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ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to examine contemporary Chinese women immigrants from Mainland China and their adaptation into Canadian society. In this locally based research, I focus on how Chinese women integrate into Canadian society as immigrants; how they identify themselves in the new social context; what factors affect their identification; and how inherent power relationships between men and women within Chinese society have been redefined and transformed as the immigrant women assert themselves in the new society in response to new opportunities and obligations that are presented to them. This study is based on a series of face-to-face interviews that were chosen through snowball sampling method. 20 interviews were conducted and the data were qualitatively analyzed. I found that changes occurred with their multiple identities, which include class identity, ethnic and cultural identity, and gender identity. Most women experienced downward mobility in social and economic status after immigration due to lack of appropriate positions in the labor market and also the feeling of a lack of power as a consequence of ethnic minority membership; almost all of them have bidimensional cultural identity which means they identify with some aspects of Canadian culture while maintaining their Chinese culture of origin; and traditional Chinese gender ideology still plays a main role in redefining gender identity which is embodied in the immigration decisions and the conflict between family and occupation. Economic, educational, occupational, social and relational power resources are factors affecting the transformation and redefinition of the power relationship between husband and wife. These factors work together in changing the allocation of power resources between husband and wife and affect the decision making process within a family.
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Chapter 1  Introduction

Introduction

Chinese immigration in Canada dates to the mid-nineteenth century. Chinese migrants in the first one hundred years of their history were subject to discrimination, restrictions, and ultimately exclusion from Canada. Chinese women, initially, formed only a small portion of the migration flow. Men dominated Chinese communities in Canada, and women were typically the wives of the well to do. Families were few in number. In the aftermath of repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1947 there was a modest effort to reunite Chinese families long separated by legal exclusion and throughout the 1950s there was an increase in the immigration of women and children, which contributed to a more balanced demographic structure of Chinese communities. (Wickberg, 1982) It was only after major changes in Canadian immigration policy in 1962 and 1967 that dramatic increases in the number of Chinese immigrants to Canada occurred. It led to major transformations in the nature of Chinese settlements in Canada.

Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong dominated the migrant flow to Canada from the late 1970s (Johnson and Lary, 1994). Independent migrants and, from the mid-1980s, business immigrants assumed an ever greater prominence. Chinese immigrants also came from other points of origin including Taiwan and the greater Chinese diaspora. Chinese migration directly from China was not resumed until the mid 1970s and was, initially, dominated by family reunification. The number of migrants from China grew during the 1980s, and by the 1990s increasing numbers of independent migrants began to arrive. By the late 1990s, migrants from China exceeded migrants from Hong Kong.
Evolution of Canadian immigration policy and recent Chinese immigrants from Mainland China

Chinese immigration may be grouped into three distinct periods, which were direct results of Canadian immigration policy. Between 1858 and 1923, in which Chinese were frequent targets of racial antagonism and attacks, Chinese were the victims of institutional racism. During this period the Chinese population in Vancouver was overwhelmingly composed of adult males. Women were only a very small percentage in the total Chinese population in Canada. In 1885 the Royal Commission on Chinese immigration provided statistics indicating that in British Columbia, among 10,550 Chinese, there were 154 Chinese women, of whom 70 were prostitutes, (Li, 1998: 74-75). Most Chinese women who came to Canada were merchants’ wives. Given the overwhelming preponderance of males it is not surprising that prostitutes formed a relatively large category of Chinese women immigrants. A small number of Chinese women were concubines and maids purchased in China and brought over to Canada, most likely by merchants (Ling, 1998). Census data suggest that in 1884, among the 10,492 Chinese in British Columbia, 88 were married women and girls and 70 were prostitutes. In 1902, there were 2,053 Chinese men and 27 Chinese women in Vancouver. All the women were wives: 16 of merchants, eight of laborers, one of a minister, and two of interpreters (Li, 1998: 63). Generally there are three factors contributing to the shortage of women in Chinese immigration. First, there was the lack of economic resources among Chinese immigrant men, that precluded their ability to pay the head taxes that were required for wives to enter Canada. Secondly, Chinese cultural beliefs suggested that it was more important for women to fulfill the concrete requirements of filial piety in a
Chinese family context than join their husbands (Ling, 1987). Lastly, Canadian immigration policies and the general prejudicial environment towards Chinese residents in Canada were seen as negative factors.

The second period of Chinese immigration was the exclusion era, which ran from 1923-1947, during which time no Chinese were allowed to immigrate to Canada and those already here were denied many of their civil rights. Between 1875 and 1885, the British Columbia legislature passed several bills to restrict the entry of Chinese into the province, all of which the Canadian government declared to be beyond the powers of the provincial legislature. In 1886, however, the Parliament of Canada levied a tax of $50 on all Chinese entering the country which was increased to $100 in 1900, and $500 in 1903. These efforts failed to limit Chinese immigration into Canada. Finally, in 1923, parliament passed the Chinese Immigration Act that prohibited Chinese from entering Canada. The act stipulated that entry to Canada, as temporary settlers for persons of Chinese origin would be restricted to diplomats, merchants and students. All other Chinese were excluded. Only very few Chinese women were likely to fit in any of these categories (Li, 1998). It was not until 1947 that this act was repealed. After decades of separation, a new policy permitted Chinese women and dependent children to reunite with their spouses and fathers in Canada (Tan, 1985).

The end of Second World War began a new epoch for Chinese immigration to Canada. With the repeal of the Exclusion Act in 1947, and subsequent changes in Canadian immigration policy, Chinese were allowed to immigrate on a limited basis. The volume of immigration was small in the two decades after the war, as Canada maintained its traditional policy of favoring immigration from Europe. In the context of socialist
revolution in China and during the cold war of the 1950s and 1960s, after 1949 relations between Canada and the newly formed People’s Republic of China were hostile. Direct migration from China to Canada ceased and was not restored until after 1974.

The entrenchment of advanced capitalism after World War Two in Canada resulted in recruiting immigrants to fill the needs of an expanding labor market. Historically, Canada has relied upon Western Europe, in particular Great Britain, as its major supplier of immigrants. In the two decades after the Second World War, Canada maintained its policy of favoring immigrants from the United States, the United Kingdom, and other European countries. In the 1960s, however, major changes occurred in Canadian immigration policies, which placed more emphasis on human capital such as educational and occupational skills as criteria for admitting immigrants. Sponsored immigrants under family unification remained an important component of immigration in this period (Li, 1996).

Further changes in the immigration regulations in 1967 finally resulted in a universal point system of assessment, which was to be applied to all prospective immigrants, irrespective of country of origin and racial background (Privy Council 1967-1616). Under the points system, an immigrant could apply either as an independent or as a nominated relative sponsored by a Canadian citizen or permanent resident. In either case the immigrant would be assessed on the basis of his or her education, occupational demand, and age.

The points system was further modified in 1978 (Privy Council 1978-486). The new regulations reaffirmed the importance of educational and occupational qualifications in the selection of independent immigrants. Within the maximum 100 points used in the
assessment, 60 points were given to educational level, vocational training, work experience and occupational demands. The 1978 immigration regulations also permitted the immigration of entrepreneurs, which indicated those immigrants who had the ability to establish a business and to create employment opportunities for Canadians.

By the 1980s, slower economic growth and shifting demographic trends had necessitated a change in Canada’s priority of recruiting immigrants. At this time, Canada, like other advanced industrial nations, faced a decline in its fertility rate and an increase in the population over the age of 65. The government’s responses were, on the one hand, raising the number of immigrants to be admitted, and on the other hand, making changes to allow the government to have more control over the quality of immigrants being selected.

Toward the end of 1994 the Liberal government released a report, which outlined a new immigration plan to covers the period 1995-2000. Economic class immigrants, mainly made up of skilled workers and business immigrants, were to be gradually increased from 43 percent of the total number of immigrants in 1994 to 53 percent in 2000. At the same time, family class was to decrease from 51 percent in 1994 to 44 percent before the end of the decade (Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Canada, 1994:13). The new plan reiterated that the new selection criteria would emphasize an applicant’s potential for long-term success, with a focus on education, experience, language skills, age and employability (Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Canada, 1994:14).

The changes in the immigration policy in 1967 facilitated Chinese immigration to Canada, since national or racial origins were no longer the criteria for selection. During
this period after 1967, Hong Kong Chinese become an increasingly important source of immigration (Johnson and Lary, 1994). There were also some Chinese immigrants admitted into Canada during the 1960s and early 1970s, but they came via Hong Kong. Many had left China because of its political instability and fear of political repression. In other contexts, and at other periods, especially after 1989, they might have applied in Canada as political refugees. Many such Chinese immigrants to Hong Kong did well in the economic context and fitted well with Canada's requirements but may also have had other links to Chinese residents of Canada, not least of which were kinship and locality ties. All of which may have furthered their speedy adaptation to Canadian society.

In the late 1970s, as Canadian immigration policies changed, China itself underwent some significant policy shifts. Many of the structures of Chinese state socialism were dismantled and China opened increasingly to the outside world of global capitalism. As one consequence of these changes, an increasing number of immigrants left China and came to Canada to seek a new life. They included many women immigrants who came either as independent immigrants themselves, or as dependents of independent immigrants (entrepreneurial and business migrants), as well as the more traditional routes in which they were sponsored by relatives in Canada (Tian, 1999).

Political uncertainty after the "Beijing Spring" of 1989, uncertainties associated with the resumption of Chinese sovereignty over Hong Kong in 1997, and many social, economic and political uncertainties in the process of transformation, saw immigration from Hong Kong increase in the mid-1980s, which made Hong Kong the largest resource of immigration (Smart, 1994). After 1997, immigration from Hong Kong decreased sharply because of the perceived lack of economic opportunity in Canada and the
relatively stable Hong Kong economy after political transformation, fueled in part by a Chinese economy, which remained strong even in the midst of an Asian economic malaise. The number of immigrants from China increased throughout the 1990s and by the end of the decade exceeded those from Hong Kong. Many came to Canada with high educational achievement, professional skills or with significant capital, although many were family class immigrants. The numbers of women and men immigrants from China were approximately equal. In 2000, China was the origin of the largest number of immigrants who were admitted to Canada. The enthusiastic response of immigrants from China never diminished after 1978, likely because of the perceived instability and continued crises in Chinese society and the attraction of Canadian society. Canadian immigration policies in the 1990s have encouraged highly skilled immigrants in science, technology, the arts, and the professions to apply for immigration visas. New immigrants from China during the late 1990s are relatively well educated, and many are from urban areas. These immigrants differ significantly from earlier ones who came primarily from rural area and were often poorly educated. The majority of immigrants from China are middle class, and many arrive with significant savings and capital. Rather than leaving China as the result of poverty, or even by reservation about political instability, they are driven by a strong sense of potential economic improvement (Tian, 1999). They are also different from their predecessors in two ways. One is that as Mandarin speakers, there is much that they do not share with the dominant (Hong Kong) Cantonese. They are also clearly not sojourners, as the original Chinese migrants were, and as many of the Hong Kong Chinese immigrants became in the late 1990s. They intend to establish their roots in Canada.
Women immigrants from China in this period have particular characteristics. They are different, in many ways, from both their male counterparts and female predecessors. They are well educated and skilled; seek personal development through the means of immigration; and struggle for equalities restrained by gender stereotypes and unequal opportunities to minority groups. There is, however, little research on women immigrants during this period of change. These new women immigrants experienced hardship while they experience transformation of identity and power relationships in the new social and cultural contexts which shaped their lives and the degree of integration into Canadian society. Chinese women immigrants provide good resource for researches on the interconnections of race, class and gender which is embodied in the process of constructing their multiple identities in their structural locations.

This study seeks to contribute to existing knowledge about Chinese immigrant women in Canada. Although this thesis will focus on the study of recent Chinese women immigrants, it has larger implications for Canadian society in which immigrants are a large component of the whole population. To some degree the problem itself reflects the internal dynamics of Canadian society.

The following questions are explored in this research.

- How do recent Chinese immigrant women identify themselves under the conflict of two cultures?
- What affects their identification?
- How do their new social and economic circumstances change their identities and status in Canadian society?
• Do the obstacles they encounter while integrating into Canadian society, such as language and cultural barriers, finding jobs, long working hours, low pay, and few job options in the labor market, reinforce or challenge their traditional values and identities?

• What affects the reallocation of power resources between husband and wife after immigration?
Chapter 2  Theoretical Issues

Self, self presentation, and identification

In this study the self is used as a key concept in examining the adaptation of Chinese women immigrants to the host society through their self-presentation and self-identification in everyday lives. The concept of self embraces a number of meanings: a process by which we come to know ourselves and the world about us; a sense of sociopersonal identity which is differentiated from the more pervasive object world (Tian, 1999: 39).

Schlenker focuses on how individuals identify themselves in social interactions. Identity can be regarded as a theory of self that is formed and maintained through actual or imagined interpersonal agreement about what self is like. Self-identification is accomplished privately (by contemplation of oneself), publicly (through self-presentation), and through other activities that serve to construct one’s identity for audiences. Consequently, self-identification is constituted contextually through various transactions between individuals, audiences, and situations (Schlenker, 1986).

Goffman (1959) indicates that an individual’s social behaviors and interactions take places within the domain of a role or sets of roles. Therefore, roles as descriptors of human interaction can be an important conceptual link to identify how individuals feel about themselves. He describes social interactions as analogous to forms of theatrical performance wherein people (as actors) present themselves and activities in ways that guide and control the impressions others will form of him/her. Goffman points out that when an individual appear before others, he/she knowingly and unwittingly projects a definition of the situation, of which a conception of himself/herself is an important part.
One of Goffman’s achievements is that his theoretical insights alert researchers to ways in which social interactions, especially between people who came together in face-to-face encounters, may reveal to the careful observer the capacity of individuals to manipulate the very situation in which their identities are grounded and made evident to others (Goffman, 1959).

In this study the concept of self-identification is used to study the adaptation process in which Chinese women immigrants reconstruct identities through social interactions with local people, cultures, institutions, and society. How and why changes occur as people change their self-identities will be an ingredient in this study. Here the identity indicates collective social identities which were formed in and stabilized by the long-range historical processes. It allows us to understand the individual self: the great collective social identities of class, race, ethnicity, gender, and migration (Hall, 1999).

**Acculturation, assimilation and integration**

Sociologists, anthropologists, and social psychologists have been more interested in how culture, particularly the interaction or conflict of cultures, affects the identities of individuals. These social scientists may be broadly divided into two schools of thought. One group of scholars asserts that members of immigrant groups possess ethnic identity because they cling to the culture baggage that they bring with them. So-called hyphenated Canadians experience conflicts because Canadian culture differs in fundamental ways from these people’s ancestral cultures. Within the culture legacy school of thought, the scholars who favor assimilation believe that as soon as the immigrants and their children learn the ways of the new society and stop following the dictates of the old, culture conflict will automatically disappear (Gordon, 1964). In contrast, those who advocate
pluralism argue that no conflict will arise in the first place if members of the majority accept people from other lands as their cultural equals (Berry, 1976; Ramirez, 1991). In the 1970s, Berry and his associates departed from the culture legacy mode of analysis by proposing that ethnic identities are not cultural residues or sentiments transplanted from other countries, but are rather products of structural conditions encountered in the host society. In their view, ethnicity is an emergent or situational phenomenon because ethnic solidarity crystallizes only under specific conditions. For this reason, not all persons with the same national origin possess the same degree of ethnic identification.

Culture is very important in shaping our sense of self-identity. One key facet of self-identity is that we belong to a certain culture group. When people move from one culture to another, many aspects of identity are modified in order to adapt to the new culture. This process is generally referred to as acculturation. Thus acculturation is a process of changing identity in which people move from one culture to another during which many aspects of self identity are changed in order to adapt to the new culture (Ryder, 1999). Such changes may be observed in many ways: attitudes, behavior, values, and sense of cultural identity. Acculturation takes place as a result of continuous exposure and contact with local culture and individuals.

There are two models of acculturation: unidimensional and bidimensional. The unidimensional model is based on the assumption that immigration is a process whereby immigrants relinquish the inherited attitudes, behavior, and values of their culture of origin. Gordon holds this perspective by using the word “assimilation” to explain the process by which immigrants are absorbed into the host society. He thinks that the success of penetration into sociocultural institutions of the host society needs a process of
the "disappearance of the ethnic group as a separate entity and the evaporation of its distinctive values" (Gordon, 1964). Assimilation theory is based on the assumption that as individuals have more exposure there will be more adaptation to the host society with the passage of time. Demographic variables, such as generational status, age of immigration, or years in the host country are used as indicators. This approach holds that the old cultural identification is strongly and negatively correlated with the new cultural identification, which may lead to a number of problems. The disadvantage of the assimilation perspective is that it fails to account for individual differences and other factors affecting the rate of adaptation to the new culture, residence in a neighborhood, willingness to seek language education and frequency of contact with host society.

The bidimensional model holds that immigrants may adopt many of the values and behaviors of the new culture while maintaining some facets of their self-identity developed in their culture of origin. Acculturation is a process in which both old and new cultural identities are free to vary independently. Individuals differ in the extent of self-identity. Thus some may strongly stick with their cultural group, whereas others base their identity more on other factors, such as occupation and religion. In a bidimensional model individuals are capable of having multiple cultural identities. People can accept two or more cultures with their values and attitudes existing as separate components or integrated to form a new fused cultural identity (Ryder, 1999; Berry, 1997).

Kiefer points out that changes often occur only under certain circumstances. It is necessary, therefore, to clarify the meaning of context or situation when defining the concept of adaptation. In the process of learning the techniques for managing
intercultural contacts, the minority group members seldom totally lose their native culture (Kiefer, 1974).

There are several stages of acculturation: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. Integration involves maintaining cultural heritage while endorsing intergroup relations; assimilation involves relinquishing cultural heritage and adopting the beliefs and behaviors of the new culture; separation involves cultural maintenance without relations with new culture; and marginalization involves non-adherence to either old or new culture (Berry, 1997).

**Ethnicity, ethnic identity and adaptation**

Ethnicity and ethnic identity are defined in numerous ways. Ethnicity is often defined by referring to the social and cultural distinctiveness that certain groups are perceived to maintain (Hicks, 1973). This distinctiveness sets ethnic groups off from each other and stimulates the maintaining of the loyalty to one's heritage. Ethnicity is also a feeling of continuity with the past (Tian, 1999). Ethnicity implies a boundary based on a sense of shared identity. Ethnicity also plays an important role in different settings by the maintaining of the boundary. Ethnic groups are defined according to social boundaries although they have territorial boundaries. Wallman (1978:205) uses ethnic boundaries to define ethnicity. She described ethnicity as a social boundary system that should be ascertained both from a level of action and a level of meaning. Thus ethnicity should be explained in its social context. Barth's (1969) approach about ethnicity helps us to understand how ethnicity is manipulated and changed under varying socio-economic and political situations.
Ethnic identity is the individual's orientation toward his or her own ethnic group. It includes the sense and extent of one's commitment to the traditions or to the lifestyle associated with a particular ethnicity, the conflicts that one deals with by maintaining an ethnicity, or the conflicts resolved by one's attachment to one's ethnicity, and the general cognitive meaning this ethnicity has for one person (Reminick, 1983). To Barth, ethnic identity is based on the dual concerns of self-ascription and ascription by others. In order to function in organized interethnic relations, the ethnic identity, as an expression of self-identification, must be paired with a recognition of the same identity by others with whom one interacts (Barth, 1969). An ethnic social network plays a role in maintaining one's ethnic identity. The frequency of contacts with the ethnic social network tends to clarify the boundary that associates and identifies one with a particular ethnic group, tradition and social status (Reminick, 1983). Culture plays an important role in ethnic identity. Ethnic identity is based on a set of cultural norms and values shared by the members and is manifested in interaction with others (Svensson, 1985: 37). To Reminick (1983), ethnic culture comprises the values that preserve and maintain ideas, sentiments, and codes of social action and individual conduct on the one hand, and the symbolic content and the contemporary meaning that ethnicity has with regard to the group's present concerns, goals and problems on the other hand.

When the social and cultural environment changes, especially when different cultural contacts take place, as in the case of Chinese women immigrants, the common sentiments of kinship, race, descent, birthplace, language and territorial origin become more obvious and important than before. Ethnicity is used as a strategy of adaptation and is often used at both individual and group levels. Immigrants may use ethnic assistance to
adapt to the new environment. This is termed “ethnic mobilization”: a process by which individuals and groups organize around some feature of ethnic identity, such as skin color, language, or custom to pursue collective benefits (Adam, 1984). Ethnic mobilization often creates solidarity that enables particular groups to compete for scarce resources. Thus ethnicity can be seen as a “dependent variable, created and controlled by a broad combination of external interests and strategies which can be invested in as a potential for action and mobility” (Nagata, 1981: 89). Ethnic groups may organize in order to gain power in the host society to fight against a perceived disadvantaged environment.

Ethnic group cohesion theory refers to “the result of all forces acting on the members to remain in one ethnic group” (Reitz, 1980: 92). When assistance is needed people are more likely to stick to their own ethnic group to seek help. Ethnicity is an adaptive strategy by which individuals and groups define themselves and are defined by others in situational relationships within a context of a structure of dependence and inequality (Gold, 1992). Overseas Chinese, regardless of which country they settle in, are apt to maintain ethnic boundaries within which they present themselves, identify themselves, and are identified by others as Chinese (Tian, 1999). The roles played by ethnicity in the process of adaptation are examined by numerous studies. By analyzing how Chinese women immigrants manipulate their multiple identities I will evaluate the effects of migration on the formation of ethnic identities.

Class and ethnicity

The major theoretical tradition within class analysis derives from the work of Marx and Weber on the emerging class structure of industrial capitalism in the nineteenth
century. For Marx, class is defined in economic terms. Marx analyzed class in relation to the ownership of capital and means of production. He divided population into those who owned property and those who were propertyless (Simon, 1994). Weber divided population into classes according to economic differences of market capacity that gave rise to different life-chances. Capital was one source of market capacity, but skill and education formed another (Weber, 1987). Modern accounts of class have often rejected Marxist definitions and have argued that individuals in modern society can be ranked on a whole variety of factors such as occupation, religion, education, and ethnicity. They take up Weber’s notion of status and develop a multi-dimensional approach that treats social status and prestige as an independent factor that dilutes economically determined class (Driedger, 1978).

The status of an ethnic group is frequently associated with problematic situations, because the existence of minority also implies the existence of a majority group who is usually in charge of resources (Friesen, 1985: 23). Marx’s concern about ethnicity focuses on the macropower conflicts between minority and majority, especially in the economic and political fields. It can be applied to ethnic dominance in nation building and the consequences for lesser minorities and their role and status in society (Driedger, 1987: 1). Cox, as a Marxist, pointed out that ‘racial antagonism’ was in essence class conflicts (or political-class conflicts as he conceptualized class struggle) because the later arose from the exploitation of labor power. Thus, racial prejudice was defined as a social attitude propagated by an exploiting class for the purpose of stigmatizing some group as inferior so that the exploitation of either the group itself of its resources or both may be justified (Cox, 1970, cited by Miles, 1999). Immigrants and descendents of immigrants
are always linked to lower stratum of the working class in capitalist societies, namely to fill undesirable jobs. Immigration was explained as a consequence of uneven capitalist development and immigrant workers were identified as having a specific socio-economic function. Hence, the analytical focus was the interconnections between capitalism, migration and class rather than only on race and race relations (Miles, 1999).

There are at least three views on the interrelationship between class and ethnicity: ethnicity is a by-product of the class structure and reducible to class; ethnicity may or may not be reducible to class, but it is a drawback to social mobility; ethnicity and class are separate phenomena that should be examined independently (Driedger, 1987: 6).

After an intensive review of existing literature, Darroch (1979) found that there were three major themes on the relationship between ethnicity and class: limited evidence of entrance of ethnic groups into positions of power; the maintaining of ethnic identity impedes upward social mobility; the lack of assimilation makes ethnic groups remain in their original low entrance class.

For Berger (1981), ethnicity and class are separate basis of solidarity, though at times they overlap. Each should be treated as an independent factor with its own influences. Driedger's research in 1987 supported this view. The relationship between ethnicity and class varies enormously by numerous other variables (Driedger, 1987).

Miles (1999) believes that race is an ideological construction, that is to say, the ideology of racism constructed the Other as a specific and inferior category of being particularly suited to provide labor power within unfree relations of production. Racialization and racism were thereby ideological forces located in certain population in
specific class positions and therefore structured the exploitation of power in a particular ideological manner.

**Gender, gender roles and gender identity**

Sex, a Biological construction, refers to what is ascribed by biology to determine one's femaleness and maleness, whereas gender, a social construction, refers to socially learned sets of normative expectations and behavior that are associated with two sexes (Epstein, 1985). Gender contains the components of gender role stereotypes, gender norms, gender roles and gender role identities. All societies prescribe certain behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes for men and women. These prescriptions make up the gender norms. The gender norms taken together comprise the rules for gender roles. In other words, gender norms are prescriptive guidelines that form gender roles (Weitzman, 1979).

A gender role stereotype is an oversimplified set of descriptive components about the characteristics of male and female which includes physical appearances, personalities, behaviors, and roles in family and society. It is the pattern what women should be and what men should be (Doyle, 1991). Gender roles are a consequence of inherited characteristics and learned, experiential and environmental factors (Ibid.).

People acquired gender role identity through the process of socialization. Socialization can be thought of as a social mold that shapes each person to fit into a group. A person learns what is expected through interaction with socializing agents. Family and kinship, mass media and educational institutions play important roles in shaping gender role identity (Rossi, 1985). This socialization theory is criticized that it fails to explain later changes and re-socialization process (Lorber, 1994).
Culture, which consists of knowledge, values, and symbolic expression, is instilled into a person's mind through the process of socialization and plays an important role in shaping gender identities. In different cultures there are different expectation for gender roles (Judd, 1994).

Recent research argues that female and male sexes are existing on a single continuum rather than as two opposite, mutually exclusive categories (Lorber & Farrel, 1991). Feminist scholarship transformed its focus from a “women-centered” scholarship to a “gender-centered”, “multifocal”, or “inclusive” scholarship. In this phase, a gender-balanced curriculum was emphasized to study women in relation to men. It takes into account the variety of complex human experience based on difference and diversity as gender intersects with race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, age, disability, and other factors (Chow, 1998).

Many feminists think women’s problematic subordinated status and their disadvantages cannot be fully understood and effectively changed without men’s involvement. We should account for both women’s and men’s experiences (Connell, 1998). Therefore, gender is seen increasingly as relational in that women’s position versus men’s is conceptualized as a gender relationship enveloped in a complex system of domination (Chow, 1996).

Gender, as an analytical category has been conceptualized in a variety of ways over time at both the micro-interaction and macro-structural levels of analysis. The psychological approach conceptualizes gender as individual attributes resulting from biology, socialization, or some interaction of the two (Hochschild, 1973). This thinking was criticized to neglect social situations, ongoing interactions, and institutional factors
that influence the formation and dynamics of gender relations (Connell, 1987). Gender role approach sees gender as an achieved status accompanied by a particular set of expectations and patterned behavior that is called a "role". Gender roles are highly institutionalized in society's values, cultural practices, and structures. But this approach is inadequate to explain power, conflicts, and change (West & Zimmerman, 1998). Another approach considers gender as a system of relations rather than individual properties. The emphasis is shifted from individual to structural explanations. Gender relationships cut across race, class, age, and institutional boundaries (Connell, 1998). Gender is dimension of multiple system of domination. It is compounded by interlocking systems of relationships with other variables such as race, ethnicity, class, age, sex orientation, disability and nationality as distinctive dimensions in systems of oppression and domination (Anderson & Collins, 1995).

Lorber (1994) sees gender as an institution rather than as individual attributes or interpersonal relations. She argues that gender is an social institution that establishes patterns of expectations for individuals, orders the social processes of everyday life, is built into the major social organizations of society, such as the economy, ideology, the family, and politics.

**Gender and Power**

The term "power" in this thesis indicates power on an interpersonal level, more specifically, power through gender relations. Interpersonal power means an individual has the ability to achieve ends by influencing others. There are different kinds of interpersonal power: the power an individual has over another if he/she can make this person do something he/she would not have done; and the power an individual has to
express ability, to obtain goods. It is not surprising that people attribute different power bases to men and women, in other words, to gender (Sanday, 1981).

Given the level of gender stratification, males enjoy more access to an array of socially valued resources and opportunities than females do in their societies (Chafetz, 1999). Therefore, men have been viewed as having greater access to power resources than women have, such as political, economic, social and relational power. An explanation is the earning gap between men and women in the labor market keeps women depending on men. Married women usually perform domestic chores for men. Men, then benefit from both higher wages and the domestic division of labor. The domestic division of labor, in return, weakens women's position in the labor market and larger society (Lorber, 1994).

Although a disparity exists with the number of power resources that women and men have, women are not powerless, they still have power to influence others to realize their wishes but they do lack authority in many areas (Doyle, 1991). Women are seen having power in motherhood. In order to ensure the survival of more children, motherhood was redefined to enhance the importance of mothers. This view gives wives more authority within their families but diminished their opportunities to make a mark in the larger society (Lorber, 1994).

Men and women use different power strategies to achieve their goals. Men have more economic, educational, and strength power than women, but women have personal resources, friendship and affection to help them feel empowered (Unger, 1979). There are three kinds of family relationships in modern families: wife-dominant relationships, egalitarian relationships, and husband-dominant relationships. An egalitarian relationship
is one where power is supposedly shared fairly equally between husband and wife. Modern families tend to have egalitarian relationships (Gray-Little and Burks, 1983).

In modern Chinese families in which wife’s income contributes substantially to the family economy, they have a higher degree of egalitarianism. In dual-earning household, women’s paid work does augment women’s bargaining power within the family, but this does not give women a equal status to men on domestic labor division (Lorber, 1994). The normative expectations of the husbands continues prime responsibilities for economic support of the family and the wife’s continued prime responsibilities for family work in modern society (Hochschild, 1973). The more severely a man’s identity is financially threatened—by the wife’s higher salary, for example, the less he can afford to threaten it further by doing “women’s work” at home (Ibid.).

Race, Class, Gender and Migration

Race, class and gender have been widely documented in research. Social scientists have studied the consequences of race, class and gender inequality for diverse groups. The “additive model” focuses on the independent effects of race, class and gender on human experience (Andersen & Collins, 1998). It is used to describe the oppression of women of color. This model is criticized because it misses the social structural connections between them and the particular ways in which different configurations of race, class and gender affect group experience (Ibid.).

West and Fenstermaker (1995) reconceptualize relationships of race, class and gender through “doing difference” as ongoing interactional and institutional accomplishments that result in multiple forms of domination. Chow (1996) conceptualized race, class and gender as basic principles of social organization and of the
human interaction process, principles that constitute basic social relationships, patterns of inequality, and systems of meanings that influence social structures and affect the life experience of diverse kind of men and women. Neither category should be analyzed separately nor takes precedence over others, nor is related to each other quantitatively. All these categories are socially constructed depending on the contexts, and intersect with each other to produce and reproduce unique experiences and social relations (Chiang, 2001).

In recent years, a new understanding emerged on how race, class and gender operate together on people's lives. These studies interpret race, class and gender as interlocking categories of experience that affect all aspects and structure experience of human's life. Collins named this approach as a "matrix of domination" (1990). The intersectional perspective is a feminist approach that theorizes the interconnection of race, class and gender, broadening beyond the scope of gender. The intersectional perspective focuses on two different yet interrelated issues: women's "knowing" of their lived experiences as a starting point for feminist activism, and the multiplicity of women's experiences based in multiple locations (Dua, 1999). Women of color are active agents, with a "free mind", capable of self-definition based on their overarching positions of race, class and gender (Collins, 1990). Yet we have to bear in mind that not all women, who are oppressed, know their oppressions nor do they know what needs to be done to end the oppression (Dua, 1999).

In order to understand the issues of race, class and gender we should think more inclusively. Inclusive thinking means seeing the interconnections between these experiences and not reducing a given person's or group's life to a single factor. In
addition, developing inclusive thinking is more than just summing up the experience of individual group. Race, class and gender are social structural categories (Andersen & Collins, 1998). Once we realize this interlocking relationship between race, class and gender, we come to see such interlocking relations should not be limited only to class, race and gender; but can be extended to other systems of power such as ethnicity, disabilities, sexuality, age, immigration, citizenship, etc. (Creese and Stasiulis, 1996).

Race, class and gender divisions are embedded in the structure of social institutions such as work and economic institutions, and family, education and state. Race, class and gender oppression rests on a network of interconnected social institutions. Understanding the interconnections between institutions helps us see that we are all part of historically created system that finds structural form in interconnected social institutions (Andersen & Collins, 1998).

Migration has been racialized, ethnicized, classed and gendered with the impact of colonialism, imperialism and patriarchy. Theoretical issues of race, ethnicity, class, gender are very important in understanding immigrant settlement (Creese, 2001). Canada was built as a white nation and developed extensive systems of exclusion, subordination, and exploitation of aboriginal and immigrant men and women (Ng 1993, cited by Chiang, 2001). This leads to the implementation of racist and sexist immigration policies (Yuval-Davis and Stasiulis, 1995, cited by Chiang, 2001). Canadian immigration process, from immigration policies, selections, to labor market have been criticized gendered (Creese, 2001). Gender, class, ethnicity, and race are very important in interpretation of the reconstruction of Chinese women immigrant’s identities.

**Family and kinship**
Family and kinship is a very important resource to facilitate the adaptation of new immigrants. The traditional Chinese individual’s personal resources are derived from the family. Many anthropological studies demonstrate that immigrants’ group-oriented adaptive strategies are mainly predicated on kinship ties (Gold, 1992).

Family influences may affect the initial decision to migrate as well as facilitate the later process of immigrant adaptation. As Forts (1969) points out, people migrate to places where a network of kinship and ethnicity has been established, and which forms a bridge between immigrants and their homeland. Kin and ethnic networks frequently open up new avenues for migration, by providing information to potential migrants and by facilitating the adjustment process in the host society.

The term “familism” has been coined to characterize traditional Chinese cultural systems in which all ideas and behavior were judged by whether or not individuals contributed to the well-being of the family (Kulp, 1925). The traditional Chinese family is based on a strong father-and-son relationship and the existence of many generations under one roof, which is different from Western family patterns that emphasize the husband-wife relationship (Wong, 1982).

Thompson’s study of Toronto’s Chinatown shows that kinship presents a powerful ideology among the Chinese immigrants which influences helping behavior among relatives in Canada. He suggests that the social and economic adaptation of new immigrants to Canadian society typically depends on kinship ties (Thompson, 1989). In a study of the function of kinship in occupational mobility for Chinese immigrants, Peter Li (1998) demonstrates that individuals develop a variety of mechanisms to overcome
structural constrains. Many Chinese immigrants turn to kinship ties to compensate for their lack of other resources in maintaining stability.

The immigration experience, the effects of race, class and gender reconstruct family relations for men and women. Men and women will negotiate with each other to adjust to the specific experiences they faced as immigrants. They try to rebuild family and kinship to provide economic and social support during the transition to a new community. It enables them to survive even in the face of cultural, economic and social assaults (Thorne, 1992).

**Self, society, social networks**

In Chinese culture the concept of self is a relational characteristic. The Confucian idea of self-development emphasizes the transforming process of the self into a social being (Tian, 1999). A social network is established on a commonality of shared identification between two or more persons (Tian, 1999: 64). Establishing a social network is a larger social stage for a Chinese individual to present self in everyday life, and through which individual selves are able to increase the capacity to manipulate the very situation in which their identities are grounded and made evident to others (Goffman 1959). Friendship is a feature in the construction of a social network. The fundamental element for friendship is sentiment and the sentiment for participants must be mutual. Friendship is treated by anthropologist as an extension of kinship (Tian, 1999). Within a Chinese context friendship is treated as kinship which refers to any person an individual wants to include in his social networks. Kinship, classmates, co-workers, social position, political attitudes, place of birth, friendship and the like, are elements to establish social networks in Chinese society. After immigration, immigrants tend to establish social
networks within their own ethnic group in order to compete for limited resources and facilitate the adaptation process. Friendship is an essential component in building a social network. This tendency of establishing an ethnic social support network is called ethnic solidarity which is used as an adaptation strategy after immigration.

In Confucian society, family occupies a central position. It is a primary unit of the whole society. In modern society, women step out of the family and assume occupational positions, thus their life spaces are increasingly extended beyond their primary group to larger groups within which they have much broader scope for self-expression. Their identification is no longer restricted to the family domain and kinship networks. This is demonstrated in the analysis in my thesis that women tend to use occupation to identity themselves and try to establish social networks in the host society in order to facilitate the adaptation process.
Chapter 3     Research Methods: Issues and Discussion

Interviews

In this research project, the bulk of the data was collected through interviews and was subject to qualitative analysis. Census data and immigration statistics were also used. In order to get first hand materials about women immigrants from Mainland China in the late 1980s and 1990s, I decided to conduct interviews among some of them. Many researchers choose to send out questionnaires, but in this research I did not use this method because of the concern that asking many detailed and opening questions would likely greatly reduce the response rates. I preferred to use a face-to-face interview format. Through direct interviews I did get more information than would be available from an impersonal questionnaire. Benefiting from the flexibility of controlling the interview process and the direct interaction between interviewer and interviewee, I could encourage the interviewees to talk in greater depth about their opinions and thoughts.

All interviews were conducted on the basis of a semi-structured interview questionnaire. I prepared two versions of the questionnaire: one for married women and the other for single women. The main differences in these two questionnaires are: in the one for married women, there are questions about their husband and children; in the other one for single women there are questions about their attitude in looking for husbands and questions about their boyfriends. Interview questions for divorced women include their attitudes on looking for husband and also their ex-husband and children.

I did a pretest before conducting the interviews. I asked five of my friends to be interviewees. According to their answers and suggestions, I revised the interview questions.
All interviews were conducted by myself. There were a total of 20 interviews conducted. Since I did not use quantitative methods to analyze data and also due to time limitations and the lack of labor and financial resources, I did not employ a random sampling method in collecting data. Instead, I utilized a snowball sampling method.

There were seven referrals I used to generate my interview network which included five friends and two relatives. First I told them I want to look for Mainland Chinese women immigrants since the late 1980s and 1990s whose ages were between 20 and 40. I then asked them to recommend some interviewees to me. If they knew of potential informants, I asked for their phone numbers. The second step was to call people whom were recommended to ask them if they agree to be interviewed. If they agreed, I made an appointment with them and asked them to choose the most convenience place and time. During my initial telephone call I told them what kinds of questions I would ask and the duration of the whole interview. I let them know the interview was to be confidential and only I would have access to the interview material and pseudonym names would be used in my thesis. They were told they could refuse to answer any of my interview questions and withdraw from the interview at any time. Before the interview I asked them to sign a letter of consent which was written in Chinese. I gave them my contact address and phone-number, and my supervisor’s contact address and phone number and told them if they had any questions about my thesis and the interview process they could contact myself or my supervisor at these addresses or telephone numbers. My approaches and my interview protocol received ethical approval from the Behavioral Research Ethics Committee at the University of British Columbia.

**Interview referral networks:**
Referral 1 (friend 1) -- Interviewee 1
-- Refusal
Referral 2 (friend 2) -- Interviewee 2 -- Refusal
Referral 3 (friend 3) -- Interviewee 3 -- Interviewee 6
-- Interviewee 7 -- Interviewee 9
-- Interviewee 8 -- Interviewee 10
-- Interviewee 4
-- Interviewee 5
-- Refusal
Referral 4 (friend 4) -- Refusal -- Interviewee 11
Referral 5 (relative 1) -- Interviewee 12 -- Interviewee 13
-- Interviewee 14
-- Interviewee 15
Referral 6 (relative 2) -- Interviewee 16 -- Interviewee 17 -- Refusal
Referral 7 (friend 5) -- Interviewee 18 -- Refusal
-- Interviewee 19 -- Interviewee 20

My group of interviewees was composed of women immigrants from Mainland China who came to Canada from the late 1980s. Their immigration status included both independent immigrants, including skilled immigrants and business immigrants and dependent immigrants, including spouses and relatives of dependent immigrants. Refugees were not included. Students, scholars and technicians who were admitted to Canada as a consequence of the Tiananmen incident in 1989 are not included. Although
most of them qualified as independent immigrants, some of them applied for refugee status under the special environment at that time.

**Demographic characteristics of interviewee group**

1) Age of interviewees: the ages of interviewees ranged from 20s to 40s. Among twenty women in the interviewee group, five are in their twenties, eleven in their thirties and four in their forties.

2) Marital status: there are two single women, sixteen married women and two divorced women.

3) Duration of immigration: four immigrated to Canada in the late 1980s and sixteen in the 1990s.

4) Immigration status: there were four independent immigrant women within which one is a business immigrant and four are skilled immigrants; the other sixteen are dependent immigrants sponsored by their husbands.

5) Educational level received in China: three women have college level education, thirteen have undergraduate level education and four have graduate level education.

6) Mother language: all the women within the interviewee group speak Mandarin; only one, who was born in Guangzhou, can speak Cantonese.

7) Point of origin: all my informants are from Mainland China, including a) Beijing, b) Tianjin, c) Guangdong, d) Hebei, e) Henan, f) Hubei, g) Hunan, h) Jilin, i) Jiangsu, j) Shandong, k) Sichuan, and l) Yunan provinces.

8) English language level: ten women needed to go to English as a Second Language program to study English before they went to work or went to university or college, while the other ten directly went to university or college or went to work.
9) Point of immigration: ten women applied for immigration status directly from China, two of them came under visitor’s status and then changed immigrant status in Canada, five of them applied for immigration in Canada via a Canadian Consulate in the U.S., and three of them applied from the United States.

10) Occupation in China: one was a medical doctor, four were teachers including one in high school, one in college and two in university, two were self-employed, three were in research institutes, six were in companies including two in foreign companies, three in government organizations, one was studying in a university.

11) What they do in Canada: seven study English, four are in a university graduate program, one studies at a college, three stay at home, one works in a university, three work in small ethnic businesses, and one works in computer company.

**Interview place:** I asked interviewees to choose the most convenient place they wanted to answer my questions. Most of them choose their home, a site suitable to facilitate open discussion by maximizing the comfort and convenience of the participants and which allowed them to talk in greater depth. Two interviews were conducted in public place.

**Interview record method:** I did not use a tape-recorder to record interviews to avoid intimidating them, instead I took notes of main points during the interview and complemented them immediately after the interview according to the main points and memories.

**Duration of interview:** The duration of the interview depended on the depth of the conversation and generally took one to two hours to finish the interview. People could not talk depth if the interview was less than one hour. On the contrary, if an interview
lasted more than two hours, both my interviewee and I felt too exhausted to talk and think.

The representativeness of the data: In the process of selecting informants, I tried to balance age, educational and occupational background, length of residency in Canada, marital status, and language level. I asked each informant to talk about her demographic background and tried to approach people from diverse backgrounds in order to make the data more representative.

The limitation of the data: Although I try to balance the diverse backgrounds of my informants, the bias of snowball sampling method is very obvious. Most friends and relatives recommend informants with similar background. Therefore, I did not contact with some of informants to avoid the similarity. But the bias of the data still remains obvious.

Language used in interview: All interviews were conducted in Mandarin. Since all interviewees are originally from China and Mandarin is their mother language, speaking the mother language allowed them to express their opinions freely. Using Mandarin to communicate with them was the most convenient way for them, especially for women who do not speak fluent English. Speaking Chinese created a common feeling between interviewer and interviewee. The interview process has proved that it is the best way to talk with them in Chinese because even women who speak fluent English thought they cannot use English as proficiently as Chinese.

Translation issues: There are two translation processes in this thesis.

1) Since my interview questions were written in English I needed to translate them into Chinese during the interview. The word ‘identity’ is difficult to translate. Usually people
translate it into ‘rentong’ in Chinese, but I find it is difficult for people to understand the meaning of ‘rentong’. During the pretest, when I asked ‘How you identify yourself’ it was not understood. I therefore changed this question into “How you think of yourself and talk about yourself” which was easier for my informants to understand.

2) Since I recorded my interviews in Chinese, I needed to translate responses into English when I wrote up the interviews. I do not always translate the Chinese literally, since there are some differences in expressions in English and Chinese. I translated the responses into colloquial English according to their Chinese meaning.

**Methods to decrease refusal rates:** In order to decrease refusal rate, I attempted to prepare a concise questionnaire, which would not take a lot of time. Sensitive questions were not asked or were transformed into acceptable forms during interviews. I let each interviewee know before starting the interview that our conversation was confidential and anonymous and I made it clear that the research was not political or related to government but personal and scholarly research inspired by my academic interests. I did not use audiotape record as a way to avoid intimidating my informants and to make them feel more comfortable and assure them of confidentiality.

**Refusal rate:** There were six women whom I contacted who refused to be interviewed. They justified their refusal in various ways: they were busy; they were not interested in it; they feared it was related to a government survey; or feared that their participation might get them in trouble.

In the end, there are some factors revealed that the women who agreed to be interviewed generally represented their true thoughts. Because many of the questions related to specific problems people faced in their study, their work and their family life
both before and after their immigration to Canada. Their answers included both criticism of Chinese society, their identification as both Chinese and Canadian, and also problems and difficulties with their family relationships. But since the bias of the data reduced the reliability, further research would need to be done to establish greater validity.
Chapter 4  Changing Identities and Power Relationships

1. Reasons for Immigration

Push and pull forces can still be used to generalize about the reasons Chinese women immigrate to Canada. In China political instability, the corruption of government officials, the chaos brought about by economic and political reform, the more and more serious environmental pollution, and a series of social crises and conflicts are factors pushing them to seek a better life abroad. Immigration to Canada becomes a popular choice among Chinese because the attractions of its high quality of life, the sense of freedom, individualism, democracy, social benefits, the high quality of education, and good environmental conditions.

In my interviews almost all my informants mentioned that in the work environment interpersonal relationships are more complicated in China than in Canada. Ms Xu was a government official who worked in a government office for more than ten years in China. She had a high position in a provincial government office. She was in charge of economic planning. She is very familiar with the relationships between officials and ordinary people, as well as the relationships between higher and lower ranked officials. She commented:

We spent too much time in dealing with interpersonal relations. It was a waste of time. But if you do not like to spend so much time in socializing, your supervisor will think you are not a good employee. So this is very contradictory. I hated to conduct work in this way but I had no choice. The relationship between officials and citizens is also very complicated. When I went to lower rank offices to inspect their work, although I do not think and behave myself as an official I felt that people would never identify me as the same group as them. You must satisfy your supervisor and also the masses to survive in that environment, so you will lose your own characteristics soon. I was so tired with this. So for me it is not a bad thing to come to Canada.
She also pointed out that some people in China who held a position of power would purposely create obstacles for you when you need their service. This indicated they wanted extra money as a bribe, or just for a sense of reprisal because they have been treated in the same way before.

Ms Miao was a sales manager in a joint venture company in Henan province. She had to deal with the difficult relationship between her two superiors who were antagonistic with each other. She said: “It was very complicated, and very tiring. Apart from the heavy workload during the day, I had to think very hard how to deal with things tactfully, how to satisfy both of them. You must think about struggling against people in order to succeed in a Chinese company”.

Ms Liu was a teacher in a college in Beijing. She has worked for more than ten years before immigration. She said: “In China there are too many factors created by people which make you very tired in dealing with them. I cannot concentrate my full energy on my work, I must spend a lot of time in handling personal relationships.”

Political and social instability in Chinese society is another reason for immigration. Miss Gao is an independent skilled immigrant to Canada. As a computer scientist she ran a company in China and enjoyed her social and economic position. One of her main reasons for deciding to immigrate to Canada was political instability. She said: “My father is an official in the provincial government. In the course of his job, he has access to much classified information on Chinese society, which he believes has too much crisis and conflicts. Having a family member abroad is more secure.” For her, immigration is not only for more opportunities, better development and a beautiful
natural environment, but more importantly as an insurance against chaos and instability in China.

The serious environmental pollution is also a factor which encourages people to move abroad. In the wake of economic development and industrialization, the natural environment in China has been destroyed in recent decades. The government, in the views of some, emphasizes only economic development and ignores environmental protection, which leads to a series of environmental problems that directly affects the quality of people's life and health. Some people who have the opportunity to go abroad to seek a better life see this as an important factor. Ms Wei said:

My daughter's health was a factor in our decision to immigrate to Canada. In Beijing, my daughter often gets an infection of her respiratory system which is accompanied with a high fever, which can not go down for a week or more. This bothered my husband and me very much. I had to ask for leave from work to take care of her, but you know my husband and me are very busy at that time. This is due great part to the bad environment pollution in Beijing. So when we got a chance to migrate to Canada, we decide to come here, for the reuniting of our family, for my daughter's education and for her health. We have stayed in Vancouver for almost a year and now my daughter did not get any infection with her respiratory system.

People come to Canada also for better education of the next generation. Ms Miao said:

We came here for a better education for my daughter. Although I like the life here, I cannot integrate easily into this society because I am not familiar with this culture and my English is not very good. But my daughter is only ten years old, she can learn faster than me. After several years she will speak fluent English and she will get the education here, which can be recognized by Canadian society. Educated in Canada will allow her to live a better life than us in Canadian society.

Ms Guan who is a Ph.D. student in biology, admires the education system in Canada very much. To her education is better here than in China. First, the teachers here emphasize independence training, which includes independence in everyday life and independence in thinking. It seems that students in China learn more at middle school
level than in Canada, but after entering graduate program you will see the advantage of the education here. Students who are educated here have the ability to develop independently and to conduct projects. They do not need to wait for the professor to tell them what to do. They have more interest and motivation to explore. In China, most students just do what the professor allows them you do. Although the situation has changed in recent years, it still can not match the education in North America. The second advantage in a Western education system is that teachers seldom criticize students. Rather, they encourage them, which makes students more confident. Students will not be forced to study so they will have enough space and time to develop their own interest.

Unlike a lot of students in China, who must study what they never love to, just like me. I am a victim of the old education system. I do not know what is my interest, this is because I was not given such opportunities to explore and develop. Another advantage is the education here does not focus on the goal of looking for job.

Ms Mei is a dependent immigrant of her husband, who is an investment immigrant. She came to Canada for her son’s education. He is in high school now and will enter university in two years. She said:

There are more opportunities for students to enter university or get other training and skills in Canada than in China. In China, students must take the entrance exam to university which is very selective and a large number of them cannot get into university. In order to create a better opportunity for education for my son we came to Canada.

She thought this is what they can do for him as parents. After immigration her husband went back to China to continue his business and she stayed in Canada to take care of her son.

The convenience and benefits after immigration is an essential factor that attracts immigrants to Canada. Ms Ma said: “Before immigration, I have no sense of security
since a lot of rights are only for immigrants and citizens. If you only have a student visa, you could not apply for a loan or grant. But after immigration you will feel that you are a member of this country, this land”. Ms Guan said that after becoming a landed immigrant it is more convenient to get visa to go to other countries for conferences. It is more difficult to get a visa if you hold a Chinese passport. She said:

Since I attend conferences frequently, I do not want to be restricted on visa. There are also a lot of other conveniences, for instance, the tuition fee is much lower than for non-immigrants. My husband is studying computer science now, if he was not an immigrant he must pay twice as much for the tuition fee, which we cannot afford.

Social benefits in Canada are factors that attract many Chinese immigrants. Ms Zhang said:

I just gave birth to a child and I get a milk fee every month for my baby. In Canada you can still have a high quality life if you are a student when you do not have so much money. My husband is a Ph.D. student and he has a scholarship which is all the income for the whole family. If in China, you never imagine you can afford a family if you are a student.

The sense of freedom, equality and democracy is another attraction for immigration. Ms Guan said:

In Canada you will have a strong feeling that you are a true human being since the Canadian government pays attention as to how people feel. Although total equality is impossible, you can feel quite equal with others in Canada. But in China, which is a society that stresses that all people are equal, it is a place where hierarchy is most obvious.

Ms Lu made a similar point:

In Canada I feel more equal than in China. For example, in China you cannot enter into a lot of places as an ordinary citizen. You will find a lot of guards in front of the door who ask for identification, which makes you feel intimidated. In Canada, I can get into places that others can also get into. This makes me feel comfortable and more equal as a member of this society.

Some interviewees felt that the social values and ethics are deteriorating in China. Almost everyone is obsessed by money, life’s purpose is for money, and money decides
everything. Even the pursuit of knowledge has been used as the way to get money.

People tend to compete with others for wealth. As Ms Chen said:

I think this phenomenon is more serious in China now than in Canada. I feel that in Canada I am not bothered by these kinds of things. In China you will have the strong feeling that it is shameful if you do not have a lot of money. But in Canada, although we are poor but we feel comfortable and we can still have a decent life. I feel very quiet and peaceful even though my husband and I have the stress in looking for job and deciding what to do in the future.

Some women immigrate to Canada for the development of a husband’s career, as well as for the children’s education. To reunite the family and for better development of their husband’s career they must sometimes give up what they have, including their jobs in China. When in China, Ms Zhang’s husband felt “huai cai bu yu” which means his talents were not recognized and he had no opportunity to realize them. Due to unequal factors he could not advance his career in his institute despite his good credentials. Sometimes whether or not one can get a higher position depends on the relationship with his supervisor but not on his capabilities. When he saw his friends who had less qualification and earned higher salaries or achieved higher positions, he felt so disappointed. His academic qualifications were excellent, but he was not good at dealing with interpersonal relationships. Ms Zhang said:

China is not good for his development. So he came to Canada and sponsored me one year later. Although he is under a lot of stress with his studies he feels very happy because he knows if he works hard he will get what he deserves.

Ms Ge was an accountant in a transportation company in China. Her husband came to Canada as a visiting scholar and then he stayed to pursue a Ph.D. program in fine arts. After arriving in Canada, she experienced extreme difficulty in finding a job and had to do a lot of menial jobs in order to make a living. When she was asked why she decided to immigrate to Canada, she said:
My husband was in Canada and my daughter and I were in China. In fact I liked my job in China very much but I still decided to come here because my husband missed my daughter very much. After I came here I did not want to stay but when I asked my daughter if she wanted to stay she said: 'I like Canada and I want to stay with dad'. My husband also likes Canada very much. Both of them chose Canada. So I must stay here to take care of my husband and daughter—they need me. My husband is very busy all the time with his work, but he is very happy here because he can express his talent freely here. My daughter is busy with her studies here. She likes the educational system in Canada. Although sometimes I feel that I am not myself as in China but when I see my husband and my daughter are very happy I also have a sense of achievement.

It seems that husband's career development is important in an immigrants' decision on where the family will live in the future. As Ms Wu said:

I came here because my husband is here and I will stay in Canada if my husband can find a job in Canada after graduation. If he wants to go back to China I will go with him. I think for me the reunion of the family and my husband's career development are most important for me.

Some women came for their own development, to broaden the eyes, to seek a better life and for better economic opportunities. As Ms Gao said:

I know it is more difficult to establish my own business in Canada than in China. I owned a company in China. But I think it is a right choice to come to Canada since I need to broaden my eyes, to learn advanced administration in Canadian companies. This is good for my future business.

It is obvious that married women's consideration of the contribution to the well being of next generation and husband's development as the motivation for migration reflects the emphasis on the collective success of the family rather than the individual. This is more obviously rooted in women's minds and reflects the deeply entrenched culture value of Chinese families (Zhang, 2001). They tend to compromise their own career than single women. In other words, they will place plenty of time and emphasis on the family, with decisions made around it (Chiang, 2001). Confucian values, which emphasizes that family is central to
women’s lives, still exists in women’s minds as a common reason for immigration.

Factors affecting immigration do not operate alone. Women immigrants came to Canada usually for a combination of reasons. These factors include the push-and-pull forces in China and Canada, a husband’s development, children’s education, family unity, and the women’s self-development. They work together as combined factors in the immigration process.

2. Construction of new Identity

Chinese women immigrants experienced changes in self-identity after immigration because they must redefine their position in Canadian society which is quite different from that of the Chinese society. Every one has a sense of self that is called self-identity. One identifies himself/herself from many aspects: age, gender, nationality, culture, ethnicity, class, education, occupation, etc. Social interaction plays a very important role in shaping one’s identity. So one’s identity is also his/her social identity, which refers to “the individual’s knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership” (Tajfel, 1972, cited by Breton, 1987). When one moves from one culture to another his/her identity will change due to the changes of social environment.

After immigration, stress and conflicts arise between expectations and realities. Stress comes to individuals when their expectations do not match the reality. The stress became stronger when a series of expected or unexpected events combine together: the loss of achievements in China, the separation from family members and friends, the lack of social support in Canadian society, language barriers, unrecognized education and
work experience, the uncertainty of future development in a new society, and more importantly, the institutionalized inequality in Canadian society affected by race, ethnicity, class and gender. As new Chinese immigrants, they experienced fewer opportunities and more intolerance compared with white European immigrants in all Canadian institutions. As women immigrants, especially for dependents, they experienced gender-biased immigration process brought by Canadian immigration policy which advanced the adaptation of primary immigrants. All Chinese women experienced hardship in adapting to these changes and finding their position in a new society. They experienced changes in identity both in terms of the way they think of themselves and how they present themselves to others in new contexts. Class identity, ethnic identity, culture identity, and gender identity, which are mayor changes they experienced which intersectionally work together in shaping Chinese women immigrants’ collective identities, will be analyzed next.

**Changing class identity**

Income, occupational prestige, social prestige, and power are important factors in judging socioeconomic status. Most occupational ranking used in this study assumes the occupation can be ranked according to the income and prestige their incumbents receive. Socioeconomic status is an important measure of class. To new women immigrants, political power seems not as important as socioeconomic status, which is much closer to everyday life in their new society. Chinese immigrants tend to measure their socioeconomic status lower in Canada than in China. This is because most Chinese women immigrants have high social and economic status in China and this situation has improved since the 1990s. This is due to Canada’s immigration policy, which stipulated
that people who have certain education and capital are welcome to come to Canada. The points system makes the selection of immigration within a specific population, which facilitates the entry into Canada of people who have high education, technique, skills, and capital. Even most wives of primary immigrants were well educated and had good jobs in China. But the situation changed after they came to Canada. Although with a high educational background, for women immigrants in their middle age, the adaptation process is difficult. This is because on the one hand, their English ability is not very good. Even though they have a university education and some knowledge of English, they have never lived in an English speaking context. Therefore they must enter language school to study English, which is a difficult process. On the other hand, they had good jobs in China with high prestige and high income, but their educational accomplishments and work experience are not recognized in Canada. They cannot find appropriate jobs. If they want to find the equivalent level job they must go to university to get another degree. This is difficult because of the English language barrier, age, the burden of supporting their families, and also deficiencies in their fields of study. So some of them study English with an uncertain future, some do menial jobs in ethnic businesses, which are seen as working class jobs, the lowest position in the social hierarchy. The loss of social and economic security makes them perceive their class identity as significantly lower than in China. In addition, ethnic identity also affects their class identity. Chinese are perceived as an ethnic minority in Canada, and Chinese culture is clearly not mainstream culture. Chinese immigrants, as a consequence, identify themselves as lower class in Canadian society. This is largely because Chinese as members of an ethnic minority do not have the same opportunity to enter the administrative class since they do
not have the local cultural characteristics which are seen to be important qualifications for entry to those positions.

Ms Lu worked in a famous research institution in China. She became an assistant researcher in the research institute when she was 28 years old. She was very respected by others in China since people acknowledged her qualifications. Both her salary and social prestige were high in Chinese society. In Canada she could not find a comfortable job because her work experience was not recognized and her English ability was poor. To her, her economic status in Canada has decreased:

In China my social status and economic condition were pretty good. After we came to Canada, I feel we were very poor because we depended on my husband’s scholarship. I felt our socioeconomic status had decreased because our ways of spending money changed. In fact, our living conditions did not decrease; on the contrary, some living conditions became better. But social and economic status is your comparative status in the society. So even if our absolute living conditions did not decrease, our relative status in the society was lowered.

She also sees her social position in Canadian society lower than that in China. Her occupation in China was as a professional who can be ranked as upper class, but she could not attain the same job level in Canada. Her desire is to find an office job, such as a clerk, which she sees as intermediate in the occupational hierarchy. She has found it hard to adapt to these changes of decreasing socioeconomic status.

I cherished high ambitions in my work in China. I was very regretful to give up my work. After I came to Canada, I had to study English as a child. I cannot find a job because my work experience is not recognized. I am a housewife now and have no work, no income, and no social position in this society. I felt so bad. Now I do not have as high an ambition as in China. I only wish I could find an office job and not need to *dagong* (labor) in the future.

Ms Miao had a similar experience. She was a sales manager in China. She bought a house and car, which are still luxuries in China. Other people saw her as a successful woman. She is now a housewife and studies English in Canada.
I lost all after I came to Canada. Everything must start from zero. I must enter language school to study listening, speaking, reading, and writing. I feel I am no better than a primary school student. In Canada I cannot imagine that I can obtain what I achieved in China. I must study if I want to work because my degree and experience are not recognized. I am not sure what I will do in the future.

It seems that the changes in the reconstruction of social status were stressful for Ms Miao. The managerial occupation she held was considered upper class in China but to be a housewife is seen as lacking of social position and recognition in society. The difficulty to achieve makes her feel disappointed. In addition, the lack of money is also important in her definition of socioeconomic status. She considers that her socioeconomic status has decreased greatly.

I never worried about money in China. But in Canada I cannot afford a lot of things or even if I can afford them I am reluctant to spend money because I have no income. In China I was the breadwinner in our family and my salary was much higher than my husband’s.

Ms Ge has a university degree but has only a menial job in Canada. She experienced downward mobility after immigration. She was an accountant in a transportation company in China. She came to Vancouver in 1990 as a dependent of her husband. She could not find a job as an accountant because she needs to study accounting and to take examinations to be certified as an accountant in Canada. Since her husband was studying for a Ph.D. at that time and they were short of money, she had to find a job immediately in order to support the family. She went to ethnic businesses to look for menial jobs but failed because she did not speak Cantonese. In the early 1990s very few people spoke Mandarin, the majority of Chinese in Vancouver spoke Cantonese and English. She did not speak either of them so it was impossible to get a job in Chinatown. Finally she found a job through a friend. It was community service work which was taking care of seniors. Her tasks were to cook, wash clothes, and take the elderly for
walks. After several months, she began to study English as a full-time student. Five months later, she continued her study of English as a part time student and at the same time became a dishwasher. After she finished her English study, she worked in a cafeteria at the University of British Columbia. Her current job is a cashier in the airport. She identifies herself as a ‘dagongzai’ (laborer) in Canada.

I am only a *dagongzai* in Canada. I never had this feeling in China. In the 1980s, our economic condition was pretty good in China. Although not very rich, we had a decent life as ordinary people. My husband came here as a visiting scholar first and then he entered a Ph.D. program. When he first came here we had only $30 left after paying travel tickets. So I had no choice but to go to *dagong* (labor) to support him and my daughter. We were very poor at that time. The feeling of a lack of a permanent job and having to *dagong* is very uncomfortable for me. I have a university degree, but I am only cashier in Canada. In China I am a citizen and I had a decent job so I feel I was a master of the land. I lost all of this after I came to Canada.

In her case, from an accountant to a cashier is perceived as downward social mobility. ‘Accountant’ is in the upper class while ‘cashier’ is seen as lower class according to occupational ranking.

Obviously high unemployment and underemployment rate among newly arrived Chinese immigrants from Mainland is an important factor to affect their class identity and reinforce their collective identity. Many recent studies found that there exists considerable segmentation between visible minority group and white group in Canadian labor market (Pendakur, 1998). There is substantial earning gap between the white and visible minority groups which indicates economic discrimination may play an important role in Canadian labor market (Ibid.). While some others thought that discrimination may be based on a set of take-for-granted assumptions and stereotypes (Hiebert, 1999). Many immigrants who attained professional qualifications do well in Canadian labor market. Therefore, immigrants are found from “top” to “bottom” in labor market, but are
particularly concentrated in undesirable jobs. This is particular obvious for women who migrate as wives. Immigrant women of color are frequently linked with least-paid, least-secure jobs. Most women in this study have university degrees and work experience in China but cannot find work that matches their former occupation. They either go to labor or enter language program or education programs as adaptive strategy. This is usually because of their language deficiency and unfamiliarity with Canadian culture, the restraint of being wife and mother, and also institutionalized racialized and gendered labor market. Dissatisfaction accompanied with unemployment and underemployment and made those people who encountered obstacles stick to their low status identity.

Most Chinese women immigrants who were unable to find high status jobs tend to identify themselves as having lower socioeconomic status after immigration. It is also surprising that some women who had a higher education in Canada and had decent occupation with good pay and prestige still identify themselves as a dagongzai, which indicates they feel that they cannot enter upper status positions. Ms Guan is a Ph.D. student in her fifth year in Canada. Although she has a high educational background and a prosperous future, she still feels she is only a dagongzai in Canada. In China she was a sales manager in a foreign company. Although she did not like her job very much, because she did not like sales, she felt her economic and social status was very good. She feels that her economic status did not decrease in Canada but the social status decreased instead. She said:

My position and salary will not be low after graduation because I have a Ph.D. degree. But you cannot have many opportunities for promotion after you reach a certain position. As a foreigner growing up in a foreign country, you cannot enter higher social circles because when you reach a high position, you not only need to do well with your work but also know how to socialize with people. But because your culture, taste, behavior and ways of dealing with things are quite
different from local people you will have difficulty to do management. This is why Chinese who grow up in China seldom enter managerial levels.

From Ms Guan’s identity with her socioeconomic status, we can see the socioeconomic identity is not only due to the income, security, and opportunity for promotion in one’s occupation, but also related to the culture or symbolic capital one possesses. As Bourdieu suggests, cultural or symbolic capital plays an important role in the reproduction of the inequality of social order. He argues that the dominant political and economic groups exert their own habitus as the natural and only proper sorts of habitus. If you are identified with a class you should possess its style, taste, in short, culture. Those with the appropriate habitus find it is easy to succeed, while others do not. An individual from a non-dominant background who wishes to succeed requires the appropriate cultural capital, with the inevitable consequences of the habitus (Bourdieu, 1973). For Ms Guan, her feeling that she cannot enter the mainstream, although she has high income and occupational prestige, indicates that cultural or symbolic capital is important for recognition. The mainstream cultural group has advantages in controlling economic, social and political resources and thus will have higher socioeconomic status. As a women immigrant from a different cultural group, she has the habitus of her original cultural group but does not have the culture of the elite in Canadian society. Although her occupation, income and prestige allow her to reach a certain class she lacks the culture of that class which seems natural among its members. This is why she identifies herself only as a dagongzai, not a member of the upper class in Canada.

Ms Liu holds a different socioeconomic identity although her experience is similar to Ms Ge. She was a teacher in a college in China. She thinks her social status and economic condition were ordinary in China, neither high nor low. She immigrated to
Canada as a dependent of husband who entered a Ph.D. program. They have two children. In order to support the family she went to dagong in an ethnic business. The social mobility from college teacher to worker in an ethnic business did not bring any change in her socioeconomic identity. I think what makes Ms Liu have a different socioeconomic identity from other Chinese women immigrants is her ethnic and cultural identity. She identifies Canada as a multi-cultural society in which there is no ethnic minority or majority. She does not identify herself as a member of an ethnic minority as do other Chinese women immigrants. She said:

I do not feel my social and economic status changed much after I came to Canada. The work I am doing is not considered of high prestige and my salary is not very high. Most people will think my social status decreased. But I don’t think so. In Canada I do not feel the social status differs much between rich and poor. I feel people are equal, at least seemingly. Even we are not rich we still have a decent life. Canadian society is a multi-cultural society, so I do not feel any inequality. I do not think I am a minority member because Canada is an immigrant country and each immigrant is identified as Canadian. I do not feel others look down upon me because I am poor or my occupation is not very prestigious or I am a Chinese origin. I do not treat others in this way either.

In general, from Chinese women immigrants’ experiences of constructing new socioeconomic identities we can conclude that not only income and occupational prestige affect class identity, but also cultural symbolism and cultural and ethnic identity have effects which is essential in redefining immigrants’ class identity.

**Changing ethnic and cultural identity**

Ethnic identity is an individual’s dominant feeling within a group, or a sense of group consciousness, which represents the social-psychological dimension and involves attraction and loyalty to an ethnic group and identification with it (Friesen, 1985: 22). From this definition, we know ethnic identity is one’s loyalty to a certain ethnic group. When interethnic and intercultural contacts occur, will it affect an individual’s loyalty to
his/her original ethnic group? Will an individual’s ethnic identity change with change of
his/her citizenship? These interesting questions arise when a change in social and
cultural environment occurs, such as in the case of Chinese women immigrants. After
they immigrated to Canada, they became permanent residents or citizens of Canada and
they are legally called ‘Canadian’. Will these changes affect their attachment to Chinese
identity? What is their current ethnic identity under this circumstance? Let us find how
some Chinese women identify themselves.

Ms Lu thinks she is still Chinese after immigration. According to her, she is
legally Canadian and responsible to Canadian society. She likes Canada very much and
identifies with many things Canadian; otherwise she would not have immigrated here.
Emotionally, however, she still identifies with China and identifies herself as Chinese.
She said:

I think the fact that I am Chinese will not change in my life because my
education, my language, my culture, and my friends, my kinship and connections
are all related to China and the Chinese. These are quite different from
Canadians, therefore, I can not think myself as the same as them.

Ms Xing’s Chinese identity developed after she came to Canada and became
stronger after the contact with local society in Canada. She said:

I did not have a strong feeling of being Chinese when I was in China because all
the people were the same. But I realized I am Chinese in Canadian society
because there are so many differences between us. The distinctiveness of culture,
way of communication, language, thoughts, interests, etc. made me realize I am
Chinese while they are Canadian. The differences exist even though I do not
want to think about it.

For Ms Zhang, she believes she has a responsibility to both China and Canada.
She is Canadian now and believes she should act as a member of this society. At the same
time she has emotional links to China and the Chinese society. She said:

I have lived in China for so many years and I possess Chinese habits, traditions,
values, and culture, which indicate I am Chinese. I have Canadian nationality
now and I will do what Canadians should do for their society. But emotionally I am of Chinese origin. I have relatives, friends and so many relations with China which can not disappear in such a short time. I feel I still have a responsibility to Chinese society.

Ms Ma lived in Canada for almost ten years. She identifies herself as Chinese in Canada and as Canadian when she returns to China. She suggests that she is at a stage in which Canadians will think of her as Chinese but Chinese in China will not perceive her as totally Chinese anymore.

When I am in Canada, I have the strong feeling I am Chinese. For example, in my work place, all Chinese tend to get together during break or lunchtime and like to speak Chinese. I think these behaviors reinforce the feeling of Chinese and also make others see you as Chinese. In addition, I feel my living habits, ways of consumption, and culture are still Chinese. But after I go back to China to visit, I am surprised that I am not used to the ways of Chinese behavior, such as how to deal with interpersonal relationships and how to socialize with people. I feel I am more like Canadian in ways of dealing with these things although I do not feel these in Canada. My friends in China also feel I have changed a lot in many ways.

Ms Liu has a different ethnic identity. She identified herself as Canadian after immigration. She said that she lives in Canadian society now and the connection with Chinese society has decreased by distance and time. So she became more and more unfamiliar with Chinese society. Instead all things in Canadian society, such as its social system and culture, have had increasing influence on her. As a Canadian citizen she enjoys her rights and at the same time fulfills her obligations. She said: “I immigrated to Canada because I identified with its social values, freedom, democracy, and natural environment, so other Canadians have no reason to think I am not Canadian.” She did not see any difference with other Canadians although she still keeps Chinese traditions, celebrates Chinese festivals and has no feelings about Canadian festivals, such as Christmas. She said: “I think Canada is an immigrant society in which multiculturalism
plays an important role, every immigrant is equal to others. I did not feel others discriminate against me because I am of Chinese origin. What I am is what Canadian is”.

In my interviews, most women identify themselves as Chinese who are legally responsible to Canadian society and emotionally responsible to Chinese society. But I found that although they do not identify themselves as Canadian they have adopted many beliefs, values, and aspects of the culture of Canadian society. They also identify many aspects of Canadian society, such as its educational system, social system, and its democracy. Sometimes they do not notice these changes, like Ms Ma, but once they go back to China they realize that they have changed a lot and are no longer used to many aspects of Chinese culture. They felt they are still Chinese because they maintain some facets of their self-identity developed in their culture of origin, which is distinctive. They felt they have changed when they go back to China because they have adopted many values and behaviors of Canadian society. Just as Weber suggested: “the persistent effect of the old ways and of childhood reminiscences continues as a source of native-country sentiment among emigrants even when they have become so thoroughly adjusted to the country that return to their homeland would be intolerable” (Weber, 1987).

The reasons affecting Chinese women immigrants’ ethnic identity are complex. Weber’s theory of symbolism can be seen as one of the explanations. Weber argues linguistic and cultural symbolism is very important in studying ethnicity. He suggests that verkehrsgemeinschaft (social circles which humans form) are symbolically linked to some of the most superficial features of custom, language and culture so that in many ways ‘a belief in common ethnicity’ depends on important distinctions on which differentiation is based. These subtle images of common ethnicity include degrees of
Verstehen (mutual understanding), memory of origin, and heimatsgefühl (feeling at home) (Weber, 1987).

The construction of a symbolic order entails the shaping of cultural traditions, values and norm, customs of ways of doing things. The cultural way of life embedded in the forms and styles of public institutions, the form of government and its institutionalized practices, the administration of justice, the school curriculum, the organization of business activities, the conduct of labor management relations, and so on (Breton, 1987). Individuals expect some consistency between their private identities and the symbolic contents upheld by public authorities, embedded in societal institutions, and celebrated in public events. Otherwise, individuals feel like social strangers, they feel that this society is not their society (Ibid.).

After coming to Canada, Chinese women immigrants found that their values, norms, behaviors, language, cultural traditions are not congruent with the public way of life and cultural styles in which English and French are thought of as public cultural styles. When their own perceptions and behaviors do not match the public way, they feel Canadian society is not their society, its institutions, not their institutions, its meanings and symbols not their meanings and symbols. They feel they are strangers. They cannot identify easily with the new system of symbols they did not feel at ease with the new culture, the new symbolic order is unfamiliar and becomes a source of anxiety. This causes them to stick to the self-identity developed in their culture of origin in which Chinese cultural symbolism is seen as the public way. Although some facets of their identity were modified whether they realized or not, they still felt they are different from
others and the public ways because they still maintained some facets of their culture of origin.

Language plays an important role in affecting one’s ethnic and cultural identity. Language, as a component of symbolic order, has its significance in multilingual societies, such as Canada. Language is a means of communication and as such is part of the instrumental culture. It is also a critical component of the symbolic culture since it constitutes a basis for defining collective identities and life styles (Jackson, 1977). As in the case of identity and culture, members of society tend to expect a certain degree of consistence between public language and their own linguistic style. The language used in public affairs and institutions signifies to individuals and groups “that the society is indeed their society” and “the institutions are their institutions”. Language is the most effective symbolic medium for assuring a mutual reflection of the public world of institutions and the private world of individuals (Breton, 1987).

Language will affect Chinese women immigrants understanding about Canadian society, such as its social system, values and norms. Thus it affects their ethnic identity. A lot of women mentioned that they are not Canadians because their language and culture are different. Here I quote Ms Lu’s words: “The language barrier and the cultural difference affect my understanding of a lot of good things in Canadian society. I think with the passing of time and with my English ability enhanced I will understand more about Canadian society.”

From Ms Liu’s case we conclude that the knowledge and attitudes about Canada’s cultural pluralism can be associated with ethnic identity. Ms Liu’s identity is more Canadian than other Chinese women immigrants. This is because her identification with
‘Canadian’ is different from others. For those who identify more as Chinese, the English speaking ethnic group is typically described as “Canadians”, while other ethnic groups are “minorities”. For Ms Liu, “Canadian” includes all citizens regardless of their ethnic origin. She identifies Canada as a multicultural society which has adopted officially a policy of multiculturalism, actively encouraging immigration from many countries and having a permissive attitude towards language maintenance and ethnic pluralism. It is likely that many immigrants will retain a definition of their own ethnic identity while at the same time developing a commitment to the receiving society as their permanent home. The core values of multiculturalism are tolerance, respect, equality, justice and fairness. Under the structure of multiculturalism every immigrant is Canadian although they may remain much of their culture of origin. From Ms Liu, multiculturalism is accepted by her and becomes a factor affecting her self-identity. She actively redefined “Canadian” which inserted power to change her disadvantaged position.

Individual identity as perceived by others is another factor having an influence on ethnic identity. Individual ethnic identity includes orientation toward an ethnic group and also others recognition of the same identity. Hughes defines an ethnic group from both self and others’ ascription. “An ethnic group is composed of those who consider themselves and considered by others to belong to the same people” (Hughes, 1948). So the recognition by others with whom one is in contact affects the development of individual ethnic identity. Ms Lu’s experience demonstrates this point. She said:

Although my citizenship changed, I am Chinese forever. Not only I have this idea but others have it too. My friends in China still think of me as Chinese, the only difference is my citizenship changed. According to my experience, the Canadians in this society think me as Chinese too.

She recounted an experience that she had after coming to Canada.
Once on a bus, my friend and I are on the way from ESL school going home. We speak Chinese on the bus. A guy sitting beside us grumbled a lot, and said why you do not speak English in an English-speaking country. The bus driver stopped him and told him if he does not want to listen he could get off. I could not understand what he said at that time, but my friend told me what happened.

I think this experience reinforced her ethnic identity as Chinese because others in Canada also identify her as Chinese. Ms He had a similar experience. She is a Canadian citizen in Canada and in her fifth year in a Ph.D. program in biology. Once she was chatting with a colleague and was asked when she will graduate and if she will go back to China. She said: “In his mind I am still Chinese and should go back to China after graduation although I am a Canadian citizen now.” From these examples, we can see that the degree of tolerance and acceptance of different cultures in Canadian society will be a factor to facilitate immigrant adaptation or reinforce their feeling as strangers. Ms Lu’s Chinese identity is reinforced because she was not treated as Canadian within the structure of multiculturalism. Ms Liu identifies herself as Canadian partly due to others tolerance in accepting her as a member of Canadian society.

Other factors affecting ethnic identity include: age, socioeconomic status and satisfaction with work, and living conditions. Age is also associated with Canadian identity, the older the immigrants, the fewer will identify themselves as Canadians. Generally the middle-aged immigrants are less likely to identify themselves as Canadian. This is because they came to Canada with a strong identity with China, which developed in Chinese society. Their children who came at a young age tend to identify them as Canadians instead of Chinese. This is because their identity is developed in Canada through the process of socialization in which school system, teachers, and media in Canadian society play important roles.
The higher the level of socioeconomic status, the influences of higher education, together with social mobility that tends to accompany it, may generate a tendency to identify oneself as Canadian. The satisfaction with work, housing, will affect identity as Canadians among immigrants.

In general, the factors which influence immigrant ethnic identity include: (1) individual basis of ethnic identity; (2) the consistence between an immigrant' own and public way of life and culture symbolism; (3) language; (4) others' recognition (5) knowledge of and attitudes toward Canadian society; (6) socioeconomic status and social mobility; (7) the influence of time; (8) ones value, ideology, and nationality.

Culture is an important component in ethnic identity. Ethnic identity includes identification with ethnic culture which is brought about by group adherence to language usage, norms, values, religion, choice of friends, a communal institutional structure and identification with historical symbols, including knowledge of their origin, special days, festivals, food habits, all symbols of their past history (Drieger, 1978). When people move from one culture to another their ethnic and cultural identity will change during the contact with others-a process of acculturation. Chinese women immigrants developed bicultural identity during acculturation, which means they adopt many values and behaviors of the new culture while retaining identity with their culture of origin. Through interviews, I noticed that most of my informants have a multicultural identity in which they seldom lose their culture of origin, attitudes, behavior, and value, but they do identify many values, behaviors of the new culture. Both the old and new cultures resulted in the constructing of their own identity. Although they feel they are more like Chinese in Canada changes did occur through the contact with local people and the
exposure to new culture. Their identity differs from each other, some have stronger identity with their culture of origin, and others identify more with new culture.

Their bicultural identity is embodied in their ethnic identity. I would suggest that most women identify with Canadian culture, but they still identify with their Chinese culture of origin. They accept two cultures with their values, norms, attitudes, which may exist as separate components or become integrated into a fused cultural identity.

Their attitudes toward the education of their next generation reflect their bicultural identity. Women who have children all said they wish their children could integrate into the host society more readily than they themselves. They identify the quality and the ways of education in Canada and hope their children will cultivate the cultural symbol or habitus of this society which is recognized as characteristics of Canadian. At the same time they do not want their children ignore or get rusty with Chinese culture. Some women whose children were born in Canada try to send them to Chinese school or teach them Chinese at home. This is because, first, some women do not speak fluent English, in order to facilitate the education and communication with their children and reduce the gap between parents and children, they need their children to understand Chinese. Second, they hope their children can read Chinese books, and know about Chinese culture, which they think is valuable to their future. For women whose children were born in China and who also received several years of education in Chinese they communicate with and educate their children in Chinese at home. Speaking Chinese is not only a language preference but reflects cultural identity. In the process of speaking Chinese they inculcate Chinese culture and value to their children. At the same time they encourage their children to speak more English in school in order to enhance their
English ability and facilitate the integration into the host society. They try to create opportunities for their children to be exposed to Canadian culture. Chinese women immigrants’ bicultural identity is thoroughly carved in the process of second generation education.

I will illustrate these issues with comments from my informants. Lisa is a single mother who divorced her husband five years ago. She went to the United States and entered medical school for two years. Since she did not find a job after graduation she immigrated to Canada with her daughter. After she came to Canada she sent her daughter to a very good French primary school where students can learn both fluent French and English. Her daughter studies very hard and has excellent grades in school. In order to improve her daughter’s Chinese she sent her to a Chinese school on weekends. When asked why she was sending her daughter to Chinese school she said:

I think there are a lot good things in Chinese culture, I do not want her to lose it. To proficiently grasp another language is good for her. Although she is born in China she came to North America with me when she was very young. She can speak Chinese but she cannot understand a lot of words.

Ms Mai’s son is in high school and received a lot of Chinese education before he came to Canada. Ms Mai said:

I hope he obtains an education in both Chinese and Canadian cultures. We identify with Western culture so we decide to send him to Canada to receive an education. The advantage for him is he has learned a lot about Chinese culture so he will not be too young to understand Chinese culture or forget it. I hope he can learn what’s good in Canadian culture and also keep what’s good in Chinese culture.

Ms Guan’s daughter is still very young, but she already has ideas how to educate her. She said:

I hope she will know Chinese culture, but I do not want her to have the Chinese way of education, which I experienced. I like the independent thinking and encouragement of education here but I do not like some aspects of Western culture, which I hope she does not adopt.
Conflicts always arise between parents and children since the second generation born in Canada holds different ethnic and culture identities from their mothers. They identify themselves as Canadians and not Chinese anymore, so they do not want to speak Chinese and think it is no use to study Chinese. They adopt more Western values than their mothers so disagreement appears during communication about the education process within the family.

Ms Ma’s son was born in Canada and is in primary school now. Ms Ma thinks there are advantage and disadvantage of Canadian education. Students in primary school in Canada learn less basic knowledge than in China, but learn more about independent thinking. She said:

My son told me they always play in the school. I think this is because the teacher will not put a heavy burden on students at his age and encourage them to learn in the process of play. But I always worry that they play too much.

On the attitude of learning Chinese, she said: “I sent him to Chinese school and hope he can be bilingual. But he rejects learning Chinese because he thinks he is not Chinese anymore”. According to Ms Ma, communication between her and her son is “strange”. Generally she speaks Chinese to him and he replies in English. He can understand simple Chinese but he cannot speak it. When there are disagreements between them, he will argue with Ms Ma if her views are different from what he has learned in school. In the end either she or her son must compromise in order to solve the problem.

Ms Ge has a daughter who is 16 years old. She also has the same problem as Ms Ma. She educates and instructs her in traditional Chinese values. There was no problem when she was very young, but her daughter felt some of Ms Ge’s view ridiculous after she grew up. She said:
We always told her she is Chinese, and that she is different from others, and so she must work very hard to get a good life in the future. She thinks it is very funny, because she thinks she is not different from others and others also do not think she is different. I sent her to Chinese school to study Chinese. I do not hesitate to express my opinions, which may be the Chinese way in her mind. But I think it is better to express my views than keep silent. She can choose to adopt my advice or not, but it is my duty to give suggestions.

The multicultural identity of my Chinese informants also lies in their contact with local Canadians, their patterns of social networks and the tendency to create an ethnic network. When asked to describe their social networks in Canada, most Chinese women immigrants suggest that their social networks are totally or mostly Chinese. They are willing to make friends with Canadians but they cannot become close friends with them. There are many reasons: a language barrier creates difficulty in expressing and exchanging deep feelings and also different life styles, traditions, values, ways of thinking, attitudes, behaviors. So they tend to make friends with other Chinese although they claimed they wish to make friends with Canadians. Ms Ma has been in Canada for more than ten years. She works in a research institute where she has a lot chances to contact local people. She said:

I have both Canadian and Chinese origin friends, but all my close friends are of Chinese origin. I only have work relationships with Canadian origin people. I do not exclude Canadian origin friend and I am very happy to have them, but I still prefer to communicate with Chinese because there are more common feeling between us.

Ms Guan makes friends with both Canadians and Chinese since she thinks there are common feelings without respect to ethnicity. But she still does not have close friendship with non-Chinese friends.

When I talk with non-Chinese friends we also have a lot of common feelings. But due to different life styles, I do not have close friendship with them. I only have work relationships with them, although these relationships are very comfortable. I do not seek help from Canadians. Those who help me most are Chinese friends.
For women immigrants who are newly arrived in Canada, on one hand they wish to socialize with Canadians in order to have more chances to learn local culture and English and accelerate the process of integration; on the other hand, they still tend to make friends with Chinese to establish their social networks and they obtain more support from Chinese friends.

In order to get more opportunity to learn English and make friends some new women immigrants attend social activities such as church services on weekends. Some churches have Bible study at weekends when they have free time. Some women immigrants may not be Christians but they are happy to learn English and make friends through this activity and also understand The Bible more, which reflects a part of Western culture.

From their preference of making friends and patterns of seeking help we see Chinese women still try to create ethnic solidarity in Canadian society. Ethnicity is an adaptive strategy used by immigrants. When assistance is needed they tend to stick to their friends in the same ethnic group to seek help. Friends and kinship network has priority over governmental and community assistance. This is consistent with their cultural values from the source society in which people are lack of confidence toward governmental and community services and tend to handle their life through their private networks. Informants state that they will consider these options when no family or friends are available (Zhang, 2001).

Friendship is an important component in one’s social network. It is also viewed as an extension of one’s kinship in Chinese ideology. After immigration, with the decrease in importance of the kinship network, friendship becomes a more important source to
increase the capacity to overcome difficulties and adapt to the new environment. Immigrants tend to establish social networks with those who have the same ethnic identity in order to pursue collective benefits. Thus they create ethnic solidarity. Solidarity is used by Durkheim in his social cohesion theory. Although he wrote little about ethnicity, his frame of social cohesion and solidarity can be easily adapted and applied to ethnic communities. Social solidarity is often implicit in discussions of ethnic identity (Driedger, 1985, P.2). Immigrants tend to establish social solidarity with their ethnic groups as an adaptation strategy. It is not only new immigrants who tend to create ethnic solidarity. Immigrants who have been in Canada for many years also prefer to socialize with other Chinese. They tend to seek help from other Chinese and establish social networks with other Chinese to facilitate adaptation to Canadian society.

**Changing gender identity**

In every culture girls and boys learn how to be female and male during the process of gender-role socialization in which a gender identity develops. Culture plays an important role in the formation of gender identity. In general, boys typically, learn to be more active, aggressive, and sociable than girls are. In some cultures, the differences between gender roles are extremely great, in others, they are relatively small (Doyle, 1991).

Gender plays an important role in the process of immigration. There are more husbands who are independent immigrants than wives according to my interviews. Women come to Canada with their husbands. Whether or not they go back to China depends on their husbands. Obviously there is a clear idea as to who plays the main role in the society and within the family. Husbands’ prospects and their children’s education
are important considerations in immigration decision-making. Dependent women immigrants tend to come as a consequence of their husbands' career choices, better education for their children, or family reunion.

The traditional Chinese value of a woman's role as wife and mother still plays an important role in shaping Chinese women's gender identity. Women have to move to places for their husband's job requirements and their children's education. It seems that traditional bonds have made women endure and manage dilemmas of reconciling work and ties of attachment to the home. Contemporary women wish to hold a position in the society to realize their social fulfillment. When contradictions come they must make a choice between work and their husbands and children. They tend to give up their work temporarily and assist their husband's development. Their value is "although we lose our work we can create an opportunity to find another job later but we cannot afford to lose our family, husbands and children." However, they seldom give up their career forever, instead, they try their best to create opportunities to establish their position in the host society although a lot of them experience hardship in adjusting to the changes.

Among the women I interviewed, most of them had good jobs in China and some of them had a better career development than their husbands. After a struggle in their mind between career and family they choose to support their husbands and children even though they have to sacrifice a lifestyle and will benefit less themselves than their husbands and children. They experienced a very hard adaptation process to reconstruct their identity after immigration: the language barrier, lack of social networks, unrecognized work experience, difficulties to get another degree, the hardness of dagong.
But there must be something encouraging them to immigrate to Canada. The values and rules of traditional gender roles play an important role in the immigration process.

Ms Wang’s husband came as a student first and sponsored her and her daughter who immigrated to Canada a year later. She was an excellent teacher in China who was respected both by her peers and students. She loves students and likes teaching. She said she had a feeling of personal fulfillment after giving a vivid class. Before immigration she had conflicts in her mind because she knew if came to Canada she would never be a teacher again in her life, due to her language ability. She is regretful about giving up her job, but if she did not immigrate, how could her family survive? Finally, She decided to immigrate to Canada for family reunion and for her daughter’s education. Although it has been very hard she thinks it is not a bad thing for her to go to a new environment. She said she could learn a lot of new things and, if she works hard, there will be new opportunities for her. After immigration, her life changed a great deal. She felt regret when she first came to Canada. Language was the most difficult barrier, which impeded her desire to study. But she still wishes to find a new position in Canada because family is only a limited place after all. When asked about her attitudes on going back to China, she said:

It depends on my husband, if he finds a job in Canada, we will stay here. If he cannot or there is very good opportunity for him in China and he decides to go back, we will go with him.

Her responses reflect her value on how to deal with her career and her family. She is the kind of women who will sacrifice her career and choose to support her family. She still wants to work. But this adaptation process is longer and harder for her than for her husband and daughter.

Ms He also came for her husband’s development possibilities. She said:
For me, the family union is the most important thing. My husband came then I came. If my husband decides to go back to China I will go back with him.

After she came to Canada, she found her husband liked Canada very much, not only for its beautiful natural environment but also more importantly for the feeling of comfort. In China he cannot display his ability freely since there are so many unfair factors created by people. He is happy in Canada because he knows if he works hard, there will be fair opportunity for him, although he always feels very tired due to hard work. But Ms He’s adaptation process is difficult because of the loss of her good job in China and poor English ability. In the past, her income and social position were higher than those of her husband. Now she can only be a housewife. She is not used to this change and felt depressed when she first came to Vancouver. After a period of adjustment she has begun to adapt to a new lifestyle. She said:

“As I see my husband very happy, I am very satisfied too. He is studying computer science now, he has a Master degree in Material science in Canada. He thought to get a degree in computer science would be helpful in finding a job. We will depend on him in the future and my duty is to take care of him and my son in addition to continuing my English study.”

Ms Mei came for her son’s education. She has resigned her job in China and will stay in Canada to take care of her son. She said: “I wish to create more opportunity and space for him in which he can freely explore. I have quit my job and will stay here to take care of him.”

A lot of women who came to Canada as dependent immigrants make decisions of coming, staying, and returning for the benefit of their husbands and children. Where they will live and what kinds of lifestyle they will have depends upon their husbands and children. The role of being wife and mother is the most important thing in their lives. This is more obvious among married women, especially those who have had children.
They have to dedicate much more time on taking care of family. Single women tend to come for their own reasons. Like Ms Gao and Ms Li, both came for a better life and career development. Therefore, the role of being wife and mother becomes an important factor which affects women's career choice and development after marriage.

Gender role stereotype became more obvious after immigration, which is demonstrated in housework sharing in families. In China, both husband and wife work and sometimes the wife is the major breadwinner. Therefore, husbands always share some housework with their wives after work although women seem to undertake primary responsibility for childcare and domestic work, which is seen as women's duty. After immigration, however, career pressures keep the majority of husbands apart from domestic tasks. Women who do not work bear the main burden of domestic management. Among the immigrant women I interviewed who do not work after landing, all of them are willing to carry the domestic burdens because they think their husbands work to support the family, so it is their duty to take care of the domestic things, although they complain sometimes about boredom and limited living space at home, especially those who had good jobs in China.

Changing gender roles will affect family relationships between husband and wife. Since most women had work in China, they have had to adjust to changing roles in family, often because of giving up high status jobs. Some wives who do not want to go out to work are happy to stay at home. In this situation there is no problem with family relationships. Ms Zhang wants to be a housewife and she remembers that it was exhausting for her when she worked in China. She is very happy that she has the opportunity to stay at home without having the pressure to earn money, although she has
to do all housework. For women who had a strong dedication to their work, they have had a difficult time adapting to new changes. Both Ms Miao and Ms He. had a higher income and higher social positions in China than their husbands did. They established the main social support network. They no longer have good jobs after migration and are simply housewives now and bear the burden of all housework. Their husbands became more prosperous after immigration and they rely on their husbands financially. Their husbands are also the main source of their knowledge about Canada. The changing roles within their family brought them unhappiness and made them feel depressed. This directly affects their husband and wife relationships.

Gender stereotype lies in both women’s and men’s minds. In traditional Chinese philosophy, a woman’s domain is in the family, although almost all Chinese women work now. The traditional values still have deep roots. They are happy to have a position in society, but if they have much better position in the society than their husbands, not only their husbands but also the women themselves feel uncomfortable. They will feel guilty to their husbands and children if they dedicate much more on their work. If their husband was not recognized by society or did not have better development as them, women may think their husbands are not competent. In other cases, even though the wife may not feel this way, her husband may feel inadequate which may put stress on the husband-wife relationship. Ms Guan and Ms Tai’s cases exemplify this point.

Ms Guan is an independent professional immigrant who is in the fifth year in her Ph.D. program. Her husband came to Canada first as a visitor and was sponsored by Ms Guan later. In the first few months, he could only stay at home, but later he found a job in a Chinese company. The administration in this company is totally Chinese, even the
reports are written in Chinese, which make Ms Guan feel very uncomfortable because she believed her husband should learn Canadian management techniques if he wanted to live in Canada. So her husband left his job. He was very upset during that time because he had been the breadwinner in China and had more work and social experience than Ms Guan. He made decisions on important issues in the past but in Canada his wife supports him and has become the decision-maker on important issues.

When he first came we depended on my fellowship to cover all living expenses. Therefore I am very careful in spending money, which made my husband very uncomfortable. Although we seldom argued over this, I know he was not used to this, neither was I. On decision-making, since I came first I knew more about Canada than he did so I made decisions on big things instead of him. I am not used to this and he felt uncomfortable.

But this situation changed after her husband entered a Master’s program in computer science. This is because he knows he can find a good job after graduation and he feels more secure than before. He also has more opportunity to receive more knowledge about Canadian society through education, which gives him a lot of chances to communicate with more people.

Ms Tai’s experience is similar to Ms Guan, but unfortunately her family relationship is still in a bad stage. She came to Canada as a Ph.D. student and her husband also came as a visitor first, then she applied for immigration and her husband as her dependent. Her husband did not go to study after coming to Canada, although he had an opportunity to go to school. He went to work in an ethnic business instead. After receiving landed immigrant status, he set up an immigration-consulting firm to help people apply for immigration. His company, however, is not prosperous. The couple therefore has many disagreements. Ms Tai thinks her husband is not fulfilling his promise because he does not want to pursue an education in Canada and also cannot do his
business well. Her husband thought that she should not pursue a Ph.D. in Canada for two reasons: one that her studies were very time consuming and that she would have no time to take care of the household, which was often dirty and in disorder. The other reason is despite spending so much time and energy on her Ph.D. it would still be very difficult to find an appropriate job after graduation, and he husband therefore thought it was not worth it.

Obviously, the problem lies in the dramatic reverse of traditional gender roles due to the dislocation from original social context. If gender roles do not change much after immigration there will be less problem for the husband-wife relationship. If gender role change too much and create friction between husband and wife, a crisis will arise. We can also see that even for women who achieve very high education levels and who assume independent positions in the society, they also think that men should do at least equally well with their work. In their minds there is a preconceived mode of what male and female should be. When this gender role balance is compromised, problems inevitably arise. For Ms Huang, her husband had just finished his Ph.D. studies in mathematics. He could not find a job immediately, and so problems arose. Ms Huang thinks men should earn more money and should have the ability to support the whole family and provide a good living for their wives and children. Therefore, when she saw her friends' husbands earned high salaries, she blamed her husband for his lack of ability. She even persuaded her husband to study computer science for future job prospects despite the fact that he did not like it. They always argue at home and their lives are full of unhappiness.
Chinese women immigrants’ definition of personal fulfillment embodies their gender role identity. Chinese women immigrants wish that they could find a job which is not very demanding and which leaves some time for them to take care of their family. This reflects ideas of the implicit order of family life and remains an important one in a woman’s life that the husband’s career is accorded top priority. The needs of children and the whole family are a second priority; and women’s work is the last one, which can be compromised for the first two. When women seek employment they will consider work related to their husbands and their families. A woman will be reluctant to move into any employment position that could compromise her husband’s career and her family’s well being. For women immigrants who come to Canada for their husband’s career and children’s education and gave up their own job in China, they are willing to find jobs which are not too demanding and busy and in which they will have time to take care of her husband and children. They will not enter jobs that put the obligations of taking care of the family at risk. Ms Wei expressed her points with her personal fulfillment: “I have several roles in the society and within my family. First I am a mother, then a wife, then a teacher, then a daughter.” Her value is reflected in her choice of immigration.

In educational and occupational choices there exists traditional gender differences. Women tend to choose to enter educational programs, which are considered female occupation, such as nurse, secretary, or accountant. Fewer women than men choose science programs. Fewer women than men enter computer programs, which is a very common choice among Chinese immigrants. Many Chinese male immigrants choose to study computer science because the job prospects are good and it has high income. Studying computer science is very demanding so few women choose it. Men take it as
insurance for future high paying jobs. In these circumstances, women will try their best to take care of domestic work and consider their husbands as the future supporter of the family. Through this educational and occupational preference we can see the role that traditional gender roles and gender identity plays. Among my interviewees, the husbands of five women went on to study computer science after they finished their original programs. For women themselves, only Lissa changed her major from medical science to computer science, due to the failure in finding a job. She is a single mother who has the obligation to support the family. When asked why they do not choose computer science, most women said it is too difficult for them and it is too demanding.

There are many factors affecting women in their occupational choices. Traditionally women are not viewed as primary money earners in the family. Women who earn a small amount of money to be used as extra income money for the family are acceptable by both husband and wife. This makes women less motivated than men to earn money. The other factor is that more domestic responsibility for women than men makes women reduce their time devoted to employment. Most women wish to work in Canada in the future, not only for a salary, but also to demonstrate their worth in the labor market and in the larger society. Finding a proper job will facilitate the integration process.

We always tend to attribute women’s subordinated and disadvantaged positions in society to the gender stereotype and external factors which lies in all institutions. But one thing we should notice is that women themselves perpetuate and reproduce these gender stereotypes in the process of pushing men to achieve better development in society. This reflects their internalized gender stereotype and discrimination. Why are they unable to
accept that men do not do well in society? They assume in their minds men can not be less competent than women. This point is still very common among Chinese women, even among those who tried to pursue gender equality. From Ms Gao’s attitude on future husband, we can see her internalized gender stereotype too. Economic and social resources of men are seen as an important virtue. Ms Gao mentioned that she wanted to look for a boyfriend who is well established in Canada, which means who has a good job, which will ease adaptation into Canadian society. She said:

My parents wish me to have a boyfriend who has a decent job, a promising future, who can give some help in the adaptation process. As a woman it is very difficult for me to reestablish myself in a new society, so I do not wish my husband to be in the same situation as me. I would wish that he had experienced this adaptation process.

For some women, marriage is seen a way to facilitate their adaptation into Canadian society. An established husband in the host society and with more economic and social and relational resources will help and ease the difficulties of new women immigrants in the adaptation process. Why women who had good educational background, fluent English ability and can depend on themselves still think men’s position and development in society is so important? Obviously they have become victims of gender stereotype and discrimination both from society and themselves. The psychological attitudes of women should not be neglected in order to change women’s disadvantaged position.

Reconstruction of Power relationship between husband and wife

There is a gender system within the family which is influenced by societal and cultural traditions. There exists a set of beliefs within the kinship system that influences and shapes family interaction patterns. Built into this belief system are inherited stereotypes of gender roles in the family. Sex role stereotypes are an expression of a society’s beliefs about the relationship between men and women. They have been handed
down through the generations and reinforced into culture in multiple ways. Life decisions in a family, such as where and under what circumstances a married couple should live, will largely depend on the husband’s work or career. This begins to construct the context and roles for later decision making between husbands and wives (Burck and Daniel, 1990). It is common in a traditional culture that women’s power is seen to be abnormal and threatening. This belief originates from early experiences of other women who are seen to hold power. A society has its own structure that constrains this power. Powerful women seems to make men feel threatened since it challenges the perceived notion that men are there to support the family and to protect women. This leads men to fear women’s power and leads women to constrain themselves from pursuing power (Perelberg & Miller, 1990).

When a family faces changes from external events, such as immigration, the change may conflict with existing modes. A tension is thus produced and husband and wife may attempt to respond by changing certain aspects of their behavior to keep things on an even plain. If there is unemployment after migration, husbands and wives may often find themselves bound by beliefs about gender role patterns which lead to different responses to the new circumstance. Women whose role in the family started to shift after immigration encounter many dilemmas and paradoxical bonds. At this time, women always find themselves confronting internal constrains as much as external ones (Burck and Daniel, 1990). When a woman attempts to pursue new roles in Canadian society, which takes her away from taking care of family, she encounters the traditional socialization of gender roles which hold that a woman should primarily have concern for her husband and children. If both men and women accepted the traditional allocation of
gender roles, once the roles have shifted, tension and crisis will occur in the husband and wife relationship.

In any family there are differences between each member’s ability to influence what happens within the family. The degree of control an individual has will depend on her or his access to resources (what she or he can use in order to acquire influences over others) and how these resources are valued. In many families, a male adult will have greater access to financial resources. For various reasons he will feel obligated to be in paid employment and will be the one designated as the “bread-winner”. The capacity to earn money is valued high within many societies, and within a family it is recognized as necessary for the survival of a family. In the same way a woman will be concerned with looking after the everyday life of family members, husband and children. In Canadian society, this capacity as a wife and mother is not valued highly. Generally, there is more prestige attached to, and satisfaction derived from, paid employment rather than being a full-time wife, mother, and homemaker.

There are different power bases within a family. Generally it can be divided into three categories: economic power, social or relational power, and domestic power (Schneider, 1990). Economic power is gained by money-earning capacity, which is essential for the family’s survival. Social or relational power is defined by being in charge of social relations, social networks, and kinship ties, which compose a supportive network for a family. Domestic power refers to the role of being wife, mother, husband, or father, which are vital for the emotional well-being of family members and being in charge of the domestic services. But in Canadian society, domestic power is often devalued in relation to the other two. If a husband or wife loses the economic and social
power bases, only staying in the family to hold domestic power, they will feel lack of power within the family, as in the case of immigrant families. This circumstance is more obvious and serious for the husband because the traditional culture always relates the economic and social power to men. There are other bases that can generate the power such as language and informational power. After immigration, the one who has language competency and informational power will be empowered in the host society and also within the family. The one with only domestic power will feel a loss of influence within the family. Educational power is another power base within an immigrant family because it not only leads to economic power (income) and relational power but it also brings symbolic power, which is very important for recognition. Some immigrant families experienced a power-realigned process after immigration, during which different power bases work together.

The power relationships between a husband and wife will change due to immigration. Several factors affect the power relationships between husband and wife. These include the pattern of immigration, education, economic resources, and the extent of social networks. Chinese women immigrants will suffer either the loss of power or be empowered after immigration as a result of these factors. Generally, in Chinese immigrant families decision-making is consistent with traditional gender roles in which wives take more responsibility for housework and child-rearing in the domestic domain and husbands deal more with money matters and relationships with social affairs and within social networks. Gender roles, however, are not the only factor that affects decision-making patterns.
The different kinds of power resources a husband and wife have are another important factor in decision-making patterns within family. If a wife holds more economic power and social power after immigration than her husband, she will have more responsibility for affairs outside the family. Ms Guan and Ms He's cases can illustrate this point. Ms Miao's losing decision-making power related to the general relationships outside the family can also exemplify this.

In many cases, however, even if a wife holds more economic and social power she will still take responsibility in the domestic domain. It seems that whether a wife holds more or less economic and social power she takes on the responsibility for housework and taking care of family members. When her working hours conflict with housework there will be tension between husband and wife. In Ms Tai's case, her husband thought she did not perform a woman's role well within the family, which makes their household neither clean nor comfortable. But we should notice that in modern families, which are characterized more by emancipation from the traditional definitions of gender roles, husbands no longer have the authority regardless of their power resources. On the contrary, husbands may be less likely to exercise authority in the family if they do not have greater power resources.

According to my interviews, in general, husband-wife relationships become closer and more dependent after immigration. This is because in China both husbands and wives have their own kinship networks, the husband-wife relationship is not the only important and dependent relationship. For these immigrants, both husbands and wives have more social space and social networks in China than they do in Canada. In Canada the only kin resource that one can rely on is one's spouse. When people came to a strange land,
kinship becomes the most important support in the process of adaptation in a harsh environment. Therefore, both husband and wife have greater feeling of responsibility and more supportive to each other in order to gain collective benefits in Canadian society. As Ms Tang said:

In China both of us have large life space, we have our own relatives and friends. If I argued with my husband I can get condolence from my friends or relatives. In Canada, our social circle is reduced, so I feel we depend on each other more. In China you have other supportive resources, but in Canada you just have your spouse. I believe the feeling of responsibility for the family is increased after immigration.

Most women in my group have similar feelings.

While the husband and wife relationship is not steady all the time after immigration. The feeling of the loss of influence and empowerment will bring stresses to both husband and wife, which will affect their relationship. Language barriers, loss of employment and supportive networks in China, economic stress, difficulties in entering the Canadian labor market are main factors that make people feel lost of control.

Ms Miao’s experience is typical of the loss of influence among wives. She is a woman who had powerful influences both in the broader society and in her family in China. She was successful with her work and became the main income resource in her family. With a lot of powerful relatives and friends, she also maintained the social network for her family. In the long run she became powerful in front of her husband and daughter. Usually she made decisions on major issues. She was the one who educated her daughter in the family. Further, she did not do housework since she was too busy. A servant did all housework. After she immigrated to Canada, every thing changed. It was impossible for her to find an appropriate job of the kind she held in China due to the lack of education in Canada and the language barrier. She had to study English and do all the
housework without a feeling of achievement, which bores her. The fact that everything must start from zero made her very sad at first. She cannot forget her past. Her husband had completed an MA degree in material science and is working on his second Masters degree in computer science. He is endowed with more opportunity for employment in the future. Her language ability and her age prevent her from getting further education, like her husband. She has no income now and relies on her husband. Her husband will become the breadwinner in the future. Since she is not familiar with Canadian society, most things outside family are dealt with by her husband. She had to do all the housework, which she seldom did in China. She was obliged to redefine her role in Canada, which she found so different from China and which made her feel a loss of power after immigration. She was unhappy in Canada and always thinks of going back to China. Therefore, she had some tension with her husband which became source of argument. After a period of adjustment she still decided to stay in Canada for her family. To herself, her goal is to integrate more in Canadian society through enhancing her language ability and hopes to receive a certificate in accounting or some other subject in the future. When asked about her future plans, she has not given up her pursuit of an occupation. She said:

A woman should realize her social value and should not only live for her family. I can give up my career temporarily for my family but I will not give up my pursuit forever.

Ms Tang was an English teacher in a university in China. She had an offer to pursue a MBA in the USA with a scholarship but was refused a visa several times. Later she immigrated to Canada with her husband and went to a college to study accounting in Vancouver, but she is not very satisfied with it because she can only get a certificate after graduation, not a degree. She was very disappointed because she was an excellent student
all the time and was very strict with herself. However, she could not do what she wants to do in Canada. This made her unhappy after coming to Canada. She said:

I am still very young. Without a higher education in North America, I cannot realize my dream. I am not willing to be just a housewife or have a low paying job. Home is a very limited space for women in which she will be isolated from society as time passed by. Education is a good way to know more about society which is necessary for new immigrants to adapt to Canadian society. My goal is to find a decent job. In order to realize it I must study. At that time I was refused a visa to go to the United States and have no other option it made me very sad. I worry about my future.

The situation changed after she was admitted to an MA program in accounting at the University of Toronto. She will leave for Toronto to pursue her studies while her husband will stay in Vancouver to continue his academic work. Although she felt bad because of the long distance separation between herself and her husband over the next two years, she is happier than before. She said:

I do not want to live so far from my husband. But my feeling is better than before because the separation is temporary. After I received my degree, I will have more opportunity to find a job in the city where he lives. Studying is the consideration for the future.

Ms Xing’s husband had a high paying job in computers. He has a Ph.D. but did not find an appropriate job then he completed a Masters degree in computer science and has received a high paying job now. Ms Xing is studying English now. Her unhappiness comes from her husband forcing her to study computer science. Her husband thought if she could get a computer degree she would find a good job so their financial condition would be better. But Ms Xing did not want to study computer science because: her English is not good. In applying for computer training she must take TOFEL and the Graduate Record Examination, which is difficult to get through. Second, she thinks software engineering is too difficult for her. So she is unhappy with her husband. She once had a very good job in a research institute in China. She suggests that if she had not
immigrated to Canada she would have been financially independent and would have been able to make independent decisions. But she depends on her husband now, so when he suggested that she study computer science in order to help in later job searches, she felt compelled to accept his position. She felt very angry at the time and is still resentful. She thinks that in China this situation would have never occurred.

Zhen Zhen is another category of women immigrants to Canada who has a different feeling of loss of power. She is a dependent immigrant of her husband who was an investor immigrant. Her husband has gone to Hong Kong to do business while she has stayed in Canada with her daughter. She does not need to work because she had a lot of money. Neither does she have the qualification since she is more than forty and does not have a Canadian education. She never worries about money but she is not happy. Her husband stayed in Hong Kong throughout the year. The "astronaut" life is very boring to her. Although she knows her husband has other women in Hong Kong, she never mentions this in front of him because she does not want a divorce. She thinks she is no longer young and wants to keep her family together. Further, she does not want her daughter to be hurt. Since her husband also never mentions a divorce and perhaps due to his sense of guilt over his affairs, he tries his best to satisfy her financially. When her husband comes to visit her she treats him very well. On the surface it appears that there is no problem with their marriage. Actually she is very sad but she believes she has no choice. She and her daughter need a husband, a father and a family.

There are some cases in which a wife is empowered while a husband experiences a loss of power. Ms Guan and Ms Tai's cases can demonstrate this. I have analyzed their cases in the gender role section. We can also analyze them through the power relationship
between husband and wife. Ms Guan and Ms Tai were empowered after immigration. This is because both of them are the primary applicants for immigration to Canada. Both of them entered higher education programs in Canada, which give them more opportunity to know Canadian culture and to facilitate the process of integration. Both of them have promising futures after graduation and both of them are the main sources of family income. This gave them more power resources in the Canadian context. By contrast, their husbands feel a loss of power since they have no jobs, no income, lack social networks and know less than their wives about Canadian society and culture. The situation will be better when the husbands get access to education or obtain jobs. Otherwise, the husband may become depressed which could lead to unpleasant family relationships. This is partly due to the gender role society assigned to males who are Traditionally seen as protector of women and children and main source of family income. They have greater pressure than women do when facing unemployment and underemployment.

From decision-making we can see the change in power relationship between a husband and wife. Generally the one who knows more about Canadian society will be the decision-maker on issues related with the society. For Ms Miao, initially she was the decision-maker on major issues because she thought she knew more than her husband at that time. After immigration, however, her husband deals with all things relating to Canadian society because he now knows more than she does. Ms Lu had the same social position in China as her husband. After coming to Canada, her husband enrolled in a Ph.D. program and she is studying English. On decision-making, she said:

We are very democratic on big things, and on small things in the family. I make decisions without discussing them with him. Usually I accept his judgment on things relating to Canadian society since he knows more than I do.
For Ms Liu, who works in an ethnic business near Chinatown, she and her husband make decision about different things. Her husband will make decision on their children's education, buying expensive items, banking, mortgage, and the like. She makes decisions on things within the family, such as buying food. She said: “We have a division of labor in the family. We are very equal. The only difference is we have different duties.”

For Ms Guan and Ms Tai, they make decisions instead of their husbands on matters outside the family. Ms Guan said:

In China, he made decisions on big issues and sometimes he did not discuss them with me. In Canada, I make more decision than he does because I think I know more about this society than he does. This made him uncomfortable at first because in China he is like a pioneer. We were used to a way of doing things. Once it changed, both of us felt uncomfortable. He is uncomfortable because he feels a lack of influence and cannot spend money as he wants. I am uncomfortable because I am used to the old pattern in which he was the breadwinner and also because I saw him unhappy.

We should note that to make decisions does not mean that issues are not discussed with the spouse. It means that one person (husband or wife) plays the main role in decision making and the other plays the secondary role. For example, if a husband and wife have different ideas on things they will compromise and the one who is more knowledgeable about Canadian society will make the decision.

From the pattern in educating children, we can see in most cases, the person whose education is higher will be the person helping children with their studies. The mother is often more careful so mothers usually takes care of things on a daily basis. Ms He said:

On my son’s education, I observe more carefully and if I find some problem I will discuss it with my husband. If we hold different views, I will compromise more because he is more insistent. But I respect his judgment.
We can generalize the factors that affect power relationship between husband and wife as follows. The pattern of immigration will affect power relationships. This is because the qualifications of the primary applicant will likely be more consistent with Canadian immigration requirements than dependent immigrants. They will have more opportunity to get access to education and employment. Usually, access to education and obtaining a prestigious and well paying job indicates the degree of integration into Canadian society. Education and occupation will bring opportunities for people to come in to contact with local society, culture and local people. An educational institution is a place not only to gain knowledge but also to acquire habitus (cultural capital) that characterizes the mainstream culture. A job will not only bring more financial power but will expand social networks. In general, patterns of immigration, education, occupation, social networks, and gender role identities will work interlocking to influence the power relationship in a family. One factor will have effects on others.

The fact that wife or husband feels a lack of power after immigration will affect the marriage and family life. Difficulties in accessing the Canadian labor force will have significant psychological and social consequences for immigrants, especially for their self-esteem and well being. Job seeking is a part of self-validating process for immigrants to secure self-esteem, identity and security (Emily, 1998). Unemployment and difficulties in accessing the labor market can lead to financial pressure, and relying entirely or largely on a spouse’s support, which can cause unpleasant family relationships and depression.

Women try to change their feelings of the loss of power in many ways. One is to develop an opportunity to enhance their English ability. Language is very important in
the adaptation process. Language barriers will affect the individual pursuit of further education, which will affect their later career. Language will also affect a new immigrant’s knowledge about Canadian society. So some women will grasp any opportunity to enhance their English ability. Besides attending language school they often go to church on weekends to study English and make friends. We should notice that a lot of Chinese women immigrants go to church not for religious goals but for the purpose of knowing more about Canadian culture, studying English, making friends and establishing ethnic social networks to seek support. The second way to change their feeling of loss of power is through education. When asked about future plans, although they have no clear idea, most of them wish to get more education in Canada, which is an adaptation strategy to find an appropriate job in Canada.
Chapter 5  Conclusion

Immigration is seen a possible way to improve position and attain power. Chinese immigrants try to seek a better life both for themselves and their descendents through Canadian immigration. After they came to Canada, they encountered new stress and tension brought by migration. The intersectional issues of race, ethnicity, class and gender shaped their everyday life in the host society. Chinese women immigrants, as ethnic minority immigrants, have their own experience facing the effects of race, ethnicity, class and gender both before and after arriving in Canada.

Chinese women immigrate to Canada for a number of reasons. These include the problems of a complicated work environment in China, perceived crisis and chaos in Chinese society, environmental pollution in China’s cities, a desire to support the social, educational and economic advance of their husbands, children’s education, the perceived attractions of Canada, and their own self-development.

Complicated inter-personal relationships often make the work environment uncomfortable for employees in Chinese companies. Chinese women may not decide to immigrate to Canada solely for this reason, but once the opportunity to immigrate to Canada becomes possible, difficulties in the work environment becomes a commonly expressed reason for migration.

Political reasons were another factor affecting the decision to immigrate. Some of the informants in my group had lost confidence in Chinese politics and sought democracy, individual freedom, and guaranteed human rights in a Canadian context. Even though some had benefited a great deal from the Chinese system they sought to go abroad for the reason of fear of crises and chaos in Chinese society.
Environment pollution was another reason that prompted immigration. My informants suggested that China's economy had improved since the government developed policies of openness and market reform. Environmental pollution, however, became a serious problem in China. Canada, and Vancouver in particular, has a reputation for its beautiful and comfortable natural environment. The quality of the life in Canada is much admired. All my informants indicated that environmental issues were a very important factor in their decision to immigrate to Canada.

The desire to assist in furthering their husbands' careers, their children's education and a desire for family reunion are very important factors in the immigration decision among married Chinese women. Many of them gave up their own job and came to Canada for these reasons.

The social benefits and convenience that came with immigration attracted many of my informants and were important in making their decision to immigrate. Some Chinese students in Canada who did not plan to immigrate at the beginning of their studies also applied for immigration for these reasons. As foreign students they cannot apply for many scholarships, grants and loans and must pay higher tuition fees. Holding a Chinese passport brings restriction on entrance to Western countries. In addition, the added sense of security after immigration is also very important for them.

Self-development increased among Chinese women immigrants. Although the role of being mother and wife is still central to a woman's life and becomes important consideration in immigration decision making, many women come for their own development. Although they must devote part of their energy to their family and they
know they may benefit less than their husbands and children in career development, they
still have hope and try their best to realize social value in Canadian society.

Gender, class and race are reflected in the process of immigration. Historically
Canadian immigration policy prefers white people and still prefers middle class people
with wealth and education in recent years which make white people and men have
advantage over women of color in immigration selection. Gender stratification lies in the
process of immigration and gender plays an important role in migration decision making
process. Most married women in my interview are dependent immigrants of their
husbands. The requirement of Canadian immigration policy facilitates men who have
more access to educational, professional and economic capital to apply as primary
immigrants. In reasons for immigration, the difference between Chinese men and women
is women tend to migrate for their husbands' career. Men tend to come for their own
career. Men's career pursuit is always consistent with taking care of family since men are
always assigned to taking care of family financially. Therefore, men do not have restraint
from family duties as women have.

After they came to Canada they encountered different kinds of difficulties on the
basis of gender, class and ethnicity. Many of them realized that they underestimated the
difficulty in adaptation and integration. Most of them had successful careers and a better-
than-average living standard in China. They had to face their poor English ability, the
cultural shocks, the barrier in communication and interaction, unemployment and
underemployment in Canadian society all of which made them often feel stressed and
disappointed. The situation is worse for many dependent women immigrants. As
dependents they may not have adequate preparation for immigration, their English may
not be as good as primary immigrants, their skills may not be what Canadian society need. As Chinese origins, they find it is difficult to be recognized as Canadian and integrate into Canadian society smoothly. Chinese women immigrants experienced changing identities under the interaction of Chinese and Canadian culture after immigration.

Most Chinese women immigrants identified themselves as having a lower class, and suffering a loss of prestige after immigration. Many of my informants were professionals and managers in China, some of them had their own business which carried prestige and a better-than-average life in China. After immigration most of them failed to maintain what they had had in China. They lost their high income, occupational and social prestige, and power, which are important measures of class. Unemployment and underemployment are important factors contributing to a new (lower) class identity. Employment means recognition by host society and indicates smooth integration into host society. Although absolute living conditions may not decrease much they tend to identify themselves with a lower socioeconomic stratum because of the relative decrease in socioeconomic status.

There are several factors that affect class identity. 1) Unemployment and underemployment: Women who cannot find a job or have a menial job due to poor English, unrecognized educational qualification, unfamiliarity with Canadian culture, tend to identify as low class. 2) Cultural or symbolic characteristics: Some women with high education in Canada and who cannot find a job appropriate to their qualifications identify themselves as dagongzai (laborer) because they have difficulty in entering managerial or supervisory levels due to a lack of style and taste, in short, culture, which
is seen as central for membership of certain class levels. 3) Ethnic identity: Women who identify themselves as ethnic minority group members tend to have a low class identity. As members of a minority group they believe that they do not control economic, social and political resources and thus they do not have high socioeconomic status. 4) Gender stratification in Canadian labor market: as minority women immigrants they also become victims of gender-biased Canadian labor market. The disadvantage of women in employment and earnings becomes more serious when combined with language, cultural difference brought by ethnicity.

Most Chinese women identified themselves as Chinese after they became Canadian residents because of their distinctive culture. They are legally Canadian but emotionally Chinese. Although they identify themselves as Chinese while in Canada they have adopted many Canadian characteristics through interaction within Canadian society which defines their bicultural identity. Some women find they are more like Canadian after they return to China. They identify with Canadian culture and values even though they may be initially unaware of the process. Some women identify themselves as Canadian after immigration because of the multiculturalism in Canadian society. This identity is not common among Chinese women immigrants but it is a very interesting identity. This identity is not a result of not knowing the oppression and difficulty but is a way to transform disadvantage through redefining Canadian identity. I think this is a very proactive and effective way to face challenges in an alien world.

Factors having influence on ethnic identity are: 1) Linguistic and cultural symbolism: Language is important in shaping ethnic identity. Since there is no consistency between language used in public affairs and their own language they feel
they are strangers in Canadian society. English ability also affects an immigrants understanding about Canadian society. Their values, norms, behaviors, cultural traditions and language do not match the public way in which English and French are mainstream styles. They cannot identify them as Canadian. 2) Knowledge about pluralism and multiculturalism: Women who think of Canada as a multicultural society and who define Canada in these terms tend to have a Canadian identity. 3) Intolerance: The Chinese identity of my informants is reinforced by experiences of intolerance by “Canadians”. 4) Socioeconomic status: Satisfaction with work and living conditions will affect ethnic identity. Class identity and ethnic minority identity have effects on each other. 5) Age: The older the immigrant the more difficult it is to adopt Canadian culture which makes her feel that she is still Chinese. This is reversed for their children, even for those born in China but received education in Canada.

Most Chinese women have bicultural identity which reflects on 1) The attitudes towards the education of their children. They encourage their children to have more exposure to Canadian culture and become well integrated into Canadian society. At the same time they wish their children to retain Chinese culture. 2) Bicultural identity also affects patterns of social networks. On the one hand, my informants create social networks with other Chinese to achieve benefits; on the other hand, they try to create opportunities for contact with local people and Canadian culture to learn English and to facilitate the adaptation process.

Gender is very important in a Chinese woman’s life after immigration. Women experienced redefinition of their gender identity after immigration because of the changing roles in family. The gender role of being a wife and mother still plays an
important role in shaping a woman’s life. This is reflected on many aspects, which include the process of immigration, the patterns to deal with the conflicts between work and family, housework sharing and occupational choices after immigration. Many women had given up their jobs and came to Canada to support their husbands and children, even though they knew that they would have more difficulties and would benefit less from their immigration experience than their husbands and children. Many dependent women immigrants come, stay and return for the benefits of their husbands and children. These women usually bear the main burden of domestic management after immigration because of the lack of employment even though most of them were successful with their work in China.

Immigration patterns are important factors affecting changing gender roles after immigration. In a family, the individual who comes to Canada first tends to be the one who supports the family financially and is the main source of information about Canadian society. Since most women in my interview came as dependents of their husbands, the changing gender role is very common among these women.

The changing gender role brings stress for both women and men. In China, there are established gender roles in the family, which may be broken by immigration. The one who gives up his/her job and has poor English and is obliged to stay at home will suffer more. These changes bring tension in immigration life. Women who have more dedication to their work or have better achievements than their husbands tend to feel more depressed. Husbands have more pressure due to the traditional gender role of being breadwinner and protector of their families while they do enjoy the success that their wives experience.
Obviously, gender role stereotype still lies in both Chinese men and women's minds. This reflects on housework sharing in family. Dependent women immigrants do all housework since they do not support family financially. For those primary immigrant women, they will always feel guilty due to lack of time to take care of their husband and children. They also tend to think their husbands are not competent if they do not have equally good career development and cultural adaptation. Men feel more depressed if they are unemployed or underemployed even though their wives do not push them. Husbands always complain if their wives dedicate too much on her career and ignore family. Besides the gender inequality and stereotype from society, Chinese women perpetuate and reproduce this inequality themselves through pushing men to achieve better development in society and thinking economic and social position is important virtue of men. Gender stereotype is internalized in some Chinese women's minds. This exists even among women who tend to pursue gender equality. Obviously they have become victims of gender stereotype and discrimination both from society and themselves. The internal factors of women should not be neglected in order to change women's disadvantaged position in society.

Decision-making patterns and power relationships change after immigration as a consequence of changing gender roles. Although both husbands and wives experience empowerment after immigration as a consequence of having more access to economic and social resources, the decision making pattern in most families in my interviews is traditional. Generally, husbands make decision on buying cars, computers, applying for mortgage, credit cards, while women decide on what to buy and how much to spend on
weekly groceries and domestic things. This pattern is usually reverse when women come as primary immigrants and have more economic and social power.

The pattern of possessing different kinds of power resources affects patterns of power in a family. Usually the primary immigrant in a family has more power and more influence in decision-making because he/she has better English ability and greater access to education, work opportunities, social relationships and Canadian culture. The one who’s English is poor and stays at home feels a loss of influence in family matters which may bring tension to a family.

Women who feel a loss of power try to change this situation through many ways. Education is a major way to give more exposure to Canadian culture. It can provide more opportunities future career prospects which may bring more economic and social relational resource, and provides more chances to learn language, and Canadian culture. Establishing social networks is another way to gain more benefits and gain power.

Although there is tension brought by immigration to husband and wife relationship, according to my informants, generally, husband and wife relationship tends to be closer and more supportive after immigration for the collective benefits and development of the family because of loss of social supportive network and other advantages in Canadian society. Both husband and wife have broader kinship and social network in China, therefore, husband and wife relationship is not the only resource one depend on in Chinese society. After immigration, one’s spouse is the only or few close kinship networks. Although there is unhappiness in individual’s adaptation process, husband and wife become more dependent emotionally in the strange world.
Finally, since this study on the adaptation of contemporary Mainland Chinese women immigrants from late 1980s to 1990s is exploratory, many important questions remain unanswered. For instance, information for Chinese male immigrants’ perspective is important understanding Chinese women’s identity. Comparison on the perspective between Chinese women and men could shed new light on the issues concerned here. The comparison with other groups of women is also needed to have a better understanding of the experience of women with color in the shaping of Canadian society. The result of a comparative study would likely reveal the generalized pattern of inequality that all Canadian women suffered and the culturally specific form of inequalities derivative from the preconceived notion of gender inherent to the Chinese society, thus its immigrant population.
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Appendix A  Interview questions

Questionnaire for single women immigrants
ID number _______
Date ____________

All answers will be kept strictly confidential and you have right to refuse to answer any questions.

1. In what year did you immigrate to Canada? ______

2. What's your age? ___  (1) twentieth  (2) thirtieth  (3) fortieth

3. In what way you immigrate to Canada? ___  (1) independent immigrants as skill immigrants  (2) independent immigrants as business immigrants  (3) dependent immigrants

4. What was the highest level of education you attained in China ____? (1) primary school  (2) Junior school  (3) high school  (4) undergraduate  (5) MA  (6) Ph.D.  (7) others (please specify)_______________

5. How satisfied were you with your social status____ and economic status____ in China?
   (1) very good  (2) good  (3) average  (4) not so good  (5) not good at all
   Please explain why?

6. How do you evaluate you living condition in China ______?  (1) very good  (2) good  (3) average  (4) not so good  (5) not good at all
   Please explain why?

7. How do your identify yourself in China?
   Please explain why?
8. What did you do in China before immigration? (1) study (2) work (3) others (please specify) ________

If (1), go to question 9, if (2), go to question 12.

9. What degree were you working on before immigration? ________

10. What is your field of study? ________.

11. How do you like your field? ________.

   In what ways you like it?

   In what ways you do not like it?

12. What was your last position or job in China? ________

13. How satisfied were you with your job in China? ________ (1) very satisfied

   (2) somewhat satisfied (3) neither satisfied or dissatisfied (4) not very satisfied (5) not satisfied at all

   In what ways are you satisfied with it?

   In what ways are you not satisfied with it?

14. How do you assess your English language ability?

15. How do you identify yourself in Canada?

   Is it different from in China?

   Please explain why?

16. How do you think others will identify you?

17. Do you think you are responsible to Canadian society or Chinese society? Why?

18. After immigration, do you think you are ______;

   Chinese; Canadian; Chinese-Canadian; Canadian Chinese

   Why?
How about your friends in China? Why?

How about other Canadians/ Why?

19. Did your life change after immigration?

20. In what ways your life changed?

21. Are you satisfied with these changes?
   In what aspects you are satisfied with these changes?
   In what aspects you are not satisfied with these changes?

22. What are you doing now in Canada? (1) Study (2) work (3) others

   If the answer in question 22 is (1) study, go to question 23; if (2) work, go to question 29.

23. What are you studying in Canada?

24. What degree you are working on in Canada?

25. Are you satisfied with your field you are studying?

26. Do you plan to change your field?
   Please explain why?

27. What do you plan to do after graduation?

28. How do you evaluate the opportunities you have been given in Canada?

29. What is your current job in Canada?

30. How satisfied are you with your job in Canada?
   In what ways are you satisfied with your job?
   In what ways are you not satisfied with your job?

31. How would you evaluate the opportunities you have been given with your job in Canada?
32. How would you evaluate your social status _____ and economic status _____ in Canada?

33. What do you plan to do or hope to do to change the dissatisfied position? (1) study (2) others _____

34. How do you define personal fulfillment? Why? How do you plan to realize it?

35. What is the most difficult barrier for you to live here?

36. What are your social activities here?

37. Please describe the social network that you have here? (1) totally Chinese (2) almost with other Chinese(3) half of time with other Chinese, half of time not (4) mostly with non-Chinese

Do you prefer to socialize with your own ethnic group or the native whites? Why?

38. What is your current attitude about returning to China? Please explain why?

39. Do you prefer to look boyfriend in your own ethnic group? Why?

40. What is your ideal image of your boyfriend?

41. If you have boyfriend in China, are there any changes with the relationship between you and him after immigration?

42. How do you explain these differences occurred?

43. Why did you apply to Canada?

44. Did you apply anywhere else?

45. Do you have connection here? What kind of connection?

46. Who helped most?

Government organizations
Community organizations (such as SUCCESS)

Connections with established Chinese in Vancouver (friends)

Tongxianghui

47. Any comments about Canadian policy on immigration and settlement?

ID number ______
Date__________

1. In what year did you immigrate to Canada? __________

2. What's your age? ____ (1) twentieth  (2) thirtieth  (3) fortieth

3. In what way did you immigrate to Canada? ______ (1) independent immigrants
   as skill immigrants  (2) independent immigrants as business immigrants
   (3) dependent immigrants

4. Are you married, divorced or widowed?
   If divorced or widowed ask the questions on looking for partners?

5. Is your husband with you in Canada?
   If yes, answer the following questions.
   If not, where is he now? Why is he not with you in Canada?

6. What was the highest level of education you attained in China ____? Your husband?
   ____
   (1) primary school  (2) junior school  (3) high school  (4) undergraduate  (5) MA
   (6) Ph.D.    (7) others (please specify)________________

7. How satisfied were you with your social status____ and economic status____ in China?
How satisfied was your husband with his social status and economic status in China?

(1) Very good (2) good (3) average (4) not so good (5) not good at all

In what ways are you satisfied?

In what ways are you not satisfied?

7. How do you evaluate your living condition in China? (1) very good (2) good (3) average (4) not so good (5) not good at all

In what ways are you satisfied?

In what ways are you not satisfied?

8. How did you identify yourself in China?

Please explain why?

9. What did you do in China before immigration? (1) study (2) work (3) others (please specify). If (1), go to question 10, if (2), go to question 13.

10. What degree were you working on before immigration? 

How about your husband?

11. What is your field of study? What is your husband’s?

12. How do you like your field? How about your husband?

13. What was your last position or job in China? your husband’s?

14. How satisfied you were with your job in China? (1) very satisfied (2) somewhat satisfied (3) neither satisfied or dissatisfied (4) not very satisfied (5) not satisfied at all
In what ways are you satisfied?

In what ways are you not satisfied?

15. How do you assess your English language ability? Your husband’s?

16. Do you think you are responsible to Canadian society or Chinese society after immigration?

Why?

17. After immigration, do you think you are_____;

Chinese; Canadian; Chinese-Canadian; Canadian Chinese

Why?

How about your friends in China? Why?

How about other Canadians? Why?

18. How do you identify yourself in Canada?

Is it different from in China?

Please explain why?

19. How do you think others will identify you?

20. Did your life changed after immigration?

21. In what ways your life changed?

22. Are you satisfied with these changes?

In what ways are you satisfied?

In what ways are you not satisfied?

23. What are you doing now in Canada? _____

Your husband? ____ (1) study (2) work (3) others _____

If the answer in question 23 is (1) study, go to question 24; if (2) work, go to question 30.
24. What are you studying in Canada? Your husband?

25. What degree are you working on in Canada? Your husband?

26. Are you satisfied with your field you are studying? Your husband?

27. Do you plan to change your field? Your husband?

Please explain why?

28. What do you plan to do after graduation? Your husband?

29. How do you evaluate the opportunities you have been given in Canada?

30. What is your current job in Canada? Your husband?

31. How satisfied are you with your job in Canada? Your husband?

In what ways are you satisfied?

In what ways are you not satisfied?

32. How would you evaluate the opportunities you have been given with your job in Canada? Your husband?

33. How would you evaluate your social status _____ and economic status _____ in Canada? Your husband?

34. What do you plan to do or hope to do to change the dissatisfied position? (1) study (2) others _____

35. How do you define personal fulfillment? Why?

How do you plan to realize it?

36. What is the most difficult barrier for you to live here? Your husband?

37. What are your social activities here? Your husband?
38. Please describe the social network that you have in Canada? _______; Your husband ______? (1) totally Chinese (2) almost with other Chinese (3) half of time with other Chinese, half of time not (4) mostly with non-Chinese

Do you prefer to socialize with your ethnic group? Why?

39. What is your current attitude about returning to China? Your husband? Why?

40. Who is the major source of income and supporter of your family in China? Who is in Canada?

41. Do you think your family relationship changed after immigration? In what ways it changed? Why?

42. Who is the decision maker in your family in China? Who is in Canada?

In what things you and your husband make decision? Why?

43. Do you feel you and your husband are equal?

If equal, please give example.

If not, why?

44. Do you have children? (1) Yes (2) No

If the answer is (1), Please continue to answer the following questions; If the answer is (2), go to question 49.

44. Are your children with you here?

45. Who is the person instruct your children in China? Why?

46. Who is the person instruct your children in Canada? Why?

47. Are there any cultural conflicts between you and your children?

48. How do you deal with the conflicts between you and your children?

49. Why did you apply for Canada?
50. Did you apply for anywhere else?

51. Do you have connection in Canada? What kind of connection?

52. Who helped most?

   Government organizations

   Community organizations (such as SUCCESS)

   Connections with established Chinese in Vancouver (friends)

   Tongxinghui

53. Any comments about Canadian policy on immigration and settlement?