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The Adjustment Needs of Chinese Immigrant Women Living in Bristol – A Narrative Inquiry

Jenny Kar See YUEN

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Education in the Faculty of Social Sciences, Graduate School of Education

May 2008

50,214 Words
ABSTRACT

According to tradition, Chinese women are submissive; they are neglected in the UK Chinese community and relatively invisible in British society. Whilst there is sufficient evidence to support the view that Chinese women immigrants experience difficulties in their daily lives, little is known about these women as a unique group. This qualitative narrative inquiry sets out the untold stories of three Chinese immigrant women, including the researcher, and explores the influence of their cultural values on their adjustment needs during their settlement in Britain. In response to semi-structured interviews, the women documented and illustrated their adjustment needs since their migration to Britain. The researcher is a Chinese woman migrant from Hong Kong who came to Britain over three years ago. Her experience of numerous personal, cultural and professional changes has left her struggling to locate her identity. During informal conversations with other Chinese women immigrants in different social contexts, the researcher developed an interest in studying Chinese women migrants and their settlement in Britain. The main interest focussed on how they make meaning of their life experiences as people who have crossed multiple geographic, cultural and psychological borders. This produced the main aim of the study which was to learn about the cultural roles these women had been brought up with and how these messages may have affected their adjustment needs since their move to Britain. The life stories of the research participants are interwoven with the autoethnographic narratives of the researcher. The three stories may resonate for readers with similar cultural concerns. The study aims to provide information for local government organisations to enable them to understand the diversity and similarity of these women's experiences since migrating. At the same time the research highlights the urgency of re-enforcing multiculturalism in UK government policy(ies) and education reform.
DEDICATION

To my beloved parents:

Linen & (Blind Fellow) Lam
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During the time I was writing this dissertation I felt very challenged. Now that I look back over the journey of this study, I am aware of the many friends, colleagues and mentors who were involved in creating this study in its various aspects. I would like to thank you and acknowledge your participation in this study.

First and foremost, I want to thank the participants for their time and their wonderful narratives of rich life experiences. I hope that this work reflects in some part of the experiences we shared, the understandings we achieved and the sense we made of those experiences.

I am indebted to many people, some of them know and some of them do not know who they are.

A special thanks to Dr Sheila Trahar for her interest in this study was constant and the cultural lens that she brought to this subject enriched this work. Her careful reading of multiple drafts of my work challenged me to clarify ideas and arguments that were vague or half-formulated. Her passionate scholarship on behalf of the oppressed and her critical positionality enriched my understanding of power, race, ethnicity, gender and subjectivity. Her deep interest in my work, her thoughtful insights and her thorough reviews of my work enabled me to achieve my research goals. I was so fortunate to work with a rigorous and supportive supervisor like her. I am forever grateful for her guidance and support.

I can’t adequately express enough gratitude to other colleagues at 35, Berkeley Square, Graduate School of Education, for their time, support, insights and encouragement. My thoughtful conversations with Professor Carolyn Ellis provided me with insight and incredible opportunities to learn the skills of “doing qualitative narrative inquiry”. She is a model for conducting research in this field.

Many thanks to many other colleagues and friends who accompanied me on this journey. My deep thanks to Jacqui and Kev, for their encouragement made the long road much easier and interesting.
AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

The work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original except where indicated by special reference in the text and no part of the thesis has been submitted for any other degree.

Any views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University of Bristol.

The thesis has not been presented to any other University for examination in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Signed: Jennyin                     Date: 28-8-2008
DEFINITION OF TERMS

In order to provide both clarity and specificity for the present study, the following is a definition of the terms used.

Acculturation: Acculturation is defined as a multidimensional process (Padilla, 1980a; Berry, 1990; Ying & Lee, 2000; Rosenthal & Feldman, 1990), one in which “groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent change in the original culture patterns of either or both groups” (Redfield, Linton, Herkovitz, 1936:149).

Assimilation: Assimilation is defined as the acculturative outcome in which an individual adopts the cultural values and beliefs of the host culture at the expense of preserving one’s own ethnic cultural values and beliefs.

Chinese Cultural Values: These are the beliefs and principles that organize the lives of Chinese individuals. In this study, Chinese values are defined as a set of ideals and beliefs characterized by principles. In the current study, Chinese cultural values are defined as being: (a) conformity to norms, (b) family recognition through achievement, (c) emotional self-control, (d) collectivitism, (e) humility, and (f) filial piety.

Chinese immigrant women: In this study, Chinese immigrant women are defined as females between the ages of 35-55 from Hong Kong or Mainland China. She must currently reside in North Somerset, an area located within South West region of England. She must have resided in Britain for over three years.

Chinese Language Ability: This is defined as the ability for individuals to communicate using a Chinese language or dialect. Native Language fluency is defined as being both verbal and graphical in nature. In other words, one’s ability to speak, read, and write in an Asian language is assessed.

Culture: Culture is defined as a set of stable and widely shared ideals or beliefs that function to both organize (Brislin, 1990) and distinguish one ethnic
group from another (Billson, 1995). Culture is comprised of both subjective and objective components. Subjective elements of culture include components such as religiosity, family roles, attitudes, and beliefs while objective cultures are social structures created within a particular society (Triandis, 1990). The focus of the present study is directed towards the subjective component of culture.

**Emigrant, Immigrant, and Migrant**: a person who was not born in Britain, but now permanently resides in Britain, regardless of citizenship status.

**Emigration**: leaving one’s native country or region to settle in another

**Immigration**: moving in to a new country and resides permanently.

**Migration**: moving out from the native country

**Bristol**: Bristol is one of the North Somerset counties which is a geographic area within South West region of England.
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Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter illustrates how I started my research. Why this research matters to me and further, the theme and the outline of the research will be discussed. A brief account of the history of Hong Kong and how it is related to my research will be given.

1.1 Outline of the Research

According to tradition, Chinese women are submissive. They are neglected in the Chinese community and it is as if they are ‘invisible’ in British society. There is sufficient evidence to support the view that Chinese women immigrants experience difficulties in their daily lives. These difficulties include seeking support and public services when in need (Wang, 2000); their employment status in a foreign country (Boyle et al. 2001); their adaptation challenges since living in Britain (Au, 2002); their experiences of family relationships since migration (Lee, et al. 2002); their mental health during the migration process (Bhugra, 2004); as well as their beliefs and practices with respect to health while living in a western country (Green, et al. 2006).

Being part of the Chinese women migrants’ community from Hong Kong, I experienced huge personal, cultural and professional changes in moving to Britain. Therefore, I have been interested to learn about the cultural role messages internalised by other Chinese women migrants and how these messages affect these women’s adjustment issues.

Chinese culture has traditionally required that a woman subject herself to the authority of her father when she is young, her husband when she marries and her son when she is widowed (Tang, et al. 2002, p. 976). How these stereotypical views of Chinese women influence their migration experiences and how they respond are important and timely questions (see Chan, 2005). By understanding how Chinese women manage their migration, we can gain insights into their experiences accordingly. This study intends to explore the effects of traditional cultural values on Chinese women immigrants in Britain, especially in Bristol, throughout their migration process.

There are many studies of immigration, immigrants and their identities (Keating, 1990; Song, 1999, 2003; Baynham & De Fina 2005), however, since
most studies of Chinese women immigrants have been subsumed into general migration literature, not much is known about these women as a unique group. In filling some of these gaps, my research contributes to scholarly work in a number of ways. First, it enriches feminist scholarship on women immigrants, an understudied topic. Second, the data provide valuable information on immigration experiences by documenting the acculturation of Chinese women. Third, this research adds knowledge to the understanding of overseas Chinese ethnic communities, which has been dominated by both Eurocentric and androcentric views. Finally, it provides comprehensive and in-depth data on a group of ethnic minority migrant women from which analysis can be drawn for future comparison.

The intention of this study is to unfold the unheard life stories of three Chinese women immigrants living in Britain and to explore the effects of their internalised cultural values and their adjustment needs during their migration process. The present study adopts a qualitative narrative inquiry approach, using semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions in Chinese language, to explore Chinese women immigrants' adjustment needs since they migrated to Britain. All the participants are over 30 years of age, with secondary school and above education, and have been living in Britain for over three years. How the women spoke for themselves served as the basis of interpretation. Their narratives were obtained with minimal preconceptions and shaping on the part of the investigator. I intend to illustrate the life stories of two women, weaving their narratives into my own. However, this kind of study cannot be generalised but the in depth experiences that are revealed may provide insight for the local policy makers to facilitate adjustment experiences of Chinese women migrants without undermining their specific cultural values.

The primary research question is:

- What are the effects of traditional cultural values on Chinese women migrants in Britain, especially in Bristol, throughout their migration process?

Secondary questions are:

- What are the factors leading to each woman’s migration and why to Britain?
• What are each woman’s experiences since migrating to Britain and her adjustment needs?
• What changes have occurred in each woman’s life since migrating to Britain and how does she communicate with indigenous people?

In making meaning of the life experiences among this specific population, the underlying research assumptions and the research question itself were ‘open’ to allow the emergent discovery of these women’s life stories. I relied heavily on ‘studying the data’, relating them to their cultural origins rather than ‘pouring the data’ into theoretical frameworks or substantive analyses as to do so might limit the innovation of ideas that could then be further refined.

1.2 Chinese Migration

During the past century, Chinese migrants have tended to move from what is considered an under-developed country to more developed countries (e.g. the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia) for a better standard of living. More recently, the motives for migration are not simply economic, but also include political and religious factors. Each individual might have different motives and stories behind his or her decision to migrate. Yet once these migrants reach their destination, it is not always easy to adjust to the new environment and settle in the new country. The ease and difficulties of resettlement depend on factors such as language, discrimination, unemployment or underemployment, and separation of families (Kuah, 1996; Sinn, 1998; Chiang, 2001; Lee et al. 2002; Kuah, 2006).

The Chinese experience abroad has been global. Chinese women now outnumber male immigrants to the major immigration countries of Australia, the United States, Canada and other European countries (Ray, 2002; Pina-Guerrasimhoff, 2006), yet their position and role in migration and settlement patterns has been largely ignored (Ray, 2002).

According to Chinese tradition: “If you marry a chicken, then you must follow the chicken; if you marry a dog, then you must follow the dog (嫁 雞 隨 雞, 嫁 狗 隨 狗)”. This idiom helps to explain one possible motivation of Chinese women who have migrated to England. Some of them accompanied their husbands and emigrated to England, some of them joined their husbands in
England and some of them are more adventurous becoming “email brides” (women from mainland China who want to live abroad will look for a transnational marriage through the Internet and then “travel across to the other country to be a bride”) (過埠新娘). Therefore, they will meet their husbands for the first time when they arrive in England.

1.2.1 Chinese Migration to Britain from Hong Kong

After its defeat in the Opium War in 1840, China signed the Treaty of Nanking with the British in 1842 and Hong Kong became a British colony. Half a century later, in 1898 and 1899, Kowloon and the New Territories respectively were also leased for 99 years to Britain.

Hong Kong was established as an entry port providing access to the British for trade with China. However, the relative stability of Hong Kong was affected by a sudden influx of refugees from the Mainland as a result of the Communists’ takeover in 1949 (Owen & Roberts, 1999). The biggest impact was on population size, which increased from 2.3 million in 1949 to 4.7 million in 1979 (She, 1979).

British colonialism and imperialism played a significant part in constructing Hong Kong and its people’s consciousness and identity. Hong Kong was subject to British rule and as a colonised city for over a hundred years, it became a city caught between three dominant cultures: “British Colonial”, “Chinese Communist” (Chow, 1993), and “Confucian Chinese paternalism”. Hence, the Hong Kong Chinese have developed a sense of marginalised “otherness” and are “fascinatingly contradictory in their diasporic consciousness” (Chow, 1993, p. 24). They identify themselves with the “Chinese culture”, but distance themselves from Chinese communism, were resistant to British colonialism yet value Hong Kong’s prosperity which resulted from British colonialism. The residents of Hong Kong were trapped as “objects”, as the “imperialism’s others”, and women in particular were trapped by both “Western imperialism and Chinese paternalism” (Chow, 1993).

Hong Kong people, therefore, have become opportunistic, and over the years, developed tactics to negotiate their cultural identities (Chow, 1993). They have developed a “transient nature”, which means they are willing and prepared to uproot themselves to where opportunities are (Lau & Kuan, 1988; Skeldon,
In fact, some Chinese migrants have become transmigrants as a result of increasing global transmigration\(^1\) in recent years. Western imperialism has a legacy of “everyday culture and value” (Chow, 1993, p. 7) that dominates ideologically not only the colonised people, but the colonisers themselves. Such imperialist and colonialist legacies, along with the uncertainty of Hong Kong’s future after 1997, caused migration from Hong Kong to accelerate (Smart, 1994). Consequently, many Hong Kong Chinese came to Britain, a predominantly White society, which is seen as culturally and institutionally superior as well as a land of opportunities.

To make a discussion of Hong Kong Chinese emigration to Britain more complete, it is essential to take a brief look at the historical, structural and cultural contexts of Hong Kong and how its various circumstances affected the emigration of its people. In this way, we are able to gain a holistic view of the circumstances bridging immigration and emigration.

### 1.3 Migration to and from Hong Kong up to 1997

As a creation of colonialism and imperialism, Hong Kong was first occupied by the British in January 1841, when it was still a village populated by not more than 6,000 inhabitants (Skeldon, 1994b, p. 21). Under the minimal economic intervention of British rule, it grew into a prosperous and vibrant capitalist metropolis, particularly during the 1960’s. For the following 30 years, Hong Kong’s economy grew at an accelerated rate. Its growth was facilitated by various waves of migrants from Mainland China. From the Sino-Japanese War to 1937, to the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, and the famine in 1959-61 (Skeldon, 1994b), thousands of Chinese refugees from provinces along the South China Sea fled to Hong Kong. These people moved to Hong Kong for political shelter and economic survival. Most brought their families along. Some left family members behind, only to be reunited later. Others started a new family in Hong Kong, while maintaining some contact with those left behind. Still others were less fortunate, and were never united with their families again.

\(^{1}\) Transmigration is facilitated by global communications and transportation revolutions, the need for the states to attract foreign investment through multinationals, the stronger protection accorded to minorities in the receiving societies and the adaptable tradition of sojourning itself (Cohen, 1997:164-5).
Culturally, the Hong Kong Chinese are a “marginal people”, very different from the traditional and Socialist Chinese from Mainland China/People’s Republic of China (PRC) (Lau & Kuan, 1988). On the one hand, Hong Kong Chinese are deprived of the formal and institutional training of Confucianism or Marxist-Maoist socialism, and on the other hand, they are unable to absorb entirely the Western ideologies and practices imposed by the colonialists and imperialists. They have become jugglers who try hard to strike a balance between the old and the new, the East and the West.

Such marginality constitutes rootlessness. Most Hong Kong Chinese have never developed a concrete identity of their own. Raised under Western capitalism, they fear Communism (Chow, 1993; Kuah, 1996), and therefore are less likely to look “inward” to China for their identity, except for sentimental reasons related to past generations. Yet, they are equally loosely attached to Hong Kong, a place that feels more like an adopted home (see Skeldon, 1994b; Kuah, 1996; Chiang, 2003). Therefore, Hong Kong people are more likely to look outward, to the West, for better opportunities and higher standards of living.

In the 1990’s, Hong Kong as a migrant territory populated by 6.6 million people, was one of the most densely populated cities in the world (Skeldon, 1994b, p. 24) yet most of its people had “superficial roots in the territory”. The Hong Kong Chinese (Hong Kong Ren, 香港人), who either directly experienced the flight from China, or are descendants of those who had such experiences, are more ready, willing and prepared to uproot themselves from Hong Kong (Lau & Kuan, 1988). Consequently, Hong Kong, over the years, has developed into a “transhipment point for migrants going overseas” (Skeldon, 1994b, p. 24).

Emigration, therefore, has become a part of life for most Hong Kong people. Emigration, particularly to ‘advanced Western societies’, has become a goal for many. To systematically analyse the history of emigration of these people, we can divide it roughly into four phases (Skeldon, 1994b): the ‘old’ overseas Chinese emigration before the 1930’s, the transition stage during the 1950’s and 1960’s, new patterns in late 1960’s and mid-1980s, and emigration from mid-1980s to 1997.

The pre-1930 period was marked by the export of unskilled male labour to settler societies such as Australia, Britain, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States. When the doors to these countries were shut early in the 20th century,
emigration from Hong Kong changed its course to countries in Southeast Asia which subsequently also restricted immigration. There was no distinction made between the Hong Kong Chinese and those from Mainland China at this initial stage because of the fluidity of border-crossing between the two places before the establishment of the People's Republic of China under communist rule. During this period, a distinctive Hong Kong identity was far from developed.

The second wave was marked by Hong Kong emigration to the United Kingdom, from the villages of rural New Territories, in the 1950's and 1960's. During this period, Hong Kong was undergoing rapid industrialisation, which undermined the rural economy of the New Territories, thereby forcing villagers to look outside for employment (Baxter & Raw, 1988). At the same time, post-war economic restructuring in Britain fostered the growth of service industries, part of which included the increasing demand for ready-cooked meals. This situation encouraged Chinese men from the New Territories to move to Britain and work in the growing ethnic fast food industry (Baxter & Raw, 1988). The Immigration Act at this time was male focused, but it allowed women and dependents to join their husbands and fathers (Baxter & Raw, 1988). Yet, by the 1960's, the British restricted Hong Kong Chinese emigration as a result of recession and a decline in demand for labour in the food service industry. This move ended the second wave of Hong Kong emigration to England.

In 1967, the communist riots in Hong Kong caused fears of political instability. The riots coincided with the change in immigration policies in the West, leading to the third stage of emigration in Hong Kong history. In the following decade, Hong Kong people tended to emigrate to Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States.

The fourth stage of emigration began after the signing of the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration, which proclaimed the return of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty on July 1, 1997. China promised to operate on a "one country, two systems" model by which Hong Kong would remain capitalist and sustain a high degree of political autonomy. Those who had survived upheavals in China did not believe that Hong Kong's capitalist system would remain untouched (Fyson, 1984, p. 16; Chow, 1993).

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2 "one country" refers to China, "two systems" refers to socialism in China and capitalism in Hong Kong.
Since 1997, Hong Kong has undergone a historically significant transition. Some would contend that the handover of sovereignty to the PRC has generated a "crisis of confidence" (Yu, 1983). The 1989 massacre in Tiananmen Square was a particularly critical event in eroding Hong Kong people’s confidence in the Beijing regime. Many demonstrating students and workers were killed, when China used military force to crack down on their pro-democracy movement. This massacre exacerbated fear among residents of Hong Kong. The insecurity which Hong Kong residents feel about the future is partially reflected in the dramatic rise in the level of emigration (Skeldon, 1994b, p. 31). Hence, what is popularly known as the ‘1997 Issue’ has sparked what some would call “one of the most orderly mass emigrations in Hong Kong history”. Britain, among all countries, became the principal source of destination for Hong Kong migrants.

In an environment of decolonisation and Sino-British disagreement, the Hong Kong people are re-evaluating their status relating to the transfer of sovereignty from Britain to China. This re-evaluation is coupled with a sense of uncertainty resulting from the rapid shift to a post-industrial, post-modern era. The return to China could bring authoritarianism, yet movement toward post-industrialism and postmodernism represents liberalism. How do Hong Kong people cope with these two dialectically opposed socio-political and socioeconomic processes? In order to cope with political uncertainty, Hong Kong people struggle their way through by negotiating migration and marriage strategies (Kuah, 1996).

1.4 Adjustment needs

An immigrant is not a person lacking a social and psychological past allowing them to adjust / acculturate with ease to new society. Researchers often pay little attention to the implications of this reality for adjustment. Since the 1950s, issues related to integration of migrants were brought to the attention of sociologists (Baglioni, 1964, p. 125). For some scholars, changes in orientation towards one’s cultural group and the larger society as a result of the migration process can occur in multiple domains, such as behavioural practices, identity, and values (Phinney, et al. 2001; Berry, 2003).

The study of acculturation has traditionally fallen within the realm of cultural anthropology (Olmedo, 1980; Berry, 1980). A classic definition of
acculturation has been offered by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovitz (1936) in which they stated:

> Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent change in the original culture patterns of either or both groups (p. 149).

For the purposes of this study, the term acculturation refers to the processes and adjustments that occur on an individual level rather than a group level.

Acculturation generally referred to the process whereby the attitudes and/or behaviours of persons from one culture were modified as a result of contact with a host culture (Moyerman & Forman, 1992). Typical aspects of acculturation have included language and food preferences. The phases of the traditional multidimensional process included contact, conflict, and adaptation (Berry, 1986). Studies have generally found that subsequent generations of immigrants tended to be more acculturated to the host culture (Rick & Forward, 1992).

Researchers have come to agree that acculturation is a multi-dimensional process (Padilla, 1980a; 1980b; Berry, 1990; Rosenthal & Feldman 1990; Tsai, et al. 2000). With the process of acculturation, an individual who is exposed to a culture different from his or her own may choose to assimilate, reject, deculturate, or integrate as a consequence of the contact. Berry (1980) offered definitions for each of these four possible outcomes. First, assimilation was described as the "relinquishing of cultural identity and moving into the larger society" (Berry, 1980, p. 13). This process fails to preserve an individual's cultural heritage, but results in a positive relationship between the individual and the host culture. Second, rejection was defined as being an individual's choice to withdraw from the dominant society. With this outcome, the individual maintains his or her cultural identity, but develops a negative relationship with members of the host culture. Rejection is different from segregation. In segregation, societal barriers prevent a person's integration into the society. With rejection, it is the individual who chooses not to participate in the host culture. Third, deculturation, also called marginality, occurs as a consequence of acculturation when the individual loses both cultural and psychological contact with the culture of origin and the host culture. In this case, the individual does not maintain any vestiges of his or her cultural origins and fails to cultivate a positive relationship with the dominant
culture. Finally, an individual can integrate into the dominant culture as a result of acculturative processes. Integration is a term often used interchangeably with biculturalism (Sue & Sue, 1990; Tang & Dion, 1999).

With the process of biculturalism, the individual preserves his or her "cultural integrity as well as the moving towards becoming an integral part of the larger societal framework" (Berry, 1980, p. 13). In this case, the individual is able to maintain his or her cultural values while simultaneously developing a positive relationship with the host culture. Integration is the aspect of acculturation most relevant to the adjustment of the migrants in the present study. However, the Chinese community in Britain is known as a cohesive one, at least on a national scale. There are cities such as London, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow and Cardiff, where there are ‘Chinatowns’ and significant populations of Chinese people. The Chinese in Britain (unlike the Chinese in New York City, or San Francisco, or other major metropolitan areas in the USA) are the most geographically dispersed minority group in Britain. Their spatial dispersal therefore limits their access to all of the benefits which can accrue from the kinds of tightly knit ethnic enclaves in which migrant groups selectively delay assimilation / acculturation (Portes & Zhou, 1993). Related to this, there is a real question about the extent to which existing Chinese immigrant networks help to shield Chinese migrants from racial prejudice in their process of acculturation in the wider society (see Chung, 1990; Parker, 1994; Song, 1999).

As a result of the acculturation process, Chinese migrants may experience certain psychological responses. For example, there may be changes in language, cognitive styles, personality, identity, attitudes, cultural beliefs, practices and acculturative stress (Berry, 1980). Berry noted that different outcomes of the acculturation process may result in differing levels of stress. Marginalisation tends to result in the most stress, followed by rejection, assimilation, and integration respectively. In the past, overseas Chinese people, either consciously or unconsciously, regarded acculturation as an inevitable process (Lee, 1952). Nowadays, the younger members, the second generation of the Chinese community that is alongside members of the older generation are beginning to engage in the process of integration rather than assimilation, as biculturalism is the most adaptive outcome of the acculturation process (see Huang & Spurgeon, 2006). However, there are documents suggesting that several factors may
enhance the stability and maintenance of traditional cultural values, such as: family socialization practices (ibid.); native language fluency (ibid.); community and one’s geographic location (Massey, 1985; Kwon, 1987; Fong, 1994; Lopez, 1996); religious institutions and affiliation (Dhruvararajan, 1993); discrimination and the model minority myth (Hasting et al. 1982; Uba, 1994; Ruggiero, et al. 1996).

1.5 Summary

This Chapter states the background, goals and rationale for my research. In this chapter I primarily address the following questions: Why did I choose women as a subject? Why is this research important to me? How can I connect my migration experiences with other Chinese women immigrants? Why do I think that the experiences of the informants and my experiences are not only unique but also similar?.

In order to understand the cultural retention component of a bicultural identity, it is important to gain an understanding of the background of Chinese women who have emigrated from Hong Kong/PRC which will be given in the following chapter.

1.6 The Structure of the Dissertation

Chapter Two provides the conceptual framework of Chinese culture, traditional values and beliefs of Chinese women up to present. Descriptions of the differences for women with(in) Chinese culture will be discussed. In addition, comparisons between traditional and contemporary cultural roles of Chinese women will be provided. These factors will demonstrate links between Chinese women immigrants and their internalised cultural beliefs, and how these affect the process of acculturation when living in England.

Chapter Three describes the rise of postmodernism, the appropriateness of using feminist epistemology and narrative inquiry as the methodological approach for this research. I also explore the relationship between the research problem and the feminist approach I use to conduct this study.

Chapter Four provides the research design and multiple strategies I used to gather, organise and to analyse my data. Discussion on the current turn to narrative and the journey I went through in conducting this research is also
provided. Ethical issues and my positionality as a researcher, as well as the dilemmas are included in the discussion. What makes a story scholarly will also be included.

**Chapters Five, Six and Seven** examine the personal voices of the women migrants in this study on their migration processes. They also account for, in great depth, the reasons why these women decided to leave Hong Kong / Mainland China and chose to come to Britain. Again, cultural and structural impacts are examined, together with their internalised stereotypical and cultural gender roles. Furthermore, the in-depth interviews illustrate their experiences and adjustment needs since they migrated to Britain. Their ways of communication with indigenous people are also included.

**Chapter Eight** summarises the major findings of the research and examines implications for future feminist scholarship and ethnic community studies, policy and organisational objectives. Personal reflections and details of the shortcomings of the methodology used for this study are also included. Suggestions for the local policy makers regarding the integration of Chinese women migrants are also provided.
Chapter Two: Chinese Culture

In this chapter, an overview of Chinese culture will be given. An account of cultural values and the gender culture for Chinese women will be discussed. It will also include an illustration of shifting identity as women immigrants from Hong Kong/China to Britain and responding to structural forces of British colonialism, imperialism, and Confucian patriarchy (see Chap. 1, p. 4). How these women immigrants took an active role in their migration process by reproducing challenging positions and relations after emigration through racialisation, ethnicisation, gendering and class-ification\(^3\), will be addressed.

2.1 What is Culture?

There are different schools of thought surrounding the definition of culture (LaFromboise, et al. 1993; Betancourt & Lopez, 1995). Kashima (2000) defined culture as being a “domain of shared meaning” (p. 14). The traditional conception regards culture as if it is fixed and unchanging. Wetherel and Maybin (1996) viewed culture as “more fluid and open, concerning relationships, interactions and a matter of everyday activities which is continually shifting and changing” (p. 228).

In discussing the nature of culture, I agree with Nieto (1999), “Cultures are always changing as a result of political, social and other modifications in the immediate environment. When people with different backgrounds come into contact with one another, such change is to be expected even more” (p. 49). She has identified six themes that account for the emigrant Chinese experiences:

- Culture is multifaceted, “culture identifications are multiple, eclectic, mixed and heterogeneous” (Nieto, 1999, p. 51). Even in the same cultural group, there may exist many and often conflicting cultural identities.
- Culture is dynamic and is always in a process of active changing,

\(^3\)Racialization is the process of producing and reproducing boundaries between “us” and “them” using both physical and cultural signifiers (see for example, Miles, 1989). Ethnicization, likewise, involves the use of cultural signifiers only. The process of gendering involves segmentation between male and female traits Class-ification refers to the construction of class boundaries based on economic criteria. In this study, class relations involves either relations between middle-class and lower-class, the wealthy and the poor, or between management and labour, depending on how the women define them
Culture is socially constructed and contextually embedded. It cannot exist outside social contact and everyday practice.

Culture is learned, transmitted and passed down from generation to generation.

Culture is related to issues of power. It is influenced by social, economic and political factors and conditions.

Culture is dialectical and is full of conflicts and inherent tensions due to social, political, economic and historical influences.

In sum, Nieto's view of culture demands an awareness and understanding of the contradictory nature of culture so as to develop a critical, as opposed to a romantic perspective of culture.

Through interactions with the social and mental environment of a particular cultural group, one becomes a member of that cultural community. The process of enculturation or acquisition of culture, and the process of acculturation, namely adjusting one's self to the new culture and re-negotiating one's identity have been discussed on pp. 9-11.

Similar to the conception of culture, there have been constant debates about the understanding of identity. A traditional view of identity is ego-centred and universal. It claims that "all the dynamics (such as class, gender, race) operate simultaneously to produce a coherent, unified, fixed identity", identity is "fabricated, constructed, in process ... full of contradictions and ambiguities" (Sarup, 1996, p. 14). Identity is about who we are, where we are coming from and what we will become. Fitzgerald (1993) contends that identity should be posited as self-in-context since it cannot be separated from culture. When a person interacts with the social surroundings, "the self and its social environment are reciprocally determined" (p. 59). The self also plays an essential role in one's constructed identity because it is this person who actively selects and interprets the cultural knowledge he or she acquires.

I agree with Hall (1990) and Dunn (1998) that one's cultural identity is constructed and reconstructed in a "threelfold temporal delineation of past, present and future self-orientations", and "it is a matter of becoming as well as of
being” (p. 211). Thus the construction of cultural identity is never complete, always in process. Hall further elucidates:

Cultural identities …like everything which is historical …undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialist past, they are subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in a mere ‘recovery’ of the past, which is waiting to be found and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by and position ourselves within the narratives of past (p. 222).

Identity dynamics are important in coping with cultural change such as emigration (Camilleri & Malewska-Peyer, 1997). Berry (1990) points out that cultural identity will inevitably change over the course of acculturation (Chap. 1, pp. 9-10). Therefore, the tension between migrant parents and children may result from the clash of their ethnic and new identities as they negotiate their way among many choices and possibilities (see Tang & Dion, 1999; Phinney, et al. 2000).

I agree with Song (1999, 2003), Parker and Song (2006) that migration brings together diverse cultural beliefs and practices of different ethnic groups, thus other cultures inevitably influence one’s native cultural identity. In England, minority migrants experience identity struggles because of tensions and contradictions between their native culture and the mainstream culture. Cultural identity is thus contextual, located with and defined by the situated social and cultural complexity of the plural yet dominant society.

The above discussion has significant implications for the current study. We must view culture and cultural identity as multi-layered and changing in its situated historical, social and political context. The core of Chinese cultural values acquired during the process of acculturation may contribute to the Chinese women migrants’ adjustment needs in the wider society.

2.2 Western versus Non-western View of ‘Self’

Challenges to the modern Western view of self-development have come from psychologists who study how self and culture is co-constituting and co-constituted in cross-cultural contexts. They define ‘culture’ as a symbolic and behavioural inheritance received from the historic and ancestral past that provides a community with a framework for other-directed and vicarious learning and for collective deliberations about what is true and normal (Shweder
& Bourne, 1984; Shweder, 1991). In the contemporary West, culture emphasises individualism whilst many other cultures value collectivism and do not conceptualise the person apart from his or her relationships. These non-Western cultures exhibit what Sampson (1988) called ensemble individualism, in which the self versus the non-self boundary is less sharply drawn and others are included within the sense of self. For Kirkpatrick and White (1985), a non-western self-conception is one in which some collectivity, "the family, community and even the land is a cultural unit with experiential capacities" (p. 11). According to Marsella (1985), a non-western self is extended to include a wide variety of significant others and includes a de-emphasis on individual autonomy and independence.

In Chinese culture, self is very much influenced by traditional Confucianism, which has become a dominant philosophy and 'human ethics' guiding the mind, thoughts, and behaviour of Chinese (Tu, 1985). Confucian teachings are not abstract; they are concerned primarily with human relationships and interactions. Confucius considered individuals to be linked in a 'web of social relations'. The Confucian idea of self as a centre of relationships is an open system. It is only through the web of social relations that the self can maintain a wholesome and personal identity. The social relations that define the self in terms of family, community and society are the realms of selfhood (Tu, 1985). Thus the self as 'an ultimately autonomous being' is unthinkable and the manifestation of self is impossible except in matrices of human relations. Ironically, in the Confucian tradition, the more individualistic and narcissistic one is, the less one is a 'self'. Confucian self-cultivation presupposes that cultivating the self is never the private possession of a single individual but a sharable experience that underlies common humanity. The uniqueness of the self in Confucian culture is immanent within a ceaseless process of broadening and deepening webs of social relations that are essential to one's selfhood in Chinese culture (Tu, 1985, 1996). The present study is going to explore how the webs between the social relations/host country and the Chinese women migrants are deepened by their internalised culturally constructed self.

2.3 Traditional Chinese Cultural Values

Historically, the Chinese migrated to different parts of the world. No doubt
their migration experiences have largely influenced their thinking and lifestyles. However, in terms of cultural values and beliefs, Chinese migrants may be different from those of other ethnic groups as they still share certain common values and beliefs amongst themselves. Traditionalism has been defined by Ghuman (1997) as “an attitude orientation which shows sympathy with the migrants’ family values and sentiments and specifically wishes to maintain the ethnic community’s religion, customs, and languages” (p. 28). Some core Chinese cultural values may remain essential to Chinese migrants and serve as an important context to parent-child interaction in emigrated Chinese families (see Ho, 1994; Chao, 1996; Tang & Dion, 1999; Phinney, et al. 2000).

According to Rosenthal and Feldman (1990), many Chinese emigrant families continue to demonstrate traditional Chinese values despite having undergone measurable acculturative changes. The Chinese values and belief systems are deeply ingrained in Chinese tradition and heritage. Confucianism, the source and core of the Chinese value system, has symbolised the essence of Chinese culture and is woven into every facet of Chinese life. Previous comparative work on Eastern culture and Western culture has reported consistently that Chinese parents generally emphasised the value of academic achievement more than parents from Western countries (Chao, 1996). Many Chinese cultural values, especially those influenced by Confucianism, such as respecting elders, family obligation, deferred gratification and belief in hard work, have been identified as conducive to children’s school success (Ho, 1994). Confucian family values have been frequently cited to explain the myth of the Asian ‘model minority’ (Mckay & Wong, 1996). My study of Chinese women migrants living in Britain shares similar findings with previous research (Ho, 1994; Chao, 1996; Zhang, et al. 1998) in Chinese values. High respect for education, beliefs in effort and hard work and close parent-child relationship, have been identified consistently as strongly related to Chinese parental expectations. Historically, the Chinese value education more than money and scholars are highly respected and admired (Chao, 1996; Zhang, et al. 1998). Anyone, in spite of his or her family background and social status, can achieve upward mobility through university education (Ho, 1994). Consequently, Chinese parents tend to hold high standards for their children’s school performance.
With respect to the collectivist orientation, many writers have commented on this aspect of Chinese culture (Rosenthal & Feldman, 1990; Triandis, 1990; Jose, et al. 2000). In contrast with the West’s emphasis on individualism and independence, Chinese culture often emphasises “interdependence (互相依靠)” among its members and stresses that relationships are only valuable if there is interdependence. (Lin & Liu, 1993; Wang & Hsueh, 2000). This notion of interdependence is so emphasised, that Chinese parents have been observed to exert more physical and social control over their children. For example, Chinese parents may choose the companions of their children, believing that their children mature at a later age, are stricter with them and/or limit a child’s social activities (Uba, 1994). Nowadays, the parents may not control their children’s activities as much as they did previously, but this change does not minimise their intentions.

Given that Chinese culture is organised collectively, Chinese parents often believe that they should provide for their children so that they will later provide for them when they are old. As such, the traditional values of filial piety are a powerful concept within Chinese culture. According to Lin and Liu (1993), “filial piety (孝)”, is a concept deeply ingrained into Chinese society, one which serves as the underlying foundation for both moral and interpersonal relationships. To emphasise the importance of filial piety, adult children are often expected to support their parents even when they cannot render support for themselves. This belief is a Chinese tradition and viewed as a way of life (Yu, 1984). The violation of the filial piety mandate was at one time deemed to be one of ten unpardonable crimes under Chinese law.

In addition, conformity is highly regarded and viewed as a means for achieving social harmony (Uba, 1994). Consistent with the demands of a collectivistic society, conformity stresses the need for an individual to be concerned with the group rather than with the self. To encourage conformity to norms, Chinese families often employ the use of shame and/or guilt to elicit socially proper behaviours (Jung, 1998).

As a result of the emphasis on family needs, personal satisfaction can be achieved by ‘honouring’ the family as a whole (Jung, 1998). Honour can be obtained through both academic and occupational achievements (Uba, 1994). According to Confucianism, education is highly valued within Chinese culture.
due to the Ching dynasty of official selection system via literary learnedness, educational success demonstrates that one has worked hard. Academic failure will bring disappointment to the parents (Uba, 1994).

Finally, Chinese culture values humbleness of one's self towards others. Consequently, many Chinese may demonstrate a quiet and reserved disposition in an effort not to offend each other (Jung, 1998). However, it is important to remember that while a Chinese may be quiet and reserved in public, they may be boisterous and unreserved when in more familiar situations.

Chinese residing in the PRC may be very different from those living in Hong Kong. Those who lived through the ‘Cultural Revolution’ that largely destroyed key elements of ‘traditional’ Chinese culture (Watson, 1991) have had life experiences that are vastly different from the Chinese of other regions. The traditional values of Chinese Confucianism, have been changed by Mao’s values in the PRC, “the closeness of the father and mother is not as deep as the grace and love of Chairman Mao (父親, 母親, 不及毛澤東主義親)” (Shek, 2006, p. 276). Those who migrated from the PRC to the UK may have different perceptions and attitudes than Chinese from other countries because of the different political, historical and economic conditions they have experienced. This unique life trajectory may have deeply shaped the parental expectations of migrants from the PRC. Therefore, an appreciation of the similarities and differences in immigrant Chinese cultural backgrounds will enhance our understanding of Chinese immigrant women’s beliefs and practices.

For people from Hong Kong, family is one of the most important social institutions. Members maintain strong ties in both nuclear and extended families and there are powerful economic and social obligations between parents and children (Lau, et al. 1991, pp. 41-66). In Confucian societies, there is an admonition to “sacrifice oneself for the fulfilment of the wider community (犧牲小我完成大我)”. This is a traditional moral issue but, nowadays it does not apply to everyone. Nonetheless, this is true in Hong Kong, where the family good outweighs individual considerations. To some Hong Kong people, family interests take precedence over those of society or other social groups, which have been responsible for pushing many of them to become reluctant emigrants (Lau,
1982, pp. 67-85). Part of the reason for emigrating is to provide a safe haven for the immediate family but also to create a migration chain for the extended family.

It is not uncommon to hear Hong Kong people wistfully talking of a return to “traditional Chinese values,” which they contrast negatively with the more modern and, certainly, more westernised ways of Hong Kong. Nevertheless, traditional values are a mixed blessing, particularly for women (Pearson, 1996, p. 92). There are available documents which strongly suggest that Hong Kong people are still imbued with the traditional values, such as: people still respect their elders, particularly unmarried women, gave a sizable portion of their income each month and express their sense of filial obligation to their parents (see Mathews, 1996).

To summarise, it would seem that there are numerous values that underline traditional Chinese culture. At the heart of these values is an emphasis on the family and the needs of a collectivistic society. While these values may undergo some changes as a result of relocation to another country and the influences of acculturative forces, traditional values still underlie the lives of many Chinese individuals. While these values may not be consciously recognised, their influences nonetheless affect day-to-day living and individual thinking. More importantly, cultural values often help to shape and define Chinese women’s roles as they pertain to both social and family responsibilities. Since this study is primarily concerned with the relationship between Chinese women immigrants and their cultural value, the following section discusses how traditional virtues influence the traditional and contemporary roles of Chinese women.

2.4 Traditional and Contemporary Roles of Chinese Women

While the role of women has improved over the years, Chinese women may, at times, continue to find themselves caught between the traditional and the contemporary. When referring to Chinese tradition, the notion of “Ying and Yang” (陰 陽) symbolically captures the ideal Chinese woman of today. They are expected to blend tradition with modernity and to achieve both harmony and balance in their lives (Billson, 1995, p. 264).

In order to understand the roles of Chinese women, it is vital to discuss the impact of Confucianism on the definition of traditional Chinese female gender roles. With its emphasis on harmony through feudal loyalty, filial piety, and
unquestioned obedience to elders, many authors (Yung, 1986; Billson, 1995; Chia, et al. 1997) have noted the importance of Confucianism in structuring the standard role model for Chinese women.

2.4.1 Traditional Model for Chinese Women in China

According to traditional Chinese society – that is, before the communist cultural revolution – the model of behaviour for women in relation to men was prescribed in the four books (四書) of Confucius (孔子) (551-479 B.C.) and his disciples. Women are to obey the instructions of their father and husband, and help to carry out their principles. These tenets are known as the “Three Obediences and Four Virtues (三從四德)”\(^4\) were the traditional education for Chinese women, which mainly foster feudalistic ideas.

The preface to the Women's Analects elucidates the “Three Obediences and Four Virtues” as the primary principles of female instruction. It is essentially a scrupulous guide for the conduct of women, such that women must be gentle and obedient, to her father in her youth, to her husband in her marriage, to her son in her widowhood. She must comply with these Three Obediences. There are four types of womanly conduct: the first called womanly virtue; the second is womanly speech, the third is called womanly comportment and the forth are womanly skills. According to LiJi (禮記) as the master (Confucius) said: “in regarding to womanly virtues, it is not necessary for her intellectual abilities to be extraordinarily unique; as for her speech, it is not necessary for her to be eloquent or incisive; in regards to her comportment, it is not necessary for her countenance to be beautiful or superior; and as to her skills, it is not necessary for them to surpass others”. These four virtues are the proper bounds of a woman,

\[^4\] The Three Obediences are:

- a. When young, she must obey her father / elder brother
- b. When married she must obey her husband
- c. When her husband is dead, she must obey her son

(cited from Koo, 1985, p. 64)

The Four virtues are:

- a. Female virtues
- b. Female speech and expression
- c. Female appearance
- d. Female accomplishment

(Cited from Ban Zhou, 1977)
and they may not be neglected or omitted (Ban, 1977, pp. 8b-9a).

Furthermore, from Sung to early Ching dynasty, widow chastity was further promoted and the highest feminine virtue in Confucianism is wifely fidelity. A square column would be built with the chaste woman’s name and story carved on it after she died. Here is a classic example in the Biographies of Woman, Ching History:

The fiancé of Chun Fu-man died when she was eighteen. Her parents wanted to marry her to somebody else. When she learned that the go-between was coming to her place, she cut off her left ear. Three days later, she cut off her right ear, went to her fiancé’s family to complete the funeral rites. Finally, she committed suicide (Man, 1998, p. 26).

This is a clear demonstration of the dictum that males are venerable and females debased and must remain chaste, obeying one husband for her entire life. Nowadays, though the feudal systems are no longer practiced, nevertheless, Chinese women are still influenced by the traditional concept but to a lesser degree (Man, 1998).

Confucianism meant the differences between the genders were exacerbated, leading to a disparate perception of worth between male and female children. In a common phrase, the concept of “superior man - inferior woman (男尊女卑)” is the status of gender in Chinese society (Holmgren, 1981, p. 154). These gender inequalities usually occur at the time of birth and continue through life. For instance, the birth of a son in traditional Chinese culture has been associated with “robes”, “a jade sceptre”, and hope that he becomes “lord and king of house and home” (Holmgren, 1981, p. 155). However, the arrival of a daughter garnered “no decorations, no emblems” but merely the wish that she “gives no trouble to the parent” (Wolf, 1985; Yung, 1986).

Exemplified by the gifts and sentiments at birth, the treatment of males and females has differed drastically in this traditionally patrilineal culture, where the family name, wealth and land are passed on through the males. In such a society, females were typically deemed to be “a dead loss to their families (蝕本資)” (Wolf, 1985; Billson, 1995), for it was often believed that daughters were only being raised to eventually join another family. In many respects, Chinese women were viewed as property, as commodities to be exchanged. After marriage, their duties were to care for the home, bear male offspring, and to raise their children to become respectable adults (Billson, 1995). Within these expectations, the
ability to produce male heirs was often deemed to be the most important. In fact, a woman’s value was often determined by the number of male children she bore (Yung, 1986). Moreover, an inability to produce male heirs often resulted in conflicts between her and the in-laws (Billson, 1995).

While traditional Chinese society expected very little from their female members, women were required to follow the “Four Virtues.” Specifically, these Four Virtues mandated women to possess domestic skills, be reticent and maintain a pleasing disposition, remain obedient and chaste. Chinese women were expected to speak only when spoken to and subsequently taught to never offend their audience (Yung, 1986) Apart from these expectations, girls were often not given educational opportunities and a “lack of talent was often regarded to be an asset (女子無才便是德)”, as no man would want to marry an educated woman (Davin, 1976, p. 78). Nowadays, the perception continues to be applied mainly in an uneducated village family or in-land/remote provinces of China. Females are discouraged from obtaining an education and are often regarded as an asset only when they contribute towards her husband and family.

Given the inherent male favouritism in a patrilineal and patriarchal society, Chinese women have historically been extremely limited in their gender roles. Women were often depicted as being less important, “lower, weaker, and dependent” in comparison to men (Billson, 1995, p. 367). However, they are now able to reshape and redefine their gender roles in response to contemporary influences. Nevertheless, Chinese women appear to be struggling to achieve a balance between the old and the new. Given that traditional Chinese culture does not appear helpful or supportive for the female; it would be interesting to explore some of the reasons underlying many Chinese women’s adherence to traditional roles.

2.4.2 Contemporary World versus Cultural Roles for Chinese Women

In modern Chinese society, women enjoy more freedom and have become more equal with men. However, women have not completely escaped the deep-rooted thinking of thousands of years of cultural tradition. Marriage and motherhood are still highly valued by contemporary Chinese women, to the extent that they make numerous sacrifices in deference to their domestic role.
Despite their academic training and intellectual potential, Chinese women are still limited by the traditional value systems imposed upon them. They internalise the Confucian ideal of the traditional role model. “Virtuous wife and good mother (賢妻良母)” is still alive in the 21st century (see Chap. 6 & 7).

By gender roles I refer to a series of expectations regarding how each gender should behave. Gender role orientation reflects individuals’ self-perceptions regarding attributes that are socially desirable for men and women respectively (Tang & Lau, 1995). Gender role identification has always been linked to personal adjustment. Rigid gender role identification affects whether specific situations are appraised as stressful. Chinese women who have adhered closely to gender role standards experienced stress in situations in which they feared they were unable to elicit gender-typed behaviours or in which they were compelled to respond in violation of gender role imperatives (Tang & Lau, 1995).

Chinese women seem to experience more gender role-related conflict in modern society. Chinese society emphasises a male-oriented hierarchy. Traditionally, women basically serve an instrumental and supportive role in managing the home and supplying male heirs (Jackson, 1980, p. 48; Stockard, 1989; Watson, 1991). The role of women in the PRC has changed dramatically since the foundation of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. Increasing numbers of women have received a college or higher education. Women have found more employment opportunities (Pearson, 1996, p. 93). However, unconscious sexism is still prevalent throughout Chinese culture. Through policy, women have been given equal opportunity in education and work in recent decades. Women expect themselves to be able to give equal emphasis to work and family. Many contemporary women believe that they are gaining a more equal status with their husbands in the family and shared power between husbands and wives in making important family decisions, including supervision of children at home (Jackson, 1980).

According to the pre-existing cultural norm, women must be committed to the family first. Women are thus likely to sacrifice their career advancement and to place greater emphasis on the family (Tang & Tang, 2001). Nonetheless, for Chinese women living in a capitalistic and commercial city like Hong Kong, where they are educated and trained to compete with other men and women to achieve a better living, they are also expected to be self-sufficient, independent
and to contribute to society. Even though there seem to be some general themes in the gender role message that is internalised by Chinese women, however, experiences of the conflicting demands of career and family exist (Pearson, 1996; Cheung et al. 1997; Man, 1998; Tang & Tang, 2001).

Adler (1994) argues that culture’s influence on gender roles cannot be underestimated. In this case, the Chinese cultural concepts of “Three Obediences and Four Virtues” may keep many Chinese women close to their families and within the boundaries of traditional cultural duties. While Chinese culture may appear restrictive to the female gender, there are nevertheless reasons for Chinese women to adhere to and maintain their cultural values. Billson beautifully described complementary roles of culture by stating:

Culture is at the heart of being a woman. The tapestry of women’s lives is woven on the loom of culture, often producing a rough and prickly cloth that is hard to wear and restricts our freedom. Ironically, though, culture also provides the loom form which new tapestries are woven – soft and gentle weavings ...that enable women to move out from under the mantle of oppression (Billson, 1995, p. 2).

As illustrated, there are numerous reasons for a Chinese woman to retain her ethnic culture. Preservation of culture ensures not only a connection to the past, but provides a map for the future. With such important functions, the preservation of culture becomes all the more important to understand; inevitably, all the internalised cultural factors have an effect on their daily life. In order to study the adjustments need of the Chinese women migrants living in Bristol, it is essential to study in-depth the attributes of their cultural values, beliefs and practices during their migration process.

2.5 Women with[in] Chinese Culture

Participants in this research come from the PRC and Hong Kong; they lived in patriarchal societies, where their limited choices were very similar, until the Communist Revolution in 1949. Until that point, there were many similarities among the women from both places such as with family and marriage practices. Moreover, due to kinship networks or even nuclear families, people migrated between Hong Kong and PRC. Before the Communist Revolution, older women were ‘in-culturated’ into the patrilineal family, which traces descent through the male line. Men inherited the ancestral property of their family and most of the property acquired over the lifetime of the family was passed on to male
descendants. Women’s social status was defined by their relation to the men in their lineage. Marriage signified the transfer of rights over a woman from her parents who were obliged to support her until she married her husband. A young wife’s status in the family is low in the patrilineal system, improves at the birth of a son and climaxes when she becomes a dowager with adult sons and heads the domestic unit (家) and distaff family.

2.5.1 Women in Hong Kong

Hong Kong is urbanised and industrial. Hong Kong’s industry is primarily export-oriented and dominated by transactional corporate investment. Women play a significant role in the manufacturing sector and a growing role in services. The current marriage law comes from a spate of law reforms in 1960s and 1970s, which supersedes the civil codes previously in force. Arranged betrothals are less frequent, concubinage uncommon and child marriages a rarity. In rural Hong Kong, the right of inheritance (i.e. house and land) from deceased parents/ancestors remains the preserve of males. However, in urban Hong Kong, acquired property is more significant. In both cases, women’s rights to inheritance are considerably less than those of their brothers. In addition, a woman is still considered an economic loss to her parents when she marries, which may severely circumscribe her schooling in poorer families.

It was not until 1971 that the government instituted six years of (free) compulsory education. Before that, families would only pay to send their sons to school and their daughters had to work to earn money to support the family. In 1978, the government enhanced this further by introducing nine years of free and compulsory primary and junior secondary education. Since then the enrolment of male and female students at universities has became more equitable. Due to the influence of British colonial education, Hong Kong women became more ‘educated and westernised’. While they may appear ‘westernised’ in their dress and attitudes, they are still under extreme pressure, however, to continue a more traditional, family-centred and male-focused life (Pearson, 1996, p. 92; Mathews, 1996).

In general, women in Hong Kong share both a past and a future with women in China. Indeed, aspects of the present indicate that the transitional after ‘1997’ relationship is drawing the two areas more closely together based on ‘One
country, Two systems’. The relocation of Hong Kong’s manufacturing base to China has meant that a large number of women in Hong Kong have become redundant whilst women in China now have opportunities for higher-paying jobs. It has also clearly demonstrated that the Chinese authorities are more concerned with economic development than they are with the rights and safety of female workers. The increasing economic symbiosis between Hong Kong and Southern China has had an effect on the family life of many Hong Kong women, whose husbands are making full use of the sexual opportunities that are abundantly available to them away from the watchful eye of a spouse (Lang & Smart, 2002).

By doctrine, Chinese women from PRC are better protected by the Constitution, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Yet in reality, they are subject to more severe discrimination and to life-threatening events: kidnapping for sale as wives and enforced prostitution, for example. Despite the lack of legal protection, and without denying the continued existence of gender discrimination, women’s positions in Hong Kong are, in reality, much better in comparison with their counterparts in PRC. A more progressive and open society, the rule of law, genuine universal education, all have contributed to the real gains women in Hong Kong have made since the end of World War II.

2.5.2 Women in the People’s Republic of China (PRC)

The government of PRC has made the new marriage law passed in 1950 and amended in 1980. This law changed the position of women in marriage which was now defined as a voluntary union of a man and woman; adopted child wives and concubinages were forbidden. However, the progress made by women over the past 50 years regressed during the 1990’s (Hooper, 1998). Amongst the changes the PRC government has made gender equality a secondary priority as it focused on economic reform and political stability (Das Gupta, 2000). The Constitution states that “women enjoy equal rights with men in all aspects of life”. The 1992 Law on the Protection of Women’s Rights and Interests provides for equality in ownership of property, inheritance rights and access to education. Women’s economic and political influence has increased therefore. Political parties were assigned by the central government to support women’s claims for independence. The theme which runs clearly through most of the women’s lives
in China is that they are willing to use their talent, intelligence and education in a productive way for either personal or collective goals.

2.6 Feminism: Emanating from the West

Feminism has, in general, been associated with the development of women’s movements in the West (Chap. 3, pp. 37-38). In fact, feminists have considered feminism as a social movement in its own right. Obviously, the various meanings of the term “feminism” correspond to the stages of development of the women’s movement in the West and, therefore, may not always be relevant in the context of contemporary China. It is in this sense that “feminism,” when applied to the Chinese context, cannot be taken to stand for an aggressive, organised, political women’s movement. Neither does it represent feminist separatism, which may be understood as a departure from all previous traditions imposed by men, and the attempt to recreate a new world from a female point of view, in particular modes of thinking, forms of language and artistic expression, as well as patterns of social behaviour.

Needless to say, women’s problems should not be separated from their local social, economic, cultural, political, and psychological backgrounds. Anyone who looks for feminism in women’s literature in China must keep in mind that the expectations of the Chinese public toward women’s literature do not encourage feminist writing which openly and explicitly problematises and challenges social, economic, or political dimensions of patriarchy. The root of the problem lies in the persistence of feudal attitudes and the total control of the political life by the Communist Party, which does not allow an independent women’s movement to exist. So, in the Chinese context, feminist statements are not put forward in an aggressive and forceful manner; instead of making appeals and offering solutions, they very often deal with possibilities and proposals.

Western feminisms and their Chinese counterpart have different emphases. While the former is embedded in liberal legal and political individualism, problematising the very nature of subjectivity defined in Western culture, the latter is more concerned with the social injustice that women face in their daily life, concentrating on the “unhappy marriage” between feminist consciousness and socialist reality. Given the fact that Western feminisms and Chinese “feminisms” have different emphases, women writers from different cultural
backgrounds will most likely have different concerns and priorities in their respective writings (see Larson, 1998, pp. 1-6).

Consequently, contemporary Chinese feminism is not a simple duplication of its Western counterpart. Rada Ivekovic, a Yugoslav feminist, has used the term “neofeminist” to depict the struggle for feminist aims in a society where many of the political and economic issues concerning women have been addressed legally by state socialism, but where many of the social, sexual, and psychological dimensions of women’s emancipation remain essentially unexplored within formal social channels (Ivekovic, 1984, pp. 734-36).

Insofar as woman is traditionally use-value for man, exchange-value among men (see Irigaray, 1980. pp. 99-106), both Chinese women and their Western counterparts are engaged in the common struggle to free their bodies from being the property and propriety of men. Similarly, feminist scholarship, whether Chinese or Western, works toward the same goal of exposing the collusion between ideology and cultural practices and deconstructing predominantly male cultural paradigms.

2.6.1 Feminism in People’s Republic of China

Since 1950s, feminism has made available to female citizens a range of political subjectivities not only within the dominant political discourse, but also outside both family roles and the erotic domain of modern sexual expression. In the minds of some people, any Chinese feminism would prove to be too static or too socialist to qualify legitimately as “feminism” (see Barlow, 2001). Erwin (2000) argues that the successful policies of the Chinese feminist state have made possible women’s centrality in the social and economic life of the new, cosmopolitan, Chinese post-socialism.

Although the 1924 legislation in China promised to give equal rights to men and women in law, marriage, education, economic opportunity and political participation, the institutionalisation of equal rights for women did not produce any substantial improvement in women’s status because traditional values were still predominant and resistant to changes in society (see Croll, 1978). Until the 1980s, the lives of Chinese women involved hardship. They had to work on an empty stomach and it was a real struggle for one to talk about the woman issue (Ku, 1988). Thus, being able to just sit down and write about feminist thoughts
was an unimaginable luxury for Chinese women. Anyhow, to address women’s issues alone without looking at the general political situation that oppressed people at large, including men, would be a dangerous denial of reality and history.

During the Maoist era (1949-1976), Chinese women were ‘brainwashed’ under the ‘Red Flag’ which in turn may also explain Chinese women’s intuitive response to feminism. Gender equality was handed down to women and they had no choice but to behave, dress, and work like men to participate in China’s socialist construction. While Western feminists are debating whether women should work as construction workers or serve in the military, Chinese women have long been there, done that.

In 20th century China, we see two eras of concentrated feminist thinking: one was during the May Fourth period of the 1920s and 1930s, and the other is the post-Mao era after 1976. Women’s liberation has been an obsession with Chinese intellectuals since the turn of the 20th century. Obviously, the history of classical Chinese literature was dominated by men. The single event that changed the Chinese literary landscape was the May Fourth Movement (五四運動), which, in fact, produced the first group of modern Chinese women writers. Although literary works by women were, at that time, still relatively few, these were, for the first time in the history of Chinese literature, considered rare items worthy of value and respect.

The literary works of contemporary Chinese women writers are characterised by their more direct engagement with the social and political problems that women face (see Zhang, 1983; Wang, 1991). If we/researchers compare women’s works of the May Fourth period and those of the post-Mao era, we may find certain common characteristics:

- Female protagonists predominate.
- The problems they encounter involve sex, love, marriage and the family.
- These problems are usually intended to reflect and comment upon large and important contemporary social issues, including not only the feminine issue of women’s place in

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5 The May Fourth Movement (五四運動) was an anti-imperialist, cultural, and political movement in early modern China. Beginning on May 4, 1919, it marked the upsurge of Chinese nationalism, and a re-evaluation of Chinese cultural institutions, such as Confucianism. The movement grew out of dissatisfaction with the Treaty of Versailles settlement, termed the Shandong Problem. Coming out of the New Culture Movement, the end result was a drastic change in society that fuelled the birth of the Communist Party of China.
Chinese society but also other important political and economic issues of the day, (Duke, 1989).

In contemporary China, I believe that women are trying to liberate in every sense that we/Chinese women are equal and the trends of the literary works reflect that we have more direct engagement with the social and political problems that women face.

In my writing, "feminism" means seeking freedoms for those who are struggling for the power of choice, opportunity, equality, respect and voice. My claims fall under the umbrella of on-going third-wave feminism. My standpoint is to carry out research in a rigorous manner for the benefit of a specific group of people. Thus, the current study intends to unfold the unheard stories of Chinese women migrants, offer them chance to voice out their adjustment issues since migrated to Britain.

2.7 Summary

In the past, Chinese women had no choices. They were not trained to be independent. They could not inherit property. Their names were not even recorded in their fathers' genealogy. In the course of at least two thousand years of subjugation, traditional Chinese women probably lacked the ability, motivation or opportunity to liberate themselves from submission, docility and self-denigration. Compared with women in traditional Chinese societies, we women of today have more opportunities and are more self-aware; and yet, because of this, we are also more frustrated. Chinese women are constantly faced with conflicting roles and images of what a woman as a good person (daughter, mother and/or wife) should be.

The examination of literature regarding Chinese culture, traditional cultural values and roles for women from Hong Kong/PRC and the change process have been discussed. These areas of literature help to shape and form the account of my own experiences as a Chinese immigrant woman and they are the critical components in the further development of my narrative that seeks to attain a better understanding of the other women migrants living in Bristol.

As a person who also had cross-cultural experiences, I seek to understand how the Chinese women immigrants reconstruct their sense of belonging after a
drastic relocation both geographically and culturally. How do they manage to adjust and to acculturate in the wider society? What does the experience of migration and cultural difference feel like and look like? How is it effect on different families and on different members of a family? As a researcher, how can I begin as an outsider of their world to become an insider to their experiences? How can my unique experiences contribute to making sense of their experiences? By unfolding their unheard stories of their life experiences since migration to Britain, I seek to help them (including myself) to create a coherent explanation that connects past to present and to future, as well as to corporate it to the wider society.
Chapter Three: Methodology

This chapter will give a brief account of postmodernism and feminism and its development in China in the 20th century. This is followed by a consideration of the appropriateness of using a feminist approach and narrative inquiry for this research. An account of the emergence of autoethnography will also be discussed.

3.1 From Positivism to Reflexive Discourse

Some researchers, including myself, formerly, believe that from a positivist perspective, there is only one way to "do science," and any intellectual inquiry must conform to established research methods (Neuman, 1994). Without knowing about the alternatives, I have been socialized to believe that "real" science is quantitative, experimental, and understood by only a select and elite few. So strong is the positivist tradition that researchers who use even well-established qualitative research methods are continually asked to defend their research as valid science (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Ways of inquiry that connect with real people, their lives and their issues are seen as soft and fluffy and although nice, are less valuable in the scientific community.

With the rise of postmodern philosophy and my awareness of it, this is changing, and I am able to learn to think differently about what constitutes knowing. The essence of postmodernism is that many ways of knowing and inquiring are legitimate and that no one way should be privileged. "It distrusts abstract explanation and holds that research can never do more than describe, with all descriptions equally valid ... any researcher can do no more than describe his or her personal experiences" (Neuman, 1994, p. 74). However, postmodernism creates a context of doubt; in which all methods are subject to critique but are not automatically rejected as false. The goal of postmodernism is not to eliminate the traditional scientific method but to question its dominance and to demonstrate that it is possible to gain and share knowledge in many ways. Richardson (2000) addressed that from a postmodern viewpoint, having a partial, local and/or historical knowledge is still knowing. All assumptions inherent in established research methods (both qualitative and quantitative) are questioned, and we are encouraged to "abandon all established and preconceived values, theories,
perspectives ...and prejudices as resources for... study” (Vidich & Lyman, 2000, p. 60).

The postmodern era has made it possible to open up the possible range of research strategies. For example “feminist theory and feminist research using multiple research techniques, has grown in reaction to the male-oriented perspective that has predominated in the development of social science” (Neuman, 1994, p. 72). Many feminist writers now advocate research that starts with one's own experience (Ellis, 2004). In contrast to the dominant, objective, competitive logical male point of view, feminist researchers “emphasize the subjective, empathetic, process-oriented, and inclusive sides of social life” (Neuman, 1994, p. 72).

Other emancipatory theories, such as those aimed at addressing the power imbalances associated with race and class, also find a space in post-modernity. Academic writers are beginning to acknowledge the normative value of inquiry. Stivers (1993) stated that a vision of universal truth is really just a dream of power over others and that liberatory, emancipatory projects are better served by alternative knowledge production process (Stivers, 1993).

With all the critics and ‘gaps to fill,’ this opens the door for autoethnography. The questioning of the dominant scientific paradigm, the making of room for other ways of knowing, and the growing emphasis on the power of research to change the world create a space for the sharing of unique, subjective, and evocative stories of experience that contribute to our understanding of the social world and allow us to reflect on what could be different because of what we have learned. The process of understanding eventually led me to use autoethnography as a tool to re-present my own experiences as a Chinese immigrant woman since migrated to Britain. As a woman born and bred in a male focused society, a novice qualitative researcher coming from a positivist tradition, I find that the relentless nudging of autoethnography against the world of traditional science holds wonderful, symbolic, emancipatory promise. It says that what I know matters. How much more promise could it hold for people far more marginalized than I? I am in love with this method.
3.2 The Inquiry

My inquiry focused on the adjustment needs of Chinese women migrants during the migration process since living in Britain. The study intended to understand and analyse Chinese women migrants from their point of view and perceived cultural beliefs drawing on their experiences in Hong Kong/China and in the host culture. This study sought to explore the adjustment needs of these women immigrants’ by giving voice to their life experiences and analysing their cultural beliefs implicit in these stories. The lived experiences of Chinese women migrants also provided a context for exploring the ways in which border-crossers negotiate critical cultural elements and rethink themselves across multiple geographic, cultural and ethnic borders. This study will provide reasons for why this specific ‘group’ made the decision to migrate from Hong Kong/PRC to Britain. In particular, I want to learn what are the cultural values internalised by these women and how these messages may have affected their adjustment needs since their move to Britain.

Despite the large number of Chinese immigrants living in England, most research is focused on the ‘male’ as subject (see Ryan, 2002; Lee, et al. 2002) and there is a paucity of information about female Chinese migrants and, the social and cultural challenges they face when living in England (see Chap.1, p. 1). Thus, the in-depth interview would provide more insight to the local government to understand the diversity and similarity of these women’s experiences, expectations, and desires by providing information on their life stories as they interpret the experiences they have had since moving across borders. The local authority in Bristol will thereby have additional resources for creating culturally harmonious environments and practices to facilitate this minority group’s ability to succeed in their acculturation into the British society.

In order to allow the emergent discovery of these women’s life stories, I relied heavily on ‘studying the data’, ‘search for pattern and meaning rather than prediction and control’ (Lather, 1991b, p. 18), relating them to their cultural origins rather than ‘pouring the data’ into theoretical frameworks or substantive analyses as to do so might limit the innovation of ideas that could then be further refined.

I believe the most suitable methodological approach for this study is qualitative narrative inquiry. Moreover, I am adopting a feminist standpoint. The
feminist approach ‘makes problematic women in diverse situations and the institutions, re-examines theory and policy aiming to realize social justice for women’ (Olesen, 1994, p. 158).

This qualitative research approach is based on the notion that human behaviours and characteristics cannot be predicted and generalised. Rather, all behaviour is subjective, interpreted, and open-ended (Borg & Gall, 1989; Maxwell, 1992). Qualitative research involves the collection, analysis and interpretation of data that relate to the social world and the ideas, perceptions and behaviours of people within it (Borg & Gall, 1989; Maxwell, 1992; Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Tierney, 1998). By using [feminist] individual interviews, Chinese women immigrants’ narrating their experiences of adjustment can be explored in a qualitative manner to provide meaningful analysis, critique, and directions for change. Moreover, ethnographic interviewing, which can yield in-depth reflective information, was appropriate to the research objective of discerning the ways in which language and politics are implicated in the identity processes of women immigrants. This study is investigative and exploratory. It is hoped that it will generate hypotheses and research questions that can be further investigated by other researchers regarding Chinese women migrants’ internalised cultural beliefs and practices and how those beliefs impact on their acculturation.

3.3 What is Feminism?

The development of feminism has been described differently at different times. From 1890-1920, feminism was concerned primarily with equality. From 1920-1960, the period of disconnection in feminism (see Friedan, 1963). From 1960 to present, Western feminism was used to explore women’s differences in order to oppose the “rule” of patriarchy (Humm, 1992). Worell & Remer (1992) believe that feminist thought began as a political stance on gender inequality. They studied the uses of power and the ways in which status hierarchies deprived women of their freedom and equality. The feminism critique was based on the belief that in societies that divided sexes into differing cultural, economic or

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6 Patriarchy is the way society is structured with men holding power. It refers to both concrete systems of power and to the ideology and generally understood attitudes and assumptions that go along with the structures – such as different sex roles and expectations for men and women (Proctor, 2002b).
political spheres, women were less valued than men. Feminists also believed that women could consciously and collectively change their social place (Humm, 1992). Young scholars have begun writing about the third-wave of feminists\(^7\) (Bruns & Trimble, 2001). Feminist activists hope to use their privilege and new freedoms to help those still struggling for equality.

Obviously, contemporary feminism rose mainly out of the concerns of Western bourgeois women, and over 25 years ago we began to hear the voices of black women (Smith, 1977; McDowell, 1980), lesbians (Zimmerman, 1981; Rich, 1987), and women in the Third World expressing feminist views (Trinh, 1989, p. 111). Although feminist literary criticism has been thriving in Western countries in recent decades, it has not, in fact, rallied under its banner a significant number of supporters from Third World countries including China. Such reality makes people, both in the West and China, wonder if there is, for example, a conscious feminist movement in China. One critic defines feminism as:

> the expression of a consciousness that nowadays penetrates into all spheres of life including male-dominated institutions, organisations and parties where women start raising questions instead of obeying, fighting instead of accepting (Gerstlacher, et al. 1985, pp. 237-238).

If we follow this definition of the term, feminism does without doubt exist in China but, when compared with the Western society, China enjoys a disparate development process and a distinct conformation system of consciousness, as well as different cultural traditions (Chap. 2, pp. 28-32).

### 3.3.1 Feminist Research

Feminist researchers have long placed women’s lived experience at the centre of a field of inquiry rooted in consciousness raising, feminist activism, and feminist critique of standard social science practices (Smith, 1987; Anderson et al. 1990; DeVault, 1996, pp. 32-33, 39). While there is no universal “feminist methodology,” feminist researchers have been pioneering in their efforts to create an interdisciplinary scholarship based on the following principles: a)

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\(^7\) Third-wave of feminists. They see the challenges of their generation of feminist as “the loss of subversive stories from young feminist memories, the tendency to believe are the end product of the feminist fight rather than part of the continuing process and disregard the political activism aspects of feminist psychology. They seek to continue the dialogue on using power as relational power finding ways of including more diverse voices within feminist analysis, establishing mentoring relationships with second-wave feminists and continuing to remain open to listen for the areas in our lives and in the world community where societal change is still needed.
Including (all) women’s lived experiences in the study of society; b) Minimizing the harms and consequences of research; and, c) Supporting changes that will improve the status of all women (Smith, 1987; Reinharz & Davidman, 1992; DeVault, 1999; Montell, 1999).

A number of researchers have outlined the basic elements of what a feminist methodology should look like. Some of these principles involve:

- Highlighting the significance of gender in research and the broader society (Cook & Fonow, 1986; Montell, 1999).
- Challenging the positivistic norm of objectivity and the divide between the researcher and the researched (Smith, 1987).
- Using consciousness raising and women’s standpoint as methodological tools in transforming and deconstructing patriarchy (Mies, 1983; Smith, 1987).
- Emphasising and understanding the role of and politics surrounding feminist research as an empowerment tool (hooks, 1989; Opie, 1992).
- Paying close attention to the ethical implications of research (Opie, 1992; Kirsch, 1999).
- More recently, deconstructing the notion that there is a universal women’s experience (see Men & Dai, 1989; Dai, 1999), while recognising the diverse intersectionality of all women’s experiences (Collins, 1990, 2000).

With these factors in mind, some feminist researchers have extolled the virtues of feminist methodology, suggesting that: “Feminist researchers are more likely to grant the interviewees the status of ‘experts’ on the topic or discussion, in keeping with the feminist principle that women are experts on their own experience” (Montell, 1999, p. 46). Using the feminist standpoint as Smith (1987) suggests, allows women’s personal narratives and testimony to be placed at the centre of research, thus ‘giving voice’ to the diversity of women’s lived experiences. Some feminist researchers have noted that in creating a space for women’s voices as participants, researchers may also be able to make sense of their own voices and experiences as well (Stanley & Wise, 1979). Being a woman who has experienced the adjustment needs since living in Bristol, a feminist methodology aimed at elucidating the patterns and shared experiences of women’s lives is very appealing. Given the above discussion, individual interviews informed by feminism were employed in this research.
3.3.2 Feminist Methodology

"Feminism" is a movement, and a set of beliefs, that problematise gender inequality. Feminists value women’s lives and concerns, and will work to improve the status of women (Mansbridge, 1995). Whilst gender was the primary focus within the early feminist methodological literature on interviewing, the focus has changed to a broader scope. Feminism now has a variety of different emphases and aims. In developing a practice and theory that takes account of the interrelations between ‘race’, gender and class, and in particular, the contributions of ‘minority’, feminists have demanded recognition of the ways in which other social differences can construct and reproduce social inequalities at every stage of the research process (Phoenix, 2001).

Feminist methodologists do not use any single research method. Rather, they are united through various efforts to include women’s lives and concerns in their accounts of society, to minimise the harm done by research and to support changes that will improve women’s status. The writings of feminist methodology address the problems of research relations, epistemologies for feminist research and strategies for developing more inclusive methodologies (De Vault, 1996). I agree that there is no single feminist method. Also, many would agree that consciousness-rising as a methodology was at the heart of this women’s movement. Consciousness-raising was fundamentally empirical: it provided a systematic mode of inquiry that challenged received knowledge and allowed women to learn from one another (Allen, 1973, Combahee River Collective, 1982). Women who became feminists began to see an alternative basis for knowledge and authority in a newly discovered community of women and “women’s experience,” which was a trend known as “a fiction and fact of the most crucial, political kind” (Haraway, 1985, p. 65).

I used feminist research in this study in order to bring women in, to find what has been ignored, censored, and suppressed, and to reveal both the diversity of actual women’s lives and what made those lives invisible (see Anderson et al. 1990). Sprague and Zimmerman (1993) argue that there are other ways than using feminist research, with the same result. Nielsen, (1990) points out that, it is not only to know about women but also to provide a fuller and more accurate account of society by including them.
3.3.3 Feminist Epistemology

Many feminist researchers agree that knowledge is socially constructed by individuals operating from or situated in a particular interpretive framework rather than a set of objective, decontextualised facts (Bredo & Feinberg, 1982; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The main concern of the feminist approach is to develop and to interpret the meaning of self through one’s lived experiences in socio-cultural context (Reinharz, 1987; Davies, 1990, 1992). In essence the feminist approach is to obtain an understanding of the ways in which individuals make meaning of their lived experiences. As such, meaning is located ‘in-between’ the researcher and participant within a collaborative relationship (Darroch & Silvers, 1982). Interpretations can vary from person to person resulting in multiple constructions of reality that are different, perhaps contradictory and yet equally valid. Feminist interpretivists argue that it is an “existential fact” that researchers are part of the social world they study rather than neutral observers (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 15; Maxwell, 1996). From an interpretivist perspective, all of the researcher’s claims must be grounded in the participants’ words and actions. A central concern for feminist interpretivist researchers is to understand participants’ experiences from their point of view (an emic perspective) and to be faithful to that understanding in their analysis and writing. At the same time, researchers bring their particular standpoints into dialogue with those of participants but in such a way that their different standpoints remain intact (Sampson, 1993b, p. 1227).

Most feminist researchers also argue against absolute truth (Acker, et al. 1996). Knowledge, or rather “situated knowledge”, is based in “location, positioning, and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims” (Haraway, 1991, p. 193). In other words, it implies the “qualities of multiplicity” that are “located in time and space and particular cultures” and are “embodied in specific ways, and operate as social and collective points of view” (Gottifried, 1996b, p. 13). Knowledge is not cumulatively additive, but partial, transient, and negotiable. It depends on how and where it is situated, and therefore is not generalisable to different contexts, histories and spaces. Specifically, by incorporating race and class as integral parts of a woman’s standpoint, women’s experiences are diverse in many different ways: instead of being additive to each other, they contribute to a
cumulative social science (Gorelick, 1996). Such recognition of diversity and differences in women’s voices goes against the traditional positivist research methodology from which additive, universal and essential knowledge is reproduced.

While some feminists see women as knowers, others realise that listening to women’s voices alone is not enough to produce knowledge. Researchers have the responsibilities to connect and relate women’s experiences to the relations and structure that underlie them (Gottfried, 1996b; Acker, et al. 1996). Since it is highly probable that these women may lack “cumulative knowledge” on the “hidden aspects of oppression” (Acker, et al. 1996, p. 29), their standpoints may not come naturally but have to be mediated by the researcher, acting as a facilitator to dig out the hidden structures of oppression and their determinants. Mediation takes the form of semi-structured or intensive interviews which require “opening our ears ... and hearing what they have to say in their own terms ... so that we can hear the unheard and the unimagined” (Reinhartz, 1992, pp. 19-20). The focus was on listening to accounts of experiences in the words the women used. Sometimes language to convey meaning is not available, because prevailing vocabulary is insufficient or even unknown. DeVault (1990) calls the lack of fit between women’s lives and the terminology available for self-expression “linguistic incongruence”. “If words do not fit”, she says, “the women who want to talk of their experiences must ‘translate’, either saying things that are not quite right, or working at using language in non-standard ways” (p. 97). In a similar vein Irigaray (1985) posits that a woman cannot be taken to represent exactly what she means. Instead, she says, it is contiguous, close. So, concludes Irigaray (p.29), ‘It is useless... to trap women in exact definition of what they mean, to make them repeat so that it will be clear.’

“If the language is ‘man-made’: DeVault (1990) elaborates, it is not likely to provide ready-made, the words that feminist researchers need to tell what they learn from other women” (p. 111). So, she says, “Researchers must develop methods for listening around and beyond words” (p.101). In trying to find words that are good enough DeVault observes that some experiences may be left out. Thus, the construction of a narrated self(ves) rests not only with what is said and the choice of words, intonations, body language, to describe that, but also what is not said. The conflation of experiences told and omitted reflects the specificity
and circumstances of particular conversation.

3.4 Matching strategies

The interview technique is particularly appealing to feminist research when the researcher is a woman because this technique: “draws on skills in the traditional feminine role - a passive, receptive, open, understanding approach ... recognizing and responding to other’s feeling and being able to talk about sensitive issues without threatening the participant” (Reinhartz, 1992, p. 20).

In fact, some feminists argue that it is necessary for women, particularly those who share the same culture, to interview women in order to understand each other. This ‘insider’ location of the interviewer has additional advantages as it will help in building more egalitarian and trusting relationships between the interviewer and the interviewee. Such egalitarianism, by facilitating a dialogue between the two practices, is beneficial to the interview in two ways: first, the interviewee will become more committed, open and engaged in telling her personal stories, and second the interviewer will also be eager to disclose her own experiences, which may in turn help elicit more detailed and in-depth information from the interviewee.

Although egalitarianism is valuable in the interviewer - interviewee relationship, difficulties may arise in real situations, as some researchers have documented (see Acker, et al. 1996; Gorelick, 1996; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1996). Since women interviewers and interviewees are less likely to come from the same backgrounds, there is always the possibility of interviewing up or down (Reinhartz, 1992). According to my limited knowledge in feminist studies, feminist research involves interviewing down, with the researcher seen as the knowledgeable middle-class healthy intellectual and the interviewees as the poor, unemployed or the less privileged. In such a scenario, empathy and self-disclosure on the part of the interviewer would work to reduce unequal relationships. However, the situation is different when the interviewer is interviewing up. To increase credibility and status and to gain trust from the interviewee, the interviewer has to adopt the humble role of a learner and listener rather than the authoritarian role of the researcher. In either case, unequal relationships seem inevitable and reciprocity is difficult to attain. However, I strongly believe that power shifting during the interviewing process will benefit
for the researcher to attain the researched. Relatively, the ‘unequal relationships’ barely existed in the current study, all the participants including the researcher are from similar social stratum in the Chinese community and share the same platform as women migrants living in Bristol, England.

3.5 Narrative Inquiry

Narrative (defined as the telling of a story) derives from the Latin narrare, to make known, or convey information (Berger, 1997; Lacey, 2000). Although there is debate regarding the relative importance of meaning and structure (Eagleton, 1983), most researchers agree that narrative presents information as a sequence of connected events, having some kind of thematic or structural coherence: this happened and then this related event happened (Labov, 1972). A formal definition of narrative suggests that it involves events and their consequences, or the relationship between an ‘event’ and other ‘events’. Gubrium and Holstein (1994) point out that conversation makes visible the unseen personal realms of experience, and embodies social contexts such as family home and community. For research and analysis, experiences and perspectives become accessible because, through narrative, people attach meaning and understanding to experience. Narrative is both a mode of representation and a mode of reasoning, shaping our perceptions of ourselves and impacting our lives, culture and society in general (Cortazzi, 1993, p. 58; Berger, 1997). However, Pinnegar, and Daynes, (2007) emphasised that the turn towards narrative inquiry:

focus on the change in the relationship between researcher and researched, move from using numbers toward using words as data, focus on the general and universal toward the local and particular, and explore the turn in acceptance of a wider range of ways of knowing and the blurring of epistemologies in research (p. 9).

Narrative inquiry is appropriate to many social science disciplines, such as: literary theory, history, anthropology, drama, art, philosophy, psychology, linguistics, education and many other disciplines (Riessman, 1993, 1995; Mishler, 1995; Schegloff, 1997; Manning et al. 1998; Baynham & De Fina, 2005).

There are different aspects of narrative inquiry such as ‘biography’, ‘autobiography’, ‘ethnography’ and ‘life story research’. Over the past several
years, researchers have begun to use the method of life-story as part of inquiry into the study of psychology and education (Kridel, 1998). This process, labelled "the narrative revolution", pays more and more attention to the individual as a storyteller whose personal life-story seems to reflect his or her self-identity and culture (Bruner, 1986; McAdams, 1996).

3.5.1 The Life-Story Method

The life-story is a personal narrative and a story of personal experience (Denzin, 1989). Furthermore, life stories are narrative accounts delivered orally by the individual. They appear to be "an internalised and evolving narrative of the self that incorporate the reconstructed past, perceived present and anticipated future" (McAdams, 1996, p. 307).

The story exposes the meaning and the subjective interpretation given by individuals to their lives and to various events occurring during their life spans (Plummer, 1995). Hence, the life-story seems to include a subjective, value-oriented interpretation of the storyteller (Wallace, 1994), and the researcher's purpose is to understand the meaning of the life as it is manifested mainly within the storied narrative and less so in the facts themselves. Advocates of the narrative study do not necessarily seek objective facts, but rather inquire about one's perceptions, values, and personal aims and so on, through the method of life-story (Ochberg, 1993).

The life-story method which I have employed in the current research blurs into autoethnography. The life story approach for studying Chinese women immigrants in England. Their stories enable us to capture a segment of time, periods of crisis and issues of the women immigrants’ life experience, as well as linking to their adjustment need in the host country during the migration process. The contextual, biographic and personal factors exhibited inside their life stories also allow me/the researcher to describe them in a way that allows others to understand what is happening (Josselson, 1995).

However, autoethnography has enabled me to consider what [I] wrote about this study as an "insider" and the reflection from me as part of the "researched community" would not fit into text if life-story method was used (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 743). Also, the life-story method would not provide me/the researcher with space to reflect upon and question the research process. My
understanding and application of specific feminist lenses and my interpretations of what this research implies for, would be inappropriate to present upon the text. However, employing the autoethnography genre, will ‘allow’ me to “talk back” (personal) to the (cultural – scholarly, research, participant) “narratives” I engage in and within (hooks, 1992). As the research developed, the autoethnographic approach has come to dominate the component of this thesis.

The emergence of autoethnography as a method of inquiry moves the researcher’s “use of self-observation as part of the situation studied to self-introspection on self-ethnography as a legitimate focus of study in and of itself” (Ellis, 1991, p. 30). New epistemologies from previously silenced groups remove the risks inherent in the representation of others, allow for the production of new knowledge by a unique and uniquely situated researcher and offer small-scale knowledge that can inform specific problems and specific situations (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). In addition, autoethnography ‘allowed’ me to have the freedom to write the research in the first person plural, the use of ‘we’ somehow symbolic of corroboration and therefore of more legitimate knowledge than just something ‘I’ had to share.

### 3.5.2 Autoethnography

The term “autoethnography” springs from two veins: one emphasising ethnographic (or anthropological) canons of research, the other, autobiographical (personal narrative or life history). In the ethnographic vein, researchers define usage as an anthropological study of one’s own people. Hayano, one of the earliest to use the term “autoethnography,” asserted that those involved in it “possess the qualities of often permanent self-identification with a group and full internal membership, as recognized both by themselves and the people of whom they are part” (Hayano, 1979, p. 100). Other researchers have expressed similar orientations. Specifically, Van Maanen (1995) said that autoethnographic research is carried out by a native who reveals his or her own group. Strathern (1987) similarly called it “anthropology carried out in the social context which produced it” (Strathern, 1987, p. 17). In summary, these approaches stress an ethnographic slant to autoethnography, advocating a focus on a cultural setting with personal reflections revealed by the member researcher.
However, others support a focus specifically on the researcher within a larger cultural setting. They have argued that “our understanding of others can only proceed from within our own experience, and this experience involves our personalities and histories as much as our field research” (Jackson, 1989, p. 17). The autobiographical vein, then, allows the research to stand on the merits of personal narrative – treatment of one’s own lived experience. Along these lines the autoethnographic researcher is a: “commoner, an ordinary member of his or her society” who “himself or herself is the autobiography subject” (Brandes, 1982, pp. 188-189). Likewise, Lejeune (1989) asserted that autoethnography composed by an insider leads to a more authentic representation of his or her experience than if done by an outsider ethnographer. These views support an orientation, according to Reed-Danahay (1997) wherein “the life story has ethnographic interest” (p. 9).

Autoethnography has enjoyed legitimacy since the 1970s, at which time wrote Tedlock: “there was a shift in emphasis from participant observation to observation of participation” (1991, p. 78). Prior to that time, ethnographers withheld personal reflection. Some researchers published personal narratives surrounding their research under pseudonyms to preserve their academic reputation (Tedlock, 1991). At the present time, the legitimacy of participant observer subjectivity has been widely accepted by the researchers. Because it serves as an appropriate method to address the proposed research question, a review of relevant autoethnography literature follows.

a. **Purpose of autoethnography**

Autoethnography is an autobiographical genre of qualitative research wherein the research richly describes one’s personal experience nested within a larger cultural context. A wide variety of topics abound in autoethnographic writing. As an avant-garde strain of qualitative research, however, autoethnography may also take divergent forms in addition to writing. For instance, in a recent symposium, poetry, theatrical performance, and even visual art served as media under the umbrella of autoethnography (Bochner & Ellis, 2002).

However, the personal experience is shared between the participants and the researcher in a sort of collaborative journey with the researcher compiling the participants’ narrative, embedding their own lived experiences within the story...
that is told, and making connections from and within. “Readers and audiences are invited to share in the emotional experience of the researcher,” argues Jones (2002, p. 33). This sharing is largely accomplished through the writing conventions frequently employed in autoethnography. Specifically, such accounts are usually written in first-person voice and contain contextual details, dialogue, emotion and self-consciousness. These tools help the author convey an emotional experience to the reader. In this respect, it has been said that autoethnographies are similar to good fiction. They: “begin with the experience of one person, but others make it over to themselves and give it new uses and interpretations” (Jackson, 1989, p. 18). Others argue:

Each is a first-person account, written as a story that expresses vivid details about the researcher’s own experience. The researcher’s privilege stories over analysis, allowing and encouraging alternative readings and multiple interpretations. They ask their readers to feel the truth of their stories and to become co-participants, engaging the story line morally, emotionally, aesthetically, and intellectually (Ellis & Bochner 2000, p. 745).

Accordingly, the study resembles a first-person, autobiographical written account of the experience of a Chinese woman immigrant living in England. Autoethnography as a research methodology defines and supports the kinds of “workings” I have attempted in this investigation. Two of the most significant frameworks are what Reed-Danahay (1997) identifies as “debates about representation (by whom and about whom), and the increasing trend toward self-reflexivity in all realms of writing” (p. 1). Throughout this dissertation, I attempt to “work” both tensions. Indeed, the workings of these tensions have led to significant shifts in my research process.

b. Effective Autoethnography

Effective autoethnography demonstrates its intended purpose: to make the researcher and reader co-participants in the recorded experience. Marks of successful autoethnography, according to Ellis and Bochner (2000) include: honesty, emotional reliability, a transformation from an old self to a new one, and the “capacity to inspire conversation from the point of view of the readers, who enter from the perspective of their own lives” (p. 738).

3.6 Summary

The cleavage between the research literature on Chinese cultural values and the personal stories of Chinese women immigrants, not only reinforce the
importance of the theme of my research, but also urges me to consider my research methods carefully. The methodology employed for the current study has already been documented in detail. In the following chapter, how I applied these methods, what kind of issues I came across, and how I chose to present the three Chinese women immigrants' stories will be discussed.
Chapter Four: Research Design - Negotiating the Narrative Turn

In this chapter, the use of multiple strategies that guided this qualitative research and the current turn to narrative will be demonstrated throughout the research process. The positionality of the researcher during interviews will also be addressed. The importance of what makes a good story and meeting the quality demands of research will also be discussed.

The current study is a narrative inquiry of Chinese women immigrants living in Bristol. The data collected came from semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions. In this study, Chinese immigrant women are both the storytellers and characters in their own stories. In this respect, "theory does not express, translate, or serve to apply practice: it is practice" (Deleuze, 1999, p. viii). In the spirit of this approach, I see research as not providing fixed views or promoting totalising concepts, but rather as something which helps to uncover and make connections, multiply potentialities and trouble or disrupt established ideology and world views.

4.1 The challenges encountered

In the context of research, ‘narrative’ is generally understood to refer to qualitative research that uses and tells stories. Many people who use explicitly narrative approaches do so, at least partly, out of a political conviction that social research should be accessible and interesting. They believe that it should seek to capture something of the sense of life as it is lived, and they want to avoid the negative ethical and power consequences of assuming the sort of authoritative voice that denies the possibility of multiple realities. Having said this, it is important to reiterate that it is only possible to re-present, not re-create experiences, perceptions and emotions (see Sikes & Gale, 2006).

Nonetheless, it is troubling for me that it has not always been easy to balance the requirements of quality research and to honour the participants’ stories. I see ways of understanding my own experiences not as atypical but, rather, as fairly typical, thereby touching on some of the theoretical and political implications of such disjuncture, and similar to what Tierney (1998) suggested that:
refrain from the temptation of either placing our work in relation to traditions or offering a defensive response. I increase my capacity neither for understanding nor originality by a defensive posture. To seek new epistemological and methodological avenues demands that we chart new paths rather than constantly return to well-worn roads and point out that they will not take us where we want to go (p. 68).

I am aware it is important that narrative research, whatever forms it takes, will be able to demonstrate both its scholarliness and its honesty in which I intend to demonstrate in the current study.

The question guiding the current study calls for autoethnographic research methods. Determining the specific and appropriate methods to employ in autoethnography, however, poses a challenge. This challenge is due to the fact that researchers disagree regarding which aspects of autoethnography deserve emphasis out of the following: the research process, the culture in which the study is embedded, and the self (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Nevertheless, most autoethnography shares similar features. In the Handbook of Qualitative Research, Ellis and Bochner (2000) provide a concise description of the salient features and forms of autoethnography:

Usually written in first-person voice, autoethnographic texts appear in a variety of forms – short stories, poetry, fiction, novels, photographic essays, personal essays, journals, fragmented and layered writing, and social science prose. In these texts, concrete action, dialogue, emotion, embodiment, spirituality, and self-consciousness are featured, appearing as relational and institutional stories affected by history, social structure, and culture, which themselves are dialectally revealed through action, feeling, thought, and language (p. 739).

Appropriate autoethnographic methods, therefore, include those techniques which contribute to a product containing the above suggested features. In the design of this study, methods of data collection and analysis, as well as writing, were considered in light of the intent and characteristics of autoethnography.

4.2 Collecting the stories

In the current study, there are three participants (including the researcher), three middle-aged Chinese women immigrants with college or higher education and over ten years working experience in Hong Kong/PRC. They migrated to Britain more than three years ago. The research participants were recruited through the local Chinese community. This study emphasised illumination, understanding, and interpretation of the participants’ experiences rather than causal determination, prediction, and generalisation.
The sample was confined to Chinese women immigrants who identify themselves as Chinese (i.e. born outside of Britain and who immigrated from Hong Kong/PRC). They arrived in Britain with family members or alone and have lived in Bristol / Britain for over three years.

Every effort was made to preserve the confidentiality of the participants. Signed consent was obtained from each one of them and the participants also kept a copy of the agreement (Appendix A). Their right to confidentiality was explained and the means by which it would be ensured was defined. All identifying data were removed from the hard copy of the transcript. In any publication or public statement based on the study, all names, occupations and other potentially identifying information were omitted or changed to protect participants' confidentiality. One year after the end of the study, the tapes will be destroyed.

Since the purpose of my research was not for representativeness and generalisability, it was not necessary to rely on a large sample to facilitate statistical significance. I met the research participants on different social occasions organised by the local Chinese community. After knowing them for a while and having become familiar with their personal backgrounds, I approached them for my research.

I used semi-structured interviews. The frequency and duration of the interview(s) were not set as people differ in the way they respond to questions. All interviews, depending on the agreement of the interviewee were tape-recorded whilst taking notes at the same time. The focus was based on the research objectives and open-ended questions were used to gather as much information as possible. As soon as the collected data were typed up, I sent the transcripts to individual participants to crosscheck the accuracy of the information. We (researcher and participants) enacted this inquiry over a period of six months.

After confirmation of the data, the researcher begins reflective analysis by deliberating on the phenomena and then attempts to portray its features and essence. Ellis and Bochner (2000, p. 752), assert that such analysis involves a process called "emotional recall". This type of reflection may be considered as a data source independent of others used (e.g. personal and official documents). Emotional recall is then expressed through description that includes physical
details, events, thoughts and dialogue.

After utilising reflective analysis to begin composing the story, I consulted the data, reading them in chronological order to determine sufficient content and accuracy. In addition to discovering possible deletions, this precaution helped ensure that themes emerged from actual data. As written here:

The qualitative researcher uses inductive analysis, which means that categories, themes and patterns come from the data. The categories that emerge from field notes, documents, and interviews are not imposed prior to data collection (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 389).

Appropriate and recursive revisions followed.

A question that recurred during emotional recall was: ‘Of the many experiences that I encountered as a Chinese woman immigrant, which ones should I include or exclude in the final narrative’? I tried to select those that seemed to bear significant emotional weight over time – such as the love from my parents and other family members that I missed during my time in England. Admittedly, personal factors immediately surrounding episodes of emotional recall may have mitigated the selection of experiences for the final narrative.

4.3 Qualitative Interviews

“The use of semi-structured interviews has become the principal means by which feminists have sought to achieve the active involvement of their respondents in the construction of data about their lives” (Reinhartz, 1992, p. 18). Following the qualitative tradition, this technique emphasises “free interaction between the researcher and the interviewee” from which discovery and description are maximised (ibid). In so doing, it gives the interviewees opportunities to tell their ideas, thoughts, opinions and experiences in their own words within the parameters and the structure set out by the researcher. The role of the interviewer is to learn about the contexts, for example, in terms of race, class and gender, and relate them to the interviewee as it would be “unrealistic to expect that every interviewee will explicitly articulate all categories of social existence” (Cuadraz & Uttl, 1999, p. 171).

The semi-structured interview allows the researcher to set the guidelines and parameters in the form of open questions. These questions are designed well in advance and have a logical sequence of themes and temporality (Appendix B). Yet during the interview, the questions do not have to be followed pedantically.
Interviewees are given a high degree of flexibility and autonomy in controlling the organisation, sequencing and length of their narratives. To keep these narratives in focus, the interviewer is in the position to direct and re-direct the interviewee to stay within the parameters of the research agenda. This redirection depends on the external circumstances, motivation, knowledge and experience of the interviewee, the subjective interpretations of the interview reality by the interviewer and the interviewee, the perceived interactions and relations between them. Therefore, each interview is unique. Depending on the circumstances and the judgements of the interviewer, some questions may never be asked while others are added to probe for more details.

4.3.1 Politics of Interviewing

Many researchers have used the combination of individual and group interview methods to explore specific experiences in more depth, as well as to gather narratives to explore the continuity of personal experience among those individually interviewed (Crabtree et al. 1993; Morgan, 1996, p. 134). While it may be difficult for researchers to negotiate both professional and personal identities while conducting individual interviews (as well as other methods), feminist researchers offer some means of resolving these dilemmas. DeVault (1996, p. 42) asks us to view the researcher as a “resource rather than contaminant” in the research process. Smith (1987) has argued that feminist researchers should embrace subjectivity to centre women’s experiences (as well as one’s own experiences) in the research process, rather than attempt to view objectivity as the legitimate authority in research.

During the interviews, women would ask how I became interested in women immigrants’ adjustment issues in Britain. Relying on my own experience of having lived in Bristol for nearly three years, I often shared my own thoughts and experiences. Given that nearly all Chinese women immigrants revealed negative experiences in acculturation, I often would share some of my own challenging experiences in adjustment. In my own opinion, to not do so would have created a tremendous exploitative dilemma between the ‘researcher’ and ‘researched’, thus thwarting the notion of feminist research. My own experiences as a Chinese woman immigrant provided some preliminary contacts to begin recruiting participants, as well as providing insight into the development of the
questions posed to those from a similar cultural background.

I spent a long time questioning myself before and after the research interviews. What is included or excluded from the final text can have a tremendous effect on how the results are interpreted by others when writing up the findings. I am fully aware of the notion of narrative inquiry and work as a reflexive researcher but, it does not eliminate my thinking of:

- How much information needed to be included in the text about theories that may have guided the research, disciplinary biases or personal hunches that were followed?
- Should I include my original field questions (refer to this chapter, p. 77) and their changing forms as the research proceeded?
- How much background information about the topic and description of research processes would the readers need to understand my findings?
- How to strike a balance between an interesting report and a report with credibility?

As a researcher I needed to confront these possible problems and try to produce fairer, clearer reports. Even when the report takes the form of a narrative, I had to ensure that the “telling of the story” gives readers an accurate and complete picture of the research.

I found the philosophical tradition of feminist research and the qualitative methods it employs to be most suitable for my research. With the goals of exploring, collecting, analysing detailed and nuanced experiences of women immigrants generated by an ‘insider’ perspective, I saw the advantage of using a qualitative approach. However, recognising its drawbacks where no universal principles, no scientific proofs, no tests for truth, or accurate and valid representations are possible, I am aware that generalisability and representativeness would be the objectives in most of the research tradition, however, such tradition does not apply in narrative inquiry (see Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007, pp. 7-9).

I chose intensive semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions for the purpose of eliciting broader coverage and minimising time constraints. While I believe that researcher mediation is necessary to guide the informants in telling their stories, I also recognise the potential problem of the researcher’s subjective
construction of reality when they are actively involved in “re-presenting” the stories told by the informants. To address this problem, I was highly sensitive to the “moral responsibility” (Richardson, 1995) of my role as a researcher that should help in my systematic reconstructions of reality. It is also important to acknowledge the limitations of narrative research, which is likely to produce knowledge that is limited, relative, transient, and therefore should always be subject to future reinterpretation and reconstruction (Richardson, 1995; Acker, et al. 1996).

4.3.2 Process of Interviewing

The semi-structured interviews focused on the participants’ experiences of their adjustments since immigrating to Bristol/Britain. Called by some, “conversations with a purpose,” the interview is recognised as a source of rich and complex material, an opportunity for a discussion or an exchange between the researcher and the participant and, a reciprocal and reflexive process of discovery.

The numerous ways in which conversations for the purposes of this research were organised reflected each woman’s preferences. Not standardised, our conversations/interview sessions took place in a variety of venues, we talked in coffee shops, their house, my house, meeting rooms within the Chinese community centre, and in parks and so forth. We enacted this enquiry over the period of six months. The interviews were conducted at a time and place convenient to the participants. The participants were informed that the interview information was confidential and, that it would be tape-recorded and transcribed later. It was agreed at the beginning that at any point during the interview they might request to have the tape recorder turned off, refuse to answer any question, or terminate the interview. The basics of the study were also explained.

Interviews are data sources for studying selves and, the ways in which people use their experiences, relationships and identities to construct their subjectivities (Charmaz, 1991). Thus interviews were an ideal method for finding out how Chinese women understood themselves as they made meaning of their experiences as migrants. The interviews were conducted in both English and Chinese (Cantonese\(^8\) or Mandarin\(^9\)) depending on the choice and inclination of

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\(^8\) Cantonese is the one of the Chinese dialects used in Hong Kong and in Southern part of China.

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the participant. During the interviews some Chinese idioms or metaphors emerged in the course of the participants' Chinese narratives and they were translated with detailed "symbolic" explanations while some concrete examples were provided as well. At the conclusion of the interview, each participant was given the opportunity to add additional comments and to ask questions. One of the research participants refused to be tape recorded during the interview. Therefore, the data were collected via note taking.

I contacted the participants via email after their interviews. They were given a copy of their transcript and were free to comment on it. The accuracy check of the translation from participants happened at a time of the interviews when I felt a need to let the participants clarify what they meant in both languages (i.e. English vs. Mandarin or vice versa). I also consulted a Chinese woman scholar whose English was good enough to check the translation and who is knowledgeable in Chinese culture. Some differences in translation were resolved through conversations with both the scholar and the participants.

To further ensure the accuracy of the transcriptions of the interviews, I gave a copy of the transcripts in English to each participant with a request that she read it and for her to note clarifications, make corrections or remove any materials. After completing the initial analysis, I sent a draft of the findings to the participants who requested for it and asked for their feedback. By providing transcripts and a draft of the analysis, I sought to engage in a reflexive research process that involved participants in the process of constructing of meaning. Even so, after reading a draft of the findings no changes were requested by the participants.

4.4 Handling the data

The analysis of data begins the moment the researcher perceives the information. In an autoethnography the analysis of data is an ongoing event, developing and crystallizing over time. With each re-reading of my personal reflexive journal with further introspection and self analysis, the process and

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9Mandarin is the official language used in China particular people from Northern part of China, they all speak Mandarin.

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clarity of the research is enriched. These processes form the analysis of data in a qualitative study of an autoethnographical nature. The gathering and analysis of data go hand-in-hand as theories and themes emerge during the study (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). In the initial phases of my study it was not always clear what distinctive themes would emerge. As noted by Janesick (2002), “the qualitative researcher uses inductive analysis, which means that categories, themes, and patterns come from the data. The categories that emerge from field notes, documents and interviews are not imposed prior to data collection” (p. 389). I used the research questions to guide my personal constructions of data, and I placed heavy emphasis on each participant’s story lines as their stories unfolded.

However, personal biases I have in dealing with certain situations also made an impact on the final selection of information I used in the narrative. The success of the initiative and the success or failure I personally faced when attempting to facilitate or solve certain dilemmas also entered into the equation of what was included in the final product. Of course, I attempted to remain as fair and honest as possible in my personal narrative in my selection of both the positive and negative impact I had experienced as an immigrant woman living in Bristol.

Categorizing the information collected provided a concrete structure that facilitated the writing and interpretation of data. At the beginning of my study it was not always clear as to which themes would emerge. However, during repeated readings of the data I was struck by several themes recurring across the interviews. To present these themes would involve cutting the narratives into smaller chunks or vignettes, which I was afraid, would detract from the truthfulness or meaning of the narratives. Moreover, narratives do not speak for themselves. They require analysis if they are to be presented as scholarly work. Any form of narrative analysis requires data reduction; the analyst makes choices about which parts of a narrative are presented to the reader, and these choices must be interpretive (Riessman, 1993).

After attempting to categorize the data, I realized that there is no one way to categorize or code data, but that it is ever changing and very fluid. It could vary from one day to the next, so determining the most likely place the data would fit proved to be an arduous task. My own constructions of the context were
enhanced and more informed as my reviews of the data increased. This greater understanding can be attributed to what Guba and Lincoln (1989) refer to as ontological authenticity – an understanding derived about the researcher’s own point of view.

I first completed a thorough reading both of the field notes and my reflexive journal. I assumed this would give me a more complete overview of the research and provide vivid details of the trials and tribulations I experienced in the research process. After an initial read, I then went back to my field notes and identified areas of the data that matched the journal entries. Notes were then made on a copy of my journal entries of any significant information or events that I did not mention in the journal. This served as a support for the journal and provided a more detailed description of the story. It also enabled me to keep all the written information easy to access.

The challenge was in sorting the data, I found that the event and the time or emotional commitment made to the story shaped the way I categorized data. I believe this just gives credence to the methodology of autoethnography and to the realization that you cannot remove the emotion and other feelings experienced from your own cultural setting. The emotions I felt during the coding of data were real and impacted the categorization of the data. Nevertheless, the analysis and evaluation of data collected was affected by my personal feelings and emotions (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Thus, a sequential and the presentation of the stories were derived from my categorizations.

4.5 Ethical issues

I was aware of ethical issues at all times when undertaking data analysis. The nature of qualitative ethnographic research requires observation and interaction with the participant, it is understandable why certain ethical issues may arise. There are several issues that I took into consideration during, before, and after, the interview and also when analysing the data as described earlier. Some of the issues involved were: a) Participants should have full knowledge of what is involved; b) Can the study hurt the participant? c) Am I being truthful in presenting data? d) What should I do if participants display harmful or illegal behaviour?

Another ethical issue involved with interviews and ethnographic research is
the potential for misrepresentation. The close relations that may emerge between the interviewer and interviewee could pose heightened dangers of exploitation and much writing has been focused on the “dilemmas” of feminist fieldwork (Frontiers, 1993). Some writers, emphasising the moral dilemmas of the fieldworker’s relative freedom and control, have suggested that feminist fieldwork should include special efforts to give something back to participants (Scanlon, 1993). Some feminist researchers argue that representational questions pose fundamental moral/ethical dilemmas; they seek solutions in writing strategies (Wheatley, 1994a, 1994b).

However, when I conducted the current research, I aimed to (re)present the experiences of my interviewees. I explained exactly what the research was about; I gave them the opportunity to revise what they have said and I offered them the opportunity to ask me questions, either about the research or about myself. Equally, I did not use techniques which obscure the voice of participants, for example, formal structured interviews or questionnaires. In these ways, I aimed to equalise the research relationship, and gave participants some control over the process, over their words and over their participation. I was not naïve enough to imagine, I had completely equalised the research relationship, because I believed that was ultimately impossible. I wrote the articles; I had the academic voice and authority; I had the education and the language which contribute to the acceptability of what I wrote. However, relatively, I shared the same platform with my research participant, as a woman immigrant from Hong Kong/PRC.

4.6 My Positionality as a Researcher

Being a researcher, when I write, I am trying to capture a segment of time in the lives of those I am researching and describe it in a way that allows others to understand what is happening. My goal is to show a process of interaction between the participant and myself. The stories I write about my fieldwork put me in conversation with myself as well as with those I am researching. When I tell my own stories, the participant feels more comfortable sharing information and, the gap between the participant and me formerly embraced during interviewing is closed (see Oakley, 1981; Douglas, 1985; Cook & Fonow, 1986; Bergen, 1993; Hertz, 1995). When I write, I am engaged in writing my identities (see Turner, 1994; Coffey, 1999). My fieldwork engages me in a conversation
where I am simultaneously discovering myself and the “others” (Hones, 1998). As a researcher / fieldworker / writer, I should broaden my horizons and awaken my capacity to care about people different from me. These efforts help me to know how to converse with them, feel “connected” (Ellis & Bochner, 1996, p. 26) and avoid abusing the freedom and control I have as a writer and merely put down what should be included in the research.

Feminists have written extensively on these dilemmas as they arise in face-to-face research methods, but concerns about exploitation and misrepresentation still come into play, no matter how distant the process of data collection may be from analysis. In my own opinion, the focus on problems of exploitation has produced an association of qualitative feminist methodology with special ethical demands that sometimes seems to obscure other aspects of its distinctiveness.

From my standpoint, while doing research, I would not exclude any information. Although these discussions were lively and productive, one risk is that the interviewer/researchers may require a moral purity in feminist qualitative research that is simply unattainable, while leaving similar questions relatively unnoticed in discussions of other research traditions. Furthermore, I strongly agree with using self-disclosure as a tool to establish rapport and gain trust when interviewing research participants. That self-disclosure should cause no harm to either party or affect the research outcome is one of the aims in feminist writing.

Although my objective in this study was to engage in an inductive, narrative inquiry process, I was aware that existing theories of acculturation, literature on Chinese culture and gender roles, the writings of feminist theorists and my own experiences as a Chinese woman immigrant, strongly influenced my thinking. As a way of articulating how my personal experiences shaped my research inquiry, I focused on the narratives of other Chinese women immigrants and listened to their stories, so that I could clearly acknowledge my reflexivity as the researcher in the process of conducting this qualitative and feminist study.

4.7 Dilemmas of Intraracial Interviewing

Intraracial interviewing is meant to be the ‘all around solution’ to the problem of gaining access to the experiences and perspectives of minority research participants. At the same time, it is promoted as reducing inter / subjective distances between the interviewer and the research participant
(Bhopal, 2001; Dunbar et al. 2002). Ethnic matching confronts researchers with a spectrum of epistemological, methodological and political choices. Alternatively, we might choose to subsume the complexities of subjectivity and social positioning under overarching categories such as religion and language.

The strengths of "matching strategy" in qualitative research depends on the scholar's belief that it encourages a more equal context for interviewing, allowing more sensitive and accurate information to be collected. A researcher with the same ethnic background as the participant will possess a rich understanding in line with their cultural belief and practice (Ashworth, 1986). Others suggest that "an insider" would have more favourable access conditions and the co-operation of a large number of people and a genuine interest in the health and welfare of their community (Papadopoulos & Lees, 2002, p. 261).

However, research using "matching strategy" often fails to take account of power relationships between the researcher and the participant. The strategy can imply a form of "unevenness" within the research interaction. Using "matching strategies" (whether race, ethnicity and gender) is an approach considered ideal for building rapport, cooperation and trust and to gain access to the authentic story. In general, it is felt that if the research uses intraracial interviewing it benefits the research in all aspects, but this understanding fails to realise that there are other dynamics buried in these epistemological assumptions about the nature of racialised inter / subjectivity (see Gallagher, 2000).

Participants in research on 'ethnic minorities' frequently experience feelings of manipulation and exploitation from the racialised, gendered and class-related inequalities inherent within academic structures and practices. At another level, interviewing without due regard for social, cultural and linguistic differences can lead to significant misunderstandings and/or misrepresentation that can feed into racist practices in the production of knowledge (Riessman, 1987).

What I am trying to point out here is that matching for racial identity alone fails to take account of many other social and cultural differences and identifications. Even with the best of intentions, qualitative interviews, whatever the differences between research participants and interviewers and how this affects those immediate interviews, remain unpredictable and messy. Qualitative interviews are never politically neutral. Power relations within particular interactional and social arenas need to be examined, located and attended to
during the active and analytical stages of research. However, using matching strategy is inevitable in the current study, based on the research focus, and the methodology used for data collection and analysis. The purpose is to unfold the unheard stories of Chinese women immigrants to explore their adjustment needs since living in Britain.

4.8 Narrative research: Criteria for scientific work

Within the wider academic research community, the word ‘story’ can still have negative consequences in the social sciences research project. Due to the fact that stories are still often equated with fabrication and untruths: in other words with the opposite of the traditional goals of (scientific) research. Thus, whilst most people would probably accept that stories can and do tell ‘truths’ about human experiences, they may feel more comfortable when their stories come in the guise of novels, rather than research accounts (see Sikes & Gale, 2006). However, Clandinin and Rosiek (2007), “draw attention to the narrative turn, a turn that is remarkable in the intensity and enthusiasm with which it has shifted research methodological undertakings” (p. 37).

What makes a story scholarly? This question is perhaps the key central issue in determining if a personal narrative is credible, dependable, and trustworthy – all cornerstones of qualitative research. “The emergence of autoethnography and narratives of self … has not been trouble-free, and their status as proper research remains problematic” (Sparkes, 2000, p. 22). Ellis (1995) argues that a story could be considered scholarly if it makes the reader believe the experience is authentic, believable, and possible. The intended purpose of autoethnography is to provide the opportunity for the reader and author to become co-participants in the recorded experience (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). There are also multiple warning signs, skills and difficulties that are experienced or needed in writing ethnography, according to Ellis and Bochner (2000).

Using self as subject is a way of acknowledging the self that was always there and of exploring personal connections to our culture. Expert knowledge is socially sanctioned in a way that commonsense or personal knowledge is not. As well, how knowledge is produced and who produces it is important in how status is attributed to knowledge (Muncey, 2005). Researchers must adapt at identifying pertinent details, introspection, descriptive and compelling writing, and
confronting things about themselves that may be less than flattering. Also, the researcher must handle the vulnerability of revealing oneself to a greater audience. The use of self as the source of data can be restrictive, yet a powerful aspect of unpacking the many layers involved in the study of a particular culture or social context. William Tierney explains that autoethnography is intended to confront dominant forms of representation and power in an attempt to reclaim marginalized representational spaces (Tierney, 1998).

In a world of empirical science, producing evocative writing accounts that are labelled as research can be a difficult endeavour (see Stanley, 1993). The quality of research is a complex issue, and there are many ways to approach evaluation. As Sparkes (2002a, pp. 191-224) points out, different research tales require different ‘judgement calls’. Some of the criteria are suggested by different writers across the disciplines (such as Trinh, 1989; Richardson, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c; Ellis, 2000; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Bochner, 2001). I agree with Speedy (2008, p. 56), a good / creative narrative research includes the following perspectives:

- Transparency
- Trustworthiness
- Aesthetic merit
- Reflexivity
- Accountability
- Substantive and enduring contribution
- Impact and transformation.

I intended to be guided by the above perspectives when at different stages of the research, such as when describing methods of data collection and the researcher’s role in the interviews and in the description of the analysis of the data.

When describing the quality of the postmodern philosophy of science: in the Western process of modernisation; as far as we can see, the most significant change in the evaluation of research is the change towards increasing holism. When we apply these principles of quality, our evaluation is not only based on cognitive-rational knowledge, but also on the emotional and the moral-ethical impacts of research (see Ginev, 2003) in which autoethnographical research bears similar notion (see Ellis, 2007).
4.9 Summary

A narrative inquiry of Chinese women immigrants' adjustment needs since living in Britain allows the writer and reader to pursue the essence and significance of being part of the community as a woman immigrant living in Britain. Attention to detail, nuances, subtleties and contextual understanding are at the heart of all such inquiries and provide the researcher with rigorous and thought provoking reflection. In this study, all the names have been altered to secure confidentiality. This is an important criterion of the research as I am still engaged as the member of the local Chinese community where the study took place. I recognised that my personal descriptions and articulation of the events in Bristol are subjective in nature and may not reflect what other Chinese women immigrants experienced. The data I gathered formed the basis of my research and it was not a comprehensive sample, but a sample that was important in my role as part of the research community as well as an autoethnography researcher. The objective here is to:

- identify the experiences of Chinese women immigrants have had and the meaning I derived from them (then and now),
- provide other aspiring or current women immigrants an avenue to further develops their own thinking about their migration process in Britain,
- provide better insight to the UK government about the adjustment needs of Chinese immigrant women living in Bristol.

There are no prescribed methods or exact formulas in autoethnography. There are only pathways and structures that serve as guidance.

Chapters V, VI, and VII contain three different stories and hopefully will offer readers a path to understanding Chinese immigrant women’s experience living in Bristol. The in-depth interview may provide valuable information to the UK government organisations to enable them to understand the diversity and similarity of these women’s experiences, and provide support to their adjustment needs. From the position of an immersed researcher, I intend to provide a cultural avenue, a story and personal reflection that will impact on the readers’ feelings.

As Clandinin and Connelly (1994) acknowledge, a narrative offers a path to understanding as a dialectical process. Hopefully, an autoethnographic account will produce an approximation of the truth, or a more detailed description of the Chinese women migrants’ experiences, and draw readers into the story where the
experience can be actually felt (Schwandt, 2001). This verisimilitude aims to enable the reader to draw upon their own experiences and to better understand those experiences as well as to assimilate and learn from the experiences of others. I will begin with my own stories in the next chapter.
Chapter Five: “One Country, Two Systems (一國兩制)”

I used to live in the New Territories of Hong Kong which is located on Kowloon peninsula. It took half an hour to drive from my flat to cross the border to Mainland China. My nightmares began after the Tianamen massacre in 1989. I dreamt about the People’s Liberation Army crossing the border and arriving at my doorstep to arrest me. Since the massacre, like the other people in Hong Kong (HK), I had no faith with the government of People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the majority of the HK people felt the same and started to look into emigration. However, I did not take immediate action to dislocate myself because I did not want to leave my parents behind.

After Hong Kong returned to China in July 1997, it was given a new name, “Special Administrative Region (SAR) / Hong Kong/China;” and the policy “One country, two systems” was introduced. Its feasibility has been a hot topic for debate around the world. Nevertheless, local entrepreneurs, as well as senior government officials, thought that if they gained the favours of the PRC government and the power centre, their own careers might progress. Their pro ‘left-leaning’ and draconian decisions were overwhelming. The majority of native Hong Kong residents found this situation unbearable (see Chiang, 2003; Kuah, 2006). They do seem to be rather sweeping and I too felt breathless under such a social/cultural environment. Before 1997, people had pragmatic appreciation for what the British/colonial government had done for Hong Kong. We were satisfied with the colonial era and resisted the 1997 transition; therefore when Hong Kong's economy started going downhill after the political transaction, we all laid the blame on the SAR government. Eventually, I decided to return to England, simply to make my life more meaningful and for personal development rather than wasting my life anticipating the unknown.
And when life’s sweet
fable ends,
Soul and body part
like friends;
No quarrels, murmurs,
no delays;
A kiss, a sigh,
and so away.

17th century Richard Crashaw wrote in his poem *Temperance* (1652)

A few years ago, I, like many other Chinese women immigrants, came to Britain from Hong Kong. I felt I could create a comfortable life in Britain. However, after a while, I struggled to locate myself as a Chinese woman migrant from Hong Kong/PRC living in Britain. From my own perspective, this is strongly tied to issues of gender role and cultural values. I felt that the traditional role model for Chinese women does not fit my own experience as well as they do other Chinese women migrants, which have been steeped in the Confucianist philosophy of “Three Obediences and Four Virtues.”

I am one of the Hong Kong Chinese women who have migrated to Britain and is trying to negotiate, weave and at times wrestle my way through the British culture or, “foreign culture”. I have experienced huge personal, cultural and professional changes in moving to Britain. I have, therefore, been interested to learn about the other Chinese women immigrants living in Britain and to explore the effects of their internalised cultural value and their adjustments needs during their settlement.

The life stories of other women immigrants from Hong Kong/China will be presented in the following two chapters. Throughout the research process, I explore the dynamics of the interview process in relation to autobiography and ethnography; I also consider how selfhood is paradoxically drawn out in the process of describing otherness. In other words, I examine otherness in the self and selfhood constructed within the others. As a way of articulating how my personal experience shaped my research inquiry, I begin with my own stories include my experiences of crossing multiple geographic and cultural borders so
that I could clearly acknowledge my reflexivity as a researcher in the process of conducting this qualitative and feminist study.

5.1 Past and present

Previously in Hong Kong, after working for the Vocational Training Council (VTC) for over seven years as a lecturer, I realised there were quite a few students with learning difficulties who had not been given adequate help. Fulfilling my desire to help those in need was achieved in several steps: I went back to further study, which, along with training, facilitated me with the confidence and skills to help people with special needs. My role with VTC shifted from a lecturer for general education to a Counsellor for the disabled. I enjoyed the nature of my job very much, which gave me the chance to empower families with disabled members and people with special needs and through which I benefited other people and society. The job itself helped me to attain my personal goal in life. The incentive and rewards from work made my life more meaningful. Chinese believe that if one does good things to others, the merits accumulated and the goodness will return to the practitioner (善有善報 / 因果循環). Certainly, I would not expect anything in return from what I did, but if that were to be the case then I would wish my parents' poor health to improve.

After 1997, I became part of the community influenced by the new government. The frustration it caused helped me decide to return to England where I used to spend lengthy periods of time in the past.

5.1.1 Re-visiting the Border-crossing

In the past, I enjoyed the privilege of having a British passport, which looks identical to those of local British people and had caused no problems for me travelling to different places prior to landing in the UK after 1997. There were a couple of signs at the arrival hall for queues before the immigration desks: one for locals with British passports and the other for EU and other passports. It never occurred to me that I needed to queue anywhere but the first one. I did not know that England was applying the policy of ‘One country, two systems.’ And when I was told off by the immigration officer, who accused me of thinking to gain entry with a right to abode, I was disappointed with the way they treated their overseas citizens. I felt I was being discriminated against and facing another
displacement since 1997. I was faced with experiences for which I had not prepared. I began to understand that my previous experience of living in England over 20 years ago would not help.

After living in England for more than 18 months, I find the way this country is governed frustrating. This period is the second time I have stayed here and I found myself restless and having difficulty settling in compared with my previous visit, as a student, over 20 years ago. I understand this difference could be due to personal issues, but I also believe that Bristol has changed tremendously in this time. I have shared my views with my colleagues and friends in Bristol and we all agree that, nowadays, the local people are more individualistic and lack a sense of community and trust. Their behaviour and attitudes towards those outside their community are mainly influenced by the media and social policy laid down by the government. I respect people and treasure the company of others and instead of bemoaning and cursing the bad experiences that I have encountered; I decided to try mixing with the local community.

Since my arrival in England, instead of waiting for sunset everyday like most of the women immigrants I met from coffee mornings, I enrolled in a postgraduate course with the local university, took up part-time employment in the local area and participated in different voluntary work. That is how I made my life more meaningful and at the same time maintained a living pattern similar to what I had in Hong Kong. Also I could mingle with the locals and understand their culture. As I grew up in a British colony I did not expect great difficulty in blending in. However, this was not the case. I experienced that the indigenous ‘Whites’ are not that friendly, they are not the same as those I met in Hong Kong or when I was a student in Bristol over 20 years ago.

5.1.2 Different Cultural Values

The different cultural values between Chinese and English culture made me feel uneasy with the “individualistic” orientation in England and I often thought back to the more collectivist life in Hong Kong / China. The individualistic orientation of English culture is difficult for someone from a Chinese cultural background to cope with. Most of my English colleagues seem to have a very positive feeling about themselves. They appear to be very focused on their own
needs and feelings in relation to others. They do not pay much attention to others’ feelings and reactions. I can feel that when we talk, I cannot discuss with them my worries because we do not share the same values. Chinese people are more concerned about each other’s lives. Such kinds of relationships and concerns are very important to us Chinese women immigrants in England. I, like many other non-first language English-speaking immigrant women of colour, experienced challenging situations with racial and class discrimination embedded in the daily life experiences of England.

As a Chinese person, my efforts to look at Western individualism from outside will be drawn largely from a Chinese background, so I will focus on the Chinese self to show a different way of understanding and living reality, self, and the world. I am aware that Western people are open to criticism, however, in our Chinese tradition to critique Western tradition, as a Chinese woman is a very ambiguous if not an impossible position. The word ‘critique (批评)’ in Chinese means to give negative feedback, yet, the Chinese tradition is to only offer positive feedback to other’s work. However, in the Western context it means evaluation. Therefore, I found myself shifting into the Western context where critique is not seen as negative but as a process of coming to a clearer understanding. Nevertheless, in a strict sense, it would not be a critique in the present context, since each tradition follows its own historical meanderings in its own contexts. While each has its own strengths, each also has its own weaknesses and such an intertwining of triumph and failure cannot be separated in any easy way. In other words, one’s strength is precisely the other’s weakness and vice versa. To use one against another, one usually runs the risk of falling into certain traps of cultural and political conservativism while expanding only one aspect of a preferred tradition. I had had no knowledge of traditional philosophy of Confucianism and never studied his doctrine either before commencing my research; however, I would like to share my limited knowledge of Confucianism relating to my ‘self’ and ‘others’.

I agree with Tu (1996) that Confucian self-cultivation is an open, dynamic, holistic process in which the self is constantly engaged with the other, whether this other is another person, the external world, nature or cosmos, and that the self can be continuously expanded, renewed, and transformed. The Western sense of individuals as isolated entities or private egos cannot be found in the
Confucian self. Fulfilment for the individual is impossible without relating to others in a social and moral context. Because of the Confucian Golden Rule: “What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others,” the communal aspects of the self can be easily submerged into a hierarchical system of society. As such, Confucianism is very often charged with promoting social hierarchy and suppressing individuality. Historically, the institutionalisation of Confucianism did play such a role. Philosophically, the emphasis on the commonality of humanity tends to constrain creative expressions of individuality. As de Bary (1991b) comments, Confucianism was a problematical enterprise from its inception, and, as it responded to the challenges of each age, addressing some perhaps better than others, it had both successes and failures. In approaching these complexities, I would argue that there are inner paradoxes within the Confucian discourse, as probably every discourse has, that still support a strong subjective self (though not in the sense of the Western subject) in contrast to the impression that Confucians only obey the rules of authorities.

Confucian self-cultivation emphasises the importance of moral integrity, human dignity and personal strength in fulfilling the mission of becoming noble men or women (see Chap. 2, pp. 16-17). This can sound too idealistic to some and might be impossible to apply under different cultural contexts; I am not certain if I could lead my life this way at all times but guard myself with the Golden Rule when I can.

5.1.3 To Become a Worthy Woman in the West

I left my role as a vocational counsellor for the disabled and came to England. Eventually, I became a doctoral student. In my research, I have examined crossing the border from the SAR/China to the British cultural domain from the perspective of a woman immigrant. When I was a counsellor for disabled children in Hong Kong, I was respected by society because I was able to offer emotional support to those in need and to guide them in their well being. As a woman immigrant and a doctoral student in England, I feel I am now seen as a ‘worthy woman’. However, my experiences with indigenous ‘White’ people have been problematic.

The experience of changing from a counsellor for disabled teenagers to a
doctoral student in a foreign land was unsettling and unforgettable. Although I was an experienced counsellor, I had rarely written academic papers before. In the first few months of university, everything seemed very new to me. I did not need to rush to meetings with colleagues, organising work placements, workshops for the trainees and juggling with data requests from higher management to secure government funding. No more dinners with my siblings on the weekends and no more relaxation in beauty parlours — the routine from my past had totally vanished. The majority White (local English / European) came into my life, many with the cool faces of academia; journals and computers appeared in front of me one by one. The competition shifted from the ability to seek the best job placements for the disabled trainees, to the ability to write the best papers for assignments and international publication. After the world of work, it was not easy to adapt to and survive in the academic world as a doctoral student.

After immigration, I was determined to seek personal development; I decided to try to become an ideal female doctoral student. I will explain how I struggled to pursue my studies and to shift roles from a full-time student to a part-time worker whilst taking on voluntary work with different organisations. Furthermore, several aspects of my university life will be presented: the first day of enrolment; moving from the periphery to the centre; challenging experience of writing papers; pathway of learning how to learn; the process of integrating with other students from all over the world and/or getting along with colleagues with different backgrounds. The most intriguing part is that I have to juggle my time to maintain a balance between my study and part-time employment.

5.1.4 Threshold of Academia

One of the local universities offered me a place in Doctor of Education programme before I left Hong Kong. Within days of arriving in Bristol, I visited the University for registration. I probed around the whole building and tried to explore the place which would endow me with a ‘new identity and make my life more meaningful’. The whole building seemed deserted compared to any of the universities in Hong Kong. I enrolled during the Christmas holiday, there were only few people working in their office, no students and no teaching taking place. Then I went to the doctoral programme office and met the support staff:
"Are you ...postgraduate course?"

"Yes, I am...."

"Oh, there is another Chinese girl coming in today.....,"

"I .... for the Doctoral programme."

The staff members were polite and friendly, when they talked about the "postgraduate course"; it represented a promotion of sorts from my former, inferior, status as a woman immigrant. What a great feeling. My identity really changed on that day, when compared to the experiences I had had when I first arrived at the immigration desk. The day before, as a woman immigrant, I was just an ordinary woman but there seemed to be some magic power in academia that could change me into a useful woman. I was wholly addicted to that romanticised idea. A deconstruction of my old self-identification as a woman immigrant and a simultaneous reconstruction as a doctoral student took place, simply from crossing the physical boundary from my home into the university. However, 'if you would like to see the rainbow then you have to put up with the rain'. For the last three years, the idea of re-constructed self, held me up and through a lot of hurdles for which I was not prepared.

After I paid my tuition fees, obtained a student handbook and study materials for my first module, I was off to various places for registration. Although I had the map indicating the places that I had to visit, still it was scary hopping to different buildings, especially with the usual English weather; damp, cold and miserable. I could hardly locate the number of the building. After three o’clock in the afternoon it was as dark as ten o’clock at night in Hong Kong. I went to the health clinic to begin with; the receptionist asked the post-code of my address and told me that I was not qualified to register with the University clinic because I did not live within their area. She continued and said that I had to find a health clinic, which was within my post-code and willing to take on a new National Health Service patient. The same procedure applied to my dental care if needed. I started cursing the glossy description in the student prospectus that free National Health Service (NHS) for full-time students would be provided. I was turned away by different clinics within my area; they told me they could not accept any new patients. I panicked. What would happen if I fell ill? Did I have
to fly back to Hong Kong for medical treatment? It took nearly six months before I could find a clinic within my area willing to take on new NHS patients.

Due to environmental factors, climate change and physiological change was unavoidable and, I found the change unmanageable. Therefore, I have become a regular visitor to the clinic for the last three years. I soon realised, however, that the service in the clinic was very limited and that the NHS could not help me. I had to fly back ‘home’ and sought help from my doctor in Hong Kong. I had the same problem with my dental care, I needed regular care and treatment but I had no luck with dental care with the NHS. Eventually, I had to seek private dental treatment. The cost for private dental care is beyond my means and the services that I experienced from three different dental surgeons were terrible. One dentist told me, she could not access the appropriate equipment to help my problem. It sounds extreme; but I had no alternative but to make various trips to and from Hong Kong for my dental care. It is frustrating and alarming that a full-time student needs to pay for private dental care. This was never mentioned in the student handbook and I did not anticipate this would happen to me.

At university, I was one of the students from South-East Asia enrolled in narrative studies. At the beginning, similar to the other foreign students I was unsure of myself and had no idea what the requirements of each assignment were. I attended three different units in the first three months and the required assignments were piled up. I had nothing on my mind except panic and sleepless nights. Quite often I could not progress my writing. My thinking was just like thousands of threads tangled up, or like a spider crawling round its web not knowing what to anticipate. How? When? Where? And what will happen? I began to lose my confidence and queried my abilities.

"Am I pushing myself too far …

… was it beyond my capability to be a doctoral student?"

I remembered the worst experience was when other students submitted their assignments and obtained good feedback from the lecturer and I was still struggling with my thoughts, or trying to put words on paper. My days went very quickly for the first six months and my brain was flooded with information from the modules that I attended. Based on the structure of each module, after the
three days of a taught module, a thirty-minute tutorial would be arranged between the tutor and students. Advice would be given on how to write the assignment. There was no formal tutorial or informal discussion with the students after that. The only communication relied upon was email but it was often unreliable. I had difficulties keeping up with the requirements. The experienced students tried to offer help, but there were limits. It took quite some time to convince myself to seek advice from support staff who tried to direct me to those who could offer help.

Narrative studies are language laden and concern social/cultural discourse between/amongst humans. My inner response was mixed; I had questioned myself about whether I could meet the demands of this programme. Thinking seriously for a while, I firmly decided to strive for excellent results in order to create a positive image of a Chinese women immigrant, whose first language was not English. I also wanted to demonstrate that foreign students could perform just as well as the local English students. To this end, I had to confront my own problems and began to evaluate my approach to study. It took over a year to appreciate narrative study and the philosophy of transformative learning as it applied to my research (see Mezirow 1991, p. 167; 1996, p. 162).

'To be transgressive and go beyond boundaries when presenting my thoughts'.

I remembered this approach of learning becomes a source for debate amongst the lecturers and students for a whole morning. To me, this approach was fascinating though some students found it difficult to follow and inapplicable for them. It seemed to resonate with my inner ‘self’ and I could not conceive any better way to approach narrative study than this perspective.

I found it gave me all the freedom that I needed to express my-self and liberate my thinking on paper. Since that point, my study improved gradually and I was enjoying what I learnt every day. Having said that, the approach was new to me as it had not been a part of my formal education and upbringing. The word ‘transgress’ in Chinese means against tides (違反), or to go beyond the boundary (越界), or against the law (違法), or breaking the law (犯罪). Therefore, the word ‘transgress’ has not been applied in our Chinese culture and would never be
used in any formal education or child-rearing practice. We all have to think and behave within social boundaries and acceptable manners. To liberate one’s thinking in a western way sounds too rebellious in our Chinese society and transgression, for women, does not arise. I am enjoying the freedom of learning in this way, even though; in Chinese cultural context I would be seen as rebellious.

At present, I claim that I am one of them, a transgressor: I am new to the university and do not know the policies and rights of a full-time foreign student, not even after 3 years. Just like the other foreign students, I would not dare to raise my problems with the University management. I feel more comfortable positioning myself on the border in fear of future consequences. Over the past three years, I managed to complete all the taught modules required by the university and began my research writing. It makes me feel that I am on the track to achieve my Doctorate.

When the new batch of students arrives, many turn to me for advice as a mentor. They approach me with difficulties in their studies or personal problems. At times, this situation creates a sense of superiority cum ego overriding my logical thinking. There are a large number of students who came from British ex-colonies, as did I. We get along very well, and although we dreamt in different languages, we share similar historical backgrounds. I value the time that we share. We evaluate the past and present, comparing our countries and examining the differences when a British colony became an independent country. There are a large number of students from South East Asian countries studying at the university. Although we share a similar cultural background, it does not mean that we share the same cultural value and practices. The most shocking phenomenon that I observe is that many appear lacking in a sense of community spirit; something with which I was far more familiar in Hong Kong. While we might share different value systems, we all walked down the same path to a Doctorate.

I had to keep reminding myself on a regular basis that I am in the West, not Hong Kong. I might not have to abandon my past but need to adjust to local circumstances and assimilate with the locals while at the same time working to make my life meaningful. Having said that, my experiences working with the local Whites in both business and charity organisations was a challenge!
5.1.5 Outsider to become an insider

There are memories of painful experiences from when I first arrived in Bristol and found it difficult to adjust to the quiet and solitary life style of England. I felt suddenly that I had lost the sense of independence and identity that I had before. I remembered how much I hated not being engaged with any voluntary work and stayed at home just like a 'professional idiot', how frustrated I was when I lost self-confidence, felt disconnected from the past, and became aware that I had failed to predict my own future. Maybe my life path determines that I will experience what my research participants had experienced, including dislocation, displacement and uncertainty.

To avoid being too isolated in the ‘new town’, I accepted invitations from my landlord to attend gatherings held by his family and friends. Feeling low in spirits, I was quiet among the Whites; they tried to be friendly to me and make this foreigner feel welcome. However, I just could not blend in; not because of the people I met, it was my inner self. Their conversations were so materially oriented that I could barely contribute to the subject. It occurred to me that in England, how one defines one’s identity is different from what happens in Hong Kong, or it could be cultural differences in collectivism and individualism. This type of gathering challenged my value system and disturbed my simple and peaceful academic mind. I kept asking myself:

Do I wrap myself in an academic cocoon and not expose myself enough to reality? Did my full-time university life make my experiences not diversified enough? Thus, at university I always felt like an ‘outsider’ in comparison to the Whites and being excluded from getting a researcher job; or is it because I am a full-time student? Will my existence and value get recognised only if I have a ‘competitive’ occupation? Shall I include myself in the job market immediately to test whether I was ‘marketable’? If I start to search for a job, will I still have time for my dissertation? If I don’t spend time on the job research, will I still be able to keep a peaceful mind for my writing? If I am not able to find a job in the short term, will my self-confidence get hit really badly? If I decide to search for a job, can I find one that can utilise my training and strength, and also benefit my dissertation?
All these thoughts were hanging over me day and night, so I decided to write up my personal particulars and send off applications to different charity organisations as well as non-government organisations for paid or non-paid work. I received no replies. What’s wrong with the Whites? I asked myself. I intended to offer my work experiences and contribute to those in need. I was frustrated and felt another displacement.

After sharing my experience with other foreign students, they told me that there are jobs for Whites only and jobs for foreigners or for those with temporary residency; I agree with what they said because of the immigration policy in the UK. My fellow students told me there are vacancies in cleaning jobs and support work in public hospitals and service businesses that I could try. With help from a friend, I found a job working in a local store. The next step was painful and more intense. The complex feelings involved in deciding to accept and carry out this job were overwhelming. The job offered to me was not in the flower stand as I had been told, but involved heavy work. I knew it would not be easy for me to return home and carry on my studies once I accepted this job. Nonetheless, working part-time might not jeopardise my programme for completion of my Doctoral degree. Taking the job seemed to be a betrayal of my academic goal and my trained profession as a counsellor. However, more than six months staying at home alone felt like centuries. The feeling of uncertainty without a sense of social belonging, the lack of financial income, the distance between my background and the material environment in England and the fear of being detached from the outside world not only let me further understand the harsh situation experienced by other Chinese women immigrants I met on the coffee morning. It was also made me feel more connected with them than ever before! From this standpoint, I wanted to take this job so that I was able to understand how it feels to work in a local store and mix with communities other than the University. In this way I could better interpret my evolving relationship with my research subject and participants.

My instinct also told me that I needed to take this job to repair my self-confidence. As calm and intact as I appeared on the surface, my self-worth was hit by a different type of value system in a different social context. ‘I’ with my focus on studying women immigrants; my sense of ‘I’ was lonely and exposed amongst the groups of people who are accustomed to English culture and values.
My vulnerability drove me to react by proving my 'market value' through quickly finding a job and boosting my confidence.

The internal debate in my mind makes me go through a disturbing anxiety when making a decision for myself to be employed or be unemployed. My feelings in the first few weeks of working in a store can be described by words: "stress", "uncertainty" and "labour". My work involved controlling the wooden pallets from the warehouse; to load each pallet with goods before re-shelving. I felt bitter when both the management and my colleagues ignored my declaration that I have suffered from a neck injury for over 20 years and cannot handle heavy goods; I also experienced colleagues hassling me at work and the management turning a blind eye. I did not mention what I was experiencing at work to any of my family in Hong Kong especially my parents; they might think it their fault for not being able to take care of me. I kept telling myself that I had to be strong; otherwise I would become a loser. I found the work taxing and strenuous, but instead of resigning from the job, I chose to work fewer hours, so that I could recuperate from a previous duty before the next one. I had had no intention of taking over anyone's job, but the management assigned me to look after an entire section not long after I started working with them. Inevitably, their decision stirred up jealousy, especially among those male colleagues who had longer service tenures than I did. They tried to upset me at work verbally and make my job difficult and I had to learn to ignore their comments and work harder. After six months, I resigned from the job because working in a local store would never fulfil my ego and make my life meaningful.

However, I valued the experience gained from this job and met quite a few new immigrants from all over the world. Some of them were accountants, medical doctors and other trained professionals. It made me believe that low status jobs are the pathway to work for foreign immigrants in Bristol. I am not sure whether you would call this situation under-employment or discrimination. But, what is certain is that none of these trained immigrants would opt to do such low status work by choice.

I worked with two other organisations after the first job. One was in the local Chinese community and the other was a local charity organisation. Through work, I experienced working with the local Whites, local born and immigrant Chinese from Hong Kong/PRC. However, the communication, attitude to work
was very much the same for the local White and local born Chinese. From my limited experience working with different business and voluntary organisations, the local people were more \textit{laissez-faire}, hardly focused on what they were doing and irresponsible as to what their job required. At one time, one of my Chinese colleagues, who has lived in England for over 35 years said to me:

"You have to slow down; the local people will not like you …

They do not like anyone to change their work culture …"

I was shocked when my colleague told me this. My work attitude kept me working with a quasi-government organisation in Hong Kong for over 17 years, with positive comments and feedback from the management. I began to understand that I had to re-examine my values, and ethics of work; my self-worth would be challenged if I decided to acculturate or transform myself to fit into the host country!

\textbf{5.1.6 Moving towards a Doctorate}

At the end of 2006, I was fully ready to rededicate myself to dissertation writing despite my schedule of part-time employment, voluntary work and three trips to Hong Kong within 12 months. I started to refresh my library research and revisit my field notes. Previously, I spent a year on doing research and preparation; I came up with my own story line, of the shifting and growing identity of ‘me’ who was a student researcher or ‘an outsider’, an academic in the Chinese women immigrant community who then became ‘an insider’ (of the group of people I studied). Of course, the relationship between my participants and me is evolutionary too – our friendship grows.

I faced many challenges in writing. Dissertation writing demanded deeper emotional involvement than my part-time job in the home for the elderly. Normally, I needed to clear up my ‘leftover thoughts from the day’ and warm myself up before concentrating on writing each night. The writing itself is both a joy and pain. I finally find a peaceful mind after I sit down to write and let my thoughts out. It is a therapeutic exercise to make sense of my own identity when I write the stories of my research informants. I try to squeeze myself into various voluntary works as well as spend time with my research participants for coffee
mornings. Nonetheless, my emotional weight is mainly in academia, at present.

From my informants, there are mainly two reasons Chinese women immigrants are in Britain. One hopes for a better future for her children and the other’s marriage is what brought her to the UK. I am the odd one out; I do not have any children or a husband. Most of the time, I sensed that my identity belonged neither to any of the organisations nor to the academic world. I know I will continually be in that limbo, as a Chinese woman immigrant living in England, shifting my role as a part-time worker, volunteer and full-time student. Though it may sound grand to some, it seemed to me the only apparent direction for me is to search for my 'self'. Maybe one day I will be able to identify and locate my 'space'.

Having left my job that I worked at for more than 17 years in vocational training, I wonder if I am courageous enough to go back and start all over again. At the same time, I do not feel I totally belong to the counselling field either, despite having moved up from entry-level to an experienced counsellor who was involved in the core functions of the Skills Centre where I worked. At the beginning, I had no qualification in counselling, a field that could provide opportunities to assist people with emotional stress or learning difficulties. After seven years working with the training centre for the disabled, I had accomplished a considerable amount and became a well-rounded person. I had focused on areas such as vocational rehabilitation for people with learning difficulties, parental empowerment on the matter of their disabled children, established and created networking with both the public and private sectors, conducted workshops to facilitate or prepare trainees before their interviewing for work placements and employment. I established strategic planning and decision making for the Centre development, which won great admiration from my colleagues and from the higher management of the Council. I do not feel these efforts can be evaluated in the way that academic publications are. For instance, if I have run extra miles in the past seven years to gain the experiences that are equal to someone’s ten plus years, how can that be assessed and be obvious as for someone who is very productive in academic research?

I am still on my search for the meaning of self(ves), as my thesis is almost finished and my degree will be completed within 2008. It is not easy for a Chinese woman immigrant to obtain a post in academia in the UK (Ward, 2001).
What are my prospects after graduation? Will I be able to find a position in the local university? Will they decide that over 40 months in the research community is not academic enough? There are too many uncertainties. Of one thing I am very certain: I must be strong and work even harder instead of mourning or giving up. However, there are moments when I cry from the fear that graduation will be the start of unemployment. Not earning money as a doctoral student is acceptable because my relatives, friends and society respect my role. I will soon be a woman with a doctoral degree and will be subject to social expectations that I be productive in financial terms. These expectations make me feel suffocated. What can I do? I need a place in academia because I feel that I have to continue revealing women’s voices for others and locate myself from within, or find myself between them.

I felt I had left all the responsibility on my siblings to care for my parents in Hong Kong. I felt I did not spend enough time with my parents whilst I was in Britain. I realised it is hard to do well in all aspects– to be an obedient daughter, a productive employee and an efficient thesis writer. I had thoughts of giving up the part-time job, but I had a hard time deciding what to do in that regard. The job in the elderly home helps me to gain self-confidence, financial input, respect from friends including the elderly people from the sheltered home and last but not least neutralises my boredom when I have moments of ‘writers block’. I am not ready to give up my job yet nor can I give up my thesis, which literally contains my three-year journey. I cannot give up either because both have led to where I am and who I am today and reflect the dual identity of a Chinese British / Chinese woman immigrant living in England with issues including:

Home and foreign lands
Cultural roots and a foreign value system
The academic and business world
Personal desires and collective needs
Wanting choice and having no choice
Gain and loss
Change and stability

The limbo situation I am in today is something I have to accept, to cope with and to modify when living in a foreign country. On one hand, I indeed live a fragmented life in which I try to juggle my role as a part-time carer in an elderly
home, counsellor for a crisis centre, thesis writer, volunteer member in a youth group, and daughter. My experiences in these roles provide some illumination as to the ways in which gender impacts Chinese women’s roles in different cultural contexts. On the other hand, I feel blessed that I have these diversified experiences that enrich my mind, heart and soul and assist me in the process of acculturation when compared to the experiences of other Chinese women immigrants who I met on coffee mornings.

Chinese people believe that one needs to live “interdependently”. Although I did not worry about having no Chinese friends in Bristol, I did take part in some Chinese activities organised by the local Chinese community. A large number of local Chinese, especially those newly immigrated, could access information from the community office and their identity was understood and respected. I felt comfortable and relaxed here and met other Chinese women immigrants from Hong Kong/PRC. We might come from different backgrounds, but shared the same language and a similar cultural context. During our coffee mornings, we can voice our individual thinking freely without encountering any political issues.

In the following two chapters, I document how other women immigrants illustrate how they struggled to uphold their cultural values and maintain family relationships in a foreign cultural context.
Chapter Six: “The Moon In Foreign Countries Is Particularly Round And Bright (在外國的月亮是特別圓和明亮)”

According to an old Chinese proverb: “the moon in foreign countries is particularly round and bright”. This adage means that the Chinese believe a foreign country always seems more appealing. It is similar to the British saying: “the grass is always greener on the other side”. This sentiment could be the core value shared amongst the women immigrants who gathered at the coffee mornings to learn from each other and to feel the comfort of sharing what they had left behind.

When a Chinese family emigrates, it is often the women who find it most difficult to settle and that is not too difficult to understand. Once the children start new schools, they begin to forge new friendships. When the man finds employment he will be concentrating on new ways of doing things. For a newly immigrant woman, finding a job is not that easy and many factors affect their prospects, such as, language fluency and work experience. Therefore, the quickest way for women immigrants to make friends and get into the local culture is to participate in coffee mornings organised by the local Chinese community. Here they can commune in their own language, sharing information and learning from each others’ experience; through their narratives, I learnt of their adjustment needs since living in Britain.

‘How nice!
We can meet up regularly, have our Chinese tea and chat in our own language. That’s what I missed’ said Lulu, an immigrant from Mainland China.

‘I felt so awkward having to speak English all the time when I was at home, because my English husband insisted that my son, Jack, should learn English first before Chinese. The only chance for me to speak Mandarin [official language in China and used mainly in the north] was when my husband was not at home. Then I insisted Jack converse with me in Mandarin. I told him that I wanted him to be able to communicate with my parents in to China when there is a chance.’
Ada, another woman immigrant from Hong Kong: 'I communicate with my sons in Chinese when they return from their boarding school at weekends. In fact, I wouldn't mind speaking English if it helps their achievement at school. My only hope for them is to uphold our Chinese values and practice regardless of living in England.'

I turned to the other member, Sami. She is not a regular participant in the coffee meeting and I only met her twice over six months. Sami rarely joined in with our conversations, just sipping her tea and keeping her head down reading the Chinese magazines. When I asked her opinion on the language used by the children at home, she looked at me with puzzlement for a few seconds then smiled, embarrassed and replied:

Sami: 'Maybe I am not a good mother. I did not spend much time with my children when they were young because of my "take-away" business. Besides, I don't have the knowledge and skills to check their schoolwork or communicate with their teachers at school. From their school reports they seem to be doing fine. Now they are all independent and don't need me around them anymore.'

Sami spoke softly with guilt in her tone and continue: 'All my children were born in England and educated locally. Most of their friends are local people. I cannot expect them to speak Chinese or adopt our culture even though I have tried to communicate with them in Chinese all the time. They only understood what they wanted to know. It was just like playing hide-and-seek.

I don't have high expectations for my three daughters; I don't need their help financially. Both my husband and I just want them to be happy. Sometimes I complained if they were out and returned home in the early hours and then they pretended they didn't understand what I said. I understand that all their friends are from school and for them to learn to speak Chinese is useless in their daily life. Therefore I never forced them.'
The only hope that I have for my daughters is not to mix with the wrong crowds.’

Lulu, Ada and I were surprised by Sami’s attitude towards her children and felt that Sami’s parenting approach was odd when compared to our Chinese tradition. We concluded that it might be due to her having been in England for over twenty years and being influenced by the indigenous / English culture. Costigan and Dokis (2006) noted that immigrants who have resided longer in the host country are less conflicted about their goals to instil a strong sense of Chinese identity and values. Their children receive fewer mixed messages regarding ethnic identity and values. That could be the reason behind Sami’s parenting.

However, I am surprised to hear that Lulu insisted Jack speak Chinese given that her son is half English. Certainly, Lulu had spent more of her time in Chinese cultures compared to Jack, she may be more secure in our Chinese identity and may feel less pressure to examine issues of identity (see Costigan & Dokis, 2006, p. 736). However, her son was born and bred in England. Lulu’s parenting approach suggested that she was holding on to our traditional values in child-rearing practice.

Most of the immigrant parents hope that their children will learn and/or maintain their mother tongue. They try to speak Chinese at home in order to provide a Chinese language environment for their children. Some of them claimed that whether a child is learning Chinese or not is actually an indication of their parents’ status in the UK. I know a few Chinese families in England and they differ in their Chinese literacy (oral and written). Some of their children can communicate with their parents in certain dialects, some are able to speak Mandarin, but none of these second-generation Chinese migrants are able to read or write in Chinese.

Some of the Chinese women immigrants would follow their children’s preference for language use at home. They understood very well that their children are studying in England and their friends are local English. Similar to Sami’s situation, they would not force their children to practise Chinese at home. Since there are no Chinese language subjects in the formal curriculum in England, the majority of Chinese parents would not force their children to learn or practice

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Chinese language for educational purposes.

It is very interesting to compare Sami’s expectations from her children with the pressures of Chinese culture. Sami understood that her children (i.e. the second generation) needed to assimilate or acculturate to the English culture. It would be impossible for her to expect her children to dissimilate or de-culturate from the local culture and turn them into something foreign to them [that is, Chinese]. Ada and Lulu’s parenting approaches are totally different from Sami’s. Like many other Chinese immigrant parents, they believed in traditional cultural values and practices of child rearing, in spite of rapid social and political changes (see Lin, & Fu, 1990, pp. 431-432). Although Chan and Lee (1993) stressed that appraisal and interpersonal feedback has been found to be more effective as a source of self-esteem from families than from peers for Chinese adolescents, Sami strongly believed that her children’s friends and peer influence is the ultimate force for her children’s well-being rather than Chinese parenting.

As far as I can remember, when I was young, every day my parents would ask me about my schoolwork – how I was getting on or had I finished what I was meant to do. My parents are no different from any others in Hong Kong; they focused mainly on their children’s education. Chinese parents emphasise the value of academic achievement. Academic achievement is regarded as a reflection of the entire family or community (Ho, 1981; Sigel, 1988, p. 354). Chinese parents place great importance on academic achievement as a means to acquire personal advancement, higher social status, wealth, and respect in the Chinese society, and a means of overcoming discrimination and gaining opportunities in the country to which they have immigrated (Lum & Char, 1985). They hope their children are able to achieve a place in a top tier school. My parents never offered or suggested any amusement or leisure activity to me. I had to develop that myself, but I have to be grateful to my parents that they never ignored my suggestions and offered financial support without fail. My parents never had to worry about me mixing with the wrong crowd since going out with friends was not on the agenda until I completed my secondary schooling.

6.1 Ada in a foreign land

Ada is one of the Chinese women immigrants whom I met regularly in the coffee meeting and we have become friends. I spoke to Ada at length about my
intention before obtaining her consent to join this research. The following conversations/interviews were conducted at different times, in a variety of venues, her house, my house and coffee shop. After categorising all the data, I represented to you as a story.

Ada lives in a five-bedroom house which is very tidy.

I complimented Ada: ‘You are one of those bionic-women who can do everything by yourself.’

Ada (A): ‘You have no idea what I have gone through.’

Researcher (I): ‘I am a good listener, if you are willing to share’.

Ada breathed deeply and slowly began her story: ‘The reason I left my husband behind and moved to England is for my two sons.’

Ada was born and educated in Hong Kong, married and has two boys. Kent is 13 years old and Bob is 16. Both Ada and her husband, Joe used to work for the Hong Kong Government. One benefit of their jobs was an education allowance for their children to study overseas and their “right of abode” package in the UK after the transition in 1997.

(A): ‘Joe and I planned to send our children to the UK for their education for a very long time. Joe thought that English Education was the best when compared to the USA or Australia. Both of us thought that to send our children to England was the best idea due to ‘1997 don’t you think?’

(I): ‘Yes, I think so too.’

However, I thought to myself that according to our Chinese tradition, Chinese parents prefer their children to stay with them for parental control, which stems from the purpose of keeping the family running more smoothly and fostering family values (Lau & Cheung, 1987). Very often the term “chiao shun
(教訓)”, or “training”, has been used within Chinese culture in child rearing (Wu & Tseng, 1985, p. 11). In the family, Chinese parents pay special attention to training children to adhere to socially desirable and culturally approved behaviours. One way to measure the success of parental intervention is the ability of children to perform well in school.

‘Training’ involves an immense devotion and sacrifice on the part of the mother. In the child’s early years, the mother provides an extremely nurturing environment for the child by being physically available and by promptly attending to the child’s every need (Wu, 1985). When the children reach school age, the mother provides the support and drive for them to achieve in school and to ultimately meet the societal and familial expectations for success. This training takes place in the context of a supportive, highly involved, and physically close mother-child relationship (Chao, 1994). Not many parents would send their children away for their education at such a young age as Ada did.

Having said that, I remember my parents used to send us to stay with different people when we were young. It was not always possible for us to live with our parents at that time and to expect my mother to offer ‘chiao shun (教訓)’, or ‘training’, was too unrealistic. My parents needed to work full time to support a family of ten children. They never took time off from their work; the only holiday they had was during Chinese New Year for four days. They never had time to take care of any of us. The three youngest children were sent to child minders and my mother visited them three times a week. I stayed with relatives for a short period of time and then with my parents’ friend for a couple of years. Not until my eldest sister became a teenager and was able to take care of us, was the whole family re-united and lived together again. Our sibling relationships are very close even after we have grown up; all my brothers and sisters have their own families, but we all meet regularly without fail. Nevertheless, child-rearing practices have changed since the late 1980s because of Hong Kong’s impending return to mainland China in 1997. The people in Hong Kong had no faith in communist China (Skeldon, 1990, p. 501). In response to the impending political changes, some Hong Kong people migrated to other countries such as the USA, Canada and Australia, or sent their children overseas for an education with a view to finding a job and settling down elsewhere (see Chap. 1).
However, after experiencing the policy of “one country, two systems” for seven years, I began to question my former decision and decided to consider my parents’ suggestion to travel back across the cultural border to England. I remembered my parents used to advise us to find a job, work overseas and leave Hong Kong. These reasons were probably similar to those that Ada and Joe had for sending their sons overseas. Ada emphasised that their decision was mainly for the children’s best interests and not to please her and her husband.

(A): ‘I kept my job while Bob was studying in England. Bob would return to Hong Kong three times a year. He enjoyed spending time with the family and meeting up with the old school friends he treasured most. Two years later, Kent joined Bob in England studying at the same school. Both Joe and I expected that Bob would help his brother if there were any problems.’

When I first arrived in England for my education I was 20 years old. I felt lost and had to face various challenges such as the language barrier, feelings of isolation and adjustment to the new environment. I had a lot of anxiety and every day was a challenge to me. I was astonished by Ada and Joe’s decision. As Kent was only nine, I thought it was too much for their children to leave home at such a young age even though they resided in a boarding school. However, Ada seemed to be proud of what she had done. I asked her if the children had really been given much choice in the matter.

Ada looked up to the ceiling searching through her mind and said: ‘They quite liked the idea’.

She paused for a second and continued: ‘Every time I telephoned Kent from Hong Kong, he didn’t want to talk about himself, and kept the conversation to a minimum. After I learnt from the other parents that Kent had problems adjusting, I was devastated. Unfortunately, Bob could not offer that much support to his brother, because they were in different houses.’
Ada paused for a second and looked pensive before carrying on: ‘I am not sure if I regret what I have done to Kent. Certainly, I needed to help him with the situation. After discussions with Joe, I resigned from my job and moved to England to be with my two sons. I wanted to let them know that I cared for them and I wanted to fulfil my role as a mother.’

In traditional Chinese families, the husband-wife relationship is regarded as secondary to the parent-child relationship (Lin & Liu, 1999). The very emphasis on parent-child relationships motivates Chinese parents to make disproportionate sacrifices and investments in their children’s education. Chinese parents generally ascribe the academic achievement of their children to successful parenting and view their children’s school success or failure as a reflection of the whole family and community (Chao, 1996, p. 420).

The close parent-child relationship in Chinese families is strengthened by two Chinese constructs derived from Confucian ethics: “guan (管)”, parental discipline and “xiao (孝)”, filial piety. In general, Chinese parents use “guan” to discipline their children’s minds and character (Chao, 1994; Stewart, et al. 1998). The Confucian parenting philosophy of “guan” assumes that parents are more experienced beings and thus have a legitimate right and responsibility to exert authority over their children. This authority is unquestionable to both parents and children and usually results in close parental supervision of children’s schoolwork in Chinese families. Ada realised that she and Joe had not fulfilled their duties as parents by sending their children abroad. Therefore, she resigned from her job and moved to England to take up the parental role without Joe.

I have heard about a number of broken families or broken marriages due to the ‘1997 crises’. I was going to ask Ada if she ever worried about Joe being left behind in Hong Kong. In the end I let it go because I did not want to distress her. At present, the most important thing for Ada is to fulfil her role as a mother and to maintain her parental care. No one has the right to decide if Ada’s decision was the appropriate one. I wonder how many Chinese parents made sacrifices for their children on the basis of a universal principal or because of their culture!

Ada sounded very assertive: ‘I prepared well before going to England. I
learnt how to drive, cook and researched buying a house before I left Hong Kong. My daily life in Hong Kong was very simple so I would not have much to miss. I had no hesitation in moving to England to live, although I did not know anyone there except my children.

Joe spent three weeks in England helping me to settle. In retrospect, this was not long enough. In this time, I had to find a way to pick up my sons from school, locate the local services and accustom myself to the new environment. I became very nervous and began to have sleepless nights. I was really lost and had no one to turn to after Joe went back to Hong Kong. For the first time, I doubted my ability to cope. I was not my usual self. When I was in Hong Kong, I was confident I could cope with whatever life threw at me. It never occurred to me that I would have problems settling in but I was wrong. I lost my confidence completely and I could not focus on whatever I did. Everyday I looked forward to dusk and anticipated the sunset when I could go to sleep, I would not have to meet people or deal with any problems. Sometimes I did not want to get up and face another day. I became something of a hermit. I lived on fast food during the week and only cooked when my sons returned home for the weekend. I treasured this time with my children.’

I thought that Ada could be considered as either self-indulgent or genuinely suffering in her isolation. Ada could not hold her tears back and reached out for the tissue box on the table. At that moment I felt so sorry for her. I comforted her and praised her for what she had done for the family. At the same time, I began to wonder whether this decision was the only viable choice for Ada, Joe and the children.

I shared with Ada my experience of arriving in England for the first time over 20 years ago. I had no friends and I had to take two different modes of transport to reach the centre of London for my lessons. Every day was a challenge to me. The people, places and situations made me feel like I was living on another planet. Homesickness was unavoidable. Certainly, I missed my parents and my family but the only time that I had, to think about them was at night when I was in bed. I told Ada: ‘You are in a better position when compared
to my situation 20 years ago, or even at present. You have the weekend and the children to look forward to but I did not’. I said: ‘Every day is monotonous for me; my only hope is looking forward to the end of my studies’. In reality, I was more sympathetic than this but was trying to be ‘cruel to be kind’. My intention was to let Ada become aware that she is not alone in encountering unpleasant experiences whilst living in a foreign country, there are other(s)’ whose situation could be much worse.

(A): ‘Another horror to me is driving. Whenever I need to drive to a place I have never been, I need at least twenty-four hours to prepare myself psychologically. I just want to stay at home where I feel reasonably secure. At night, I am worried about someone breaking in. What would I do? I do not want to talk to my neighbours because I barely understand what they say. Even though they approach me I keep the conversations to a minimum because I don’t want them to know that I am alone. As Chinese, we don’t trust strangers and have no intention of making new friends.

Now, the major difference to my life in Hong Kong is mobility. In Hong Kong I could travel anywhere by bus and the service was very good. In England I cannot go anywhere without a car. The bus service is expensive and seems unreliable so I rely on the car wherever I go. In England I never go out after dark.’

Ada’s intonation became faster and more anxious: ‘I feel isolated, lonely, and breathless and sometimes cannot sleep. Joe tries to call every night, to comfort me but he cannot understand what I have been through and how I feel about car accidents, the boiler’s leaking or the house flooding. No matter what I tell him, we cannot share the same emotion, because we do not face the same scenarios. I have come to the conclusion that this is the most painful experience of my life: moving to a new country on my own.’

I offered to pour Ada a glass of water while she wiped her tears and continued
her story.

(A): 'My parents always prepared everything well for me. When I was a child I never had to worry about anything. As soon as I finished secondary school I got a job with the government as a clerk. After marrying Joe, he was the one to make all the decisions for the family and we had a domestic helper to take care of the chores. I have had no experience of living on my own or doing things without Joe. Since moving to England I feel that something bad could happen every day. I cannot think of a way to make my life easier or happier. I feel like the sword or doom is hanging over me.

The most precious time for me begins on Friday when Bob and Kent return home for the weekend. I now understood what Bob had been through when he arrived in England. The same situation as what I am now. Bob understands me but my husband does not. Both of my sons give me a lot of support and comfort. I thought I gave Bob the psychological support he needed to come to England but I did not. When Bob arrived his difficulties included the language barrier, to establish critical thinking, independent living skills and catching up with the standard required in different studies. It was a hard task for an eleven-year-old boy. Bob’s problems were beyond my anticipation. I love my son, Bob, very much, he never complained or told me his problems while he was on his own. He did not want us to worry about him.'

Ada could not control herself and started to cry out loud, I did not try to stop her and let her carry on for couple of minutes. Since we share the same culture, I understand how she sees herself in the light of what she has done to her children. According to our Chinese culture (Tang, et al. 2002), Ada is blaming herself for not being able to fulfil any of the roles well enough: as a dutiful wife by leaving her husband behind and as a mother by not being able to offer appropriate “training” and caring to her children.

(A): 'To me the first six months living in England was just like living in
HELL!!

My life became “HUMAN” again, when I started working with the Chinese trading company. At work, I can communicate with the Chinese and all of us speak Cantonese. I learnt more about the local Chinese community. I could speak the language I am familiar with and liaise with people who come from the same culture. I feel so much better now; I have become very independent and it is not necessary for Joe to make decisions for me. Most important is the growth of the relationship with my boys compared with when I was in Hong Kong. We share our values and discuss our views openly. We get along very well; I learnt how to communicate with them instead of just talking at them. I know it’s daft to think like that, but now I can live without my husband. Sometimes Joe implies that he is very lonely on his own. I understand that it is very dangerous for him to be alone. Since we made this decision together, we have to face the consequence together. We just have to trust each other; I know it is not healthy for the marital relationship that we live apart, but we have no choice because of our sons.

My final hope is that Bob and Kent finish university and find a job in England. Joe will retire in four years time and move to England. The whole family will be together again.’

I interrupted: ‘You sound very positive and confident about managing yourself and the two sons. So no more worries?’

(A): ‘The problem arose when I went back to Hong Kong for a holiday a month ago. That was my first visit since arriving to England two years ago.’

(I): ‘Did you enjoy yourself?’

(A): ‘I stayed home most of the time, because the weather was too hot for me and I only contacted our immediate families. I could not be bothered to spend any time with my friends or ex-colleagues’
(I): ‘How about your two sons?’

(A): ‘Bob was enjoying himself, going out everyday with his friends from his previous school. Kent does not have many friends in Hong Kong because he left when he was very young. Therefore he stayed at home most of the time and kept me company this summer. But I would like to discuss my children’s problem with you if you have time.’

(I): ‘Go ahead, I am not in a hurry.’

(A): ‘It is about my two sons. Bob always says that he wants to return to Hong Kong to work when he graduates from university in England. He does not seem to understand that his goal will be a difficult one.’

(I): ‘Why would you think that?’

(A): ‘It will takes another five to six years before Bob graduates, by then he would have lost his contacts in Hong Kong; as you know, Hong Kong is a capitalist country. And most of the business people or almost everyone is interdependent. If you have no contacts with anyone in your trade, it is just impossible to make your business work.’

(I): ‘What do you want Bob to do after he graduates?’

(A): ‘He has freedom to choose to do what he wants; I just worry about what’s going to happen and would like to ease all the hurdles for him.’

(I): ‘You have already answered your own questions; on one hand you would not stop him, but you are over-worrying on the other hand. Bob has another five to six years to develop his choice of career; there is no immediate problem.’

Bob’s individual thinking does not align with the Chinese value of family “interdependence” (see Ch. 2, p. 18), although individual independence is not
necessarily discouraged (see Sung, 1985; Lin & Fu, 1990, p. 432). Ada seemed
to agree with what I told her; presumably her acceptance of Bob’s individual
thinking is to promote cohesion within the family while encouraging the
development of the children’s independence. As such, her children would be
prepared to function adequately in the larger society (see Lin & Fu, 1990). She
understood that from the traditional socialisation perspective that if any of her
children were ‘not able to succeed or function in the society at large it could
bring disgrace to the family’ (Chen & Uttal, 1988).

(A): ‘With Kent, I did not know how to guide his attitude.’

Ada recalls Kent’s communication problems with his aunt when they were
in Hong Kong. She thought that follow up action was necessary but did not know
how to proceed.

(A): ‘I tried to discuss with Kent about his manner and communicative
skills, particularly while making conversation with senior members of the
family. Kent does not seem to understand me at all. He insisted that he
has no problem in communication and believes that getting the message
across and making others understand him is vital in communication.

According to our Chinese traditions Kent’s attitude was not acceptable.
How he behaved damaged the family prestige and cast doubt on the
nature of his upbringing.’

Although there is a lack of conceptualisation of the significance of child
rearing to personality development in Chinese society (Ho, 1981, p. 82),
philosophical perspectives and general knowledge of Chinese families are found
in the wider literature (Chao, 1983). Ada is aware that her sons, Bob and Kent,
are acculturating to their particular environments and they believe changes are
possible and within their own control. Ada preferred her children to show respect
for adults and family over the freedom of expression found in their mainstream
(English) peers. Ada was focusing on the definitive views on parental control,
obedience, strict discipline, emphasis on education, filial piety, family
obligations reverence for tradition, maintenance of harmony and negation of conflict. All are attributed to the influence of the complexities of Confucianism (see Ho, 1981; Chao, 1983). To understand the acculturation process in the Chinese family, there is a need to explore the significant impact of Confucian principles on family interactions and relationships (see Chao, 1983; King & Bond, 1985).

(I) ‘What do you want from Kent? Do you want him to “honour the family” (see Chap. 2, p. 19) by following the Chinese tradition? If so, then you should not send him to England for education? Or you would accept your son is in the process of acculturating?’

Ada looked down, thinking deeply, and sighed; murmuring to herself:

‘If it helps, I don’t mind to change my full-time employment into part-time, so that I can spend more time with my son.

Rates of acculturation may differ between parents and children because of different amounts of exposure to the ethnic and host cultures. Parents may have reached maturity in their ethnic culture, whereas the children of immigrant parents have either been socialized in both cultures or exclusively in the new culture. As a result, parents may have more difficulty learning the host culture and their identities and values may be less open to influence by the host culture (Phinney, et al. 2000). Thomas (1995) and Tang and Dion (1999) both indicated that the issue of acculturative stress in immigrant families means that the children acculturate at a faster rate than the parents and have different perceptions towards social roles, values and traditionalism. Bob and Kent are disinclined to associate themselves with our Chinese tradition in their daily living, whilst they are at the boarding school, but at the weekend, when they return home to their mother, her main concerns are our traditional values at all times particularly in child-rearing practices10.

10 Chinese child-rearing practice which emphasises on: Control, the concept of parental authority and filial piety
This situation induces conflict. Sung (1985) stressed that bicultural conflicts are the obstacles children of Chinese immigrants must negotiate with their families as part of their ethnic identity development and acculturation process. Some bicultural conflicts that children of Chinese immigrant families may face include: enforcing ethical values and social conformity, education and social acceptance, dependency and independence, respect for authority, standards for role models, individualism and social needs. These tensions seemed to explain Ada’s worries and anxieties, but how could she compromise or strike the balance between maintaining Chinese cultural beliefs and practices and supporting her sons’ acculturation process in Britain? How could she negotiate and harmonise the relationship with her children? How to justify her role as a “virtuous wife and good mother (賢妻良母)” with these dilemmas? Furthermore, she has to live up to the expectations from her husband and relatives in Hong Kong, which are very real tasks for her.

Compared to Ada, Lulu, our friend from the coffee meetings, had no such worries. Lulu’s husband Tim, a local Englishman, had no intention of educating their son Jack with any Chinese culture and did not agree with Lulu’s wish to impose Chinese norms on Jack. This stipulation caused tension. According to Lulu, she has struggled since living in England because she wanted to keep our Chinese culture and practices at all times with her son, but not Tim.

In the following chapter, Lulu illustrates her issues involving her transnational marriage, her relationship with her parents from the People Republic of China (PRC) and child-rearing practices, since living in England.

and the Confucian dictum that “parents are always right” influences parental control and discipline of children (Hsu, 1981).

- Chinese parents tend to be less expressive of their affection. Traditionally, the Chinese emphasise family harmony through emotional restraint (Bond & Wang, 1983). In particular fathers are less emotionally expressive and less emotionally involved with their children (Hsu, 1981).
- They are less likely to encourage independence. Traditionally, in Chinese society the child is socialised to learn his “place” in the social order (Ho, 1981, p. 86).
- Chinese parents emphasise the value of academic achievement. That is they are a reflection of the entire family or community (Sigel, 1988, p. 354; Ho, 1981).
Chapter Seven: “If You Marry A Chicken, Then You Must Follow The Chicken; If You Marry A Dog, Then You Must Follow The Dog (嫁雞隨雞, 嫁狗隨狗)”

Lulu is one of the most outspoken women in the coffee meeting. She explained the reason for her immigration to England. According to an old Chinese proverb “If you marry a chicken, then you must follow the chicken; if you marry a dog, then you must follow the dog (嫁雞隨雞, 嫁狗隨狗)” This adage means that once a woman has married she must follow her husband wherever he goes.

Trans-national marriage became a new phenomenon in China when it changed from an ‘iron curtain’ country to an ‘open door’ policy. This shift in policy attracted more overseas companies to invest in China and at the same time opened up opportunities for cross-cultural marriage (Massey et al. 1998; Beijing Qingnian Bao, December 10, 2003). Here, Lulu immigrated to England after marrying Tim in China and become, “an overseas bride (過埠新娘)”.

In the following comment, Lulu illustrates her adjustment needs and her parent-child communication since living in England. Furthermore, she offers her significant accounts of cultural clashes in her cross-cultural marriage.

7.1 An overseas bride

‘How can I communicate with the local English people and make them aware that I do not appreciate their jokes and humour because I am a foreigner. They should not say such things in front of a foreigner. If my husband does this to me I will tell him off’ said Lulu.

Every one of us in the coffee meeting was taken aback by Lulu’s comments as she first introduced herself. This demure young lady is not shy, telling everyone that she emigrated from The People Republic of China (PRC) after marrying an Englishman and has a seven year old son. She claimed that she wants to improve her communication skills with the local English people yet at the same time has no reservations about offering her overview of the social culture in England. Lulu is very unusual when compared to other Chinese women migrants from Hong Kong/PRC; she was expressive and her comments
on indigenous people took us by surprise. I am not sure if this is one of the 'strategies' that she learnt from her trans-national marriage, being 'reflexive and reflective'. I wanted to find out more about Lulu's inner world, maybe I could pick up some of her adjustment skills, to improve my own.

At the beginning, I was quite worried that my research focus might offend her; after all, I was asking her to open up her inner soul. I was also concerned that she might be intimidated. The process would involve interrogation and exchange of ideas based on our similar cultural context. Lulu's reaction surprised me when I explained my worries. She was delighted to become my research participant after I revealed my interest in her adjustment needs since living in England and her parent/child communications. She assured me that she had no problem discussing any issues and was willing to assist me with my research, but with the condition that there was no audio recording during interview.

I thought I understood her reason for making such a condition, that it was because she did not want to go 'naked into the unknown', but as the later part of the interview revealed, she was haunted by the Chinese communist regime.

Lulu (L): 'Three men have featured prominently in my life and each has had a tremendous effect on me.'

(I): 'Just tell me what you want me to know.'

(L): 'The hero in my life is my father. My philosophy and my character were "sculpted" by him. My father used to teach me and my two sisters that we have to be able to live independently and always emphasised that we have to lead our life, not let life lead us. He was the one who rescued me when I was at the bottom after the break up of my engagement.'

Lulu becomes high spirited and assertive when speaking about her father and continued praising him for another twenty minutes.

(L): 'Now my parents were really worried about my cross-cultural marriage. They thought it was a risk for me to marry an Englishman. My
father advised me to seek financial independence from my husband. That was one of the reasons I sought higher education in order to have better prospects in the future. My father kept repeating, no goal and no life.

My father only stopped pushing me once I registered with the local university for further study.'

In a traditional Chinese family, the most senior male is usually the one who makes family decisions and takes charge of family ceremonies, as well as settling intra-and inter familial disputes (Che, 1979; quoted in Chiu & Yu, 2001, p. 685). The most senior family member will have the authority and status to guide the direction of the family. In our family system, the key 'figure' and the 'chief' is the father. In fact, the father's role is not only as breadwinner but in leading decision making in parenting as well. (see Hsu, 1981; Bond & Wang, 1983). Likewise, Lulu's father influences Lulu's life tremendously despite the fact that she is thousands of miles from home, or that her dearest husband is next to her.

I fully understand the feelings of Lulu's parents about their daughter marrying a foreigner and living thousands miles from home. Chinese parents are very concerned about their children's marital choices. Many parents continue to view the marriage of the child as a rite of passage for themselves. Parents involve themselves in spouse selection so that they can check out the prospective spouse's family background for signs of illness, instability, or unreliability. Only then can they feel that they have fulfilled their parental responsibilities. Furthermore, they are hoping to receive from their children the recognition that they feel is their due for having fulfilled their parental obligations. Parents want to be freed of responsibility and to receive demonstrations of filial gratitude. The mark of a good child is his or her concern for the parent's well being. Concern can be expressed in many ways, depending partly on the location of the child after marriage. Those who are nearby should visit often. Children who live far away should make it clear that their parents are always welcome for extended visits (Ikels, 1985, pp. 258-259). However, Lulu gave no sign of being concerned about her parents' well being before or after her marriage. Inevitability, this attitude cast a shadow the relationship between the parents and the son-in-law.

For me, my father is my hero and definitely affects my philosophy too. I
admire my father’s attitude, his generosity and kindness to other people. He is the best companion to my mother and a dutiful father to his ten children. He treasures life and is contented with what he has, which is different from many other people in Hong Kong who are obsessed with work and money.

I would not be the only person who considers my father a hero, as many do who have heard his story. My father is nick-named “blind fellow Lam (盲仔林)” and he suffers from eye-sight impairment due to lack of medical care during the Sino-Japanese War. Lam came from a big family, all his twelve brothers and sisters died without a trace during the war. Lam travelled between China and Hong Kong with his father from when he was six years old. He went back to China to join one of the local guerrilla groups, “Eastern River Brigade (東江中隊)”, to fight against the Japanese in his mid-twenties. He met another comrade, Linen, who later became his wife, my mother. When the war was over, Lam and Linen decided to settle down in Hong Kong. Over 15 years ago, the government of The People’s Republic of China showed recognition and respect to the contribution of the guerilla group and awarded all the ex-comrades a medal, memorial certificate and souvenirs. Every one of us in the family is very proud of what our parents did.

(L): ‘My ex-fiancé is another man who had a great impact on me.’

Lulu’s tone becomes stronger and she speaks with anger: ‘He criticised me when he returned from overseas training. He kept telling me how nice it was overseas. Other countries are so modern where people always follow trends and fashion. I felt like “baggage” to him and I became lost. I turned into a completely different person. My transformation was from an obedient, introverted Chinese woman to become rebellious, outgoing and adventurous, once I put an end to the ten years relationship with my ex-fiancé. I lost focus and my life became a mess.’

Lulu swallows her anger, pauses for a while, takes a deep breath then continues: ‘In retrospect, I have no regret in making the decision to terminate our engagement. I was not brave enough to head into the marriage with so
many uncertainties hanging over me. I felt so much lighter as soon as I made my decision.'

(I): 'You are very brave to make such decision after ten years of a relationship, not many girls can make that kind of decision at such a crucial time.'

Even since May 1, 1950, the communist party attempted numbers of social reformation, such as the Marriage Law advocating free marriage and equal rights between men and women. However, "feudalistic influences\textsuperscript{11}" still prevail in China (Wei, 1983, P. 945) and many traditional family relationships have persisted. Social and familial pressure has also grown for women to resume their traditional roles as wives and mothers (see Chap. 2, pp. 23-25). As a woman from a similar culture I fully understood Lulu's anxieties over the termination of the engagement. It would be like a woman divorcing her husband, which would oppose the "feudal" belief that "a good woman does not marry twice (好女不再婚)" (Honig, 1984, p. 261). The stigma of divorce was so great that Chinese women felt reluctant to admit they were divorced (Platte, 1988, p. 429). In our traditional culture, a broken engagement is shameful not only to the girl but a disgrace to the entire family. People outside the family will lay the blame on parenting, look down on the girl and act as if she has done something evil. She would have a bad reputation for the rest of her life.

(L): 'After this crisis I learnt to become independent and decided to seek a job with an international firm after I graduated. I hoped that this would help me to travel aboard, widen my outlook, satisfy my ego and compensate my perceived deficit. I tried to get rid of the stigma from my ex-fiancé that I was one of those "looking up from the well to the sky (坐井観天)" [English translation: tunnel vision].

'Luckily, I was posted to London for six months. That was the first time I went to England. I did not have a good experience there. During that time

\textsuperscript{11}Feudalistic influences is a kind of social phenomenon is more severe in the rural areas than in the urban areas. What we mean by feudalistic remnants are the following: early marriage, marriage to close relatives, mercenary marriage in disguised form, the idea of being well-matched in social and economic status for marriage, the old idea of regarding sons as superior to daughters, and so forth. Besides, the inequality between husbands and wives still exists in modern China and exercises its influence in many respects.
my life became monotonous; travel between home and office, work and sleep.

(L): 'My experience of living in England was very brief and disappointing. The local people did not make me feel welcome during the six months secondment; they were not sincere at all. It seemed that I was not in their circle because I was a foreigner. I felt isolated, depressed and homesick. I did not communicate with the local people and my limited English did not help. I had an accident while learning to drive in London. One of my colleagues, Tim, from the Peking / China office, visited me in hospital. Later, he became my husband and the third important man in my life.'

I was not surprised when Lulu mentioned her experience of a cold reception in London. I had the same feeling when I lived in London over twenty years ago. I could not rely on anyone to help me in the capital. Most of the people I came across were foreigners and wanderers. They were either visiting, or trying to find a job and work in London. Everyone was rushing to their tight schedules. Nobody had time for anybody else. Nowadays, I travel to London occasionally for different reasons but, like Lulu, it is not a place I would choose for a holiday. I have never felt settled there and have no sense of belonging in London. The busy fast-paced life styles are very much the same as in Hong Kong and is something that I have not missed. For a girl like Lulu, coming from mainland China, used to living a 'sheltered life', never travelling abroad, always living under the protection of her parents, and with limited English language skills, to learn to become independent in a foreign country for the first time is a lot to cope with.

(L): 'We travelled around the world after we got married because of Tim's business. The first two years of our marriage were the happiest time that I have ever had in my life. Then there was an unexpected pregnancy. Tim and I had to plan for our son's future, so we decided to return to England to live.'
Lulu looks up longingly and speaks softly: 'My life became a roller-coaster after returning to England.

After giving birth to Jack, I suffered from postnatal depression (PND) which was so severe that I was not able to take care of the baby or myself. I was crying all the time with feelings of loneliness, isolation, depression and helplessness. I could not cope with daily errands. In the end, Tim had to give up his business to nurse both the baby and myself.'

I was surprised that Lulu did not mention her parents' involvement during her pregnancy and the puerperium period; I had to jump in before Lulu continues her story:

(I): 'What happened with your mother? Were your parents aware of your problem? Did they offer to visit you in England?'

(L): 'I chose not to reveal any problems that I experienced after marrying Tim. As you know in Chinese there is an old saying, "good daughter should hide her problems from both sides" (好女兩頭瞞)” (this adage simply means, once married, a good daughter should exercise her ability in solving her own problem and should not reveal any of her difficulties to her parents, or to her in-laws). Tim decided the best way to help me to recover from PND was to take me on holiday. After six months, Tim returned to his business when I became capable of looking after the baby. Our lives slowed down because of Jack and he became my only focus.'

Nowadays, trans-national marriage in PRC is not an unusual phenomenon and has been accepted by the public, but that was not the case ten years ago. In China, the women choose trans-national marriage for multiple reasons, some of which are not directly related to financial gain: for the opportunity to go abroad or liking the feeling of travelling between countries, for studying overseas, for children’s education, for possible career advancement as well as simply for love (Liu & Liu, 2006, p. 10). According to Daruvala (2000), Chinese women are learning to be fashionable. They try all means to lead a better life. Chinese
women enter international marriages for different reasons. As to the life after making a trans-national marriage; they strive to be an independent woman rather than a dependent wife.

Lulu did not offer her reasons for marrying an Englishman, but she seemed to enjoy travelling abroad at the early stage of her marriage until the unexpected pregnancy arrived. From her narratives, she is eager to seek and maintain financial independence and have her own voice in cultural, social and political areas after immigration to England.

When related to Chinese tradition in birthing practices, extended family members take great interest in this typically “once-in-a lifetime” event and mothers or mothers-in-law are the main source of information (Gottschang, 1999). According to our beliefs, family care and support are vital for a woman during the puerperium period (Lee, 2001). Family members have a moral duty to help the new mother during the birthing period (Wong & Pang, 2000). Certainly, Tim was able to offer support to Lulu in certain areas during “tso yueh (坐月)” (Chinese translation is: sitting month; English translation is: the first month after giving birth), but it would be a problem for him to share the same cultural beliefs in care and practice with Lulu. The Chinese regard the puerperium as a dangerous and vulnerable transition period for the new mother who, accordingly, should receive special care and attention, eat nutritious food and be relieved of all duties in order to recuperate fully (Kartchner & Callister, 2003).

Health care in China is based on the “yin-yang (陰 阳)” theory, which means the germ theory when related to Western medicine. The main tenet of “yin-yang” is that a body seeks to maintain balance and when out of balance it becomes sick. After birth, the mother is considered to be in a state of “yin (陰)” because her body has become vulnerable and “cold (寒)” due to blood loss during childbirth. To bring her body into balance, she needs to avoid “cold” in food such as fruits and vegetables and eat “warm (熱)” or “yang (陽)” food (Hao & Moore, 2000). When I compare my sister’s postnatal experience to Lulu’s, I understand better the causal relation between family support, care after giving birth and postnatal depression (PND).

I remembered that when my sister was expecting a baby, my mother helped her to prepare everything a few months before she gave birth. After birth, she
was given “yang” food including wine, food cooked with ginger or wine vinegar (prepared a few months before the due day), beef, chicken, eggs, mushrooms, gluten with brown sugar, and spicy foods such as tang-kuei (ligusticum acutilobum) chicken, red dates (jujubes), sesame oil chicken, pork liver, shen-hua tang (herbal soup) and pig knuckle stew. Chinese believe such foods will dissolve blood clots, replenish the blood and energy, and provide warmth. The herb tang-kuei is well known in Chinese medicine for its effects as a uterine stimulant in breaking blood clots and stimulating the production of new blood (see Koo, 1976). In order to recover lost energy and to prevent further fatigue, my sister must have complete rest and stay indoors for one month after giving birth. During this month, she would stay in bed as much as possible and avoid any physical exertion including household duties. At this time, my mother came into play.

Other rituals surrounding “tso yueh (坐月)” include washing the new mother and her family’s clothes separately and avoiding sexual relations. She is restricted to staying indoors. It is said that she should avoid drafts, stemming from the belief that any wind or cold can enter the body and cause diseases, such as arthritis. Clothing must cover the entire body. She should not shower, brush her teeth, or wash her hair for a month following childbirth, although she may take a bath with ginger and red wine a week after childbirth (Hao & Moore, 2000). Reading or watching television may cause eye problems in the future. The extent to which women follow the rituals of “tso yueh” vary, but it is generally believed that to neglect them completely will produce negative health outcomes in the future (Steinberg, 1996).

During “tso yueh (坐月)”, relatives and friends visited my sister and gave her and the newborn a present or “lai see (利是)” (a red packet with money inside, a symbol of good luck for the Chinese). This gift is both a postnatal cultural practice and a form of reward, recognition and celebration of my sister’s reproductive contribution. It is not appropriate for males to visit my sister and the newborn in her room. My sister can bring the baby out to welcome the friends and relatives. Chinese women during the puerperium period tend to receive more attention from their family and are pampered and well-treated (Chu, 1993). We believe that the treatment of a woman during “tso yueh (坐月)” is not just for
health protection. In short, "tso yueh (坐月)" is a long established traditional practice of Chinese culture aiming both to protect the health of women with newborn babies and to reward them.

After witnessing what my family experiences in birthing practices, I agree with Kartchner and Callister (2003, p. 112) that support and care are vital to the new mother during "tso yueh (坐月)", and will improve postnatal mental health. I also believe such postnatal support and the cultural practices described above are not aimed at specific illnesses, but are regarded in Chinese culture as valuable in protecting and promoting women's health after birth. This approach can play an important role in mediating postnatal stress and preventing PND among Chinese women and avoid a possible repetition of Lulu's experience among other women.

I felt sorry for Lulu when she told me about her postnatal experience. The difficulties she encountered when she began living in England included settlement stress, English, cross-cultural communication problems, access to health information and services during her pregnancy. She did not know how to care for the baby or care for her own postnatal health. All these circumstances had negative effects on her. In this context, Lulu was very lonely; she could not open up and share with Tim what was missing; the care and support from relatives and friends during the puerperium period and cultural practices with a newly mother.

Lulu’s tone becomes deep and her eyes stared to the floor when discussing the spousal relationship: ‘There were some problems between Tim and me when we lived in England at the beginning.’

Lulu sighs again and continues: ‘We could not identify the cause of the problems. Both of us found it difficult to settle down. In particular, me; it took more than two years to become accustomed to the English way of life.’

(L): ‘When Tim and I used to travel for business we lived out of suitcases and dined out all the time. Now instead of going out for three meals a day, I needed to prepare all the meals at home. My daily routine was
housebound and I felt isolated.'

(I): 'Why did you choose to be alone? You are an out-going and sociable person and should have no problems mingling with your neighbours or other English people.'

(L): 'My perception of English people had not changed since my first visit to London. The bad experience still haunted me.'

I became curious and asked: 'You chose to marry an Englishman while at the same time you were not prepared to accept the English culture or people. Why?'

Lulu continues and speaks softly: 'Marrying a foreigner is not that simple. If Tim and I were in a good mood we discussed and shared our thoughts. When the situation became tense we might argue for a few days. (L): 'I hate the English manners especially their table manners. I prefer our Chinese custom. At weekends, family or friends gather together in a Chinese restaurant. We eat and talk at the same time. That is why Chinese restaurants become so noisy.'

Lulu said with glowing eyes: 'My life changed again since my nephew arrived from mainland China for his education in England. I felt very happy, settled and warm. It was very strange; I treated him like my son. Tim is very kind to pay for my nephew's tuition fees and living expenses in England. Tim understands me very well and he did not object to letting my nephew stay with us. For the last three years, I have felt so much closer to my family in China since my nephew arrived. We shared the same food and talked about China in "Mandarin" [an official language used in mainland China] all the time.'

I shared the same feeling and understood what Lulu was missing; the family bond is very close and unique in our culture and family gatherings at the weekend are common among Chinese families. I remember when my family gathered in a Chinese restaurant, I could hardly hear others' conversations. Every
one of my family members seemed very happy and enjoyed shouting across the table exchanging greetings and making conversation. The noise represents cheerfulness and happiness, and also represents the size of the family.

The family has always been regarded as the cornerstone of traditional Chinese society. It has been characterised as a large and extended unit, with several generations living under the same roof and the belief that the needs of older people are best met within the family (Hsu, 1998). However, those who have married and moved away are expected to visit their parents weekly or monthly. Therefore, a large part of a married couple’s weekend is spent with both sets of parents. According to our tradition, parents or grandparents like seeing their children and grandchildren all together, we call this “all the sons are together (仔仔一堂)” (meaning all generations are together). In the Chinese family, male is the only symbol used when referring to a nuclear family system because of their duties such as: to take care of their parents in old age (Qin, 2006, p. 176) and “to extend and carry down the family tree (開枝散葉)”. Female members, once they are married, will live under their husbands’ care and will take the husband’s family name. We still very much live in a male-focused society even in the cyber era (see Chap. 2, p. 23, 26) I am not sure if any western countries have these traditions in such depth. If so, I have not heard of such cases, from my English friends, since I have lived in England.

(L): ‘When we enjoy our food we chew with some noise but the English people do not accept this carefree manner.

Tim told me off so many times about my table manners, he said English people would look down on me. On a few occasions, I just walked off when he started on me. Later, he explained to me that he wanted me to become accustomed to English culture and to be accepted by the local people.

He tried his best to prepare me for that. I would not disagree with him, to be or not to be is not important to me, so I followed his suggestions.

Another problem arose when Tim’s health deteriorated and he could not
manage to travel long distances for his business. He spent most his time at home taking care of the household chores. He kept raising the idea of moving to the USA to live where most of his business was located.

I told him I was not moving anywhere; I had to complete my research study. Maybe I would feel differently when I completed my study, but I wanted Jack to be educated in England, not the USA. I knew I would have to resolve our differences eventually but not now.'

Lulu continues and sounds very apologetic: 'I did not know the reason why Tim and I became distant once he started spending most of his time at home. I spent most of the day at the university and in the evenings I would take care of Jack for couple of hours and then carry on with my study for the remainder of the evening. I knew it was not fair to Tim that I did not spend more time with him.

(L): 'We had different expectations and communicated less now. I knew how to make him happy and understood very well about his weaknesses but I did not want to spend time to please him. Similarly, when I needed to adjust myself to the local culture, I did so reluctantly.'

Nakamatsu (2003) has noted some scholars tend to regarded Asian women entering trans-national marriage as dependent “outsiders” who remain outsiders forever in the host countries. I am not sure if this circumstance is the case with Lulu. Nakamatsu (2003) has suggested at the beginning of the trans-national marriage, “communication difficulties were felt most acutely”. This problem not only has influences on the relationship between new couples, but is also an obstacle to Chinese women’s assimilation into host societies. Although some women become the citizens of their residing countries, their cultural orientation is still towards China. "As the first generation migrants born in China, they are receptive to Chinese culture and remain keenly interested in China’s development" (see Liu, 2005). We can see their cultural orientation from how they approach their children’s education. Most of them would hope their children to know Chinese culture (Huasheng Bao, February, 10, 2003). Furthermore,
since many Chinese women still maintain close family and social connections with their homeland, to some, China is not only a cultural symbol, but also a sovereign entity in actual life.

(L): ‘I was fighting with my inner world.

I did not want to move abroad and was worried Tim would insist on moving to the USA before the completion of my studies. As I said earlier, I had to move along with my husband, unless ……”

Lulu hesitates and does not speak what is in her mind.

I believe cross-cultural marriage requires a lot of learning and accommodation between two people. Both Lulu and Tim might not have been aware of the consequences of cross-cultural marriage or realise that they had to accommodate their differences more than they had anticipated. However, the difficulties and problems that the couple encountered after settling down in England were issues they had never considered before their marriage. I began to ask myself, did Lulu’s father foresee all these risks for his daughter? I am not certain if these problems are standard in cross-cultural marriages. Do couples begin by exploring the ‘unknown’ and learn to deal with it, or is it an on-going process throughout the marriage?

I recall the cross-cultural marriage between my niece, Cathy and her husband Chris. Cathy was born and bred in Hong Kong. She furthered her education and later worked in Europe for nearly twenty years. Chris was a French-Canadian from Ottawa. Both of them had prominent jobs and worked in The Netherlands but decided to settle down in Ottawa after their marriage.

Cathy was able to communicate with the local people in simple French, but she found living in Ottawa challenging, a difficult experience from the beginning. She said there were so many subtle differences to learn about each other, in terms of expectations and culture as a newly married couple. Although Cathy spent nearly twenty years in Europe, she was not surprised that there were differences in social practices and traditions in Canada compared to Hong Kong and Europe.

Cathy told me that had she not experienced living independently in Europe for lengthy period of time, she would not have been able to cope with living in
Ottawa when at the beginning, after Chris went to work, she was housebound. Later, Cathy enrolled in a language course at the local university and became interested in studying law. However, Chris wanted her to spend more time at home rather than study. Lately, it is good to hear from Cathy that, although she and Chris might dream in different languages, but their values, tears and laughter, fears and happy moments have truly become similar. Cathy admitted that if both of them had not cared for each other so much, it would have been very difficult to adjust.

When comparing Lulu’s and Cathy’s situation, it is very interesting to discover that Chinese women seem to pay more attention to their careers than their families and homes. Lulu pursued further studies mainly to secure her financial independence from her husband, but I am not sure if Cathy had the same idea. When comparing Cathy and Lulu’s choices to the more traditional role for Chinese women, there is a variant. I am not sure if it is related to the long period they have lived in Europe or that they have been ‘baptised’ by their transnational marriage and transformed to fit the wider society; or simply that it is coincidence in line with Daruvala’s comment (see Chap. 7, p. 133).

Both of their husbands preferred them to spend more time on the family rather than focus on their careers. I wonder if the two cases are a coincidence reflecting different values in married life between husband and wife or is it a phenomenon of the modern era that married woman with professional knowledge reject the idea of being housebound. Perhaps it is mainly differences in cultural values, but I am quite certain, from my observations that ‘communication and care’ are the core values that work in Cathy’s cross-cultural marriage.

Lulu’s voice rises: ‘Parenting is part of my duty but Tim has a different approach compared to me. I respect his decisions since he understands the local educational system better than I do, but I would like to have a chance to make decisions too whenever possible. So I made use of the time when Tim was away from home.

I have tried to brainwash Jack with my father’s philosophy. I became the shadow of my father and kept repeating to Jack what I used to pick up from my father. I hope he will take it in eventually.
I want Jack to be able to speak Mandarin, understand my culture and to be able to communicate with my family. Jack promised he would try his best.

We can practise speaking Mandarin only when Tim is not at home.'

Tang (1998, p. 586) noted that egalitarian decision making was directly associated with marital satisfaction; Conklin (1988) and Ford and colleagues (1995) agreed that distribution of marital power is influenced by the interaction between resources and cultural values. Difference in cultural values induces conflict in Lulu and Tim's cross-cultural marriage. Tim might expect Lulu to behave like a traditional Chinese wife, subservient to her husband, to fulfil her culturally prescribed domestic roles of supportive wives and mothers; he did not want shared power in decision-making while imposed Chinese-ness on their son was so important to Lulu.

Lulu continues with a smile on her face and speaks proudly: 'Every evening Jack and I spend a couple of hours sharing our values and discussing various issues.

My son understands me very well, at one time he said to me

"Mammy, please do not divorce daddy. I have friends at school and they are not happy because their parents are divorced"

Then I told Jack he has to behave himself, go to Sunday School, study Chinese and speak Mandarin with mammy'.

Lulu looks up, searches through her mind then says: 'Jack tried to convince me, to practice English culture in England. When we visit Mainland China, then we can practice the Chinese culture.

He promised he would learn more about Chinese culture when he lives in
I have no complaints about that since I am one of the minorities in this country. Occasionally I have the same feeling when the three of us are together.

Lulu bombarded Jack with her father’s philosophy and hoped that Jack would inherit his grandfather’s qualities. This approach reminds me of the Chinese tradition “passed down from one generation to another (傳宗接代)” or “to follow father’s will and advice (秉承父訓)”. Lulu’s parenting style suggested that she strongly maintained our traditional cultural values although Jack was born in England with an English father. For instance, Lulu emphasised that what she expects from him is to be able to speak Chinese language. Jack was torn between his parents and tried to please both of them. I was not surprised that Jack pleaded with Lulu not to divorce his father if there were problems. It shows that there were marital problems and that the child felt insecure or sensed that something might happen to the couple’s marriage.

Chinese immigrants tend to keep their ethnic identity through linguistics (see Phinney et al. 2000; Costigan & Dokis, 2006). Most of the immigrant parents hope that their children learn and/or maintain their mother tongue. For Lulu she emphasised what she expects from Jack is to be able to speak Chinese language.

Chinese children try their best to please their parents and to honour their families. Under this cultural and family climate, Chinese parental expectations are likely to be valued and shared by their children who tend to behave in ways that are consistent with the desires of their parents (Chao, 1994; Fuligni, 1997). There are available documents to prove that those high parental expectations and excessive parental control inevitably cause some children to exhibit psychological problems (Yau & Smetana, 1996; Chung, et al. 1997; Stewart et al. 1998). I am not sure if Lulu is aware of Jack’s psychological development or her expectations are more important than her son’s health. Since, most of the mothers tend to spend more time at home with her children when compare to the father, Boehnke (2001) found that mothers’ influence in value transmission is somewhat greater than fathers’ influence. Unfortunately, I am not in a position to speak as a
Chinese parent, but based on Lulu’s cross-cultural marriage should ‘Chinese-ness’ be imposed on the second generation? I have reservations on that and would leave this question open for further research. However, what Lulu imposed on a local born, half English, seven-year-old son with regards to “Chinese-ness” caused tension in the couple’s marriage and parenting philosophy. How significant the cross-cultural issues are is not certain, but they definitely have an effect on their son.

(L): ‘I know that I would not return to China to live. I find that I have more freedom in England than in China. The English people respect human rights more than in mainland China. Tim does not understand what I mean.’

‘Since Tim had no experience of living under a communist regime. He could not share the fears and worries of those who came from Mainland China like me. Nevertheless, I would like my son to bear some kind of “Chinese-ness by being able to speak the language.”

When Lulu mentioned the ‘Chinese regime’, it struck me and I better understood her remarks. In fact, she was haunted by the communist regime when she was living in China. I remember what my father told me, about after the Sino-Japanese War. Those who chose to stay in mainland China experienced a different kind of hardship when China was under a communist regime. Although mainland China began their open door policy in the early 1990s, similar to “Hong Kong people (香港人)”, their fear of the previous regime never left them entirely. Every one of them had to be very careful about what they said as ‘Big Brother’ was always watching. If one used a wrong word, one might be put in prison for life or accused of treason (see Chap. 1, pp. 5-8).

Lulu explained her difficulties blending in with the culture in China when she returned for a holiday: ‘I could not understand why my mother behaved like she did. She had no identity; every decision had to wait for my father’s approval. She had no self-awareness at all.'
It was a similar situation with all my married girl friends. I did not agree that they had to respond according to their husband’s preferences.

I began to question my father’s philosophy. On one hand, he guided us to seek independence from our spouses, but on the other hand, he restricts my mum’s “freedom”.

(1): ‘Every time I met up with girl friends in mainland China, they all envied my freedom in England.

Some of my friends have tried to live in England, but, after they arrived, they realised that they could not cope with or get along with the local culture. In the end, they had to return to China.

To be honest with you, I picked up from my father never to reveal any weaknesses to other people. It might have been that my friends only picked up the bright side of my life in England.’

Lulu compared the life between China and England during her holiday in China; she complains about the inequalities in gender issues amongst her parents. Lulu has assimilated into the English culture over the last ten years without realising it herself. However, it is interesting to know that she insisted on maintaining her ‘Chinese-ness’, not only in the language, but in values and practices such as: “save face (要面)” , avoid “lost face (丢面)” and people will “give face ( 伸面)” (that is, not disclosing any weaknesses, poverty or any other negative side of themselves so as to gain respect from other people). I am not sure if the people from the West share or value this philosophy to the same degree.

Lulu opens up with her worries: ‘Tim might die, or he might not leave me with any money. One day, if I decided to return to China to live, I might have no close friends. How could I adjust to living in China again? My son might not live near by me so what would I do? All these problems pop up into my head from time to time. Sometimes, I tell myself, Tim is still alive so there is no need to worry. What would happen if he decided to leave
me because of our different perspectives, values and family background? Every now and then I become one of the wanderers myself.'

I can understand Lulu’s worries. Certainly, after living aboard for over ten years, it would take time for Lulu to become accustomed to the political and social system in Mainland China again if she decided return there to live.

Regarding my personal experiences from twenty years ago, I felt claustrophobic when I went back to Hong Kong for a holiday, after spending three years living in England. In Hong Kong, there are more than six million people crammed into a confined area. Social friction happens frequently due to the lack of space and overcrowding. The Hong Kong culture and social practices struck me straight away upon my return. It took me quite awhile to become used to it again. Nowadays, even the thought of living in Hong Kong is enough to intimidate me.

On the whole, Lulu enjoys her life in England better than in China. She found that English people are more formal in manners when compared to Chinese from the PRC and that Chinese people tend to hide their ‘true’ personality. This circumstance is why a lot of English people misunderstand Chinese people. Most English people can work very well together as a team, but most Chinese people can work very well on their own because we are not outspoken. We are not meant to be out-spoken, to critique other people’s work or say something offensive (see Chap. 2, pp. 21-23); we have to behave in a socially acceptable manner, especially when we are living in a foreign country.

From my previous experience and observations living in England, then and now, I would conclude that the local English people have more passion for life than the Hong Kong Chinese. They value their enjoyment of life. For most people living in Hong Kong, their only meaning in life is to strive for their own space and values. Most of the time they struggle to survive. To mention quality of life in Hong Kong, for some, sounds luxurious because we have a different welfare system compared to England. Since most English are ‘individualistic’, they tend to live more private lives. This is a positive outcome for Chinese immigrants, like me, can enjoy the space and sense of freedom when living in England rather than over populated Hong Kong. Nowadays, the English people seemed to be more casual than they used to be, while the majority of Hong Kong
people are very formal. Most English people can give you a very clear idea about what they like and what they do not like, but people in Hong Kong do not open up, as mentioned previously, because of our culture. In Hong Kong it is very difficult and takes time to get to understand and know someone well and yet, I feel it is the same here. Living in Bristol for over 3 years, I am still searching the way to communicate with indigenous people.

7.2 The Stories of The Three Chinese women immigrants

I am proud of my research participants for their kindness and trust. They revealed their stories and offered their experiences of being a Chinese woman immigrant living in England. The stories of our experiences as women immigrants living in England as written here have both limitations and significance. This study adopts a life story approach but is not a comprehensive review. Rather, it is a purposive selection of some representational personal experiences and it does not aim to generalise or to induce any concepts or theories. However, the in-depth interviews would able to provide more in-sight to the local Council, policy maker(s) to formulate cultural sensitive policies and to facilitate the Chinese women immigrants’ adjustment needs without undermining their cultural values.

Immigration often brings changes to family roles and tends to destabilize family relations over time (Coll & Magnuson, 1997; Foner, 1997). One of the most salient issues is the acculturation gap between parents and children (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). The narratives of the Chinese women immigrants in this study highlight the expectations and experiences of their family life since living in Britain. They illustrate the tension and conflict with their children that arose after migration. They found that extensive negotiations between mother and children are necessary and challenging. The mothers strive to transmit their ethnic culture to their children and children attempt to balance their experiences in the new culture and the teachings of their ethnic culture. Likewise, parents are more likely to retain values and ethnic traditions that are at odds with children’s experiences in the new culture. Although the present research has noted issues of the acculturation gap and increasing parent-child conflicts, how and why the quality of these relations may change over time might need in-depth further investigation.
Furthermore, the women involved in this study emphasised that they chose not to communicate with the local English people. One of the participants displayed anxieties and insecurities associated with her cross-cultural marriage to a local Englishman. Her distinctly independent attitudes towards finance, self-enhancement activities and control in parenting vary from the other research participants.

In short, the three women immigrants involved in this study, including myself, show their own characters and have their own voices. They tried to adhere to or maintain our traditional cultural beliefs, values and practices whenever they can manage, regardless of the reality that they are in the process of migration and living in a different economic, cultural, social and political arena. I began to question whether the intention of these women migrants was to settle down in England or simply follow the old Chinese saying “return to their root (歸根)” (return to their home country ultimately).
Chapter Eight: Summary and Recommendations

In this Chapter I will discuss what I have learned in this research journey. Reflections on the methodological approach and the educational and research implications of the study along with a discussion of key limitations, contributions, and recommendations will also be addressed.

8.1 Discussion of the Research

Women, in a male-dominated society, respond and adapt to life in many different ways; some withdraw, others rebel and still others create their own world (Belcourt, 1986/7). While feminists challenge the resignation of migrants to the status quo and advocate collective action to improve the position of women, this study reveals how women migrants can create their own worlds in their new countries. Ethnic minority women immigrants, who face adversities, not only as women, but also as minority immigrants, try to negotiate, accommodate and struggle in their lives in a new land.

Needless to say, the choices made by the Chinese immigrant women in the current study are influenced by their families and by self-motivation, individualism and achievement. Having been raised in a traditional Chinese culture, their life was steeped in the ideas of specifically ascribed gender roles. Such cultural influences became more pronounced after migration, as adjustments became necessary within a foreign cultural context. Many immigrant women with adequate skills to communicate would have few problems finding a reputable job and/or integrating socially, but all of the informants encountered difficulties in acculturating during the migration process.

However, the experiences of migration and adjustment were not homogeneous and uniform among these women. They came to the situation with diverse values, cultural beliefs and immigration experiences. Thus, their motivation for establishing a new life and the migration process they went through in the host country were complicated.

The current research on Chinese women immigrants in Britain, explored such diversity and complexity. To begin with, I, as the researcher, discussed the historical patterns of Chinese immigration to Britain and the cultural and structural impact of Confucian patriarchism and paternalism as well as
colonialism and imperialism, on Chinese culture. Having done so, I proceeded to outline, discuss and analyze the elements involved in the migration process with which these Chinese women had been brought up in relation to cultural beliefs and gender roles. I illustrated how these stereotyped cultural beliefs and practices intersect in different ways to produce and reproduce diverse social relations embedded in acculturation.

There were three participants in the study, including myself. Each came from similar cultural backgrounds and were raised by their families within a similar sociocultural stratum in Hong Kong/PRC. Two of us had experienced living in England prior to immigration. The participants had reputable jobs before migrating. They are all middle-aged and attained average or higher results in education. They were able to speak English and had no problem communicating with locals. This background enabled them to familiarise themselves with the new environment and to find work. However they needed to make use of established ethnic groups for information, both locally and trans-nationally.

In order to understand why these women decided to emigrate, how they adjusted and managed and what kinds of strategies they used to cope with the adjustments needed within the host country, it is necessary to situate them in the historical contexts which played an important role in shaping their ideas, beliefs and behaviour. An understanding of the history of migration from Hong Kong and/or China to England in terms of cultural, imperialist and colonised hegemony helps to provide that context (see Chap. 1 & 2).

British colonialism and imperialism had an immense effect on the people of Hong Kong. Raised in this British colony, Chinese women not only have normalised unequal relations between the English speaking people and Chinese, but also developed inferiority complexes relative to the White expatriates. Hence, as reflected in my study, the choice of English speaking White settler societies such as England, Canada, Australia and the United States for immigration, the view that the English school system is better for their children’s education and the ‘insensitivity’ to subtle racism, all demonstrate the internalisation of White superiority as the norm. In addition, Western imperialist hegemony led to the dichotomisation of identities, resulting in the racialisation between the Whites as ‘them’ and the Chinese as ‘us’, which further contributed to ethnic solidarity.
within the Chinese community. Such racialisation had important consequences on how these women adjusted to and settled in the new situations. For example, they were inclined to stay within the Chinese community and refrained from integrating with the locals. For myself, I participate in activities within the Chinese community occasionally. Even though I experienced difficulties with the indigenous people, it had not influenced my intention to mingle with them and take part in their activities. I had a good relationship with the Whites from the local lawn bowls club for Ladies. All the other members are local English and I am the only foreigner in the Club; but it had no adverse effect on the joy and fun that I shared with the others from playing lawn bowls.

Closely associated with British imperialism and colonisation is capitalism which, brought in and established by the British during their rule of Hong Kong, has made most Hong Kong Chinese suspicious of Communism. This background explains partly the women's decisions to leave Hong Kong. They considered the 1997 reversion of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty as a threat, both politically and economically, despite the fact that culturally they still identify themselves, very much, as Chinese.

For women migrants, the gendered culture is yet another determining factor. As Chinese culture values collectivism, a woman believes that her husband's or her children's achievements are surrogates for her own achievement. As the Chinese say “a wife is honoured because of her husband and a mother is honoured because of her children”; therefore, a woman may not necessarily feel a strong desire to pursue her own interests outside her family as long as she feels that she can help her husband and children to succeed. In addition, Chinese women especially value the role of mother. Chinese women tend to sacrifice their own interests for their children. The children's needs are the women's first priority at home, even sometimes above their husbands' needs. This role of the mother keeps many women's hearts at home.

Many Chinese may believe that adjusting themselves to fit the environment is a more effective strategy than bringing about objective changes to attain their goals. Accepting one's fate is a deep-rooted philosophy in this social and cultural context. Knowledge and acceptance of one's place in society and the family is one of the traditional Chinese values promoted by Confucianism, one of the most influential philosophies in China (Uba, 1994). This explained why the Chinese
women immigrants tended to accept their required role as a wife and a mother above all others.

In this study, one participant stated: “I have to fulfil my role as a mother, I had to resign from my job to move to England to be with my two sons”. These women may wish that they could co-ordinate both their family role and their career role and be equally successful in both, but in reality, they may give up more of their career ambitions. That is, their family is their first priority and their career comes second. For myself, I have no family in England; therefore I do not have to choose which role to prioritise. However education for personal development and achievement in academia are my goals.

Education plays a very important role so that both men and women have better opportunities to be involved in society and also to be successful in their careers. However, the implications of education for Chinese women seem somewhat different from those for men. Education affects women’s attitude to gender. The participants believed that education would allow women to become more independent, to have more desire for career achievement and to pursue equality with men. It is generally assumed that women with less education and with limited exposure to the western ideologies are more accepting of this cultural script of women’s role as a virtuous wife and a kind mother (True, 1990). Nevertheless, while the participants are educated and exposed to the western world, how they define and prioritise their roles may cause tension when compared to their Chinese tradition.

Moreover, women’s attitudes toward education are actually somewhat more complicated. I infer that some of them are not sure what education is for: does it mean achieving high scores to honour the family? Helping their husband and children in the future? Or seeking personal development? Each individual might have a different perspective to education which needs further investigation.

Although I may view myself on an equal status with these women in the present study, my role as a researcher put me in an authority position. The two other Chinese women may be unconsciously displaying this response bias in the interviews. That is, they may disclose fewer issues than they may have experienced. Evidence for this possibility was suggested by the participants who alluded to the feeling that they might not be fully expressing their thoughts. Nevertheless, I felt that they were impressively open and honest about their
thoughts and feelings during the interviews. Furthermore, this minority ethnic “group” found themselves deprived of authority, control and/or income. Each experienced lack of decision-making power due to her status as a wife, as a single parent or as a student whilst living in Britain.

In the eyes of the “foreigner/indigenous” people, the positioning of Chinese women immigrants was ambiguous, contradictory and diverse. The women immigrants are instilled with complex levels of class, gender and ethnic identities and face different kinds of barriers and difficulties on the basis of class, gender and ethnicity. These women went through diverse experiences at various stages of their assimilation.

And yet, before I conducted the current research, I was not aware of the extremes of the internalised cultural values within us. As Chinese immigrant women, the internalised construct deepens our thoughts, behaviour and attitudes in our daily lives, not to mention the effects on our acculturation.

8.2 Reflecting on My Research

The narratives of Chinese women immigrants support different rates of acculturation and perceptions of ethnic identity amongst family members causing family conflict (see Chap.6, pp. 122-124). Acculturation is referred to as the orientation of an individual to their host culture. Recent immigrants were perceived to have lower levels of acculturation than the offsprings of immigrants, meaning that the children acclimated to host cultures at a more rapid rate than their parents. This was often exacerbated by accelerated language acquisition due to the academic environment. It was not uncommon for first generation immigrants to have little need for the English language, particularly when settling into ethnic enclaves (Rosenthal, 1984; Rick & Forward, 1992). One of the informants indicated that she is busy at all time with her husband’s take-away business and attends activities organised by the local Chinese community occasionally. The narratives of the women immigrants indicated they felt higher levels of ethnic identity than their children did. In other words, they were more proud of their heritage or were more likely to become involved in organisations with others of similar ethnic backgrounds. On the other hand, children of the second generation immigrants were less likely to have a clear sense of their ethnic backgrounds and the meaning it held for them (Oetting & Beauvais, 1991).
The life stories of the Chinese women immigrants reflected that they are adapting to the necessary changes, while holding on to certain traditional family values. Traditional values and practices that are deeply rooted in Confucian principles still seem to have a great deal of influence on their child-rearing practices (see Lau & Cheung, 1987). The greater the difference in acculturation among family members, the greater the likelihood of family discord and the higher levels of mother-child ethnic identity disparity would lead to higher levels of mother-child conflict.

8.3 Reflecting on the Methodological Approach

This study employs autoethnography as a strategy to illustrate the life stories of Chinese women immigrants embedded with my own story as a woman immigrant who has experienced Chinese and British cultural contexts. Autobiography is the writing about oneself, as distinct from others. Ethnography, on the other hand, is writing about others, especially those who are considered different. These two genres are often opposed. In this study, I combined the two (i.e. auto/ethnography) in order to provide a clear understanding of the informants' life stories. In other words, I examine otherness in the self and selfhood constructed within the others as doing so helps us to better understand our own individual stories.

Furthermore, during the process of writing my own story, I began to realise that my writing is largely feminist in perspective and method. I began by identifying those aspects of composition studies that might express a feminist standpoint and this study could well be mainly targeted for a “feminist” audience. Writing autoethnographically provided me with questions: firstly, do men share the same passion in writing women’s stories? Secondly, if so, will the presentation/language used be different? These questions have a political agenda. How could writing be neutral? If we can establish difference, then have we taken a first step toward establishing dominance? I am still confused as I have little writing experience. Would a man, or someone local, compose the text differently? I learned from reading contemporary interdisciplinary feminism writing that most scholars agree “that textuality should be at the heart of the study of autobiography and the dissolution of the distinctions between self-life-writing should also be an objective in feminist autobiography” (Cosslett et al.
Using the feminist autobiography for my own story enables me to view my ‘self’ from a distance and at the same time to locate my research participants within me, as a Chinese immigrant woman from Hong Kong/China.

8.4 Limitations of the Study

8.4.1 Re-assessing the Research Method

This research was the result of qualitative analysis based on interviews. Since little is known about Chinese women immigrants living in Bristol, this study was exploratory in nature, with the intention of revealing, in some depth, the experience of some Chinese minority women immigrants. A few issues have been noted throughout the process of the research, which suggest the need for careful methodological deliberation for future studies.

One major issue that has been neglected is the matter of transcription and translation. I transcribed audio-taped data into written format which involved the process of transcribing from the Cantonese dialect to a written form in Chinese which was subsequently translated into English. Going through these two separate procedures means that my construction of the subjects’ narratives was made twice. As many proverbial expressions in the Cantonese dialect are non-transcribable and difficult to translate, statements may be easily twisted and distorted. This situation is exacerbated when carried out by a novice translator such as myself. In doing research on a different culture, more so in ethnography, very often the issue of translation is taken for granted. Researchers tend to assume that the insider or the interviewer/interpreter who knows the language is naturally capable of doing the translation. This oversight poses the problem of realism when meanings are inaccurately translated or hidden. My experience suggests that we should be more cautious about the professionalism of the translator when researching groups of a similar culture and language. My point is that neutralising any message offered by any informant should be avoided.

Generally speaking, interviews serve the purpose of collecting detailed information on experiences, allowing the subjects to tell their stories from their own perspectives. In this way, we are able to obtain complexity, intensity and depth. One of the major drawbacks of using this approach is the inability to measure quantitatively the relative significance of the different factors involved.
such as the participant’s demographical data such as their age, educational level (independent variables). Such statistical data enable the researcher to identify the significant relationship between demographic data and their migration process. This manner of comparison amongst participants can be possible and findings can be generaliseable.

8.4.2 ‘Feminist’ Power and Politics

I would not claim that I had a deep commitment and passion for feminist work had I not had the privilege of researching Chinese women immigrants living in Bristol. This enabled me to share the same platform with other feminist writers. In my opinion, the development of “feminism” should align with modernisation and be applied according to different discipline of studies. Therefore, it is important to change peoples’ perceptions of feminism, people such as myself who are “political innocents”, who misunderstood “the women's movement” believing it had something to do with right-wing organisations. Secondly, some feminists are very sensitive towards biases and discrimination based on gender, class, ethnicity, physical abilities and religious affiliation. They are often unaware of this overbearing demeanour, especially in feminist writing.

I would claim that 21st-century feminism is going through a “metamorphosis”. Feminist ideology is still based on the principles of gender equality and social justice.

In the past, the tendency was for feminism to fight, literally, against men, but at this point I believe that we will only make gains and be in a better position to mobilise “social change,” if we integrate men as active, engaged members of the “feminist movement.”

When referring to feminist writing, I have limited experience and cannot tell the difference between “mature” or “young” activists. It seems that the core issue of the conceptualisation of feminism must be plural and that is my standpoint. I am still learning how to achieve my position in the academic world without being restricted by the “rules and clauses” of feminist writing. I do not accept that I should conform to an identity or live in a way that does not allow me individuality, complexity or allows for my personal history. Nonetheless, I would not eliminate others’ choices as activist writers. I only want women’s voices to be heard and respected. I am one of those women who call themselves feminist
but disagree with some "doctrines" of feminism. There are many different feminist approaches and there is no single feminist method. However, as I mentioned earlier, I believed that the ultimate goal is to carry out the research for the benefit of the people that we are researching and monitor the process with ethics whilst progressing in a rigorous manner.

8.4.3 Re-assessing the Inquiry

My research employed narrative inquiry to analyse the adjustment needs of Chinese women immigrants, exploring the interlocking relations of culture, gender and migration process. The findings from the research draw attention to some theoretical issues that need to be addressed, namely the questions of the importance of gender role in Chinese and foreign culture. In this study, there are calls for the recognition of the multiplicity of experiences resulting from the interlocking systems of power, particularly pertaining to cultural beliefs and gender roles. The women in my study showed uniformity in many aspects of their cultural beliefs despite the existence of the 'local/foreign' cultural context. Dependence on informal networks from the local Chinese community was a common factor in making migration decisions. Another common factor shared by these women was insensitivity to the gender concept; it was not obvious for them to seek equal standing with their male counterparts in the study. Instead they were still very much ingrained in the traditional role for Chinese women regardless of living in a different cultural context. Such ignorance led to the perpetuation of stereotypical gender roles in these Chinese women migrants. These common patterns indicate to us that, while it is theoretically sound to pay attention to diversity and difference, we should avoid over-generalisation between and within groups; however generalisation cannot be avoided entirely.

8.5 Contributions of the Study

This study expands the current body of literature on Chinese women immigrants living in Britain. Existing literature indicated the paucity of information regarding this specific group and it has typically been an understudied population. Given recent immigration patterns, this group will only continue to grow as will their needs.

Another contribution of this study is that it indicated the variance in cultural
values amongst immigrant parents and children would effect their acculturation and also their relationships. There was confirmation that the acculturation process is multifaceted and complex. This study also confirmed earlier research that intergeneration conflicts may arise in addition to the acculturative stresses immigrant families face.

This study also indicates that the parent had to compromise many of her traditional values to create a more harmonious environment for her children. On the other hand, it is necessary for both generations to make concessions to each other. The significance was to understand that if both the first and second generation immigrants may have different levels of acculturation, then recognising these differences openly may help to reduce overall family conflict. In addition, it may be helpful for parents and children to understand that both have their different methods of relaying their affections or concerns for one another. For example, when Chinese mothers “teach” their children certain values, children may feel the discipline is too strict, while mothers may feel they are serving their duty as a caring parent.

The study attempts to explore the Chinese immigrant women’s experiences since migrating to Britain and make their experiences known to the general public as well as to policy makers. Their perspectives are rarely heard in British mainstream society. The findings of the study lend insights to the importance and necessity of multicultural education. It compels us to rethink how to empower minority immigrants and to effectively reduce their tension and pressure so as to ensure British biculturalism is a reality rather than mere propaganda.

Although this study cannot cover every facet of parental expectations and should not be generalised to other immigrant Chinese families, it has important implications for parents. It exemplifies how parental expectations function in this specific cultural group. By providing information from the perspectives of both parents and children, the study can help immigrant Chinese parents and their children to establish mutual understanding germane to a harmonious family life in the process of acculturation and in the pursuit of betterment.

This study has significant educational implications. As educators, we must optimise opportunities to help students of all backgrounds to successfully go through sociocultural and psychological transitions so as to fulfil their talent
potential. This study helps teachers/educators to have a deeper understanding of cultural and family factors involved in schooling for immigrant Chinese children or children with a Chinese parent. Such understanding will enhance school-home collaboration and facilitate teacher-parent partnerships. Such understanding will ultimately benefit immigrant Chinese students as well as students of other ethnic backgrounds. If the study compels British schools to foster racially inclusive classrooms and to develop culturally responsive teaching strategies on the basis of cultural awareness, if it challenges English schools to provide more efficient academic and social mentoring for non-mainstream children, then this study will have gained an extra mile.

8.6 Recommendations

Integration is a two-way process that requires adaptation by migrants but also by the receiving society. Integration policies need to be targeted at the whole of society, not just at migrants and minorities. In practice, it means policies must address the institutional barriers to integration, including discriminatory practice, and not only, for instance, migrants’ economic, social, cultural and political levers to address them: policies should not be confined to integration into the labour market, or cultural attitudes, but take a holistic approach. To do so effectively, the specific needs and experiences of different racial, ethnic and religious groups need first to be identified – recognising the differences between and within communities. Second, it is necessary to assess the differing economic and social barriers they encounter, including discrimination. In that context, steps should be taken to equalise the legal status of long-term residents and nationals of other countries. The social and economic progress of migrants and ethnic minorities needs to be monitored to provide an evidence base for future policy making and for assessing the impact of these policies on different communities. Finally, participation in civic decision making and integration into the rights and responsibilities of citizenship is a vital if often a neglected integration goal. It will give migrants a stake in the future of their society and help express the acceptance on the part of the majority that migrants’ and minorities’ participation in shaping that future is possible and desirable.

One of the most important factors in determining the success of integration into a host country is the level of democracy. The approach to the matter must
not be an extreme *laissez-faire* that ignores the problem nor be too rigid towards absolute assimilation. Equally negative would be the locals' ethnic prejudice and racial discrimination. Integration depends on the degree of cultural and institutional differences between the indigenous population and the immigrants.

The reciprocal attitudes of immigrants and natives to integration are core factors. The immigrants' lack of understanding of the new society may hinder their integration process, especially where it varies from their expectations. The immigrants' predisposition to adapt and their perceived superiority of the new culture are additional elements that affect the process of integration. Other factors such as the lack of communication within the migrants' political, religious and recreational groups may also affect the process of integration. However, the predisposition of the local people toward immigrants is conditioned by their degree of cultural affinity, in particular ideas concerning race, language, religion and political organisations of the host-society. Nevertheless, the media and other organisations with social control will have great influence on the general public towards new immigrants.

### 8.6.1 Embracing Diversity

English society has become increasingly diverse, as people from many different backgrounds and experiences come together to meet the challenges of a changing world. One important intervention is "embracing diversity," which involves a way of thinking and a way of relating or being (Jenkins, 1999, p. 9). One cognitive dimension of this process involves thoughtful movement toward increased social awareness and acceptance of those who are different and gradual disintegration of personal barriers (e.g., prejudice, stereotypes) that block openness to human differences. This dimension also involves becoming aware of and knowledgeable about local and world communities and the unfolding of a flexible and socially contextualised perspective of human development.

The practical behavioural dimension of this process is active. It involves defining, clarifying and appreciating one's own social identity (Jenkins, 1993) as well as maintaining openness to opportunities for valued interactions with those who are different from oneself. Another important aspect of the practical behavioural dimension involves learning to cope with difference without diminishing it through universalising or essentialising it. For example, the
impact of gender on “female” characteristics such as relational skills, nurturance and gentleness is sometimes assumed to be universal among all women despite class, sexual orientation, racial, ethnic, or cultural differences among them (Spelman, 1988). Essentialising these experiences is a denial of inequality in relation to culturalism, racism, classism and other dimensions of diversity. Experience based on any of these integrations may vary from one individual to another.

The narratives of the Chinese immigrant women illustrate how their internalised cultural belief and gender roles affect their acculturation in Britain. Their biographies provide valuable information for the government to formulate culturally-sensitive policies that address political, social and economic integration, which need to be targeted at the wider society not just at migrants and minorities. Integration and gender equality objectives and indicators should be central to government policies on employment, social inclusion, education, housing and health. Policy initiatives should proceed in a participatory way, in consultation with women migrants and ethnic minorities, so that proposed reforms reflect actual experience. The government should provide more funding to ethnic community organisations so that they can play a more involved role in disseminating updated immigration information and related policies to Chinese women immigrants.

Regarding the integration of Chinese women immigrants, appropriate actions need to be taken by the British government to disseminate cultural awareness and readiness for embracing diversity. The following suggestions are for the local government to formulate culturally-sensitive policies targeted for this specific group.

Integration objectives should be mainstreamed into all relevant policies especially those procedures and practices concerning gender issues, building on the policy makers’ experiences of gender mainstreaming. A closer collaboration between different ‘Directorates’, such as home affairs and employment and social affairs, will be essential to achieve this objective.

Even though the majority of Chinese immigrants are (self) employed and are usually seen as independent profit-makers in the spirit of achievement and success, with ethnic immigrant women this is not usually the case. Like many other women they are marginalised, disadvantaged and isolated and therefore
require not only support from the government and other institutions by evaluating current strategies, but also a collective effort to fight possible adversities in the acculturation process.

An emerging issue that I noticed was the isolation and lack of organised institutional support among these women. Given the demands of their jobs and their responsibilities as wives and mothers, many were not able to join any other social activities with the local community. These women should be encouraged to organise among themselves to share their experiences as women immigrants. At present, there is a lack of adequate venues where these ethnic women immigrants could meet to discuss their specific needs: existing government-funded training programmes are gender-neutral, women’s groups organised by ethnic organisations do not target new immigrants; and, existing local ethnic minorities community groups do not target Chinese women. In my own opinion, government or ethnic community organizations should reach out to this population, bringing information to new immigrants’ doorsteps.

Perhaps the government should provide more funding to ethnic community organisations so that they could play a more involved liaison role in disseminating updated immigration information and related policies to Chinese women immigrants. It would be even more accommodating if tax policies could be changed to create more incentive for financial institutions to be more sensitive to the limits of small businesses, particularly those established by the new immigrants and women.

The following life-long learning programmes are recommended for Chinese women immigrants to facilitate their adjustments whilst living in Britain.

- Language for communication, to enhance their communication skill with the wider society.
- Skills training schemes to suit individual needs, encourage the immigrant women to participate in training and enhance their employable skills to seek employment.
- Parenting skills enhancement, to focus on issues specific to Anglo-Chinese, such as biculturalism, ethnic identity development and the impact on family functioning. This could be offered in a variety of media, including pamphlets, lectures in community centres, parenting workshops, public service announcements, and newspaper columns. Such
programmes should emphasise the need for an effective style of bicultural parenting, where it is neither healthy to completely assimilate to the host culture nor to adhere strictly to one’s culture of origin.

In other words, a literal and cultural melting pot is encouraged so that values are exchanged, integrated, and appreciated. This goes beyond understanding, but embraces acceptance of both sets of values. With adequate support, this specific population could become a vibrant workforce, making a valuable contribution to and energising the local economy.

Furthermore, this study reflected the bicultural conflicts amongst generation levels. Chinese cultural values rooted in Confucian philosophy reflected that family values include: to love, respect, and obey parents and adults; be responsible; make sacrifices; live in harmony; and care and maintain the family’s honour by succeeding in education. Teachers and educators should be aware that migrant Chinese students bring with them these traditional values from home to school. For example, Chinese children were not allowed to show disrespect to teachers and adults by arguing certain things or not following orders. They were taught not to raise their voice or talk back to teachers. Yet, some teachers from the UK might uncritically transfer the British culture to Chinese tradition and consider Chinese children defensive and submissive to teachers and adults.

Schools and society face challenging issues on diversity and ethnic relations among children and families from different backgrounds. Teachers/educators should be aware of the differences in these families and address their needs accordingly.

The following remedial actions are recommended for teachers/educators:

- Teachers should preserve the cultural identity of the children and honour the child’s original name or native name and language. Therefore, educators should be aware and understand that it is important to maintain children’s culture and language because they are parts of the children’s identity.

- Teachers should value children’s home values to make an easier transition for children at school. For example, to demonstrate and reflect teachers’ appreciation and value of other cultures, s/he could ask children or their parents to bring artefacts or books to class for show and tell activities, or decorate their classrooms with pictures, photos and other
decorations displaying cultural themes.

- Teachers are also encouraged to examine their own cultural awareness and understanding of others. They should learn about cultural orientation and teaching styles of Anglo-Chinese parents, family histories and parental world view, and political and historical information about this group. The best way to help teachers is to invite parents to the school as guest speakers to talk about their cultural traditions.

- Teachers and educators should examine the teaching practices that they use in working with children from different cultural backgrounds and school policies that they are expected to follow. Zero tolerance policies on bullying should be followed strictly. Name-calling or racial slurs can diminish minority children’s self-esteem and pride.

- Educators should enhance:
  - the curriculum. The school should provide justification for intercultural understanding among children and offer suggestions for an ideal intercultural programme. Schools should develop curriculum and instructions that are culturally sensitive and methodologically adaptable to the needs of minority children. Teachers should familiarise themselves with the values of customs of the children they teach.
  - pre-service teacher programmes, to enhance awareness on diversity in schools. It is imperative to revise pre-service teacher programmes in higher education institutions. Teacher preparation programmes must incorporate multicultural courses. Training must address the need for understanding diversity and multiculturalism as day-to-day in the life activities of teachers’ and students’ lives.

- Parents from the Bristol Chinese Association can establish outreach programmes to educate others about their culture and community. Parents volunteering in schools are crucial to facilitate the healthy development of their children. Some parents serve as members of school associations or as a support group for school functions. Parents’ involvement should not be limited to the schools, but can also extend to being actively involved in community outreach. They can organise Chinese cultural activities and functions and involve members of other communities.
8.6.2 Suggestions for Future Research

This study raised an issue regarding women's gender role. The women in this study learned about their gender role expectations from different sources. It is one thing to know about expectations, but it is another thing to fulfil these expectations when in a different cultural context.

The stereotyped gender role message has been regarded as one of the major factors affecting Chinese women's social status. It seems that there is a cultural lag in the subjective attitudes towards women and their general role despite apparent changes in the objective indicators of women's social status in Chinese society. In this study, such traditional views of gender roles and stereotypes are confirmed. These cultural identities have been slow to incorporate the objective changes women are supposed to have undergone in society. Instead, they reify the stereotypes with psychological prescriptions of values and behaviours.

This study filled some of the gaps in the understanding of ethnic minorities and ethnic communities. Regrettably, as a preliminary and exploratory case study, it fell short of providing a comparative agenda. One of the limitations of the study was that there was a bias in studying those migrants who chose to settle in the host country (Siefen, et al. 1996). Furthermore, this study followed a cross-sectional rather than longitudinal design (Radiszewska, et al. 1996). Longitudinal research was necessary to capture intra-individual change over time. In addition, self-reporting may have created biased interpretations of the family system and severely limited interpretations of the results. Source bias might have been present as participants' perceptions were used in the reporting of parental acculturation and ethnic identity levels.

Hence many important questions remain unanswered and need to be addressed in future research. For example, how is this “group” of women performing relative to their male counterparts? Would other ethnic minority women immigrants share similar experiences? What about Chinese women who came from other places such as Taiwan or Singapore? Would their experiences be the same as, or different from the women of Hong Kong/China? What about the children of Chinese immigrants? How would their adjustment experiences be different from those of the first generation Chinese women immigrants? Furthermore, the participants in this study had higher education. It would be valuable to study other populations with different demographic characteristics so
as to have a fuller picture of the adjustment of Chinese women immigrants living in Britain (for example, those in the Morecambe Bay tragedy in Lancashire in 2004). These and many other questions could be the subject of further research and the findings might provide answers that add richness to the literature on gender, class and race/ethnicity.

8.6.3 From Discovery to Action

We rarely encounter accounts of relatively well-off ethnic minority women in women's studies. Clearly, privileged women have been ignored (or forgotten) and their personal struggles largely disregarded by feminist scholars. Since the women migrants in my study had traditional backgrounds and subsequently were ignorant of their disadvantaged position as women, they need to be educated and empowered. Feminist scholars should be more inclusive and start to focus their energies on identifying the oppression these middle-class women encounter. With increased awareness and empowerment, it is hoped that, eventually, ethnic women immigrants will use their class and ethnic resources to help contribute to gender equity and equality both within the ethnic communities and society at large. Furthermore, women should pay attention to their lives, stop suppressing and promoting false consciousness, since inhibiting our capacity to assume responsibility may transform society and ourselves (De Beauvoir, 1981, p. 471).

As I listened to these women's voices in the interviews, I was reminded of feminist consciousness raising groups where women, in sharing their personal experience and problems, came to see how personal politics could be moved from discovery to action. An intervention study amongst Chinese women immigrants and/or a minority ethnic group could be designed to determine:

- if a collective discussion of personal problems leads to a recognition that perceived personal difficulties are socially produced and shared by many women in similar situations, and
- if this process of discovery leads to action or social change.

8.7 Conclusion

This study was designed to investigate difficulties of acculturation in the lives of Chinese women immigrants living in England. I found that negative events in the social world contributed to their migration experience. What
became evident, however, was that the nature of the women immigrants’ integration process was centred on their cultural beliefs and internalised gender roles. It indicated that Chinese women immigrants perceived their gender role as consistent with traditional Chinese attitudes. Therefore, the immigrant women reinforce the stereotypical gender role with prescriptions of the traditional values and behaviours they had been brought up with. These cultural identities have been slow to incorporate the objective changes women have undergone in the wider society, which have become the major issues overshadowing their means of acculturation in the host country.

Nevertheless, the research participants experienced and overcame numerous hurdles in order to immigrate to England and make it their home. In my interviews with the participants, they expressed that they were looking for a different way of life, new challenges and a more liberal environment in which to raise their children. However, bicultural conflicts seemed to infiltrate amongst/within their family cohesion and in their process of acculturation.

In such contexts, the policy makers should initiate appropriate actions to promote biculturalism targeting minority ethnic communities and to promote bicultural values in Chinese parenting. In this bilateral exchange, it would be appropriate to adopt a culturally sensitive method of parenting that adopts a more integrated orientation.

Moreover, educators/teachers are the core agents to promote biculturalism to ethnic minority children. However, this is a challenging yet an important beginning toward developing a better understanding of the complex phenomenon of how different ethnic groups simultaneously enculturate their children into their own cultures and acculturate them into the mainstream British culture. Continuing examination of issues of cultural and educational expectations has the potential to provide insights into the educational and socialisation needs of minority ethnic students in Britain. This will help educators/teachers and other helping professionals make significant headway in their efforts to improve the quality of life for ethnic minority students, families and communities.
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GLOSSARY

a dead loss to their families (蝕本貨) (p. 22)
a good woman does not marry twice (好女不再婚) (p. 104)
against the law (違法) (p. 76)
against tides (違反) (p. 75)
all the sons are together (仔仔一堂) (p. 4 & p. 100)
an overseas bride (過埠新娘) (p. 4 & p. 100)
breaking the law (犯罪) (p. 76)
chiao shun (教訓) (p. 89)
cold (寒) (p. 107)
Confucius teachings (孔子學 說) (p. 16)
Critique (批評) (p. 70)
Eastern River Brigade (東江中隊) (p. 103)
filial piety (孝) (p. 81 & p. 91)
four books (四書) (p. 21)
girls lack of talent was often regarded to be an asset (女子無才便是德) (p. 23)
go beyond the boundary (越界) (p. 75)
good daughter should hide her problems from both sides (好女兩頭瞒) (p. 106)
guan (管) (p. 91)
Hong Kong people (香港人) (p. 6 & p. 117)
If you marry a chicken, then you must follow the chicken; if you marry a dog,
then you must follow the dog (嫁雞隨雞, 嫁狗隨狗) (p. 3 & p. 100)
interdependence (互相依靠) (p. 18)
lai see (利是) (p. 108)
LiJi (禮記) (p. 21)
looking up from the well to the sky (坐井覲天) (p. 104)
May Fourth Movement (五四運動) (p. 30)
One country, Two systems (一國兩制) (p. 7 & p. 66)
one does good things to others, the merits accumulated and the goodness will
return to the practitioner (善有善報 / 因果循環) (p. 68)
passed down from one generation to another (傳宗接代) (p. 116)
return to their root (歸根) (p. 121)
sacrifice oneself for the fulfilment of the wider community (犧牲小我完成大我) (p. 19)
save face (要面), lost face (丟面), give face ( 傢面) (p. 118)
superior man inferior woman (男尊女卑) (p. 22)
the closeness of the father and mother is not as deep as the grace and love of Chairman Mao (父親,母親,不及毛澤東主義親) (p. 19)
The moon in foreign countries is particularly round and bright (在外國的月亮是特別圓和明亮) (p. 84)
Three obediences and Four virtues (三從四德) (p. 21)
to extend and carry down the family tree (開枝散葉) (p. 111)
to follow father’s will and advice (秉承父訓) (p. 116)
travel across to the other country to be a bride (過埠新娘) (p. 100)
tso yueh (坐月) (p. 107)
unit (家) (p. 26)
virtuous wife and good mother (賢妻良母) (p. 24 & p. 99)
warm (熱) (p. 107)
What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others (己所不欲，勿施於人) (p. 71)
Ying and Yang (陰, 陽) (p. 20)
APPENDIX A

Informed Consent form

This document is to confirm my voluntary participation in the doctoral research of Jenny YUEN entitled “The Adjustment Needs of Chinese Immigrant Women Living in Bristol – A Narrative Inquiry”

It is my understanding that the objective of the dissertation is to explore the life experiences of Chinese women immigrants living in Britain.

The participation will consist on a narration of my experiences in one interview to be held at a place and time convenient to me. The interview will last approximately three hours. The interview will be audio-taped and transcribed, and I grant my permission to do so. Jenny will give me a copy of transcript so that I can clarify and correct any comments I make during the interview. I grant permission for Jenny YUEN to write up findings in her dissertation or publications.

I understand that my identity and the identity of others whom I mention will be disguised in any written reports or presentations of this data. I will also be free to stop participating at any point in the research.

Participant’s signature: __________________________

Researcher’s signature: __________________________

Date: __________________________
APPENDIX B

Interview guide / Field questions

1. Who are you? What do you do? How did you come to be here?
你是誰? 你現在做什麼工作? 你怎樣來到英國。

2. Tell me about your experiences of being a Chinese woman immigrant living in England. What’s your supports? Your stressors?
作爲一個中國婦女移民，告訴我關於你在英國的生活經驗。你有什麼支持和壓力?

3. What’s your life like in England at the beginning and now? How did you deal with challenging experience?
你在英國的生活，開始時和現在有什麼分別? 你如何面對挑戰或困難?

4. What is it like to be an immigrant in Britain? Is there a particular image that comes to your mind when you think about yourself as an woman immigrant?
作爲一個英國移民，你有什麼感覺? 當你想起自己是一個移民時，你腦海中會否有一些特別的印象。

5. Could you tell me about your life in Hong Kong/ China? Tell me the good and bad time of your life there. What’s the difference to you being living in Britain and China?
你能告訴我有關你在香港 / 中國居住時生活的好與壞嗎? 在英國和香港 / 中國的生活有什麼分別。

6. How has your life changed as an immigrant who has crossed geographic and cultural borders? How are you different? Please give some examples?
作爲一個移民，你經過了二個不同地理和文化的地方，你可有感受到自己有什麼改變? 請給出一些例子。
7. Do you move back and forth between your culture of origin and the host culture as you think about yourself or are you predominantly in one culture?
生活在兩個文化不同的地方，你覺得自己是否已經融入這個新環境，還是只能適應一種文化？

8. What has it meant to you to be a Chinese woman immigrant in England?
作爲一個居住在英國的女性中國移民，對你有什麼意義？

9. What have you accomplished after immigrated to England?
移居英國後，你有什麼成就？

10. What would you suggest the local community / authority if they want to help you?
如果本地社區或政權想幫你，你會有什麼建議？