth, they advocate social change.

The feminist approaches challenged conventional social theories, including the functionalist approach in the study of the family in various ways. Feminists observed that the pre-feminist theoretical frameworks for social science were largely produced from male perspectives (Eichler, 1980). The implication is that men and women have different experiences, thus theories proposed by men are most likely different from theories produced by women. This further implies that women must speak for themselves. Feminists also pointed out that social structure is patriarchal and hierarchical. Feminists expanded the study of gender issues in the family, such as family violence. The familial division of labour, especially childcare, is recognized by all feminist movements as important in shaping the economy of the household and society at large (Cheal, 1991).

Functionalist sex role theory was influential in the West, but it has been widely criticized since the 1960s and 1970s (Bottomley, 1983; Connell, 1987; Eichler, 1980). Eichler (1980, p. 40)

criticized that Parsons' distinction of "instrumental" and "expressive" spousal roles between the two sexes was based on observation of a small group of *male* subjects, and that it therefore could not represent the two sexes. A major critique of this theory from a feminist point of view is that it failed to analyse hierarchy and patriarchy, in another words, forces that constrain women from participating in society and create inequity between the two sexes. The functionalist model of the nuclear family was also criticized as it potentially devalued other forms of family practice in other cultures (Bottomley, 1983; Gilding, 1997).

Feminist approaches also challenged research methods, which did not pay enough attention to female voices. Feminists have developed various methods to better capture social relations. In studying gender relations, Bernard in the early 1970s pointed out that "two marriages" existed in the marital union, and hence posed a challenge to the reliability of processing data in social research. As Bernard observed, men and women in the sample tended to express their views through stereotyped social expectations which may be contradictory to their actual behaviours. Though Bernard's statement has been debated, it has significance to researchers to think about the accuracy of their results and pay specific attention to the experience of women (Cheal, 1991; Eichler, 1988).

Migration, Race and Gender

Feminist approaches thus have important implications for this study of migrant family and gender relations. However, argument and criticism about feminist approaches also exist. Like some social theories, feminist approaches may not be adequate to assess families that came from another social and cultural context. Martin (1991) criticizes feminist theories which were primarily produced by White feminists and based on an ethnocentric outlook, which do not represent all women in society. Cassidy and associates (1995) also criticize feminist approaches that set standards based on middle-

class White women, and lack accounts of the variety of women's experiences, the poor, and ethnic women. In the host country of immigration, social strata and gender relations are made even more subtle, complex and hierarchical by immigration. As Martin (1991) observes, ethnic women and men are often ranked differently from Anglo-Australian women and men.

Hierarchy is not confined to relations between two sexes, but also occurs within the same sex. Bottomley (1992) indicated that in a highly stratified and plural society, ethnic women are often in a most disadvantaged situation. In turn, migration studies often neglect the issue of women.

Regarding family and personal networks in migration, Boyd (1996) pointed out that current migration studies are limited in their consideration of women and female migration. Boyd further criticized that

Some studies emphasize the experiences of male migrants or all migrants undifferentiated by sex, while others emphasize group behaviour as represented in household decisionmaking strategies....As a consequence, little systematic attention is paid to gender in the development and persistence of networks across time and space (pp. 313-314).

In the model of migration decision-making, a female opinion may carry little weight in a male dominated family. A male hierarchy of power and authority exists in many households. Female mobility is also an area needing further study. Boyd (1996) suggests that current studies that include women may need re-conceptualization, and open new areas in the field of migration studies.

A Gender and Power Structure Framework

Since the 1980s, studies of gender and family have also moved to analyse systemic and structural constraints that lead to inequality between two sexes. For this, Connell (1987) proposed a three-

structure framework, distinguishing the structures of power, division of labour and cathexis.⁴ This framework offers a tool to unpack the family, and to see how gender relations are organized within it. According to Connell, “the ‘sexual division of labour’ can no longer be seen as a structure in its own right. It must be seen as part of a larger pattern, a gender-structured system of production, consumption and distribution” (1987, p. 103). Power structure in the family is also seen as a reflection of the social and economic inequality of the two sexes in society at large. Power in most cases is determined by “wage” and “career”, for which men generally hold advantages over women. The social system is gendered and based on the ideology that men work outside the home as breadwinner; women stay at home, playing an expressive role. In such circumstances, men’s power is fixed by this system and ideology. Men are generally empowered in their relations with women. Connell further stresses, “The power of husbands shows in the family, but it is certainly not based in the family alone” (p. 123). The structure of cathexis also indicated that emotional relationships in stereotyped heterosexual couples often lead to inequality of division of labour at home. However, as Connell also pointed out, in some circumstances or in other cultural contexts, women may have authority, to some extent, over men (pp. 108-109).

The practice-based approach provided by Connell (1984) is seen as helpful to this study as it locates the family in a dynamic context. Practice stresses the interaction of individuals with their environment and the dynamic nature of social life. Values, beliefs and behaviours will be inevitably influenced and reconstructed through the process of interaction of the individual and the

⁴ Cathexis is a psychological term, not commonly used. According to Connell (1987, p. 112), the term used by Freud indicates “a psychic charge or instinctual energy being attached to a mental object, i.e., an idea or image”. Connell extended this usage “to the construction of emotionally charged social relations with ‘objects’ (i.e., other people) in the real world”.

environment, through personal experiences, economic status and interaction with others in society.

Summary

In this chapter I have provided some general frameworks which I believe will be useful for this particular study. The framework I use for this study is complex, as I am studying migrant families, but modifying family theories in the light of migration studies. I am also modifying migration studies in the light of ethno-culture and gender relations within the family. Thus this study is based on multiple perspectives, which consist of a sociological perspective particularly in relation to gender studies, a migration perspective, an ethno-cultural perspective, a feminist perspective, and an historical perspective. These perspectives are interrelated with one another, and must now be made concrete in the specific cases of migrant families studied.

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

This study focuses on recently arrived Chinese migrants from the People's Republic of China and examines their family practices within the context of migration and settlement in Australia. The aim of this study is to find out what impact the process of migration has had upon their family lives.

This chapter will describe the methods that were utilized for the study. The chapter consists of three sections. The first section will introduce the research design which includes the methods of data collection, sample selection, and interview questions. The second section will describe the fieldwork including preparatory activities, the pilot study and the interview process. Following this is a discussion of difficulties encountered in the sampling process. The final part of the chapter introduces the approaches to data analysis and discusses some of the difficulties associated with these approaches.

Research Design

The study of family practices primarily utilizes qualitative research methods, as it emphasizes processes and meanings and tries to "seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 8). "Qualitative research", as Denzin and Lincoln (1998, p. 3) defined, "is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them." Qualitative research is not the exclusive domain of any particular social science

discipline. Qualitative methods allow researchers to take a closer look at the subjects they are studying and obtain rich information unavailable using other social survey techniques. In this particular case, qualitative techniques made it possible for the researcher to gain insight into how the informants' family lives were affected by the processes of migration and settlement. Studying family practices involves the examination of values, attitudes and emotional relationships as well as behaviours which are all embedded in specific situations and social contexts. Qualitative research is therefore best suited for this kind of study.

Statistical analysis is also employed as a complementary tool in this study as statistical analysis has merit in providing a portrait of the informants in a simple and clear way, especially in regard to the demographic characteristics of the sample. Census figures are also used as a way of situating the informant sample with regard to the larger population and context.

Many qualitative researchers stress ethical issues involving consent, privacy and confidentiality of data. This research was designed according to ethical codes. All of the research participants were informed of the information collected from them and were directly told of the nature of the study. Assurances of confidentiality were provided to all informants prior to the interview. All of the names of informants given in the following chapters are pseudonyms.

Methods of Collecting Data

Data collection for this study used a multi-method approach to obtain a variety of empirical materials. However, much of the data were collected through in-depth interviews in which informants were asked about their experiences and personal biographies. The interviews were loosely structured given that this format helped elicit more specific information from informants about their lives in a comfortable manner. A recruitment form was also designed for collecting

demographic data and a social profile of the participants both in China and Australia. On-site observations and information provided by other informants were also included.

Apart from these methods, various data concerning Chinese migrants and their families were collected from published and unpublished papers, government documents, working papers and conference papers, theses and newspapers, as well as magazines and novels. Census data related to the China-born population in Australia were also gathered.

Sample Selection

The sample in this study was drawn from Sydney, a metropolitan area of Australia. There were three general requirements utilized for recruiting research informants:

- Respondents were required to have come from the People's Republic of China in the past two decades, either directly to Australia or through a third country. People who came from Hong Kong were not included in the sample given that the study was initiated before the hand-over of Hong Kong from the British to the Chinese government.
- Respondents were either Australian citizens or permanent residents.
- Respondents had lived in Australia for at least two years at the time of interviewing.

Since this study examines family life, other factors were considered in recruiting the participants. A sex balance was maintained in recruiting participants. Almost equal numbers came from each sex. An attempt was made to recruit participants from the regions of the north, eastern coast and the southern portions of China. The marital and parental status of the subjects were not considered in recruiting respondents.

The sample size for this study was originally planned as 30, because the potential number of available respondents was unknown. However, as the study unfolded, there came to be a total of 40

informants.

Interview Questions

Questions asked of the respondents in this study basically pertained to the following issues:

- Motivations for migration
- Perceptions of Australian society and family practices
- Attitudes toward sexuality
- Marital life
- Child rearing and education
- The division of labour at home

A great amount of additional information was also collected in the interviews. There was no set questionnaire. The general guiding principle utilized involved keeping questions open-ended in order that the respondents would not feel constrained by highly structured questions. As a matter of fact, most of the data obtained was not directly derived from specific questions that were asked, but was extracted from the life stories shared by informants. Open-ended questions proved to have greater merit than a structured questionnaire for this particular study because these allowed a variety of answers, and did not set limitations for respondents.

Fieldwork

The Process of Interviews

The interview process involved three phases. During the first phase, the main work was associated with preparing documents to be used for the interviews. These documents included: (1) a

recruitment form for participants to fill in before interviewing, designed to collect demographic data and a social profile of the respondents; (2) a statement of the research and a letter of assurance of confidentiality; (3) an interview guide (see Appendix I) which listed all the major question areas and specific questions. These questions were not asked in a fixed order in the administration of interviews, but were provided in a flexible manner.

A pilot study was also conducted to try out the questions and gain some experience with interview administration. As a result, a few items were added to the interview guide, including questions regarding family income and religious practices. The pilot study proved helpful in allowing the researcher to improve interview skills and also helped ensure that the actual interviews proceeded smoothly.

The second phase of the study involved recruiting participants. The recruitment of participants was accomplished through a multi-method approach. The majority of the participants in this sample were recruited via a snowball sampling approach which seemed to be the most effective method to use for this kind of study. At the time of each interview, the respondent was encouraged to recommend one of his/her friends who would meet the criteria as a potential subject for an interview. The mutual trust established between researcher and subject seemed to facilitate the solicitation of referrals among informants. Some of the participants even helped to explain the purpose of the project to their friends. In such cases, as long as one respondent made a referral, there would be a network of informant connections. However, snowball sampling also had its weaknesses, given the fact that a dependence upon chain connections often brought about a group of migrants sharing a somewhat similar background.

A number of Chinese organizations were contacted for help in recruiting participants which

included the Chinese Saturday School, the Australia-Chinese Friendship Association, the Chinese Baptist Church and the Chinese Academic Associations. These organizations were generally helpful. With their assistance, about one fourth of the total subjects were recruited. Personal connections with these organizations proved to be important for making possible the initial contact with informants.

Fieldwork is often problematic. A common problem that doctoral researchers face compared to many professional academics is that students typically do not possess the resources to give honoraria to research subjects for their participation. So my experience from the fieldwork revealed that the personal relationship the researcher was able to establish with respondents was critical. In the process of meeting with potential participants, an introduction of the nature of the study proved vital for the establishment of the mutual trust needed later in the interview process. In the first meeting with the potential participant, I as a researcher was expected to answer questions. Most of these questions related to the way the research findings would be disseminated. In addition, the introduction of my personal background to the potential participants proved to be a valuable means of gaining trust from potential subjects. When everything went smoothly in the initial contact, a time and a place for an interview would be scheduled almost immediately. Subjects were always given priority in setting a time and locale. In this study, the venue for interviews varied from an office, the subjects' home, the researcher's home or even a park. Most of the interviews took place in the evenings or on weekends.

The third stage was interviewing. All the questions asked were open-ended and flexible in terms of when they could be asked during the interview session. Questions were not asked in a set order. For some married subjects, questions started with children or housework. For single

respondents, questions often began with leisure time. These informants were initially asked what they liked to do at the weekends. Questions requiring simple answers were always asked first, and then gradually questions of a more "soul searching" nature were administered. The goal in the interview process was to have the subject feel as if they were chatting with a friend in relaxed and unrushed conditions. The questions being asked also needed to be sensitive, as it was important not to make subjects feel embarrassed or worried about their privacy. In some cases when respondents were providing few words, more specific questions were needed. During the interview, subjects were also permitted to stop any question they did not feel comfortable with. Observations made during interviews and other occasions including meetings with family members and friends were also recorded as supplementary data.

A total of 42 people were accepted for interviews from late August 1997 to May 1998, two of these interviews were interrupted and as rescheduling did not prove possible, were excluded from the data analysis. Data analysis in this study were based on the materials from 40 subjects.

Appendix II provides a biographic sketch of each of the 40 respondents.

The interviews were conducted in the Mandarin language, though some of the informants spoke fluent English. Most respondents felt more comfortable with the mother tongue, and believed it was easier to express deep thoughts in Mandarin. Three-fourths of the interviews were audio-taped with the consent of the respondents, while the rest of respondents preferred note taking.

The length of each interview varied, running from one to two hours on average, while a few cases ran more than two hours. The length of time for each interview was affected by the time availability of each participant, the complexity of their lives, as well as the ability of each respondent to express personal thoughts. The interviews were not always completed at one time due

to the complex personal situations presented by the subjects. In some cases, respondents were asked about missing points found later during the transcription process. About one third of the respondents agreed to a second interview either by means of a face-to-face meeting or over the telephone.

Fieldwork Difficulties

The data collection took nine months to complete. This was three months longer than had been planned. The major challenge I met was in recruiting participants for the interview during the earlier stages. Though I successfully recruited 40 participants, I experienced quite a high proportion of rejections from people I approached. About 13 people refused interviews. Among these were a few people who accepted the interviews in a superficial way after conducting a cross-examination of myself and the purpose of the study, along with the eventual dissemination of the findings. They proposed a time with me for an interview, yet when I arrived on the scheduled date, they turned it down with the common excuse that they were too busy. One case I remember vividly involved a man who was in his late 50s or early 60s. I met him at a friend's work place. He seemed to be interested in what I was studying, and made an inquiry about my background in China. At the end of our discussion he set a time with me for an interview in his office the following week. I appreciated his response and showed him considerable respect. Yet, when I got there, he did not appear until I located him, with the help of his colleague one hour later. It was an embarrassing moment when I saw him and mentioned the appointment. However, he made an explanation by saying that he had come upon some urgent tasks at work and had no time for the interview. Then he suggested that he would write down his answers and send them to me. I gave him the interview guide and left. I never heard back from him.

However in many cases, people turned down interviews in a straightforward manner, and the reasons they provided may be summarized in no more than the following: "not interested in this", "no time to do it" and "no honorarium".

The process of sampling seemed to be quite dramatic. The rejection I met also included two of my friends, to whom I repeatedly explained the nature of the study and provided assurances of confidentiality, but no use. In fact, they had already told me their stories, but they did not want their data included in my study. Unfortunately our relationship has become more subdued and less comfortable since this time.

The process of finding respondents sometimes was painful. I once passed by a Chinese restaurant, and dropped in expecting to find some potential respondents. After providing some explanation to the owner of the restaurant, he outright suggested that I change my research topic as he remarked that I would touch their personal pain. He further estimated that nine out of ten Chinese who came to dine in his restaurant had marriage problems because of their migration and separation from family during the four-year temporary visa status stage. The ratio he provided was striking. He was possibly exaggerating, but it supported general impressions about migrants from China obtained from my interview materials, which will be presented in later chapters.

I also remember that one Australian-born Chinese professor who was a member of the Australian Chinese Academic Association in Sydney tried to help me with recruiting participants. This professor sent an email notice to everyone; against his expectations, no one ever contacted me, or even made an inquiry about this study.

The difficulties I experienced in finding respondents have also been noted in other studies including those of Zhang (1995) and Tian (1999). A cautiousness and unwillingness to disclose

personal information among migrants from China may be seen as something of a cultural trait, as culturally there is a common belief that disclosing family conflicts to outsiders involves "losing face" and brings disgrace to the family. The explicit and implicit rejection may indicate the personal impact of political movements in China during Mao's regime. This political impact was also expressed in respondents' concern about the dissemination of the findings. In general, respondents at the ages of 25-35 seemed to be more open and liberal in expressing their views; while those who were older than their mid 40s seemed to be wary about what they said. A general impression I had was that most people did not seem to be used to such interviews. Some respondents agreed to an interview without hesitation as they possessed knowledge and some experiences with this kind of research method. It should be stated that the majority of respondents in the study were supportive and cooperative.

Data Analysis

Description of the Method

This section will introduce approaches to analysing the interview materials. Processing raw materials into meaningful data involved several steps in this study: transcription, translation, the writing of case studies, grouping the data, producing tables, as well as identifying themes and interpreting the data. Each of these steps required huge amounts of work, and were time consuming.

The data analysis began with the transcription of interviews. There were two methods used in transcribing: the transcription of every word, or the transcription of the main issues raised, which were determined by the nature of the study. For this study, I transcribed every word in the Mandarin

language, which indeed became a huge undertaking in terms of time, and seemed to be tedious, but ultimately proved worthwhile when I came to the latter stage of data analysis in which the more detailed transcription notes were highly useful.

After transcribing, I wrote case studies in English. This involved translating the material from Mandarin into English. Each interview was written up as a separate case study. For each case study, I read through the transcript while sitting in front of the computer. I then started to produce a detailed summary of each interview, in which I sorted the information in a chronological manner by interview theme including social profile and demographic data, motivation for migration, perceptions of Australian society, attitudes toward sexuality, marital life, child rearing, and division of housework. For each case, I highlighted the characteristics, discussed issues that appeared in the data, and wrote a commentary related to the study as a whole. In the process of writing each case study, I bore in mind three points: the impact migration had made on the respondent's family life; cultural distinctiveness; and gender structure and relations. When it was completed, the case study had become a chronological personal profile. All of the case studies were written up in the same format.

In the second stage I began to sort the data from the case studies into six major issues: a social profile, motivations for migration, perceptions of Australian society, marriage, child rearing, and the division of housework, each of which later became topics of chapters.

For the social profile, I produced a set of tables which mainly drew data from recruitment forms. I then interpreted these data while using census data relevant to the larger population of Chinese migrants in Australia to make comparisons.

The next step I followed was to re-classify the data relevant to each issue. This was the most

complex and time-consuming task in the entire study. For each issue, I cross-classified the data by a variety of social groupings including age, sex, regions of origin in China, marital and parental status, family structure, social and economic status, division of housework and childcare arrangement. I also did case studies in groupings. This approach obliged me to think about what cases had in common and what diversity there was in a group. Following this, I accounted for major themes and selected relevant key examples for discussions. The general method utilized for data analysis in this study involved multiple groupings, cross tabulation and cross examination of all the empirical materials, in order to make full use of them. I examined the data not only from the answers the respondent overtly expressed, but also linking the statements to the life stories of the respondents who expressed them, incorporating each respondent's case with a specific, situated context. This approach helped qualify the openly expressed statements. I then knew who were the most prone to change in the process of settlement and who were the least. Frameworks noted in Chapter Two are the standpoints in the process of data analysis. The case studies, tables and data grouping files worked out in this particular stage became the sources for each chapter.

A set of the most salient case studies was selected for each chapter based on the chapter's focus. Material from the same case study used in different chapters was referred to throughout the discussion. I tried to present a full range of empirical data that I had gathered and included material from everyone I had interviewed.

Challenges and Experiences in Data Analysis

Given that qualitative research is "a set of interpretive practices", does not involve a clear theory or paradigm, nor "a distinct set of methods that are entirely its own" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 5), the process of data analysis was challenging and required numerous adjustments. At the beginning,

the proper way in which to manage, interpret and present the empirical materials collected was not obvious. The process of data analysis therefore involved several rounds of reviewing, regrouping and analysing the raw materials before the thesis chapters were finally formed.

The difficulties I confronted in this process were several. The first problem stemmed from the fact that the data sources were diverse, for the reasons discussed in the previous section. The information provided by the respondents was uneven as it pertained to each case and every issue. A second issue emanated from the fact that the sample was also diverse in terms of age, education, professions as well as home origin and family background. A final difficulty originated with the methods I used to interpret the findings. All of these difficulties were solved with each revision of the thesis until finally a clear pattern of managing and interpreting the data emerged and was employed in the composition of each data analysis chapter.

However, while the process of data analysis involved a process of exploring, learning and practising, it also included substantive political and ethical dimensions. Inevitably, the ways in which I interpreted data were related to my cultural beliefs, ideologies, and personal values.

In sum, my experience in this study confirmed that qualitative research may appear simple and flexible, but is in actuality, challenging and complex to carry out. There are no certain rules to follow. As Denzin and Lincoln (1998, p. 29) have pointed out, "Qualitative research is endlessly creative and interpretive."

PART II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

FAMILY PRACTICES IN TWO SOCIETIES

Introduction

This study of family practices of the migrants from China to Australia must consider social and cultural differences of family practices between these two countries. Different cultural beliefs may contribute to family practices quite differently. An examination of family practices that Chinese migrants had had prior to their settlement in Australia helps understand the general patterns of their family practices in the new country. An examination of family practices in the host country helps understand the differences of family practices between two societies which will be useful to identify the challenges that migrants are likely to encounter in the post-migration settlement.

Part two will serve this purpose by presenting portraits of family practices in China and Australia . Chapter Four will first provide an historical review of family practices in China with emphasis on the cultural roots and contemporary changes, while Chapter Five will offer a picture of family practices in the Australian context, focussing on contemporary changes.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CHANGING FAMILY PRACTICES IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Introduction

It has often been said that family and kinship relations are highly regarded in Chinese society. As a matter of fact, the family as a social unit is valued in many other societies. Given this fact, what has made the nature of the family in China different from that observed in other societies? It has also widely been said that Confucianism represents Chinese culture. It is true that Confucianism has had a great influence on the Chinese in many aspects of their lives, especially given the 4000-year history of the feudal system in China. Yet how does Confucianism influence Chinese families and make Chinese family practices distinct from families in other cultural societies? Numerous changes have occurred in the past century, particularly in the second half of the twentieth century when China has been governed by the Communist party. How have these social changes shaped family practices in the context of China?

A historical review and analysis of family practices in China may provide some answers to these questions. This historical review is presented in five parts: (1) family traditions; (2) influences of the 1911 Republic Revolution; (3) political impacts upon family life during Mao's regime; (4) trends since the 1980s; and (5) a family profile in the Pearl River Delta region.

Family Traditions

Cultural Roots - Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism

Chinese family life, and particularly attitudes towards sexuality and values related to the family, reflect significant cultural traits. Chinese culture includes three major traditions: Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism. Taoism has been seen as an indigenous faith of the Chinese, which originated during the end of the second century A. D. Its founder was Lao Zi. Buddhism, was introduced into China from India during the beginning of the Christian era. These two religions share certain similarities. They both presented pessimistic attitudes towards reality and human life by stressing immortality, emptiness and the advantages of withdrawal from reality to avoid human suffering (Smith, 1973). In terms of behaviours, both traditions recommended individual meditation and self-cultivation for the purposes of avoiding competition and conflict. For example, Taoism always advised people not to compete. In its attitude towards sexuality, Buddhism values harmony between “yin” (female) and “yang” (male), and also recommends people control their sexual desires in order to live long lives, while Taoism offers specific guidance and skills for the sex life of its followers. Buddhism also encourages men not to indulge in sex, in the belief that doing so might bring harm to their health (Bonavia, 1980). In sum, Chinese thoughts towards sex have stressed its potential effects upon the health of men.

Confucianism has long been recognised as a philosophy rather than a religion in China. It originated with an ancient educator, Kong Zi, or Confucius (551- 479 A. D.), who created a school of thought based upon a theoretical framework for proper human relations within society. Confucius’s thoughts were strongly influenced by his early experiences, which occurred at a time

when China was in deep chaos. As an intellectual of his time, Confucius felt a strong commitment to assist the ruling class in maintaining the peace and harmony of the country as well as the established social system. Confucianism, therefore, may be seen as having been highly representative of the essence of a feudal society. His influences were more widespread among the upper class (Chu & Carew, 1990). However, his teachings covered a broad range and were widely accepted as prevailing social norms within Chinese society.

In Chinese history these three traditions competed, interacted and influenced one another. For instance, Confucius' followers criticized Taoism and Buddhism for their neglect of social relations with authorities and ministers (Smith, 1973). However, Confucianism has been widely acknowledged as a unique feature of Chinese culture with its influence exceeding that of the other two major philosophical traditions.

Confucianism itself has continually been developed and modified over history. The so-called Neo-Confucianism, a term created in the West, has been seen as the modification of Confucianism. Neo-Confucianism appeared during the eleventh to thirteenth centuries (Smith, 1973), Zhu Shi (1130-1200) was regarded as its master. Neo-Confucianism emphasized a strict hierarchy and well-defined social codes intended to sustain the existing order. There has been a widespread impression that Neo-Confucianism resulted in conservative, hierarchical, sexist and ethnocentric influences on China's foreign policy. Many scholars have argued that this policy led China to lose touch with the progress of world civilisation. De Bary (1981) believed that the conservative and hierarchal doctrine of Neo-Confucianism may have led Confucian teachings to be included into the school curriculum and civil service examinations under a dynasty ruled by the Mongols. Regardless of the regime, Neo-Confucianism was seen as ideal for sustaining the social order.

As a consequence, the influences of Confucianism became uneven within the vast country: stronger impacts were observed in the North with relatively weaker influences in the South. Geographically the South was far from the central Chinese government, as dynastic capitals were never set up beyond the Yangzi River. Moreover, many scholars in the South originally had escaped from the North, and the insecurity of life may have led them to neglect the Confucian values of filial piety to their seniors while following a personal philosophy of self-interest as opposed to collectiveness (Smith, 1973). Besides, the stronger economic advantages and foreign influences felt in the South cannot also be ignored. However, Confucianism in the South was never particularly strong in any period of history in China.

Confucian Ideology.

Confucianism argued that there were fundamental principles that regulated social relations at various levels of society. The prevailing principles were summarised as four words, “san gang wu chang”, or three cardinal guides and five constant virtues. The three cardinal guides were “ruler guides the subject; father guides the son and husband guides the wife”, and the five virtues included benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and fidelity. These constituted the basic ethical code under the feudal social system. Under its general principles, women were further regulated by the “san cong si de” or three rules of obedience and four virtues. The three rules of “obedience” required women to be obedient to their father before marriage, obedient to their husband after marriage and obedient to their son after the death of their husband; and the four virtues guided women to cultivate themselves in the aspects of morality, proper speech, modest manner and diligent work. As a result, women experienced discrimination within the family context, were excluded from public activities, were labelled as domestics, and had no right to receive an

education. A Confucian belief, popular in the old days, is that a woman who has no talent may be seen as virtuous (Judd, 1994). Obviously women were constrained by Confucian ideology, and men, being the heads of families, were empowered to take responsibility for all matters.

Confucius himself emphasized the importance of the family, as he believed the fundamental morals in society were based upon love and obligation among family members. He provided a model for running a society in which even the total polity might be regarded as one massive family. According to his view, family relationships predominated in their potency over all other types of relationships (Freedman, 1979). An ancient philosopher, Mencius, one of Confucius' students, believed that the family was at the very heart of the roots of China (Hsieh, 1967). A corollary belief was that the ruling class had the right to intervene in the families of their subordinates. The ruler was perceived as being similar to a head of the family who takes control over his family members. The ruling class held that a man's obligation needed to be qualified and mediated by his kinship relations and family activities. The harmony of the family reflected the basic unit at the central base of the social pyramid and was supposed to regulate itself under the state (Freedman, 1979).

A key tenet in Confucianism is the "xiao", or filial piety, which has been viewed as a typical feature of Chinese culture. Filial piety literally implies that children should obey their parents and seniors, in addition to serving or looking after them (Chu & Carew, 1990). Theoretically, filial piety functions as an axis, which can be extended to every sphere of an individual's life. It determines various relationships among family members, such as father-to-son, brother-to-brother and relationships between the young and the elderly. Filial piety also emphasizes respect for one's forefathers. The most obvious example was marrying to have children in order to carry on the family line. As a popular Confucian saying puts it, "Having no male offspring is the greatest crime".

Consequently, to respect ancestors also means that the young must be properly cared for.

Reciprocal caring relations are an outstanding feature of the Chinese family. Many writers have neglected to point this out. Filial piety is not actually a one-way relationship. Parents have high expectations as they have sacrificed individual interests to care for their young. Investment of time, resources and strong personal involvement were also prevailing features of Chinese family values based on the procreation function of the family. Some Chinese scholars saw the parent/child relation as a kind of “feedback model” compared to the “relay model” in Western society. There is also a popular Chinese saying which states, “ke lian tian xia fu mu xin”, or the most pitiable thing in the world is the heart of parents. This saying vividly depicted the investment and devotion Chinese parents have made for their children. These values are still observed in many Chinese families today (Chen, 1996). However, the cornerstone of filial piety and the major principles of social relations are the mediation of social conflicts both at the familial level and within society at large.

While the Confucian influence on family matters was direct and massive, the value of filial piety became more intricate than the literal interpretation, and it has been intensified and modified through broad practices. It is worth noting that there was no particular family law throughout the long period of feudal history. Familial and individual conduct codes were based on the Book of Virtues, which set up the determinants of morals for the Chinese people. Filial piety applied to society meant obedience to the ruler and the dominant ruling class. Therefore, filial piety both helped maintain the harmony of the family, and its patriarchy and lineal structure, while also sustaining the social system at large.

In sum, Confucianism was influential and permeated every aspect of daily Chinese life. This may have been related to the talents of Confucius himself who was an educator. The thoughts of

Confucius were arguably better documented by his numerous followers compared to those of Taoism and Buddhism.

Customs and Practices

The ideal traditional Chinese family has been summarized as possessing five features: (1) father-son relations are superior to husband-wife relations; (2) a pride in the family; (3) an extended and multi-generational household structure; (4) a practice of ancestor worship by family members; (5) common ownership, production and consumption of familial property (A. K. Wong, 1979, p. 57-58). In reality, family life in China was more diverse and complex than revealed by much of the existing literature.

Family Structure and Pattern

Traditional Chinese family practices have long been described as exhibiting an extended pattern - including several generations, a large size in terms of members, as well as strong and hierarchical relations with kinsmen. In practice, both extended families and nuclear families existed in previous centuries, and Chinese family size was not that much larger in comparison to other societies. The Chinese family usually consisted of two or three generations. Yet family size, on average, never exceeded five members during the Dynastic period or in the decades prior to 1949 as P. T. Ho (1964) has argued. This scholar provided evidence that the average family size was 5.95 in AD. 755, 5.68 in 1393 and 5.33 in 1817 (p. 3). Goode (1963) also indicated that the five-member family size was not a recent trend. This family size was not much larger than that associated with families in the West during the same period of history.

Yet one must keep in mind that family practices varied among social classes and regions. Traditionally, the Chinese family has been described as several generations living under one roof,

but these were often the powerful and wealthy families (Freedman, 1979). The existing literature is often misleading in this respect as it over-stresses the feudal features of traditional Chinese families (P. T. Ho, 1964). In the majority of families, family property, if it existed, was owned by both the father and sons or by the joint family. Family property was often equally divided among male children when they got married and lived independently. The elder son, or the youngest son, remained at home, and was responsible for looking after their parents. Therefore, family size could not be very large. In rural areas, men in poor families were perceived as less superior to women, but men remained dominant among gentry class families. Comparatively, women among the lower economic class of families had more rights and were involved in family decision-making to a greater extent compared to women in the gentry class (Brugger, 1971).

Many scholarly texts hold that Chinese families exhibited hierarchical and patriarchal structures. It is true that Chinese families were often headed by the father or grandfather who made decisions related to major domestic issues such as marriage, mourning, and the inheritance of property. The fraternal relationship was also regarded as superior to the husband-wife relation by the Confucians. However, the senior females' authority over the young male and female cannot be ignored. In this aspect, P. T. Ho (1964) argued that traditional extended Chinese families were hierarchical by seniority rather than by patriarchy.

Marriage Customs

The earliest classical work of "*Li Ji*", *The Book of Virtues*, set the age of marriage at 30 for men and 20 or 23 for women, which were assumed as the ideal ages for marriage. Yet the existing literature shows that the age at wedlock in practice varied by dynastic period. In the Tang Dynasty, for example, the age of marriage was set at 20 for men and 15 for women. In the Ming Dynasty, the age

at marriage became lower, 16 for men and 14 for women (Goode, 1963, p. 285). The age at marriage varied among urban or rural areas. In rural areas, men often delayed marriage. Goode provided evidence that in rural areas of Guangzhou, the "average age of the father at the birth of his first living son was 33 years in the period from 1150 to 1500 AD., 31 years in the 1630 -1800 period, and 23 in the 1800-1880 period" (Goode, 1963, p. 286).

Traditionally, the institution of marriage demonstrated parental control over children. Marriages were predominantly arranged by parents based upon economic interests. Marriage for love was ignored. Girls and boys were often matched with reference to a mixture of mystical and mundane criteria. Families used horoscopes as well as the economic conditions of the two families as factors for making judgements. The couple often met for the first time at the wedding ceremony. The betrothal and dowry were important institutions. The custom of child brides was practised, especially in rural areas. There were also many rites and rules for married women. They were expected to take over all of the household work, and serve parents-in-law and other senior relatives as well as taking care of the offspring. Widows rarely remarried because chastity was encouraged in society. Marriages in the old days showed significant differences between different classes. For the upper classes, marriages were primarily arranged within their own social class circle. For rich men, marriage, love and sex could often be compartmentalised (Brugger, 1971), and they were legally permitted to take concubines.

Divorce

Divorce could be initiated by men but not women. Men had the right to initiate divorce for any reason. According to *The Books of Rites*, seven circumstances were listed which might allow husbands to divorce their wives. These conditions included: not giving birth to a male, rudeness,

gossip, jealousy, maltreatment of others, having a serious disease, larceny and unsatisfactory performance in household work, including in the provision of service to the mother-in-law (A. K. Wong, 1979).

Footbinding and Infanticide

There were some exotic and cruel customs practised including the footbinding of females.

Footbinding existed more than one thousand years ago. Oddly, this was seen as a form of entertainment for rich men. It was practised among both rural and urban women with the aim of limiting a woman's activity outside the family. Female infanticide also has a very long history.

Poverty in rural areas was the major reason for this practice (A. K. Wong, 1979). Due to Confucian influences, women were excluded from the outside world. They were deprived of opportunities and access to formal education which were substituted by the three rules of obedience mentioned above.

Women were trained to do various types of domestic work. Women in rich families might be taught music, chess and poetry so that they could entertain men.

Homosexuality

Homosexuality does not appear to have been an especially stringent taboo in Chinese social history.

Masculine beauty was favoured. However, homosexual practices varied among social classes.

Homosexual relations were practised among the upper class, especially in the royal palace. It was said that ten emperors possessed bisexual orientations. Literature related to the Ming and Qing Dynasties (1368 - 1911) provides some evidence that in Beijing there was a "xiang gong guan", a young master of the noble house, involved in homosexual activities. This house was closed by the 1911 Revolution. In Nanjing there was also a Taoist temple, which was used to provide handsome monks to homosexual rich men.

In sum, attitudes towards sexuality in ancient times were less regulated for men compared to the present time. Family practices varied, to a great extent, by social class and region as well as at the individual level. Chinese society was more complex than is revealed in most of the literature. Confucian values had stronger influences on higher status than lower status families, and were more strongly felt in the North compared to the South. The maintenance of traditional family values and practices was enhanced and perpetuated by three main factors: the primarily agricultural economy, a highly centralised but isolated social system, and Confucian influences.

Influences of the 1911 Republic Revolution

The 1911 Republic Revolution was a milestone in Chinese history as it ended the already crumbling feudal system. Sun Zhongshan (1866-1925) was made the first provisional president of China. He advocated the “three principles”, that is, nationalism, democracy and the people’s livelihood. These were obviously opposed to Confucian ideology. The 1911 revolution displayed strong foreign influences. Marxism and western forms of democracy were introduced and inspired young people to rid themselves of family-based constraints. Although the Republic Revolution was short-lived, its three central principles remained influential. Massive and dramatic changes to traditional practices took place. The influence of the May 4th Movement in 1919 was far-reaching. Though the movement mostly involved students, it inspired feelings of patriotism among many. People were eager to accept new forms of knowledge as well as the idea of democracy. Equal rights were promoted between men and women in the areas of education, employment and marriage. Co-education emerged in the universities in 1919.

Along with industrial development in textile, cigarette, and machine manufacturing as well as shipping in big port cities, many women moved out of the domestic sphere for the purpose of providing financial support to their families. Traditional customs and practices were questioned and slowly declined in prevalence. Perhaps most notably, the footbinding practice was legally abandoned during the 1920s, though it was still exercised in some rural areas. The breakdown of traditional family practices derived from both internal factors as well as influences from the outside world (Chow, 1991, p. 34). These social changes enabled women to improve their status at home.

However in the first half of the twentieth century, social changes could not improve women's condition on a large scale due to unrest and wars among warlords and the invasion of the Japanese. Yet the ideas of equality and democracy were dispersed among the people. It is interesting that campaigns for women's emancipation were always headed by intellectual men. Mao himself advocated women's rights (Brugger, 1971). Marxists believed that women were stuck at the lower rungs of society. Therefore, liberating women from traditional constraints was no doubt one of the major tasks in the course of Communist revolution.

Traditional family values and practices were challenged during the civil war and the anti-Japanese war period. War itself, an unstable situation, disrupted the traditional family system and its functions. Millions of men joined the war, and women were left at home to take over all of the family tasks and productive work. It is also noteworthy that during the war period a significant number of people who joined the revolution originated from gentry or upper class families. These individuals were usually educated and influenced by Marxism, and thus gave up opportunities to inherit family property while they also rejected the concept of arranged marriage. War itself may also be observed as harming Confucianism in that it broke the well-defined social order, hierarchy

and patriarchal structure associated with traditional Chinese society.

A very significant event was the introduction of the first family law in Chinese history. The nation's new leadership regarded a new family system as being necessary. This law came into effect in 1931 after several years of effort. The legislation was written with reference to the laws of other countries including the Soviet Union and Japan. The law granted the legal rights of men and women in property, inheritance and divorce as well as freedom in the selection of marital partners. It stressed the relationship of husband and wife, and basically ignored obligations to ancestors. Concubinage and child bride practices were limited, but not rigidly. The new Chinese law drew attention nationally and internationally (Brugger, 1971; Goode, 1963). Family sizes, however, remained the same. A survey in the 1930s and 1940s showed the average size of families ranged from four to six members. There was no significant difference in size between families in the West and Chinese families (Brugger, 1971).

The semi-colonial status of coastal urban areas enhanced the complexity of Chinese family practices and enlarged the difference between urban and rural areas, as well as interior and coastal regions. Murphey's (1953) work pointed out that Shanghai, as one of the early largest treaty ports open to the imperialists, was the place where "two civilizations" met. The foreign population reached 60,000 in Shanghai in 1936 (p. 23). The large population of foreign residents in this limited metropolitan area fostered a culture of mixed influences in Shanghai where British and American banks, French cafés, dancing halls, gambling houses and opium dens were part of the city scene. A similar impression of Shanghai at this time has also been provided by Brady (1995). Overall, the Shanghai urban culture was seen to have grown apart from a peasant civilisation (Chow, 1991).

It is true that from the nineteenth century, Shanghai developed culturally and economically

separate from Chinese traditions. Its large foreign trade, and industries provided various job opportunities for men and women. The proportion of women in the work force exceeded the male proportion. A 1931 survey indicated that among 214,152 workers in Shanghai, one third were male, about half were female, while the rest were child workers (Lieu, 1936, p. 113). Women in Shanghai had a greater influence at home because of their new found economic independence. In this economic context, the long established values of Confucianism in family life had generally weakened in Shanghai. Family practices in Shanghai have reflected a case of cultural variance in the Chinese context.

Political Impacts Upon Family Life During Mao's Regime

Marxist theory has argued that a socialist society is supposed to be based on highly developed productive forces and techniques as well as economic abundance. China obviously met none of these pre-requisites when its leaders announced the establishment of the People's Republic of China (Meisner, 1996). However, it is undeniable that China under the rule of Mao Zedong (1897-1976) underwent profound changes. Improving women's social status was particularly stressed under Mao's regime because Marxist theory indicated that women's emancipation signified the complete liberation of the human being on earth. Equal rights and equal pay between the two sexes were advocated. Women's participation in the work force reached its peak during Mao's time. Family life under the new social and values system faced various challenges from subsequent social and political movements. To understand family practices in China, it is important to know that the social and value systems in China determined family practices. It is also necessary to understand the

changes a series of political campaigns brought to family life in Chinese society. These issues will be addressed from the aspects of ideology and value systems, with particular attention paid to the influences of political movements and systemic constraints.

Ideology and Value Systems

China since 1949 has been highly centralised under the Communist Party. Under the theoretical guidance of Marxism and Leninism, politics has enjoyed a dominant position in people's lives. The slogan, "Putting politics in command" was frequently proclaimed by authorities, and became an ethical code for individuals. People who were thought to be over-devoted to work might encounter criticism and be accused of wrongdoing. Conversely, individuals who focussed on the Marxist brand of politics could do no wrong.

During Mao's regime, people were encouraged not to seek material comforts. A populace that remained poor was perceived to facilitate the maintenance of revolutionary morale (Chen, 1996). Individualism and material indulgence were seen as forms of non-proletarian or bourgeois ideology, and incongruent with proletarian selflessness. Consequently, the family interest, from a political point of view, was secondary in comparison to the realisation of the ultimate socialist goal. Given this social context, an examination of family practices during Mao's period must take into account the impact of endless political movements.

Social Political Impacts

1950 Marriage Law

It is no coincidence that the first law issued by the Chinese government soon after its establishment in 1949 was the 1950 Marriage Law. This legislation was similar to the new marriage law issued by the new Soviet Union in 1918 after its triumph in 1917 (Conroy, 1987). In the Chinese context, the

placement of the family issue at the top of the government's agenda did not mean that individual life was considered to be of the foremost importance. But it implied that the government intended to regulate and control the lives of individuals, in conformity with its entire systemic ideology.

Nevertheless, the 1950 Marriage Law, for the first time in history, mandated equal rights and opportunities for both men and women in every aspect of social life. It also became legitimate for women to retain their family name, if they wished, rather than taking their husband's family names. Polygamy, concubinage, child marriage and prostitution were legally abolished. Prostitutes were organised to receive ideological remoulding. Monogamy was the only legal form of marriage. The 1950 law was widely disseminated and was aimed at empowering women to protect their rights. The improvement of women's status in China, particularly in urban areas was striking. The chief improvement was the participation of women in the work force. Millions of women took paid jobs to support their families. Men were no longer the sole breadwinners in the family. Economic independence significantly empowered women to claim their rights within families and society. A huge amount of literature and government documents recorded this change.

The Land Reform.

The land reforms were embarked on in the early 1950s with the aim of placing private land and businesses into government hands. This reform copied the changes instituted in Russia when the Communists took power. The productive functions of the traditional family were weakened. In previous decades, the family had used its property to bind its members together. In the 1950s, this form of traditional ritual bonding was eliminated. The head of the family was no longer able to exercise his traditional power over others (Freedman, 1979).

The Great Leap Forward Movement

In the succeeding Great Leap Forward (1958-1960), policies coerced women under 45 years old to work (Davis & Harrell, 1993). There was a very high rate of female participation in the work force. There were also numerous dining halls, nurseries, and kindergartens as well as other social services created in both rural and urban areas with the intention of helping women opt out of family duties and participate in socialist construction. Family functions, as observed, were shrunk to great extent. During this period, views emerged in western scholars concerning government policies towards the family, with both negative and positive views expressed.

The Cultural Revolution

The ten-year Cultural Revolution was denounced by many elements of Chinese society, but at certain junctures, it did weaken the authoritarian and hierarchical relationships within both the family and society at large. "Rebellion is rational" was a popular slogan during the ten years of the Cultural Revolution. All traditional things were destroyed or abandoned. The values associated with family and kinship relations were ruthlessly attacked. For the so-called revolutionary interests, young people were encouraged to turn a cold shoulder to their relatives and friends if they were suspected to have performed anti-revolutionary acts. It was not uncommon during this time of strong political pressure for children or spouses to disclose their family members's so-called wrong statements. At the least, these disclosures would lead to a public criticism of the accused, and imprisonment in the most drastic cases. The tragedy of this revolution was that the most basic element of trust among family members or friends was ruined. It generated a "moral crisis", people distrusted one another and became cautious in their social relations with other people. Scholars who are interested in contemporary Chinese culture may fail to gain insight if they ignore this period of

history.

Systemic Constraints upon Family Practices

The Household Registration System

The household registration system had influences on family practices in China. From 1949 to 1979, families in China were frequently shaped and conditioned by elaborate social systems imposed by government authorities. The household registration system was adopted in 1955 and was aimed at controlling domestic migration from rural to urban areas and protecting food supplies. The system required each household to be registered at a local police station. Any change within a family had to be reported. Permission to move had to be obtained in advance. Today, the system is still in practice, but it has faced challenges and undergone modification.

Employment Systems

Employment systems, to some extent, also determined the patterns of family life. The Chinese system featured the “iron bowl”, which meant that once you had a job, you would hold it till retirement. For the majority of the population, jobs were usually assigned by authorities according to the vacancies that were available. There was not much room for personal choice or preferences. A transfer from one job to another was an employer’s decision. The employment system affected family life. It was often the case that the husband was assigned to work in another city, and his wife and dependants could not go with him as his wife could not transfer her job due to various reasons. Separation between husband and wife was common. It often took several years for the couple to live together again.

The Housing System

The housing system was another issue in urban areas which affected the lives of individuals.

Housing construction and distribution were centralized by local governments and governmental institutions. Due to financial constraints, there was always a shortage of housing construction relative to the needs of the population. The allocation of housing was decided by employers, whose decisions were based on the seniority of applicants and the availability of units. The procedures for assessment were complex, and created great tension and conflict among applicants. The centralised housing system brought disruption to family life in several ways. It did not allow people to live where they chose for family convenience. Due to the shortage of housing, several generations had to live under one roof, which may have increased family conflict. At this point, family structure was not only determined by cultural traditions or family values, but also by constraints emanating from the shortage of housing.

These three systemic constraints interacted to affect family patterns in China. A family may have experienced spousal separation for several years as a result of the housing shortage or employment constraints. Spousal separation was seen as normal in the Chinese context (Bonavia, 1980; Goode, 1963). By contrast, such a lengthy separation between spouses would be legal grounds for divorce in Australian society.

Marriage and Sexuality

Marriage, during Mao's period, was a personal choice, but it was conditioned by certain political requirements. Firstly, love was supposed to be based upon political attitudes, i.e. the partners were supposed to be in conformity with the authority's ideology. It might be seen as ridiculous from a Western point of view that two young people must obtain a signed document from their respective local authorities prior to the marriage ceremony. A marriage was illegal if the couple did not register their household at the local police station. An individual's non-conformist political behaviour might

ruin his or her chance of marrying someone they loved. In other words, Chinese people did not enjoy the same level of personal choice that Westerners did in their lives. During this period, the ideal model of marriage was that of two young people who shared common political attitudes, while exhibiting a devotion to work and personal thriftiness (Evans, 1995; Zha & Geng, 1992). During the 1950s to 1970s, political attitudes played a dominant role in the lives of individuals.

Pre-marital virginity and conjugal fidelity were stressed. Fornication and adultery, if detected, would not only be criticised in public, but also harshly punished. Sometimes, the guilty party might be transferred to work in a remote area or be demoted or lose a promotion, and in the most extreme cases, dismissed from work. Sex was a silent and “perilous” issue in public life.

Sexual interests and preferences in dress, hairstyle, cosmetics and colourful things were criticised as supporting a bourgeois ideology. This led to national uniformity in the shape and colour of clothes. The de-feminization of the female appearance was encouraged during the Cultural Revolution. Nudity or pictures revealing the human body were viewed as ‘spiritual contamination’ among the people. Even in films and plays, there was hardly a single kiss. And any depiction of sexual behaviour in publications was prevented by authorities. The difference in gender construction between China and the West has been noted by Bonavia (1980), Da (1997), Evans (1995), and Zha and Geng (1992). Sun (1991) commented, “Instead the Chinese seem to be the least emotionally-expressive, especially in matters regarding sex, not only compared with Latin peoples, but even with Protestant Westerners” (p. 9). There is a consistency in the views towards sexuality extending from Confucianism to the current political ideology in China.

Divorce rates increased in the early 1950s. The reason for the increase was partly due to the impact of the new Marriage Law which granted women the right to divorce if they felt maltreated

within the family. In the first three years after the Law had been in effect, there were two million divorces (Davis & Harrell, 1993). Yet the new law also produced unexpected consequences. It was reported that many women committed suicide after being divorced, even though the law was intended to protect women's rights. Many of the women still held traditional values and felt it difficult to accept a divorce initiated by their husbands (Brugger, 1971). Existing sources indicate that the divorce rate was low during the Cultural Revolution. In reality, many couples were divorcing due to political pressures during this period. This may have been the result of the dysfunction of many legal authorities during the Cultural Revolution (Conroy, 1987).

On the whole, family practices in China from 1949 to the 1970s were neither traditional nor Westernized. Confucianism was criticized and abandoned. Politics took a dominant position in the lives of every individual. Family life, in reality, has been constantly shaped by policy. Changes in attitudes towards family and marriage were often seen as a consequence of political movements and the effect of coercive policies during this period of history.

It is necessary to mention that Chinese family life was not widely studied during the Mao period. Sociology in China encountered difficulties in its development at this time. Well-known Chinese sociologist Fei Xiaotong⁵ and demographer Chen Da,⁶ for example, confronted criticism during the political campaigns. Western theories were also excluded from the curriculum with the

⁵ Fei Xiaotong was educated in the US and his work *Peasant Life in China* in 1939 and several other works were well known in the West.

⁶ Chen Da, born in 1892, was the most experienced demographer in China. He was criticized and regarded as an anti-Marxist scientist in the political movement during the 1950s (Freedman, 1979).

exception of Marxist perspectives. Given these political factors, data about Chinese families during this period in the West was primarily gathered in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore (Freedman, 1979) and is not representative of the situation in China.

Trends since the 1980s

Undeniably, the Open-Door policy and economic reforms in the 1980s were milestones in modern Chinese history. A shift in focus from political struggle to economic construction as the task of the central government brought changes in all spheres of Chinese life. Increasing communication with the West also facilitated changes at an unprecedented pace. The government has stressed family life and much attention has been paid to improving living standards and the quality of personal life.

Within this social context, the family has increased its importance in society, while it has continued to be shaped by changing policies.

One Child Policy and Changes in Family Size and Structure

The first policy promulgated under the economic reform program was the one child policy. The goal of the policy was controlling population growth. This unprecedented policy has been controversial both in and outside China since its emergence. The policy has been criticised as undermining human rights. Yet the government has felt an urgent need to slow down the growth of population. The huge size of the population affects people's lives in many respects, and is strongly related to housing, transportation, employment and education issues. Noted Chinese economists Ma Yinchu ⁷ and Chen

⁷ Ma Yinchu was a noted economist in China. His proposal of family planning to the government in the early 1950s was rejected. He was criticized and regarded as a Malthusian. He was then assigned to engage in some other work than his profession till the 1980s.

Da proposed initiatives to control population growth as early as the 1950s. Unfortunately, their suggestions were turned down for political reasons. As a result, the Chinese population increased from about 500 million in 1949 to approximately 1.2 billion in the 1990s.

The economic reforms generated significant pressures to control population growth. In reality there was a policy of two children per family that had been implemented prior to the introduction of the one child policy. But this policy was not effective given the already expanded population. The one child policy was put into effect in 1979. The impact of this policy on families in China has been significant. Firstly, family size has been shrinking. Family size had long been five to six members on average. But a national sample survey in 1993 indicated that three- and four-person households accounted for more than 50% of the population. Data from the State Statistical Bureau in 1994 indicated that in urban areas the average household size was 3.89 in 1985, 3.5 in 1990, 3.43 in 1991 and 3.31 in 1993 (Chen, 1996, p. 90). This suggests that changing family size and structure may not be determined by a single factor, such as policy. There are other factors that affected the changes in family size, such as family values, increasing personal choices and improvement of housing conditions.

From a positive perspective, a reduced family size enables a working couple to improve their living standards and enjoy more leisure time after work. However, the negative aspects of this policy are appalling. There has been increased psychological pressure and maladjustment within Chinese families. The only child was the object of very high expectations, and often spoiled by parents. A lack of peers at home, as well as the absence of brother/sister relationships, prompted misgivings among national and international experts as well as parents. As Jing (1982), a Chinese psychologist, noted, contemporary Chinese children have no brothers and sisters. The following

generations of them will not have any siblings, cousins, uncles or aunts.

The issue of care for the elderly has also presented challenges to this policy. Government policies since the 1950s have actively played a role in weakening kinship ties within the family, while obligations among children to look after their parents are still advocated and stipulated by the law. Thus, looking after the elderly is the responsibility of family members. The elderly in urban areas enjoy pensions and government benefits. They can either ask one child to stay with them, or live on their own. The elderly in rural areas face difficulties. There are no pensions for peasants in China. These elderly individuals have to rely on their children. The one child policy is obviously not popular in rural areas at least up to this point. Nevertheless, the issue of care for the elderly has alarmed government officials.

Resistance to the one child policy has taken several forms, and demonstrates in varying degrees the incentives and disincentives provided to individuals by the government. The very practical problem related to this policy is that it contradicts another policy - the "family contracted production responsibility" which was introduced in the 1980s as an economic reform program in the rural areas. According to this program, each family as a productive unit is required to hand over a certain amount of grains to the state each year. Labourers were required to fulfil contracted tasks for each family. Therefore, preferences for a son have resulted in an increase of female infanticide in some rural areas. However, the one child policy has been gradually bifurcated. There is one rigid policy for urban families, while the policy has been peasantized for rural areas and made more flexible in its implementation (Greenhalgh, 1993).

In sum, the changing family structure and reduced family size may be partly seen as a result of the coercive one child policy, while also reflecting changes in values along with social and

economic changes in Chinese society at large.

Changes of Attitudes towards Marriage and Sexuality

Many Westerners have witnessed the significant changes in Chinese personal life that have been brought about by the relaxed political atmosphere. The shape and colour of clothing, as well as book and magazine covers, advertisements and films which contain sexual images are easily observed. The economic reforms offered chances for people to enjoy a more comfortable life. Living standards in urban areas have improved along with modern innovations and domestic appliances.

The relaxed political atmosphere also makes it possible for scholars from various fields to conduct studies on the impacts of social changes on a more personal level, issues that could not be studied previously. Zha and Geng's (1992) survey of sexuality in urban China indicated that among a sample of 2000 men and women, 83% of men and 67% of women aged 21-35 agreed that sexual issues should be discussed in public, and 44% of men and 36% of women aged 36-60 also agreed to this view (p. 5). The majority of men and women hoped that their marriage partners would be virgins. This survey also found that respondents with higher education levels showed greater tolerance of extra-marital behaviours than those who had received less education. On the whole, virginity for unmarried women and fidelity for married women were seen as important. It also should be noted that the conduct of such a survey pertaining to the issue of sex would have been impossible from the 1950s to the 1970s. Emotional satisfaction was also stressed in marriages. K. J. Guo and X. L. Liu's (1997) findings showed that emotional satisfaction in marriage was highly valued by their informants. Among the 500 respondents in their sample, 402 of them saw emotional satisfaction as the most important facet of their marriages.

There has also been a rise in the rate of pre-marital sexual behaviours among the young in

urban areas. A survey undertaken by North East University indicated that in universities, 50% of students had friends of the opposite gender, and 25% had sexual relationships (Zheng, 1994, p. 384).

However, marriage and family practices demonstrated some complexity in their relationship to the process of economic reform. Differences between rural and urban areas were obvious. The age at marriage in rural areas, for example, showed a tendency to return to the trends which prevailed in the pre-collective era. The age at marriage has been declining. According to a 1978 figure, the average age at marriage for women was 22.4 for rural brides and 25.1 for those in the city. By 1987, official sources reported that the age at marriage for all women had fallen to 21.0, and teenage marriages and even child betrothal had begun to reappear in rural areas throughout the country (Davis & Harrell, 1993, p. 10). Greenhalgh's (1993) study in three villages also provided evidence of this phenomenon. This trend suggests that the high age at marriage may have been the result of coercive policies implemented by the government during Mao's period.

Family Life: Gender Relations and Views of Children

How is the housework divided within families in China now? Gender relations in China have been poorly investigated, but studies have been increasing since the advent of the Open-Door policy. K. J. Guo and X. L. Liu's (1997) survey in Shanghai based on a sample of 500 people found that housework including childcare was basically shared between husband and wife. On average, wives spent slightly more time than their husbands cleaning and cooking. Decision making on family matters was also shared between couples, but each party contributed differently. For example, 51% of decisions about moving were made by husband and 46% of decisions were made by wife; and also 48% of decisions about investment or major purchases were made by father, while 45% of

decisions were made by mother. In relation to child education and other issues, the husband and wife were equally involved in decision making.

Social and economic changes will eventually lead to changes in family values, and views towards children. Having children used to be considered a necessity for Chinese families, but this is no longer the case among urban families in cities such as Shanghai. An official figure showed that from 1979 to 1989, among over one million couples, 2% -3% of couples were fertile, but chose not to have children. From 1990 to 1991, 4-6% of newly married couples chose not to have children. This figure doubled the previous 10-year figure. The Beijing Family Planning Centre also indicated that since 1982 18% of married couples (over one hundred thousand) have decided not to have children (S. Guo, 1997, pp. 275-276). By contrast, families with more than two children have been increasing in rural areas (Selden, 1993).

Divorce Patterns

Noticeably, the divorce rate has been continuously rising since the 1980s. This has been seen as a negative effect of social and economic changes and also as a consequence of the revised 1980 Marriage Law.

The 1980 Marriage Law made a divorce easier to obtain than previously. It contrasted with the 1950 Law which stipulated the freedom of divorce, but failed to provide details. In the implementation of the 1950 Law, mediation was used to reconcile the two parties. The 1980 Law, however, specified that a divorce would be granted even if only one partner had applied for it. The grounds for divorce were no longer based on the fault of one partner.

Since the 1980s, people are divorcing at younger ages, and consequently the length of marriages have become shorter. A survey between 1977 and 1981 in Shanghai showed that 16% of

divorcees were aged 25 to 35 in 1977, while 29% were between these ages in 1981. A survey in Beijing indicated that half of the divorced individuals were people under 30 years old in 1981. In 1986, a nation-wide figure indicated that 60% of the divorcees were no more than 30 years old, and had been married no more than 3 years. The Shenyang survey indicated that 42% of the divorce cases were young people married for only one year (Conroy, 1987, p. 64).

The reasons for the increasing divorce rate are complex and associated with social and economic changes. In the early 1980s, divorce cases reflected the impact of the Cultural Revolution. During that period, thousands of intellectuals and students were called to go to rural areas to receive an education from peasants. For social survival, cross-strata marriages were common. Intellectuals married factory workers, or urban youths married peasants. These marriages were often potentially unstable. A 1981 large survey in Beijing indicated that three quarters of divorcees were under the age of 40, and the majority of them had been married during the Cultural Revolution (Conroy, 1997, p. 64). It should also be noted that marriage for economic reasons as opposed to love was common during this time.

Seeking emotional satisfaction in a relationship was increasing and was also perceived as a reason for initiating a divorce. Also, there were more divorce cases initiated by women who had received a higher education. The economic independence of women also played a role to contributing to the increasing rate of divorce (Conroy, 1987).

In sum, Chinese families today present a greater complexity in size, structure and function than in previous decades. Differences between rural and urban areas seem to have grown and display opposing trends. It is impossible to generalise a clear pattern based on the limited data available at present. Scholars should further study family practices among different regions, and

between rural and urban areas on a larger scale.

A Family Profile in the Pearl River Delta Region

This section discusses the characteristics of families in the Pearl River Delta region. The Pearl River Delta is the ancestral home of thousands of overseas Chinese who have migrated to Australia, North America, New Zealand and Latin America as well as European countries. The primary language spoken in the Delta is Cantonese, which also encompasses many local dialects. These local dialects can be easily identified in Chinatowns all over the world. Even among newly arrived migrants from China, the dominance of the Cantonese language and Guangdong culture surprise many, and frustrates those who find it difficult to socialise due to language obstacles. Background information about the earliest source region of Chinese immigration will allow for a better understanding of the diversity of the overseas Chinese and their cultural values.

The Pearl River Delta, which lies in the centre of Guangdong province with rich alluvial soils cross-cut by the myriad of waterways, has long been the major economic area in Guangdong. The delta includes Hong Kong, Macao and two current Special Economic Zones (SEZ), Shenzhen and Zhuhai. The northern part of this region is mountainous and the areas are inhabited by minorities. As early as the eighteenth century, Guangzhou (formerly called Canton) its capital, was open to foreign businesses which set up factories and trade (Murphey, 1953). The Opium War during the mid-nineteenth century led this city to become one of the earliest treaty ports opened to European imperialists. So, the Delta has possessed a long established international commercial production network, and has been far more actively involved and incorporated into the world market

compared to other Chinese regions. The special economic links with the outside world have fostered a local culture segmented from the inland regions. Before the current economic reforms, the Delta could not fully take advantage of its strategic position to develop its economy under Mao's policy. It is the economic reforms that have facilitated the Delta's potential for economic development, and have allowed it to lead the entire country in this regard. In 1985, the Delta was designated as a special economic region by the central government, and two SEZs were set up as models for rest of the country. To date, the Delta region has attracted a large amount of foreign investment.

The Delta also had other advantages given its overseas connections. The Open-Door policy reinstated overseas kinship links. Donations from overseas Chinese have constituted a significant financial component in the construction of local public facilities such as schools, museums, bridges, roads and other infrastructure. Donations from overseas Chinese are a tradition dating back to the 1911 Revolution. The current donations may be seen as a continuity of traditional practices which are expressions of sentimental bonds by overseas Chinese to their hometowns.

Alternatives to Traditional Marriages and Household Structure

Given this context, family practices in Delta show some complexity compared with those observed in other regions. A particular marriage custom is the "delayed transfer marriage" examined by Stockard (1989). Traditional customs anticipate that a bride, after the marriage ceremony, will move to her husband's family immediately and begin to perform various duties including domestic work, childbearing and rearing. Yet, in the delayed transfer marriage custom, as the name implies, the bride moves out from her husband's family on the third day of marriage to live with her own parents for at least three years. During those three years, she pays visits to her husband's family only on special occasions such as festivals or family celebrations. This practice is diametrically opposed to

the Confucian familial traditions which are practised in many regions of China.

According to Stockard, women who practise in delayed transfer marriage enjoy a prestige among their peers and are seen as culturally ideal. Vice versa, those who have a shorter length of separation from their husbands are mocked among their peers. This custom also has several variations in practice, such as the "compensation marriage". A compensation marriage refers to the fact that a bride who rejects the consummation of her marriage can negotiate the terms of marriage with her husband's family and pay a certain amount of money instead of living in her husband's home. In this case, the husband's family can use this money to find another girl to marry their son as a second wife. This custom has special social-economic implications. The Delta is one of the prime silk industry regions in China. Silk reeling requires a high level of skills, and is mainly performed by women. Women wage earners emerged as early as the nineteenth century which was much earlier than in other regions of China. The compensation marriage was primarily practised in sericulture areas. Generally speaking, women in the Delta have been actively involved in productive work, and have played important roles in supporting their families. The delayed transfer marriage was certainly beneficial to the bride's family.

Spinsterhood has also been popular in this region. Women who wanted to become spinsters had a special hairdressing ceremony in which they combed up their hair, which was seen as a symbolic proclamation. Women who were economically independent in the Delta often had a wider range of choice in their lifestyles than mandated by traditions. There were also social groups established by and for women throughout the region for the purpose of promoting bonds of assistance and reciprocity.

These variations to the major marriage practices in China were seen by authorities as

abnormal and contradictory to Confucian culture. Consequently, woman practising these customs faced pressure by local authorities to live with their husbands' families after marriage. Even during Mao's regime, these customs were seen as abnormal and their followers were pressured to change. Some women committed suicide as a way to express their resistance to a forced marriage (Stockard, 1989).

Household structure in Delta also has its peculiarities. Female-headed households may be seen as a consequence of migration. Johnson (1993, p. 128) found that a large number of households (about 38%) were headed by woman due to migration and rupture of communication between spousal partners. In some cases, women preferred to stay at home rather than join their husbands overseas. Females as head of households were not uncommon in Delta region.

Family size was found to be quite stable in the twentieth century. Johnson (1993, p. 114) indicated that the average household size was five persons throughout the 1930s to 1980s. The divorce rate was also found to be low in Johnson's survey of particular areas of the Delta. Family members who stayed together for a lengthier duration maintained a union for economic reasons. On the whole, family practices in Delta displayed a segmentary model compared to other regions in China. Economic interests and migratory consequences were seen as major contributing factors to family practices.

Strategies of Sustaining Overseas Connections

Since the 1980s, the emphasis on economic autonomy and flexible government policies at every level has allowed each region to mobilise its network to accumulate capital through various means. The Delta has significantly used this advantage to enhance its overseas connections. To attract investment and donations from overseas Chinese, the restoration of ancestor halls and a revival of

lineage were prevailing strategies among the home villages of overseas Chinese. This strategy may be observed as an effective way to maintain a sentimental attachment among overseas Chinese for their hometowns. As indicated in the previous section, ancestor worship, lineage and traditional practices were abandoned during the Cultural Revolution; at this time, many ancestor halls were demolished. Yet the Open-Door policy revived various traditional practices in rural areas of Guangdong as well as in many other provinces. In other words, overseas connections helped the Delta sustain some traditional customs. The recovery of overseas connections also brought in a large number of remittances from overseas kinsmen to the Delta and led to the improvement of general living conditions in the Delta in terms of housing and commercial development. Overseas investment was also a major contributing factor in the improvement of local schools' facilities and teaching aids. Overseas links cannot be ignored in explaining the overall economic status of the Delta. Proximity to Hong Kong is also a key factor which has contributed to the rapid economic development of this region. The revived overseas links since the 1980s have provided a chain network for new immigration waves (Johnson, 1993).

Summary

Overall, family practices in China have been socially constructed, and continuously shaped by various socio-political and economic changes. Family lives within immense China have exhibited enormous diversity, and Confucian influences vary among regions. Political influences on family life may be seen as the most significant contributing feature in examining contemporary Chinese family life. Family practices since the 1980s have shown a tendency towards Westernization in

relation to the values of family, marriage, children and sexuality in urban China, while a return to traditional practices has occurred in rural areas. In general, family practices appear to be more complex and diversified than ever before. Reviewing the history and social changes, the social status of women has exhibited great improvement in China, with major implications for family practices and gender role playing within Chinese families.

CHAPTER FIVE

DYNAMICS AND DIVERSITY OF FAMILY PRACTICES IN AUSTRALIA

Introduction

What kinds of family life do people have in Australia? What are Australians' values of family and children that are different from that of the Chinese? In what direction have family practices been shaped by social changes in Australia? Furthermore, what kinds of gender relations do Australians have at home and in society at large? An overview of family practices in the Australian context may help find out some answers of these questions.

As a nation established by the British Empire in the late eighteenth century, Australia's social system and general trends of social culture including the values of family, attitudes toward sexuality and marriage are basically identified as Westernised (McDonald, 1995b). Before World War II, 98% of the country's population had been born in either Australia or the British Isles (Thornhill, 1992, p. 18). Yet with the lift of discriminatory immigration policy in Australia since the 1960s, the composition of Australian population has experienced significant changes in the immigration source countries. Australian residents who were born overseas made up about 26% of total population in the 1996 census, including people from all over the world (see Table 5.1 next page). Reviewing family practices in Australia must consider ethnic minorities which not only contribute to the general pattern of Australian families, but have also become an integral part of the nation as a whole.

This chapter on Australian family practices is organized into three section. This first section offers a review of family practices before WWII. The second section focuses on the contemporary

family practices in Australia which include family practices during the post-war period, and diversity and trend since the 1970s. The last section presents examples of ethnic family practices in the Australian context.

Table 5.1. Australian residents by birthplace (country), by sex, 1996 census

Birthplace (country)	Male	Female	Total	%**
Australia	6527013	6700763	13227776	73.93
Canada	12122	13010	25132	0.14
Chile	11509	12311	23820	0.13
China	53429	57580	111009	0.62
Croatia	24900	21991	46980	0.26
Egypt	17440	16719	34159	0.19
Fiji	17331	19771	37102	0.21
Germany, Federal Republic of	53805	56526	110331	0.62
Greece*	64417	62103	126520	0.71
Hong Kong	33414	35016	68430	0.38
Hungary	13590	11673	25263	0.14
India	39677	37874	77551	0.43
Indonesia	21926	22249	44175	0.25
Ireland	26620	24849	51469	0.29
Italy*	126452	111794	238246	1.33
Lebanese	36539	33685	70224	0.39
Macedonia	21977	20222	42199	0.24
Malaysia	35815	40440	76255	0.43
Malta	26689	24190	50879	0.28
Netherlands	45990	41908	87897	0.49
New Zealand	147494	143894	291388	1.63
Philippines*	32326	60623	92949	0.52
Poland	31877	33236	65113	0.36
Serbia and Montenegro	4844	4172	9016	0.05
Singapore	13657	15833	29490	0.16
South Africa	27184	28571	55755	0.31
Sri Lanka	23548	23436	46984	0.25
United Kingdom	537816	534746	1072562	6
United States of America	25577	23951	49528	0.28
Viet Nam*	75247	75806	151053	0.84
Born elsewhere	347892	348840	696732	3.89
Not stated	305219	311621	616840	3.45
Overseas visitors	65798	73796	139594	0.78
Total	8849224	9043199	17892423	

* Major ethnic minority source countries.

** Percentages may not be 100.0 per cent due to rounding.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1999. Australia Now - A Statistical Profile: Population, country of origin.

Family Practices before WWII

Australian families may be described as “born modern” if we define the modern family as featuring reduced kinship ties and a simplified family structure (Grimshaw, 1983, p. 36). The nuclear family was the predominant formation among Australian families in the country’s early days. There was never a feudal system that constrained family practices in Australia compared to what European or Chinese families experienced further back in history.

The general patterns of family practices in Australia have been shaped by various social and economic changes since the late nineteenth century. The growth in industrialization that took place in Australia during the 1870s and 1880s was critical. With economic prosperity came housing construction, and the improvement of transportation. Household conveniences that were commonly used eased domestic work to a significant extent.

Economic prosperity played a pivotal role in shaping family values and patterns in Australia. McDonald (1995b) summarized four orientations in the changes of values within Western society: autonomy, intimacy, aspiration and acceptance. Many things have happened to family life since then. The age at marriage has been delayed; personal values about children have also changed. Many women no longer perceive child rearing to be such an important part of their lives (McDonald, 1995a).

There have been continuous efforts to improve the lives of children in Australia since 1890. These efforts have included recognition of the concept of whole childhood, protection of children, and access to education. These protections and benefits contributed to child-centred families in the Western world during the mid twentieth century (Gilding, 1991; Goodnow, Burns & Russell, 1989;

McDonald, 1995b).

The feminist movement during the 1880s and 1890s in Australia significantly improved the social status of women. It challenged the traditional roles of women, and claimed equal roles for women and men at home, the right to divorce if a marriage was producing unhappiness, a right of access to professional work as well as a right to inherit family property in the case of a divorce. Women were also able to claim political participation during this era. Australian women had the right to vote as early as 1902 (Bottomley, 1983c). Australia was one of the earliest countries to ensure women's suffrage. During the 1920s it was common for women to work outside of the family, though the majority of them continued to perform domestic work (Grimshaw, 1983).

The introduction of contraceptive measures in the late nineteenth century brought the fertility rate down significantly. Family size was reduced from more than seven or eight children during the mid nineteenth century to two or three by the 1930s. Birth control also led to changes in general Australian attitudes toward proper gender roles in society and at home. Quality of life issues received increased attention. The infant mortality rate decreased and the life span of the population was prolonged (Grimshaw, 1983).

Australia is one of the few countries which has implemented a complete set of welfare programs for its people at the turn of the twentieth century, including pensions for the aged and invalid (1908), the baby bonus (1912), the child endowment (1941) and the widow's pension (1942). The introduction of "a family wage" in 1907 (Goodnow et al., 1989; Grimshaw, 1983; McDonald, 1995b) played an important role in shaping gender practices in Australia. According to this policy, a basic family wage would be set up for a man so that he could support his wife and three children. This policy ensured a basic living standard for each family. However, women's roles

were limited by government policy. During the 1930s, 5% of married women joined the work force (McDonald, 1995b). This family wage policy may be observed as not only gendered but patriarchal in terms of the gender roles it promoted in society and the home. The policy was removed in the early 1970s (Goodnow et al., 1989; McDonald, 1995b). However, the introduction of various policies and laws greatly improved the basic living standards of Australian families, as well as the social status of women and children in Australia.

Contemporary Changes in Family Practices

Family Practices during the Post-War Period

The end of WW II led to a return to more traditional family practices in Australia as well as in other Western countries. The rate of marriage became significantly higher and the age at marriage declined to the lowest level in history - 20.9 for women and 23.4 for men (Goodnow et al., 1989; McDonald, 1995a). This phenomenon has usually been explained as a consequence of the inhumane and cruel war which resulted in family life becoming more highly valued. In addition, marriage was seen as a sign of independence for young people and as an acceptable way to meet their needs for sexual intimacy. Family practices during this period were also influenced by the postwar immigration wave, which has been associated with the high rate of marriage. The lifting of the discriminatory immigration policy brought many female immigrants to Australia, and made up for the previous shortage of women. Rates of marriage were unprecedentedly high during this period. The wave of immigration also brought various traditional family practices to Australia, including the extended families found among many new immigrants (McDonald, 1995b).

The rising number of marriages produced the well-known baby boom in the 1950s in Australia. At the same time, the divorce rate was relatively low. Gender roles during this period conformed to the theory of the American scholar Parsons. Women played an “expressive” role at home, while men as breadwinners played an “instrumental” role. The expressive/instrumental role differentiation between spouses has been criticized since the 1970s as noted in Chapter Two. In the Australian context, a married woman was required to resign from the Australian Public Services before 1966 (McDonald, 1995b).

Family practices during the postwar period were also marked by increased attempts to achieve personal autonomy among the younger generation. This was expressed in various movements that were organized by young people for the purposes of claiming human rights, as well as opposing war, nuclear disarmament and apartheid during the 1960s. There were various debates concerning individual rights in the 1960s. In the Australian context, the reformers during the 1960s and 1970s were attempting to achieve “selfless” individualism. However, some observers believed that there was a shift of values occurring toward selfish individualism or narcissism (McDonald, 1995b, p. 35). Generally, Australian families began to enjoy a high standard of living, particularly in housing. Many families owned a relatively spacious house with front and backyard gardens. In 1966, three-quarters of the families owned their houses (Goodnow et al., 1989, p. 24).

Diversified Family Practices Since the 1970s

Family life in Australia has undergone many changes since the 1970s. Several of these changes are reviewed below.

Complexity of Households

Three major types of households were recognized in the 1991 Census: lone-person households

(22%), group households (5%) and family households (73%). Since the 1960s, the proportion of lone-person households has most likely risen due to the aging of the population, as well as divorce. Group households mainly featured people under the age of 35. Family households, probably the most complex, include married couples, remarried couples, de facto families, single-parent and mixed families as well as homosexual partners (McDonald, 1995a, pp. 19-20). Generally, the complexity of family formation reflects the alternatives individuals possess in terms of lifestyle. This complexity also makes it necessary to define all of the relative terms to avoid confusion.

Alternatives of Life Style

There have been a variety of family practices in Australian history. *Single life* existed in history and it has been increasing as a type of lifestyle in Australia (McDonald, 1995a). The *de facto* form of family has become increasingly prevalent in Australian society. A national survey of families in 1975 did not classify de facto family as a type, but indicated that 3.1% of men and 2.1% of women in the sample were not legally married (English & King, 1983, p. 13). In the 1990s, de facto was classified as a common family form. According to McDonald (1995a), among all couples, 5.7% were in de facto status in 1986, and 8.2% in 1991. In addition, many people engage in de facto relationships as a form of trial marriage. Only 16% of married couples had de facto status prior to marriage in 1975, but this figure rose to 50% during the 1990s. The majority of de facto couples were under the age of 35, and had no children (p. 21). *Same sex couples* have been increasing in the past decades. Though they have gradually obtained some public acceptance, they are not classified in the official statistics. It has been estimated that same sex couples make up about 1% of the total (p. 32). *One-parent families* are still a common type of family formation, as they were a century ago. About 88% of one parent families are headed by females, and 65% are created by divorce (p.

22). *Childless women* are also common in Australia: over 20% of women were lifetime childless in the nineteenth century. This figure declined to 8-10% in the 1930s to 1940s, and rose again to 20% in the 1960s, and has now returned to a level similar to that observed in the nineteenth century (McDonald, 1995a, pp. 43-44).

Contemporary Marital Status

The increasing varieties of personal life styles mentioned above have inevitably affected marriage rates and the age at marriage. The marriage rate for women aged 20-24 dropped from 64.3% in 1971 to 19.6% in 1991 which was at its lowest level in the past one hundred years. The marriage rate of men between ages 25-29 was 45.2% in 1991. It has gone back to the level which existed prior to WWII (McDonald, 1995a, p. 34). Consequently, the average age of women at the birth of their first-born has risen from the 20s to the 30s. Meanwhile, divorce rates have increased significantly. The divorce rate was 0.64 per thousand in 1960, 1.7 in 1975 and 4.5 in 1976 (Goodnow et al., 1989). About 35-40% of marriages end in divorce. The trend indicates that the divorce rate is likely to be higher among couples who have been married for a longer period of time than among those who have shorter marriages. For example, divorce within five years of marriage has increased from 1% since 1975 to 8% at present; 17% of couples divorced within 10 years, 28% within 20 years, and 30% within 37 years. The remarriage rate in Australia was higher before the 1970s. It has now dropped from 246 to 120 per thousand for men, and 215 to 101 per thousand for women. The divorce rate among second marriages was higher than that associated with first marriages (McDonald, 1995a, pp. 53-58). The 1996 census revealed that registered marriages account for 53% of the population older than 15 years old (see Table 5.2). The population of women divorced and separated is higher than that among men, and the never married population is relatively high.

Table 5.2. Australians (persons aged over 15 years), by registered marital status and sex, 1996 census

	% of all males	% of all females	% of total
Married	54.3	52.2	53.0
Separated	3.1	3.6	3.3
Divorced	5.7	7.0	6.4
Widowed	2.5	10.1	6.3
Never married	34.3	27.1	31.0
Total	6875721	7164582	14040303

*Percentages are not 100.0 per cent due to rounding.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1999. Australia Now - A Statistical Profile: Population, country of origin.

Gender Relations and Status of Women

Since the 1970s, various social movements and social changes have made contributions to improving the social status of women and reducing inequity between the two sexes.

The second feminist movement in the 1970s was a very significant event that directly or indirectly brought many changes to women's lives. This movement not only challenged conventional roles of women, but also allowed them to claim increased rights over their bodies, rights to obtain abortions and use contraception as well as receive higher education (Grimshaw, 1983, p. 39). The effects of this movement were expressed in many aspects of the social and legal system. The Federal Government established the Women's Bureau in 1963. In 1966 the government rescinded the regulation which required married women to resign from public sector employment. The government gave permission for women to obtain abortions in the late 1960s and early 1970s. An equal pay policy between the sexes was implemented. The family wage system noted before was abolished. The Child Care Act was enacted in 1972, which allowed maternity leave in the public sector (it was extended to the private sector in 1979). Mothers' benefits were allowed by federal

legislation. The first women's adviser to the Prime Minister was appointed in 1973; The Family Law Act was enacted in 1975; sex discrimination legislation in 1984; and the Child Care Assistance legislation in 1986, the Child Support Scheme in 1989 and so on (McDonald, 1995b). The series of changes in policies and laws led to increasing participation of women in the work force, and legitimated the basic rights of women in society.

The 1975 Family Law resulted in an increase in the divorce rate (English & King, 1983; Goodnow et al., 1989). This 1975 law eliminated the fundamental barriers to termination of a marriage. For example, the previous law required that a couple had to have been separated for at least five years to receive a divorce. The 1975 law permitted either of the parties to divorce the other based on the evidence of just a one-year separation. "Fault" or evidence of "wrongdoing" was not required by the 1975 legislation (McDonald, 1995a, p. 55).

Education is commonly viewed as a force toward upward mobility in society. This is especially the case among women. Statistics in 1967 showed that the ratio of boys and girls was 152:100 among 17-year-old high school students, but the ratio was reversed to 96:100 in 1983. Women in tertiary education increased from 10% in 1968 to 33% in 1982 (Goodnow et al., 1989, p. 25). The 1996 census shows that the number of women attending tertiary institutions is higher than that of men (Table 5.3). Women received prolonged levels of schooling, enabling them to have more opportunities to be employed, while leading them to delay marriage and childbirth. In practice, changes in the division of labour at home occurred along with increases in women's participation in paid work. Sharing domestic housework became a practical strategy among dual-earner families. Women's participation in the work force has nearly doubled from 37% in 1966 to 67% in 1992 (McDonald, 1995a, p. 38). In general, education has strongly influenced women's attitudes toward

family life compared to men.

Table 5.3. Australians' educational institution attending, by sex, 1996 census

	% of all males	% of all females	% of total
Primary	43.7	40.9	42.3
Secondary	29.8	29.2	29.5
Technical or further educational institution	11.1	10.5	10.8
University/Tertiary institution	14.2	16.5	15.4
Other	1.2	2.8	2.0
Total	2038106	2068310	4106416

* Percentages are not 100.0 per cent due to rounding.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1999. Australia Now - A Statistical Profile: Population, country of origin.

Equal opportunities for men and women in education have produced many changes in values and attitudes towards family, marriage and child rearing. A 1975 national survey showed that over 60% of women (at age 18-34) supported the view of differentiated sex role in marriage (English & King, 1983, p. 266). Studies by Goodnow and Associates (1989) also indicated that there were more Australians taking a less gendered view towards housework since the 1980s. For example, in a 1977-79 survey, 78% of fathers believed that women had a biological advantage in childcare. Later, in the 1981-1982 survey, the figure dropped to 58% (p. 32).

There has been a nascent pro-feminist men's movement which has emerged in the US and became involved in debates on gender issues. Undeniably the feminist movement has played a role in awakening men's consciences to rethink gender roles in society, and the inequity and unjust practices in employment and roles within the family context. It is noticeable that the men's movement is oriented and supported by broad empirical research on gender issues from various disciplinary perspectives including biology, psychology and sociology. Parsons' sex-role theory has

not only been challenged by feminists, but also questioned by men themselves as studies of masculinities have emerged.

There was an "explosion" of research and articles on fathers' roles and the division of labour at home within Western societies. In Australia, the 1975 national family survey by English and King (1983) found no significant evidence that men had begun to share more housework. Yet there has been a trend towards sharing of housework among Australian middle-class families in which wives were in the workforce. Since the 1975 survey, there has not been another national survey of the same scale in this area. However, some other studies of specific groups of families indicate changes in gender roles at home. For example, Russell's (1983) study, which was based on a specific group of families indicated that there were some obvious changes in male participation in domestic activities. The fathers in his sample reported spending more hours looking after their children by themselves than mothers did on average. Russell also pointed out that the attendance rate of fathers at the time of childbirth was as high as 80% in 1981 in Australia. There was also an increase in single father families, the result of fathers seeking custody of their children when marriages ended (pp. 186-188). On the whole, studies in Australia showed that the division of housework varied among different social classes and families.

Since the 1970s, there have been international milestones which have facilitated the advancement of women's status in many societies. For instance, the United Nations proclaimed 1975 as the International Women's Year and the period of 1976-1985 as the United Nations Decade for Women. The Nairobi World Conference on Women in 1985 proposed measures to remove existing obstacles impeding the advancement of women at all societal levels, including the family. An international consensus on strategies to be undertaken to facilitate improvement among women

was also elaborated in Copenhagen in 1980. Furthermore, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women was ratified in 1983 while the International Labour Organization Convention on workers with family responsibilities was approved in 1991 (McDonald, 1995b). Thus, joint national and international efforts have been made to improve the status of women and children at home and in society. The international atmosphere for advocacy has been undeniable and has challenged governments across the world to institute measures to change gendered policies in society at large.

Cultural Diversity: Major Ethnic Family Practices

Family practices in Australia, though predominated by Western culture, reveal an interesting ethnic dimension. This section will provide examples of ethnic families in the Australian context which are based on their significant population and cultural diversity. These ethnic families include: Aboriginal families, Greek-Australian families, Italian-Australian families, Latin American families, Philippine families, and Vietnamese families. The China-born population is significant among ethnic groups, yet will not be discussed here. The discussions of these ethnic families are largely based on Hartley's (1995) collection of studies on ethnic families in Australia.

The indigenous Aboriginal families are distinctive from European families in many ways. An Aboriginal family often referred to a group of 200-300 relatives. Blood relations are not necessary (Barwick, 1974; McDonald, 1995a). Aboriginal values are significantly oriented to spiritual and physical survival as well as the land. Compared with White Australian families, Aboriginal families show relatively higher rates of one-parent families. In the 1991 census, one-

parent families among Aboriginal society make up one fourth of total families, which is much higher than the non-Aboriginal family figure of 9%. The Aboriginal population exhibits a high birth rate, low life expectancy and is younger compared with Australians on the whole. Aboriginal families also exhibit multiple family households and bigger family size. They are also likely to live in caravans or camp out (E. Bourke & C. Bourke, 1995, pp. 50-51). Aboriginal family practices have changed to a significant extent since the twentieth century. More Aboriginal women went to towns and cities to receive an education and find employment. Intermarriage has been practiced more often by Aboriginal women than men. Younger generations are likely to adopt mainstream family values, and prefer de facto family formations. Family practices are diverse among Aboriginal families today.

Greek kinship ties are very strong. Within the Greek community, single parent families are rare; marriage is desired and is considered a significant milestone. Nuclear families are common, but not multi-family households. The percentage of Greek women participating in the work force is higher than that of Australian-born women. According to Tsolidis (1995, p. 134), during the 1950s to mid 1970s, 56% of Greek women were in the work force, compared to only 9.2% of Australia-born women. The divorce rate has been increasing, but is still lower than that found among other ethnic groups. The intermarriage rate among Greeks is higher than that observed among other ethnic groups. Dowry still exists, but faces resistance from the younger generation Greek families residing within their own communities tended to sustain more traditional customs. Generally, Greek women enjoyed more freedom and equity compared to in the home country.(Bottomley, 1979).

Italian migrant families faced a shift from a rural to an urban context as well as a different culture. Among Italian families a variety of family types among the second and third generations are

noticeable (Vasta, 1995). A certain degree of assimilation of Italians into Australian mainstream culture has been observed. The divorce rate rose among Italian families in the 1960s, but has remained stable since the 1980s. The divorce rate, the proportion of de facto relationships, the incidence of single parents, and the birth rate out of wedlock among ethnic families are still lower among Italians than among Australians as a whole (Hartley, 1995). Italians have shown great tolerance to the diversity of sexual practices in Australia. Intermarriage has gradually become acceptable among Italians. In general, the social status of Italian women has improved in Australia (Vasta, 1995).

Filipino families are usually extended and feature high proportions of two-parent families with dependent children. Marriage is still important to Filipinos. Parents' approval of a marriage is commonly sought and Filipino weddings are usually lavish. Premarital sex is not encouraged and the birth rate of Filipino women is higher than observed among other ethnic groups. The divorce rate is relatively low among Filipinos in Australia. The Catholic religion plays a vital role in this. Women are expected to take responsibility for domestic work and child rearing. Women's roles are often seen as complementary to men's roles. Filipino women are also considered as powerful because of the tremendous contributions they make within family. Many Filipino migrants send money back home to support relatives there (Soriano, 1995).

Latin Americans have always been treated as one ethnic group mainly because of similarities in their social and economic status and cultural beliefs as well as the Roman Law system. Latin Americans have three origins: indigenous or Amerindian, European and African. Culturally, Spanish and Portuguese are more predominant. Latin American societies tend to be patriarchal and authoritarian. Marriage is the only form of family recognised by the authorities. The Catholic

religion plays a very important role in family life. Divorce and separation are not recognised by the church and neither is remarriage. The Latin American family structure is mixed with both nuclear and extended types. Gender roles at home are directly related to gender images. Women are supposed to take major responsibility for domestic work, even if they are employed outside the family. Changes in family practices have occurred with time spent in Australia. The divorce rate is higher among Latin American migrants in Australia compared to the situation in their home countries. This can be seen as an effect of "cultural shock" or post-immigration stresses. More women enter the work force in Australia compared to in the home country. The status of women has improved in Australia.

Many Vietnamese migrants were refugees who arrived in Australia by boat in the mid 1970s. Vietnamese migrants were characterized by traumatic experiences and a serious imbalance of sex and age groups. Vietnamese families in Australia have changed as their length of residence in Australia has increased. They have adopted a more mainstream family structure, but with modifications. For example, nuclear families are common, but residential proximity among families is practiced. There has also been an improvement of women's status. The 1991 census indicated that 59% of Vietnam-born married women participated in the work force. Yet women are still supposed to take the major roles in housework and caring for the children. Vietnamese intend to have big families. 1991 census indicated that 38% of Vietnam-born women had more than three children. Traditional values are still well maintained in the Vietnamese community. The majority of people in the community hold negative attitudes toward premarital sexual relations, cohabitation and divorce (Nguyen & Ho, 1995, pp. 228-236).

Overall, ethnic migrants' families are facing challenges in the process of settlement. The

changes are increasing along with the length they live in Australia.

Summary

Australian family practices have been changing since the 1970s. In general, family life in Australia tends to be more diversified, flexible and complex. Registered marriage has no longer been seen as necessarily the best choice for the individual. De facto type of family is on a rise since the 1970s. Divorce rate is high in Australia compared to that in China. Single life, lifetime childless and same sex couple alternatives of lifestyles tend to be increasing in contemporary Australia. Australian family practices, though predominantly of Western culture, reveal an interesting ethnic dimension. Indigenous and ethnic family practices, which represent a combination of their own traditions and mainstream culture, contribute to the current complexity of family practices. However, these migrants become increasingly part of mainstream the longer they remain in Australia.

PART III
SAMPLE PROFILE

CHAPTER SIX

A SOCIAL PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

This chapter is intended to provide a picture of the group of 40 respondents I interviewed for this study from August 1997 to May 1998. The discussion is organized as follows: (1) demographic data; (2) marital status and family structure; (3) education and English level; (4) employment and occupational status; (5) income and remittances; (6) religion and socialization. This chapter offers a comparison of the sample with the larger Chinese population in Australia based on the 1991 and 1996 census data.

Demographic Data

Table 6.1. The age distribution of the sample on arrival, by sex

Age range	Male	Female	Total
20-24	1	2	3
25-29	3	10	13
30-34	6	5	11
35-39	4	2	6
40-44	1	1	2
45+	4	1	5
	19	21	40

Table 6.1 shows that the respondents most often migrated when aged 25-35, particularly the females. The increasing mobility of relatively young women is associated with their general educational level, and the rising socio-economic status of women in China. The increasing mobility of Chinese women is apparent in the 1991 census data which indicates that the number of China-

born females in Australia increased 95% between 1986 and 1991. In 1991 the total population of China-born females was 36,505 while the number of males was 41,294, a total which exceeded the population of females by 12% (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1994, Community Profile, 1991 Census: China-born, p. 5). In the 1996 census, however, the female population numbered 51,388, which was 6% higher than the enumerated male population of 48,111.⁸

Table 6.2. Home origin of the sample in China

City	No.
Beijing, state capital	10
Shanghai* (port city), Jiangsu province	12
Guangzhou*, capital of Guangzhou province	8
Fuzhou, capital of Fujian province	3
Nanjing, capital of Jiangsu province	1
Shenzhen, Special Economic Zone	2
Wuhan, capital of Hubei province	1
Tianjin* (port city), Hebei province	1
Shi Jia Zhuang, capital of Hebei province	1
Xiamen (port city), Fujian province	1
Total	40

* Cities directly under the administration of the central government.

Table 6.2 makes two statements. The first reveals the predominantly urban background of the sample. It is impressive that most of the respondents came from big cities located in the coastal regions. In general, urban people have more opportunity to go abroad. They are usually well informed and have access to various resources and information that persons residing in small towns and rural areas may not have. The second message is that the regions most of the respondents came from were primarily located along the east coast where the general living standard is higher than in

⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1997, 1996 Census of Population and Housing: Ethnicity Thematic Profile, China (excluding Taiwan), Table E01.

the land-locked regions.

Table 6.3. Year of arrival of the sample, by sex

	Male	Female	Subtotal
1996	2	0	2
1991 - 1995	6	7	13
1986 - 1990	11	11	22
1981 - 1985	0	2	2
Before 1980	0	1	1
Total	19	21	40

Table 6.4. Year of arrival of China-born population in Australia, by sex, 1996 census

Year	% of all males	% of all females	% of total*
1996	5.0	7.7	6.3
1991 - 1995	24.9	36.0	30.6
1986 - 1990	46.6	32.8	39.5
1981 - 1985	8.4	9.1	8.7
Before 1980	13.6	12.8	13.2
Not stated	1.5	1.6	1.6
Total	47022	49726	96748

* Percentage is not 100.0 per cent due to rounding.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (1997). 1996 Census of Population and Housing: Ethnicity thematic profile, China (excluding Taiwan), Chinese.

Table 6.3 reveals that the majority of the sample arrived between 1987 and 1992, a finding which is in conformity with the 1996 census in Table 6.4. This period has been recognized as the time of the peak migration wave in China. This massive flow of Chinese from China to other countries was also observed in Canada at the same time (X. F. Liu, 1997; Tian, 1999; Zhang, 1995).

Table 6.5 (see next page) demonstrates that most respondents held private passports, which represents a social change in China and may be tied to the open-door policy. This changing policy played a direct role in creating the contemporary diaspora of Chinese throughout the world. The second part of the table shows initial immigration status. It is clear that most of them arrived in

Australia as students as noted in Chapter One.

Table 6.5. Passport and visa categories of the sample

<u>Passport*</u>	<u>N=40</u>
Official	2
Private	38
<u>Visa</u>	<u>N=40</u>
Students	23
English language course	19
Degree course	4
Independent immigrant	11
Family reunion	6

*There are two kinds of passports in addition to the passport for diplomats: official passport and private passport. An official passport implies that the trip is sponsored and financially supported by the government; the private passport means that the trip is based on a personal purpose and all the costs are paid for by the individual.

Table 6.5 also shows that one-fourth of the respondents came as independent immigrants, who arrived primarily in the 1990s. Though the number of independent immigrants is small in the sample, it is growing and shows that there is another option for some Chinese to go abroad in addition to the student route. The increasing number of independent immigrants also indicates the overall economic changes in China.

Table 6.6. Overseas networks for migration of the sample

	<u>N=40</u>
Having relatives in Australia	10
Having friends in Australia	12
Having no relatives/friends in Australia	18

Table 6.6 reveals that a majority of respondents had no kinship assistance within Australia. The traditional kinship-chain migration model does not apply. Assistance upon arrival may be obtained

from kin but may also come from friends or professional links.

Marital Status and Family Structure

Table 6.7. Marital status of the sample, by sex

	On arrival		In 1997/1998	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Married	12	9	14	19
Separated	0	0	1	0
Divorced	0	0	0	0
Widow	0	0	0	0
Not married	7	12	4	2
Total	19	21	19	21

Table 6.8. Marital status of China-born population (persons aged over 15 years) by sex, 1996 census

	% of all males	% of all females	% of total *
Registered marriage	75.2	69.4	72.2
Separated	2.1	3.0	2.6
Divorced	3.3	5.2	4.3
Widow	1.7	10.5	6.3
Never married	17.7	12.0	14.7
Total	44159	47713	91872

*Percentages may not be 100.0 per cent due to rounding.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (1997). 1996 Census of Population and Housing: Ethnicity thematic profile, China (excluding Taiwan), Chinese.

Table 6.7 shows that on the whole, respondents were just as likely to be married or single upon arrival in Australia. However, men were more likely to have been married than women. Table 6.7 also shows that single women were more likely to get married in the host country compared to single men, and they were also more likely to marry an Australian-born partner.

In comparison, the 1996 census (Table 6.8) indicated that among the China-born population registered marriages were predominant, though other family forms also existed. Hon and Coughlan's (1997, p. 127) study, which I discussed in Chapter One, indicated that the marriage rate of China-born migrants was higher than that among other Chinese groups. For example, the marriage rate of the China-born was about 65%, which was 10-25% higher than Chinese groups from Hong Kong, Macao, Singapore, Malaysia and Taiwan. However the percentage of the separated and divorced among the China-born was higher than in other groups as well. The long period of separation from spouses due to the four-year temporary visa status created by the 1989 political incident was likely a major factor.

Table 6.9. Family size of the sample, by number of children

	Before arrival	After arrival
Childless family	4	6
One-child family	14	20
Two-child family	3	7
Three-child family		1*
Total	21	34

* This couple had one child who was born in China and two children born in Australia.

Table 6.10. Family structure of the sample

	<u>N=40</u>
Nuclear family	
Couple without children	6
Couple with children	22
"Astronaut" family	3
Extended family	3
One person household	6

Tables 6.9 and 6.10 show that the majority of the respondents were in a nuclear family structure with on average three to four members, which is not much different from the average family size in Australia. The small family size may be a consequence of the one-child policy in China. In Table 6.9, the number of two-child families is noticeable, which might indicate a tendency to have one additional child in the post-migration stage of settlement. In addition, the number of childless couples was noticeable, which might indicate a delay in child bearing due to migration status. Single parent families were not observed among this small sample, but were present in the larger China-born population. Hon and Coughlan (1997, p. 132) indicated that 6.9% of the China-born population they studied were single parents. "Astronaut" families were found in this sample though this type of family type was not as common as among migrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan (Mak & Chan, 1995).

Education and English Level

Table 6.11. Educational qualifications of the sample earned in China and Australia, by sex

	In China		In Australia				Total
	Completed		Completed		In progress		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Higher degree (Ph.D and MA)	3	3	2	5	4	4	21
Postgraduate diploma	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Bachelor degree	10	13	1	2	0	0	26
Undergraduate and associate diploma/vocational certificate	4	3	0	1	1	1	10
Secondary certificate	2	2	0	0	0	0	4
Not stated	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	19	21	3	8	5	6	

Table 6.12. Educational qualifications of China-born population (persons aged over 15 years), by sex, 1996 census

	% of all males	% of all females	% of total
Higher degree	13.3	6.6	10.1
Postgraduate diploma	2.2	2.5	2.3
Bachelor degree	34.6	31.4	33.2
Undergraduate and associate diploma and qualification	31.0	34.3	32.5
Not clearly stated	19.0	25.3	22.0
Total	22863	20753	43616

* Percentages may not be 100.0 per cent due to rounding.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (1997). 1996 Census of Population and Housing: Ethnicity thematic profile, China (excluding Taiwan), Chinese.

Table 6.11 reveals that the educational level of this sample was relatively high, about three quarters of the respondents possessed a university degree (and most of the others had a tertiary diploma) upon arrival. Table 6.12 also shows that the number of respondents who continued their education in the host country was high. About one fourth of the informants had obtained an Australian degree and an additional one fourth were attending various educational programs. In the 1996 census, slightly less than half of the China-born population had earned a university degree, a rate which was higher than the Australia-born population but lower than the study sample.

Regarding gender differences in education, the sample showed that the educational level of females was almost as high as that of the male respondents on the whole, and more female than male respondents were attending educational programs in the host country (Table 6.11). This pattern was identical to that of the Australian population as a whole, in which more women were attending higher educational programs compared to men (see Table 5.3).

Table 6.13. English level of the sample by sex (self reporting)

	Male	Female	Subtotal
Very well/well	9	14	23
Less well/not at all	10	7	17
Total	19	21	40

Table 6.14. Proficiency in English of China-born population (persons aged over 5 years), by sex, 1996 census (self reporting)

	% of all males	% of all females	% of total
Very well/well	58.5	46.1	52.3
Less well/not at all	40.8	53.2	47.5
Not stated	0.8	0.8	3.3
Total	47934	51198	99132

* Percentages may not be 100.0 per cent due to rounding.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (1997). 1996 Census of Population and Housing: Ethnicity thematic profile, China (excluding Taiwan), Chinese.

Table 6.15. Percentages of non-English speaking population of Chinese groups (persons aged over 15 years), by country of birth, 1991 census

	Hong Kong	Macao	Malaysia	China	Singapore	Taiwan
Male	1.5	4.0	0.3	9.6	0.3	3.8
Female	2.9	4.5	1.3	18.7	0.7	6.0

Source: Data selected from Hon and Coughlan (1997), p. 141.

In Table 6.13, more than half of the respondents reported that they spoke English well, which was roughly consistent with the larger group in Table 6.14. Female respondents reported a higher level of English proficiency compared to males (Table 6.13), though the reverse was true among the Chinese-born population as a whole.

Table 6.15 also showed that the “non-English” speaking rate of the China-born population

was higher than that among Chinese-origin groups from other countries. The lower English proficiency among migrants from China was related to obvious historical and social political factors such as the lack of a full colonization history and purposive resistance to Western influences during Mao's regime which mandated that the study of English not be emphasized in schools.

Employment and Occupational Status

Table 6.16. Employment status of the sample before and after arrival, by sex

	Before arrival		After arrival	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Full-time	17	20	16	15
Part-time			0	3
Not employed (studying)	1	1	2	3
Retired	1		1	
Total	19	21	19	21

Table 6.17. Employment status of China-born population (persons aged 25-54 years), by sex, 1996 census

	% of all males	% of all females	% of total*
Full-time	71.9	58.4	66.2
Part-time	15.8	23.5	19.1
Not employed	10.1	15.6	12.4
Not stated	2.2	2.5	2.3
Total	25835	19259	45094

*Percentages may not be 100.0 per cent due to rounding.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (1997). 1996 Census, Population and Housing: Ethnicity thematic profile, China (excluding Taiwan).

Tables 6.16 and 6.17 show that full-time employment was more common among men compared to

women both in the sample and in the China-born population as a whole. It is obvious that women's participation in the work force was lower in Australia compared to the situation in China. The employment status of the sample was consistent with the larger population. Compared with other Chinese-origin groups, the China-born group possessed a relatively high rate of labour force participation. Hon and Coughlan (1997, p. 150) indicated, for example, that about 64.6% of the China-born population participated in the labour force in the 1991 census, compared to only 28.5% for the Taiwan group.

Table 6.18. A comparison of occupational status of the sample in China and Australia, by sex

	In China			In Australia		
	Male	Female	Subtotal	Male	Female	Subtotal
Managers/Administrators	3	3	6	0	1	1
Professionals (educators, medical doctors and engineers and related associate professional)	10	14	24	5	11	16
Technicians and associate professionals	2	3	5	1	2	3
Clerical & service workers	0	0	0	0	0	0
Trades persons and related workers	2	0	2	0	0	0
Intermediate production & transport workers	0	0	0	6	3	9
Labour & related workers	0	0	0	4	1	5
Student	1	1	2	2	3	5
Retired	1	0	1	1	0	1
Total	19	21	40	19	21	40

Table 6.19. Occupations of China-born population (persons aged over 15 years), by sex, 1996 census

	% of all males	% of all females	% of total*
Managers/Administrators	7.9	4.6	6.2
Professionals	15.4	13.9	14.1
Technicians and associate professionals	16.9	9.5	13.1
Clerical & service workers	23.1	5.7	17.2
Trades persons and related workers	11.0	27.9	15.0
Intermediate production & transport workers	14.6	16.5	14.7
Labour & related workers	15.2	17.4	15.4
Inadequately described	1.3	1.1	1.2
Not stated	2.9	3.4	3.0
Total	24040	17913	43953

* Percentages may not be 100.0 per cent due to rounding.

Source: 1996 Census of Population and Housing. Ethnicity Thematic Profile, Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Among most of the sample, occupational status had been higher previous to arrival in Australia (Table 6.18). Though quite a few of the informants engaged in academic work, it was obvious that several respondents who had earned university degrees in China had taken jobs below their qualifications in Australia. Compared to the larger group in the 1996 census (Table 6.19), Hon and Coughlan (1997) also indicated that over half of the China-born population engaged in manual occupations, which was twice the proportion of Australian workers. This might be explained by their (i.e. Chinese) lower level of English language ability, and a reluctance by Australian employers to accept educational qualifications earned in China (p. 154). It may be assumed that with increasing length of residence in the host country, and as more people earn local qualifications, there will be an increase of opportunities for the China-born Chinese to pursue professional jobs. Local qualifications, however, might be seen as an important factor that increase employment opportunities.

Income and Remittances

Table 6.20. Individual and family annual income of the sample, by sex (self-reporting)

Income scale (A\$)	Individual income		Family income
	Male	Female	
Under 10,000		3	
10,000-20,000	4	5	1
20,000-30,000	10	8	2
30,000-40,000	1	4	3
40,000-50,000	4	1	7
50,000+			21
Total	19	21	34

* The income calculation includes scholarship.

Table 6.21. Median individual* and median family annual income (A\$) of Chinese groups, by country of birth and sex, 1991 census

Country of birth	Median individual income		Median family income
	Male	Female	
China	18637	15955	32015
Hong Kong	27641	21026	40014
Macau	26639	21001	40878
Malaysia	30048	23015	45881
Singapore	28031	21878	41709
Taiwan	21604	17001	23321

* Employed workers over 15 years old.

Source: Hon and Coughlan (1997), pp. 160-161.

The majority of respondents earned \$10,000-30,000. Hon and Coughlan (1997, p. 160) showed that in 1991, among the employed workers aged over 15, 63% of males and 59% of females had an annual income between A\$12,000 and A\$30,000. The average individual income of the China-born cohort was A\$18,637 for male and A\$15,955 for female, which were the lowest among the two

sexes of all Chinese-origin groups. Since a significant number of respondents in this study are in the process of studying, and they arrived very recently, their low income status may be temporary.

Compared with the larger China-born group, the family income of the sample was impressive. A significant number of families earned over A\$50,000 annually. Two factors might have contributed to this. First, most families were dual-earners, a characteristic which makes possible a significant improvement in family income; second, some respondents arrived as business migrants with a higher economic status.

Table 6.22. Remittances of the sample

	Male	Female	Total
Regular remittance	6	3	9
Occasional remittance	8	6	14
No Remittance	5	12	17
Total	19	21	40

Table 6.22 shows that there are more men than women who sent money back home to China. This suggests that men, not women, may have obligations or they are expected to support their parents and relatives. This is in conformity with Chinese culture. The three male respondents from a rural background all sent money back home.

Remittances from the host country to the home country are a common practice among migrants from developing countries (Simon, 1999), especially those who came from rural areas. Overseas Chinese do have a tradition of remittances, as noted in Chapter Four. Yet data from this study do not provide strong evidence of remittance. Some respondents sent money back because they left their children with relatives in China.

Religion and Socialization

Table 6.23. Religious practices of the sample before and after arrival in Australia, by sex

	Before arrival		After arrival	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Christian	0	6	3	6
Buddhist and others	0	0	0	0
No religion	19	15	16	15
Total	19	21	19	21

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (1997). 1996 Census of Population and Housing: Ethnicity thematic profile, China (excluding Taiwan), Chinese.

Table 6.24. Religious practices of China-born population, by sex, 1996 census

	% of all males	% of all females	% of total*
Christian	12.6	15.5	14.1
Buddhist and others	8.0	10.5	9.3
No religion	72.7	66.8	70.0
Inadequately described and not stated	6.7	7.1	7.0
Total	48110	51388	99498

* Percentage may not be 100.0 per cent due to rounding.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (1997). 1996 Census of Population and Housing: Ethnicity thematic profile, China (excluding Taiwan), Chinese.

Religious practices have not been encouraged in China since 1949. In this sample the six female Christians originated from Christian families who lived in the coastal and southern regions of China. Christian practices in these regions are directly associated with Western influences introduced in the nineteenth century. There were three male respondents from non-religious families who became Christians. In general, migrants from China show less participation in religious activities. According to Hon and Coughlan (1997, p. 144), the China-born group in the 1991 census showed the highest rate of both sexes in the category of "no religion" among other Chinese groups.

The 1996 census (Table 6.24) further confirmed this characteristic of the China-born population.

Table 6.25. Socializing

	No. (n=40)
Mainly with Chinese	24
Mainly with non-Chinese	10
Both Chinese and non-Chinese	6

Though most respondents socialized primarily within their own ethnic group, the proportion of respondents who mainly socialized with non-Chinese was impressive. A lack of English ability, cultural and value differences as well as their relatively disadvantaged socio-economic situation might have limited socializing with non-Chinese.

Summary

The home origin of this group of Chinese represented a wider diversity of regions than those found among Chinese immigrants of the nineteenth century. Kinship chain migration exists, but kinship networks are not the only stimulus for migration. Friends and other networks are also important. In general, the Chinese migrants in this sample displayed, compared with the total China-born population, high educational levels, negligible religious affiliations, a relatively higher socio-economic status. In other respects, the characteristics of the sample were consistent with the larger population, including marital status and family structure. In general, the recent arrivals of the 1990s possessed a higher economic status than the earlier arrivals of the 1980s. The sample fits well with the larger Chinese population which settled in Australia during this particular period of time.

PART IV

MOTIVATION AND PERCEPTIONS

CHAPTER SEVEN

MOTIVATION FOR MIGRATION

Introduction

The issue of motivation for immigration has been poorly studied, and the “debate on these matters has thus been governed more by assumptions and impressions than hard evidence” (Rumbaut, 1990, p. 11, cited from Zhang, 1995, p. 116). What is particularly lacking in most of the existing studies is a closer examination of the social context. The issue of why some people decided to come, while others did not, as well as the “push” and “pull” factors embedded in environments, all have implications for the family life of Chinese migrants in Australia. In the nineteenth century Chinese migrants came to Australia seeking gold and a fortune. Migrants of the late twentieth century have sought to improve the lives of themselves and their families through different means. This chapter will examine these issues both individually and as part of a group.

The examination of motivations proved to be a difficult task in this study. Motivation itself is complex, and is in a sense accumulative through previous life experiences. As an insider, I understand that people in China used to be suspicious of anyone who asked them about their personal opinions. The political impacts on their personal life would not vanish as quickly as policy actually changed. Very likely, some respondents may not have provided me with the true reasons for their migration. Besides, this group was diverse in age, education and occupation, home origins and social economic status. The best way to assess the motivations here will be to not only examine what informants overtly stated, but also to look at their personal history along with some of the clues that respondents gave in other portions of the interviews.

I will first present a table which lists all the major reasons given by these respondents regarding their decision to migrate. This study did not use a list of presumed reasons for migration. The table is based on what respondents stated, classified by the researcher. The majority of respondents gave more than two reasons. Subsequently I will try to link these individual statements with the social and individual contexts including personal family history, as well as educational and occupational background. Statistical evidence is provided throughout the chapter.

General Comments on the Reasons Stated for Migration

Table 7 reveals a diversity of motivations for migration compared with the Chinese migrants of the nineteenth century for whom making a fortune was a clear and unanimous purpose. This might be related to the diverse age, life cycle and social background of these respondents in their home country. People at different stages of the life cycle have different goals and purposes in their lives.

The following are discussions for each statement.

Table 7. Reasons stated for going abroad, by sex

	Male (n=19)	Female (n=21)
A) Seeking a better life	13	15
B) Seeing the world and widening experience	10	6
C) Western education and qualifications	7	6
D) Earning money	8	3
E) Seeking democracy and personal choice	5	3
F) Good for children's future	5	3
G) Family reunion	3	5
H) Others	4	2

Seeking a Better Life

This is the most popular reason given by respondents. There were no significant sex differences in expressing this reason. The educational level for the 28 respondents ranged from high school to

master's and doctoral degrees; their occupations in China included engineer, technician, accountant, government officer and university teacher. Zhang (1995) and Tian (1999) both indicated the desire for a better life as the major motive for migration. The general economic status and living standards in China are still lower than those in the West. Here I offer one example to give a good illustration:

Frankly speaking, my life wasn't bad at all by our Chinese standard in China, but we seek a better life than this. If living standards here were not higher, or not much better than in China, none of us would like to come... (Qian Dali, male, early 30s)

Qian had earned a university degree in China, and was a technician in a state-owned factory in Beijing. Working in the nation's capital was seen as a privilege and admired by many.

Seeing the World and Widening Experience

There were more men than women who expressed this motivation. This statement showed that these respondents had a sojourner nature at the beginning of their migration decision-making. The statement also indicated that due to the limited contact between China and the West, people were curious about the West. In this sample, 38 out of the 40 respondents reported that they had never been abroad before they came to Australia. In general this statement reflected the political relaxation in China, and the reality that individuals had more personal choice in their lives. Here is one typical example.

I had worked for five years after I graduated from the International Business College. I worked in a factory and office work. I was very comfortable in China compared to my life here. Yet, you know what, I just did not want to spend my whole life in a factory. I wanted to see the world, and get more experience... (Lei Ming, male, mid 30s, from Shanghai).

Western Education and Qualifications

It is noticeable that the number of women who expressed the motivation to obtain Western qualifications was almost the same as men. Respondents in this category primarily had academic

jobs in China, so going overseas was seen as a continuity within their career development. And Western qualifications are also highly valued within China. Here is an example to give a good illustration.

My purpose of coming here was simple, it was to obtain Western qualifications and some Western working experience, and then to go back. To tell you the truth, my income in Guangzhou was quite high, and I also had an apartment which was provided to me by my institution... (Zhang Qiang, male, early 30s, was a researcher from an institute in Guangzhou).

Earning Money

According to conventional migration theory, economic interest is a major motivation for migration. In this sample there were only 11 respondents (nine men and two women) who overtly mentioned this motivation. This is probably an understatement given the average living standard in China. Perhaps "seeking a better life" (above) also included perceived economic benefits. I also believe that respondents who did not express these motives in an outright manner may have been displaying a cultural trait. In general talking about money during Mao's period was regarded as "dirty", "capitalist" and "unscholarly", particularly among intellectuals.

There is also an obvious gender difference in this category: more men than women expressed an economic motivation. A financial motivation, however, seems to have had no significant association with the educational level of respondents. Among the 11 respondents (eight men and three women), four possessed university degrees, one had a MA degree, four had tertiary certificates and two only had high school certificates. Yet, it was found that a financial motivation was somewhat associated with their occupations in China. Among the men, six worked in the industrial field, one had been a college lecturer who taught commercial business, and one worked at a research institution. Among the women, one worked for a business company, and the other two

worked for the government. The respondents who were involved in business and worked in the factory seemed to be more open in talking about money. This is best seen in the following two examples.

When I first arrived here, many people asked me why I came. I told them honestly that I wanted to make money and then go back to China... (*Wan Jun*, male, early 40s from Shanghai where he worked in a state-owned factory; at the time of the interview in Australia he was self-employed, and ran a small business).

I originally planned to stay a few years, to make some money and then go back home. Everybody knows that foreign currency has a higher value in China. You earn \$100 here, if you bring it back, that means more than \$500... (*Sun Gang*, male, early forties from Shanghai; he was a senior technician in a factory; he now is working in factory).

Seeking Democracy and Personal Choices

There were only eight respondents who expressed this motivation for coming to Australia. Among the eight, there are more men than women. There is a general impression that men are more interested in political issues than women. All but one of the eight respondents possessed a university degree; their occupations varied from having been professionals to factory workers in China. Their ages ranged from the early 30s to mid 40s. Generally speaking, the motivations for migration may be seen as individualized, which is best seen in Ma Ke's words:

I was not satisfied with the social system in China and the social relations among people; I was interested in Western culture, and believed that the Western system was better, and fit me... I used to listen to foreign radio, and read a lot about the West... (*Ma Ke*, male, mid 30s, from Shanghai; he is currently self-employed).

Good for Children's Future

It is interesting to note that more males than females expressed concern for their children's future. The majority of respondents in this category were past 40; obviously, respondents at an older age are more likely to mention their children's future as the major consideration in their migration. The

following are two examples.

The reasons we immigrated to Australia are two: my sister and brother all immigrated here, so I would like to join them. Another important reason is for my children, who would have more opportunities to develop themselves in a western society. (Wu Lin, male, over 50s, was a professor in the Zhongshan University. He, together with his family came in the late 1980s as skilled migrant. He had two teenage children, including one whom had graduated from university, and the other who was still studying for his degree).

I believed that immigration to Australia would be good for my son. He is 15 now. I am sure he would be unlikely to get into a university if we were in China where there was fierce competition, my son was spoiled. Here he might be able to get in, and also there are more opportunities here. Coming here is definitely not so good for me, I don't know English and have no special skills... (Wang Xia, male, early 40s, was an administrator in a governmental organization)

Migration for children might be seen as a trend within the contemporary diaspora because of the One Child Policy and the fierce competition in China's higher education system.

Family Reunion

More women than men came as spouses. It is a common practice among migrants that men go first, and women and children follow. It is worth noting that all of these women had university degrees, and worked in the professions before they came. However, on account of marriage, children and family reunion, women are most likely to give up their pursuits to follow their husbands. This is best seen in Zhao Xiaoyan's words below,

I brought my daughter to join my husband here in 1991. To tell you the truth, I was not interested in coming here. You know that I had a senior position in the government - I was chief of a division...you can't understand how hard it was for me to make this decision . . . very frustrating.

Xiaoyan had been also a Christian before she came, so religious beliefs were a factor in her decision to migrate.

There were two families in which women came as “pioneers”, and men followed. This situation contrasts with traditional gender role practices as well as the migration model.

However, the diaspora of this group to Australia involved many other social and personal factors which played a “push” role. In the following section, I will examine the motivations of the migrants from three aspects: social and political impacts, family background and educational and occupational factors.

Social and Political Impacts

The Impact of Political Changes

The end of the Cultural Revolution brought tremendous changes within all spheres of life in China. Individuals had more choices in their lives than previously. The resistance to the West in China has been eroded by the Open-Door Policy and the increasing contact with the West since the 1970s. The change from rigidity to relaxation has been a trigger for the sudden outflow of Chinese from China to Australia. In this sample, many respondents remarked that they wanted to go abroad because what they had heard from friends was different from what had been taught by the authorities. There was a curiosity about the West among this sample, and a typical example is presented below.

My purpose for coming abroad was just to see the world. You know that China was isolated from the rest of the world for a long time, and the Cultural Revolution also lasted such a long time, ten years. Now that the Open-Door policy offered us the chance of to go abroad, why we do not take it? We want to see the other parts of the world... Coincidentally one of my friends came back from Australia and told me how good it was, which really inspired me to go...(Zheng Wei, female, late 30s).

This curiosity about the West showed the prolonged impact of the Cultural Revolution among the Chinese in China. This impact influenced several generations. The following is a typical case.

The Case of Jia Jun

Jia Jun, a male in the mid 40s was married and had one son at 15. He was a college teacher in China, and now works in a furniture factory in Sydney. He arrived in Australia by himself in 1988, and his wife and son joined him in 1990. He stated the reasons for his migration were to make money and to improve his life generally. What he said was surely true, but his life history revealed reasons beyond this. Jia came from a relatively privileged family. His father held a senior position in the provincial government. During the Cultural Revolution, his father was criticized, “knocked down”, and then died. Because of his father’s problem, Jia was assigned to work in a factory for several years until he passed an examination to get into a university in the late 1970s. After graduation, he taught in a college. However, he felt discriminated against and was not happy with his life in China. He was still upset about his father’s death, and believed his father was a victim of the Revolution. His story impressed me a great deal, and I had a strong sense that this was probably a major reason for him coming to Australia. The disruptive and negative impacts of the Cultural Revolution permeated all other aspects of several informants’ life experiences. In this sample, respondents who were over 35 years old all remembered some effects of the Revolution, and many expressed a continued distrust of government and politics.

The 1989 Tiananmen Massacre

The 1989 Tiananmen Massacre also played a decisive role for the diaspora of the Chinese. The consequences of the 1989 event led thousands of Chinese students to change their sojourner status into a permanent residency in the major Western countries. This Incident had a significant role in their choice to migrate. I present two such examples below.

The Case of Xiao Zhu

Xiao Zhu, female, in her early 30s, had earned a BA degree in China, and majored in computers. She now works for a business company. When she was asked why she decided to move, she answered that she had sought a better life and personal freedom. When she talked about her family life in China, more specific reasons became apparent. Xiao Zhu had come from an intellectual family, and had a happy childhood and easy life. She did well in school, and went to university in 1985. As early as 1986, her father asked her if she expected to go abroad, as going abroad was so trendy among university students. If she desired to do so, her father said he would support her financially. But she said “no” at that time. What made her change her mind? She said quite frankly her decision to migrate occurred overnight after the 1989 Tiananmen Incident. She, only 22 years old at that time, full of beautiful dreams, found herself shocked by the government’s reaction to student protests. It can be assumed that as a university student she was very likely involved in the students’ demonstrations during that period of time. However, this Incident changed her entire attitude towards government authority. She came to Australia in 1990 along with her boyfriend. When we talked about this Incident, I observed she still looked very emotional, and she told me that the word patriotism was still sacred to her.

The Case of Ding Hai

Ding Hai, a male in his mid 30s, has a doctoral degree, and was a professor at a top university in China. He migrated to Australia in 1993, and now works in an academic job. He frankly told me that he migrated because he did not like the political atmosphere in China. He said that when the Tiananmen Incident occurred he was in England as a visiting scholar sent by the government; he could stay overseas if he wanted. However, he decided to go back to China, and expected to make

greater contributions in his work. Yet, things turned out differently. He was suspect for his political attitudes because he had been employed abroad. He confronted many problems and finally made up his mind to leave for Australia.

These two typical examples demonstrated the impact of the 1989 Incident on the intellectuals in China. Ding Hai, like Xiao Zhu, did not cite the event as the major reason for migration. He said he was seeking personal freedom and a better life. However, it is very interesting that when people answered the question in the interviews, they usually stated a reason from a positive perspective.

Influences of the Family on Migration Decision-Making

The family can have a crucial influence on migration decision-making. Yet many of the informants might not have been conscious of its influence. One third of the respondents possessed overseas kinship ties. Their coming to Australia was most likely strongly encouraged and supported by their families. Respondents who have overseas relatives confessed they knew more about Western culture before they came, and had a clear purpose for migration, rather than “to go abroad to have a look”.

Two typical cases are presented below.

The Case of Lu Bingyan

Lu Bingyan, female, in her early 40s, had earned a master's degree in Sydney. After graduation she worked as a librarian in the university. She summarized her motivations for migration in three points: one was that she was single before she came, so she had no marital commitment. The second was that she felt bored with her life in China, it was “too simple and dull” as she expressed it. Third,

she felt that it was most important that she had overseas relatives in Singapore and Australia. These relatives were willing to support her financially. This is best seen her own words:

My circumstances are probably different from other Chinese. I was born in Singapore, and my family went back to live in China during the late 1950s. All my relatives are still in Singapore except my family. My family suffered a lot during the Cultural Revolution; when my relatives knew I wanted to go overseas, they were willing to provide financial assistance. Why shouldn't I take it? I am also romantic, I have read many Western novels, I like Western culture, and I thought I would feel comfortable living here...

Bingyan also has one sister who had lived in the US for many years. She told me that she did not experience many obstacles in adapting to mainstream society in Australia. Both family background and personal interest in Western culture are significant here.

The Case of Zhou Jie

Zhou Jie, a female in her late 30s, worked as a cashier and manager assistant in a café. Her parents both received their education in Hong Kong, her father had a university degree, and her mother gave up the chance to go to university and followed her father back to China for patriotic reasons. They moved to China in the early 1950s, and expected to make contributions to the new society.

According to Zhou, all her relatives live either in Malaysia or Jamaica, with none in China. Her father's decision to move to China might be against his parents' expectation. However, as an intellectual, her father experienced really hard times during the Cultural Revolution. The informant's family life was strongly affected. She and her younger sister had to follow her parents and move to a rural area for several years. When she came back from the rural area, she worked in a factory. In order to change her life and leave the factory, she taught herself English, and found a "white collar" job in an international hotel. When the Open-Door Policy was introduced, she was encouraged by her father to go overseas. Her father supported her with all his savings including

several thousand US dollars inherited from his grandparents in Jamaica. With this amount of money, Zhou was able to pay for tuition fees and enroll as a language student. In Zhou Jie's case, family history and the "Cultural Revolution" seemed to be critical factors in migration decision-making. For this informant, studying served solely as a means to get a visa. It was clear that she intended to stay permanently in Australia.

In general, respondents who possessed overseas relatives were likely to have had made decisions to migrate when the Cultural Revolution was ended in the late 1970s. Respondents who came from educated families and experienced hard times in the political movement were also likely to migrate if they had the chance. Family resources were used for migration when individual resources were inadequate to meet the costs of travelling.

Educational and Occupational Advantages

The motivations for migration depend on personal circumstances but are also influenced by the larger social context and family background. In a constantly changing world, with immigration policy changing, migrants' social capital characteristics have also been changing. About nine-tenths of the respondents possessed university degrees or tertiary education certificates. Educational qualifications are an advantage in achieving mobility. During the 1980s and early 1990s, the diaspora of the Chinese from China were predominantly those who had been involved in professional or academic work. Those persons possessing a university degree, knowledge of English and academic employment had greater opportunities for mobility. This sample provides ample evidence to support this point. Regarding the advantage of education, I present one typical case

below.

The Case of Qian Dali

Qian Dali (mentioned in an earlier section of this chapter), was a male of about 30 who came from a peasant family in north China. Due to hard work and the full support of his family, he was able to get into a university, and became the first university student from his village. In the university, he performed well, and won an award. After graduation, he was assigned to work in Beijing because of his academic achievement. In Beijing he married an urban woman whose father was an executive manager of a state-owned factory. In his case, education brought him from a rural to an urban environment, furthermore, his social status was improved by his marriage. His motivation for migration was strongly influenced by his wife and parents-in-laws, who provided financial support. Otherwise, he would not have been able to come to Australia. In sum, education, social status and marriage were combining forces which allowed this informant to make a second migration from a developing country to a Western nation.

In the recent migration wave, those employed in academic work with a knowledge of the English language were especially endowed with the resources to migrate successfully. In the sample there were 18 respondents who worked in an academic setting such as a university, college or research institution in China. Their educational and occupational background enabled them to be accepted by a foreign institution and to get a visa. Academic or professional work was also associated with their relatively higher fluency in English, which was a fundamental factor if they decided to go to an English-speaking country. The following are three selected cases.

The Case of Ren Yan

Ren Yan, a female in her late 30s, had a MA degree, and taught Chinese literature at a top university

in Beijing. She was unusual as in her generation there were not many women who had master degrees. She had earned her doctoral degree from an Australian university, and possessed a teaching job at a university. The major motivation for her migration is seen in her words below.

The main reason for me to go abroad was to see the world, and gain some foreign experience. In my university, many of my colleagues went to U.S. or other countries, some of them did not even speak much English. My English is good, why shouldn't I make a try?

The Case of Ke Lin

Ke Lin, a female in her early 40s, had earned a BA, and taught English at a secondary school in Beijing. Her husband was her classmate at the university, and he worked in foreign affairs. They both spoke fluent English before they came. This is what Ke Lin said about their decision to migrate.

... many of my friends who did not speak as good English as we do went abroad. Why shouldn't we go? My husband and I both majored in English at the university, and we speak good English. My friends always wondered why we didn't go... we had advantages.

These cases revealed that going abroad was trendy among intellectuals. It is really true that people with a higher level of education were most likely to go abroad with the advent of the Open-Door Policy. This was seen as a "brain drain" and eventually drew the attention of the government.

The ability to speak English was also a crucial factor for a couple in deciding who would go first, and who followed, rather than following stereotyped gender roles. As noted above, there were two families in this sample in which the wives went abroad first, with husbands and children following. The following is one such example.

The Case of Li Sha

Li Sha, a female in her late 30s, possessed a university degree. She married and had a daughter who

was only two years old when she came to Australia. When she was asked why she came first as opposed to her husband, she responded, "The reason is simple, my English is better than that of my husband, he did not like English very much, he could not speak properly, he can only read."

Though there are only two cases in which the women came first and men followed, their implications are noteworthy given the usual patterns of gender construction and gender roles common in the People's Republic of China as I discussed in Chapter Four. These examples highlight interesting gender role practices among certain migrant families.

Summary

The motivation for migration decision-making is a process which combines influences from both external and internal contexts. The motivations for migration in this sample were diverse and personalized, and complex. Four themes predominated: educational qualifications, knowledge of English, economic status, and family background and kinship ties. Though motivation varies individually, the informants did have in common that they were seeking improvement in their lives. This goal is congruent with the traditional migration model Zubrzycki (1966) and Sinha and Atallah (1987) indicated that migrants usually held favourable views about the destination and expected to lead a better life for their families. The mobility of women in this sample is interesting and requires further study.

CHAPTER EIGHT

PERCEPTIONS OF AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY AND FAMILY PRACTICES

Introduction

Chapter Eight examines the perceptions of Australian society and family practices among these migrants. Given that they had lived in Australia for years, how they perceived this society may have implications for the ways they coped with cultural differences in a new setting. The perceptions immigrants have of the host country are usually neglected in migration studies. This is because the dominant assumption is that migration is an upwardly mobile experience from rural to urban, and from the less developed to the developed world. The destination is, therefore, expected to be much better than the home country. In reality, perceptions of the host country may not be positive in every aspect, and immigrants may possess negative views which influence their settlement experience.

The questions about perceptions of Australian society inspired much interest among the respondents. Their immediate responses and lack of "soul searching" reflected the fact that this was an issue they had already spent a considerable amount of time thinking about. Though the data collection in this stage went smoothly, data analysis still proved to be complex. Perceptions and motivations are complex issues in this study. To deal with this complexity, I will first present a table which lists all points of view expressed, under two categories, positive and negative; cross-classifying these responses by the sex, occupation, income and migration status of those who gave them.

Secondly, I will try to incorporate the expressed views into the individuals' social context and understand how their particular views were derived. This exercise will allow us to determine

which types of immigrants would be most likely to possess a positive or negative point of view of the host society, along with the causes of these disparate attitudes.

An Overview of the Perceptions

Overall, the majority of respondents held positive views of Australian society (see Table 8) which are congruent with Zhang's (1995) and Tian's (1999) studies on migrants from China. However, the negative points of view expressed were also diverse, and complex. Some views contradicted each other, including the views related to education. The majority of the respondents commented that the Australian education system had merits compared to that in China. However, a significant minority believed the opposite to be true. The diverse views expressed of the host country, to some extent, may indicate that these perceptions were more likely to be related to a given respondent's life experience.

Respondents who were employed in nonprofessional jobs might be thought more likely to provide negative views than those working in positions associated with a higher social status. No such pattern was found in this sample. Those who earned more seemed just as likely to provide negative views as those who earned less.

Women were more likely to express negative views than men with respect to sexuality and violence. There were slightly more men than women who held negative views related to tax policy and the educational system. The table also reveals that respondents who came as independent immigrants were more likely to give positive views than those who had arrived on a student visa. As indicated in Chapter Seven, many respondents who came as students had no intention to stay

permanently at the beginning, but the 1989 Incident compelled them to stay overseas.

Table 8. Positive and negative views of the Australian society (numbers mentioning specific points), by sex, occupation, income and entry visa category of the sample

	By sex		By occupation		By income		By entry visa category***	
	Male	Female	Prof.	Non-prof.	- 30k	30k+	Immi	Stud.
	n=19	n=21	n=26	n=14	n=10	n=30	n=17	n=23
<u>Positive points</u>								
Good welfare policy and social system	19	20	25	14	9	30	16	23
Freedom and personal choices	14	13	16	11	8	19	12	15
Good education system	10	12	13	9	8	14	5	17
People more civilized	3	6	4	5	1	8	5	4
Good environment	4	4	2	6	0	8	2	6
Less class difference	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	1
<u>Negative points</u>								
Loose sexuality and kinship ties	10	14	12	12	4	20	9	15
Tax and unemployment policies "too good"	11	8	10	9	4	15	6	13
Less structure in education	5	3	3	5	2	6	2	6
Too individual-centred	1	3	3	1	0	4	1	3
Discrimination	1	3	3	1	0	4	1	3
In-efficient hospital services	3	1	2	2	0	4	1	3
More violence and crime	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2
People less industrious	0	2	1	1	2	0	0	2

* Respondents here include those who are currently taking higher degree courses and those who are taking para-professional jobs. One retired professional is included. Respondents who are in the nonprofessional category are either primary factory workers, or self-employed business people or salesperson (See Table 6.19).

** See Table 6.21 for reference.

*** Respondents in this sample who entered Australia were in two categories: independent immigrants or student. (see Table 6.5).

In the following sections, I will discuss some controversial issues including perceptions of sexuality, tax and welfare policy, and education as they relate to the respondents' gender, social class, occupation and motivation for migration.

Perceptions of Sexuality/Family Practices in Relation to Sex and Social Class

In a patriarchal and stratified society, it is not surprising that differences in informant perceptions of Australian family practices and sexuality are generally related to individual social and economic status. Respondents who took nonprofessional jobs and had lower incomes are likely to express negative views on family practices in the host country. Women are more concerned about issues of violence and crime. The respondents' social circle, that is, who they socialize with, is also crucial to the construction of perceptions. In this section, I will present and discuss cases of three women and three men with the aim of finding out the differences in their views as well as some of the contributing causes to these differing perceptions.

Women's Perceptions

The following discussion of perceptions will focus on Li Sha, Lu Bingyan and Xiao Zhu. These three were educated and had been employed in the professions in China. But in Australia there were some significant gaps in social status between them.

The Case of Li Sha

Li Sha, from Beijing, in her late 30s, had earned a university degree from China and now works in a job below her educational qualifications. Her views of Australian family practices are presented below:

...families in this country are so diversified by social class, "white collar" people might be serious about their marriages; but the "blue collar" people aren't. I know a company manager, he married because he thought he fell in love with a woman, but, only a few years later he divorced because he felt there was no love between them... they are not responsible people at all ... At my factory, some men are very rude... I don't think any women like them. These men often went to prostitutes or married illegal women from the Philippines or Malaysia...

It is very clear that Li Sha's views of Australian family practices were related to her social class and social circle. She was a keen observer. As a woman and a mother, she pointed out the dark side of Australian society to a greater extent than any other respondent in the sample. She noted the prevalence of teen mothers, youth violence and the high divorce rate. In an outright manner, she said she had learned to be tough. She dared to argue with people in the street, which she would never do back home. She proudly said to me, "To make a living, you have to learn everything 'new'; you cannot be shy." If someone was aggressive to her, she would give it right back. She also said that she had learn to say some "dirty" words. She was laughing when she said this. Her social status in Australia had a tangible influence on her entire view towards the host society.

The Case of Lu Bingyan.

Lu Bingyan, from Beijing, in her early 40s, provided a contrasting view of Australian family practices.

Family practices are too complex in this country, and it is hard to say there is any pattern. Different social classes have different practices and there is no conformity. Instead, there are a variety of family practices: some are traditional, some are modern; some cohabit, some are homosexual, some are seeking one night of romance, which are their choices and I accept that...

Lu had a rather permissive attitude to the diversity of family practices in Australia. As noted before, she was interested in Western culture. Her social status was also higher than that of Li Sha and the majority of this sample. Lu came to Australia in 1985, and married a white Australian man. It is quite likely that this personal experience directly influenced her views of the society. Both she and her husband possessed professional jobs, and they had no children. Their social economic status was high.

The Case of Xiao Zhu

Xiao Zhu, from Guangzhou, in her early 30s, was the young woman who made up her mind to come to Australia overnight after the 1989 incident. She became a Christian after arriving in Australia. She had a degree from China, and at the time of the interview had a full time job with a company, while also taking part time courses in college. Her views on local sexual practices are presented below.

... at work, a native white man has a sexual relationship with an Asian woman, but, at the same time, he also has a date with another white woman... I also knew some Australian parents who taught their teenager daughters about sex as well as how to prevent getting pregnant... I do think it is bad...

Xiao Zhu also pointed out that teenagers leaving home had caused social problems. In government welfare policy, youth benefits were a source of major expenditure. Xiao Zhu's negative views of local sexuality reflect the fact that there are very different attitudes towards sex in China compared to Australia. In the west, teenage pregnancy is a major social problem. Parents teaching their teenage children about sex may not be seen as bad in Australian society, but rather as necessary. In Chinese culture, the norm is that parents should constrain their children's sexual conduct, as opposed to teaching them about sex relations. Xiao Zhu's views reflected the social

norms she brought from China. In Xiao Zhu's case, religious beliefs had contributed to her views.

In sum, the women's perceptions of Australian sexuality were diversified and personalized. They showed strong resistance to the local loose sexuality and they seemed to be more sensitive to the issues of crime and violence. Social class, religious beliefs and social norms were also seen as important contributing factors to their views.

Men's Perceptions

Not surprisingly, men's views were also diversified and complex in each individual context. The three cases presented and discussed here are those of Huang Dajiang, Wan Jun, and Chen Jing. The three men engaged in different types of work, and had possessed different social statuses.

The Case of Huang Dajiang

Huang Dajiang, a male in his late 30s from Shanghai, had earned a master degree and worked in a research institute. He, together with his family, migrated to Australia in 1993. He was an engineer employed by a university. His occupation likely determined his social status and social circle, which influenced his views of the host society. His views are presented below:

I was impressed that many people I met at work were either singles, homosexual or divorced. Even in my neighbourhood, I observed how children were cared for by their divorced parents. Children frequently move from one place to another. This week, they stay with their mom; next weekend they will stay with dad. Children seemed to be used to it. Besides, people did not want to get married, particularly men. Many people prefer cohabited partner relationships... family practices here are so different from China...

Huang pointed out some characteristics of Australian families he observed from his socializing circle. In general, perceptions of Australian family life seemed to be personalized, and they were dependant upon the informant's social class and social circle.

Gender differences in attitudes towards sexuality saw their strongest expression in views

toward prostitution and homosexuality. Men, in general, showed greater tolerance to the existence of prostitution. Evidence of this is seen in the two cases presented below.

The Case of Wan Jun

Wan Jun, in his early 40s from Shanghai, was married and had one son. He had only received a secondary education due to the Cultural Revolution. Then he worked in a factory where he was in charge of material supplies. He came to Australia in 1988, and his wife and son joined him in 1991. He was self-employed. Wan expressed this view of prostitution:

The existence of prostitutes should be seen as normal, nothing weird. But I don't understand how people became homosexual, and why. However, it is none of my business. I don't care. Here families have various formations. For a couple, if they were happy with each other, they live together; if not, they were apart. I think it is not bad.

The Case of Chen Jing

Chen Jing, a lawyer, in his early 40s, was a journalist in China, and had earned a Ph.D. degree in Australia. His views are expressed below:

I think prostitution should be legalized. From a legal point of view, it would help reduce certain crimesI also support that homosexuality would become legal. This is not a political issue, and it has biological reason; it's just sexual preference.

Chen Jing's attitudes toward prostitution and homosexuality were quite liberal, which may be associated with his occupation as a lawyer as well as a journalist when he was in China. His views of prostitution were representative of the male informants.

The three male respondents are diverse in age, occupation, social economic status as well as educational level, but their views seemed to have no relation with these characteristics. What they share is their sex: men are the consumers of prostitution.

In sum, perceptions of Australian family and sexual practices among informants were

personalized and related to social status and life experiences. The diversity of family and sexual practices in Australia was one of the major cultural differences these Chinese had to cope with in the process of settlement. The general views among these Chinese of Australian family and sexual practices were identical to the findings in Fund and Chen's (1996) study of migrants from China. In these Chinese eyes, Australians seemed to be less responsible for their sexual conduct. The obvious gender differences in the attitudes towards sexuality and prostitutes were predictable.

Perceptions of Welfare and Tax Policy in Relation to Social Economic Status

Perceptions of welfare and tax policy were found to be complex among these respondents. 39 of 40 respondents expressed some positive views, yet 24 of them also held negative views. In the following I will take a closer look at six cases: three professionals with a yearly income more than A\$30,000, and three blue collar workers with yearly income below A\$20,000. The purpose here is to find out if their social economic status in some way contributed to their perceptions.

Perceptions of Middle Class Professionals

The Case of Chen Jing

Chen Jing, noted in previous section, came to Sydney in 1987 and enrolled in a graduate diploma course. After completing the course he worked in a library for a few years until he saved enough money to pay for a higher degree course. Chen has relatives in Sydney. They offered various forms of assistance for his early settlement. He did not experience the same financial hardships as many Chinese students did during that time. He entered a doctoral program in law and graduated in 1995. At the time of the interview, Chen was working at a law agency. Regarding Australia's tax and

welfare policy, he expressed highly positive views:

This country has the best welfare system. People feel secure. If they lose their jobs, they could apply for unemployment benefits which can keep them surviving. If you don't have enough money to buy your own house, you could get a loan from a bank. Beside, government also provides cheaper housing for the low income families. I think if the welfare system is the criterion to say a society is socialist or not, Australia is certainly seen as a socialist country.

Chen seemed to be among the few very fortunate persons in this sample. His prospects for career development and improved economic status contributed to his positive views toward Australian society and its welfare system.

The Case of Su Fan

Su Fan, a male in his mid 40s from Fuzhou, was a college English teacher. He was married and had a daughter. He came to Australia in 1989 as a student. After the 1989 incident, he had a four-year temporary visa and worked in a factory. The personal hardship Su experienced in his transition from being a teacher in his home country to working in a factory in Australia was probably not only physical but also psychological. However, he was lucky; after he became a permanent resident, he found full-time academic work, and he was able to bring his family over.

His views of welfare and tax policy were complex as seen in his words below:

I think the welfare system is perfect... but, this policy has some kind of weakness in that people do not feel motivated to work hard. A few people I know do not work, but they get benefits from the government. We work hard, contribute more, but get less... I don't think it is fair...

Obviously he was not comfortable with the tax policy. His awareness that a few people took advantage of this policy was one major factor contributing to his view. His earlier experience working in the factory may also have contributed to his opinions. The other portion of the interview revealed that he worked hard and had never applied for any benefits. His statement also

indicated that he may not quite understand the Australian social system. In China, taxes were not imposed upon individuals. For this reason, it is likely that many migrants from China are uncomfortable with taxes.

The Case of Zhao Hong

Zhao Hong, a female in her early 30s, came from Shanghai. She expressed strong disagreement with the current Australian welfare policy. Her words are below.

I did not think the welfare policy is as good as other people think, rather, it is worse. The reason is, how to say... it depends on your social class. For the low-income class, they might think the tax policy is good, but for the middle class, I felt exploited. I paid a large amount of taxes and have received no return. Given that everyone has to pay taxes, then everyone should get the same benefits, but, it is not in fact. People like me, don't get any benefits. Working or not does not make a big difference... I don't think that the welfare system is good, it only helps the poor. U. S. is better, I heard from my friends, you earned more, but you don't have to pay such high taxes...

Zhao had a master's degree from Fudan University in Shanghai, and was a researcher at a university hospital. Very obviously, she was proud of herself. She was single and came as a government-sponsored student in a doctoral program. She married an Australian-born Chinese after graduation and her husband was educated and had a professional job. Zhao's views of welfare and tax policy reflected the fact that she might not quite understand the social system in Australia. Australia as a Western society is not fully capitalist, and its social policy has been gradually modified and tended to take care of the poor. Some of the respondents might not be aware of this. So there are some differences between the US and Australia in terms of social welfare policy. Zhao seemed to be ambitious and had higher expectations for her life in Australia. In fact, she as a young professional woman enjoyed a much higher social economic status than most other females in this sample, and she had not experienced any financial hardships since her arrival. Her background in

Shanghai was also a factor contributing to her view. Her coming to Australia did not really mean personal upward mobility. Zhao even noted that her hometown of Shanghai was more prosperous than Sydney. It is worth noting that the rapid economic development in Shanghai influenced her views of Australia, which is in conformity with Fund and Chen's (1996) study of the changing perceptions of mainland Chinese related to Australia.

In sum, the perceptions of these middle class people varied individually. Perceived side-effects of the welfare policy, home country experiences and the informant's understanding of the host society were all factors influencing their views of welfare and tax policy in Australia.

Perceptions from the Lower Socio-Economic Class

The Case of Qian Dali

Qian Dali was a male in his early 30s. His background was noted in Chapter Seven. He had earned university degrees in both China and Australia, but was unfortunate to find himself employed in a butcher shop with an income about A\$20,000 yearly. He worked six days a week, and about ten hours a day. His views of Australian welfare and tax policy are presented below:

As far as I know, Australia has the best welfare policy and social services in the world, such as medical services, low income supplement. This is particularly the case when you have lost your job. The government will pay you for a living, and also offer some training which helps you find another job. It can't be better than this. Looking at the transportation system, environment and public services...very good.

Dali expressed very positive views which may be associated with his rural background. Though he took a physically demanding job below his qualifications, he still believed that it was worth coming to Australia, and that his current situation was temporary. He was one of the younger respondents in the sample. He believed he would experience upward mobility in the latter stages

of his life. His education had no relationship with his perceptions of Australian society, but his social status and family background played major roles.

The Case of Li Sha

Li Sha, a female, noted in a previous section of this chapter, came to Australia in 1990. At the time of the interview, she was working full-time in a garment factory with an income of about A\$20,000 yearly. Her social status was lower and she took a job below her qualifications as did Qian Dali. She expressed very positive views toward the Australian welfare policy.

Australia social welfare policy is really good. For example, if you are a single mother, you would get more benefits from the government. The policy is favourable to the poor. Compared to the US, as far as I know, Australia is better.

The Case of Li Xiaohong

Li Xiaohong, a female in her mid 30s, came from Guangzhou, where she worked as an accountant. She married after coming to Australia and had a four-year-old daughter. Her husband had earned a degree in China, and because of his difficulty in finding a professional job, had applied for and won a scholarship to take a two-year computer course. Xiaohong cared for her daughter, and took a part-time waitress job with an income of less than \$10,000 per year. Her family income was the lowest of any informant in the sample. Xiaohong's family enjoyed some benefits from the government. Like Li Sha, she held very positive views of the welfare policy, but she especially indicated that the policy worked "in favour of women and children; and it is much better than that in China. This policy also supports low-income families and the unemployed. I think the system is quite good". Women from low income families are especially likely to provide positive views toward Australian welfare and tax policy.

Taxes, were, however, a sensitive issue among this group of respondents. Their compelling

reaction to Australian taxes was likely the result of their past experiences in China.

In sum, the above six cases showed that respondents from lower income families generally held positive views of social welfare policy; while those from a higher strata were likely to have more complex views. These respondents admitted the merits of the social welfare policy, while also pointing out a perceived dark side to the social programs.

Perceptions of Education in Relation to Cultural Beliefs, Occupation and Local Training

Education matters to the majority of these respondents as a result of their having had children. Perceptions of education are difficult to analyse, as they are individualized apart from other cultural influences. Here the method for analysing perceptions of education is to present both positive and negative perceptions, while assessing the roles of social context and personal background in the construction of individual views.

Negative Views and Individual Contexts

There were eight respondents (five men and three women), who possessed negative views of Australian education, and these informants all had children. Among them, seven had university degrees. Educational level may not have a direct effect on their views of Australian education. Yet their occupations in Australia were quite divided: five had low-skilled jobs and three had professional jobs. Among these eight, six had never attended an educational institution in Australia with the exception of the language classes that most of them attended at the time of their arrival. Presumably, the views of these informants might be limited by their lack of first-hand knowledge about the Australian education system.

Most of the negative views of education centred upon primary or secondary school teaching methods. Informants generally complained that primary school teaching was "less structured, there was "not much teaching", "children played too much" etc. Evidence of these types of perceptions is seen in the following three cases.

The Case of Li Sha

Li Sha, a female, was noted several times in previous sections. I will first present her views below.

I did not want my daughter to come here... I have several friends who brought their children here. Oh, my god, they had such troubles... Teachers here never taught children to listen to their parents. On the contrary, they taught children how to call the police if they were not happy with their parents. Besides, in primary school one teacher teaches all of the subjects. In China only in rural areas does one teacher teach all subjects and only because of the lack of teachers. Also teachers here teach very little in class, they just let the children play ... they are not responsible.

Li Sha and her husband, though educated and professionally employed in China, both worked in a factory in Australia. Their social status was obviously lower after migrating. The people they socialized with were primarily Chinese from China. The social capital they possess may be seen as influential. Li Sha's views of education consisted of passed-on information from her ethnic friends. Therefore, I believe that her views were representative among the Chinese community. However, what she heard about the educational system played a crucial role in determining her daughter's education given that she decided not to bring her daughter to Australia. Her daughter still lived with grandparents in Beijing. For Li Sha, occupational status and a lack of local training were major contributors to her views.

The Case of Cheng Hui

Cheng Hui, a female, in her mid 30s, had two young children, a 6-year-old in primary school, and a 4-year-old in kindergarten. Her views of primary education are presented below:

My son learns little from school, you know, kids are playing a lot at school. So you cannot rely on school. I found, and I also heard that the top children in Australia are not taught by the school; the parents' supervision and attending private classes are very important...

Cheng also did these things. The interview revealed that she sent her children to various private classes to learn music and drawing; she also taught them at home. So the evidence in this case indicates that this informant's views of the educational system were directly related to her children's own experience. Cheng's interview also revealed that there was a gap between her expectations and the school's actual programs. This gap might have been related to cultural beliefs pertaining to learning. Obviously the Chinese way of learning is distinctive from that of the West. It is inevitable that people from a different culture and educational system would feel uncomfortable with a new way of learning. The concept of children learning from playing has gained wide support in Western society. This method has even begun to receive some recognition in China, especially among people who work in the field of education. Cheng's occupation as an accountant in China and Australia may have somewhat contributed to her view of the Australian educational system.

The Case of Xiao Lu

Xiao Lu, a male in his early 50s, had a son who was 18 years old. As noted earlier, this informant had taken a job below his educational level while living in China. In Australia, he was self-employed and ran a small grocery shop. The extensive labour required kept him busy from morning until night. His son studied at a nearby high school. Lu's view of the Australian educational system also had an obvious effect on his son's education. This is best seen in his words below:

I don't quite understand the education here, the level seems lower than that of China. My son complains about it, I think it would waste his time to study here ... what he learned here he had been already taught when he was in Hong Kong...

In fact, Xiao knew little about education in Australia, as he had never visited educational institutions in Australia, or even an English class. He immigrated to Australia from Hong Kong. A follow-up interview revealed his son had been sent back to Hong Kong to study. There were other factors which motivated Xiao Lu to make this decision, but his view of Australian education institutions played an important role.

Positive Views and Individual Contexts

As shown in Table 8, 27 respondents expressed positive views of Australian education. Those expressing positive views of education gave somewhat similar responses. The general views were that in Australia educational institutions stressed individual choice and personal interest, and that they encouraged creativity, both critical and practical, along with flexible teaching methods. Besides, the majority of the 27 respondents had been to Australian educational institutions. I will present two examples.

The Case of Ke Lin

Ke Lin, a female, had earned her BA in China and a M.Ed in Australia. She was a high school teacher in China, while in Australia she continued to work in the field of education. Ke's view of education may have been the dominant influence in her decision to work as a teacher in both societies. This is best seen in her words below:

At the beginning, I had a biased view of Australian education. As my length of residence expanded, I learned more about the educational system and my views have changed. I found many good points about Australia education, the teaching methods, enlightening rather than inculcating, library search skills and creative-focussed methods and the like. I believe the education here is better than China.

Ke Lin had experience teaching in two different cultures.

The Case of Su Fan

Su Fan, a male, had earned a BA in China, where he had been a college teacher. In Australia he was completing a MA degree while also working full-time in the field of education for the government. Su provided a relatively comprehensive view of the Australia educational system and also argued with some ideas which might be popular among the Chinese ethnic communities:

I believe that the Australian education level is higher than China in terms of quality. China's education is uneven and polarized among urban and rural areas. I don't agree with some Chinese parents when they complain about education here that little is learned. I think they make an inappropriate comparison by comparing the best school in China with a bad one in Australia, which is not correct. In addition, the focus of education here is different from that of China.... Here there are more educational opportunities and choices for everyone, they have the public school, and private one, they have selective schools, and also religious schools. Students are much less competitive than in China...

Su Fan showed strong support for the Western way of teaching, which might directly associated with his educational qualifications and work experience in two societies.

In sum, perceptions of Australia education were individualized on the one hand, on the other, perceptions were also influenced by cultural beliefs related to learning, as well as occupational and training experiences in both countries. In general people who had worked in the educational field in China were likely to provide positive views.

Perceptions of Australian Society in Relation to Motivation for Migration

Perceptions could be influenced by many other factors including individual experience, social status, sex and occupation etc. Motivation for immigration and personal interest were also related

to positive or negative views of Australian society. In this section, the discussion will focus on a group of four respondents who came from different social strata, but who all shared similarly positive views of Australia society.

The Case of Liu Nan

Liu Nan, a female in her early 40s, was a Christian who grew up in Shanghai but was sent to work in Yunnan province during the Cultural Revolution. She certainly had had some difficult experiences during the Revolution, as she repeatedly mentioned that she hated politics and the interpersonal relationships in the workplaces of China, however she did not provide details. She went to university in Kunming, Yunnan province, and was a college teacher after graduation; she then married and had a son. Her husband was a senior English interpreter, and had worked overseas for several years. She and her husband came to Australia under the sponsorship of an Australian friend. They migrated to Australia in 1989, after the Tiananmen Massacre. In Australia they both worked as librarians at a university, which was not really in line with their educational qualifications and training. Yet Liu had very positive views of Australian society. Her words are expressed below:

I love this country, it is so beautiful, and people are more civilized, free and equal. We socialize with many White Australians. They are kind to us. You know what, we have a neighbour, an old lady, she often helps us look after my son. People we socialize with are also traditional, even more so than we are ... A couple we knew are our best friends, they both worked for the national congress, and are retired now. They are such a lovely couple, they take their marriage very seriously, they respect each other ... They also help with looking after their grandchildren...

From my observation, Liu also enjoyed her life in Australia. Why was this so? As the interview moved on, she shared more stories. She came from an intellectual family, and her family suffered during a series of political movements in China. She moved out from Shanghai to a remote

province. Her life in the Bunnan region played a major part in her sad stories. In addition, she revealed that her personality was a factor which had caused her many problems. She liked to freely express her political ideas which authorities did not like, and she was at times suspected of disloyalty to the government. Another factor was that her husband majored in English and worked overseas. So the couple had many Western friends and had more exposure to Western influences than do most Chinese in China. All of these factors probably contributed to Liu's positive views of Australian society.

The Case of Ma Ke

Ma Ke, a male in his mid 30s, came to Australia in 1990 to study English. He had earned a tertiary diploma and had possessed an office job in Shanghai. He was unmarried when he came and remained so at the time of the interview. From the time of his arrival in Australia, he had taken employment in various forms of labour. He did not possess a university degree and his English was poor. He became a Christian when he faced the uncertainty of his future life during the four-year temporary visa period. After he had earned permanent residency status, he used all of his savings to take a course on business, and then ran a small business. He was not rich at all and his life seemed to have more dramas which he did not mention, but, even so, he still held very positive views of Australian society.

I enjoy my life in Australia. Australia has a complete legal system; and people have equal rights to access education and various social services; welfare is pretty good; and interpersonal relationships are less complex than in China. People are more civilized, and often express their good wishes to one another... I like these kind of social relationships...

In his life story Ma mentioned that he had been interested in Western culture since the time he was a teenager. He confessed that he used to secretly listen to an American radio program (in

Chinese) even though this was forbidden during the Cultural Revolution, and dreamed he would go to the West one day. His dream became true under the Open-Door policy. For him, studying was just a pathway to get out of China, and it was his intention to stay overseas permanently. His interest in the Western social system and culture had played a major role in his decision to migrate and contributed further to his positive views of Australia society.

The Case of Xiao Lu

Xiao Lu, male, 50s, an informant mentioned in the previous section, migrated to Australia with his family in 1994. He ran a small grocery shop with help from his son. His wife remained in Hong Kong where she worked. His social economic status was not high, but his perceptions of Australian society were quite positive:

I like Australia. I like the freedom and privacy especially in personal life. Here no one would interrupt me, and no one will put his nose into my personal life. In China, the housing conditions were so poor that people hardly had any privacy; the Neighbourhood Committee also kept an eye on you...

From what Xiao Lu remarked, we can see that the expectations of many informants were strongly related to their views of the host country. Xiao Lu's positive views were also correlated with his complex life and family background of which further details will be provided in Chapter Twelve.

In sum, the above cases show that positive views of Australian society had an obvious association with the informant's motivation for migration, the kind of life they had had in China and their aspirations for themselves and their families in Australia. Though their social economic status was not high, they enjoyed life in their new host country.

Summary

Overall, the perceptions of Australian society among this sample were diverse and complex. The home country's culture, social system and policies played a role. Also important, however, were personal experiences and social economic status in the host country. The greater the differences between the two societies, the wider the differences among the perceptions expressed.

Consistently, people who have encountered hardships or are interested in the Western culture and social system are more likely to migrate to a Western society and have more positive views of the host country. Generally the perceptions can be seen as mediating the influences of the host country on these migrants. Furthermore, these perceptions may serve as guidance for their conduct and family behaviour in the host country. For example, the negative views expressed toward some sexual practices and differences in educational values may serve as immediate influences on parenting and the education of the informants' children.

PART V

FAMILY LIFE: MARRIAGE AND CHILD REARING

Introduction

The concept of family life itself presupposes a complexity which is intrinsic to all marriages given the intense emotions and the various needs and interests associated with each family member.

Family life confronts strong challenges during the process of cross-cultural transformation experienced by immigrants. Challenges stem not only from the interactions among family members, but also from their interactions with the outside society.

Traditionally, Chinese people have believed that there were two major events in one's life: marriage and child rearing. Marriages were conceived of as being clearly for the purpose of procreation to sustain the family line and further family interests. Having children was also considered a fulfilment of womanhood as well as an obligation to the future of society. Since the twentieth century, family practices in China have shifted away from these traditions and towards the West. Yet, as elaborated in Chapter Four, and in contrast to the West, marriage is, though threatened by divorce, still central to the average Chinese adult's life. Chinese women, by and large, are still expected to give birth after marriage and sexual practices are still constrained by cultural values and social policy.

By contrast, Western society has experienced more apparent shifts in family practices since the 1960s. Definitions of family life and family composition have been blurred by a new variety of formations of families (Eichler, 1997a; Gilding, 1991). Sexual practices have also witnessed a shift from conservatism to increasing permissiveness. The conventional "double standard" in sexual conduct and marriage has been questioned (Eichler, 1980). An active sex life, consequently, has gained a central place in marriage and the society at large, and is seen as a symbol of Western

culture (Weeks, 1985; 1999).

Family practices vary considerably from one culture and one society to another. How people organize their families depends on what they value in life as well as what society desires for them. Hence, it would be misleading in examining a group of ethnic migrants to not account for their social norms, cultural context, and personal values and beliefs. In this section, immigration status, social capital, and structures of power and cathexis (as noted in Chapter Two) will be the basic tools to probe the intimate but complex and dynamic relationships within the informants' family lives.

This section is organized into two chapters: Chapter Nine focuses on marriages and Chapter Ten focuses upon child rearing practices.

CHAPTER NINE.

MARRIAGES IN CROSS-CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

Introduction

Marriage is a central but difficult issue in family studies. This is a fact because marriage involves affection and feelings, which are dynamic and often somewhat “ambivalent” combining some degree of affection as well as hostility (Connell, 1987). Interviews revealed some complexity and ambivalent relationships among the sample. Difficulties in data collection on these topics were noted in Chapter Three. The home country’s social context, where there little public discussion related to marital and sexual issues, proved to have a direct effect. Some respondents were not comfortable discussing the issue of marriage. Further, respondents experiencing marital crises may not want to disclose these difficulties to people they did not know very well. In some cases respondents claimed to be open-minded, yet when questions were addressed to them, they either looked awkward or embarrassed, or quickly gave a simple answer, then changed the topic. These types of responses are evident in the cases below.

Xiao Lu, a male in his early 50s, was talkative, and initiated various topics during his interview. These ranged from politics to cultural diversity. Yet when I asked him about his marriage, he answered in the following manner:

My marriage is O.K., it does not have problems. I don’t think this question is necessary to ask. We have been married a long time.

Qian Xiaoyan, a female in her 40s, replied to me this way:

We have been married 20 years, nothing worth of talking about. This includes if we

are satisfied with it or not. Anyway, the fact is that we are still a couple and live together. Imagine, 20 years, a long time. What is your next question?

The somewhat reticent attitudes about marriage among this sample was also found in previous research. For instance, Zha and Geng's (1992, p. 4) study of sexuality in China found that about 51% of men and 56% of women had discussed their sex lives with others. Bonavia (1980) pointed out that even in Westernized Hong Kong, Chinese seemed to be uncomfortable with the issue of sex during social occasions. A general impression is that Chinese people are not used to disclosing their emotions the way many Western people do.

Nevertheless the majority of the respondents in this study were cooperative, and they provided interesting accounts of their marital life. The principle guiding this chapter was to make the best use of whatever relevant information was available from informants. Marriages are complex, and my data sources were also diverse. The solution I used to cope with this complexity was: first, to present an overview of the marriages of the sample respondents; and second, to examine some issues in case studies.

An Overview of Marriages and Related Emerging Issues

How did these Chinese feel about their marital lives? Satisfied or dissatisfied? Marital satisfaction according to Nimkoff (1947) could be attributed to dozens of factors including family background, education, premarital experience, personality, as well as social class and economic status. Here I will present a set of tables (see Tables 9.1 - 9.4) to examine marital satisfaction from four aspects: sex, age at marriage, the length of marriage and the length of spousal separation caused by migration.

Data collected varied greatly from a few sentences to a love story shared by an informant which lasted about an hour. Some answers were difficult to classify. However, I managed to classify all of the answers into three broad categories: "generally satisfied", "less satisfied" and "not satisfied". The "generally satisfied" category includes answers such as "Not too bad", "It's O.K." or "No problems", without mentioning any problems. The "less satisfied" category refers to answers such as "We are generally O.K., yet..." or "I am not quite satisfied", mentioning some emotional problems. The "not satisfied" category refers to those who clearly stated, "I am not satisfied with my marriage" or "I have been thinking of divorce."

Table 9.1. Self-perceived marriage satisfaction of respondents, by sex

	Male (n=19)	Female (n=21)	Subtotal
Generally satisfied	12	13	25
Less satisfied	2	5	7
Not satisfied	1	1	2

Table 9.2. Self-perceived marriage satisfaction of respondents, by age at marriage and sex

	20-25 yrs old		25-30 yrs old		31-35 yrs old		36 + yrs old		Subtotal
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Generally satisfied	1	0	8	8	2	5	1	0	25
Less satisfied	0	0	0	5	2	0	0	0	7
Not satisfied	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2

Table 9.3. Self-perceived marriage satisfaction of respondents, by length of marriage (year)

	1-5 yrs	6-10 yrs	11-15 yrs	16-20 yrs	21+ yrs	Subtotal
Generally satisfied	8	5	3	2	7	25
Less satisfied	1	6				7
Not satisfied	1	1				2

Table 9.4. Self-perceived marriage satisfaction of the respondents, by length of spousal separation (year) in the process of migration

	-1 yrs	1-2 yrs	3+ yrs	No separation	Subtotal
Generally satisfied	2	6	1	16	25
Less satisfied	1	1	3	2	7
Not satisfied			1	1	2

Table 9.1 shows that the proportion of women in the “less satisfied” and “not satisfied” category was higher than among the men. The age at marriage seemed to have no association with marital satisfaction (Table 9.2). The majority of this sample were married between the ages of 25-30 which is congruent with Goode’s (1963) prediction that the average age for marriage in China would rise. Noticeably, 7 respondents were married when they were 31-35 years old, 6 of them in Australia. This suggests that marriages were likely to be delayed in the process of migration. Table 9.3 shows that respondents who were married less than 5 years or over 10 years were more likely to report satisfaction with their marriages compared to those who had been married between 5 to 10 years. A general explanation for this might be that people at middle age confronted more pressure from work, as they were halfway in their career development, as well as at home, as they were more likely to have had children by then. Table 9.4 shows that spousal separation and a particularly long period of separation were likely to affect marriage, but not necessarily in all of the cases among the sample. Overall, the majority of the respondents reported that they were content with their marriages. No cases of divorce were found in this sample, though a few respondents expressed marital dissatisfaction.

A number of issues drew my interest here. In this sample, about one third of respondents had experienced spousal separation. The length of separation, however, varied significantly in length. So

how did these respondents cope with the separation, and what was the status of their emotional relationships at the time of the interview? The impacts of separation upon emotional relationships will be explored below.

The second issue is marital expectations. As shown in the table there were more women than men who expressed dissatisfaction with their marriages. Why? What do these women expect from marriage and their husbands? And what effect has the migration experience had upon their expectations of their husbands?

Culturally and historically, the construction of sexuality in China is quite different from Australia as noted in Chapters Four and Five. What did these migrants think of the differences in gender construction? Has there been any shift in their attitudes from conservatism to permissiveness?

The Impact of Spousal Separation on Emotional Relationships

Separation from close family members in the process of migration, and the consequences of broken families, have been serious concerns in the studies of migrants (Nguyen & Ho, 1995). In this section, I will present two typical cases that show how migration affected the emotional relationships of couples.

A Rupture of Emotional Attachment along with Emotional Distancing - The Case of Wan Jun

Wan Jun, a male, in his early 40s from Shanghai, was an informant who stated that he was not satisfied with his marriage. He, in an outright manner, said that his wife moved out and had stayed with her father for more than one year. She had a pretty good reason for moving out as her parents

were separated. Her father had had an accident and was injured and could not manage his affairs by himself. She was an only child. It is taken for granted in Chinese culture that an only child should take care of her father. This was what Wan told everybody in public. These facts were true, but the reasons for his wife moving out were more complex as I learned when listening to Wan describe his migration experience.

Wan came to Sydney in 1988. His wife gave birth to a boy two months before he departed China. Obviously, his leaving at this particular time was not seen as appropriate by his wife. However, his coming to Australia was a family decision, and was supported by his father-in-law who had already settled in Australia. During the migration wave of the 1980s in China, not everyone had the luck to get a visa. In Wan's case, his family might have been pleased with his success in this regard. However, he came to Sydney while leaving his wife and newborn baby in Shanghai. Wan was not able to bring his wife and son over until three years later. The joy in this family reunion did not last long, as conflicting undercurrents emerged in the couple's relationship.

Wan stated:

I do not expect her to be good at doing something, even the housework. Shanghai men are used to taking care of their wives. But, you know what, she likes fancy clothes, and expected me to buy these for her, I just can't afford it, too expensive. We have to save money to buy a house, not clothes, then she was not happy with me. It is not easy to earn money, and she doesn't understand this.

As Wan confessed, he and his wife both felt that they "had no common interests", and the couple grew apart. The inherent problem lies in their basic attitudes towards life. Wan, as a migrant, experienced many hardships during the earlier years of his migration. These hardships served to enhance his values of thrift and "saving" as opposed to "spending". He worked hard and saved the money he earned for his family. It was true as he said that it was not easy at all for him to earn a

significant amount of money as a new migrant. Now let us look at his wife. During the three to four years after he migrated, she still lived in the largest Chinese city where rapid economic development promoted the value of “spending”. Urban people tend to enjoy a more comfortable lifestyle and buy more fashionable clothing. Wan’s wife would likely have followed this trend. For Wan and his wife, the different personal situations and social contexts in which they were embedded during several years of separation had a major influence upon the personal values in their lives.

Wan’s story also revealed that money may have been a major factor that affected the intimate relationship he had with his wife. In many marriages, people try hard to untangle the web of love and money. As Millman (1991, p. 5) points out, “Money is a primary source of power in relationships.” How a couple spend their money is not just an issue of spending, but also an expression of feeling and commitment between one another. Wan’s economic status and inability to buy fancy clothes for his wife might have been interpreted as a hint that he did not “care” for her as much as she had expected. In addition, Wan may also have felt less attraction to his wife. In Wan’s case, once the rupture had been made, it was unlikely that it could be filled with anything. As an obvious consequence, when Wan’s father-in-law was injured, his wife moved to her father’s home, but she continued to share the child care with Wan.

Wan’s regrets about his marriage were very observable during the interview. There might have been other factors that had contributed to his marriage crisis, but the process of migration was an obvious factor. At the end of the interview session, Wan mentioned that his wife had expressed some understanding of his thrifty ways, but their relationship had shown little improvement.

Growing Gaps between Husband and Wife - The Case of Su Fan

Separation from the spouse in the process of migration not only affected the intimate relationship

existing between couples, but also created a gap in terms of social economic status among some informant couples. In this sample, Su Fan's case provides the best example. First, I would like to present his perception of his marriage:

Our marriage is o.k., but we are not the most harmonious couple. This might be related to our immigration status. But I think my family background is different from hers, so we are supposed to have some differences no matter whether we are here or in China. She actually came from an educated family, but she is the youngest child in her family and is used to being spoiled. Obviously she feels a lack of upwardly mobility and inspiration. It was o.k. when we were in China. Yet, in the new context, we have lost all of our advantages. We are facing many challenges, we need to improve ourselves, yet she does not have this intention at all.

We can see that Su Fan was sensitive to the changes and challenges his marriage had experienced as a result of the migration process. He aspired to be upwardly mobile in his new setting and expected his wife would do whatever he expected. At the time of the interview, he was completing his thesis for a master degree. He had also already applied for entrance into a doctoral program. Su Fan had a full-time well-paid professional job with the government. His social economic status was admired by many in the Chinese community.

On the surface, the major reason Su Fan was dissatisfied with his wife was because of her lack of aspirations for upward mobility. She was not interested in earning local qualifications. The implication was that Su Fan perceived education as being an important way to achieve upward mobility in Australian society. Su Fan was right to some extent. Yet there were further implications if we think through the consequences of his views. Migration had, in fact, created a distance between Su Fan and his wife both socially and economically. Looking at Su Fan, he engaged in a professional occupation and worked for the government. By contrast, his wife found herself employed in a job at a factory. The distinction between them was obvious. Yet they had possessed

an almost identical social status when they lived in China. They both had university degrees and taught in a college. However, in Australia they belonged to different social classes. The long period of separation caused by migration had differentially affected their lives. Su Fan aspired to improve himself; his wife might not have thought this was necessary because she was already in her 40s and she might have felt it would be too difficult for her to go back to school. Or she might have considered the economic effects if she went to study, whatever the reasons, the family income would have been significantly reduced. Nevertheless, Su Fan and his wife had different responses to their changing social contexts. Furthermore, as we commonly know, people are more likely to marry someone who has a nearly identical background to themselves. One cannot imagine that a man like Su Fan who had earned an Australian degree and had a professional job would be happy to have a wife working in a factory. Though Su Fan expressed dissatisfaction with his marriage, he was not likely to end the marriage. For most Chinese, the central principle of marriage is commitment.

For Su and Wan, the sense of emotional attachment in their marriages had been interrupted by the consequences of migration, which in turn affected the intimate relationship with their wives. Wan's marriage experienced a greater negative impact from migration than did Su's. Indeed, there could have been other factors affecting the marital life of these respondents. Spousal separation, however, was seen as a major factor in both Wan's and Su Fan's cases. However, the evidence found here cannot be generalized. Spousal separation would not necessarily have the same effect on all migrant marriages. The satisfaction derived from marriage depends upon various factors including cultural values, dating experiences, emotional relationships before migration, etc.

Changing Marriage Expectations and Gender Norms

Marriage expectations vary in each society, and are also affected by social changes. Traditionally, a Chinese woman expected no more than security and sustenance from her husband. A Chinese man expected his wife to be obedient, rear the children and perform all of the housework. In contemporary times, a woman's expectations of her husband emphasize many other traits including sharing, caring and personal responsibility apart from being a breadwinner. However, social changes have always posed challenges to men. What effects might migration have on the marital expectations of this sample?

The Women's Views: Emotional Support, Romance and Caring Relationships

Here I will focus on a group of four women: Li Sha, Zhang Ning, Ke Lin and Zhao Lili. The former three were married and the latter informant was unmarried at the time of the interview. These four women all came from urban backgrounds, possessed university degrees and worked in the professions. In Australia, three of them had professional jobs while the other worked in a job of lesser socio-economic status.

The Case of Li Sha

Li Sha had been married 12 years. Her husband was her classmate in the university, and they both worked in a research institute in Beijing. Li came to Australia in 1990 on her own, which, as noted previously was a family decision made simply because her English was better than that of her husband. They had a daughter who was 8 years old. Li's husband joined her in Australia in 1996, and they left their daughter with grandparents in China. During the six years of separation, Li Sha returned home once, and her husband and daughter paid a visit once as well. Li was very open so

long as she trusted you. She said to me in a very straightforward way that she did not feel quite satisfied with her marriage.

My husband is not the type of man I expected. I wish a man could be more supportive and caring, in particular, when you are experiencing difficulty, but he wasn't like that. Just the opposite, he used to blame me if something went wrong. I was upset and angry at this. He is too lazy, always talking... no action. I have to push him... otherwise he would never do it. Then he believed I was bossy. You know that we were in a new country, there were too many things to learn. I came earlier so I knew more, but, he did not listen to me. We often quarrel...

Li's feelings about her husband were complex. She complained about him, while she also added that, "He isn't a bad person; he shares housework with me, and he does laundry, cleaning and also shares cooking and shopping with me. He is even-tempered." To some extent, what she said was obviously contradictory to what she had said earlier. She seemed to feel a combination of affection and hostility towards her husband. Obviously, when the social context is changed, conflicts within marriages are likely to increase. Li's dissatisfaction with her husband seemed to be primarily derived from her changing social context which required a change in attitude and behaviour. Li's husband seemed to be reluctant to acculturate into the new setting. Li had dated and selected her husband on her own. She might have been speaking the truth when she said he was not her type of man, but it was also true that he could not meet her expectations in the new setting in which they resided. Li Sha had separated from her husband longer than anyone else in this sample. This separation very likely affected the intimate relationship. As a married woman and a mother, Li Sha presumably encountered significant problems after migrating to Australia. Her desire to seek support from her husband was therefore very understandable. However, her husband did not seem sensitive to her needs for comfort. He also did not like being "supervised" by his wife and told what he should do. Remember, Confucianism promoted the belief that men were superior to women. Li's

husband may have unconsciously believed this as well. Love itself does not straighten out all the problems experienced within marriage.

To sustain a marriage sometimes requires strategies. An independently minded wife such as Li Sha had to consciously play a traditional role in the home. Li provided the following statement:

He likes to make decisions. Since he came here, I tried to ask him to decide everything. I just pretended I had no ideas what we should do. In fact, I made all of the decisions on my own before he came. But I wanted to make him happy...

Li also added,

If I were an Australian, I would have gotten a divorce already... but, on the other hand, if I divorced him, and married another man, who can be sure we would have no problems... marriage is too complicated...

Marriage was seen as complex in Li Sha's case. The cultural values surrounding marriage played an important role which contributed to her views of the marital relationship with her husband. Li's attitudes toward marriage seemed very practical and involved less of an emphasis upon personal needs. For a migrant family, economic interests may be seen as a cohesive binding force within some families. Divorce or separation would be disruptive to both partners socially and economically.

The Case of Zhang Ning

Zhang Ning, in her early 30s, had been married seven years. She directly stated that she was not satisfied with her marriage.

In contrast with my friends, they are not better than I, but they seem to be happier. I am disappointed with my husband; money is not the major issue. I wish he was more determined and strong, and I also wish he could earn a Western qualification, a higher degree, but he has no aspirations. It's a pity that he isn't more ambitious. If he wanted to take up doctoral studies, I would give up my studies, and find a job to support him.

What Zhang desired was, in fact, a hierarchical and patriarchal relationship with her husband, even though she was an educated young woman. Her intention of making a sacrifice to support her husband's career development may have been associated with her childhood experience. Zhang was brought up by her grandmother as she revealed in her life history. Her early childhood experience distinguished Zhang from her younger sisters. In another portion of the interview, Zhang mentioned that her sister had married a handsome man, who held a professional job, while leaving her with no housework to do. Zhang remarked, "If I were she, I would feel very lucky". But her sister still complained about her husband. As Zhang commented, "what else could she [her sister] expect?"

Marital expectations varied according to the informant's personal values and life experiences. The respondents' expectations of marriage were complex. Distinctions between traditional Chinese values and modern views were commonly blurred. Zhang wished that her husband were more upwardly mobile but she also expected him to be more romantic and caring:

My husband is not romantic at all. He has never celebrated my birthday. I had my first birthday in Australia when I worked in a factory. I went to work in the morning, to my surprise, all my friends and workmates sent me birthday cards, I was so moved... yet, in contrast my husband did not even mention my birthday, he did not even give me a card. I knew he might not be used to doing this, but we are in Australia. I was angry at him, and wrote all my feelings in my diary. However when it came to his birthday, I bought him a present. I really wish he could buy me some flowers, but he never did. On the contrary when I bought him flowers, he blamed me for not being thrifty... Yet, he celebrated his sister's birthday, it is not fair. He seemed to have a lot to say to his sister, but not to me.

Zhang's expectations of romance suggested the influence of Australian society in relation to the expression of affection. There are obvious cultural differences in expressing feelings between two societies. It is easily noticed that hugging and kissing are very common rituals during social occasions in the West, but these behaviours are rarely observed in China. Penny and Khoo's (1996)

study provided evidence of the culturally based behaviours practised among Chinese-Australian partners. Societal differences in norms surrounding the expression of affection and emotions are likely to become a source of marital dissatisfaction or conflict among couples originating from a more traditional cultural context.

Zhang's intimate relations with her husband were complex, and were intertwined with her other kinship relationships. Her statements about her husband were also contradictory. She overtly stated she disliked her husband, while, she also added, "I should feel happy, he is not a bad person, he never smokes or drinks. He is very inward, not sociable; he is just not used to expressing his feelings, but he is honest anyway."

Zhang's dissatisfaction with her marriage, at one point, caused her to refer back to her early dating experience with her husband. She noted that these experiences were full of undercurrents. At another point, she mentioned that her parents were opposed to the marriage in the first place. However, the changing social context posed challenges to her marital expectations and stimulated feelings of regret.

The desire that a husband be more upwardly mobile is common among many women, but to expect husbands to be more sensitive, emotional and romantic conflicts with traditional marital expectations among Chinese women. These feelings are likely caused by influences from the host society.

The Case of Ke Lin

A desire for the husband to be more romantic in intimate relations was also observed in Ke Lin's case. Ke had been married for over 10 years. She possessed a university degree and was an English teacher. Ke had a teaching job in Australia. Her husband had been her classmate in the university.

He had been employed in a senior position in a government department. At the time of the interview, he worked for an international company. When we talked about her marital expectations, she provided the following comments:

Chinese men, I think, generally, are more responsible than Australians. They go back home right after work. Yet, they lack romance compared to Australian men. It is rare for Chinese men to send flowers to their wives, or to open the door for women... My husband and I both majored in English literature, but he is so careless, and does not seem to know how to care for others. When I read novels or watch movies, I am angry if I compare the relationships I see with our marriage...

Married women expected their husbands to be supportive, caring and romantic; unmarried women also hoped to marry a man with these traits. The case below provides evidence of this.

The Case of Zhao Lili

Zhao Lili came from Shanghai and had a university degree. Her parents both had university degrees. At the time of the interview she held a part-time teaching job at a college, while also taking courses toward a degree. When she was asked about her expectations of men, Zhao put caring and sensitivity foremost.

It is hard to say. First of all, he must have a good heart, and be caring and sensitive; second, he must be healthy, have no major diseases; but he doesn't have to have a higher degree. I might date a Western man, or I might date a man who has a Chinese background.

In general, women's expectations of men seemed to be changing in the new social milieu they had encountered, though some of the expectations demonstrated the typical gender order in stereotyped heterosexual relationships.

The expectations of men also displayed newly blurred directions. The breadwinner role was challenged by intricate emotional needs which might be seen as a product of migration. Women were used to providing support for men, but they also needed emotional support from men. Men

were used to women to play a caring role, however, the cases showed that women also expected men to be caring.

The Men's Views: New Pressures

What do men expect of women and what problems did they experience in relation to marriage and family life as a result of the process of migration? The interview data documented the pressures men encountered in both explicit and implicit ways after the process of resettlement. Though the data derived from the male informants was as informative as that gathered from the women, it was collected at a different stage of the interview. The discussion here will focus on a group of four men: Lei Ming, Ding Hai, Wan Jun and Lin Dong.

The Case of Lei Ming

Lei Ming, in his mid 30s from Shanghai, was an unmarried technician who possessed a tertiary certificate. He came from a middle class family. His mother was a teacher and his father was an engineer, though they had both retired by the time of the interview. Lei was one of two boys in his family. His elder brother is married and works in Shanghai. Lei came to Sydney in 1989 as a student. He had taken several different jobs. He was now working in a factory. Lei had lived in Australia for eight years, but was still single. Marriage seemed problematic to him. He confessed that he had felt too much pressure from his parents who had continually asked him if he had a girlfriend whenever he called home. He also expressed frustration that he was even suspected of being a homosexual or having biological defects because a single man like him usually either had a sexual partner or cohabited with a woman. For Lei, the difficulties in finding a girlfriend were complex. Due to his language inefficiency and cultural differences, he would not dare to think of dating a native Australian girl. Yet dating a Chinese girl also seemed difficult for him. He tried to

socialize with girls from Hong Kong, but he found no common interests with them. He wanted to date someone from China, but he just had no luck. On account of his situation, his parents asked him to go back to Shanghai for the purpose of marriage. He made excuses to not go back. Why did he refuse to go back to his home country to get married? He told me a story about his friend, which I found illuminating:

My friend went back to Shanghai for marriage. Yet against everybody's expectation, he did not divorce until his wife came. You know why? My friend came here for many years, he worked very hard and watched every penny, he saved quite a bit of money. Before he went back to marry, he bought a one-bedroom apartment. For a couple without children, he thought it was enough. When he got married, his wife asked him how many bedrooms were in his apartment. He said that he had only a one-bedroom apartment. His wife immediately changed her attitude toward him... and said something which left my friend feeling insulted...their relationship soon ended. Women are greedy...

This story implicitly told me that if Lei went back China to find a marriage partner he felt that his marriage might end in a similar manner. This story itself might not be typical, but Lei tried to tell me something more with this story. He was expressing his feelings that there were some gaps in values felt by Chinese migrants after they have lived in Australia for many years. These differences left them feeling marginal when dealing with Chinese residing in China. The media were very misleading when they promoted the view which most people in China believed that people who went abroad were rich. The Chinese media rarely talked about the hardships migrants experience. Lei's friend expected to find a girl who was understanding and industrious. But his wife expected a more comfortable life in a foreign country. This story is parallel to Wan Jun's story noted in the previous section of this chapter. High expectations of marriage could sometimes end the marital relationship.

Lei obviously took the lesson from his friend, and decided not to go back for the purpose of

meeting a marriage partner. If Lei were still in Shanghai, he might have been married for years.

The Case of Ding Hai

Ding Hai, in his mid 30s, was a professor in China. He migrated to Australia in 1993. He married and had one child. Now he had an academic job. He remarked that he was content with his marriage. But he observed that marital crises were common among his friends from China, and most of them were male friends.

I had several male friends from Shanghai. They looked very depressed. Two of them are divorced, and said that they felt it was difficult to meet their wives' expectations. They complained about women that they were too greedy nowadays. They also felt uncomfortable living in this country. It was their wives who dumped them, it wasn't their fault. Their wives looked down upon them because they could not earn more money and had no achievements. I could imagine they must have had a lot pressure at home. But I don't know how they behaved at home. They generally felt disappointed with coming here...

The evidence of male depression Ding provided may reflect a common phenomenon among Chinese men, in particular, when they lost their privileges in the home country and faced challenges in a new cultural context. Consequently, men seemed to distance themselves from women and socialize with their own sex. Evidence of this is best seen in Wan Jun's case.

The Case of Wan Jun

Wan Jun noted in the earlier part of this chapter that his marriage had been in crisis. His unhappy marriage brought him back to his same sex friends.

... I often go to a "singles club" on the weekends. This club is only for men, where we drink and chat, talking about problems with women... I made some friends there, most are Chinese. One of them divorced a few years ago, then he lived with another woman, about two years; now they separated again. Another man in the club came to join his wife. He was educated, but his English was poor, so he could not find a more decent job. His wife always teased him ...

I had no more information about this man's club. Yet, this kind of men's club was more like

“speaking bitterness” (a Chinese phrase popularly used in the political campaigns during Mao’s regime) or “consciousness-raising” groups which were developed in the early years of the women’s movement in the West. They were often seen as a form of therapy to release the depression felt at home (Connell, 1987, pp. 230-231).

The Case of Lin Dong

Lin Dong in his 50s, came as a spouse to join his wife in Sydney. He was a senior engineer with 29 years of working experience in Shanghai. Unfortunately he was not able to get a professional job in Australia due to linguistic barrier. His wife, by contrast, was an English teacher in China. After receiving local training, she easily found employment in teaching and obviously earned more than her husband did. For Lin Dong, the process of changing his social status from a higher position to a lower position at home was painful. Lin’s feelings are seen in his words below:

I have felt extremely imbalanced and depressed since the time I arrived. I had to live on my wife’s income. I came to join my family, not because I could not make a living. In China, I was a senior engineer...

Lin was an egalitarian husband; he took on much of the housework at home. But he could not forgive himself for living off his wife. For a woman, living off her husband’s income was taken for granted and seen as natural, but for men it was perceived as insulting.

In sum, the challenges the men faced were multifaceted. Their marital expectations mirrored the shadow structure of the cathexis within heterosexual relationships. No matter what the social status a woman possessed, she always expected her husband to be higher economically and socially. Women’s expectations of men involved the complexity of tradition, modernity and some degree of contradiction. In the pattern of expectations of men, there were always hierarchical and patriarchal elements. The improvement of women’s status inevitably paralleled the increasing rate of divorce

among educated women.

Changing Constructions of Sexuality

Sexuality is socially constructed, and it is a product of history shaped by social, economic and political practices. Attitudes towards sexuality and sexual conduct also are derived from social cultural practices and shaped by social changes. They also vary between different classes, religions, ethnic groups and cultural origins (Weeks, 1985). This section on sexuality has been included because: (1) sexual relationships are central to family structure; (2) sexual practices in the Australian context offer a sharp contrast to those common in China. Cross-cultural migration will inevitably challenge the sexuality of these migrants from China as no one can escape some of the influences from mainstream society. The term "culture shock" provides the best description of this challenge.

As noted in Chapter Four, the construction of sexuality in China is most obviously distinctive from that commonly observed in the West. Prostitution and all sorts of pornography are forbidden in China. All the policies introduced during Mao's regime were intended to be de-gendered. This was particularly the situation during the Cultural Revolution. There were no pictures revealing human bodies in public scenes; even in films and plays, there was hardly a single kiss. De-gendering was advocated on a nationwide scale, and any sexual preferences such as those for colourful dresses, high heel shoes, cosmetics and jewellery were associated with bourgeois ideology. This led to a national uniformity in the shape and colour of clothes. Though these de-gendering political movements came to an end, the impact of political ideology on sexuality is still

strong in China. Understanding this background helps us understand Chinese attitudes towards sexuality and sexual practices in Australia.

The interviews documented multifaceted changes in the personal construction of sexuality. Here I will examine two aspects of the changes: attitudes and social conduct.

Changing Attitudes Towards Sexuality

The changing attitudes towards sexuality expressed among the sample are summarized in the following statements: "There is no 'myth' about sex"; "sex is a natural need of human beings"; "sex is a personal issue," and "people should have rights to decide their sexual preferences". These statements are nothing special to the average Australian, but to the Chinese these views suggest obvious changes when compared to the social context which existed in China during Mao's regime. These changing views can be seen as largely stimulated by influences from the mainstream society. Two examples are presented.

Because of the rigid policy, most people in China see sex as something "mystical", or "dangerous", and are afraid of talking about it... In fact, sexual needs are one of the basic needs of human beings, why do we treat it like something "evil"... My point here is that sex is not something abnormal or bad. It really depends on how you see it; we cannot just try to avoid it... (Li Ping, female, mid 30s)

Australians take very open attitudes to sexual issues. I think it's right that sex is not a "myth" or a "dirty" thing, but it is natural. People should feel free to talk about it whenever and wherever they want, in a bar or somewhere... Yet, people in China used to be afraid of talking about it; if you talked about it, you would be seen as "unclean"... This is wrong... (Zhou Jie, female, late 30s)

The views expressed above do not suggest that these people held positive points of view toward sexual practices in Australia, but there has clearly been a shift among informants in views from radically conservative opinions to more open attitudes.

Changing Sexual Practices

Changing sexual practices were found among members of this sample. These primarily were associated with two aspects: premarital sexual relationships and cohabitation between couples. As noted in Chapter Four, premarital sexual relations and cohabitation were not publicly favoured in China, but they are common in the West. Evidence from two cases are presented below:

We married last year, but we lived together almost six years. I don't feel I have to be formally married in this country, no one cares about it. As for the reason I registered to marry, perhaps it was just for fun. I have a friend who wanted to have a wedding in the church, then we thought it would be nice if we all had the wedding together, we are friends... so we all had our wedding in the church on the same day. (Xiao Zhu, a female in her early 30s, had university degree from China)

I had dated a guy who came from Beijing. We lived together for a while, then we decided to be apart...because we found we had so many differences, it did not work. (Zhou Jie)

Changing sexual conduct also took other trajectories among the sample. For example, quite a number of respondents, both male and female, reported in an outright manner that they had gone to watch "striptease" dances after arriving in Sydney. Two such cases are presented below:

... Yes, we went to watch a "striptease" dance. We were of course curious about it; on the other hand, this is part of Australian culture, it is worth seeing. When I had friends coming from China, I also took them there, but I no longer do it now, that was enough... (Jia Jun, a male in his mid 40s, with a university degree from China and worked in a factory in Australia)

People from China are curious about everything. In China, we didn't have this, and it was forbidden. Some people went to prostitutes, and watched striptease dances, I had been there, just in Chinatown, you should go, it is a culture... (Song Xiaohong, a female, in her mid 30s, was pursuing a master degree at the time of the interview)

Curiosity seemed to be common among this sample. In regard to changing sexual conduct, some respondents gave examples of their friends. See the example provided by Zhang Ning below:

When I was in the language centre, I knew some girls...this is not second hand

information that I heard from someone. I knew these girls who were involved in some kind of pornographic services... they needed money I understand; they didn't want to work in the factory, that was too hard for them. Now when they had permanent resident status, they no longer did that, they started their own business...

This evidence suggests that changing sexual practice sometimes might be seen as a survival strategy.

In sum, the nature of the changing sexual conduct among these migrants was diverse. Curiosity about the diverse sexual practices in Australia corresponded with the social characteristics of this sample. These characteristics may be associated with the home country context. However, changing sexual attitudes among this sample were not found to be related to gender, educational level and occupation, but rather, were personalized. Curiosity about different sexual practices among the sample seemed to weaken with increasing length of residence in Australia. Cohabiting family practices may have increased as a result of the predominant influences from the mainstream society. In general, the changing sexual conducts could be attributed to three factors, the limitation of sexual conduct in the home country, the irresistible collective influence from the mainstream society and personal cultural values.

Cultural Patterns in Marriage: Greater Tolerance and A De-Emphasis of Personal Desire

Previous sections examined the effects of migration on the marriages of these migrants. A significant number of respondents had experienced separation from their families for quite a long period of time though their marriages remained intact, even in the cases of Wan Jun, Su Fan, Li Sha and Zhang Ning. As I emphasized in previous sections of this chapter, these particular respondents

were not quite satisfied with their marriages. This may suggest a pattern of marriage practices that exists among this sample. Obviously there were cultural factors at work, which mediated the impact of migration and mainstream influences. Three typical examples are presented below for discussion. The three cases are: Sun Gang, a male in his early 40s; Jia Jun, a male in his mid 40s and Zhao Xiaoyan, a female in her early 40s.

The Combined Effect of Cultural Traits and Religious Practices - The Case of Sun Gang

Sun Gang did not practice religion in China. He came to Australia in 1990. He had earned his permanent resident status only a short time before the interview in 1997, and by this time he had been separated from his wife and daughter for eight years. During this time he had never been able to make a trip back home for a visit, nor could he pay his wife to come over. Though its characteristics were very unusual, Sun Gang sustained his marriage. What forces allowed him to maintain his marriage? His biography revealed that he had become a Christian several years earlier, at a time when he faced a dilemma between going back home or staying in Australia. Becoming a Christian was critical in mitigating emotional depression stemming from his family separation and the hardship he experienced in a new social context. Yet, cultural beliefs and personal values also played an important role in helping him sustain his marriage. This is best seen in his own words:

I could initiate a divorce; my wife could also do so. People would understand us. But, I feel I am indebted to her [his wife]... she does not have it easy at all, she works while looking after our daughter without any help. And look at my daughter, she is so sweet, she is not indebted to our expectations, she did so well in school, and recently passed the entry exam and got into a "key" secondary school. I feel so proud of her... I have been trying to send more money back home, and hoping they could live more comfortably, that has been my hope. I value family life, it is the most important thing to me... I feel very sorry that many marriages have ended due to migration. The "going abroad wave" has broken up many marriages, and this is a tragedy.

Sun's view of family and marriage was not only seen as traditional, but also reflected a cultural trait of de-emphasizing personal desires and needs in family life. What Sun valued in the marriage was that his wife had remained devoted to him and his family rather than focussing upon immediate returns of personal affection. Sun also emphasized the return he received from the personal good feeling his wife provided to him. Keeping the family together on account of his daughter was also seen as an important factor, which allowed Sun to sustain his marriage.

Personal Morals and Beliefs - The Case of Jia Jun

Jia Jun came to Australia in 1988. He was married and had a son who was 15. Like many others Jia had been separated from his wife and son for three years due to the 1989 Tiananmen Massacre in Beijing. However, his marital life was going well. In the interview, we talked about the impact of separation on marriages. Jia's personal values are best seen in his words below:

My wife and son came to join me in October 1990. Before she came, I did not have any sexual relationship with any woman, I lived alone. I think this is a very personal issue, and it depends on how you account for it. I knew some people, who went to prostitutes. I can understand them, but I wouldn't do it. I believe that sex is very private and emotional. If you have no affection, you should not do it. I don't care how other people think of me, that is my attitude toward my life...

Jia knew his wife when they were in high school. They knew each other well. Their long dating experience was seen as important in sustaining his marriage. Hence, the three-year separation did not really have an obvious impact on his intimate relations with his wife. Jia was not a fervent believer in religion. In his case, personal values played a dominant role in his marital life.

The Mediating Role of Religion in Coping with Marital Crisis - The Case of Zhao Xiaoyan

Zhao Xiaoyan came to join her husband in 1991. She came from a Christian family and had practised religion since her childhood. She had a university degree and had held a senior post in the

government. She didn't originally expect to migrate to a Western country, and for her migration meant that she had to give up her privileged status. On account of her marriage, Zhao obviously was the partner who made a sacrifice in terms of career development. Marriage in her case seemed quite dramatic.

Our marriage had so many problems after we came to join him [her husband]. Coming to the church provided great merits to our marriage. As a migrant, life was so hard at the beginning. We often quarrelled after we came, however, since we began coming to this church, our family life has become more peaceful... God helps us, otherwise, we might have divorced or separated...

In general the data revealed that there was a deeply-based cultural belief in the Chinese mind that de-emphasized individual desires and interests for many, although not all migrants. These beliefs are expressed in the Confucian texts, and involve such matters as filial piety and obedience. Culturally and historically, personal happiness and emotional satisfaction have never been on the agenda in Chinese culture. By contrast, the Western ideology of "progress" and individuality-oriented culture encourages people to seek ultimate personal fulfilment and self-satisfaction. Of course, concern for others is also common in Western societies, but the central ideology tends to place more emphasis upon the individual. In general, Chinese attitudes towards marriage are different from those in the West. For example, a marriage without love may be seen as immoral in the West; for the Chinese, seeking personal satisfaction may be viewed as immoral. Fundamental cultural beliefs play a major role in marital life.

Summary

Marital lives were complex and drama-filled among this sample. Migration, the consequences of the changing social cultural context, and the rupture of kinship relations played an obvious role in

influencing the informants' intimate relationships, shaping their marital expectations as well as their sexual conduct in the new social context. However, the social capital these migrants brought with them and their participation in religious activities also played a significant role in mediating the effects of migration and family separation and the influences from the mainstream society.

Marriages were more likely to be sustained than broken among this sample. This finding can be seen as the result of cultural beliefs at work in the respondents' family lives. Challenges to men, which were reflected in both the women's views and men's views suggested a complex set of marital expectations, which were in turned influenced by the social context. These expectations were a combination of traditional and modern practices. Women's expectations of men seemed more emotionally oriented and did not just focus on the "breadwinner" role. Mainstream sexual practices posed strong challenges to this group of Chinese, as a result of the very distinctive social practices and policies between two societies.

CHAPTER TEN

CHILD REARING PRACTICES: EXPECTATIONS AND CULTURAL BELIEFS

Introduction

A desire to seek greater opportunities for their children's future was explicitly expressed by many respondents as a reason to migrate. Perceptions of the Australian educational system noted in Chapter Eight were related to concerns about the education that children would receive. It can be asked, then, what effect did the cross-cultural migration to Australia have on respondents' child rearing practices, and what are the characteristic child rearing practices among these migrants?

Chinese Confucianism is characterized by a set of values including filial piety, obedience, the adoration of authority and the de-emphasis of personal desires. These characteristics are integrated with one another and permeate every aspect of Chinese family life.

Cultural values and beliefs often are directly expressed in child rearing practices. Parents consciously or unconsciously pass on their values and beliefs to their children in the conduct of daily life. Yet cultural beliefs can be influenced, to some extent, by the contextual environment. The cross-cultural migration of this group of people will be manifested in how social capital is used on one hand, and on the other, in how the respondent's personal values are modified under mainstream influences.

This chapter focuses on the 34 married respondents among the sample, 28 had children and 6 had no children. The major themes of this chapter are: (1) changing views of children and a decline of expectation of children to an economic return; (2) a tendency towards having a second child; (3) mother tongue maintenance and ethnic identity; (4) cultural beliefs of strictness in child

rearing practices; (5) greater investment and expectations regarding the school performance of children.

Changing Views of Children and a Decline of Expectations of Children to an Economic Return

Changing attitudes toward marriage and personal life will have an effect on views of children. The data revealed that children were no longer seen as essential in one's life. Evidence for this was found among the six childless respondents (Table 6. 10), who had been married from one year to seven years respectively, with their ages ranging from 30 to the early 40s. Compared with the practices in China, where a majority of the married people tend to have a baby during their 20s, the six people would have significantly delayed the age of child bearing if they still wanted to have a child. Migration had a direct effect on this delay. Two typical examples are now presented.

The Case of Lu Bingyan

Whether to have a child or not is determined by various factors among a given couple. Lu Bingyan, a female in her early 40s had been married more than seven years.

You look at this society. It is not easy to rear a child, very expensive. In addition, having children seems to be troublesome and worresome, particularly when they become 17 or 18 years old, they might run away or leave home to leave you alone, or they stay with you, but fight with you... I saw many things of this kind in this country. So I need to think if I really want to have a child...

Teen problems are social issues which exist in all societies. When Lu mentioned this issue, she showed her negative views of Australian society. Lu's view of young people leaving home reflected social cultural differences between China and Australia. In Australia, young people tend to leave home earlier because the mainstream culture places greater emphasis upon personal autonomy, self-

discipline and independence (McDonald, 1995a). So young people leaving their parents' home is acceptable and supported by social policy. This social cultural context is different from China, where most young people do not leave their parents' home until marriage. Leaving their parents' home earlier would be seen as lacking filial piety.

Rearing a child is indeed expensive today, but obviously this is not a major issue for Lu because she and her husband were both educated and had full time professional jobs, and money should not be a major concern if they were to rear one child. The key point for Lu was whether she and her husband were willing to make such sacrifice for an "economically worthless" child, given the considerable energy, time and money that they would spend with little likelihood for a return. Millman (1991) has indicated a shift in the perceived values of children in the West since early in the 20th century from being an economic asset to being economically worthless. Lu might have viewed this trend and felt unwilling to take on the commitment of having a child. Lu's expressed view of young people leaving home implied uncertainty about having a child in the future.

Lu's marriage to a non-Chinese White man also had contributed to her views toward having children. In another portion of the interview, Lu mentioned that her husband's attitude towards having a child was fifty-fifty. However, the changing social cultural context, perceptions of the host country and personal values all had implications for Lu's view of children.

The Case of Zhao Hong

Zhao Hong, a female in her early 30s, had been married three years. She had earned a master's degree from a top university in Shanghai and earned her doctoral degree from Australia. She was employed as a researcher in the university. Her view of children is presented below:

For me, I would not care if I have a child or not. Yet, from another point of view,

family life seems not to be intact without a child. Giving birth is a special experience for a woman. I think I might want to have a child, but, not now. I have too much pressure from work, and am too busy. Besides, I have no experience with children, I am worried, and feel a bit scared... If I really want to, I would have one a few years later, just one child, that is enough. I don't care if it is a girl or boy...

Zhao was an educated professional young woman. She seemed to be likely to have a child, but in comparison to her career, having a child was secondary in her life. Challenges at work were another factor that led her to delay bearing a child, a factor which could also be associated with her migrant status.

Changing views of children are also expressed in declining expectations of an economic return from children in old age. Nine out of 28 respondents clearly remarked that they do not expect a return from their children, and most of them implicitly indicated that they would not rely on their children much in old age, while a few said that they hoped for some degree of return, either financially or physically. Three typical examples are presented below.

The Case of Hu Na

Hu Na is a mother of two children. At the time of the interview, she held a part-time teaching job, while she took a full-time doctoral course. What she expected from her children is best seen in her words:

Yet in this society, I am pretty clear that you had better not have any expectations of your children. What I am expecting now is nothing, you have to be realistic. However, for me, what I expect is to wish them to study well, and be healthy and happy, those are my only expectations.

In her comments relating to a decline of expectations that children would provide a return, Hu suggested the influences of the mainstream society. On the other hand, the declining expectations of a long-term return from children, can be, fairly speaking, also seen as a continuity of practices in

China since the introduction of the one child policy.

The Case of Liu Nan

Liu Nan, a female in her 40s, had a son who was 11. She and her husband came to Australia in 1989. She was the informant noted in Chapter Seven who mentioned several positive points about the host country. These views were also consistent with her statements about children. Her words are presented below:

I would not expect a return from my child in our old age... I don't want my son to feel that he has a commitment to us. People of my generation in China have too many things to worry....a lot of commitments in our life until now, we [her husband and herself] have to take care of both our parents... I don't want my son to be like us. I wish for him to have a delightful life, carefree and happy in this country.

Liu Nan's views of children were seen as different from most of the respondents, which might have been associated with her experience in China and how she perceived family practices in the host country.

The Case of Jia Jun

Jia Jun, a father, had a son who was 15 years old. He was a college teacher in China, and he worked in a factory in Sydney. His views of children suggested that social welfare policy had played a major role in shaping parental views of children.

We did not expect a return from him even when we were in China. Yet in this country we do not even dare to think about this. However, we will have senior benefits when we get old, and welfare policy is good in this country. If he wants to help us, we would be more than happy.

The data presented above suggested that there was a decline, more precisely, a further decline of expectations for children to bring a return in old age among this sample. The decline of expectations for children to bring a return could be contributed to various factors. These might

include the home country's one child policy, perceptions of the host country, personal experience as well as welfare policy in the host country.

In sum, there were significant changes in the views of children among this group of people compared to the traditional views toward having children in Chinese society. These changing views toward children paralleled the trend toward urbanization in China. It was noted in Chapter Four that the population of couples in China who prefer to have no children has been increasing.

A Tendency towards Having a Second Child

The interview data revealed that respondents who had married in Australia, or those who had one child in China and came to Australia in their 30s, were likely to have had a second child. In this sample, there were eight respondents who had more than one child. Three of them had their two children before they came to Australia. Four of them married in Australia and had two children born in Australia. One respondent had had one child in China and two in Australia. In addition, another three respondents had one child and were thinking about having a second child.

In this sample, however, there was no one who indicated that his/her motivation for migration was associated with having more children, though I would have guessed that a few of the respondents had had this intention. What made these people decide to have a second child? Is it because of Australian social welfare policy which encourages people to have more children? Or do these informants wish to maintain their family line or receive a return in their old age? The findings offer diverse explanations. Three typical examples are presented below.

The Case of Hu Na

Hu Na, as noted in the previous section, was a mother of two children. She was married in China, and came to join her husband in Sydney in her early 30s. She provides her reasons for having two children below.

After I had the first child, I thought I was finished. But later, I found only having one child would be too lonely. We have to work, and have no time to accompany him all the time. Besides, you look at this society, even with your neighbours, the only communication is no more than a "Hi," or "How are you?", that is all. So we decided to have a second child, then they can be a companion with each other, which is good for them.

Hu's explanation for having one more child does not suggest that she held traditional views. She was educated, and she had a part-time teaching job, while she completed her thesis for a doctoral degree. She would not have been likely to stop working to stay at home to look after her children. Her reasons for having two children were not associated with traditional values. The data suggest that the isolation of the nuclear family, a lack of kinship network and participation within the ethnic community may all have contributed to her decision to have a second child. In Hu's case, she and her husband had no relatives in Australia. Hu's reason for having a second child was representative among this sample.

The Case of Ding Hai

Ding Hai, a male in his mid 30s, earned a doctoral degree in China, and he migrated to Australia in 1993 as a professional. He was employed by a university. He had a daughter who was 5. He was thinking of having a second child. His words are below:

I want to have another child, but I am just too busy right now. As a migrant, I had lost all of my advantages and I face too much pressure at work. And I also need to talk with my wife...

When I asked him if he had any preference about the child's sex, he provided me with more

information below:

Frankly, I, myself, was not very keen to have a second child. The idea came from my parents and her [his wife] parents. The older generation all want male grandchildren. You know that being a Chinese, you have to try to satisfy everyone's expectations, it is difficult. For me I think two children would be enough. I wouldn't think I could have more children. I still want to pursue my career. If I have more children, how could I pursue my career...

Ding Hai was the only one in this sample who had earned the highest degree in China. Yet, education in some cases had less influence than family background. Ding originally came from a peasant family in China. This family background had an important influence on his family practices. It is understandable and common for rural parents to expect male children. What Ding remarked revealed some typical features of the traditional Chinese way of thinking. His concern about meeting his parents' expectations may be best seen as an example of filial piety. He also seemed to be in a dilemma between his commitment to his parents and his own career development. He seemed to be most likely to have a second child to please his parents. But his current strategy was to concentrate on his career and postpone having a second child. A potential problem was what he would do if he had a second girl.

The Case of Zhao Xiaoyan

Zhao Xiaoyan, in her early 40s, was a mother of three who had a university degree and worked for the local government in China. At the time of migration, she was married and had one child, a daughter. Her husband was educated and taught in the university. Zhao's husband came to Australia first, and Zhao brought their daughter to join him a few years later. At the time of the interview, she and her husband were running a business with relatives. Zhao had two children born in Australia, which was the "largest" nuclear family in the sample. Her comments about having two more

children are:

My husband wanted more children, you know what we had a daughter, he wanted a son, then we were lucky the second was a boy. Then I thought it was the end, yet, he loved children and wanted to have another. However, welfare is good in this country, then we had three...

Zhao's husband sounded a bit dominant in the decision making related to having children. That her husband came from a small town may have accounted for this, though he did possess a master's degree which he had earned in China. Thus a higher educational level may not necessarily indicate a less dominant role of the male at home. The interview also suggested that the intention to have more children and escape from the rigid control of the one child policy in China had played a part in Zhao's husband coming to settle in Australia.

In sum, the tendency among informants to have a second child provided support to Hwang and Saenz's (1997) study of Chinese female fertility in the US. There were several factors which were important in the decisions of these women to have a second child. Traditional values in child rearing were somewhat influential as shown in Ding Hai and Zhao Xiaoyan's cases. Respondents with a rural background were more likely to hope for a male child. The one child policy implemented in China was possibly a factor though no respondent provided explicit evidence of this. Social welfare policy was also critical. On the other hand, the isolation of the nuclear family, and the lack of kinship networks among the migrants all had implications as well. Thus the reasons for having more children went beyond a mere adherence to traditional values.

Mother Tongue Language Maintenance and Ethnic Identity

Maintenance of the mother tongue is an integral part of child rearing and education in the context of the home. This issue is associated with Chinese identity and cultural continuity among the second

generation of Chinese migrants. Mother tongue languages among the Chinese are diverse. They include the official language of Mandarin as well as many other local dialects. People from Shanghai might speak the Shanghai dialect at home, and those from Guangdong might speak several different languages depending on the specific regions they came from. In this study, the discussion of the mother tongue language refers to Mandarin. The data revealed that maintenance of the mother tongue language was not an easy job for parents. Language maintenance stimulated many conflicts, and required strategies. Almost all of the respondents who had younger children remarked that they emphasized the maintenance of the mother tongue language by either sending their children to attend Chinese class on the weekend, or teaching them at home. Various strategies were applied. Four examples were selected from the interviews for discussion.

The Case of Wan Jun

Wan Jun a male in his early 40s, from Shanghai, and had a son who was 8. He brought his son to Australia at the age of 3. His son spoke the Shanghai dialect and very little Mandarin at home.

Wan's son did well at school. Wan proudly told me that his son had won a Principal's Award the previous year in school. But Wan expressed significant worries about his son's Chinese identity.

The big problem for me is my son's identity. He does not like Asian people. He once said to me that he wanted to change his face like Michael Jackson. He wants to be a white man. Sometimes when he saw Asian people, he said "yak". He never says he is a Chinese. We never taught him this, I think school might have influenced him, or his friends.

I observed that Wan appeared very upset about this issue. He tried hard to give his son some guidance related to Chinese culture by sending him to a Chinese Saturday School to learn Chinese, but his son went there only a couple of times, and then refused to continue. Wan then tried teaching him at home, and his son was reluctant to learn the language. Wan finally gave up. The difficulties

involved in maintenance of the mother tongue language among the second generation are common among ethnic migrant families. Wan's son's attitude towards Chinese may also be seen as typical. His denial of his Chinese identity may have hurt Wan's dignity. Wan might have felt that this was a tragedy not only for the family, but also for his ethnic nationality. The point here is if a person does not feel proud of being one's self, he/she might not gain prestige from others. For a child, intimate surroundings are critical. The family, peer groups in school and the social context at large all contributed somewhat to the beliefs and conduct of the second generation.

The Case of Huang Dajiang

Huang Dajiang, a male in his late 30s, came to Australia as an independent immigrant. He had earned a master degree in China. He was employed by a university in Sydney. Huang had been married in China and had a son who was 11. His words are below:

English is indeed important if you want to develop your career in the West, but Chinese is important to us for the purposes of maintaining our identity and ties with our hometown. I learned this lesson from a friend...

Huang provided the story of a friend who brought his son to the US when his son was about 6 years old. As a result of the importance of learning English for a migrant, his friend tried his best to offer a supportive English environment for his son. The family only spoke English at home. As a result, his son could not speak proper Chinese when the family paid a visit to China many years later. All of his relatives showed disappointment in his son. This story explicitly indicated Huang's attitudes toward the mother tongue issue. The lesson he took from his friend is seen in his words.

It was I who did not allow him to speak English at home. Whenever he tried to speak English with me, I said Chinese, I just do not speak any English with him... He wasn't happy at the beginning, it took a while for him to get used to this. Now he never speaks English with us at home.

Mother tongue maintenance at home inevitably involved some coercive strategy. Huang brought his son to Australia when his son was 7. At this age his son had acquired a basic level of the mother tongue language, so maintenance of the language would not be so difficult compared with Wan's child. But for the child who was born in Australia, maintenance of the mother tongue was far more difficult. One such example is presented below.

The Case of Qian Xiaoyan

Qian Xiaoyan, a female in her 40s had a son born in Australia, who was 14 years old. Qian and her husband were both devoted to teaching Chinese to the second generation. They ran and taught Chinese in a Chinese Saturday School. Ironically, their son did not come to the school. Qian was upset about this fact:

I had never pushed my son hard with his school work except with the Chinese. I used to bring him here every weekend. You know what, every Friday evening before he came to the Saturday School, I used to spend the whole evening with him, helping him with some of the Chinese language. Yet, he just had no interest. What shall I do? I saw no use to force him like this, so I just let him go, he is bigger now, I really can't force him any more.

Maintenance of the mother tongue is an issue among many migrant families. It is a source of conflict. Maintenance of the mother tongue is usually associated with cultural identity and continuity, but other important interpretations were also found among this sample. Consider the following case.

The Case of Qian Dali

Qian Dali, a male in his early 30s, had earned a master's degree in Australia, but worked in a butcher shop for complex reasons. His view of maintaining the mother tongue provided another dimension.

For migrant parents whose children could not speak the mother tongue language, I think there is a feeling of loss and tragedy. I heard many stories.... For our children, they are in a natural environment to learn another language. Why don't we do it? In the long run there is an advantage if you are able to speak another language. It might be helpful for future employment in the Asian countries, since China is a big market...

Thus, maintenance of the mother tongue language was viewed as more than an issue of cultural heritage, it is also seen as an advantage for the future employment of children.

The mother tongue language is most likely to weaken among the second generation. However this group of Chinese demonstrated a greater concern about the maintenance of the mother tongue language among their children which supports Mak and Chan's (1995) study of Chinese migrants in Australia. The data in this study are not quite in conformity, however, with their findings that parents who had a higher academic and occupational status tended to speak English at home because they saw Chinese as serving no useful function outside the home (Mak & Chan, pp. 85 - 86). Among this particular sample, educational level and social status seemed to have less association with the perceived desirability of maintaining the mother tongue language.

Cultural Beliefs Related to Strictness in Child Rearing Practices

For migrant families, rearing a child in a country different from their own creates many challenges. Children in Chinese culture are highly valued, and child rearing is often seen as nurturant, protective and supportive (Mak & Chan, 1995); while strictness is also emphasized. Strictness as understood in Chinese culture means discipline, which is expressed in parental control and certain kinds of physical punishment. For example, saying "no" to the young child is commonly seen among Chinese families as a way to teach the child what conduct is expected. Spanking a child when he/she has done something wrong is accepted, on the condition that there is no real harm done

to children. There is an old Chinese saying, "Spanking means concern, and scolding shows love, while no spanking and scolding means no love [da shi teng, ma shi ai, bu da bu ma bu shi ai]."

Western child rearing practices are differentially oriented. Saying "no" to young children is not as strongly supported in Western society. Different cultures have different concepts of discipline and use different methods for punishing. In this section, issues with respect to cultural beliefs regarding strictness will be discussed.

Controversial Issues of Physical Punishment and Cultural Roots

Physical punishment is perceived by this group of people as meaning slapping the hands and spanking the bottoms with the palm. These were reported by most respondents as the most common ways they punished their children. A few reported other forms of punishment like having children stand in the corner or requiring children to perform some tasks. Table 10 presents the views of physical punishment expressed by these respondents.

Table 10. Views of physical punishment to children, by sex

	Female	Male	Subtotal
Agree	9	5	14
Disagree	4	10	14

It is interesting that the number of women who agree to the physical punishment of children was higher than that of men, which is contrary to what one may expect. The interpretations for this may be several. As a result of gender roles, women usually take major responsibility for childcare at home. Long hours of caring for a child at home could easily lead to a short temper. Physical punishment can also be seen as a strategy which mothers use to maintain their authority in front of children. Besides, the term "physical punishment" lacks a precise definition of what kind of

physical punishment is seen as of no harm to the child and of what is seen as harmful. The degree of punishment is also hard to measure. During the interviews, respondents who supported physical punishment often claimed that what they did brought no harm to their children, and they believed that what they did promoted their children's well-being. In general, views of physical punishment had no association with the educational level and occupations of these respondents, though, as mentioned, views did seem to have some relation to sex. Cultural beliefs do provide strong support for the child rearing practices of these migrants. Here I would like to present four examples for further discussion.

The Case of Ke Lin

Ke Lin, a female English teacher, earned a master's degree in Australia. She had one teenage son.

Regarding physical punishment, she remarked:

When my son was a little, I spanked his bottom, yet, since he started school, I never did this. I also know in this society, people do not agree with physical punishment for a child; if you did so, and neighbours saw it, they would report to the police... But, I think some kind of punishment is necessary particularly when the child was little and misbehaved. You got to teach him what was right and what was wrong. If you just explained the reasons they would not understand it... Anyway I never really did any harm to him [his child].

Ke Lin was not the only respondent who was concerned that physical punishment of a child might be seen as child abuse in this society. Soriano's (1995) study of Filipino families in Australia also pointed to worries regarding the concept of child abuse and discipline. The families in this study believed, however, that what they did was out of love and concern for their children. In turn, they believed Australian parents tended to spoil their children in certain ways and did not seem responsible for their children.

The Case of Hu Na

Hu Na, female and a mother of two, was mentioned in the previous section. Hu did most of the childcare in her home.

I feel that even though Western people don't slap their children, they do not seem to be responsible... I know some parents who often left their children with someone at home, and they went to parties; or they let their children do whatever they wanted. We Chinese seem to be more attentive to our kids. I believe some kind of physical punishment for the child is necessary. Chinese culture holds that strictness is good for children. I slapped my kids if they misbehaved. But my husband tended to spoil the kids. I spanked them for some reasons... In such a society, children easily learn the bad things. For example, there is too much "sex" on the TV, and "drugs" are another big social problem among the teenagers. If you are not strict with kids when they are young, one day you will pay for this, and children might think it was our fault...

Hu was completing her doctoral thesis at the time of interview, and her husband earned a Ph.D degree a few years ago. Obviously one's occupation and educational level do not necessarily lead one to disagree with physical punishment for children. Clearly, cultural beliefs played a crucial role in Hu's views. In Hu's case, she overtly remarked she was more strict with children than her husband, this was perhaps related to the division of labour at home. Hu took major responsibility for the childcare.

Respondents who disagreed with physical punishment for children gave diverse reasons including their own "bringing up" experience, or human rights. Here two examples are presented.

The Case of Chen Jing

Chen Jing, a lawyer in her early 40s had just had a newborn baby when I returned for a second interview to obtain some missing information. His statements are below:

I strongly oppose violence to children and women. I grew up in a family where there was no violence at all. I once saw a man beating his son in the street when I was in Beijing. I became so angry and tried to stop the father. You know what, he said, "It

is none of your business, and I have the right to beat MY son"...

Chen's view revealed that Chinese are likely to think of their offspring as being their own property. Chen's view of physical punishment to children showed the influence of his occupation and family background.

The Case of Li Ping

Li Ping, a mother of two, had earned a master degree from China and was currently taking a full-time doctoral course. She strongly disagreed with physical punishment of children.

I have never spanked my kids even if they did something wrong. I always talked to them patiently and let them know why they were wrong. My mother was educated, and open-minded; she used to do this to us when we were a little, so we have had a very good relationship with my mum till now. But, my husband has a short temper, he spanked kids... His family is different from mine.

Her "bringing up" experience was a major factor contributing to Li Ping's views of physical punishment and child rearing practices. This suggested that the family environment a child grows up in has an obvious impact on his/her later adult life and parenting choices.

Insisting on Parental Control over Children in Relation to Sexual Practices

Cultural beliefs related to strictness are expressed in diverse ways in everyday life. Parental control over their children's behaviour is the most common practice among ethnic Chinese families in Australia. Parental control is often associated with how migrants perceive the host country. Among this sample, respondents who had teenage children all reported some degree of conflicts at home, and the strongest issue in these conflicts related to differences with respect to sexuality. Two typical examples are presented.

The Case of Su Lian

Su Lian was a Christian mother of two children. Her eldest child was a girl who had just turned 13;

her second child was a boy of eight years. Su expressed major concerns with her daughter's "safety". She set up rules for her daughter that she must come back home before midnight no matter what the situation. Su also strictly forbade overnight stayovers at any friend's home. These rules became the source of conflicts at home. Su's words are below:

One weekend, my daughter asked me if she could stay over night at a good friend's (female friend) home after a party. I did not agree irrespective to what she explained. I stuck to my rule and went to her friend's home and picked her up. When we were back, we had a big argument. She questioned me as to "why the Chinese families are like this", and "why Australian families allowed their children to stay in a friend's home".

The prohibition of "stayovers" and the limitation of the teenager daughter's social activities are also themes in other studies conducted among ethnic migrant families including Filipino and Lebanese Australians (Soriano, 1995; Batrouney, 1995). In general, ethnic migrant families expressed more worries about sexual influences from the host country. In Su's case, apparently, her perception of Australian sexual practices was negative, and these perceptions had a direct effect on the way she handled the teenager issue. Su's strictness with her daughter was also associated with her religious beliefs.

The Case of Su Fan

Su Fan had a daughter who was 11. As a teacher in China and an educator in Australia, Su Fan strongly believed that parents had the ultimate right to control their children before their children reached the age of 18. Su Fan's words are below:

I am strict with my daughter. For example, she wanted to have her ears pierced so that she could put on earrings. I did not allow her to do this. Because, though this is not a big issue, I think for her age it is not necessary. As long as she is under 18 and is my dependent, I have responsibility for her.

Su Fan expressed a strong sense of parental authority.

In sum, cultural beliefs regarding the appropriate level of strictness in child rearing practices permeated many aspects of Chinese family life. These family practices constitute a general feature of Chinese family practices distinctive from other ethnic groups. Some fundamental differences between Chinese culture and Western culture led to distinctive ways of child rearing. Physical punishment of children was believed to indicate caring and responsibility in general, but not violence. What in the West may be viewed as "hostile" behaviour or child abuse is seen as acceptable in the Chinese culture. The controversial issue of physical punishment of children is interesting because it shows different views of parental behaviour involving contrasting perceptions of love, affection and care. Different cultures provide different discourses.

Greater Investment and Expectations Regarding Children's School Performance

There has been extensive research regarding Chinese parents' expectations of their children's academic achievement. Yao (1985) and R. K. Chao (1996) in the US, Turner (1993) and Fan (1996) in Australia, all mention patterns of parenting which are associated with a greater concern over school results, high expectations and greater investments in finance and time in children's schooling. For instance, R. K. Chao's study of mothers' beliefs about the role of parents in the US indicated that high expectations, a heavy workload, as well as parental investment and sacrifice among Chinese-American mothers were distinctive from the parenting styles of European-American mothers. Though Chao's sample mainly involved migrants from Taiwan and Hong Kong, the features of those Chinese American mothers were identical to what I found among this sample. 24 out of 28 parents expected their children to attend university. I have selected one of the typical

examples from the sample for discussion below.

The Case of Wang Xia

Wang Xia, in his mid 40s, was a father with a 16-year-old son. Concern for his children's future was expressed as one of the major motives for his immigration to Australia.

I won't expect a return from him when we are getting old, but we do expect him to be able to get into a university, that is my only expectation, and that is why I came to Australia...

Wang, in an outright manner, remarked that migration to Australia did not make any sense for himself personally. He had a permanent and secure position in the government, along with his own apartment. Life was comfortable in China, and he did not have to worry about anything. Obviously he had some reasons for coming to Australia, but offering his son an opportunity to get into university was a key motivating factor. Wang stated that his son had very little chance to get into university because there was fierce competition in all of the schools. Yet, in Australia he believed his son had a very good opportunity to get into university.

Supervising their children's studies, assigning extra homework or taking extra classes on the weekend were common practices among this sample. The amount of time and effort parents spent on these activities was huge. These efforts occupied most of their leisure time. Evidence can be best seen in the following example.

The Case of Huang Dajiang

Huang Dajiang was mentioned several times in the previous sections of this chapter. He was a senior engineer and worked in the university. Huang had a son in grade 5. The following is how he described his leisure time.

In the evenings, I usually have a chat with my son to find out what he had learned*

that day. So I have some ideas about his weaknesses and strengths. Then I check his assignments. I do this every weekday. My wife and I have different tasks for my son. My English is better than my wife's, so I supervise him with English. I often give him extra homework and watch him do it. My wife helps him with Chinese on the weekends...

This may be seen as a typical child-centred nuclear family in urban China. Supervising children's schoolwork seemed to be a major part of family activities in the evenings. Furthermore, Huang's greater concern for his son's studies was also seen in the fact that he asked his friends in Shanghai to send him a set of textbooks and teaching materials which matched his son's level. Huang then used these materials to supervise his son's study. The energy and time provided by a father such as Huang who also had a full time academic job was striking.

Expectations and investment of time and energy were also expressed in the selection of schools for their children. R. K. Chao (1996) noted this characteristic among the Chinese parents in her sample in the US. Evidence of these parental practices were also seen in this sample. A typical case is presented below.

The Case of Su Fan

Su Fan, as noted in the previous section, had a daughter who would be going to secondary school the year following the interview. He, like Huang Dajiang, showed great concern with his daughter's studies. He had very high expectations of his daughter, and tried to offer her the best education possible.

My daughter is doing very well at school, and she has already gotten into an elite class. You know what, I want her to go to the best school in Sydney next year. So this year, I need to find the best Saturday class for her, which would help her prepare for the entry exam.

The school Su Fan intended to send his daughter to was listed at the top of secondary schools in

Sydney. The requirements were very high. One weekend, because of other matters, I was able to go with Su Fan's family to visit a Saturday school. At the site, I observed how Su Fan and his wife discussed their daughter's progress with the teacher... I was very impressed by their efforts and commitment to their daughter. Su Fan's high expectations and his willingness to invest in his daughter may have been associated with his occupation as a teacher and his family background back in China. Selecting the best schools for their children was not a new practice among the sample in Australia, but a continuity of practices from China.

Generally speaking, the majority of parents I interviewed in this sample reported that their children did well at school. I believe these children's academic achievements cannot be separated from their parents' efforts.

However, expectations for children also took on other dimensions. Among the 28 parents, 4 displayed different expectations of their children. Here I present two of these cases.

The Case of Qian Xiaoyan

Qian Xiaoyan, as noted in the previous section, was a mother who had a teenage son. She came to Australia in 1979. Her view of children had some particularities, as is seen in the evidence below:

My expectations of children might be different from those of others. I only wish my son to have a happy life and to be useful to society. I don't expect him to be famous like many Chinese who want their children to become a doctor or a lawyer or whatever... People have different views of success. I would be very happy if my son enjoyed his life and was healthy, while not doing any harm to others.

Qian's statement indicated a trend of higher expectations among parents of their children among the Chinese community in Australia. However, her resistance to following the ways of most Chinese parents may be attributed to her distinctive personal life. Qian had lived in Australia longer than any other member of the sample. This suggests she had felt more influence from the mainstream

society. Though Qian stated that she did not particularly expect her son to go to university, the fact is that her son had gotten into a selective school, which provided him greater opportunities to attend a good university.

The Case of Ren Yan

Ren Yan, as noted in Chapter Seven, was a female who in her late 30s had earned a Ph.D in Australia and taught in the university. She had a son born in Australia who was 5 years old at the time of the interview.

My life has been full of burdens and pressures. I don't want my son to follow my career. In a country like Australia, I only wish that he has a good heart, and is a good person. I would not care if he couldn't go to university, or even if he takes a job like collecting rubbish. As long as he feels happy, I will be happy. In this aspect, I don't like many Chinese parents who try to send their kids to various evening classes or Saturday schools, and expect their children to be this and that...

Ren seemed to be open about her son's future which made her seem more Westernized. Ren's personal context, her marriage with a Western man and employment as a teacher, along with her general awareness of the diversity of educational choices, may all have influenced her expectations of her son. However the above two segmented cases are still seen as a minority in this sample.

In sum, a greater parental investment in children's education seemed to emerge as a pattern among this sample. This pattern may have been directly associated with the one child policy. Ample research conducted in China has indicated that the policy created high psychological pressures for parents and the only children (Jing, 1982). The high pressure that only children felt was exacerbated by limited opportunities and facilities in higher education. The one child policy also challenged the traditional parental role. Irrespective of the time, energy and monies Chinese parents spent on their only children, their roles and relationships with their children were also

changing. Chinese scholar X. T. Feng (1997b, pp. 339-345) summarized that contemporary parental roles in China were multiple, including checking homework, tutoring, and being a game partner as well as a companion. In Feng's sample, checking the children's homework was seen as a fixed daily household role that was shared between the two parents. In comparison with other families who had more children, the frequency of checking homework and the amount of time parents invested doubled. This trajectory of parental behaviours in relation to their children's education was strongly supported in the sample.

Summary

Over all, the process of migration posed new challenges to the general practices of child rearing among this sample. The tendency of delaying child birth, changing views of children, and a tendency towards having a second child as well as a decline of parental expectations of an economic return from children in old age, along with an increased investment of time and expenses for education all can be seen as having been influenced by migration, which may in turn lead to a generational rupture of these patterns in the future. Child rearing practices among this sample, while having undergone some changes as discussed above, still bear remarkable cultural traits which are distinctive from mainstream child rearing practices on the one hand. On the other, they demonstrate the continuity of child rearing practices in China which themselves display the impact of the one child policy and fierce competition in higher education. The existence of traditional cultural beliefs in child rearing among this sample was not so obvious. It seems that it is now a common practice for Chinese parents in the diaspora to invest a huge amount of time and money in their children's

schooling. Migration might very well lead to other interesting future trends among the second generation in the Chinese diaspora.

PART VI

DIVERSITY AND DYNAMICS OF HOUSEWORK DIVISION

Introduction

The family as a comprehensive social unit does face challenges and it at times requires reorganization so as to sustain its functions in response to external changes. Reorganization is not an easy job for any member of a family. Housework is an important component of family life. It is performed and negotiated on a day-to-day basis by the members of this small unit.

Housework generally takes those forms: (a) child rearing, (b) cleaning, cooking, shopping and washing and personal kinds. The majority of societies, countries and ethnic groups across the world have long recognized the division of labour by gender in the family. However, the precise role the two sexes play at home has varied by culture, ethnic group, as well as group economic status, and has been affected by social policy, the ideology of each society as well as individual circumstances. Thus, the domestic division of labour is an extension of the division of labour in the society at large; it reflects “a gender-structured system of production, consumption and distribution” (Connell, 1987, p. 103).

Many empirical studies in Western society indicate that the power structure at home is the key element determining gender role-playing. Connell (1987) offered a three-structure framework, also mentioned in Chapter Two, for studying gender relations in the family. The framework includes: the division of labour, power relations and the structure of cathexis. The structure of power relations in the family is critical. As Connell (p. 107) explained, “The power may be a balance of advantage or an inequality of resources in a workplace, a household, or a larger institution.” Connell further indicated,

Wage and career affect domestic power; domestic power affects the definition of the division of labour....The very ideas of ‘the housewife’ and ‘the husband’ are fusions

of emotional relations, power and the division of labour. The gender regime of a particular family represents a continuing synthesis of relations governed by the three structures (p. 125).

In reality, the power structure in a given family is more complex and involves more than these aspects, especially when you look at the diversity of ethnic groups, their cultural traditions and particular practices. The balance of power relations might not always be determined by the “wage and career” of the husband. Bearing this in mind, the power-structure framework will be used to examine housework divisions within this sample.

Sample Context and Related Issues Derived

To examine the division of housework and familial decision making, it is first necessary to look at the employment status of wives. Among the 34 married respondents, the 19 women were all either in full-time or part-time work, or in full-time study; all of the men stated that their wives were either working or studying. The majority of families had two earners.

This is continuous with practices in contemporary China since the 1950s as noted in Chapter Four. It is also common among women in other Communist countries such as the former Soviet Union where the proportion of women in the work force is higher than in the Western countries. Two-earner families in Communist countries are enforced by social policy, but also by poverty and war.

By contrast in Western society, two-earner families are largely the result of recent economic and social changes. There is considerable research on this issue, perhaps the best-known being Hochschild's *The Second Shift*. Two-earner families have stimulated heated discussion and

continuous research in the West, but in China two-earner families and their relevant housework divisions have never been given much public attention.

The gender roles of these migrants from China are complex; what they practice in Australia is largely carried over from the home country. Considering that China is a vast country in which each region differs from one another geographically, economically and culturally; this diversity will influence family practices in each region in several different ways. The interviews have purposely documented data on husbands' involvement in housework, simply because housework has traditionally been viewed as women's work and responsibility.

Several different forms of gender role-playing were found within this sample. Among 34 married respondents, 13 (seven females and six males) stated housework was shared equally between the two parties at home. It is interesting that five women reported that their husbands did more housework than they did, while six men reported that they did more than their wives. Also there were seven women who stated that their husbands did little housework and three men who reported that they did little housework.

When we look at the division of housework and home origin of respondents in China (see Table 11), it is noticeable that the majority of "sharing types" were those who came from cities in the southern regions; and "male involved more than female" types were primarily those who came from cities in the middle eastern regions; by contrast, there were more males from the north who reported less involvement in housework.

Table 11. Type of housework divisions, by home regions of respondents in China

	North regions	Middle eastern region	South coastal region	Subtotal
Male involved more than female	2	7	2	11
Equal sharing	4	2	7	13
Male involved less	6	2	2	10
Total	12	11	11	34

* In this study the Northern region includes the cities of Beijing, Tianjin and Shijiazhuang; the Middle Eastern region includes cities such as Shanghai and Nanjing; and the South coastal region indicates cities such as Guangzhou, Fuzhou and Shenzhen.

Family structure was also relevant to the division of housework. There were three respondents living in extended family structures who stated that their husbands were involved in very little housework, and there were also three “astronaut” families in this sample among whom housework was obviously mostly performed by one partner (see Table 6.10).

The discussion of housework division by gender will be divided into two chapters. Chapter Eleven focuses on the regional culture of housework divisions and Chapter Twelve examines the interrelations between housework division and family structure.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

REGIONAL CULTURE AND DIVISION OF HOUSEWORK

This chapter examines the division of housework among respondents who came from different regions of China. As Table 11 shown, the origins of the respondents in the sample were broadly divided into three regions: the northern region, the middle eastern region and the south coastal region of China. These groupings are based on where respondents came from, but there was some complexity in a few cases where the regions from which informants came were not the regions they grew up in or had worked. In these circumstances, hometown regions were used instead of region of residence prior to migration. Cross-regional marriages added complexity to a few cases. The following sections will present and discuss some typical cases drawn from each grouping.

“I Am a Shanghai Man.” - Families from Shanghai

We share housework. I am a Shanghai man. A Shanghai man enjoys a world reputation for doing housework. Shanghai men all do housework... (Huang Dajiang, male, late 30s, a senior engineer)

What a nice way of identifying as a Shanghai man! Cultural differences among different regions of China have long been noted, yet rarely studied in terms of gender roles played at home. Here I will present for discussion the cases of three respondents who came from Shanghai.

“I Do More Than My Wife Does.” - The Case of Lin Dong

Lin Dong, a male, was one of the few respondents over 50. He had married in the 1970s and was the father of two children. He seemed gentle with the look of a man from the South, short and slender. He arrived in Sydney with his two children in 1991 to join his wife. At the time of the interview, he

worked for a photocopier maintenance company, while his wife taught at a college. Their two children, one son and one daughter, were both studying in the university at the time of interviewing. Neither of his two children lived at home, though both came back for visits on the weekends. Regarding housework, Lin Dong remarked that he performed more housework than his wife. According to Lin, every morning he made breakfast, and then prepared lunch for both of them to bring to work. He cooked supper after work, and also washed the dishes. The reasons he did so were simple:

I have regular working hours, so I do more housework. She teaches, some days in the mornings, some days in the evenings. She also needs more time to prepare the lectures. She works hard. She has no time to do the housework...

Lin Dong sounded like a very caring man. He and his wife used to share supervision of their children's studies before they went to university. His wife supervised them with English, and he helped them with science subjects. Given the importance of language, his wife had spent more time in the evenings and weekends to help their children. This may be the reason that Lin Dong felt obligated to take on more housework. Lin Dong however remarked that he enjoyed doing housework. For him, housework in the host country seemed to be much lighter and easier than it was in China as a result of the domestic appliances available in Australia.

Here we have washing machines, the vacuum cleaner and other domestic appliances, which make housework much easier. You know that when we were in China we did not have washing machines, washing clothes was the hardest job for us...

Overall Lin Dong felt that his life had improved significantly in Australia. At the time of the interview he lived in an apartment, which was bigger and more comfortable than he and his wife had had in China. His earnings might not have been much in comparison with those of native Australians, but he was content. He provided the example that he and his wife could dine in a

restaurant whenever they wanted when he had only \$20 or \$30 in his pocket; but in China he could not afford to go to a restaurant with his salary.

I presumed that Lin Dong took on more housework because he had a disadvantaged status in Australia compared to his wife's job as well as his employment status in China. His biography showed that he encountered more difficulties in employment because of his age and poor English, and he had to live on his wife's income at the beginning of settlement in Australia. At this time, he was very depressed and blamed himself. He later found employment in a factory, which one would assume might have influenced his gender role-playing at home. Though he had a white-collar job, the work he did had no relation to his professional training and knowledge. In comparison, his wife pursued a career that was identical to her profession in China, and she obviously earned a higher income than her husband. Yet Lin Dong remarked that the division of housework was basically carried over from what he and his wife did in China.

Lin Dong's history revealed that he came from an educated family. Educated families usually showed less traditional ideologies and practices. Indeed he expressed the view that women should have equal rights with men in every aspect of their family lives. Lin Dong earned his university degree in Shanghai and was a senior engineer in a state-owned factory. His wife taught English at the university. They were a professional couple. As a two-earner couple, they shared housework, more precisely; Li Dong did more than his wife did. Furthermore, during the two to three year period of separation from his wife, Lin looked after two children on his own. For two-career couples, accommodation of one to the other is often required, as McDonald (1995b, p. 40) indicated, in particular when a wife finds a job with a higher wage than her husband's. This is often seen as a potential marital crisis, and in most cases it is the woman who is made to accommodate

her husband. In Lin Dong's case, however, as a consequence of migration he was the one who accommodated his wife's career.

In general, the housework division among Lin Dong's family reflected some regional character apart from the prevalent social political milieu in his native China. Yet I would assume that the disadvantages he experienced in the host country might have further enhanced his role at home. He was a family type of man. This was why he was willing to give up his career to join his wife in Sydney. In addition, Lin's positive views of Australian society were also crucial in his decision to migrate. His family life showed some cohesion and harmony, which might have been related to the quality of the marriage he and his wife had.

"He Is Caring and Sensitive"- The Case of Liu Nan

Liu Nan was a female in her 40s. As noted in Chapter Seven, she grew up in Shanghai and worked in Yunnan province before she migrated. Her husband shared a very similar background to her own. He was also born in Shanghai and came to Yunnan during the "Cultural Revolution". The couple had one child, an 11-year-old boy. Liu and her husband immigrated to Australia soon after the 1989 incident. At the time of the interview they both worked at a library. When she was asked about the division of housework at home, Liu provided the information below:

I am a lucky woman. My husband does more work at home. He is a caring man, caring for our son and myself. Generally, Shanghai men, though not all of them, are good at housework. My husband does all the cooking now; I am the only one responsible for supervising my son's studies. I used to do cleaning and washing, but not anymore. You know that I have some diseases because I am getting older, I am not very strong, so he now has taken over the cleaning and washing from me. I tried to stop him from doing too much, but he did not listen...

Liu Nan also pointed to her hair which was obviously newly cut, and said, "Look, that's his work; my colleagues thought that was done by a professional. It is nice, isn't it?" Liu was observably

proud of her husband. When I asked her how the housework was divided in China, she simply answered, "It was the same, nothing new. That was why I married him..." It seems to be true that an educated woman with egalitarian views is likely to marry an egalitarian man. When I looked at Liu's family values, Liu emphasized harmony and stability within marriage; yet when you looked at the gender roles at her home, they were not traditional at all. Therefore, it is hard to say that the wage or profession of the husband determined the division of housework in Liu's case. In China, Liu's husband was a senior translator, and he had more opportunity to go overseas. However, this did not prevent him from doing housework. In Australia, Liu's husband earned a bit more than she did. However, her husband still shared the housework with her, and even did more she did. Liu's case provided evidence to support the general impression that Shanghai men are more involved with housework.

I interviewed Liu Nan twice. The second interview was arranged at a time when she had finished work and was waiting for her husband to pick her up. So I had the chance to meet her husband. He seemed very gentle and polite to Liu. Liu told me that it was not necessary for him to pick her up as she could just take one bus to get home, but her husband insisted on picking her up because he cared about her.

From one point of view, the fact that Shanghai men shared more housework makes it appear that they were less dominant at home. Shanghai women might be seen as more dominant than men at home. Liu said the following about their family decision-making:

In general I make more decisions than he does, of course, we consult with each other. Sometimes I propose something and he does not agree, yet he often gives in if I become upset...

It seems that Liu's dominance at home might have been related to her personality as well as to the regional cultural pattern.

"He Did More Than I Do." - The Case of Li Lingling

Li Lingling, a female in her 50s, remarked that her husband performed more housework than she did, especially when it came to cooking. Li and her husband were born and reared in Shanghai, but worked in Wuhan the capital of Hubei province along the Yangzi River. Li had two sons, who were both studying at the university. Li and her husband arrived as independent immigrants in 1990. They both had university degrees and had taught at the university while in China.

At the time of the interview, Li held an academic job in the university, supervising students in a lab. Her husband worked for an international company. He was well paid according to Li. The housework at home was shared among the family members. During the weekdays, her husband cooked dinner because he had regular working hours. Li had to supervise students and always came back home late. She did more cooking on the weekends. She and her husband went shopping together on Saturday, and did the cleaning and washing jointly. Their two sons also helped with cleaning, laundry, and dishwashing. It seemed to me that this family was cohesive and harmonious. Their two young adult sons still lived with them peacefully. According to Li, her family practices were basically carried over from the home country.

A higher economic status seemed to be an important factor in promoting family cohesion and harmony. Li and her husband had had good luck in finding employment. Li found an academic job only two months after arrival, and her husband became employed six months after arrival. Their good luck in finding well-compensated employment reduced many potential conflicts between them. In this sample most marital conflicts appeared to stem from unemployment and poor economic

status. In Li's family, the division of housework was not determined by wage and profession. In fact, Li's husband earned more but still shared housework.

A sharing type of housework division often leads to more democratic decision-making at home. Li remarked that all four members contributed to every important decision that was made by the family. Issues and decisions were discussed at family gatherings or at dinnertime. A family rule mandated that dinner must be eaten together. If one person were late, the other three would wait until this family member arrived. This was a well-organized family! It sounded as if they had a smooth arrangement. I assumed that there might have been some cover-ups, but on another occasion, one of Li's colleagues confirmed that this family was indeed the most harmonious family she had ever seen.

Sharing housework seems to be more common among families from Shanghai. My impression from the interviews was that Shanghai men not only shared housework, but that they also do more than their wives. I was impressed with what Sun Gang, a male respondent from Shanghai, interpreted as his understanding of gender roles at home, "Woman gave birth to a child, and man should rear the child, that is the equal division of labour."

There is little literature related to the gender role behaviour in Shanghai households. Most literature about the Chinese family structure is out of date. The hierarchical, patriarchal and extended structure of Chinese families is imbued in literature, novels and films, which have been generalized as the image of Chinese families. The particular family practices of Shanghai men may derive from some historical and economic factors, and these raise an intriguing issue for future study.

“Wife in Charge of Housework” - Families from the North

There is a general impression in China that men from the Northern regions showed more masculine traits physically and mentally compared to men from the South. One of these masculine traits expressed at home is the lesser involvement of men in housework. This section will examine three typical cases among respondents who came from the North of China. They are: Zhang Ning, Chen Jing, Liu Yi.

“Serving Him like His Mother” - The Case of Zhang Ning

Zhang Ning, a 30-year-old female, came from Beijing. She had a university degree and was married in 1990 in China. Her husband, who was four years older than she, was a teacher at the university where she had earlier studied. They migrated to Australia in 1993. Her husband worked for a company where he earned a yearly income of about A\$30,000. Zhang had worked in a factory, but at the time of the interview was enrolled in a full-time postgraduate course with a scholarship. The couple had no children. The housework in Zhang's family was supposed to be shared between the two of them. However, the interview revealed that in reality, Zhang did all of the housework. As Zhang remarked, in the morning she made breakfast and put it on the table for her husband. Then she prepared their lunch, which always included a box of fruit salad, which her husband liked the most. She cooked and served dinner every day. She shopped and cleaned on her own every weekend. What did her husband do at home? According to Zhang, the only work he had ever performed was dishwashing, but as he found his hands were often cracked and bleeding from getting wet, he soon stopped doing it. Zhang vividly stated about the housework division in her home, “I feel I serve him like his mother.”

What influenced the division of housework at Zhang's home? The economic dependency of one individual on another within a couple is often the key factor in determining who does the housework, and who does not (Millman, 1991). In Zhang's case, her husband obviously was the "breadwinner"; so, according to Connell's gender and power structure framework, Zhang's husband's wages were the major element in the division of labour at home. Zhang, as noted in Chapter Nine, frankly remarked that she was not satisfied with her marriage. The inequality of housework labour in her home may have been a key reason.

Apart from this, her life experience provided other clues, which may have affected the gender roles she played at home. As already noted in Chapter Nine, though both her parents were medical doctors, Zhang was actually brought up by her grandparents. Zhang was born during the Cultural Revolution, and due to the continuously unsettled political movements, her parents sent her to live with her grandparents until she attended secondary school. These early childhood experiences had a strong effect on her adult life, particularly in relation to the gender roles she played at home.

I am so different from my sister though we came from the same family. You know that she [her sister] never left our parents, but I was reared by my grandma who always taught me to be obedient and care for others. When I moved to live with my parents, I always cared for my younger sister. When I married, I began to take care of my husband...

My point here is that the intimate environment within which a child grew up, i.e. who actually looked after the child, may be more important than who the individual's parents were in terms of an individual's internal values and beliefs. The rupture of bonding between a child and parents may have very negative implications to the child in later life. Zhang lived with her parents when she was a teen, and had a very difficult time. On every major issue, she fought against her parents. For example, when she finished high school, her parents wanted her to choose a university in Beijing,

yet she chose to attend a university which was more than one thousand miles away from Beijing. After graduation, even though she went back to work in Beijing, she chose to marry a man who worked in the South, which implied that she might have been planning an eventual move to the South.

The inequality in housework roles in Zhang's family indicated that in other aspects of family life her husband played a dominant role. However, Zhang Ning's case displayed some complexity in terms of family background. Her family originated from the North, but her husband grew up in the South. Zhang's traditional view of gender roles at home and her husband's wages were two possible major factors contributing to the division of labour in her home.

"She Doesn't Let Me Do It." - The Case of Chen Jing

Chen Jing, a male in his early 40s, had come to Australia 10 years earlier. He had earned his Ph.D in Australia, and majored in law. At the time of the interview he was employed at a legal agency. Chen chose a marriage partner in China and brought his wife to Australia in 1996. His wife had a university degree from China and in Australia had obtained a scholarship to undertake a master program at a university. She was pregnant at the time I interviewed her husband. Though Chen had very liberal views of Australian sexuality and family practices, as was noted in Chapter Eight, the division of housework in his family seemed traditional. His wife did almost all of the housework. This was the case even though she was at the beginning of a pregnancy.

She is very traditional. I don't have any complaints about her. She took over all the housework in our marriage from the very beginning. She believes that performing housework is not the proper role of a husband. She is very traditional. I am willing to share with her, but she doesn't allow it. She spoils me.

Chen's less involvement in housework was not the result of his unwillingness, but was rather the consequence of his wife's view of proper gender roles at home. Chen's wife demonstrated a clearly subordinated role. As Chen remarked that his wife rarely argued with him. Chen asked his mother coming to Australia for a visit and paid her airfare and all other expenses. His wife did not complain anything about this.

Chen saw his wife as traditional. He was traditional as well, which he might not have consciously realized himself. Regarding marital expectations, for example, Chen clearly remarked that what he expected most was that his wife would be willing to support his chosen pursuits. So Chen's wife exactly met his expectations for her. Chen's family arrangements worked well, and he felt quite satisfied with his marriage. Hence, it did not really matter what views they held regarding gender roles given the fact that they were happy with each other.

Situations in which women took on the major share of housework and accepted a submissive role in family decision-making were also found in other cases. Li Gang, a male in his mid 30s, frankly remarked that he was willing to consult on every family issue with his wife, but his wife always asked him to make the decisions. Therefore Li believed that women did not want to be involved in decision-making because they did not want to take the responsibility.

"Though She Earns More than I, It Doesn't Affect Her Role at Home." - The Case of Liu Yi

Liu Yi, a male in his 30s and originating from Beijing, came to Australia at age 19. He earned his first university degree in Australia with honours. At the time of the interview, he was taking a doctoral degree course on a scholarship, which offered him a living allowance of more than A\$15,000 yearly. He been married five years at the time of the interview, and had no children. His

wife was a migrant from Beijing. She had earned an Australian qualification in economics, and was employed in finance with a yearly income three times higher than that of her husband.

How was the housework arranged in this family, given that the wife's wages were higher than her husband's? The interview revealed that housework in Liu's family was basically shared between the two. Liu remarked that, for example, his wife did the cooking, and he did the dishwashing. She did the cleaning and ironing, and he did the vacuuming. They went shopping together. According to Liu Yi, his wife held similar views to Chen's wife in that she believed that men were not good at housework. This case provided evidence that women may be less likely to use money to control their husbands if they hold traditional views of gender roles. Even though Liu Yi earned less than his wife, he made the decisions related to important family matters. Again, he believed, "she does not like to make decisions, so she always gave up her right to do so."

In sum, families from the North of China in this sample were likely to sustain traditional gender roles at home in comparison to families from Shanghai. How women themselves perceived their proper role at home seemed to be important in determining the housework arrangements within these families. Achieving equity in the division of housework required a raising of consciousness as well as value changes among both men and women.

A Complex Mixture of Traditions - Families from the South

Family practices in the southern regions have long been observed as complex and less traditional compared with those associated with families originating in the northern regions. This is the case given the geographically greater distance from the central regime and Confucian influences.

Families from the South also had greater opportunities to be exposed to foreign influences, as well as the colonial experience in history and immigration along with the influence of Western missionaries and the proximity of Hong Kong. How was the housework arranged among migrant families from the South of China? This section will present four case studies.

A Complexity of Family Traditions - The Case of Su Fan

Overseas kinship ties are one of the characteristics among families originating from south coastal regions, and these have implications for the division of labour at home. Su Fan, a male in his mid 40s, was mentioned at several places in Chapter Eight and Chapter Nine. His biography revealed that he was born in Bali, Indonesia; and in the 1950s as a result of discrimination against the Chinese in Indonesia his parents returned to Fuzhou, the capital of Fujian province, the region from which their family had emigrated. Su Fan had a university degree, was married and had one daughter who was 11 years old. He and his wife both taught English in college. He had come to Australia in 1989 on his own as a student, and his family joined him in 1993. At the time of the interview, Su Fan worked for the government and his wife worked at a factory. His social and economic status was obviously higher than hers.

However, housework within his family was shared. Su Fan believed that the members of a couple should enjoy equal rights at home. He remarked that there was no specific division of housework in his home, it was all arranged in terms of the availability of time between him and his wife. Su Fan had relatively flexible working hours compared to his wife. So he did more housework during the weekdays, at least 1.5 hours, and quite often doubled that. Every morning he prepared breakfast and sent his daughter to school. He then picked her up in the afternoon. He cooked dinner more often than his wife did. In the evening he also spent more time supervising his daughter's

studies. He looked like a family man, and believed that family issues were the most important matters in one's life. He emphasized his family life, but did not display traditional views of gender at home. He earned more than his wife but equitably shared in the housework. In Su Fan's case, his wages did not seem to be a crucial factor in determining the housework division at home. His egalitarian views of gender roles may have been directly associated with his overseas family background.

The complexities of his family practices were also expressed in his expectations of his wife. As I discussed in Chapter Nine, he showed dissatisfaction that his wife had no apparent aspirations for upward mobility. Generally men were reluctant to force any changes, and were not likely to encourage their wives to be more economically competitive.

In sum, the housework arrangements in Su Fan's family and his views of gender roles displayed a combination of influences from traditional Chinese culture, his overseas family background, and education and occupation in both China and Australia. Families with overseas connections seemed unlikely to have a traditional division of housework.

A Combination of Chinese Culture and Western Religion - The Case of Zhao Xiaoyan

Zhao Xiaoyan, a female in her early 40s, had come from a Christian family. She was married and had three children, one of whom was born in China and two who were born in Australia. As noted in the last section of Chapter Nine, migrating to Australia had been a difficult decision for Zhao as she had to give up her privileged job and come to Australia for the purposes of family reunion. Her marriage had also encountered difficulties. However, her religious practices had played a major role in mitigating the effect of migration on her marriage.

Family life in Australia was quite hectic for Zhao given the fact that she had three children, while her family also ran a business of their own. Childcare was a time-consuming duty in her family. How was the housework arranged within the family?

We share household duties. We have three children who keep us very busy. We run a private company... We are struggling with our lives; we do not have particular roles at home, the person who has time does it, that is the principle. For now, I am involved in the business more than my husband is. So during the weekdays, he spends more time with our children. I do more on the weekends...

I was also fortunate to have been able to talk to Zhao's husband. Her husband's comments about the housework division in their home are presented below:

I take on much more housework than my wife does, and I also do more than I did in China. When we were in China, we had only one child, and we had the grandparents helping us. I did not need to do much housework. Yet here we have to manage everything by ourselves. Tell you what I do every day: in the morning she prepares breakfast, then goes to work. I wake the children, feed them and send them to school, kindergarten and nursery school respectively. Having done all of this, I go to work on our business. In the afternoon, I usually leave work earlier to pick up my kids and take them back home. Then it is time to start cooking dinner. Sometimes on the way back home, I go shopping...

It was indeed true that there were no fixed gender roles within this small business family. Zhao's husband did everything in the home a typical Chinese woman would do. In Zhao's case, her husband had a master degree and taught in the university. He might have had something of a dominant status in the home when they were in China. However, in Australia he had to make a living from a starting point of zero. Clearly, in this self-employed business family, composed of migrants, the male is unlikely to exert dominance and the traditional hierarchical gender power relations over his wife. This is because of the limited resources and common interests associated with such families.

The interview also revealed that no matter how busy Zhao and her husband were, they took the whole family to church every Sunday. It seemed to me that the Christian religion played a substantial role in sustaining the family coherency.

Zhao's case provided a portrait of a small business family from the South of China and its characteristics: several children, a greater involvement of the husband in housework, operation of a small family business and the observance of Western religious practices. In this case, Zhao's husband faced greater challenges. These included his increasing involvement in housework as well as his conversion to Christianity. It seemed to me that participation in religious activities might have been the strategy he used to sustain his marriage and family cohesion.

A Combination of Rural, Urban and Western influences - The Case of Ding Hai

Ding Hai, a male in his mid 30s, was introduced in Chapter Seven and Chapter Nine. At this time it was noted that he was the only informant in the sample who had earned a Ph.D. while residing in China. He was married, and had a daughter who was five years old. He and his wife migrated to Australia in 1993, and left their six-month-old daughter with grandparents in China. They brought her to Australia when she was three years old.

Ding had an academic job and earned a yearly income of \$40,000-50,000. His wife was studying full-time at the time of the interview. He reported that the housework in his family was shared. Every morning Ding made breakfast, fed his daughter and sent her to school, and then went to work. His wife went to school in the morning and picked her daughter up in the afternoon, watching after her until Ding came back home. He and his wife shared cooking and looking after the child. He did dishwashing after dinner each day. Then he would spend some time with his daughter,

either reading stories to her, or teaching her Chinese poetry. His wife would do some schoolwork in the evening. Ding would also do some reading and writing for his job after her daughter went to bed.

Decision-making in this family was easily described by Ding. He simply left his wife in charge of everything. Though he was the obvious breadwinner, he had no intention of taking control of the family income.

I don't care how she spends money. I know she won't waste money. My salary is enough to sustain our life here. She manages everything. If she wants, she can consult with me about spending, but this is not necessary. For example, she thought we needed a car, and then she bought one... Family matters are complex, they can be viewed as big or small. I am not good at managing money.

The division of housework and decision-making in Ding's household were obviously not determined by his wages and profession. However there was some complexity in his family practices. He seemed to be an egalitarian man and open-minded in terms of gender role-playing at home. But his attitudes toward family income management still seemed traditional, which implied a perspective that "my work was outside the home, housework belongs to my wife." From another point of view, the fact that he let his wife be in charge of everything showed he put great trust in his wife. This fact provided evidence of the soundness of his marriage. His family seemed to be westernized from one vantage point. However, from another view, traditional family commitments seemed to be strong in this household. Ding was the eldest son in his family; he still provided financial support to his rural parents and also supported his brother's and sister's education.

Ding originally came from a peasant family in the South, and both of his parents had little education. Yet he studied well and had worked his way up to the top university in China where he earned the highest degree. Education had greatly affected his entire life. He had also lived in England for two years. Twice in his life he had played the role of migrant, similar to Qian Dali,

another informant. First, he had migrated from a rural to urban environment. Next, he had moved overseas. Each of these migrations affected his family values. Yet no matter where he went, his family ties were never ruptured. However, as a scholar, he expressed worries that he had not been very productive since he had arrived in Australia. He intended to ask his mother to come help the family with housework and childcare.

Overall, families from the South showed a greater complexity in family practices. Overseas connections, Christian beliefs, Western influences and traditional values appeared to be forces at work in each family. Gender roles at home appeared to be less traditional compared to those observed among families originating from the North of China.

Summary

Housework divisions varied among families from different regions and by individual characteristics. The general orientations of housework divisions were that families from the North displayed more traditional practices in gender roles, with men less involved in housework. Men from the Middle Eastern regions, particularly from Shanghai did more housework on average. This reality was pointed out by both men and women. Southern men were more likely than northerners to share housework. Due to the small sample in this study, I would not generalize about this issue here; it needs to be studied on a larger scale. Generally, household work seemed to be influenced by several factors, including regional culture, women's employment, economic status and traditional influences. There were also various personal factors, such as individual values and family background and so on. Families in changing circumstances needed to reorganize or modify their previous gender-related divisions of housework.

CHAPTER TWELVE

FAMILY STRUCTURE AND DYNAMICS OF HOUSEWORK DIVISION

Introduction

This chapter examines how housework is arranged within different types of families, including nuclear families, extended families and “astronaut” families as mentioned in the previous chapter. Families in the process of migration may undergo structural changes. Zubrzycki (1966) indicated several factors such as increasing occupational mobility, improved living standards, as well as modifications of values. Given the fact that Australian families are predominantly nuclear, the structural shift for a migrant family often involves a change from an extended to a nuclear structure. However, structural change among the families in this sample was found more complex than the model posited by Zubrzycki. Furthermore familial shifts were not always in one direction. In this sample, for example, respondents who lived in a nuclear family in the home country may possess an extended family in the host country. In other cases, a nuclear family became an extended family temporarily due to a special need. In addition, some nuclear families became “astronaut” families in order to obtain certain economic benefits. A changing family structure is inevitable, and such shifts consequently influence division of housework.

This chapter has three sections. In the first, housework arrangements within nuclear families will be examined, emphasizing childcare arrangements. The second section will look at the extended family to assess how gender roles are negotiated within the traditional family structure. The last section will examine the division of labour and gender relations with “astronaut” families.

The Two-job Nuclear Families and Childcare Novelty

The presence or absence of children makes a great difference in the housework load. Consequently, childcare arrangements are often a source of conflict within two-job families (Hertz, 1986). How is a young child to be cared for within a two-job migrant family? Given the rupture of culture and kinship ties, the higher proportion of women in the work force among this sample and the generally lower economic status of these migrants, what would be the best way for them to deal with their childcare needs? Using relatives to take care of children while parents are at work is viewed by Hertz (1986) as the ideal form of childcare in terms of cost, quality and safety. However, childcare arrangements within two-job families often require a negotiation of "bargaining power" which is defined by Hood (1983) as the ability of one partner to get another to accommodate to his or her goals. Connell (1987) believed that gender power existed in the form of wage and occupation both of which tend to be primarily dominated by the husband. Childcare within the two-job family is largely done by women in societies across the world (Eichler, 1997a).

Among the nuclear families in this sample, 14 families had children who had been born in China. The majority of these families who had children under school age did not bring their children to Australia until the children reached school age. There were eight respondents who had had children after arriving in Australia. This section will focus upon these eight cases in order to explore the patterns that appear in childcare arrangements.

Struggling Between Family Life and A Career - The Case of Hu Na

Hu Na, a mother of two children, a 3 and a 6 year old, was writing a thesis for her doctoral degree at the time of the interview. She also held a part-time teaching job. Her husband had earned a doctoral

degree in Australia and possessed a well-paid full time academic job. Obviously her husband was a major “provider” for the family, and Hu’s contribution was seen as supplementary. This was a highly educated, two-career family, which was rather atypical among the sample.

Hu Na and her husband had both taught in the universities of Beijing. They were also both sent overseas by their institutes of learning for further study in the late 1980s. Hu went to the US, and her husband came to Australia. As a result of the June 4th, 1989 Incident in Beijing, they became separated in two different countries. Who would accommodate whom? And which country would they settle in? This was the first big challenge to their marriage. At that time, Hu was accepted to a doctoral program offered by two universities in North America with scholarships. So she suggested her husband coming to the US. The opportunities for her husband in Australia were also attractive. He was already in a doctoral program and was very likely to have an academic job before he even graduated. For some complex reasons, her husband could not make a trip to the US. For their marriage, Hu decided to come over for a visit before making a final decision. She arrived in Australia in 1991, and never went back to the US.

Hu gave a birth to a boy one year after she arrived. Hu made a compromise in coming to Australia, but she never gave up her “dream” of earning a doctoral degree. She applied and was able to get into a doctoral program with scholarship after her baby was only two months old. How was the childcare arranged in Hu’s case?

I started my doctoral studies when my child was only two months old. I had to send him to a Chinese woman’s home during the day, and picked him up in the evenings... We kept doing it like this for almost a year. When my parents-in-law came to help us, my son was 10 months old. They stayed and helped with childcare for a year. That was great. I do not think I could have continued my studies without their help. When they left, they took my son with them back to China... And my son stayed with them until he was three...

Hu's case suggested that for migrants, if they sought childcare assistance in the host country, they were more likely to seek help from people of their own ethnicity rather than from native labour. Grandparents were often the source of childcare assistance. When Hu gave birth a second time, it was her parents' turn to come to help. Her parents stayed with them for half a year and when they left, they took Hu's second child back to China. In Hu's case, her two children had stayed with grandparents for a few years respectively.

Obviously, kinship-based childcare assistance rendered great help in allowing Hu to continue her studies and work. In addition, moving to another country to provide childcare assistance is meaningful beyond its surface. It is also seen as a way of expressing filial piety.

I wanted my parents to come not only because I wanted them help me. I wanted them come over to see another country. They were happy to come here. You know that when my parents were here, we often took them out for sightseeing on the weekends...

In Hu's case, the sending back and forth of her children between home and host countries, as well as the involvement of all four grandparents in childcare, was striking. From an economic perspective, this might not be seen as very economical given the cost of the airfare for all of these round trips. But in terms of quality, convenience and safety, the cost might have been perceived as worthwhile.

Hu's case suggested that apart from involvement of relatives in childcare, her husband's support was critical. The interview revealed that her husband shared more housework on the weekends to allow Hu to have time to work on her thesis. Hu stated:

He [her husband] often took the children out for a whole day on the weekend, because he wanted me to have more time for my thesis. My kids loved their dad very

much because he took them out; my kids were always excited... I would not think I could have completed this study without his support...

Mutual understanding and support between partners is a key contributing factor to a happy family. In Hu's case, her husband's support for her studies might have been related to the "sacrifice" Hu had made before. However his support was of full scale and was not based on any conditions. To support Hu's attendance at a conference in China, Hu's husband trimmed his work and took on the major childcare duties at home for two weeks. He was an egalitarian man. Hu's case proved that a woman with a higher educational level is likely to marry an egalitarian man (Hochschild, 1989).

Hu's case also showed the importance of close kinship ties for rendering assistance. The relatives she utilized did not even share residence in the same country. A nuclear family may take on the structure of an extended family for a certain period of time according to the needs of the family.

"I Chose to Work." - The Case of Li Ping

Many women in this sample found their personal identity through work. Li Ping, a mother of two children provides such an example. She had earned a master's degree in China and had joined her husband in Australia in 1991. Her husband came to Australia in the late 1980s, and had earned a doctoral degree there. At the time of the interview, he worked as a department manager in a large company. Ping had just begun doctoral studies at the time of interview. She had two children, one of whom was 4, while the other was only 9 months old. Both of these children were back in China, where they were cared for by Ping's parents. Ping remarked that she had stopped working and stayed at home as a housewife for one year after her first child was born. Though she recalled that

she had learned a lot during that year, which was interesting and rewarding, she still felt uncomfortable as a housewife.

If I were in China, I would certainly go back to work after the maternity leave. I love my child, but I also love to work; I don't want to be a housewife. I am educated and have a career. So I told my husband how I felt. Then he asked his parents to come and help us. They came and stayed with us for a year; then I asked my parents to stay with us for another year. When they left, they took my child back with them.

Ping enrolled in a doctoral program when her second child was seven months old. As a result of her studies, she stopped breast-feeding and sent her baby back to China. For Ping, her husband's income was high enough to support the whole family. Obviously she did not study or work just for economic purposes. Her decision to lead a career was likely associated with her experiences back in China.

The Cases of Others

Song Xiaohong, a female in her mid 30s, gave birth to a child at the time she was studying for a master's degree. In order to continue her studies, she sent her 6-month-old child back to China, just as Ping did. The rest of the cases in this group included **Li Gang**, **Qian Dali**, **Li Xiaohong** and **Zhao Xiaoyan**. All of these informants had relied upon their relatives to help them with childcare. They either sent their children back to the home country or asked relatives to come over to Australia for a short period. Families with a higher social status usually had better housing, and they were likely to ask their relatives to come to stay with them. They were also likely to pay frequent visits to their children when their children stayed with grandparents in the home country. Those who were of a lower social status would typically choose to send their child back to China and pay fewer visits to their children. International phone calls were frequent.

There was only one case which was an exception among this group. This was the case of **Ren Yan**, a female in her late 30s, who had one child aged 5. Ren had married a white man who migrated to Australia from Canada on his own. As Ren's life story revealed, both of her parents had passed away years ago. If her parents had been still alive, she might have asked them for childcare assistance. Ren and her husband, like many Australian middle class families, used hired labour and social services to meet their childcare needs.

The childcare arrangements among these Chinese migrants demonstrated a clear pattern, which I would characterize as a cross-country childcare arrangement. This model was characterized by the greater involvement of grandparents or relatives who came over from the home country to the host country, or vice versa, they sent the children back to their grandparents or other relatives for childcare. Several factors stimulated these kinds of childcare arrangements. Some women wanted to go back to work, as they were influenced by the social system and labour policy back in China. Kinship ties were strong among Chinese migrant families compared to the typical kinship ties existing in the West. Kinship assistance in childcare typically was perceived as being of higher quality and safety. Cross-country childcare arrangements may also be seen as involving a continuation of practices from the home country. Cross-country childcare involved a form of reciprocity between family members. Few people in China have the opportunity to go abroad. Thus, the cross-country childcare arrangement benefits parents and grandparents and its meaning extends beyond the basic functions of childcare. These arrangements in fact enhance kinship ties while also providing emotional comfort to these new migrants.

Economically, these arrangements might not be in conformity with Hertz's formula, which states that using relatives for childcare assistance minimizes cost. The costs of cross-country

childcare arrangements are significant whether they involved inviting grandparents to come or sending the children back to China. However, an accounting for the benefits to both parties in the long run, the costs were seen as necessary and warranted. For the migrant family not fully established in the host country, childcare is a major constraint in the early stages of settlement. Thus, the assistance of relatives for childcare would be of great help for migrant families in the process of settlement. Cross-country childcare arrangements are an innovation created by these migrants as a way to overcome initial difficulties they encounter in the process of settlement in a new country.

The Division of Housework in the Extended Family

Gender relations within extended families are often hierarchical and patriarchal in form. This section will focus on the three extended families in the sample for the purpose of examining how the housework is arranged and the kinds of gender relations existing within each.

The Complexity of Extended Family: Easy to Step in, Hard to Step out of - The Case of Su Lian

Su Lian, a mother of two in her 40s, had come from Shenzhen 16 years prior to the interview. She received a tertiary education and was a high school teacher in China. Su Lian grew up in a family of some complexity. Her parents originally came from Hong Kong and settled in Shenzhen in the late 1940s. She had a big family, and was the third born of eight children. During the 1960s, a Chinese government policy allowed previous residents of Hong Kong to apply to move back. Her mother applied and took the youngest child with her back to Hong Kong. As to the reason why her mother left the family, Su Lian did not mention. Her father cared for the other seven children on his own.

Su Lian remarked that her parents never divorced. Su Lian recalled that her mother paid a visit to the family twice a year. This visit was always seen as a big event within her family. Her siblings and father cleaned and decorated their house each time her mother came to visit. This type of long-distance marriage and divided childcare arrangement is uncommon among families in China. During the 1970s, Su Lian's mother and youngest sister made a second move when they migrated to Australia.

Su Lian's migration to Australia was completely her mother's idea. Her mother helped her go through all of the application procedures and paid the fees. Su Lian arrived in Australia in 1981 at the age 25. She enrolled in a one-year diploma course. She married after finishing her studies. Her husband, an Australian-Chinese, was a son of Su Lian's mother's friend. While her mother did not arrange the marriage, her mother's influence was strong. Su Lian's husband possessed a university degree and worked for the government. His economic social status was higher compared to the majority of Chinese.

Su Lian's life drama began after the marriage. She and her husband lived on their own in an apartment at the beginning. Yet her husband soon proposed that they move in with his parents because he was the eldest son in the family and felt obligated to take care of the parents. Su Lian did not think much about this plan and agreed to it. She confidently believed she could get along with her in-laws.

Her life in this extended family became more complicated than she could have anticipated. After marrying, Su Lian did not go to work, as she was needed to perform housework at home. Her parents-in-law had some property, which needed to be maintained. Su Lian was the ideal helping hand for her parents-in-law. In addition, her husband had married adult siblings who lived in the

nearby neighbourhood. These family members frequently dropped by to visit as well. Su Lian became the person expected to take care of everyone's needs at home.

Su Lian gave birth to her first child one year after the marriage. She took on the major portion of childcare at home. When her child was 3 years old, she was hoping to go to work. However, her husband persuaded her to have a second child. Given that one child would be too lonely, she agreed with him. Su Lian had a second child and from this time afterward she was occupied with the various aspects of housework at home.

I do all the work at home. I take care of children and my parents-in-law; you know that we live together and I have an obligation to look after them... Every morning I send the kids to school, and pick them up in the afternoon. I cook the meals every day and do the cleaning on my own. My brother-in-law said to me, "The house has been so tidy and clean since you came." My brother-in-law and sister-in-law live nearby. I often cook more dishes, and ask them to join us. I sometimes also prepare lunch for them to take to work... Whenever we have a party at home it is my job to do the cooking. I need more time with my children. In the evenings, I help my son with his studies. He is ill and needs medication.

What does her husband do at home? He does little as Su Lian remarked. Her husband used to do the dishwashing immediately after they got married. However, he stopped doing the dishes soon after they moved to his parents' house, as his mother took over his tasks at home. Her mother-in-law sometimes helped her with cooking and caring for the children. Thus, the women basically did the housework in Su Lian's family.

In an extended family, kinship relations are intertwined and complex. Although Su Lian did much of the housework for the entire family, she did not feel she received proper credit. There were conflicts between Su Lian, her parents-in-law, and other relatives. Su Lian wanted her immediate family to move out from the extended family and live on their own. When she shared this idea with her husband, his attitude was always ambivalent; then Su Lian tried to get her mother's support.

Contrary to her expectations, her mother did not agree to it, since Su Lian had lived with her husband's family for so long. Her mother also implied that if she moved out, her relationship with her husband's parents would be negatively affected. Su Lian's mother persuaded her to put up with the situation rather than moving out. Su Lian became a Christian after she gave birth to her second child, perhaps partly as a result of the conflicts she was experiencing at home.

Su Lian was an educated woman. She did not want to be a housewife. When her children started school, she began teaching at a Chinese Saturday School, and she was very devoted to her work.

Su Lian's family background was complex, and her own immediate family dynamics seemed even more complicated. Migration did not really improve her social status. The division of labour in her family showed a pattern of power relations, which were related to her husband's wages and family resources. The uneven family resources and employment status between husband and wife were the key factors which contributed to the unequal division of labour in this household. Some degree of hierarchy and patriarchy were also obvious in Su Lian's case. The husband living in an extended family is unlikely to share housework as women always unconsciously or consciously take over the housework themselves. Su Lian's case also suggests that earlier Chinese migrants are more likely to possess traditional values of family and maintain a traditional family structure compared to more recent arrivals. Su Lian's personality may have also somewhat contributed to her subordination. She seemed to be unassertive about her needs and desires. In the extended family when the wife has conflicts with parents-in-law, the husband is likely to stand by his parent's side as opposed to supporting his wife.

Harmonious and Reciprocal - The Case of Qian Xiaoyan

Qian Xiaoyan came to Australia in the late 1970s for the purpose of marriage. Her husband had been her high school classmate, and he had come to Australia to join his father in the early 1970s. Qian was raised in an educated family. Her parents had both graduated from St. John University - an American-affiliated religious university - in Shanghai. Her grandfather was a capitalist prior to Mao's regime. As Qian recalled, her family had lived in a Western style house in the 1950s. However, their house was taken over by the government during the Cultural Revolution. Qian went to university in 1977, but she did not complete her studies due to her migration to Australia. Qian earned a university degree after settling in Sydney. After graduation, she found full-time employment in the government as a researcher. She was economically independent, which made a great difference in her status at home compared to that of Su Lian. Qian's husband also had earned a university degree and worked for the government. Qian possessed almost the same social status as her husband.

As a two-job couple, Qian and her husband lived on their own for a few years. During these years, Qian and her husband shared all of the housework. Things began to change after their son was born. Her parents-in-law moved in to help with childcare, as Qian wanted to go back to work full-time. After her in-laws moved in, the division of labour at home underwent changes. These shifts are best seen in Qian's words below:

My husband sometimes shows man's superiority. Since his parents stayed with us, his mother always took over his work... gradually he used to this. He no longer shares housework with me. He did everything before, but now I worry he might forget how to do it... I worry he might not be able to help me if his mother is too old to work.

The housework in Qian's family was primarily performed by her mother-in-law. Qian played a supporting role after finishing work. Qian lived in an extended family similar to Su Lian, but her status at home was higher than that enjoyed by Su Lian. Qian was economically independent, and her parents-in-law moved in to help the family with childcare. Thus, hierarchical relations were not as apparent in this family. Her parents-in-law were actually economically dependent upon her and her husband. For Qian, the housework load did not increase after her parent-in-laws moved in. However, her husband's role in housework was significantly reduced. In these extended families, men were likely to be spoiled. Women, regardless of whether they worked full-time or part-time, were expected to do the housework.

Overall, Qian Xiaoyan's family displayed greater harmony compared to Su Lian's. Qian also possessed a different type of personality than Su Lian. She seemed assertive and was conscious of her rights.

I do not always do what he says. Sometimes we argue, and I insist on my opinion, and finally he listens to me... In our family, we consult each other most of the time. Sometimes he makes the decision, and sometimes I make a decision...

Qian and her husband both grew up in Shanghai. Their native regional culture may have contributed to the division of labour in her home. The division of housework in her family displayed a combination of traditional and modern practices. Her case suggests that the extended family structure has merit in assisting women if they are employed outside the home.

Extended Family and Intermarriage - The Case of Chen Hui

Chen Hui was a female in her mid 30s, and a mother of two children, one aged 6 and the other aged 4. She had earned a BA degree from Australia and worked full-time as an accountant. She was married to an Austrian-Australian man. Chen's husband ran a business, which employed a number

of people. Her household consisted of a two-earner family. Chen's mother moved in with them after they had their first child and later extended her stay. Chen described her daily life below:

I usually get up at 7:00 A. M.. After having eaten something, I go to work. My mum will send my kids to school and she also picks them up after school. She looks after them until I come back. She cooks meals, and I help her with cooking and do the dishwashing. In the evenings I stay with the kids, reading stories to them or teaching them things. I give them baths and send them to bed.

When I asked what her husband did at home, she remarked:

My husband is very traditional. His concerns our family-related, but in a different way from other Chinese. He loves kids, and he needs a family. Yet he never helps me with housework. The only work he does is to mow the grass or some heavy work. He rarely looks after the kids. My mother and I share all of the housework. My mom helps me a lot, without her I would not take a full time job... actually it is me who doesn't let him (her husband) do the housework. I prefer doing things myself. I am not satisfied with his work. I often redo it. Men are not good at housework...

The inequality in the division of labour among this household was obvious. Some contradictions were also obvious in Chen's words about her husband. Was it her husband who did not want to share the housework? Or was it Chen who did not want him to be involved in it? It was hard to tell, but the fact was that Chen and her mother shared all of the housework, while her husband performed very little.

There were three factors which may have contributed to the unequal division of labour in Chen's family. The extended family structure may have had the more direct effect on the inequality of housework divisions at home. As discussed in the previous two cases, men within extended families tend to be much less involved in housework. Chen, like her husband, worked full-time, but she still took on more responsibility for domestic duties at home, even though she did have her mom's assistance.

Income and wages may also be seen as critical in the housework division in Chen's home according to Connell's (1987) structural framework of gender relations. The household member who earns more is likely to share less housework, and the partner earning less would take on more. The interview revealed that Chen's husband provided the primary share of economic resources to his family. As Chen remarked, her husband earned more, so he took care of all the major expenses of the family, which included home loans, and food etc. Chen's income was less and was perceived as being supplemental. Her income was mainly spent on children's clothing and education and the like. The proportion of income she contributed to the family determined in part the amount of housework she performed at home (Hood, 1983). Economic status is a powerful determinant in the household division of labour (Hertz, 1986). As Chen indicated, her family adopted a divided family income management system, and she never knew how much her husband earned and how he spent the money.

The gap of economic status between the two couples also determined decision-making at home. In Chen's case, her husband predominantly made family-related decisions.

All of the decisions were made by my husband. He loved to make decisions, and he never consulted with me... if I did not agree with him, I had to accept it, there was no way to change his mind...

There were some conflicting undercurrents in their marriage. Chen mentioned several times that her husband smoked and was not thrifty at all by Chinese standards.

The dynamics of a cross-cultural intermarriage in itself may have affected the housework division of labour in Chen's family. In Penny and Khoo's (1996) case studies of cross-cultural intermarriages, they found that traditional gender roles were likely modified toward equity among intermarried families in their sample. Chen's case however did not support this finding. Chen's

mother spoke very little English. In this case, communication was an obstacle between her mother and her husband, which likely affected her husband's involvement in sharing housework. There were certainly cultural differences in child rearing between her husband's country of origin and the Chinese tradition. These interrelated factors may have led to Chen's husband to withdraw from housework and childcare completely.

The methods used to manage a household's money affect the emotional life existing among a couple. It is noticeable that Chen wasn't happy about the divided income management system in her household, but she just put up with it. Cross-cultural intermarriage obviously requires one partner to accommodate to another.

The family's system of income management is of importance, as it is a measure of authority and power. In the West, family income management became an issue along with the emergence of dual-career families (Hertz, 1986). It is the dual-career couples that introduced divided systems of family income management into Western society. Such a system has its merits as it challenges the traditional authority of men who often take control over family resources, while it also provides opportunities for women to exert their rights to share authority (Hertz, 1986). Yet, not every culture and society has the same system of managing family resources. I would argue that dual-career households do not necessarily produce divided systems of family income management in other societies. For example, dual-earner families are popular in contemporary Chinese society, but the family income management system is rarely divided within Chinese families. There are certainly other factors which have strong influences on the way households manage family income, including the social system, stability of marriages, cultural values related to marriage and family as well as an emphasis on personal autonomy and the feminist movement.

The data in this study also showed that cross-cultural intermarriage does not necessarily lead to a divided system of family income management. Cases from the sample also provided contrary evidence. For example, Ren Yen (noted in the first section of this chapter) had married a non-Chinese partner, but she and her husband managed the income together, and discussed all spending from their joint bank account.

“Astronaut” Families and the Division of Housework

The “Astronaut” family has been seen as a particularly common practice among Chinese migrants since the 1990s, especially among migrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan. In astronaut families, it is usually the husbands who are often away from home for business (Mak & Chan, 1995; Man, 1995a). This structure of family practices has been observed to be disruptive to family functions, and has been labelled the “astronaut” syndrome (Hon & Coughlan, 1997). In this sample, three cases were identified with some “astronaut” family characteristics. However two of these involved women who were frequently away from home.

Family Coherency Despite Separation - The Case of Xiao Lu

Xiao Lu, a male in his early fifties, short but stocky and strong, possessed an appearance typical of men from the South of China. He was married and had a son who was 19 years old. Xiao and his family emigrated from China to Hong Kong in 1983, and then from Hong Kong to Australia in 1994. Xiao’s brother and sister migrated to Australia during the 1980s. When they settled down, his wife returned to Hong Kong to continue her employment, while Xiao and his son remained in Australia. His son stayed with him because the family perceived a Western-style education as being

better for their son. At the time of interview, the family members had been separated for about two years. A main reason his wife went back to Hong Kong was to take advantage of a rare opportunity for employment. Both Xiao and his wife spoke only limited English, and for this reason were quite pessimistic about their possibilities for occupational advancement in Australia. Spousal separation in Xiao's family was seen as a strategy to cope with employment difficulties.

The mobility of Xiao was striking and was directly associated with his family background. Xiao as briefly introduced in Chapter Eight, came from an educated family in Hong Kong. Both of his parents had received a university education. Due to patriotism, his parents brought the entire family back to China for the purpose of contributing to the new society established by Mao. Xiao's parents were invited to come back by the government precisely because they were intellectuals. It was a great honour for the family at the time. Yet, the emergence of unexpected political movements led to criticism of his parents. Xiao and his siblings' lives were also affected. As a university student during the Cultural Revolution, Xiao was sent to a rural area to work. When he came back to the city, he worked in a factory. In this position, he was in charge of material supplies. This job was below his qualifications. His work required him to be away from home very often. Thus, the childcare in his family was primarily performed by his wife. Xiao's family background and personal experiences showed that political factors were critical in his multiple migrations. These experiences also had implications for his gender role practices at home.

Xiao ran a small grocery shop in Sydney. The need for his labour in the small shop was very extensive given the fact that his wife was away from home.

Every day I get up at 5:00 in the morning. I then go out to purchase some fresh foods and vegetables. My shop opens at 7.00 A.M., and closes at 8:00 P.M.. I hardly go anywhere for entertainment. I have no time at all. The community informed me of

English classes. I could not go though I really wanted to. Very occasionally I close the shop for a few hours when I have something urgent to do. This is my life...

Xiao's gender role practices were neither clear-cut Chinese nor Western. As a man, Xiao did all of the housework on his own as a result of his migration status. Xiao's case suggested that migrant males were often more involved in housework than they were in China (Mak & Chan, 1995). As a result of their immigration status, the family members in Xiao's household found it difficult to exert power over one another. Housework was arranged in Xiao's family based on the family's need to cope within a changing social context. Gender roles were seen as more flexible within Xiao's family. Despite the separation of members, his family appeared harmonious and coherent. During my several visits to his shop, I observed that he had a positive and easygoing relationship with his son. Spousal separation is often assumed to be harmful to marriage and family life, but this did not seem to be the case in Xiao's household. The impact depends upon the issues of why and how a family has been separated. Family separation is sometimes a strategy in the process of migration and may not strongly affect a marriage (Boyd, 1996). Xiao seemed to enjoy his life in Australia though his social status was low. Further evidence of his perceptions related to Australian society was provided in Chapter Eight.

A House-Husband - The Case of Wang Xia

Wang Xia, a male in his 40s, grew up in the North, but worked in the South of China before migrating. He was married and had a son who was 15. His family came to China as business migrants, which indicated that his economic status was higher than many of the respondents in the sample. Wang and his son lived in Sydney, while his wife had remained in China to continue her business. The family had been separated almost two years. Wang had a tertiary education and

worked for governmental organizations in China. In Australia, he had a full-time job in a share company. Wang's wife, as the interview revealed, was successful in running her own business. She was portrayed by her husband as something of a superwoman. She ran a business with more than 20 employees. Obviously she was the breadwinner in Wang's family. Her economic contribution to the family empowered her with the dominant status at home. Wang's wife had suggested that the family move to Australia. Wang followed, on account of his marriage and his son's potential opportunities for higher education. For Wang himself, migration did not seem to hold out much promise. His English was poor, and he did not possess any particular skills which might be useful in Western society. His family status was much higher than that associated with Xiao's household. He and his wife had bought a car and a house with tennis court located in a wealthy area of Sydney. Wang did not perceive his job in Australia as a way to make a living, but rather as a means to keep busy.

Though his economic status was much higher compared to Xiao Lu, Wang did do a considerable amount of housework in the family's home. Wang describes his day below:

I usually get up at 6:30 in the morning. I then clean the garden and make breakfast for us. I sometimes prepare lunch for my son. I drive him to school, then I come home again to bring the car back. Then I take the train to work. In the afternoon, I usually come back home at 6:00 P. M.. I cook the meal... and do the dishwashing... My son helps me occasionally. In the evenings, I might do some laundry or cleaning...

Wang did work similar to many women in households. How much housework did he do in China? Were his gender roles at home a direct result of his migration? His biography revealed that he shared more housework in China when his wife started her business. He took on major childcare roles at home when his son was little. In Wang's family, gender roles were directly opposed to traditional practices. His wife was the bread winner of the family. My observations at his home

confirmed that he was a house husband, and that the division of housework in the host country was not a new practice within this household.

Wang's economic status was the highest among the sample. Compared with Xiao Lu, he had far more material resources. Did Wang feel more satisfied with his life in the new country compared to Lu? He stated the following about his marital life:

We are lucky to be rich. We have never worried about money or fought about money like some other families. She (his wife) makes a lot of money, and she is generous, and never fussy about it if I send money to my parents. She is kind ... But, how about our marriage? She told me several times that she was coming back, then she called it off at the last minute because of business. We did trust each other, but now I have begun to worry...

Wang's problems and dissatisfaction were not due to his household role, but rather were related to his marital life. He seemed frustrated by the long-distance separation from his wife. This separation presented a potential crisis to Wang's family.

The gender relations existing in Wang's household showed the power of money. This power was expressed in his wife's role in the decision to migrate, as well as in the family's purchase of an expensive house in Sydney. Wang's description of the process of purchasing a house provided evidence of his wife's dominance in household decision-making. Wang collected all of the relevant information about the housing market and faxed it over to his wife who made the final decision.

Living as the Wife of an "Astronaut" - The Case of Ke Lin

Ke Lin was in her early 40s. She had a teenage son. Her marital expectations were discussed in Chapter Nine. Ke Lin had anticipated that her husband would be more caring, supportive and romantic. Ke had earned degrees in both China and Australia. She was employed full-time and had a solid career in China. However, in Australia she could only take on a part-time job as a result of her

housework duties. Her husband (who was introduced in Chapter Nine) had possessed a senior position in the government in China. In Australia he worked for an international company. This position provided him with an impressive salary, but required him to be away from home frequently. He was an "astronaut". Sometimes he was away from home a few months, and sometimes for up to half a year. Ke complained about her husband's employment situation:

My husband goes forth and back between Sydney and Hong Kong very often, one month here, another two months over there, I can't expect him to help me with any housework. Our family usually does not have him around at all. We could get by without him. He did little housework for the family; of course, he makes a lot of money, but that is not everything...

In Ke's case, the rupture of emotional attachments in her "astronaut" family was obvious. This was the source of Ke's dissatisfaction with her husband. Her husband shared little housework.

... he occasionally helps me with the housework but only if he has been away from home quite a long time, or if I specifically ask him for help. He has no conscience at all. He thinks a wife should take care of everything. He lets me be in charge of money and make all of the decisions ... he trusts me, this is good. But from another point of view, he is lazy...

The housework division in Ke's family demonstrated the impact of migration and showed the bargaining power of her husband who made the major financial contribution within the family. Ke's husband's lack of involvement in housework was associated with his social class in China. He came from a privileged family, and had done little housework in China. His senior position in China might have also influenced his behaviour at home. For Ke, migration to a Western society did not really improve her social status. She actually decreased her outside employment from full-time to part-time after migrating.

Within families, women often made decisions pertaining to spending money. This is a common practice in Chinese culture, but not within the Western families (Penny & Khoo, 1996).

Ke's husband provided the largest share of economic resources, but he handed his check over to his wife to manage. However, the fact that a wife is in charge of family finances might not necessarily indicate she has a higher status in the home. In many cases, having the wife in charge of the family's money means she acts like an accountant, while the actual final decision-making power still lies with the husband. The way money is managed within a family is influenced by values within a particular household. Ke's husband's attitude toward the family income was identical to Ding Hai, another informant, whose case was noted in Chapter Ten. These men earned more than their wives, but did not control the family's spending. The relative stability of the family was the major factor ensuring the maintenance of these practices.

In sum, gender roles seemed to be more flexible within these migrant families. There were no specific gender roles at home. Men might perform housework duties that traditionally had largely been assigned to women. Economic interests within these families determined housework roles. The impact of long-distance separation on these families was striking, but the effect depended upon the causes of the separation. Not all separations had the same impact upon family life. An unequal division of housework can be seen as the impact of migration on family life. Men who had been involved in the process of migration seemed more involved in housework than they were in China, which supports Mak and Chan's (1995) findings.

Summary

Overall, family structure has a major influence on the division of housework. Each type of family discussed above has adopted a different strategy to cope with a changing social context. Among the

nuclear families, cross-country kinship assistance is a common strategy utilized for childcare. This kind of childcare arrangement cannot be simply seen as an issue of modern vs traditional, or Chinese vs Australian, but rather it shows that some families actively invent new arrangements to meet their needs in the process of settlement. Though the numbers of informants were small, there seems to be a cultural pattern in childcare arrangements among this sample. Men tend to withdraw from sharing housework in extended family households. Migration from a developing country to a developed country does not necessarily mean an improvement of women's social status in the home. Gender roles in households depend upon the social context in the home country as well as the contextual situation of a particular family. In general, gender role performance within extended families seems more traditional and patriarchal. On the other hand, the findings of this study also suggest that extended family structures do have merit in providing childcare assistance which may allow women to work outside the family and achieve economic independence. Gender role playing appeared to be complex and flexible among the "astronaut" families in the sample. This suggests that gender roles are often determined by family economic interests in the process of migration as opposed to being solely derived from cultural values.

PART VII
CONCLUSION

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

This study has examined family practices through in-depth interviews of 40 Chinese migrants who emigrated from the People's Republic of China to Australia in the past two decades. The hypothesis of this research is that the family life of these Chinese would encounter great challenges in the process of migration given the obvious social and cultural differences between the two societies, and the aim was to examine the impacts of migration on their personal life. This study is intended to be contextualized, historical and broad in scope. Hence, the examination of family lives required overviews of family traditions, culture and contemporary changes in both home and host countries. It also required analyses of motivations for migration and perceptions of the host society, which have implications for the way migrants reorganize their lives in a new country. Family life including marriage, child rearing and division of labour at home has been investigated within a complex framework relevant to studying ethnic migrant families.

This chapter will first provide a summary of the main findings from each chapter and their possible contributions to the literature of Chinese migrant families, and broad gender and cultural issues. It will then discuss some of the implications for the theoretical framework and methods for studying ethnic families. Lastly it will make some suggestions for possible research areas which emerged from this study.

A summary of the Findings and Contributions

Social Profile, Motivation and Perception

The sudden emigration of Chinese from China to Australia since the 1980s responded to various social changes within two countries: the end of the Cultural Revolution, the Open-Door Policy and

economic reform in China; and the removal of discriminatory immigration policy and the introduction of an education export program in Australia. The migration is voluntary, facilitated by a more favourable “push” factor rather than a negative “push” factor.

The findings first provide a portrait of this group. Demographic characteristics and social data are discussed, and compared with the larger Chinese population in Australia. In general this group of Chinese is consistent with the larger China-born population in many aspects like educational level, marital status, family structure, religious practices, employment status and income level. On the whole, migrants from China displayed a relatively lower status compared with the mainstream population and Chinese groups from Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong. Yet the general educational level, urban background and wider diversity of home regions as well as language of the migrants from China are different from those of migrants from China more than one century ago.

Urban and educated background has a direct association with the mobility of these migrants. Reasons for migration among the respondents were presented and analysed from various aspects of family background, education and occupation. Reasons given by respondents cover a wide range from seeking personal choice and freedom to seeking a Western qualification. The findings revealed a “myth” about the West among these respondents. The social and political context in China is seen as a major factor for this, given that China had resisted the Western influence for long, and people were enchanted with what they heard about the West, which was somewhat contradictory to what they knew from official propaganda. The emigration of this group of people still bears the impact of the Cultural Revolution. The 1989 Tiananmen Massacre was a decisive factor further facilitating the settlement during the 1990s.

Perceptions of Australian society influence their family practices. The findings showed a wide range of positive and negative views. Negative views gave the best reflection of cultural and social differences between the two societies, such as views on sexuality, education and tax policy. A different sexuality in Australia is a major concern among people who have children. A general view is found that Australian welfare policy is too good to encourage people to go to work. Primary school teaching is an area of worry for many. The general negative view expressed was that primary school taught little. But positive views of Australian education were also expressed. The diverse views on Australian society were found associated with personal experiences: social and economic status on the one hand, and on the other, home country context. However, these perceptions have an important influence on family practices. The findings also suggest that the rapid economic development in China may influence the perceptions of Australian society.

Family Practices: Marriages, Child Rearing and Division of Housework

Family practices have a complex relationship with the process of migration. Continuing and changing family practices are interwoven. They are personalized and also patterned. Cultural factors are at play throughout various aspects of their life, yet, mainstream influences are also unavoidable. The findings suggest that migrant families have to struggle between two kinds of cultural influences, and their lives appeared to be more dramatic than they used to be.

Marriages

The impacts of migration on marital life are expressed in several ways, such as being single, delayed age at marriage and increased family conflict. Spousal separation is most disruptive to the emotional relations of the couples. The findings suggest that marriages are vulnerable and face greater challenges in the process of migration. However, among this sample, despite long periods of

separation and some degree of dissatisfaction, it is preferred to sustain marriage rather than break it up. Cultural values of harmony and tolerance and de-emphasis of personal desire are possible factors. Besides, what one expected from the marriage is also relevant to the family practices. In general, marriage is expected and valued among the sample. Relationships alternative to marriage are mentioned, but not found practised.

Migrant men face more challenges in the cross-culture transformation; evidence of this is found from both men's and women's statements in relation to marital expectations. There is an increasing expectation on men to be more emotional, sensitive and romantic apart from being a breadwinner. In return, men viewed women as more ambitious and "greedy". The generally lower social status of migrant men compared to their status in China is an obvious factor caused by migration. Within an immigrant society, social stratification appeared more influenced by race, socio-economic status, and gender. Ethnic men face challenges not only from a hegemonic colonial masculinity, but also from women. The challenges, however, are not new to Chinese men. Over the last century, the challenges were not always in one direction, or in one form. During Mao's regime, women's participation in the work force and claims for equal rights in education and employment led to a general improvement in the position of women in society and at home. Since the 1980s, the economic reforms and Westernization have brought challenges to men in a more complex way. Nevertheless, a rise of women's social and economic status is paralleled with a rise of expectations on men's role.

Findings presented in this research showed that, to a certain degree, attitudes to sexuality have changed in ways that indicate strong mainstream influences. In general, attitudes to sexuality appeared to be complex and subtle, which limited the scope and depth of the findings. Evidence

clearly suggests that there are some cultural factors that constrain discussion of issues related to sexuality. Evidence of changing sexual practices is limited and personalized among this group. The disparity of social policy and cultural attitudes to sexuality suggests the difference in gender construction between the two societies, which would influence other aspects of family practices, for instance, the challenges to men noted previously.

Child Rearing

There is considerable evidence that views of children have been influenced in the process of migration. Having children is no longer viewed as being a woman's life, rather an alternative in a woman's life. There is also found a decline of the expectation that children will make a return in the parents' old age. However, views of children are diversified. Though the majority of the families are one child families, a tendency to have a second child has emerged. One child policy in China, the interruption of kinship networks, isolation and loose social relationships with others are found as important reasons to have more children. But a family with more than two or three children is unlikely according to this sample.

An unexpected finding is that more mothers than fathers supported physical punishment of children. No precise definition of physical punishment was adopted in this study. In Confucian culture, physical punishment of young children for proper reasons is understood as caring rather than as violence or child abuse. The fact that more women supported this view might relate to the fact that women take major responsibility for childcare. This issue of physical punishment of children is controversial among the sample. Awareness of mainstream Australian views that physical punishment of children is regarded as violence may affect the views of some respondents. For example, respondents who believe that certain kinds of physical punishments to children are

necessary may say the opposite in their interviews because they perceive that to be the desired responses. The finding suggests that in studying ethnic migrants the cultural meaning of a particular term needs to be considered. Chinese culture, and current practices in China, in general accepts physical punishment of children, but it depends on the category and degree of the punishment.

A potential problem, however, is the finding that Chinese parents tended to make heavy investment in their children's education in terms of the amount of money they spent and the time and effort they devoted. This is common among families in this sample and shows continuity of practice from China. The cultural values placed on education and the Confucian ideology of de-emphasizing self-interest are contributing factors. In general, the parental behaviours of this sample reflect cultural traits. The greater investment and expectation among Chinese parents may also reflect the impact of the one child policy. The psychological problems of parents and fierce competition in receiving higher education in China are the sources of this practice. This finding also suggests that sending children abroad for higher education is possibly a trend along with economic development in China. Cultural beliefs in education and the method of learning as well as the education system in China are contributing to this practice.

Division of Housework

Division of housework is examined in terms of the structure of power, home region and family structure. The findings in this study showed support for the power structure theory. Yet one of the interesting findings is the regional culture relating to men's sharing of housework, which is more salient than the husbands' wage and career. Men from the South, especially those from Shanghai, generally share housework more than men from the Northern regions of China. In general, men in this sample share housework, but in varied degree. Women's participation in the work force is a

factor. The findings suggest that the regional pattern of men's involvement in housework may relate to economic status and the exposure to Western influences in the nineteenth century of the south coastal regions where women's participation in the work force is greater. Due to the small sample, this finding is not certain, but it raises an issue for further assessment in a large sample.

The findings indicated an increase in the amount of housework done by husbands in the process of settlement compared with what they did in China. The unavailability of kinship assistance and the difficulties confronted as new migrants contributed to this practice. On the whole, women's participation in the work force and family structure have a direct effect on the division of labour at home.

The findings also revealed that women in this sample may face a change at some time in the process of migration, because of the disparity of the employment system and welfare policies in two societies, becoming a housewife particularly after the birth of children. Migration from a developing country to a more developed country does not always mean an improvement of social status for women.

With respect to childcare arrangements, a very clear pattern that emerged in this study is the cross-country childcare arrangement. This is a novelty created by these families in coping with difficulties they confronted in the process of settlement into a new country. This finding suggests that the Chinese nuclear family is not really "isolated" all the time. It is flexible, and sometimes becomes an extended family when there is a need. To put it another way, families have a nuclear structure, but their functions remain the same as an extended family. This kind of childcare arrangement also suggests that Chinese migrants lack social services in the new country. Grandparents and relatives offering assistance with childcare is common practice in China, but the

cross-country assistance is different, as it involves the cost of air tickets. The actual meaning of such arrangements is more than appears on its surface. As well as the good quality, safety and convenience the relatives offer in childcare, offering an opportunity for parents or relatives to see another country is an important factor. It is a way to express filial piety in Chinese culture.

A question that arises here is whether the bonding between parent and child is affected by the cross-country childcare arrangement, especially when the child is sent back to the home country for several years to be cared by grandparents or other relatives. This relatively longer separation between parents and their children may have an effect on their later relationships. This would be an interesting topic for future research.

Religious Practices

Migrants from China in this sample showed low participation in religious activities, which is in conformity with the larger population in the census. This reflected the social and political context in the home country where religious beliefs used to be limited. This has been improved to some extent at present. The data from this sample showed that in general people from the South are more likely than those from the North to have Christian religion practices before they came. Buddhist religious belief has not been found within this limited sample. There was a tendency for migrants from China to participate in religious activities after arrival. The reason is related to the barriers and difficulties they encountered in the process of settlement. Religious practice is playing an important role in mediating the conflicts within the family and obtaining assistance and reducing the isolated status most migrants encountered.

In sum, the findings of this study suggest that the particular social and cultural context in the home country has a major role in the formation of migrants' family practices. This study was not

intended to sample a larger population, but it might offer a portrait of urban family life.

Implications of Findings for Theoretical Framework and Research Method

Implications for Theoretical Frameworks

Approach to Migration

The findings of this study, generally, offer evidence to support certain theories of migration, especially the macro-micro determinant migration theory. The sudden emigration from China to Australia has been seen as a combination of the changing larger social context and individuals' response to the changes.

Traditional migration theories have limitations. They used to stress the pattern of migration from rural to urban, kinship chains, and migration dominated by less educated males. There are migration studies that challenge this traditional picture. The findings of this study provide more evidence to support the challenges to traditional migration discourses. In the situation studied here, educated and urban people are more likely to make cross-country migration. Rural people are less likely because of limited financial resources and information, as well as the current immigration policy in Australia which favours the urban educated population. The urban to urban pattern of migration often involves two kinds: urban from an underdeveloped country to urban in a developed country, and developed dense urban to less populous urban. Returning for employment and economic interests after settling down in the host country is also a new area needing attention; many studies indicate the presence of "astronaut" families. This study did not provide strong evidence for this, but a number of respondents expressed an intention of going back if there is an opportunity.

Female mobility does not get enough attention in current migration studies. The evidence from this study shows that married women are likely to be pioneers in their families. Some women migrate first, and their husbands and children join them later. The issue here is that the traditional gender role has been changed in the process of migration. In addition, migrant women play an important economic role for the family and the society. Studies of migration trends and economic effects rarely focus on women and scarcely indicate their economic contributions.

Most migration studies stress the importance of kinship networks. This study offers moderate support for the kinship chain migration theory. The kinship tie is important, but not necessary, and it can be substituted by friendship. Most of the Chinese migrants in this sample neither had a relative nor friend in Australia upon arrival. Yet coming with friends is a way to overcome some unexpected difficulties at the beginning of settlement. Kinship assistance, however, would be more helpful for the newcomers in providing information, access to social services, and opportunities for employment.

Ethno-cultural Approach

The findings of this study provide support for the ethno-cultural approach in studying migrant families. The attitudes to sexuality, marriage and child rearing expressed by this group of Chinese illustrate the merit of the ethno-cultural approach. "Ethno-culture" has a broad meaning, including political culture, economic culture, class culture and ideological culture. In studying this group of Chinese, it is clear that home country social policy, economic status and Confucian ideas contributed to the general pattern of their family practice. These practices are distinct from those of Chinese from other places and people from other cultures and societies. Ethno-culture is at play throughout the whole process of settlement. It is expressed in various aspects of their lives,

sometimes tangible but often intangible.

In studying ethnic migrant families, country of origin is important. Many studies on the Chinese neglect this issue, and treat the Chinese as one homogenous group. As noted in Chapter One, the diaspora of the Chinese is worldwide. Where they grow up has significant implications for their values and behaviours. Chinese from China are distinct from Chinese from America or Singapore or Malaysia, in terms of values, religion and language.

The findings of this study also raise an issue of cultural meaning. Some terms are used in the West, but not where the migrants came from. Exploring the meaning of these terms to migrants from different cultures has not been paid enough attention in migration studies. Fong's (1996) study of child welfare practices with Chinese migrants indicated some differences in interpreting the term child welfare, which has an effect on their practices. Pfeifer's (1999) study of Canadian Vietnamese pointed out the issue of cultural misunderstanding, which probably contributed to the tension between migrants and mainstream society.

Findings of this study indicate that social capital theory has merits in understanding parental behaviours in relation to children's education. The observed special concern of parents about their children's education, and the effort and time parents spent besides financial investment, reflects cultural beliefs on education and parental commitment to children. This trajectory of parenting is reinforced by the one child policy adopted in China. The relationship of two parents to one child has increased psychological pressure on the parents to provide the best education to their only child. However, host country family practices and access to higher education may also influence the Chinese parents' behaviours regarding their children's education.

Gender Relations Approach

A gender relations framework proved to be useful in this study. Considerable evidence showed that women and men have different life experiences, and therefore women's stand point for seeing things is different from men's. This is reflected in many aspects of their lives. Women's voices are by no means absent from all migration studies. The findings of this study suggest that a comparison of views from women and men has merit, helping to overcome some biases and subjectivity in the process of data analysis.

Findings of this study also suggest that there are differences in the construction of gender between different societies. Obviously, the gender constructions of the Chinese are different from the experience of mainstream Australians. Generally, Chinese people prefer not to disclose their emotions and feelings in public, and do not discuss sexual issues freely. The difficulties experienced in recruiting respondents and interviewing give the best illustration. Given the different pattern of gender construction, when theoretical frameworks derived from Anglo-Saxon culture are applied to a group of people from another culture, it is necessary to modify the framework. The issue comes back to the ethno-cultural approach. Home country social context has a critical role in analysing gender relations. In China, public policies are generally de-gendered, and women have always been encouraged to participate in the work force, and wages are classified by length of working years, occupation and local economic level. This particular social context determines that the general pattern of housework division of the Chinese is likely to be different from that of mainstream Australians. My point is that when a research project comes to study a particular group of people, specific social context must be taken account.

Inevitably, all theories are limited by their time and social context. The crucial point is how

a researcher sees and uses them. The experience I gained from this study is to see theories as tools, and to be willing to modify them in the given context.

Implications for Research Method

Findings of this study provide strong support for the merits of qualitative research applied to this problem, which helped achieve the depth. Yet, a certain degree of scope is also necessary, to help understand how an individual's ideology or conduct is constructed. This study offered considerable evidence that in studying the family practices of a particular group of migrants, the larger social context in a given society is necessary to the study. The Chinese attitudes to sexuality, and parental views of children's education, both have an association with the larger context in China. The findings suggest that incorporating both qualitative and quantitative approaches improves the significance of the study.

Findings of this study also provide support for a feminist approach in research design and methods. Recruiting female subjects and analysing data by sex are important to improve the validity of the study.

The study could have been improved in the following ways. Exploring the cultural meaning of some terms used in this study, such as child abuse, would improve the quality of data collection and analysis. On-the-spot observation would be important as a supplement to the life-story, if it is available as a method, to show practices which might be different from what the interviews revealed. From this standpoint, it would be ideal to interview both partners within the family, which might reveal a very different story about their life, or might confirm one another.

Implications for Future Studies

Regional Culture among Migrants from China

The evidence provided in this study suggests that there are regional features of family practices among migrants from China. Most studies on Chinese in the West have a standardized description of Chinese society like collective orientation, familial and filial piety. These ideas are not wrong, but are inadequate. As a matter of fact, there is great diversity of values among different regions, closely associated with regional economic status and cultural traditions as well as exposure to external influences in history. People from more commercially developed coastal regions may show some traits identified as influences from Hong Kong; people from northeast provinces may show some influences from the former Soviet Union. People from Shanghai may be viewed as more Westernized. There are some general impressions that people from Beijing are more politically oriented, and people from Shanghai are more practical, and those from Guangdong more economically oriented. My point here is that cultural diversity within China needs further study among the migrants from China, given that most studies on Chinese culture fail to do so.

Gender Construction

Data in this study open up a broad area, gender relations, for future study. The mobility of urban women, higher participation of women in the work force and marital expectations of women as well as men's pressures from home all indicate the dramatic social changes in the home country, China, which challenge men's dominant status in society. The findings of this study also showed that men's breadwinner role is challenged due to cross-country migration. How Chinese men cope with these changes and how they respond to the changes of social status in society and pressure from

home, are issues that need consideration in future.

In this study, no woman reported any kind of violence against women at home. This might be the case among this sample because of the generally higher educational level and urban background. Or the statements may be untrue, if some women did not want to disclose family problems because of "losing face". Violence against women at home has been indicated by some studies done in China. Family violence among Chinese migrant families might be an area for future consideration, but which needs sensitivity to cultural factors. This study would be more challenging. The issue about violence turns back to men. A general impression about Chinese men in the West is that they are weak and lack masculinity. A review of family practices in China revealed that there were fundamental differences in the construction of gender between China and Australia. A comparison of gender construction between two cultures in terms of gender role playing at home might be an area for future study.

Child Rearing and Education

Findings of this study suggested several issues regarding child rearing and education which need more attention in the future. The finding about views on physical punishment of children is compelling. But the value of strictness parents expressed in this sample seems to contradict findings of other studies. For example, Jing (1982) indicated that Chinese parents tended to spoil their only children in contemporary China.

This study also offered compelling evidence that Chinese parents make great efforts for their children's education. The finding raised a potential problem of migration and child education. The decline of expectation for a return, and higher expectations of children's education and greater investment, are likely to produce a generational rupture in the future. The trajectory of Chinese child

rearing practices needs systematic study to gain insights into cultural factors in the pattern of child rearing.

Cultural Barriers to Integration and Acculturation

This study raises general issues about cultural barriers in the process of settlement and integration. The cultural disparity between China and Australia suggested a great difficulty for Chinese migrants to enter mainstream society. Cultural merit in one society might be a barrier in another society. As commonly known, Chinese culture requires consensus and collective-oriented ways of thinking and behaving. These are valued at school and at the workplace. But in the West, these traits would be devalued and seen as evidence of lacking talent. As we also know, Chinese culture highly values courtesy, implicitness and reserve. But a person having these characteristics would in Australia find it difficult to get a job and might be seen as incapable. Considering these fundamental differences in values and behaviors, the process of acculturation would be painful and frustrating. Furthermore, if the culture of courtesy, implicitness and reserve makes Chinese were unwilling to disclose personal emotions and feelings as Western people do, this would affect access to assistance from various social services. Western society stresses being critical and open; Chinese culture takes care of personal face, and prefers a mild way. Here I do not intend to enlarge on cultural differences, but state the fact to draw attention from scholars who have an interest in Chinese culture. Any culture has its consistency, and permeates everyday life in tangible and intangible ways. In sum, the findings of this study imply that there are cultural barriers for Chinese to integrate and acculturate into Australian society which need to be explored.

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Occupation in China:

Type of work:

Place (Province/city):

Years of working:

Level of English (Self-reported)

Well

Not well

No English

Religious practice:

Buddhist

Christian

Others

No religion

Current employment status in Australia

Type of work (Full time/Part time):

Self-employed

Unemployed

Retired

Annual income (A\$)

- 10,000

10,000-20,000

20,000-30,000

30,000-40,000

40,000-50,000

50,000+

Appendix I

(B) Interview Guide

General views of Australian society and family practices

- What do you think of Australian society? What aspect do you like most, what aspect you don't like?
- What do you think about Australian family life, such as marriage, sexuality and child rearing?

Motivation for migration

- What made you decide to come to Australia?
- Did your family support you to come?
- Do you have oversea relatives anywhere? In Australia or in other countries? If yes, did they provide some assistance for your coming?

Marital life

- How long have you been married? How do you view your marriage? Do you satisfy with your marriage?
- What do you expect from your marriage? And your spouse?
- What is your attitude towards sexuality?

Child rearing and education

- Do you have any children? Please provide details, such as boy or girl, age.
- Do you help your children with their study? What do you do usually in the evening with you your children? How many hours do you spend with your children? How are they in school? Do you expect them to go to university? Please give details.
- Do you physically punish your children when they had some unaccepted behaviours? Do you think that it is necessary to do so? Give some reasons either you agree or not to physical punishment.
- What do you expect from your children?
- Do you speak English at home? Why not? Give some explanations.
- Do you have any problem with your children? What kinds of problems do you have with them?

Division of housework

- How is housework divided in your family in the four aspects - childcare, cooking, shopping and cleaning?
- Please describe one day life in term of housework division between you and your spouse?

Socializing

- Have you made some friends here? Are they your own ethnicity? Who do you mainly socialize with? Chinese or non-Chinese?
- How often do you socialize with your friends?

Management of the family income

- Who manage family income in your family? Together? Or separately?
- Who will make decision in spending money at home? Please give some details.

Overall, how do you feel your life in Australia? Do you think your life have been improved since you came?

- If yes, then in what aspects?
- If no, in what aspects?

Appendix II

Bio-Sketch of the 40 Informants ¹

Chen Jing, a male in his early 40s, came from an educated family in Beijing. He earned his first university degree in Beijing and was a journalist. Unmarried at the time, he came to Australia to study in 1987. He possessed relatives in Sydney. They provided various forms of support during his initial period of settlement. Chen had earned a graduate diploma in library services from a university; he then found a job at a library. After having worked for a couple of years, he went back to university to study in a doctoral program, majoring in law. He earned his doctoral degree in 1995. At the time of the interview, he was taking a one-year course of study while working part-time at a legal agency. He found a marriage partner when he went back to Beijing for the first time to visit his parents. He was married in 1995 in Beijing and brought his wife back to Sydney in 1996. His wife possessed a university degree, with a major in medicine, and had worked at a hospital before immigrating. At the time of the interview, she was enrolled in a postgraduate course in medicine. Chen became father to a child in early 1998. One of his relatives came over from China to help the family with childcare on a temporary basis. Chen had an income of around A\$40,000 at the time of the interview. He and his wife did not practice a religion.

Cheng Hui, a female in her mid 30s, grew up in Guangzhou. She had a tertiary education and was an accountant. She was 25 years old, and was unmarried when she came to Australia in 1986. She enrolled in an English language centre and then was accepted to a degree course in computer science. She had relatives in Sydney. They offered assistance when she arrived in the country. Cheng married an Australian-Austrian man in 1991. She had two children; one boy of six years and a girl aged three. Her husband ran a business, and his income was the primary support for the family. Cheng worked full-time as an accountant, and her income was around A\$30,000 per year. After settling down in Australia, Cheng sponsored her parents and her brother to immigrate to Australia. Cheng's mother lived with them after her first child was born, and did most of the housework and childcare work. Cheng's father and brother went back to China to do business. Cheng's family did not practice a religion.

Ding Hai, a male in his mid 30s, had earned his doctoral degree in China. He came from a peasant family in the South. His parents possessed little education. He was very successful in his academic work. He graduated from Nankai University, a top university in China. He went to England as a visiting scholar in 1988, and came back to China in 1990. He married; his wife also possessed a university degree and taught at the university. They had a daughter. He immigrated to Australia in 1993, at that time his daughter was only a few months old. Ding arrived first, and his wife joined him a few months later. They left their daughter with his wife's parents in China. Ding found an academic job in Perth. He worked there for about one

¹ All the names of informants are pseudonyms as noted in Chapter Three

year, and then he found employment in Sydney. His wife was studying in college at the time of the interview. They brought their daughter to Australia in 1996 when she was three years old. Ding had an income of around A\$40,000-50,000 per year. He financially supported his parents and relatives in China. Ding had no relatives in Australia, but he played an active role within the Chinese community in Sydney. Ding did not observe a religion.

Gao Weiliang, a male, over 60, was a professor in architecture at the University of Shenzhen. Gao was a scholar who had visited other countries as a scholar numerous times. He was retired. He had a daughter who was the only child in his family. She had married and immigrated to Australia in the early 1990s. Gao and his wife came to join their daughter in 1995 under the family reunion program. They lived with her daughter's family. Her daughter followed his profession, majoring in architecture in the university. She had also earned a master's degree from a university in Bangkok, Thailand. Gao and his wife shared the housework at home. They had no relatives and did not participate in any religious activities. Gao was taking an English class at a local community centre at the time of the interview.

Hu Na, a female in her late 30s, arrived in Sydney in 1990 to join her husband. She and her husband both had university degrees and had taught in the university in Beijing. In the late 1980s, they were sponsored by their universities to go abroad for further study. Hu went to the US and her husband went to Australia. As a consequence of the 1989 political incident, they ended up in the two countries. Hu had been accepted in doctoral programs in two universities both of which had offered scholarships. However, she gave up these opportunities for her marriage. Hu came to Australia because her husband could not get a visa to the US at that particular period of time. Her husband in Australia enrolled in a doctoral program. He found employment before completing his degree. Hu had two children who were born in Sydney, one a boy of six years and a daughter of four. Hu was accepted to an Australian university to pursue a doctoral degree with a scholarship one year after she arrived. She had been struggling between her studies and childcare. She sent her two children back to China for a few years. She then brought them back until they were ready to go to kindergarten. At the time of the interview, she was completing her dissertation, while also holding a part-time teaching job. Her family income was over A\$60,000 per year. Hu and her husband had no relatives in Australia and they were not involved in any religious activities. Hu and her husband financially supported their relatives in China on various occasions.

Huang Dajiang, a male in his late 30s, had come from Shanghai. Huang, as a principal applicant together with his wife and son, immigrated to Australia in 1993. He had no relatives in Australia but did possess a close friend in the country. His friend helped him work his way through all of the formalities involved in immigrating to Australia and had also provided him with other forms of assistance. Huang had earned his master degree in Shanghai and was a senior engineer at a research institute. He had received a job offer from a university in Sydney before arrival. His annual income was around \$40,000. His wife had earned a university degree in China, but she did not find a professional job in her new country of residence. Instead, she found a job in a factory. Huang's son was 11 years old at the time of the interview. Huang's

family had no religious beliefs.

Jia Jun, a male in his mid-40s, came from Fuzhou, the capital of Fujian province. He had worked in a factory for a few years during the Cultural Revolution. He went to university in the late of 1970s. He taught commerce in college after he graduated from university. He married in 1982. His wife was his classmate in high school and they had worked in the same factory. They had a son who was born in the mid 1980s. Jia's father was an official in the local government. His father was criticized and died during the Cultural Revolution. Jia came to Sydney in 1988 on his own as a full-fee paying student at an English language centre. He had no relatives in Australia. He originally planned to come to Australia to earn some money, and then return to China. However, as a consequence of the 1989 political incident, he ended up as a permanent resident of Australia. He sponsored his wife and son to join him in 1990. Jia and his wife spoke a little English. Jia had taken various labouring jobs in the first few years after his arrival. After he was granted his permanent residence, he found a permanent full-time job in a furniture factory. His wife also found a full time job at a nursing home. Jia had a yearly income of around A\$20,000-30,000. His family income was about A\$40,000 per year. Jia and his wife sent money back to China to support both of their parents. Jia's family did not practice a religion.

Ke Lin, a female in her early 40s, came to join her husband in Australia in 1992. Her husband arrived in Sydney in 1991 as an independent immigrant. Ke came from an educated family. Her father was a senior scholar and retired. Ke had a university degree, with a major in English literature. Her husband had been her classmate at university. After graduation, Ke taught English at a high school in Beijing. Her husband worked for the government. He had been promoted to a senior position before he came to Australia. After immigration to Australia, Ke's husband worked for an international company based in Hong Kong, and was well paid. He basically stayed in Hong Kong, and visited his family in Sydney several times a year. Ke earned a master's degree in education from an Australian university. She was a part-time teacher in a language centre, and taught Chinese in a Saturday school. In addition, Ke worked for a company one day per week. Ke's yearly income was around A\$20,000. She had a son who was going to secondary school. Ke and her husband had no relatives in Australia, and they did not observe a religion.

Lei Ming, an unmarried male in his mid 30s, came from an educated family in Shanghai. His mother was a primary school teacher, and his father possessed a university degree and was a senior engineer. They had retired a few years prior to the interview. Lei was the younger of two children in his family. He possessed a tertiary diploma, with a major in commerce. He had done office work in a Shanghai factory. He originally expected to go to the US as he had an aunt there who was willing to provide financial support to him. Lei finally decided to come to Australia because immigrating there did not require an English test at the time. Lei arrived in Sydney in 1989 and enrolled in a language centre to study English. He had taken various labouring jobs due to his lack of English proficiency. At the time of the interview, he worked in a factory. He reported his annual income to be around \$20,000. Lei had become a Christian in

Australia. He went to church every Sunday, and had made a lot of friends there. He was still unmarried. He had been living in Australia eight years, and had never been back to China to visit his parents.

Li Gang, a male in his mid 30s, lived and worked in Beijing before coming to Australia. Both of his parents had received their higher educations in China. Li was born in the South, and had been reared by his grandparents. He came to live with his parents in Beijing when he was going to secondary school. He was good at schoolwork and was accepted to study at Beijing University. After graduation, he worked at a research institute. He had a girlfriend before he came to Sydney to pursue the study of English in 1988. He originally had expected to improve his English, and then go back home to marry. He finally settled in Australia as the consequence of the 1989 political incident. He married in Hong Kong in 1992 because of the difficulty he encountered in going back to China after the 1989 political incident. He sponsored his wife to come to Australia in 1994. His wife had earned a university degree and worked in the same institute as he in Beijing. In Australia, Li had run a restaurant with friends for a couple of years. Then he went to university to pursue a doctoral program. He became father to a newborn child in 1997. His parents-in-law came over from China to help their son's family with childcare. Li won a scholarship to support his studies. He also found tutoring work in his department. His yearly income was about \$20,000. Li and his wife had no religious practices. They had no relatives in Australia.

Li Lingling, a female in her mid 50s, came from Wuhan, the capital of Hubei province. She married and had two children who were born in the 1970s. She and her husband both taught at a university. Li and her husband grew up in Shanghai. All of their relatives also lived in this city. As the principal applicant, Li's husband applied to immigrate to Australia in 1989. Her whole family arrived together in Sydney in 1990. Li's husband had a sister who had immigrated into Australia in the 1980s. Her sister-in-law's family offered some assistance at the time of initial settlement. Li found an academic job in the university a couple of months after arriving. The position paid a yearly income of about A\$40,000. Her husband found a well-paying job in an international company half a year after they arrived. Li's two sons were both studying in the university, one was 24, and majored in medicine. The younger son was 21, and majored in Engineering. The sons still lived with the family. Li and her family did not practice a religion.

Li Ping, a female in her mid 30s, came from Nanjing, the capital of Jiangsu province. She had earned her master degree in China and had worked in a research institute. She married in 1990, and her husband had graduated two years earlier from the university where she herself had studied. He went to Australia in 1987 and enrolled in a doctoral program. He came back to marry her in China. Li came to Australia to join her husband in 1991. They had two sons born in Sydney, one was about 4 years old, and the other was only nine months old at the time of the interview. Li had her parents and her parents-in-law come over from China to help the family with childcare on a temporary basis. When they left, they took the children back with them to China. Li was undertaking doctoral studies with a scholarship while her parents in China cared for her two children. Li's husband worked for a large corporation and was well paid. Li's

family's yearly income was more than A\$50,000. Li and her husband did not practice a religion. They had no relatives in Australia.

Li Sha, a female in her late 30s, came from Beijing. She had earned a university degree in Chemistry and worked in a research institute after graduation. She had married in 1985. Her husband had been her classmate at the university and worked at the same institute as she did. They had a daughter who was born in the late 1980s. Li came to Australia in 1990 on her own as a student to learn the English language. She sponsored her husband to join her in the early 1996, by then Li had been separated from her family for six years. Before her husband joined her in Australia, Li Sha paid a short visit to her family in Beijing, and her husband and daughter had come to visit her in Sydney on one occasion as well. Li's parents in Beijing had looked after her daughter. Li expected to bring her daughter to Australia at the time that the girl started to go to high school. Though Li and her husband had received their college educations in China, they could not find professional jobs in Australia due to various factors. Both of them did work full-time jobs. Li Sha worked in a garment factory, and her husband was employed in a meat-packaging factory. They estimated their family income to be A\$40,000 per year. They had no relatives in Australia. They did not practice a religion.

Li Xiaohong, a female in her early 30s, came from Guangzhou. She had a tertiary education in finance and worked as an accountant when she was in China. She had a brother who came to Australia in the 1980s. He offered financial support for her immigration. Li came to Sydney as a student in 1991. She was unmarried and had a boyfriend who had arrived in Sydney prior to herself. They had gotten married in Australia. Her husband had earned a university degree in China, with a major in Mechanics, and he was taking a degree course in computer science in an Australian university with a scholarship. They had a daughter who was four. Xiaohong held a part-time job while also taking on more childcare work at home. She had her parents-in-law come over from China to help the family with childcare half of the year. The income of Li Xiaohong's family was low, and they received some benefits from the government. Li was not a Christian in China, but she and her husband converted in Australia. They went to church every Sunday.

Lin Dong, a male in his mid 50s, came from Shanghai. He came with his two children to join his wife in 1991. Lin earned his university degree in the early 1960s. He had been a senior engineer in a state-owned factory in Shanghai, where he had worked 29 years before leaving China. He married at age 33, his wife was 29 at the time. His wife majored in English and taught the same subject at a university after graduation. They had two children, one son and one daughter. Lin's wife came to Sydney as a visiting scholar in 1989. She was granted permanent residence as a consequence of the 1989 political incident. She then found a teaching job in an English language centre. Lin had been living separately from his wife for three years before he came to Australia. Though he possessed a university degree and had had a professional job in China, Lin had a difficult time finding a professional job after his arrival due to his limited English ability. He eventually took a factory job one year after immigrating. After working a couple of years, he found a white-collar job in a company which paid a yearly income of about

A\$20,000. His family's yearly income was between A\$40,000-50,000. His two children were both studying in a university at the time of the interview. His son had moved out and shared accommodation with friends. His daughter still lived with the family. Lin's family had no relatives in Australia, and no family members practiced a religion.

Liu Nan, a female in her early 40s, grew up in Shanghai, but worked in Kunming in Yunan province. She earned her university degree and taught in a college in Kunming for almost 10 years. She married, and her husband, a senior English interpreter, had worked overseas for several years. Liu and her husband immigrated into Australia in 1989, sponsored by an Australian couple. They had no relatives in Australia. They had a son, but they left him with Liu's parents at the beginning, and then brought him over in 1993. At the time of the interview, Liu worked full-time in a library. Her husband also worked at a library. Their family income was around A\$50,000 per year.

Liu Yi, a male from Beijing came to Australia to study in 1988 at the age of 19. He had been a student in his second year of university in Beijing. Liu came from an educated family. His parents had both received university degrees and did academic work at a research institute in Beijing. They gave up their professional jobs and moved to Hong Kong in the mid 1980s to go into business. Liu was left with his grandparents. Liu's coming to study in Australia was arranged by his parents who paid for the full costs of his studies. Liu went to an English language centre to study for more than half a year, he was then accepted to take a degree course at a university. He earned his BA degree with honours. After graduation, he applied for a doctoral degree course in the US. He won a scholarship for his studies, which covered tuition fees and also provided him with a living allowance. He had gone back to Sydney to complete his dissertation at the time of the interview. As of that time, he had never been employed. Liu got married at the age 25. His wife was also an immigrant from Beijing. She had studied economics at an Australian university, and worked for a company where she earned a yearly salary of about A\$50,000. Liu and his wife had no relatives in Australia. They did not practice a religion. Liu's parents still lived in Hong Kong. Liu visited them every year. Occasionally, they also came to visit him in Australia.

Lu Bingyan, a female in her early 40s, came from Beijing. She was born in Singapore. Her parents had settled in Beijing in the early 1950s. Most of Lu's relatives lived in Singapore. Bingyan went to university in 1978 in Fujian province. She majored in Chinese medicine. After she graduated, she took a one-year English course. Then she came to Australia for further studies. Her relatives in Singapore offered financial support for her university work. She enrolled in a MA degree course and majored in library services. After graduation, Lu found employment in a university library. She married in 1990. Her husband was non-Chinese. He was educated and worked for the government. Bingyan's yearly income was around A\$30,000 a year. She reported that her husband had a higher income. They had no children. Lu and her husband did practice a religion.

Ma Ke, a male in his mid 30s, grew up in Shanghai. He was the eldest of two children in his

family. His father was the general manager of a factory, and his mother worked for a governmental agency. They were both retired. His sister was married and worked for the government. Ma had a college diploma and worked for a corporation in Shanghai. Unmarried, Ma came to Sydney in 1990 to study English. For a time he worked in a factory. At the time of the interview, he ran a photo shop after completing a short-term business course at college. He spoke little English. Ma became a Christian in Australia, and took an active role in his church. Ma was interested in charity work. Through the World Vision TV program, he provided financial support to a little girl in Africa for her education. From the time he came to Australia, Ma had never paid for a visit to his parents in China.

Qian Dali, a male in his early 30s, had worked in Beijing before coming to Australia. He arrived in 1992 and had enrolled in a MA degree course at the University of Queensland. Qian originally came from a rural family in the North of China. His parents did not have much education. He was the first one in his family and also his village that had been able to get into university. He majored in mechanics. He studied very hard and had won an award during his studies. After graduation, he was assigned to work in a state-owned factory in Beijing. He married an urban woman. Qian's immigration to Australia had been financially supported by his parents-in-law. He came to Australia on his own. He applied for independent immigrant status soon after arrival. He was granted permanent residence when he completed his studies. He then sponsored his wife to join him in 1994. After his wife arrived, they moved to Sydney in order to find a job. They had a son who was about two years old at the time of the interview. Eventually, Qian found a full-time job in a butcher's shop. He often worked about 10 hours a day. His wife took in major childcare work at home. Qian had asked his mother to come over from China to help the family with childcare for half a year. Qian was the breadwinner in his family, and he also sent money back home to China to support his parents and siblings. His yearly income was over A\$20,000. Qian's family had no religious beliefs. They did not have any relatives in Australia.

Qian Xiaoyan, a female in her 40s, emigrated from Shanghai to Australia in 1979 for the purposes of marriage. Her husband had been her classmate in high school. He immigrated to Australia in 1974 to join his father. At the time, Qian was a second year student at Fudan University in Shanghai. She withdrew from university studies due to her immigration. Qian came from a so-called bourgeoisie family. Her father was a capitalist prior to 1950. Qian's family suffered during the Cultural Revolution. At the end of the Revolution, her brother immigrated to Canada while she moved to Australia. Her father had died many years ago, and her mother lived with her brother at the time of the interview. Qian's husband had earned a university degree and worked for the government. Qian entered a university in Australia and earned a BA degree. After graduation, she found employment as a researcher for the government. Qian and her husband played an active role in the Chinese community of Sydney. They taught Chinese at a Saturday School. Qian was a Christian back in China. She continued her religious practices in Australia. She and her husband went to church every Sunday. They had a son, who was 14 years old at the time of the interview. Qian's parents-in-law had lived with them from the time their son was born. Qian's income was around A\$40,000 per year. Her husband earned a bit more than she did.

Ren Yan, a female in her late 30s, grew up in Beijing. She earned a master's degree from a top university of Beijing, and taught in the university after graduation. She came to Australia as a student in 1990. She enrolled in a doctoral program with a scholarship one year later. At the time of the interview, she was employed in a university after completing her studies. Her income was around A\$40,000 per year. She got married in Australia. Her husband was a non-Chinese who had come from Canada twenty years prior. He had a university degree and taught at a university. They had a son who was about four years old at the time of the interview. Neither Ren nor her husband had relatives in Australia. Ren's parents had passed away a few years prior to the interview. Ren and her husband used a hired person to help them with childcare. Ren and her husband did not practice a religion.

Shi Fang, a female in her late 40s, came from Shijiazhuang, the capital of Hebei province. She majored in English at the university and taught English after graduation. Her husband was her classmate and was a university teacher as well. Shi came to Australia with her son to join her husband in 1993. Her husband came to Australia as a visiting scholar in 1990. He enrolled in a doctoral program with a scholarship at the University of Newcastle. After graduation, he found a teaching job in Sydney, so the whole family moved to Sydney at this time. Shi had taken a diploma course in Australia. At the time of the interview, she worked two part-time jobs, at a library and as a teacher at a language centre. Her son was studying at a university. Her family income was about A\$50,000-60,000 per year. They had no relatives in Australia. They did not practice a religion.

Song Xiaohong, a female in her mid 30s, came from an educated family in Shanghai. Her father graduated from Fudan University in Shanghai. Song's parents went to work in a remote province during the Cultural Revolution and had left Song with her grandparents in Shanghai. Song went to university in 1983 and majored in Chinese linguistics. After graduation, she worked in a university in Shanghai for two years. Unmarried, she came to Australia in 1989 to study English. She had taken many different jobs to make a living during the four-year temporary visa status period. She married in Australia, and her husband was a Chinese who had come from Shanghai. She had met him back in China. He taught at a university, and had come to Australia one year earlier than she. Song and her husband had run a small business for a couple of years. They then subcontracted this work out to others. After having spent half a year in a language school, Song was working toward a master's degree course in education at the time of the interview. She had a son who was born in early 1997. She sent her son back to China to his grandparents because of her studies. Song's husband had a full-time job with an income of about A\$30,000 per year. The couple also earned some income from their shop. In addition, Song took on some casual work in order to earn some extra money. She and her husband had no relatives in Australia. They did not practice a religion.

Su Fan, a male in his mid-40s, came from Fuzhou in Fujian province. He was born in Bali, Indonesia. His parents returned to settle in China in the early 1950s, but most of their relatives remained in Indonesia. Su went to university in the late 1970s and majored in English. After

graduation, he taught English in a college located in Fuzhou. He married, and his wife was also an English teacher at the college. They had a daughter who was born in the mid 1980s. Su came to Sydney in 1989 on his own. He enrolled in an English language centre in Sydney. As a consequence of the 1989 political incident, he was granted permanent residence in Australia. Su had been separated from his family for almost four years until his wife and daughter joined him. Su had taken labouring work in a factory to make a living before he obtained permanent residence. Su spoke good English. He found a professional job in the government. He worked full time while he also went back to university to pursue a master's degree. At the time of the interview, he was completing his thesis. Su Fan had a yearly income of around A\$40,000. Even though his wife was educated and spoke good English, she did not find a professional job. Instead she worked at a factory. Su and his wife did not practice a religion; neither he nor his wife had relatives in Australia.

Su Lian, a female in her 40s, was from Shenzhen in Guangdong province. She was the third of eight children in her family. Her parents were originally from Hong Kong. Most of her relatives still lived in Hong Kong. Su's father was a technician. Su's mother took their youngest child with her when she immigrated to Hong Kong in the 1960s. Su's father was left to look after the rest of the family's seven children. Su's mother paid for a visit to the children twice a year. In 1980, her mother and her youngest sister emigrated from Hong Kong to Australia. Su received a tertiary education in the 1970s, with a major in English. After graduation, she taught English in a high school. In 1981, under her mother's sponsorship, Su, unmarried, came to Sydney to study. She was married in 1982. Her husband was an Australian-born Chinese. He had a university degree and had formerly worked for the government. At the time of the interview he ran a business. Su's family had been living with her parents-in-law. She had two children, one daughter and one son. Her daughter was in secondary school, and her son attended primary school. Su did not go to work after she married until her son started attending school. At the time of the interview, Su was teaching Chinese in a Saturday School. She did not practice a religion in China, but she became a Christian in Australia. She went to church every Sunday.

Sun Gang, a male in his early 40s, came from Shanghai. He earned his university degree and worked in a factory as a senior technician. He came to Australia in 1990 to study English. He had expected to earn some money and then go back home. He had married in China and had a daughter who was born in the mid 1980s. His wife had not earned a university degree. She worked in a Shanghai factory. Sun had intended to settle in Australia after arrival. Due to some complex reasons, it had taken him nearly eight years before he was granted his permanent resident status. He had not been able to go back to visit his family in China since his arrival. However, he had sustained his marriage. He regularly sent money back home. His wife also often asked friends to bring him whatever he needed from Shanghai. Sun had become a Christian in Australia. Sun took a job in a factory where he earned an income of about \$20,000 per year, while he also attended an English class. Sun had applied to sponsor his wife and daughter to come join him.

Wan Jun came to Australia at the age of 33. He was born in Shanghai, and was the youngest of

three children in his family. Wan's schooling was interrupted by the Cultural Revolution, so he had had only secondary schooling. He started to work in a factory after finishing high school. At the factory, he was in charge of materials supply. He married, and his wife worked in a stated-own enterprise. His father-in-law had overseas kinship ties and immigrated to Australia in the 1970s. Wan came to Australia under the sponsorship of his father-in-law, who also provided him with financial assistance. Wan left for Sydney in 1988. At this time his son was only two months old. It took more than three years for Wan's wife and son to be able to join him in Australia. Wan took various jobs in order to make a living. At the time of the interview he was self-employed, and ran a small business which supplied industrial salt and other materials for factories and small businesses. His wife found employment in a factory. Wan, at the time of the interview, had been living separately from his wife for more than one year. Wan's wife lived with her father as her father had been injured in an accident and could not look after himself. Wan looked after their only son during the weekdays, and his wife took their son to her place on the weekends. Wan and his wife knew very little English. They did not practice a religion. Wan's parents were both retired and lived in Shanghai. Wan sent money back to support his parents occasionally.

Wang Xia, a male in his mid 40s, immigrated to Australia as a business immigrant in 1995. Wang arrived in Australia with his son. His wife remained in China to continue with her business. Wang and his wife grew up in the North of China, but they worked in the South. They married in the early 1980s, and they had a son who was born in 1982. Wang had a tertiary education and worked for a local government. His wife had worked at a factory for a few years, then in the early 1990s she quit her job and started her own business. She was successful in her business and employed about 20 people. Wang took on more of the housework after his wife started this enterprise. After arriving in Australia, Wang attended English class to improve his English while he found employment in a stock company, which was owned by a Chinese. This job did not require him to speak English. He had an income of around A\$20,000 per year. He had been separated from his wife for more than two years. Wang had no relatives in Australia. He did not practice a religion.

Wang Zhi, a male in his late 30s, came from Fuzhou in Fujian province. He had a tertiary education, and had worked in a business company in China. He was unmarried, but had a girlfriend before he came to Australia. He arrived in Sydney in 1990 as a student. He borrowed money from a friend to pay for his tuition fees. He broke up with his girlfriend because of uncertainty over his future. He applied for permanent residence, and waited for several years for it to be approved. At the time of the interview he was working at a factory with a yearly income of around A\$20,000. He had no religious beliefs. He had no relatives in Australia. He did send money back home to support his parents who were retired and lived on only a small pension.

Wu Lin, a male in his 50s, had been a professor at Zhongshan University in Guangzhou. His wife was a college teacher. Wu had relatives in Australia who offered assistance to help his family to immigrate to Australia. Wu, as an independent immigrant, came to Australia with his wife and two children in 1989. Wu was accepted to a doctoral program in an Australian

university, and had earned a PhD degree. After graduation, he found academic work in a university. His son was in his mid 20s. He had earned a university degree and was employed by a corporation. His daughter was studying at a university at the time of the interview. Wu's wife had worked in a factory, but eventually she took a job in a community childcare centre. Fu's two children still lived with them. Wu's family income was estimated to be over \$50,000 per year. The family did not practice a religion.

Xiao Lu, a male in his 50s, was born in Hong Kong. His father possessed a university degree. In the early 1950s, Xiao Lu's parents brought the whole family back to Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong province. According to Xiao Lu, his parents as intellectuals were invited by the local government to make contributions to the new China. Xiao Lu went to university in the early 1960s. During the Cultural Revolution, Xiao Lu's parents were criticized because of their family's background in Hong Kong. Xiao Lu was also sent to work in a factory where he was in charge of material supplies. He married and had a son who was born in the late 1970s. Xiao Lu immigrated to Hong Kong in 1983 on his own under the conditions of a government policy. His wife and son came to join him one year later. In 1994, Xiao Lu and his family emigrated from Hong Kong to Australia. Xiao Lu had a younger brother and sister who settled in Australia in the 1980s. They provided assistance to Xiao Lu's family for their initial settlement. After they settled in Sydney, Xiao Lu's wife went back to Hong Kong to continue her job. In Australia, Xiao Lu ran a small grocery shop with some help from his son. His son was studying at a high school, and helped Xiao Lu with his business in the evenings and on weekends. Xiao Lu knew very little English. Xiao Lu had been living separately from his wife for two years at the time of the interview. His son, after having stayed in Australia two years, went back to Hong Kong to stay with his mother. Xiao Lu's family had no history of observing religious practices.

Xiao Zhu, a female in her early 30s, came from an educated family in Guangzhou. Her father had a university degree and worked for the government. Xiao earned a university degree in China, with a major in computer science. Unmarried, she came to Australia in 1990 to study English. Her boyfriend was her classmate in the university, and majored in architecture. They had applied to come to Australia at the same time, but her boyfriend received his visa earlier. Xiao's immigration to Australia had been encouraged and financially supported by her parents. She arrived in Sydney in 1990. She had not been a Christian in China, but converted in Australia. Xiao had been living with her boyfriend several years before they had a wedding ceremony at a church. They had no relatives in Australia. At the time of the interview, Xiao was taking a part time diploma course in TAFE, while also working a full time job at a company. Xiao's income was around A\$20,000-30,000 yearly. Her husband also worked on a full time basis. They had no children.

Zhang Ning, a female of about 30 years old, emigrated from China into Australia with her husband in 1993. Her husband was the principal applicant. Zhang came from an educated family. Her parents were both doctors who worked at a hospital. Zhang went to university in 1985, majored in medicine and worked in a medical institute in Beijing after her graduation. She married in 1990. Her husband taught science subjects at the university where she studied.

In Australia, Zhang first worked in a factory to make a living. At the time of the interview she was pursuing a postgraduate course at a university with a scholarship. Her husband worked for a computer company with an income of about A\$30,000 yearly. Zhang's husband had relatives in Sydney. These relatives had provided some support at the time of their initial settlement. Zhang had no children. She and her husband did not practice a religion.

Zhang Qiang, a male in his early 30s, came from a peasant family in Jiangxi province. He did well in school, and was accepted to study at a university in Guangzhou. He earned his master degree in agriculture. After graduation, he worked in a research institute in Guangzhou. He came to Australia as an independent immigrant in 1996. Unmarried, Zhang went to Melbourne first as he had a relative there. Then he moved to Sydney and worked for a business company as a sale representative. He was also taking a course in college and was intending to get into a doctoral degree program. He had a yearly income of around A\$20,000. He did not practice a religion.

Zhao Hong, a female in her early 30s, came from Shanghai. She had earned a master's degree and worked in a medical institute in Shanghai. Unmarried, she was sponsored by her institute to undertake a doctoral program in Australia in 1992. Having completed her studies, she went back to Shanghai. Not long after this she applied to come back to Australia for marriage. Her husband, who was an Australian-Chinese, possessed a university degree in computer science, and worked for a corporation at the time of the interview. Zhao also was employed in academic work at a university. Her income was around A\$40,000 per year. Zhao had no children, and did not practice a religion.

Zhao Lili, a female in her mid 30s, came from Shanghai. She came from a family with a medical background. Both of her parents were doctors. During the Cultural Revolution, they volunteered to work in a remote area in response to the government's call. Zhao was brought up by her grandmother and aunt in Shanghai. She was the only child in her family, but felt only a weak attachment to her own parents due to the emotional rupture, which had occurred in her early childhood. She had earned her university degree in Shanghai with a major in Chinese medicine. After graduation she worked in a hospital. She, with her parents financial support, came to Sydney as a student at a language centre. She was unmarried, and had no boyfriend at the time of the interview. In the first few years after her arrival, she took various jobs to make a living. After she was granted permanent residence, she went back to school. At the time of the interview, she held a part-time teaching job at a college while pursuing a full time degree course in medicine. She had not paid a visit to her parents back in China since her arrival. She did sent money back to her parents and grandparents on certain occasions. She did not practice a religion.

Zhao Xiaoyan, a female in her early 40s, came from Guangzhou. She grew up in a Christian family and used to go to church when she was a little girl previous to the Cultural Revolution. Zhao had earned a university degree and worked for the government after graduation. She had been promoted to a senior position before she came to Australia. She married, and her husband

had earned a master's degree and taught at a university. They had their first child, a daughter, in the late 1980s. Zhao's husband came to Australia with Zhao's brother as a student in 1989. Zhao and her daughter came to join him in 1991. Zhao's husband had enrolled in a master's degree program, but he withdrew from his studies soon after Zhao arrived. To make a living, Zhao and her husband ran a business with her brother. After her arrival in Australia, Zhao gave birth to two more children. Her parents and her parents-in-law came to help the family with childcare. Zhao was involved in the business more than her husband was. Thus her husband took on more of the housework and childcare duties. Zhao took her entire family to church every Sunday, and was active in her church.

Zheng Wei, a female in her late 30s, came from Shanghai. She had been unmarried when she arrived in Sydney in 1988. She had received a tertiary education, and worked for a government organization in Shanghai. She had no relatives in Australia but did have a close friend who had provided various forms of assistance when she arrived. Zheng married after arriving in Australia. Her husband was a half-blooded Australia-born Chinese. He had been to China to study Chinese medicine for a few years. He then ran a clinic in Sydney's Chinatown. Zheng had taken various jobs to make a living before she obtained permanent resident status. After she was granted permanent residence, she sponsored her sister to join her in Australia. She had no children. Zheng found employment in a governmental department in Sydney. Her yearly income was around A\$20,000-30,000. Her family income was over A\$50,000 a year. Zheng and her husband did not practice a religion.

Zhou Jie, a female in her late 30s, came from Guangzhou. Her parents had received their educations in Hong Kong. Her father had earned a university degree in Hong Kong. After 1949, Zhou's parents settled in China with patriotic enthusiasm. They had no relatives in China. All of their relatives resided in Jamaica. Zhou's father encountered some criticism during the Cultural Revolution. Her father's status also affected Zhou's own life. She and her younger sister had followed their parents to live in a rural area during the Revolution for a few years. They came back to the city in the early 1970s. Zhou had worked in a factory, she then taught herself English and found a job in an international hotel. Her father who had inherited some money from relatives in Jamaica had financially supported Zhou's coming to Australia. Zhou, unmarried, came to Australia in 1987 as a student in an English language centre. She was not married at the time of the interview. After she had earned permanent residence status, she sponsored her parents and younger sister to come to Australia. Zhou had some English ability and had taken various jobs to make a living. At the time of the interview she had taken a full-time job in a restaurant as a cashier and a waitress. Her yearly income was estimated to be A\$20,000. She lived with her parents and sister. But her parents went back to China after obtaining permanent residence. Zhou and her family did not practice a religion.