An investigation into the effects of migration and acculturation on the gender values of Chinese-Australian women and adolescent girls
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Log
My PIP process began as a reflection upon my individual values and beliefs, particularly surrounding feminism and how it was conceptualised by my peers. However, the sheer breadth of this area, along with a desire to conduct a topic with greater personal significance, led me to further question how my individual feminist values had been constructed. This self-reflection resulted in a realisation that it was only due to my socialisation in, and acculturation to, a Western society that I had developed a strong identification and passion for feminism, in contrast to the largely patriarchal ideals held by my Chinese culture and parents. Consequently, my PIP moved to investigating respective Chinese and Western forces surrounding gender and feminism, and their internalisation by Chinese-Australian adolescent girls. I decided upon a generational comparison with Chinese women in my parents’ generation as my cross-cultural component, as it enabled detailed analysis into the effects of Western socialisation.

My secondary research uncovered levels of previously-unconsidered complexity, and forced me to become aware of the assumptions I had begun to make regarding the patriarchal nature of Chinese society. I found I had began to equate China’s patriarchy as being ‘negative’, whilst conversely equating Western societies as adopting more egalitarian values, thus being ‘positive’. These assumptions demonstrated my initial lack of cultural relativism, or awareness regarding the centrality of various historical, social and cultural forces in the formation of gender values in both Chinese and Western societies.

With a largely macro understanding established through secondary research, my primary research explored these trends and influences on a micro level. I first conducted questionnaires with Chinese-Australian girls, with these results forming the basis for my focus group questions. Focus groups were immensely useful as they provided extensive micro experiences and detail for my cross-cultural component, and assisted in reinforcing my hypothesis. I also conducted semi-structured interviews with nine Chinese women aged 44-56 (five migrating from Hong Kong, four from the People’s Republic of China (PRC)), which proved to be my most difficult methodology. This was predominantly due to language barriers- the lack of a widely-accepted Chinese term for ‘feminism’, for example, made my questions difficult to convey, and thus presented many challenges in the transcribing of interviews. These difficulties, however, proved imperative to overcome,
as the interviews allowed me to develop an empathetic cross-cultural understanding and triangulate my research, ensuring ideas uncovered in my secondary research (most of which were written by Western women) were indeed accurate.

The opportunity to interview two academics, UTS’ Dr Christina Ho, and Professor Gail Hershatter (University of Santa Cruz, California), provided a new means to explain the findings of my research. Both women suggested the importance of researching the sociological and psychological impacts of migration, framing the challenges of hybridisation on more theoretical levels. Researching the sociology of migration was ultimately central in explaining my findings.

Through the completion of my PIP, I have determined the importance of hybridisation, the sociological effects of migration, and various socialisation agents in the development of Chinese adolescent girls’ and women’s gender values. I have become aware of the ways in which the somewhat dichotomous messages are internalised by adolescent girls, as well as the wider implications of Western socialisation on Chinese migrant diaspora, all serving to enlighten me to the significance of the links between macro trends, institutions, and the micro world.
Introduction

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The basis of migrant individuals’ identities, values and beliefs are predicated upon a unique combination of the societies and cultures in which they are socialised. From a young age, my Chinese culture, as advocated most clearly by my family, has enforced a belief in patriarchal authority and value in female subservience. Contrastingly, the Western society in which I have been socialised promotes ideals of gender equality and a breaking-down of remaining patriarchal values. How I, as a Chinese teenage girl, had come to internalise feminist viewpoints became of pivotal interest: why was it that, though I had grown up in a micro culture where male authority was advocated, I had developed a strong belief in, and passion for, feminism?

This question drove my PIP’s focus to how Chinese-Australian adolescent girls viewed gender and feminism, and their internalisation of Chinese and Western societal influences. My cross-cultural component involved examining the attitudes of 44-56 year-old Chinese women (in my mother’s generation), compared to that of 14-18 year-old Chinese-Australian adolescent girls, whilst my continuity-and-change component focused upon the changes in perspectives of my mothers’ generation from the 1980s to the present, to make predictions on future viewpoints of the Chinese migrant diaspora. These components were complementary as they necessitated investigation into migration’s effects, an aspect which proved central to my analysis of the socialisation of Chinese-Australian adolescent girls. Based on personal reflection, micro world observation, and consideration of Mead’s theory of symbolic interactionism, I hypothesised that acculturation to a Western society has resulted in a hybridisation of gender values among Chinese-Australian adolescent girls.

In order to explore my hypothesis, both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies were utilised: questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and expert interviews. Due to my PIP’s nature, and the necessary focus on detailed experiences, qualitative methodologies were deemed most appropriate to my investigation. However, to firstly establish general trends and provide focus for subsequent methodologies, 120 questionnaires, comprising both closed and open-ended questions, were distributed to 14-18 year-old Chinese-Australian adolescent girls to gather qualitative and quantitative data. This allowed general trends to be established regarding the dominant views amongst my target audience, and revealed the most pertinent agents of socialisation in their
development. Accordingly, questions for three focus groups with 14-18 year-old Chinese-Australian adolescent girls were developed, allowing an in-depth discussion and expansion of the extent and reasons for the trends revealed in my earlier findings.

Nine Chinese women were individually interviewed, discussing their current and past perceptions of gender and feminism, and experiences within their Chinese and migrant Australian societies. Semi-structured interviews were deemed most appropriate and ethical as I desired detailed, qualitative data, whilst simultaneously being careful to account for the reservation Chinese culture holds regarding feminism. Two expert interviews were then conducted, proving invaluable in providing a theoretical basis to my research, and in triangulating my data.

The undertaking of this investigation has allowed me to acquire a deeper awareness into how various social and cultural forces are internalised by individuals of different ages, generations, and societies. Specifically, it has enabled understanding of constructions of personal identities and beliefs, with particular emphasis on my individual acculturation process. These have been significant in affirming my belief in the importance of feminist activism and personal performance of egalitarian gender roles and values, in the hope that the seemingly-entrenched patriarchal nature of Chinese culture will decrease in the diaspora over time.
Chapter 1

Exploring the Hybridisation of First and Second-Generation Migrants’ Identities

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The hybridisation of beliefs and values is a pertinent force in the construction migrant
individuals’ identities, across both first and second generations. This notion of hybridisation has been extremely apparent in my micro experience, often resulting in conflict between the normative gender roles and expectations within my culture, as opposed to the implicit and explicit empowerment of women I experience from my Western society. Through my research, I sought to discover whether this hybridity was commonly experienced by Chinese-Australian girls and women, and the factors which had contributed to the somewhat dichotomous messages conveyed through the respective cultures.

While it may be partly accurate, aspects of Western culture, particularly popular culture, commonly depicts Chinese culture as strictly patriarchal, enforcing “seclusion... and a subordinate role” for women. Whilst this portrayal is largely flawed, only drawing from selective periods of history, it is telling of the perception of inherent differences between the gender messages conveyed by Chinese and Western cultures. A semi-structured interview with Rachael*, a 48 year-old Hong Kong woman, suggested the importance of tradition in defining women’s roles in Chinese culture: “women have a defined role... com[ing] from ‘ancient wisdom’”. She defined these as originating from Confucian values and historical forces, asserting that they “benefit men... making women less important”. This view was also evident in focus groups conducted with Chinese-Australian adolescent girls, which demonstrated their perceptions of Chinese society as being largely patriarchal. “Chinese society [in terms of gender equality]... isn’t even where Australia was in the 1970s” was suggested by one participant, alongside ideas that “there was no such thing as feminism [in China]” and that Chinese society was “all male-

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2 Ibid.
3 Budani, Donna. Patriarchy and Gender, created 2009. Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology, hosted by University of Delaware, USA. Last accessed 22/05/2012 at <http://www.udel.edu/anthro/budani/patriarchyandgender.pdf>
4 In-depth Interviews (Chinese Women, Hong Kong- Rachael*) Conducted 11/04/2012
5 Ibid.
6 Focus Group 1 with 15-17 year old Chinese-Australian adolescent girls, conducted 03/04/2012- Anya*
7 Focus Group 3 with 15-16 year old Chinese-Australian adolescent girls, conducted 04/04/2012- Lillian*
dominated". This was affirmed in my questionnaire findings, conducted with 120 Chinese-Australian adolescent girls, with 66% of respondents believing the rights and opportunities of Chinese women are significantly less than that of men, hence demonstrating the notion of patriarchy in Chinese culture has been internalised by both generations of women.

However, upon further primary and secondary research, these views proved too simplistic in explaining the interrelation of micro and macro forces in defining Chinese gender perceptions. As with all social constructs, gender values in Chinese society have been created through various historical, cultural, and political forces; it is only through an exploration into how this process has been conceptualised, that a holistic understanding may be attained. Contrary to the association of Chinese culture with ‘strict patriarchy’ by both myself and my focus groups participants, the PRC government has, at various times, historically endorsed a rhetoric of equality (especially throughout the 1980s), attempting to downplay notions of gender difference and separation. Although this rhetoric of equality often did not match the subjective experiences of women, it has served to enforce some aspects of macro gender equality in Chinese society. As my expert interview with Dr Christina Ho * revealed, “Chinese [gender] values have become much more similar to Western society than appears”. She proposed the increasing Westernisation undertaken by the government during the 1980s as essential to consider, as the Chinese government began to enforce ‘women and men being the same’ during the 1980s, based upon their economic aims.  

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8 Focus Group 3 with 15-16 year old Chinese-Australian adolescent girls, conducted 04/04/2012- Sherry*
9 Questionnaire Results- 120 Chinese-Australian adolescent girls aged 14-18, conducted 22/02/2012 - 29/02/2012
* Name used with permission
13 Expert Interview with Dr. Christina Ho (Senior Lecturer at University of Technology Sydney), conducted 13/04/2012
14 Ibid.
* Name changed with permission
Chinese women indicated the significance of both ‘traditions’ and the distinct government enforcement of ‘equality’ in forming their personal gender values. However, a divide between experiences in the personal and public spheres was also revealed through various interviews. Anita*, a 52 year-old PRC woman, suggested internal familial treatment often differed greatly from expectation of women in the public sphere, particularly regarding employment\textsuperscript{15}. Historian Elisabeth Croll supports this, suggesting ideals of women’s equality originated from a ‘top-down’ government approach, with the subjective social experience contrasting this rhetoric\textsuperscript{16}. This enforcement of equality for largely economic means is considered a result of Westernisation, where ‘Western’ values were promoted by the Chinese government alongside a desire for economic growth and expansion\textsuperscript{17}. This resulted in women being encouraged to pursue a role beyond the domestic sphere, an aspect of continuity from the 1949 Cultural Revolution, in which ‘sameness’ between the two genders was enforced\textsuperscript{18}. An interrelation of historical and cultural forces has therefore shaped Chinese women’s internalisation of gender values; although alongside female subservience, women are now being increasingly designated the double-burden of work and home\textsuperscript{19}.

Upon migration, however, these roles are seen to shift. Despite Chinese society typically being viewed as more gender-restrictive than Western societies, my interviews and expert interviews revealed migration has actually resulted in a ‘feminisation’ of women’s roles. This idea was first raised in my interview with 54 year-old Hong Kong woman Elise*, who suggested migration has limited her opportunities and participation in the public sphere: “coming to Australia has meant I don’t have much to do outside the home- from having a full-time office job, I am now a stay-at-home mum.”\textsuperscript{20} Dr Christina Ho’s 2004 work Migration as Feminisation confirms this experience to occur on a macro level,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{15} In-depth Interviews (Chinese Women, PRC- Anita*) Conducted 29/04/2012
  \item \textsuperscript{16} Croll, Elisabeth, \textit{op. cit.}, p114.
  \item \textsuperscript{18} Ibid., p190.
  \item *Name changed with permission
  \item \textsuperscript{20} In-depth Interviews (Chinese Women, Hong Kong- Elise*) Conducted 19/03/2012
\end{itemize}
arguing that migration results in a domestication of Chinese women’s roles, as they often move from working in a public domain, to having a sole domestic focus. “Migration... leads to a ‘feminisation’ of women’s roles within their households... with successful careers suddenly replaced by largely domestic concerns”\(^{21}\). Migration to a Western society has thus resulted in very different norms, roles and values advocated, providing new influences on the women’s personal and public roles, norms, and expectations. Hence, this notion of hybridity has significantly affected Chinese women’s gender norms.

Chinese-Australian teenage girls, therefore, are subject to many varying forces; at the interrelation of their micro culture continuing to advocate largely ‘Chinese’ gender roles, with their wider macro society portraying Western ideals. Based upon personal reflection and realisation of the centrality of hybridisation in the construction of my own beliefs, I conducted a questionnaire with Chinese-Australian adolescent girls to garner the most significant influences on their gender values, as well as their perceptions towards ‘Chinese’ and ‘Western’ gender values. The conflict between these two aspects is evident in 79% of girls suggesting the gender values endorsed by their parents and peers were ‘mostly different’\(^{22}\), although most asserted stronger identification with their peers’ values\(^{23}\). This conflict was further explored through the focus groups subsequently conducted, with Jennifer* suggesting “Being in a Western society, and seeing them being so liberal, actually makes me value Chinese conservatism more”\(^{24}\). Amelia*, took a different approach by asserting the greater equality promoted in Western society increased her alignment with these Western values, as it prompted her to “start resent[ing] the gender-based boundaries my parents impose”\(^{25}\). This dual effect of encouraging an increased identification and adherence to ‘Western’ values in some girls, whilst leading others to revert to more traditional Chinese values, can be considered to be a complexity of hybridity, based upon an individual’s own socialisation. This idea is encapsulated in

\(^{22}\) Questionnaire Results- 120 Chinese-Australian adolescent girls aged 14-18, conducted 22/02/2012 - 29/02/2012
\(^{23}\) Questionnaire Results- 120 Chinese-Australian adolescent girls aged 14-18, conducted 22/02/2012- 29/02/2012
* Name changed with permission
\(^{24}\) Focus Group 1 with 15-17 year old Chinese adolescent girls, conducted 03/04/2012- Jemma*
\(^{25}\) Focus Group 2 with 16-18 year old Chinese adolescent girls, conducted 04/04/2012- Amelia*
George Herbert Mead’s theory of symbolic interactionism, a micro theory which views individuals as the products of their personal interactions with elements of society throughout their lives\(^{26}\), resulting in each individual interpreting society in a unique way\(^{27}\). The construction of gender values, especially amongst second-generation migrants, embodies this theory through being differently internalised and conceptualised by different individuals, in accordance with their unique interactions and socialisation processes.

This micro experience of hybrid gender values and norms is similarly faced by migrant groups on a macro scale. Sociologist Ien Ang suggests “the notion of hybridity captures migrants’ [feelings of] ambivalent in-betweenness.”\(^{28}\) She further argues that hybridity and ‘suspended positioning’\(^{29}\), denotes the friction and conflict felt by migrant individuals, and their simultaneous identification yet alienation from the multiplicity of cultures. This, Ang suggests, occurs due to the perceived need to identify and internalise values of the new society, often incommensurable with their individual values. These ideas were felt by both generations of women in my primary research, as the respective norms and values of each society prove difficult to reconcile.

It is thus evident that the formation of gender values in both generations of Chinese-Australian women originates from a unique combination of various social and cultural factors, and cannot be isolated as simply being ‘Chinese’ or ‘Western’ ideals. Rather, the notion of hybridity has proved prominent across both cultures and several agents of socialisation, as accounted for through the theory of symbolic interactionism. With this established, the next chapter will focus upon the two key institutions of family and education in both China and Australia (identified by participants as being the most significant to their development), their promoted messages, and their subsequent impact on the women’s internalisation of gender values.


\(^{27}\) Ibid., p40.


\(^{29}\) Ibid, p.25-26
Chapter 2

The Key Socialisation Agents of Family and Education

Student Number: 2162 1609
The formation of beliefs and values is a result of the complex process of socialisation, in which many different persons, institutions and forces impact upon an individual. Defined as agents of socialisation, these are essential in the establishment of values and identity, particularly during childhood and adolescence, where a significant number of social messages are internalised\textsuperscript{30}. Although socialisation processes are undeniably multifaceted, as accounted for through Mead’s theory of symbolic interactionism, responses to my questionnaires, focus groups and interviews isolated family and education as most central to the formation of gender values in both generations. This chapter will hence examine the messages conveyed by these two aspects in current Australian society and 1980s Chinese society, and how their effects are demonstrated in the values and perceptions internalised by two generations of Chinese-Australian women.

The central role of the family has been acknowledged as the primary agent of socialisation, due to their ability to influence the development of individuals’ values and expectations from a young age\textsuperscript{31}. This idea was revealed in my questionnaire results, where it was selected as the most common source of information about Chinese culture (95%), and the third-most important source regarding Western gender beliefs (34%), behind education and the media\textsuperscript{32}. However, despite recognising their family’s importance in receiving these ideas, it was not chosen as the most influential, or similar, to the girls’ own perceptions. Only 22% believe their gender beliefs align mostly with their parents, whilst 76% selected peers as the most similar in nature\textsuperscript{33}. Therefore, despite the family having a dominant influence on the girls’ values, they believed their own views are quite different, suggesting their Western socialisation is of greater significance. Whilst it had been my personal experience that the values advocated in my family were ones which I personally disagreed with, I found this result somewhat surprising, as I initially believed Chinese familial and cultural values would have a stronger influence upon my peers’ identities and beliefs. This thus led me to consider potential invalidities of my findings, in accordance with the girls’

\textsuperscript{31} Shearer, Cindy L. “Gender Socialisation in the Family”, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University, 2007, p3
\textsuperscript{32} Questionnaire Results- 120 Chinese-Australian adolescent girls aged 14-18, conducted 22/02/2012 - 29/02/2012
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.
potential consideration of what answers would appear ‘desirable’ or ‘correct’, despite my attempts to ensure objectivity in the wording of questions in both methodologies.

Nonetheless, my focus groups were central in delving deeper into the role of the family, as their micro experiences were able to provide further insight and validity for this result. Louise* suggested her alignment with her peers’ views were due to our parents’ generation holding what were now considered to be “traditional” values, thus seeming “outdated in our Western context”34. “What they thought was more important when we were younger, but now we’ve grown up and had our own experiences, it’s different”35, another participant asserted. However, all these girls admitted the importance of their mother’s roles and beliefs in forming their individual expectations for the future36. Sociologists Patricia Pessar and Sarah Mahler recognise this importance, stating that concepts of gender become embedded in institutions, “with the first of these seen through a family’s organisation and role allocation”37. My focus group participants ultimately suggested that familial impacts were initially more influential, with macro institutions such as education and media becoming more formative in their development of values at a later age.

The analysis of the impacts of family on the gender socialisation of teenage girls reflects both continuity and change, when compared to Chinese women of my parents’ generation. Both secondary and primary research acceded the family to be of significance, especially in Personal Voices: Chinese Women in the 1980s38. Historians Honig and Hershatter assert that, though the government aimed to push an agenda of equality, their inattention to the values promoted in micro institutions (particularly the family) was such that a sense of gender difference continued to be perpetuated to younger generations39. Interviews conducted with Chinese women, who individually reflected upon their own familial structures, affirmed this. Shirley* described a distinct separation of treatment between

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* Names changed with permission
34 Focus Group 1 with 15-17 year old Chinese-Australian adolescent girls, conducted 03/04/2012- Louise*
35 Focus Group 3 with 15-16 year old Chinese-Australian adolescent girls, conducted 04/04/2012- Lily*
36 Ibid.
herself and her brothers by her parents and grandparents, which left her believing it was “the norm to be treated differently to men”\textsuperscript{40}. She believed macro social forces had influenced this enforcement of gender difference, suggesting the ‘less important roles’ women were assigned in the public sphere had contributed to her family placing a ‘smaller value’ on females\textsuperscript{41}. Contrastingly, Julia\textsuperscript{*} spoke of her familial socialisation advocating a sense of gender equality, stating “there were no distinctive treatments... no concept of gender divides”\textsuperscript{42} in her family, although admitting “this was uncommon for Chinese girls in my time”\textsuperscript{43}. This interview also led me to become aware of differences between the experiences of Hong Kong women, as opposed to those from PRC, with Hong Kong still under rule from a Western government during the 1980s. The continued importance of family in establishing gender norms and values can be seen as an aspect of continuity; however, it arguably held more significance for Chinese women, as their micro worlds were largely reflective of the norms enforced in their macro society.

Chinese women’s experiences of their micro reflecting the macro is further evident through the educational institution. Upon being asked about the sources from which their gender values had been derived, Sarah\textsuperscript{*} immediately discussed her educational experiences, highlighting the teaching of domestic skills in the school she attended: “our teachers specifically taught us things like cooking and sewing... it was assumed we would all marry and have kids, even if we worked for some time”\textsuperscript{44}. The role of education is highlighted by historian Croll as a reason why government rhetoric of gender equality did not translate to the subjective experience, as “educational institutions continued to enforce gender divides... that females were physically and mentally inferior to males”\textsuperscript{45}. Education therefore held a significant influence over the entrenching of gender values in 1980s Chinese society, demonstrative of macro worlds endorsing similar values to their micro.

Contrastingly, Chinese-Australian girls feel the educational institution in Australia largely advocate very different views from the values presented in their families. This was the notion upon which my PIP was developed, as I realised the significance of my schooling in

\textsuperscript{*} Names changed with permission

\textsuperscript{40} In-depth Interviews (Chinese women, PRC- Shirley\textsuperscript{*}), conducted 29/04/2012.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{42} In-depth Interviews (Chinese women, Hong Kong- Julia\textsuperscript{*}), conducted 09/04/2012.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{44} In-depth Interviews (Chinese women, PRC- Sarah\textsuperscript{*}), conducted 17/05/2012.

\textsuperscript{45} Croll, op. cit., p162.
creating my gender values; the explicit teaching of feminist history, as well as the empowerment of women endorsed by my teachers, had resulted in an awareness of the pertinent gender constructs in society. My questionnaire results affirmed this to be commonly experienced by my peers, with 86% of respondents selecting ‘school’ as the socialisation agent from which they most strongly experienced Western ideas of gender, and subsequently affirmed these to be most similar to their own gender values. My focus group participants supported this finding, suggesting the High School environment had provided ‘very different’ ideas regarding women’s roles and expectations, particularly “because they promote feminism and the idea that women can do anything... I don’t think my parents even know what feminism is.” The specific examination of feminism was particularly interesting, as the girls discussed the different messages and norms they had received when contrasting their educational and familial experiences. Alison* explained that gender values from her family were implicitly advocated through her parents’ roles, whilst her educational experience has explicitly discussed the necessity of women moving beyond a traditional sphere. She elaborated that the teaching of the Women’s Liberation Movement in Year10 History was significant to her evolving understanding of gender.

Trisha* supported this, suggesting the explicit discussion of feminism in her classes had been formative in “changing her understanding.” This evolving understanding is undoubtedly significant in the shaping of values, however, whether these understandings translate to a tangible shift in the norms internalised by these adolescents remains to be seen.

Even so, the notion of education being a central agent of socialisation in the development of values and beliefs amongst second-generation migrants is supported by sociologist Ana Bravo-Moreno. Bravo-Moreno argues the educational institution represents ‘a microcosm of society’- able to enforce equality, or, can “perpetuate prevailing hegemonic societal attitudes through their socialisation processes.” Whilst Bravo-Moreno applies this concept primarily to racial divisions, this can be similarly applied to internalisation of

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46 Questionnaire Results- 120 Chinese-Australian adolescent girls aged 14-18, conducted 22/02/2012 - 29/02/2012
47 Focus Group 2 with 16-18 year old Chinese-Australian adolescent girls, conducted 04/04/2012- Alicia*
48 Focus Group 1 with 15-17 year old Chinese-Australian adolescent girls, conducted 03/04/2012- Alison*
49 Focus Group 3 with 15-16 year old Chinese-Australian adolescent girls, conducted 04/04/2012- Trisha*
gender values. It reveals the increased importance of the educational institution in a migrant society, as the messages espoused are those felt to be ‘acceptable’ and ‘normal’ in their new society. Education is thus central to developing the expectations and understanding of migrant individuals. Yet, due to the inherent shifts in roles and circumstance occurring throughout the girls’ lives, whether the values advocated in their education remain held until adulthood is an area which requires further investigation.

It must also be noted that, whilst all my focus groups largely expressed similar notions, rendering my data reliable, they were all conducted at the same single-sex selective school. This was a conscious choice made in my research process, as I felt a very specific focus would provide the greater detailed, qualitative data necessitated by my topic. As such, the results cannot be viewed as indicative of the experiences of all Chinese-Australian adolescents, as demonstrated through my focus group participants stating they believed their schooling experiences were unique, through the explicit and implicit empowerment of women through subject matter, and teachers’ and school executives’ attitudes\(^{51}\).

Even so, the often conflicting messages raised by the socialisation agents of education and family reveal the hybridity which must occur in the development of migrant individuals’ gender values. Being enculturated in a society which often advocates different views to that of their cultural heritage has led to some identity conflicts. Surrounding society’s views are seen to mostly prevail, inseparable from aims to ‘fit in’ with their surrounding environment\(^{52}\); however, are ultimately based upon the individual, their socialisation and interactions. The following chapter will further analyse this idea through examining the older generations’ experiences of migration, to make future predictions on the attitudes of the Chinese migrant diaspora.

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\(^{51}\) Focus Group 1 with 15-17 year old Chinese-Australian teenage girls, conducted 03/04/2012- Jasmine*

* Name changed with permission

Chapter 3

The Effects of Migration, and Future Predictions for the Chinese Migrant Diaspora

Student Number: 2162 1609
The previous chapters have highlighted the differences in gender roles, norms and expectations between Chinese and Western societies, and discussed the roles of various agents of socialisation in creating hybrid identities in Chinese-Australian women and adolescent girls. This chapter focuses on the effects of migration on the older generation of women, and the resulting influences on girls in my generation, to make future predictions on the perceptions of Chinese migrant diaspora.

Migration to a Western society has resulted in a significant shift in women’s roles, however, their values and perceptions towards gender and feminism have not undergone significant change. As raised in my interviews with Elise*, Rachael*, and Fiona*, and affirmed through secondary research in Dr Christina Ho’s work *Migration as Feminisation*, migration has resulted in a domestication of Chinese women’s roles, relegated from the workforce to largely undertaking domestic roles.53 However, Ho argues migration still results in ‘new-found freedom’ for women, relieving them of the double-burden of work and home enforced in their country of origin.55 Whilst their roles are therefore often significantly affected by migration, my interviewees believe their opinions and expectations regarding gender has not shifted, as the majority of their socialisation and internalisation of messages had been completed at a younger age. An interview with 56 year-old Julia* affirmed this, stating that “because most of my views were already entrenched by my adolescent experiences, although [Australia] has different ideas of what women should be like and I’m now in a very different role... I haven’t really changed [my] opinions [about gender].”56

My expert interviews with Dr Christina Ho and Professor Gail Hershatter provided further theoretical basis to this notion, discussing the psychological mindset migrants bring to their new society. Ho suggests that, in a new society and environment, the first migrant generation will want to enforce the existing social structures of their culture, as part of a

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* Names changed with permission
53 In-depth interviews (Chinese Women, Hong Kong- Elise*) conducted 19/03/2012
54 Ho, *op. cit.*
56 In-depth interviews (Chinese Women, Hong Kong- Julia*) conducted 09/04/2012
“psychological attempt to preserve heritage”, thus aiming to retain the norms of their culture of origin. Therefore, she argued, there now exists a lag between the ‘Chinese’ values promoted by the migrant generation in Australia, compared to the values endorsed by current Chinese society. Hershatter elaborated on this in relation to the gender roles enforced, explaining the unique historical and cultural forces of 1980s Chinese society. “China at this time was going through a period of modernisation, but the gender values felt by women was often a want to celebrate their femininity, and the very existence of a gender difference”. She isolated the backlash against the previous ‘sameness’ of genders enforced during the Cultural Revolution as the reason behind this celebration for femininity, suggesting migrant individuals had desired to be seen as ‘different creatures’ to their male counterparts. Therefore, she theorised that Chinese women would continue to advocate this sense of gender difference, and of a feminisation of roles, to the next generation.

My focus groups, however, suggested these attempts to retain and enforce ‘Chinese’ values were not being as heavily internalised by second-generation migrant youths. They suggested a rebellion against their parents’ values, in accordance with a larger aim to reconcile their individual values with those advocated in Western institutions. Interestingly, interviews with Chinese women demonstrated they believed they were passing on ‘more egalitarian’ gender values to their children, although this was disagreed with by my focus group participants. gender values to their children, although this was disagreed with by my focus group participants. As 17-year-old Elli stated, “The battle over gender shouldn’t need to be fought at school or in the government; the change should start at home”. This culminates to demonstrate the influence of Westernisation, and more Western gender values, on the views of the younger generation; whether this is a result of shifts in parents’ attitudes, or more likely, the influence of macro socialisation

57 Expert Interview with Dr Christina Ho (Senior Lecturer, University of Technology Sydney), conducted 13/04/2012
58 Ibid.
59 Expert Interview with Professor Gail Hershatter (Senior Lecturer, University of Santa Cruz, California), conducted 26/05/2012
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
62 In-depth interviews (Chinese women, PRC- Sarah*), conducted 17/05/2012
* Name changed with permission
63 Focus Group 2 with 16-18 year-old Chinese-Australian teenage girls, conducted 04/04/2012- Elli*
agents such as the media and education. Certainly, my personal experience affirms the significance of macro societal agents in developing my conceptualisation of gender roles, with my opinions contrasting that of my parents. The inevitable greater exposure of second-generation migrants to Western gender values will likely lead to a decrease in the patriarchal norms and roles enforced through Chinese culture and families.

There are various theories on the ways second, and later-generation migrants will negotiate individual and diasporic identities. Charles Price suggests migrant ethnic groups are at risk of ‘diminishing their ethnicity’ through a ‘loss’ of younger generations to the culture of their emigrated society, leading to a failure to transmit and continue culture. Described as ‘straight-line theory’, this is however too simplistic to explain potential futures, with social researcher Baldassar theorising the importance of transnationalism in establishing migrant identity. She asserts that the identities of second-generation migrants are formed not only through the settlement experiences of their parents, or through the host society; rather, there exists a constant dynamic between home and host environments in a transnational context. When applying this theory to the internalisation of gender values, it reinforces notions of hybridity, in which an interrelation of social, cultural, micro and macro forces culminate in an individual’s negotiation and development of identities and values; ideas which philosopher Zygmunt Bauman terms ‘an intertwining in continuity and discontinuity’. It therefore becomes clear that future identities and values may be predicated upon a complexity of various socialisation agents and forces, with their respective dominance changing over time.

Based upon this, it is probable that future generations of the Chinese migrant diaspora will not suffer a ‘disappearance’ of their culture as such, but rather, have their roles becoming increasingly westernised. Gender roles in the family are especially likely to become more egalitarian over time, with current generations of Chinese adolescent girls expected to forge their own successful career paths. The exposure to Western ideas in the girls’ socialisation

65 Ibid., p264
processes has rendered their opinions to become more aligned with Western ideas of gender roles, norms, and expectations in their negotiation of a ‘bicultural’ identity. It can hence be extrapolated that the more patriarchal Chinese ideas and norms will probably decrease in the diaspora over several generations, although the retention of other aspects of culture will possibly remain and potentially strengthen over time.
Conclusion

Student Number: 2162 1609
I began this PIP believing I already held a perceptive understanding of how gender and feminism were viewed and enforced in Chinese society; what I discovered was the presumptuous and ethnocentric nature of my views. Whilst my initial hypothesis was largely proven, I found that the reasons for individuals’ internalisation of views lay not as a simple ‘balance’ between Western and Chinese societies; it was rather much more nuanced, involving forces of Westernisation, familial socialisation, education, history and culture. As the daughter of Chinese migrants, my gender values had been influenced by both Chinese and Western aspects. However, due to my personal disagreement with the patriarchal ideals advocated in my family, I underestimated the significance of the interrelation of complexities surrounding historical, societal, cultural and psychological influences which combine to create migrant identities. The necessitated exploration of the migrant experience in my research has provided newfound understanding and empathy as to why traditional values and norms continue to be exercised in a new country.

My hypothesis, that acculturation to a Western society had resulted in the hybridisation of gender values among Chinese-Australian adolescent girls, was supported through secondary and primary research. Primary methodologies, particularly questionnaires and focus groups, revealed the significance of hybridity, with the majority of respondents stating their internalisation of more Westernised gender expectations, contrasting the patriarchal attitudes promoted within their families. Secondary research supported the existence of dual attitudes within migrant generations, emphasising its prominence in later generations. Although my hypothesis was thus supported through all methodologies conducted, the rates of these continuities and changes remains an area which could be further investigated, such as through a macro-level exploration into the long-term impacts of migration and acculturation on the gender values of migrant generations. This is because, though my respondents cited a shift in their understanding of such issues and values due to their socialisation in a Western society, whether this hybridity continues to take a prevalent role in their future adult lives remains unknown.

On a micro level, my PIP’s findings have revealed the influence of macro events on the gender values and behaviours advocated in my micro world. Notably, it has affirmed the underlying centrality of Mead’s theory of symbolic interactionism in my individual
experience, as I have developed an acute awareness of the significance of all interactions and institutions in the formation of my personal and cultural identity, especially considering the influence of macro forces such as Westernisation. Questioning the prevalence or prominence of these Western values on the future roles and norms of the Chinese migrant diaspora has also led to consideration of their significance on an individual level. I come away from this PIP in the hope that I may continue to perform the egalitarian gender norms I have internalised throughout my socialisation process, limiting the effects of the patriarchy which inherently continues to be presented within Chinese culture.

The completion of this PIP journey has been enlightening in allowing exploration of aspects of my society, culture and self which I had never before considered or analysed, leaving me with a deeper cultural sensibility and appreciation of the rigours of the sociological discipline. The newfound understanding I have gained into my cultural heritage, the reasons for continuation of traditional beliefs in migrant diasporas, and the construction of individuals’ beliefs, has been formative in continuing to develop an empathetic, cross-cultural understanding.
Annotated Resource List
Books/Book Chapters


This was a photographic essay documenting the experiences of Chinese women in the twentieth century, with a particular focus on the rural/urban divide. The introduction provided a useful overview of the changing recognition of women throughout Chinese history. Although the book was not particularly significant in developing my writing or ideas, it initially served to establish a more empathetic understanding of what I was researching, as well as the extremely varied experiences of Chinese women across the different regions of the nation. Due to its nature as a photo-essay and aim to provoke an emotional response, I was aware of the possibility of the staging and editing of photographs.


This book provided me with a deeper sense of cross-cultural understanding, due to Barlow’s assertion that feminist values and thinking was a central concern in contemporary deliberation surrounding the nation, and it’s economic and social development. This was useful in my initial development of ideas and conceptualising the significance of feminism and gender to the contemporary societal structures, as well as providing a historical critique of the ways in which these structures had developed. As feminism became only a secondary point of research to my PIP, this book therefore did not come into as much use as I initially envisaged, although still proved useful in my conceptual and theoretical understanding of the ways in which notions of gender underpin the functions of society. Barlow’s use and application of Western theory (such as that of Joan Wallach Scott) results in a very Western perception of Chinese society, and thus I had to ensure her ideas could be triangulated with that of other sources and my own primary research.

The collection of essays, edited by Brownell and Wasserstrom, was accessed in the early stages of my PIP research. Covering an extensive range of gender-related issues in Chinese history and society, including the role of modernisation, depictions of men and women in Chinese popular culture, familial structures and the impacts of the Reform Era, it emphasised the centrality of notions of gender in defining and structuring many aspects of Chinese life and culture, particularly amidst the immense change which has occurred in past two centuries. This therefore significantly developed my understanding of the nature of the links between the micro and macro worlds, and the pertinence of gender constructs on both levels, and thus proved useful to the development of my conceptual understanding. It was a largely reliable and valid source due to its selection of essays from renowned academics, historians and anthropologists in Chinese and Asian studies, as revealed through many of the chapter’s similar findings. This book was therefore immensely useful in research, the conceptualisation of my ideas and thinking, although was not referred to significantly in my writing process.


This book was used to gain an understanding of the influence of macro institutions on the internalisation of gender amongst Chinese women. Whilst it had a heavy focus on the ways in which government rhetoric had changed throughout different periods of Chinese history, the emphasis on ‘self-perception’ allowed an insight into the interactions between micro and macro. I was initially wary about whether the author would promote ethnocentric values due to her European background; however, I found Croll’s information to be supported by the experiences of Chinese women whom I interviewed, thus rendering the information useful and largely reliable. This book was extremely useful in the development of questions for the
interviews and expert interviews. It also was imperative to the development of my hypothesis and cross-cultural comparison, as it highlighted the ways in which the macro world and micro experiences of women interlinked in Chinese society, and thus was able to serve as a comparison between the influences upon Chinese-Australian teenage girls.

◊ Croll, Elisabeth. **Feminism and Socialism in China**. Routledge, 1978.

This was one of Croll’s earliest works regarding feminism and gender in China, and discussed the interrelations between feminism and socialism, and their respective contributions to the redefinition of the roles and status of women in China in the 1970s-1980s. Historical events and promotion of ideas are asserted to be central to the construction of gender roles, norms and expectations, acknowledging its often ambiguous ideological and structural development. Although the book largely focused on women who were active in the public sphere (e.g. through organisations and prominent workers in urban areas), and thus reducing its reliability in clearly demonstrating the effects upon a larger group of Chinese women, Croll’s incorporation of eyewitness accounts and materials again clearly demonstrated the links between the micro and macro worlds. Due to it being written during the period of study, its ability to encompass a wider range of views, and discuss the period’s true implications, was limited.


One of the most important and useful resources in both the research and writing stages of my PIP, this book was extremely useful in substantiating the data found in my in-depth interviews, and discussed the notion of migration resulting in a ‘domestication’ and ‘feminisation’ of women’s roles. It argued that, even though the West was often equated to being more progressive in terms of gender and gender roles, migration to Australian society had not resulted in this ‘progressivism’ for women, although this was not a negative result. Ho’s
conducting of interviews with several migrant women rendered her results to be valid, and the similarity of findings between her work, and my primary research, rendered both of our data reliable. It was used to provide a theoretical standing to my findings, and from this, I was compelled to further explore the sociological patterns and experiences of female migrants.


This book was extremely useful in understanding the macro views of my cross-cultural and continuity and change components. As the title suggests, this book focused on the lives of Chinese women in 1980s, with chapters on aspects including socialisation in childhood, family relations, marriage and the existence of feminist voices in the government and media. It also included translations of several sources from the time, including newspaper articles, government documents, and state-sponsored material distributed to urban girls and families. Due to the context of both Honig and Hershatter being two American feminists, I was aware of potential inaccuracies and ethnocentrism in their accounts and interpretation, however, was able to overcome this questionable validity through correspondence with my interviews with Chinese women. This source was incredibly useful to the development of my cross-cultural and continuity and change components, and my opportunity to interview Professor Hershatter was able to provide further explanation for the conclusions reached in her book.


This chapter provided a historical context for the ways in which gender was viewed by both micro and macro institutions, from the period of the Cultural Revolution. It allowed for a good insight into the ways in which gender is a social construct, having been attempted to be manipulated by the Chinese government to achieve
economic goals. It also linked the micro experiences with macro institutions, and demonstrated the inexplicable links between the two. The information, and tone, of the article may have been skewed due to the necessity for translations, however, corroboration with other sources proved the information to be largely accurate.


Again having a predominant focus on the macro sphere, Li’s book was extremely effective in drawing out the implications of government policies, attitudes and rhetoric, on the expectations and norms of Chinese women. As an individual who was present during these events, I was aware of potential bias and subjectivity in the information and stories presented, further enforced due to the frequent use of emotive language. Nonetheless, her own use of micro experiences in conveying her argument was a useful point of comparison to my own interviews with Chinese women, as well as a point from which I developed my questions.


This chapter provided an overview of several sociological theorists and theories which were used to provide a theoretical basis for which to explain my findings. Particularly, its discussion of Mead’s theory of symbolic interactionism was used to provide an explanation for my results, as explored in Chapter 1. Its detailed coverage of several theories, as well as extensive referencing and corroboration of sources ensured its validity, and due its description of information of academic nature, rather than analysis, diminished the potential of bias. It was useful in the course of my PIP’s writing process, being able to add another dimension to my research and analysis.

Shearer’s thesis focused on the role of the family as an agent of socialisation, in the development of gender norms, roles and expectations within children and adolescents. Her specific exploration of migrant communities in an aspect of her work proved immensely useful for the second chapter of my work, as it affirmed my findings and conclusions. As her research was conducted in the United States, I was aware this information could not automatically be seen as the same, thus potentially bringing subjectivity to the work. Additionally, it was necessary to substantiate my results with further Australian works, to ensure the conclusions I drew were applicable in a cross-cultural context.


This chapter provided an insight into the ways in which migrant cultures had established their individual cultures and values in Australia, and potential impacts into the future for these diasporas and communities. Although it was largely focused upon experiences of European migrant communities in the Australian community, the same theories were applicable to my research, and provided a basis of further research on the sociological discussions surrounding migration and the migrant experience. Due to the largely objective language and focus on theory, the information was determined to be reliable and a valid source of data. It was particularly useful in the writing of my futures chapter.


Originally published in Japan, this article discussed the status of women’s rights in modern-day China, as well as providing a detailed historical analysis of how these had been changed over time. The translations may have affected the overall
accuracy of the information, as well as the author’s original Japanese background potentially resulting in bias against the Chinese system, thus awareness was taken in the use of information from this chapter. Even so, as my PIP shifted in focus to largely exploring the Chinese situation in the 1980s, much of this information was used to develop a conceptual understanding and empathy, rather than in the writing stages of my PIP.


This was useful in understanding the effects of the Communist Party coming to power in 1949, and the 1966 Cultural Revolution, on the rights and freedoms of women. The extremely emotive language denoted a significant bias towards women, and the author’s background and perspective as an American-Chinese suggests a possible ethnocentricity of Western values. Nonetheless, the account of events and perceptions of women during these particular historical periods were used in developing my macro and cross-cultural aspects, although I was sure to corroborate this with other sources due to the decreased reliability of the source.


**Journal Articles**


   In this article, Bauman argues how the changing patterns of global migration have impacted upon the identities of individuals across the world, particularly for migrant individuals. He argues the inapplicability of the idea of a ‘rooted’ identity, instead affirming ‘interlocked diasporas’ as being the basis of identity formation in the globalised world. These notions of the ‘intertwining of continuity and discontinuity’ in the perspectives of individuals were important in my conceptual understanding in the writing of my third chapter, enabling an awareness of the constant flux of opinions individuals are subject to. This article was thus useful in my background knowledge, although its emphasis on scientific methodologies and philosophical critiques rendered it less reliable for my particular investigation.


   This article focuses upon the writing of three different books in understanding the nature of the links between gender, culture and migration. Whilst the books themselves are based upon situations and circumstances very different from my individual subject of investigation, and hence rendering much of the data invalid, Barber’s criticism of their techniques and methodologies were important in the development of my own methodologies and the ways in which I used their results and data. It also shed light on the different ways a sociology of migration has been approached, and affected the decision-making around my personal choice of methodologies.

This article focuses upon education as an agent of socialisation in the development of second-generation migrants’ perspectives, with the ability to influence perceptions and structures surrounding an individual’s relation to their migrant community, as well as the wider community in their new nation. It takes a critical perspective on how policies and educational programs can continue to perpetuate existing social tensions and problems. Whilst this study was largely focused upon the ways in which issues of race and ethnicity were navigated, it nonetheless drew conclusions which could be similarly applied to ideas of gender and gender constructs. Whilst much of the data and information itself was therefore not valid to my personal research, the broader theoretical basis, as well as exploration of education as a significant tool for socialisation, was useful in developing my conceptual and theoretical understandings.


Exploring the concept of ‘identity’ in migrant individuals, this article focused upon the role of macro institutions in establishing whether an individual felt a sense of belonging to, and identification with, their host society. It was insightful as it discussed several different aspects such as legal status, citizenship, and education, in how migrants conceptualised their roles in their new society, thus highlighting the links between the macro and micro worlds. Its reliability, and applicability, was diminished due to its focus on European experiences, and as each society inherently has different attitudes towards migrants, and each individual is influenced by their own socialisation processes, many of the results discussed could not be similarly applied. Nonetheless, the researchers’ approach on the anthropology of the situation ensured their views were unbiased, and their methodologies and attempts to corroborate their data through many sources affirmed this.

This article was a review of a book of the same title, focusing on the globalisation, localisation and hybridisation of Chinese culture, particularly in the Westernised city of Hong Kong. It summarised the concept of hybridisation and its subsequent influence on identity, popular culture, religion, as well as the influence of globalisation. Being written for a university audience and using objective language, this article can be considered valid and reliable in its content, and was useful for me in developing a further understanding of the meaning of hybridisation, and its impacts on the identities of Chinese individuals in a globalising, Westernising world. As such, it was useful in the early stages of my writing process, contextualising my research, although was not immensely useful to my research or development stages.


Focusing upon the nature of gender being a social construct, this article was incredibly insightful in contributing to my understanding of the interrelation between migrant, gender, and identity. It cited previous migration theories as lacking in discussion surrounding the gendered nature of migration, as well as its impacts upon both men and women alike. It also focused on the role of the state, as a macro institution, in perpetuating or subverting gender norms, in the increasingly transnational process of migration. Whilst Pessar and Mahler’s conclusions were taken from studies from a number of nations, their predominant focus on Canada meant their conclusions cannot be blanketly applied to experiences of migrants to Australia, however, their framing of the conceptual complexities was imperative to my understanding. The information was deemed to be reliable due to its ability to be corroborated with other sources.

Research surrounding the sociological aspects of migration was conducted following the expert interviews with Dr Christina Ho and Professor Gail Hershatter, and this article was a launching point for discussing the interrelation between gender and migration. Sinke recounts the development of gender being used as a category for analysing the experiences and impacts of migration, in an economic, political and social sense. The information was largely unbiased due to the narrative-like nature of the article, and was reliable due to the information being similar to that of other sources. This article was used primarily for my third chapter, and although wasn’t cited, was central to the development of my theoretical understanding.

Tastoglou, Evangelia, Valerie Preston and Brian Ray. “Gender and Migration Intersections” *Canadian Issues*, no.6 (2005), pp. 91-93.

This article argued for the necessity of gender being used as a lens for examining the norms and experiences of migrant individuals and generations. It asserted that an investigation into the interrelation between gender and migrant experiences would develop a further understanding of the changes occurring in society due to immigration and the growing socio-cultural diversity, and their consequences in the increasingly globalised world. As the article was published in a Canadian journal, I had to critically analyse and discern whether their conclusions were at all applicable to Australian society, meaning the quantitative data was often not valid to my research. Whilst their statistics were thus irrelevant, its analysis of migration trends and its implications for the future were particularly central to the understanding behind my third chapter.
Online Resources


Sociologist Ien Ang, who identifies as a Chinese-Australian feminist, discusses the idea of feminism of non-white cultures in this article. She argues there exists a difference between the experiences of white women and those of ‘other’ cultures, and this difference needs to be acknowledged and engaged with as such. As a Chinese-Australian female and a prominent author, her views were useful in the development of my topic, however, as my focus gradually shifted away from feminism and onto gender roles and expectations, this article becomes less useful. Furthermore, her discussion of her own individual experience, and lack of focus on that of other Chinese-Australian women, decreased the reliability of her work.


This website was used to establish an initial understanding of the status of gender and feminist consciousness in modern China. It provided a very detailed, factual-based overview of the changes which had occurred in Chinese history, with particular analysis of the effects of the various legal changes, such as those ushered in during the Reform Era. Because of the unknown author, and posting on a ‘wordpress’ website, which subsequently diminished its overall reliability, I took extra care in ensuring all information could be corroborated with that from other sources. It proved useful in understanding the macro aspect of my PIP, and was used as a basis for forming interview questions.

Following my expert interview with Christina Ho which established the importance of migration in the development of gender norms and roles, this article provided an interesting perspective regarding the significance of links between feminism and migration. As Feministing is a feminist website targeted towards a younger audience, and due to the conversational nature of the website, the claims and ideas of the article needed to be substantiated with other research and sources to ensure its accuracy, hence decreasing the reliability of the source. As an immigrant herself, the author also tended to emphasise the links between the ‘oppression’ and ‘injustice’ of both women and immigrants, tending to emphasise her own struggles. Nonetheless, this article provided a useful background as to the nature of the links between migration and gender.


This article provided the inspiration behind the title of my PIP, but most importantly, served to offer a commentary on the Mao proverb, “Women Hold up Half the Sky”. It denoted her own standing as a feminist, and the way this phrase resonated with her understanding of gender and feminism. As a conversational post, and based in her American context, this article didn’t provide any particular insight into my PIP, but served to be a basis from which I thought about the standing of women in macro society, and the extent to which Mao’s proverb was a reality in modern Western and Chinese societies.

This article, written by the chair of the Simone de Beauvoir prize for women’s liberty, recounted the particular challenges that women’s rights activists in China faced, in accordance with the emphasis of economic expansion taken by the world’s media and Chinese government. As the chair of the Simone de Beauvoir prize, Kristeva would inherently be biased towards the feminist cause, impacting upon her portrayal of the status of feminism in China. Nevertheless, the article indicated the challenges women across China still faced, which I was able to conduct further research upon and integrate into the formation of questions for the expert interviews.


Being a more ‘official’ document in that it was an English translation of a document written to the United Nations, this was an interesting publication which revealed the status of women’s rights in modern-day China. The article was written from a Chinese perspective, and as an official source, would therefore innately connote bias and subjectivity, and a want to present the Chinese society in a more positive light. Whilst this information was therefore used cautiously, it was useful in gathering a greater understanding of the ways in which gender was actively constructed by the government, in both the 1980s, and now.


This site was one of the first resources accessed in my PIP process, and was significant in providing a direction for the topic of my Project. The site explains the
term and history of the feminist movement, which was initially the area which I
began my research in, however also discusses the role of women from non-English
speaking backgrounds in the continuation of the feminist movement, as well as
their fundamentally different experiences of feminism from Australian women of
Anglo descent. Being a site designed to appeal to individuals who hadn’t had very
much knowledge or exposure to the feminist movement, the language and
information largely lacked detail and thus wasn’t particularly useful to the writing
or research processes of the PIP. However, it provided a new aspect in my thinking
which ultimately wound up being the focus for my investigation, and led me to find
the writings of Chinese-Australian feminist and sociologist Ien Ang.

at Western Culture” Accessed 16 January 2012 from

This article discussed China’s President, Hu Jintao, and his perspective of the need
for China to defend itself against the Westernising of the ideological and cultural
fields of China. Accessed in the early stages of my PIP research, it was particularly
interesting the envisage the ways in which Western and Chinese cultures are
viewed differently by individuals in power. The subjectivity of this article denoted
a certain bias, as the author often portrayed Hu’s views extremely negatively,
however, was useful in the initial stages in establishing the common perceptions of
Chinese values being very different, and rather anathematic, to that of the West.
PRIMARY RESEARCH

Focus Groups with Chinese-Australian Adolescent Girls

◊ Focus Group #1, conducted 03/04/2012, ages 15-17 [Jemma*, Anya*, Louise*, Jasmine*, Jennifer*, Alison*] - *names all changed with permission

◊ Focus Group #2, conducted 03/04/2012, ages 16-18 [Elli*, Amelia*, Alicia* Emily*] - *names all changed with permission

◊ Focus Group #3, conducted 04/04/2012, ages 15-16 [Trisha*, Lillian*, Lily*, Katie*, Anika*, Sherry*]- *names all changed with permission

These three focus groups were all extremely useful in developing a greater understanding for the reasons behind the development and internalisation of gender values amongst Chinese adolescent girls, and hence were important in the proving of my hypothesis. Whilst the focus groups themselves varied in usefulness and the degree to which the participants were engaged in the conversations and ideas, the insights and micro experiences they provided proved invaluable in furthering my conceptual and analytical understanding. The group environment allowed a comfortable and most engaging conversation, with my first focus group being particularly useful, and hence, often analysed, in my PIP. Whilst the age bracket was slightly smaller than that from which I drew my questionnaire results from, this was a deliberate choice due to these girls’ being more open to discuss and voice their opinions. Comparison between the three focus groups added reliability to my data, and my ability to mostly keep the conversation relevant rendered it to be valid research. Their importance and centrality to my PIP was not only in providing extensive reasons behind their viewpoints, but also serving as a basis for addressing my cross-cultural and continuity and change components. Furthermore, it was hugely important in the development of interview and expert interview questions, as well as providing a point of comparison for my personal reflection.
Interviews with Chinese Women

◊ Elise*, 52 year-old from Hong Kong, 19/03/2012- *name changed with permission
◊ Julia*, 56 year-old from Hong Kong, 09/04/2012- *name changed with permission
◊ Rachael*, 48 year-old from Hong Kong, 11/04/2012- *name changed with permission
◊ Anita*, 44 year-old from Mainland China, 29/04/2012- *name changed with permission
◊ Shirley*, 53 year-old from Mainland China, 29/04/2012- *name changed with permission
◊ Elaine*, 42 year-old from Mainland China, 11/05/2012- *name changed with permission
◊ Fiona*, 45 year-old from Hong Kong, 13/05/2012- *name changed with permission
◊ Sarah*, 51 year-old from Mainland China, 17/05/2012- *name changed with permission
◊ Tracy*, 44 year-old from Hong Kong, 18/05/2012- *name changed with permission

These in-depth interviews constituted the bulk of the research into my cross-cultural component, and was extremely important in allowing me to develop a more empathetic understanding of their experiences, and hence the values advocated within my own family. Whilst some of these interviews did become somewhat uncomfortable at times due to some occurrences of misunderstanding or misinterpretation (hence some of them not being referenced in my PIP), and proved to be the most challenging aspect of my research, much insight was offered into their individual experiences, both in their country of origin, and of Western society and culture. Even so, the interviews varied in usefulness, as indicated through only six of them being directly referenced in my PIP. Through some of the ideas raised in my interview, I was able to gain a more perceptive awareness of the psychological impacts of migration, and the consequent sociological results. As most of these women were also mothers, I was able to discuss the roles and ideas they had passed onto their children, insights which were extremely useful in the writing of my futures chapter. It was from these interviews that I was able to develop a more sophisticated understanding before the conducting of my expert interviews, with these results particularly used with my expert interview with Professor Gail Hershatter.
**Expert Interview #1- Dr. Christina Ho**

◊ **Interview conducted in person (13/04/2012) with Dr Christina Ho, Senior Lecturer in Social and Political Change at the University of Technology Sydney.**

The discovery of Dr Christina Ho’s 2004 work *Migration as Feminisation* was a turning point in my secondary research, as it detailed my findings of the domestication of women’s roles on a macro level. As such, this interview focused around a detailed discussion of the impact of migration on the roles of women, and its potential implications on the perceptions of the Chinese migrant diaspora. She suggested that many of my findings surrounding the more patriarchal views of Chinese families, which I had previously sought to explain as a factor relating to culture, was rather an effect of migration, and subsequently suggested I delve into this aspect. This interview proved particularly useful in the writing of my third chapter, as well as in the wider explanations and details of my Project. As her research was conducted almost 10 years earlier, I was careful to ensure the views were still relevant, although the similar subject focus was such that the research proved largely reliable and useful.

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**Expert Interview #2- Professor Gail Hershatter**

◊ **Interview conducted over Skype (26/05/2012) with Professor Gail Hershatter, Lecturer in East Asian & Feminist Studies at the University of Santa Cruz, California.**

Hershatter’s 2002 work with Emily Honig, *Personal Voices: Chinese Women in the 1980s*, was a resource which provided much information into my cross-cultural and continuity and change components. The opportunity to interview her allowed me to discuss some of my own findings surrounding the nature of gender roles and expectations in 1980s Chinese society. As she had conducted her research in China, she was able to affirm the validity of my findings, whilst also suggesting I further investigate the role of historical forces in the shaping of Chinese identity, as well as the unique environment of the 1980s. As her work was predominantly done with women from the PRC, it led to less usefulness as many of my interviewers were from Hong Kong, however, her extensive research into the field provided enormous assistance to the theoretical grounding of my Project.
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