Becoming Hèunggóngyàhn – A Study of Female Mainland Immigrants in Hong Kong

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of the Requirements for the Degree of
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Abstract

A flow of mainland immigrants to Hong Kong is characterized as "feminized" since the 1990s due to an increasing number of Hong Kong men marrying mainland women as a result of increasing socio-economic contact between China and Hong Kong. These women immigrants are re-socialized through attending adaptation classes in the community centers and having daily interaction with their Hong Kong husbands and children. Their identity and femininity is contested and reconstructed at the same time.

Using participant observation and in-depth interviews collected during 2006 summer at two of the community centers in Hong Kong, I attempt to explore (1) What are the social and cultural capital acquired by the women immigrants in the adaptation process?, (2) How do they perceive, imitate, and contest 'Hongkongness' and Hongkong style womanhood?, (3) How do marital relations affect their decisions as individuals and as a subaltern class, as they try to fit into the new cultural environment?, and (4) How are they empowered and disempowered by the social and welfare policy in Hong Kong?

論文摘要

自一九九零年代以來，由於中港兩地的社會及經濟關係越趨緊密，香港男性與內地女性結婚數字日漸增加，中港婚姻更爲香港社會帶來大批的內地女性移民。這些女性移民來港後，都會在不同的社會層面接受社教化：其一，當她們到社區中心接受專爲「新來港人士」而設的適應課程的訓練；其二，當她們與其香港丈夫和兒女進行日常的生活溝通。筆者認爲這些女性移民的文化身份，及女性特質都在以上的社教化過程中，重新被建構起來。

本調查研究是於二零零六年暑期間在香港進行的。筆者到分別位於旺角和沙田的兩所社區中心進行觀察參與，又跟二十位女性受訪者進行深入訪談。本論文旨在透過探討內地女性移民在學習香港文化過程而分析以下問題：(一) 內地妻子在適應香港生活過程中，獲取了哪種社會資源及文化資源? (二) 她們如何理解、模仿「香港人特質」和「香港女性特質」，以及如何與之作出協商與互動? (三) 在適應過程中，她們與其香港丈夫的婚姻關係，會如何影響她們作出作爲個人及低下階層人士的決定? (四) 香港的社會福利政策又如何影響她們經驗「充權」及「去權」?

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Migration is not only about migrants learning to adapt to a new society, it also involves losing an identity and reconstructing a new one. In Hong Kong, many people still maintain a distinct local identity vis-à-vis a Chinese national identity despite the transfer of sovereignty from the British to the mainland government in 1997, and many locals consider mainland migrants socially and culturally inferior. But Hong Kong has been a migrant society, whose majority Chinese population was originated from mainland China. Even when Hong Kong was developing as a global city, the influx of mainland migrants has been the main source of population growth from the 1940s onwards (Huang 2004: 298 – 301). Since the 1990s, this influx has largely comprised women and children as a result of Hong Kong men marrying mainland women. Many factors account for this cross-border marriage trend, but on a broader level, the opening of coastal cities in South China and the establishment of special economic zones (SEZ) such as Shenzhen, has attracted many Hong Kong enterprises to move "up north", resulting in an intensive socio-economic network across the Hong Kong-China border.

Hong Kong men move daily across the border for employment in Shenzhen and the Pearl River Delta. According to the data available on employees in Hong Kong (Census and Statistics Department 2003), the number of Hong Kong people

who have worked in mainland increased from 64,200 in 1992 to 238,200 in 2003; and 78.1% of them were men. Many of them work as cross-border drivers, factory managers and engineers. In their workplace and in leisure, they meet mainland women migrants from different towns and villages. Many of the latter group are from poorer areas of China, and have come to Shenzhen and richer South China cities seeking upward mobility through work and marriage to the relatively affluent Hong Kong men (Lang & Smart 2002). In addition, older, working class Hong Kong men who have difficulty in finding marriage partners locally also seek to marry mainland brides. To be eligible to marry a mainland spouse, a Hong Kong person will need to apply for the Certificate of Absence of Marriage Record (無結婚紀錄証明書). Such a record is known as *gwá lóu jing* (寡佬證, literally certificate for single men) showing that it is mostly men who apply for it and thus points towards the gendered nature of the phenomenon. Figures from the Census and Statistics Department also show that the number of Hong Kong men marrying mainland wives and who had their marriages registered in Hong Kong grew from 703 in 1986 to 18,182 in 2006 (Census and Statistics Department 2006). Changes of immigration policy (which I will discuss in Chapter 2) help to bring these mainland wives to Hong Kong. As the daily quota for mainland immigrants to migrate to Hong Kong increased from 75 in 1983 to 150 in 1995, and family reunion was given priority, the number of mainland

wives coming to Hong Kong continues to accumulate. In 2001, there were 178,415 mainland women who were considered "new arrivals" in Hong Kong (Census and Statistics Department 2001).

From an anthropological point of view, the process of becoming a *hèunggóngyàhn* (literally "Hongkongers" or "Hongkongese") is a complex one, particularly for mainland women migrants who are doubly stigmatized due to their gender, class background, and the geopolitics between Hong Kong and mainland. In this study I examine what happens when mainland women migrants move to Hong Kong, and the kinds of knowledge they acquire in order to fit into the new cultural environment. I also ask what happens to their perception of themselves, and hence their identity in the process. In particular, as this mobility is highly gendered, I question how the re-construction of cultural identity among these new arrivals are related to the gendered self, and whether mainland women immigrants recreate their femininity as they acquire a new cultural identity in Hong Kong. Specifically, this thesis analyzes the social phenomenon of mainland wives migrating to Hong Kong, and investigates its significance for Hong Kong society by looking at the following issues: (1) What are the social and cultural capital acquired by the women migrants in the adaptation process?, (2) How do they perceive, imitate, and contest 'Hongkongness' and Hongkong-style womanhood?, (3) How do marital relations

affect their decisions as individuals and as a subaltern class, as they try to fit into the new cultural environment?, and (4) How are they empowered and disempowered by the social and welfare policy in Hong Kong?

Background

Marriage across the Hongkong-China border allows mainland women to migrate to Hong Kong through a relaxed immigration policy – the reunification of family. In 2005 alone, there were 29,357 mainland women coming to Hong Kong with a One-Way-Permit, which accounted for as much as 67.8% of the total number of migrants that year[1]. In popular discourse, among the different mainland groups in Hong Kong, women migrants have particularly been stigmatized for lacking 'Hongkongness'. They are accused of, for example, "having a mainland accent" (滿口鄉音), "being impolite" (無禮貌), unhygienic (不衛生), and "coming from the countryside" (鄉下出來的), among other derogatory stereotypes.

The concept of Hongkongness, however, is relatively new and has a lot to do with the historical development of this city. Being colonized by the British since 1842, people in Hong Kong experienced drastically different lives from those in the

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1 Data refer to the "Statistics on New Arrivals from the Mainland" (Third Quarter of 2005) provided by the Home Affairs Department and Immigration Department.

mainland in social, economic and political terms. Scholars in general agree that the Hong Kong identity (which I will discuss in chapter 3) emerged in 1970s, when residents in Hong Kong felt proud of themselves being distinct from "other" Chinese, and started to call themselves hèunggóngyàhn (Lau 2000: 266; Wu 2003: 138; Tsang 2004: 194). In fact, it is also a cultural concept that is comprised of different elements, including a particular linguistic style, lifestyle, and education. Interestingly, female mainland migrants learn 'Hongkongness' in a unique way-- they do not go through the adaptation process at the same time as their family members. Instead, because their husbands are Hong Kong men who have been living in Hong Kong, and because their children have migrated earlier than they, it means that as wives the women migrants learn to become hèunggóngyàhn from their husbands, and as mothers they have to learn from their children. In everyday life, they are also bombarded by cultural messages of "Hongkongness" in the media and in their social networks such as their neighbors and relatives, as well as their children's teachers and social service providers.

In this study the migrant women's reconstruction of cultural identity is examined through grounded ethnography, including participant observation of adaptation classes that catered to mainland migrants as they went through the process of acquisition of knowledge about language and behavior deemed acceptable to

Hong Kong people. I also conducted in-depth interviews with the women, and through analyzing their accounts of daily experience with their Hong Kong husbands, children and social workers, I investigate how femininity can be relearned and reconstructed. These interviews also show that the women's adjustment in Hong Kong is highly related to their marital relationship with Hong Kong men, and to patrilocal residence and their husband's fidelity.

Feminists in general regard training in cultural knowledge and vocational skills as an empowerment process for women. This research will also evaluate the effectiveness of the adaptation classes, and study whether the migrant women were empowered or disempowered by their participation in these classes. Since women who took these classes unavoidably needed to interact with Hong Kong social workers and teachers, an ethnographic study of such interaction is also a study of sub-ethnic relations. I enquire how the social workers imparted their Hongkongness to migrants, how they saw mainland migrants as "secondary subjects", and how migrants reacted to their teaching. Throughout this study I define "teachers" in a broad sense. Women migrants did not just learn Hongkongness by attending classes; rather they were "taught" by various people in different situations. Thus "teachers" were not merely people who taught in class, but included all those who might impart knowledge about Hongkongness, such as their husband's relatives, volunteers in

community centers, parents of their children's classmates, and even their own children.

Defining Female New Immigrants

Since the 1970s, residents in Hong Kong started to identity themselves as hèunggóngyàhn as a result of the development of popular culture, education reforms, government campaigns such as the Clean Hong Kong Campaign and the Hong Kong Festival, and the rise of the middle class (which I will discuss in Chapter 2). This new identity was operationalized in everyday life in terms of language, education, clothing, behaviors and values, which eventually created among the residents of Hong Kong a high degree of non-acceptance and even hostility towards mainland Chinese. When mainlanders migrated to Hong Kong, yearning to be accepted by the host society, they therefore needed to learn this new identity and shed their original one.

Since the 1970s, it has been common for Hong Kong people to use such names such as *ah chaan* (阿燦), *bīu sūk* (表叔), and *daaih luhk lóu* (大陸佬) to refer to mainland men. These terms connote negative meanings that specifically suggest the newcomers' "cultural backwardness". As to mainland women, they were called *daaih luhk pòh* (大陸婆), and other names such as *bíu jé* (表姐), and *chaan sóu* (燦嫂). In

the 1980s, the government began to use the term "new immigrants" (新移民) for both male and female immigrants from China. Over the years, the term *daaih luhk pòh* persisted, but in different periods new terms were coined for women as they came to be associated with various social problems. These terms included: *bak gu* (北姑, prostitutes from the north), *yih naaih* (二奶, mistresses), and most recently in 2007, *noih deih yahn fuh* (內地孕婦, mainland pregnant women). These terms inevitably highlight the sexuality of mainland women, and reinforce the image that they either prey on Hong Kong men, break up Hong Kong families, or create an undue burden on the welfare system in Hong Kong. In short, mainland women are doubly stigmatized amongst all categories of immigrants.

In order to understand how the gendered identity of the mainland women immigrants affects their experiences in Hong Kong, it is necessary to analyze how they have come to be stereotypically perceived as being involved in sexual activities. From the term *bak gu* (北姑), we can see how Hong Kong people commoditize the bodies of females from China. The reasons for calling mainland women *bak gu* are twofold. The word *bak* means "the north", and *gu* means middle-aged women. It literally means middle-aged women from the north. As mainland China is located to the north of Hong Kong, the term points to a geographical relationship with China. Interestingly, *bak gu* (北姑) is a synonym of *bak gu* (北菇, dried mushroom), which

is a common ingredient in Cantonese cuisine, especially in chicken dishes, such as *bak gu jìng gài* (北菇蒸雞, to steam chicken with mushroom). As sex workers are also called *gài* (雞, chicken), the term *bak gu* (北姑) is a word play. Therefore to eat *bak gu* (mushroom) is an analogy of visiting a *bak gu* (prostitute). In my fieldwork I was also told that the term *bak gu* is derived from *hùhng pàaih ah gu* (紅牌阿姑) which refers to popular prostitutes who worked in brothels during the late Qing Dynasty and Republican period.

Female mainland immigrants are also often perceived as "poorly educated" and "uncultured" (無文化). They are widely reported in the news as "young" and "greedy" women who marry Hong Kong men who are much older than they. They are also said to abuse the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (綜合社會保障援助計劃 or in short form, CSSA 綜援) and so are widely understood to be a burden on the welfare system. After the Handover of Hong Kong to China in 1997, the government realized that it was technically incorrect to call them "new immigrants" (新移民) since Hong Kong had become part of China. A more neutral term was therefore coined: "new arrivals" (新來港人士) (Chen 1999:175). According to Chen's research, the term "new arrivals" as defined by the Census and Statistics Department has the following characteristics:

(1) They were born in mainland China;

(2) They have the nationality 'Chinese (place of domicile – Hong Kong)'; and

(3)They have been in Hong Kong for less than seven years (Census and Statistics Department 1998: FC2, cited in Chen 2005: 269).

However, despite the government and social service providers' definitions of new immigrants in terms of the length of stay in Hong Kong, these definitions have changed over time; there is still a discrepancy between the official definition of this migrant community and their self ascription. My informants who had been in Hong Kong for over seven years still called themselves "new immigrants", which reflected that they regarded themselves as "outsiders" of Hong Kong society regardless of the number of years they have been in Hong Kong.

Literature Review

Migration theorists have primarily focused on the following questions: What initiates migration? What is the direction of migration? What are the roles played by immigrants in host countries? And, how well do they adapt to the host countries? Stalker (2001) classifies causes of migration on two levels: individual and structural. On the individual level, some theorists point to the rational choice of human beings – those from densely populated countries with lower wages move to places with low supply of labor, in return gaining higher benefits (Greenwood 1975; Krugman and

Bhagwati 1976; Lucas 1977). However, individuals often do not decide independently to migrate, and the "household decision-making" theories suggest that the family serves as a central unit in planning migration. For example, some of my informants felt that marrying Hong Kong men and moving to Hong Kong were ways to gain a better life. They moved to Hong Kong in order to unite with their Hong Kong husbands. As in the Cantonese saying, they "follow the chicken when [you] marry a chicken, and follow the dog when [you] marry a dog". In my fieldwork, I also found the decision of migration sometimes fell into the hands of their sons who want to receive education in Hong Kong. On a more structural level, Zolberg (1981) argues that the state in fact plays a crucial role in regulating the amount of labor supply in its own country through immigration, hence the "state as regulator" theory.

In theorizing migration, anthropologists take a further step and use the approach of transnationalism. This implies that the "uprooting" approach may no longer be applicable since migrants can now move freely across borders. Telecommunications and transportation also make distances between the destination and origin much shorter. All these help migrants to maintain ties with their home country (Brettell, 2000: 104). Yet, notwithstanding the internet being easily accessible in Hong Kong, many of my informants felt they were uprooted from their home on the mainland. They found it difficult to stay in touch with home due to their lack of resources and

computer knowledge.

Studies of migration have long lacked discussion from a gender perspective. Feminists in the 1970s criticized migration theorists for being "gender-blind" (Kogman, Phizacklea and Sales 2000: 27). To rectify this, researchers have begun to study women migrants, in particular unmarried women who leave their home country for employment, and married women who seek family reunification through migration. The Working Party on Women Migrants (1978) suggests that female migrants are "alienated, exploited and oppressed" due to their working in low pay but exhausting work environments (1978: 3). Concerning mother-child relationships, migrant mothers are under stress due to their nurturing role of teaching the "language, customs and religion of their country to children" who are more influenced by values taught at local schools (The Working Party on Women Migrants 1978: 3-4). Seller also opines that gender may complicate the situation of immigrants. She writes, "All immigrant women suffered a double educational handicap - they were foreign-born and female" (1994: 217). Such a statement may co-relate to de Beauvoir's argument of male and female as the dichotomy of Self / Subject and the Other. Females are placed in the secondary position in both reality and people's consciousness.

However, there is a counter argument that women migrants are no longer subordinated to males in the migration process. Campani (1995) for example

believes that women's economic positions are not marginal since it is easier for them than their male counterparts to enter the labor market, though these kinds of jobs are often gender-linked. In Taboada-Leonetti's research (1983), she finds that female migrants "have a greater capacity than males to adapt themselves to the new situation in the immigration country". My field data does show something similar in Hong Kong in terms of the marketability of women migrants' labor, but it still begs the question of why these supposedly more successful female migrants are subject to all kinds of social stereotypes while their male counterparts are not.

Migration theories are also interlinked with social integration theories. Durkheim (1933) regards integration in the complex society is built upon division of labor. He argues that individuals are not as self-sufficient as those in the primitive society; they need to rely on production of goods by other people who specializes in different profession; and consequently lead to social solidarity. In this research, female immigrants are broadly condemned as "parasites" in Hong Kong society and "economically productionless" in the public discourse. Their exclusion from the mainstream is similar to Durkheim's argument. Chavez's research (1991) considers the adaptation process by migrants a transition process from outsider to insider. What is it that makes this transition process possible? Many scholars consider that integration cannot exist without a legal basis, i.e. a set of laws and regulations that

construct a framework of citizenship, which gives rights, duties and privileges to people (Moren-Alegret 2002: 19; Seifert 1997: 86). Giving rights to people to form political pressure groups, for instance, will lead to political integration (Münz and Ohliger 1997: 179). Successful integration should allow immigrants opportunity to participate in civil society and access to welfare benefits equivalent to those who hold full citizenship (Morén- Alegret 2002: 20). In this research, I find that my mainland Chinese women informants were legally permitted to move to Hong Kong, however, they have not been allowed to share the eligibilities to access welfare benefits that Hong Kong citizens enjoyed and took for granted.

Münz and Ohliger opine that a different language, the usage of words, pronunciation, and accents all add up to distinguish immigrants from mainstream society, and therefore provision of language training may help them to become better integrated (Münz and Ohliger 1997: 180). In my research, I looked at these kinds of training as more than "integration" instruments. I question if this is a way to gain a new identity. Cole (1997) argues that problems of integration into a host society are not limited to issues of racism, but rather class identities also counts. Along this line, I ask what class identities meant to the female mainland immigrants as they tried to construct a Hong Kong identity. Research by Roth & Speranza (2000) shows that a happy marriage between cross-border couples is the key of integration to the new

place. Their study on African women migrating to Switzerland shows that support from the Swiss husband alone will adequately help their African wives to integrate into Swiss society (2000: 295). Accordingly, I ask how much does a happy marriage attribute to adaptation of my informants in Hong Kong, and what impact does it have on their identity construction?

In the process of identity construction among these women, one needs to ask what is Hong Kong identity? What makes a Hong Kong person different from a mainlander? Identity is not fixed, but rather is negotiable and situational. People only identify themselves as a group of "us" when confronting "others" (Benmayor and Skotnes 1994: 11). Stuart Hall defines identity as "actually something formed through unconscious process over time, rather than being innate in consciousness at birth" (Hall 1992: 287). Identity is thus not in-born, but formed and developed through time; and in addition, it varies in specific contexts. In this context, the study of emergency of Hong Kong identity needs to be traced back to the 1970s when complexes of cultural, social and political changes interwoven, which I will fully discuss in the second part of Chapter 2.

To look at what Hongkongness is, one needs to study what Hong Kong culture is. Evans and Tam (1997) discuss Hongkongness as more than a simple notion of "East meets West", but rather varying degrees of a combination of "Chineseness"

and "Westerness". In a study of Hong Kong people who had migrated to Australia, Tam finds that Hong Kong culture is characterized by Hong Kong emigrants as "inclusive, open to change, inventive and sophisticated, in other words, a metropolitan culture that prizes diversity, syncretism and adaptability" (Tam 2002: 131). Linguistically, the importance of using both Cantonese and English in Hong Kong reflects the coexistence of Chineseness and Westerness to a certain extent. Cantonese is not solely spoken by hēunggóngyàhn, but also by people residing in a large part of Guangdong Province. However, the former group declares their version of Cantonese as distinct from and better than the latter's version, in terms of usage of local colloquial phrases and slang, dotted with English words. There is a constant invention of new phrases and slang that people can learn through the Hong Kong mass media. In Ma's research (2003) about factory workers in Shenzhen, he has found that while Shenzhen workers try to imitate and speak Hong Kong slang, what they had achieved linguistically was not appreciated by Hongkongers but rather was typically viewed as "outdated" , implying a hierarchy even in language usage.

The command of English makes most Hong Kong people feel that they are different from mainlanders. British colonial rule for over 150 years has created two groups of Hong Kong people who believe that English is a way to achieve social mobility. One group is the Anglophiles created by the educational system introduced

by the British. Better English has become a key to enter the higher ranks of the civil service structure, and thus created an upper class of Chinese who speak British-accented English. It is this group that has ruled Hong Kong as top level decision-makers. The middle and working classes also share similar experiences: they learn English in school and understand the world in a different way as they adopt English as the medium of learning. As Mathews opines, "English points to colonialism, a colonialism directly experienced by Hong Kong people through, among other forms, their schooling" (1997: 11). Hong Kong society thus sees a good command of English as a vital means to success in life.

Other research findings also echo Evans and Tam's notion of the "process of selection and rejection" (Evans and Tam 1997: 13). Hongkongers tend to recognize symbols they feel proud of. For example, Lau finds that people who identify themselves as hèunggóngyàhn highly identify with certain cultural symbols such as Chinese landscape and ancient architecture (2000: 260-262), but they reject political symbols such as the Chinese national flag and anthem (2000: 270-271). In more recent research conducted by Chan and Lee, China's successes in launching aerospace flights and in international sports are seen as "modern cultural symbols" that effectively encourage Hong Kong people to identify themselves as "Chinese" (2005: 16).

In contrast to the dichotomous approach of Hongkongese versus Chinese, recent researches show that the boundary between Hongkongers and mainlanders is not as rigid as before. Lau (2000) shows that the Hong Kong and Chinese identities overlap (2000: 265). Chan and Lee in recent research see the emergence of dual identities among Hong Kong people: "Hong Kong's Chinese" (香港的中國人) and "China's HongKongese" (中國的香港人) as well as "Hongkongese" (香港人) and "Chinese" (中國人) (Chan & Lee 2005: 1-35). Research by Mathews, Ma and Lui also shows "the identity distance is narrowing" when mainlanders are regarded to be more ambitious and optimistic than Hongkongers (2008: 100). However, the Hong Kong-China relationship is more ambivalent on the everyday level. Mostly because of the superiority complex deeply entrenched in many Hong Kong people (Lau 2000: 266), they feel rather uneasy about the economic rise of mainland China.

Among the very little research about the relationship of gender and Hong Kong identity, Lau's surveys have consistently showed that there are higher proportions of females who regard themselves as hèunggóngyàhn than males, apparently because they are less influenced by the PRC's rule (2000: 259). A recent research by Mathews, Ma and Lui (2008: 117) about people's love of their own nation, more female Hong Kong university students than their male counterparts expressed feelings of disdain for China. Factors leading to such strong feelings of detachment from China among

the Hong Kong women have not been fully explained in the research. But in this study, my interviewees definitely found themselves very distinct from local women in terms of tastes and appearances, and felt pressurized to reconstruct a new femininity in Hong Kong style. On top of teaching Hongkong-style outward appearances, the social workers in my study also implanted ideas such as self-autonomy and financial independence. My question is: Do these characteristics bridge the gap between Hong Kong women and mainland women?

The action of my informants as they marry Hong Kong men or gain a Hong Kong identity carries different forms of capital. Bourdieu (1977: 183) introduces the concept of "capital" which refers to the resources that a person can use strategically in order to gain a certain end. A person can accumulate one form of capital and in turn transform it into other forms of capital, so as to increase one's savings, prestige, status or power. Society defines what capital is, and it means different things to different groups of people in different contexts. In Bourdieu's theory, there are many forms of capital in society, including economic capital, social capital and cultural capital. Economic capital refers to money and property that a person owns; cultural capital refers to accumulated cultural knowledge, skills, educational credentials and aesthetic tastes, while social capital refers to social networks between friends, relatives and acquaintances that enable a person other advantages. In this study, I ask

the question of whether mainland women migrants participate in changing the habitus in which they newly find themselves, as they undergo the process of adaptation to and integration into the host society. As adaptation implies the acquisition of cultural capital and social capital, I also ask whether women migrants are indeed able to increase their capital and whether this leads to their empowerment.

It is important to look at "structure" when discussing migrants who learn to reconstruct a new cultural identity. Structure is not a static form, as individual agency constitutes to its formation. Bourdieu introduces the concept of habitus which is a process through which individual agents shape society as they themselves are shaped by society. Using a theory of "practice" ("what people do"), Bourdieu (1977: 78-87) explains that people's everyday action recreates the social world that has created them. Thus it is not a one-way action, but a two-way interaction where people's "strategies of action" are responses to the social world.

I have chosen Hong Kong society to study cultural identity because firstly, being a second generation migrant myself has aroused my interest in this area and living in Hong Kong makes in-depth fieldwork possible. Secondly, Hong Kong has been regarded a typical migrant city by many scholars (see for example, Lau 1988; Lui 1997; Lam & Liu 1998; Tsang 2004). Its population grew from 600,000 in 1945 to over 2 million in 1950 largely due to the inflow of mainland migrants (Tsang

2004). However, economic competition in the 1970s led to Hong Kong people's categorizing mainland new arrivals as non-hèunggóngyàhn. Migrants from earlier times and subsequent generations of arrivals perceive their identities very differently. After 1997, on the political level, the PRC's political leaders have sought to merge the national (Chinese) and local (Hong Kong) identities, through the teaching of nationalism. The mass media's increasing broadcasts on the achievement of Chinese athletes and astronauts in recent years have successfully channelled Hong Kong people's identification with China (Lau 2000). However, at the level of daily life, the division between "us" and "them" is alive and well. It is not about "how Hong Kong people learn to be Chinese", but "how Chinese learn to be Hong Kong people" in the case of mainland migrants. It is because when people from a poorer society entering a richer society, their qualifications are often dismissed, and as research on Mexican migrants entering the USA have shown, people with tertiary education frequently needed to work as dishwashers and domestic workers (Segura 1994: 95-111). Thus migrants are in general required to conform to the restrictions they encounter in daily life, and therefore, learning to be like the locals would be an advantage to them. It is obvious that individual agency and gender have made the migrant experience unique, and therefore I use them as guiding perspectives to further understand the identity politics between Hong Kong and China.

Methodology

To collect data on the above issues, fieldwork was carried out in three major ways: participant observation, in-depth individual interviews, and textual analysis. To protect informants' privacy, information that may imply their identity is disguised, including personal profiles and names of the social service centers that I visited. I conducted the research at two social service centers, which I will call Sunshine New Arrivals Service Center and Lok Yan New Arrivals Service Center. Both of them are well-established NGOs and have a long history of providing services to new arrivals. They are located in Mongkok (Kowloon) and Shatin (New Territories) respectively. The two centres were chosen not only because of the geographical variation, but also because they offered different services. The former emphasized the transmission of job-related skills, which included language (Cantonese, and Hongkong-style English) in the workplace, while the latter emphasized the development of social networks and parent-child relationships. The age of interviewees from the Mongkok centre varied from the 20s to 60s, while interviewees from Shatin were mostly in their 20s to 30s. In terms of martial status, interviewees from the former ranged from married, divorced to widowed, while those from the latter were all married. In terms of educational background, interviewees from the former ranged from primary to tertiary level, while those from the latter were all lower secondary graduates.

Therefore, studying both centers gave me a clearer picture of how different migrant women recreated new identities, and how such identities were reproduced, and the complexities in the identity construction process.

During early June to late August of 2006, I conducted participant observation in adaptation classes in the two centers. I took part as a voluntary worker in language classes, such as Cantonese class, English class, and English pronunciation class. I also observed classes for vocational skills such as computer skills, sales skills, and cashier machine operation. I also went to classes on dietary health and facial beauty. These classes were run intensively three to five times a week, and lasted about one to two hours for each session. Participant observation of these classes helped me understand what is taught about "appropriate Hong Kong behavior" and "inappropriate immigrant behavior", the "wordings" that should be used at work or among friends, and subtle issues such as when to use Cantonese, when to use English, and when to use "Konglish" (Hongkong-styled English).

Participating in classes helped me to establish relations with the service users, and individuals for in-depth interviews were identified among them. Married, divorced, and single mothers were included in this study. I interviewed 20 women either at the centers, at restaurants nearby, or at their homes. A summary of the interviewees is provided in Table 1.1. Semi-structured interviews were carried out

based on questions in four major categories: adaptation, identity, social networks, and waged work. I aimed to investigate what their major barriers to adaptation were. Thus, questions like "How much have you learned after taking these classes?", "In what ways do these classes help you to integrate into Hong Kong?", and "How do you identify yourself after learning the skills?" were important to understanding the role of classes in the imparting of identity. In order to find out the roles of their husbands and children in their acquisition of 'Hongkongness' and womanhood, I asked them about what and how they learned from these family members. Investigating their participation in waged work and their interaction with Hong Kong Chinese co-workers was another means to discover the kinds of behavior they had learned and reproduced. At the end of the interviews, the socio-demographic characteristics of the informants and informants' family members were recorded. This included age, educational level, hometown, language skills, and length of stay in Hong Kong.

One of the constraints of this study is the lack of participant observation at the work setting of the interviewees. Ideally, some observation in their work environment would enable us to understand what kinds and how much of the social and cultural capital were acquired and how they were reproduced by the interviewees. In reality this was impossible. However, I did explore issues in relation to the

workplace in the individual interviews. Further, as this research focuses on the depth and complexity of the mainland migrants phenomenon rather than its entire range, I conducted in-depth interviews with 20 people, with the understanding that it is not a representative sample.

Table 1.1: List of Informants[2]

Informants	Age	No. of yrs in HK	Marital status	No. of children (age)
1	23	2 yrs	Married	1 son (5)
2	28	2 yrs	Married	0
3	28	2 months	Married	0
4	30	Over 1 yr	Married	2 daughters (5 and 3)
5	30	2-3 yrs	Divorced	1 son (9) 1 daughter (5)
6	36	3 yrs	Married	1 son (6)
7	37	3 yrs	Married (Husband was deceased)	1 son (about 8)
8	37	4-5yrs	Single	0
9	38	4 yrs	Married (Husband was deceased)	1 son (9)
10	38	3 yrs	Divorced	3 sons
11	38	2 yrs	Married	1 son (7)
12	39	23 yrs	Married	1 daughter (18 months)

[2] Most of the information on the informants' personal background is accurate, however, a part of it is disguised by informants' requests.

13	39	3 yrs	Married	1 son (6)
14	40	1 yr	Married	1 daughter (20) 1 son (18)
15	43	6 yrs	Divorced	1 daughter (12)
16	47	7-8 yrs	Divorced	2 daughters (16 and 10), 1 son staying in China (10)
17	About 50	10 yrs	Married	3 sons
18	54	2 yrs	Divorced	1 daughter (28) 1 son (18)
19	55	2 yrs	Married,	(2 step-daughters who are about 50)
20	65	16-17 yrs	Married	1 daughter (37) 1 son (35)

Amongst all the informants, five aged between 21 to 30; nine aged between 31 – 40; and 6 aged 41 and above. 19 of them were married, and only one was single by the time I conducted the in-depth interviews.

In order to see the flow of ideas about *what* and *why* social workers think of mainland migrants in both centers, I conducted individual interviews with social workers and class teachers when classes were finished. For a deeper understanding of such sub-ethnic relations, observations of interactions between Hongkong-born teachers, social workers and mainland women migrants were made in an informal setting and relaxed environment, e.g. chatting before and after class sections, and interactions in outdoor activities.

Textual analysis is another means to acquire information about Hong Kong

identity. I reviewed newspaper and magazine articles from the 1990s to the present. Government reports on immigration policy, reports of the demographic composition of Hong Kong and government statistics were reviewed as part of my archival research.

Being a Hong Kong woman has made it more difficult for me to position myself when working on this research. When I walk down the streets in Hong Kong, nobody would take notice of me. But here, when I studied how a group of new comers learn to become "insiders" of Hong Kong society, I found it difficult to critically analyze some taken-for-granted cultural beliefs at the first stage of the research. Not only did the research process help me to understand the female mainland immigrants, it also helped me to understand the phenomenon of hèunggóngyàhn and its gendered nature. It was not easy to open up conversation with the migrants for many of them felt inferior to speak to a Hong Kong person, but being six-months pregnant during my fieldwork had removed some of the barriers and even aroused their interest to talk to me.

Thesis Structure

In this chapter, I have discussed the significance, the theoretical framework, and the methodology of the research. Chapter 2 discusses the historical background of

migration flow from the mainland to Hong Kong and reviews how the emergence of Hong Kong identity has affected the immigration policy in Hong Kong. In Chapter 3, I try to find out what kinds of cultural knowledge are taught and how the women migrants perceive it. Through the imitation of linguistic characteristics and imagined "Hongkongness", such as politeness and "Hong Kong spirit", I argue that these women were disciplined as docile bodies in the learning process.

The learning process will be discussed from a gender perspective in Chapter 4. I will report on the kinds of cultural knowledge and vocational skills that are specifically designed for female immigrants. I explore how femininity is reconstructed in terms of appearance and how the women are trained to imitate Hongkong womanhood in order to become an ideal Hong Kong mother and Hong Kong wife. I also explore the connection between adaptation and marital relationship as experienced by the women migrants in respect of: (1) patrilocal residence, and (2) the husband's fidelity.

Chapter 5 is an analysis of how much these women are empowered and/or disempowered through such learning processes. I argue that a cultural boundary is reinforced as they were told that they were different from Hong Kong people through all these kinds of training. It is also a painful process for them as they needed to negate their own identity and gendered self.

Lastly, in Chapter 6, I conclude that identity reconstruction in Hong Kong by the female mainland migrants is a unique process. I argue that 'Hongkongness' and Hongkong-style womanhood is imagined both from the migrants' and the public's perspective, and challenge the current social policy for being a means to segregate the female mainlanders from the locals. These analyses enable me to further discuss the larger implications of social policy and the importance of respecting cultural diversity in the development of Hong Kong as a metropolitan city.

Chapter 2 History of Female Mainland Migrants in Hong Kong

This chapter reviews the historical background of migration from mainland China to Hong Kong, and how the emergence of Hong Kong identity has influenced the government's immigration policy and social policy. Unlike most previous research on the migration history of Hong Kong, my discussion highlights what has been underemphasized in the history of mainland migrants in Hong Kong, namely the female experience. As female migrants are commonly found to be "alienated, exploited and oppressed" in the host countries (The Working Party on Women Migrants 1978: 3), I argue that, only by placing the women's experience side-by-side with the men's, will we be able to fully understand this process of migration that has made Hong Kong what it is today. In this thesis, I use the terms migrants and immigrants with slightly different meanings. In general, migrants means people who move from one place to another, and immigrants means people who leave one place to settle permanently in another. More specifically, to reflect the stages of mainlanders' migration to Hong Kong, I use the term migrants to refer to those who came to Hong Kong in earlier periods, and immigrants to refer to the mainland wives who marry to Hong Kong men and aim to settle in Hong Kong permanently.

Invisible Female Migrants

In most research Hong Kong is regarded a society comprised mostly of immigrants and sojourners from China (Davis 1955: 33-34; Leung 1996: 75; Lam & Liu 1998: 3; Wan 2001: 192-195; Huang 2004: 298-301; Tsang 2004: 167-170). We are familiar with the notions of the boost to Hong Kong's population and workforce by the influx of mainland migrants (Huang 2004: 298-301; Tsang 2004: 167-168) and the contribution of male Chinese laborers to the success of Hong Kong's economy (Lam & Liu 1998: 12). Such documentation of history, however, cannot fully reflect the migrants' experience. Females and males have faced different problems in their access to resources in a new environment, and they have taken different action in re-establishing themselves in the host society. The structure-based orientation and male-centeredness of previous research has led to a lack of individual experience and female voices in our understanding of Hong Kong's immigration history. One obvious example is during the mid nineteenth century many of the female mainland immigrants experienced inhumane treatment in the process of coming to Hong Kong (Jaschok 1994: 1-24; Sinn 1994: 141-170) but historical research has to a large extent disregarded this issue.

The signing of the Treaty of Peking in 1898 did not cut off cross-border movement, as it allowed Chinese citizens (especially those from Guangdong and

other southern provinces) to move across the border to the New Territories in Hong Kong. Throughout the early part of the twentieth century, people were free to move across the Hongkong-China border. Most male migrants from the mainland came to Hong Kong to work while leaving their wives and children at home. In contrast, however, many women immigrants were treated as commodities that were sold and resold as prostitutes in Hong Kong and different parts of South East Asia (Yip 1997: 308). Though there were no official statistics of the exact number of women being trafficked, research based on the records of the Po Leung Kuk[3] which offered protection to these women in the 19th century, have demonstrated the women's forced mobility and individual suffering (Sinn 1994: 149-162; Yip 1997: 307-311; Poon and Ng 1998: 8).

In conventional discourse, while male Chinese immigrants were praised for the contribution their labour made to Hong Kong's early economic expansion, little was acknowledged of the contribution of their female counterparts. The period between the late 1940s and 1950s was generally regarded as the earliest peak of immigration (Chiu, Choi & Ting 2005). Mainlanders fleeing from famine as a result of the Japanese invasion and subsequently the civil war between the communists and the

[3] The Po Leung Kuk is a non-governmental organization set up in January 1880 that offered protection to kidnapped women and children in Hong Kong. It was started by two Dongguan (東莞) merchants. (Sinn 1994: 149)

nationalists boosted Hong Kong's population to 2.5 million by the year 1955 (Tsang 2004: 167). The profiles of these mainland migrants were recorded as mostly farmers and laborers from Guangdong Province, who planned only to stay for a short time and to return home whenever the situation improved (Tsang 2004: 110). Wong (2004: 300) described male adult migrants as "young and energetic forces who formed the major working forces", while Tsang (2004: 165-166) praised them for their participation in a "series of constructions and development, such as factories, housing programs, water supplies", which "prepared Hong Kong to play a leading role as an international trading center". However, most studies on Hong Kong's socio-economic development provide no sex-specific information, such as the proportion of the male and female workforce, or the patterns of occupation and other activities by gender. The written history of women immigrants in this period is almost non-existent, except for bits and pieces from the oral history narrated by a group of elderly women who crossed the border to seek freedom from hostile families, or who married Hong Kong men as a way to flee political instability (Yip 1992; Yip 1999: 117-132; The Association for the Advancement of Feminism 1998: 14-15).

The contribution of female immigrants was also overshadowed by scholarly focus on the wealthy male Shanghainese entrepreneurs who arrived in Hong Kong

from the late 1940s onwards. For example, Wong (1988: 16-40) investigated the population movement from Shanghai to Hong Kong, and concluded that it was mainly a household strategy by which the father as the head of the family sent his sons to operate spinning factories in Hong Kong. Many people in Hong Kong value the capital and technological know-how brought by these entrepreneurs (Tsang 2004: 167 – 170; Lam & Liu 1998: 12), but neglect the contributions of the women workers who toiled to make these factories prosper. Indeed a large number of women and girls participated in waged work which propelled Hong Kong's post-war manufacturing industry into great success, by taking part in the "production of plastic products, clothing, wood, wigs, toys, hardware and electronic components" (Wan 2001: 210). Factory production was heavily supplemented by household production, especially in embroidering, sewing, and plastic flowers assembling, which were carried out in the women's home (Poon and Ng 1998: 18-19). Though these female immigrants were not as financially powerful as the male Shanghainese entrepreneurs, they provided indispensable labor in Hong Kong's industrialization. More importantly, like their male counterparts and their local-born children, these female migrants also gradually settled in Hong Kong and started to identify themselves as hèunggóngyàhn. I will further discuss the relationship between Hong Kong women and Hong Kong identity in the second part of this chapter.

Immigration Policy as Identity Marker

As mentioned above, before 1950 the flow of people between Hong Kong-China border was rather free and the identity of hèunggóngyàhn did not exist. It was only in 1950 that a quota system was set up, whereby the government of the People's Republic of China has the authority to decide who could migrate to Hong Kong. This system is still in use today, although categories of migrants and the quotas have changed over time. As a result of this system, mainlanders who did not come to Hong Kong through this quota system were considered illegal. This categorization of certain mainlanders as "illegal immigrants" and their status as "problem people" contributed to the distinction between mainland immigrants and hèunggóngyàhn (Ku: 2004: 326-360).

As the sense of Hong Kong identity started to grow since the 1970s, there was a rising discontent in society towards the newly-arrived mainlanders who were regarded as "outsiders". In public discourse, mainland migrants were seen as farmers from rural areas, causing unbearable population pressure to the Hong Kong society and damaged the welfare benefits of the Hong Kong people. Their arrival in Hong Kong was also seen as eroding the improvements in living standards that the people of Hong Kong have struggled hard to achieve. This implied a clear boundary between Hong Kong and mainland people arising from literacy, cultural, economic

and ideological differences. This made the implementation of policies controlling the mainland immigrants easier, such as the abolition of the "touch base policy" on 13 October, 1980. Further measures were used to mark out mainlanders by Hong Kong people. One dramatic move was to require all adult Hong Kong citizens to carry their identity cards with them, and to grant to the police the authority to check anyone's identity card. Those who failed to show their identity card upon police request could be charged with criminal offence. Owning a Hong Kong identity card is thus a clear message that the holder belongs in Hong Kong.

There are in fact ten different letter codes used to represent people according to the ID card holders' place of birth, which indirectly categorize the holders as having different rights,[4] but these are often overshadowed by the "three stars" discourse.

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[4] The following is based on information in http://www.smartid.gov.hk/tc/faq/index.html#00ac :

A stands for "the holder has the right of abode in the HKSAR";

C stands for "the holder's stay in the HKSAR is limited by the Director of Immigration at the time of his registration of the card";

R stands for "the holder has a right to land in the HKSAR";

U stands for "the holder's stay in the HKSAR is not limited by the Director of Immigration at the time of his registration of the card";

Z stands for "the holder's place of birth reported is Hong Kong";

X stands for "the holder's place of birth reported is the Mainland";

W stands for "the holder's place of birth reported is the region of Macau";

O stands for "the holder's place of birth reported is in other countries";

B stands for "the holder's reported date of birth or place of birth has been changed since his/ her first registration";

N stands for "the holder's reported name has been changed since his/ her first registration".

Aside from the letter codes, some identity cards have three asterisks printed beneath the date of birth of the card holder. These asterisks, or "three stars" (三粒星) as they are referred to by both Hongkongers and mainlanders, denote the holder as someone who is "of the age of 18 or over, and is eligible for a Hong Kong Re-entry Permit"[5], and who is legitimate to stay in Hong Kong permanently. Thus in everyday discourse, a person possessing an ID card on which is printed "three stars" is a sign of a true Hong Kong person.

To add to Ku's opinion, I argue that the immigration policy and Hong Kong identity as mutually constructing: on one hand the immigration policy created and increased Hong Kong people's feeling of distinction from and superiority over mainland migrants; and on the other hand, the more strongly the locals feel they are distinct from the mainlanders, the more vociferously they call for implementation of strict control over immigration, in order to protect their superior society from mainlanders' abuse.

Gender Implications in the Immigration Policy

As the immigration policy in Hong Kong changed over time, they have affected the female mainland migrants in different ways. The "Two-way Permit" was

[5] Information sourced from the website of Immigration Department, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administration Region at http://www.immd.gov.hk/ehtml/topical_3_2.htm

introduced as a new mechanism to control the number of mainland migrants after the abolition of the "touch base policy". Before explaining what the "Two-way Permit" is, I will first explain the "One-way permit". The "One-way permit" (in Chinese the official name is 中華人民共和國前往港澳通行證 and the short form is 單程證) is a travel document issued by the PRC to allow residents of mainland China to leave permanently for Hong Kong or Macau. Such a permit is in fact a continuation of the quota system. In November 1993 the quota was 75 mainland residents to leave for Hong Kong per day, which increased to 150 persons per day after 1 July 1995. On the other hand, the "Two-way permit" (中華人民共和國往來港澳通行證, or 雙程證 in short) grant mainlanders the permission to go to Hong Kong or Macau for periods of three months at a time, mainly to visit relatives. Holders of the two-way permit are forbidden to work while in Hong Kong or Macau.

Overstaying in Hong Kong became a by-product of the granting of the "Two-way permit" to mainlanders who travel to Hong Kong[6]; and statistics show that female mainlanders tend to be more active in overstaying. Research done in the 1990s found that there were various categories of women who overstayed: (1) both

[6] There were 22,566 people and 27,250 people overstaying in Hong Kong in the years of 1991 and 1994 respectively (Lam & Liu, 1998: 20). The colonial government later amended legislation to disallow the overstaying mainlander to apply for permanent resident-ship; two years of imprisonment and a $5000 fine would be charged for overstaying.

single and married women who found or were looking for jobs; (2) women married to Hong Kong husbands, who stayed to look after their children; and (3) pregnant women who sought to have their babies born in Hong Kong so as to get a Hong Kong birth certificate. The number of babies born during their mothers' overstay has increased drastically from 1990 to 1994. There were 1746, 2750 and 9000 babies born to overstaying women migrants in the years 1990, 1991, and 1994 respectively (Lam & Liu, 1998: 27). These dramatic increases contributed greatly to the local people's concern that the mainland women's babies will eventually be a burden to Hong Kong's welfare system. Thus while the two-way permit was designed to be a means of control over migrant numbers, it had ironically become a catalyst for an influx of female mainland immigrants.

At the same time, the number of cross-border marriages was increasing. While hostility towards mainlanders still persisted, an increasing number of Hong Kong men were marrying mainland women as a result of increasing socio-economic contact between China and Hong Kong. Among the total of 178,415 female new arrivals migrating to Hong Kong in 2001, 92.9 percent were married to Hong Kong men--including those men who were born in Hong Kong, and male mainland immigrants who had resided in Hong Kong for more than seven years (Kershaw 2006: 55). The implementation of the Basic Law since 1997 stimulated another flow

of migrants characterized by women and children who sought to unite with their families in Hong Kong. These new migrants were a result of cross-border marriage.

According to Article 24 of the Basic Law; "permanent residents" of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall include any children born of Hong Kong "permanent residents" even if born outside of the territory of Hong Kong. As discussed earlier, the quota for Chinese residents permitted to migrate to Hong Kong was raised from 75 people in 1993, to 150 people per day in 1995. Within this quota, mainland spouses (usually the female spouses of Hong Kong men) and children are given priority in coming to Hong Kong in order that the family can unite. However, this policy is criticized as deficient because the granting of settlement is not based on the principle of treating the family as a unit but instead on an individual basis. As a result, a typical scenario is that, for a couple made up of a Hong Kong man and a mainland woman, their children may be granted permission to move to Hong Kong to be with their father first, while the mother must come separately, usually much later. The policy as it stands thus brings about a lot of split conjugal arrangements. More counterproductively, it also creates pressure for the mothers to overstay any temporary visits they might be granted whilst they await permission to immigrate permanently (Leung 1994: 27). Due to the fact that female mainland immigrants came in larger numbers than in previous decades and Hong Kong people's perception

of them being dependents and not able to contribute to the economy, the "new immigrant women" (新移民婦女) consequently became the most unpopular among all categories of mainland migrants.

Shifts in Social Policy and Social Capital

The question of how and how much cultural capital is provided to the mainland migrants depends on political and social changes in the larger society. During the 1940s and 1950s, the British colonial government had no involvement in providing services for the mainland migrants as it was believed they would return to mainland China when the political situation was settled there (Yang 1983: 6; Wong 1997: 33). Mainland migrants in Hong Kong, therefore, mainly relied on support and assistance from their relatives and fellow hometowners. The churches and charitable organizations such as the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals, also provided much needed alms, and medical and family services. As Hong Kong identity had not yet emerged, there was basically no competition for welfare benefits between Hong Kong people and mainland migrants in this period. In the 1960s, the Social Welfare Department was set up, which began to provide limited services to Hong Kong people only; assistance to the mainland migrants was still the territory of voluntary organizations such as Caritas and Lutheran Social Services (Wong 1997: 35). Until the 1980s, it

was the non-government organizations (NGOs) that initiated language programs to help the migrants to integrate into their new home. The Hong Kong government, on the other hand, believed that the existing services were "sufficient" to cater to the migrants' needs (Wong 1997: 37). As the Hong Kong identity emerged in the 1970s, a strong distinction between the Hong Kong people and mainlanders began to appear. However, the colonial government paid little attention to the language and cultural difference between the two groups, allowing the cultural gap to widen (Choi 1989: 14-19).

Child arrivals are given priority in orientation programs organized by the government and NGOs, as children are believed to be easier to be acculturated into a new society (Lin 2002: 39). Since the right of abode has allowed a rising number of cross-border marriages to seek family reunion, there were discussions in the Legislative Council before and after the transitional year of 1997[7] in order to prepare for the arrival of more children and mainland wives during that year. One measure taken by the Hong Kong government was the relaxation of the approval process for public housing after November 1998: a family with only half of the family members

[7] During May 1996, the "Green Paper of the Policy for the New Immigrants"; and during April 1997 "White Paper of the Policy for the New Immigrants" were raised for discussion. Policy focusing on the new immigrants was continued in the 21 century: in December 2001, there was the "Policy and Services for the New Immigrants – Review and foresee", and the "The future of the Policy for the New Arrivals" in 2004". (Luo Zhiguang yi yuan ban shi chu, 2004: 2-3)

having resided in Hong Kong for seven years was eligible to apply for public housing. Starting from May 2001, a family with only one member having resided in Hong Kong for seven years is eligible to apply for the Home Ownership Scheme[8]. For child immigrants, the Education Department has sought cooperation with the NGOs since 1995 to provide adaptation training including training in English language. Followed by providing English language learning material[9], course evaluation guidelines[10], and money to subsidize both primary and secondary schools through the "School-based Support Services"[11], more "New Arrivals Programs" (新來港學童適應課程) were run at primary and secondary schools in different parts of Hong Kong since the year 2000.

To migrants in other parts of the world, social assistance by the government in the host society is a common provision. For example, Qiu observes that in Taiwan some teachers considered Southeast Asian brides citizens and "insiders", and therefore encouraged them to learn Chinese in night schools, so that they could

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[8] Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) is a plan designed by the Housing Authority for the general public to buy their own flat since the late 1970s in Hong Kong.

[9] 60 hours of English teaching material were given to schools by the Education Department since October 1995.

[10] Evaluation guidelines of the courses of Chinese language, English language and Mathematics were given to schools by the Education Department since June 1997.

[11] Money subsidies were given to public schools; HK$2000 per primary student, and HK$3300 per secondary student in September 1997 onwards. From April 2004, the subsidy has been raised to HK$2750 per primary student, and HK$4080 per secondary student.

contribute to the development of Taiwan (2003: 202-206). However, in the context of Hong Kong, "female mainland immigrants" were defined as dependents on their Hong Kong husbands and therefore could barely contribute to Hong Kong society (Lin 2002: 2-3). These female adults were largely perceived as handicapped in seeking jobs because of their "inferiority"— coming from a rural background, little educated, in a nutshell they are considered country bumpkins who cannot speak Cantonese nor English. In addition, as Hong Kong went through a period of economic re-structuring since the 1997 financial crisis, they were considered double trouble to society (Wong 1997: 139; Li 1999: 271). Some of the female migrants participated in information sessions and mutual aid within the circle of new arrivals organized by the NGOs, which were subsidized by the government or the commercial sector[12] (Yang 1983: 5-9; Wong 1997: 40). And as more government resources were pumped into social services for mainland migrants in the following years[13], more community centers and NGOs offered services special programs designed for new arrivals. This had led to a hostile feeling towards the mainland

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[12] For instance, in 1997, the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charity Trust worked hand in hand with the Home Affairs Department to sponsor a 3-year pilot project in the districts of Sham Shui Po, Tsuen Wan, Kowloon City, Kwun Tong, and the Hong Kong Eastern district.

[13] By the year of 2003, 8 community centers had been established for new arrivals that had been in Hong Kong for less than 1 year. 13 NGOs assisted by the government provided services for the new arrivals. (Hong Kong Council of Social Services, 2003:9)

immigrants among many Hong Kong people, as they believed what was their rightful resources were now being usurped by welfare abusers from the mainland.

Hong Kong Identity: a Gender Perspective

After discussing roles of female migrants in migration history, and historical changes of social policy to immigrants in Hong Kong, I move on to revisit the emergence of Hong Kong identity, which is closely related to migration history. As briefly outlined in Chapter 1, few studies about Hong Kong identity are gender-specific. Lau (2000: 259) finds that there is a persistent trend of more Hong Kong women than men in identifying themselves as hèunggóngyàhn. In a study of belonging to a nation, more Hong Kong female university students found China unpleasant and less willing to identify themselves as Chinese (Mathews, Ma & Lui 2008: 117). But the reasons for the above results are not fully investigated yet. Here, I will attempt to discuss how changes in the status of Hong Kong women are interwoven with the birth of Hong Kong identity, integrating data on the changing status of Hong Kong women over time, in relation to their growing sense of identity as hèunggóngyàhn.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP)'s coming to power in China in 1949 marked the beginning of the process Hong Kong identity formation (Tsang 2004:

180-181). Though sharing cultural and ethnic similarities, different political ideologies have widened the gap between Hong Kong people and mainlanders. Before the era of Deng Xiaoping's reforms in the late 1970s, the brutality of political campaigns such as the Great Leap Forward[14] and the Cultural Revolution[15], the demise of economic life, and the stories of floating bodies in the waters between China and Hong Kong, greatly deterred Chinese migrants already in Hong Kong from returning home (Mathews 1997: 7; Tsang 2004: 189). Sojourners ended up staying in Hong Kong for good, as the communist rule across the border heightened fear and suspicion in their hearts.

The end of the Mao era in the late 1970s did not remove the social and mental boundaries between Hong Kong and the mainland, but rather strongly reinforced them. Among those who lived through that historical period, fresh memories of their suffering were vivid; for those who did not suffer in person, they received information about life in China from their relatives. Therefore, political campaigns at

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[14] Mao Zedong, a paramount leader in the Chinese Communist Party, mobilized massive labor to run an industrialization campaign in 1957. People in rural areas were organized in communes to produce steel, however, this ended with failure. Millions of people died from the famine in the following years during 1958 and 1962.

[15] A movement initiated by Mao Zedong in the Chinese Communist Party during 1966 to 1976, which mobilized youth across the country to join the Red Guards to combat counter-revolutionaries. Large scale of political and social chaos were ended up with deaths of millions of people.

different periods were indeed push factors that prompted Hong Kong people to be more ready to emigrate. Successive waves of migration to European and American societies, for example, had resulted from the riots in the 1960s[16]; the Sino-British talks leading to the Joint Declaration[17] of 1984; and the June Fourth Incident of 1989. Most Hong Kong people were afraid that history would repeat itself in Hong Kong as they saw what happened to farmers and intellectuals in China. The hèunggóngyàhn, as Lau says (1988: 41-68), are more able to enjoy individual autonomy, such as freedom and human rights that are lacking on the mainland. Therefore, the rule of the PRC is crucial to the formation of Hong Kong identity. The following remark from Tsang's (2004) study may best summarize the role of the colonial government in the formation of the Hong Kong identity (Tsang 2004: 1):

> British rule also left its mark on Hong Kong in a more important and sustainable way. It led to the rise of a people that remains quintessentially Chinese and yet share a way of life, core values and an outlook that resemble at least as much, it not more, that of the average New Yorker or

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[16] From May to December of 1967, the Hong Kong and Macao Work Committee mobilized workers and students on streets to "fight against the British imperial capitalists". A series of violence and bombing caused 51 deaths. These riots were seen as a "spill-over" of the Cultural Revolution in China.

[17] An agreement formally called the "Joint Declaration of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Question of Hong Kong", which was signed on the 19th December, 1984.

Londoner, rather that that of their compatriots in China.

The British colonial government seemed to have never intended to impart a new identity on its subjects in Hong Kong to be distinct from China. But it did help in making it happen through the implementation of various policies. In the social aspect, the public housing projects in the 1960s and 1970s provided possibilities for migrants to search for "permanent living space" and consequently a feeling of "home" was gradually developed (Lui 1997: 50). In the 1970s, public events such as the Hong Kong Festival and the Clean Hong Kong campaign in 1973, cultivated a sense of belonging among the migrants from China. The establishment of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) in 1974 and its tremendous success also made Hong Kong people start to "feel proud of being Hong Kong citizens" (Ng, Ma & Lui 2006: 27-28; Tsang 2004: 192).

The success of Hong Kong's economy is closely related to the formation of a Hong Kong identity. There are multiple reasons for the booming of Hong Kong's economy: the government's investment in industry, the inflow of capital and technology from Shanghainese industrialists in the late 1940s as mentioned above, and a "hard-working mentality" among the unskilled workers (Tsang 2004: 162-170). Knowing that mainland migrants would very unlikely return to China due to the unstable political environment there, the colonial government saw industrialization

as a way out, as it could provide employment for the large migrant population, and a way to utilize this cheap labor force in the 1950s (Tsang 2004: 165; Vickers 2005: 25). And as mentioned before, women in Hong Kong (including early migrants and locals) participated actively in industrial development since the 1960s. They worked in different sectors of manufacturing, such as electronic components, wigs, clothes, and plastic products. Not only did they contribute their salary to their families, they had their own pocket money for expenses such as clothes and accessories (Salaff 2004: 151). I argue that the financial independence of Hong Kong women went hand-in-hand with their growing sense of belonging to Hong Kong.

In terms of demographic changes, Lui (1997: 81-99) has found that the growth of the "local-born" population (whose values have shifted very much away from their parents who migrated to Hong Kong in earlier times), has contributed to the formation of Hong Kong identity. Such a change of values, according to Tsang (2004: 182), is largely due to the provision of education by the colonial government, which has helped to give birth to a group of "thoughtful and articulate young people" who asked who they were and what their cultural identity was. Research shows that education directly relates to the formation of Hong Kong identity (see for example Lau and Kwan 1988: 181; Lau 2000: 259-260). Hong Kong women also had a higher rate of identification of being hèunggóngyàhn than men (Lau 2000: 259). However,

there is no further exploration on how women's educational development may have contributed to their cultural identification.

Women in Hong Kong, in fact, have particularly benefited from the greater exposure to educational opportunities. In Chinese societies which maintained that "a woman without knowledge is virtuous" (女子無才便是德), women in Hong Kong had indeed experienced drastic changes compared to those in the mainland. Some Hong Kong girls were able to attend schools operated by missionary groups since the early 19th century (Smith 1995: 276 – 282), and later, under the Nine Years Educational Scheme that began in 1978, all Hong Kong girls could by law receive nine years of free education along with their male counterparts. Their job opportunities were therefore broadened to managerial positions which helped them to move up to the middle class. I suggest that the higher educational attainment and increase in job opportunities in Hong Kong since the Second World War, had started to cultivate among Hong Kong women a sense of difference from mainland women.

Class, Popular Culture and Identity Politics

In the following paragraphs I discuss the relationship between Hong Kong identity, popular culture and class identities in its historical development. Scholars trace the birth of Hong Kong identity to the indigenization of popular culture, most

obviously in the 1970s when Cantonese was used in local television programmes, when drama productions increasingly featured local lifestyles, and especially when the popularity of Cantonese songs (Cantopop) and local film productions soared (Leung 1996: 63-72; Vickers 2005: 62-68; Grant 2001: 167-171). All these have helped to consolidate the sense of belonging among Hong Kong people, who were beginning to enjoy the benefits of economic success. Also, utilizing Anderson's notion of "imagined community", Ma discusses visual images in Hong Kong television (Ma 1999: 34):

> For the first time, the people in Hong Kong started receiving a daily diet of television images of the city. Through the screen, the literal, much-ignored notion of 'Hong Kong society' was knitted into visual news narratives.

In discussing the role of mass media in the differentiation of Hong Kong and Chinese identity, Ma (1996: 86-91) analyzes a male character from a television drama series in the late 1970s named *Ah Chaan*. This is a man from mainland China, who is dirty, lazy and ignorant, in contrast to his Hongkong-born brother who is kind-hearted, educated and dedicated to work. This reflects the superiority of "us" (hèunggóngyàhn) to the "others" (mainlanders), and the reality of rejecting and discriminating against the latter. Ma (1999: 19-44) has analyzed the period of 1970s as a reflection of "de-sinicisation", and the "*Ah Chaan*" phenomenon is the best

example of such a process. Certainly, such a phenomenon cannot totally reflect how all Hong Kong people think, but the representation of mainlanders as stereotypically "lawless and uncivilized" did largely shaped the popular concept of the mainlanders.

Some scholars regard the phenomenon of hèunggóngyàhn as not only an issue of "identity" but of "class" as well, as this identity is mostly embraced by the middle class in Hong Kong (Lau 2000: 259-260; Mathews 1997: 4-5). In the 1970s, Davis Podmore's research reflected that many Hong Kong people believe that "Hong Kong is truly a land of opportunity and people get pretty much what they deserve here" (Chaney and Podmore 1973: 60). Wong (1992: 205-238) coins the term the "Hong Kong dream" which implies that no social injustice can hinder people in achieving success so long as they are willing to work hard. The "Land of Opportunity" and "Hong Kong Dream" concepts have become some of the most widely accepted characteristics of hèunggóngyàhn. Research findings have shown that women in Hong Kong have actively participated in the labor market to a greater extent since the 1970s than the previous few decades: participation in manufacturing rose from 13 to 57 percent between the year 1931 and 1971 (Westwood 1997: 50). Although no research has explored the relationship between Hong Kong women's social mobility and their own cultural identification, I believe that Purushotam's study (1998: 127-166) of Singaporean women supports the idea that there is a causal relationship

between women's attainment of higher income and power of decision-making, and their cultural identification as being middle class.

Differences of tastes mark the boundary between Hongkongers and mainlanders. Many Hong Kong people think that they have better cultural taste and a more sophisticated fashion sense, especially when compared to the nouveau rich on the mainland who earn mega money and spend extravagantly (Mathews 1997: 10). Ma (2003) finds that there are "distances of taste" between people in Hong Kong and people in Shenzhen. His research has shown that although a lot of shops with Hong Kong's brand names were opened in Shenzhen, they were regarded as "lower and secondary to Hong Kong's characteristics" by Hong Kong people.

Conclusion

The formation of a Hong Kong identity is intricately related to immigration policy, social policy, and the history of migration in Hong Kong. However, little has been analyzed from a gender perspective. Though female mainland immigrants have aroused public attention in recent decades, many of them are perceived as dependents of lower class Hong Kong husbands, and thus are parasitic on the government's financial support and on their Hong Kong relatives' emotional and social support. Though Hong Kong's sovereignty has returned to China, it has not helped mainland migrants to be better integrated into Hong Kong society. They are still regarded as

"outsiders', and hostile feelings towards them are deeply entrenched in many of the Hong Kong people's hearts. Economically, Hong Kong's economic restructuring and the Asian financial crisis in 1997 led to a high unemployment rate. Because mainland migrants are mostly stereotyped as lower educated and unskilled, they became defined as a threat to Hong Kong people who were experiencing downward social mobility. As the local textile and electronic industries had moved to mainland China to take advantage of its lower production costs, the lack of industries in Hong Kong led to a drastic shrinkage of Hong Kong's labor market. On the other side of the coin, the newly arrived women cannot be absorbed into this kind of light industries that the old female migrants used to.

Mainland immigrants in Hong Kong are often portrayed as recipients of CSSA (Comprehensive Social Security Assistance) by the government and by the media (see for example Ming Pao Daily News 2006b; Ming Pao Daily News 2007b; Ming Pao Daily News 2007c), which contributes greatly to the negative image of mainlanders in the eyes of Hong Kong people who then condemn mainlanders as a "burden" on Hong Kong's scarce resources and abusers of tax payer's money. However, according to the Society for Community Organization (SOCO), in 2007 it was found that only about 3000 out of 54,000 mainland immigrants had applied for CSSA, and only a few hundred cases were approved by the government. Single men

who are low-skilled and unemployed due to economic structural changes also lead to a certain proportion of the total.[18] In addition, in the 1990s the image of mainland women as mistresses of Hong Kong men, and the most recent image of mainland pregnant women taking over the local maternity services in Hong Kong, both added to the negative impression of female mainland immigrants in Hong Kong.

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[18] See website of Society for Community Organization at http://www.soco.org.hk/news/new_c.htm

Chapter 3 Hongkongness in the Classroom

> I felt like I was a country bumpkin when I first came to Hong Kong. There were so many rules in society that I didn't know. Well, [for the rule of] lining up before getting on the bus, I knew it before, but for lining up before taking an elevator, I totally didn't get it. I was shouted at by some old guys who were the security guards…… so I stepped back embarrassed, and looked for the line to queue up again! Whenever I shared such experiences with other new arrivals, we all laughed together. (Lai San)

In the previous chapter, I examined the history of mainlanders migrating to Hong Kong, which was closely linked to the development of Hong Kong identity. In this chapter, I ask how Hong Kong identity can be taught and how mainland immigrants are socialized. Re-socialization of immigrants is commonly found in the modern world. In the USA, the Americanization program tries to reshape the "undesirable behavior" of 'the new immigration" (Kasaba 2000: 142) by home visit and training classes. These programs teach American culture to new immigrants, aiming to transform the "so called aliens into bona fide U.S. citizens who are indistinguishable from those born in the United States" (Collins 2000: 157). In this study, I examine how Hongkongnesss was taught in the classroom of the community centers, and how socialization of Hongkongness was extended beyond the physical structure of the classroom by Hong Kong husbands, children, and other people.

According to Stuart Hall, "identity is actually something formed through unconscious process over time, rather than being innate in consciousness at birth" (Hall 1992: 287). Identity is not in-born, but formed and developed through time. It is not fixed, but negotiable and situational. In particular, when people are confronted by "others", they will show solidarity and identify themselves as a group of "we". In Hong Kong society, hostile feelings towards the mainlanders only grew as Hong Kong identity emerged in the 1970s. The re-unification of Hong Kong and China in 1997 did not pull mainlanders and Hong Kong people together. The year 1997 marked a drastic change in Hong Kong's political, social and economic relationship to the British colonial government and the Chinese government. Hong Kong was promised 50 years of a high degree of autonomy (五十年不變, 高度自治)[19] under the policy of "One Country, Two Systems" (一國兩制)[20] promoted by the then premier Deng xiaopeng. "One Country, Two Systems" is not only a political arrangement, but it also brings out the issue of cultural identity: it implies that the PRC recognizes the political, economic, and social differences between mainland China and Hong Kong. Its implementation further means that the PRC accepts the ideological differences within the country. Accepting this arrangement however, does

[19] Except matters concerning about national defense and diplomatic affairs stated in the Basic Law.

[20] It was a principle suggested by Deng Xiaoping (the leader of the PRC) in the early 1980s, that there should be only one China, but that the capitalist system in Hong Kong and Macau and Taiwan can remain the same, while the other parts of China will continue with the socialist system.

not mean that Hong Kong people and China understand the principle of "One Country Two Systems" in the same way. In fact while the Chinese government focuses on "One Country" and hence the structural unity, the public in Hong Kong emphasizes "Two Systems" and thus the ideological distinction.

For those mainlanders who migrate to Hong Kong, how do they reconcile this conflict in identity? In particular for the targets of this research, the women immigrants, how do they understand and learn this Hongkongness? And what kind of Hongkongness do they reproduce?

I believe acquiring skills and knowledge is one of the ways to acquire "cultural capital", an idea derived from Bourdieu (1977: 171-182). In my fieldwork, many staff of the community centers believed that learning working skills and cultural skills can increase the cultural capital of immigrants, which will then lead to access to employment and greater confidence. Working skills include computer knowledge, cash register operation, beauty and healthcare, and marketing skills, while cultural skills are something more complicated and are embedded in daily life. In *Cultural Skills* (Scott 1989), cultural skills are defined as "vocabulary, language fluency, numerical skills, and specific cultural knowledge". Scott uses the plural term 'cultural skills' which will be used here to refer to "a cluster of possibly distinct abilities" (1989: 79). During the research, I participated in the classes, as a volunteer

of two of the community centers located in Shatin and Mongkok, to see how and what sorts of knowledge and culture the women immigrants were learning.

In the following analysis, the theory of disciplinary power Foucault describes helps to explain how these women were taught, as they were kept under total surveillance in the process of adaptation. Foucault writes (1979: 138),

> The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down, and rearranges it. A "political anatomy," which was also a "mechanics of power," was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over others' bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed, and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, "docile" bodies.

To Foucault, discipline is "a type of power" that "may be taken over either by 'specialized' institutions or by institutions that use it as an essential instrument for a particular end" (Foucault 1979, quoted in Rabinow 1984: 206). He uses Jeremy Bentham's design of the Panopticon, a circular-tower-like prison building, as a metaphor for modern "disciplinary" societies. He opines that the prison exists throughout societies where bodies are controlled by relentless surveillance. He says, "prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons"

(Foucault 1979: 228). Similarly, my fieldwork shows that while women interviewees gained cultural capital in an institution called community centers, at the same time, became disciplined as "docile bodies". In the following discussion, I analyze this paradoxical process in the acquisition of the local languages and behavioral code.

Learning Hong Kong English

The training of language is the key for outsiders to integrate into the mainstream according to research conducted by Münz and Ohliger (1997) in Germany and Summerfield (1993: 93) in Britain. In Hong Kong I also find a similarity. To mainlanders, learning English is one of the most important ways to acquire the "Westerness" of Hong Kong people, and indeed they very soon found that one of the most fundamental adaptation classes for new arrivals is the "English Language Enhancement Workshop". Speaking English is definitely a symbol of being "cultured" in the eyes of the women immigrants in this study. In the Service Handbook for New Arrivals (2005), it is stated the percentage of English speakers accounts for 43% of Hong Kong's population (2005: 1). This figure reflects that English is used as a major means of communication in Hong Kong apart from Cantonese.

The popularity of English continues until nowadays though the era of British

colonization in Hong Kong ended in 1997. Since Hong Kong was a British colony for over 150 years, English has been used as a language in government, law and business. In the article *The English Language and Chinese People*, Sun suggests that there is a common perception of English as a representation of "civilization and advancement" (2004: 132). The Chinese admired English as a language of developed countries, which has the potential to introduce science and technology. The unification of Hong Kong to mainland China did not shift this importance. Though the Education Bureau of HKSAR promoted teaching and learning through "the mother tongue"[21] as an effective way of learning, not many schools and parents accept this idea. Indeed, in everyday life, it is common to see advertisements on TV about the importance of the continuous learning of English in order to cope with demands in the workplace.

Living in a new environment where people strongly emphasize the importance of English, most of my mainland interviewees were convinced that attending English language class was the first step to integrate into this city. Almost all of my informants had felt crippled in job seeking due to their low English standards. Lai San, 40 years-old, used to work as a primary school teacher in Jiangmen. She

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[21] The policy of teaching and learning through mother tongue enforced by Education Bureau of Hong Kong government in 1997 refers to using Chinese as medium of instruction (MOI) in school in all subjects apart from the subject of English Language.

complained,

> I can't find a similar job in Hong Kong [as I used to have in China], even a Kindergarten will not consider [hiring] me. I've asked a lot of kindergartens, but they all rejected my application due to my poor English.....Now I just want to learn more English to enhance myself. In Hong Kong, if you don't know English, you can't even get a job in a Chinese restaurant.

Just like the rest of my informants, Lai San believed that a good command of English was vital to survive in Hong Kong. Similarly, Lai Chuen, aged 38, who was a housewife, believed that English language skill was one of the most important factors of success in the future. She said,

> I taught my son to learn more English. I said to him, 'If your English is not good, you'll need to work on a construction site.' Once he heard this, he was very scared, because he hates sweating under the sun. I also asked him, 'Do you want to work like guys who wear suit and tie in the bank? If you do, you'd better work hard in your English lessons!'

As my interviewees believed social mobility in Hong Kong was closely related to a person's English ability, they desired to advance their English skills through attending English classes.

In my fieldwork, seven women students were enclosed within a classroom

which was smaller than 200 square feet. They had to tolerate the cries and laughs and noises made by the children who were taking summer activities in the next room. In this English class for new arrivals, English was taught by means of rote learning. The teacher asked the women immigrants to read more, spell more, and memorize the pronunciation of the English taught in class. Regarding the learning of English pronunciation, my informants found it extremely difficult. When asked by the women for tips in improving spoken English, the teacher replied,

> You need to memorize the spelling. You do not necessarily need to know *pinyin* (拼音). [I know] there are some former students who put down the Chinese pronunciation next to the English words, or they simply did the *pinyin* by themselves!

To the mainlanders, the *pinyin* system allows a person to pronounce the characters when they are reading without even knowing the word. Though learning to speak a foreign language here, i.e., English, without the *pinyin*[22] did not make sense, many of my interviewees self-regulated to rote-learn what the teacher was teaching after hearing the above explanation. The following was a rare case as a debate was raised between one female mainland student called Ah Mei, aged 28, and the local-born

[22] *Pinyin* refers to *Hanyu Pinyu* which literally means to "spell out the sounds of Chinese words" by writing in Romanization. The Pinyin Romanization system includes three parts: the four tones (聲調), word initials (聲母)and word finals (韻母).

English teacher.

Teacher: You all need to memorize the pronunciation of the vocabularies that I taught. If you know *pinyin*, you can pronounce it yourself, but here [in our center], we don't teach *pinyin*.

Ah Mei: So how can we continue if we don't know the *pinyin*, I feel like I'm only at the primary school level, or even worse than that.

Teacher: Even primary schools in Hong Kong do not teach *pinyin*[23]!

Ah Mei: No No No, my daughter is learning it now!

Teacher: Which school does she go to?

Ah Mei: XXXX at Tsim Sha Tsui.

Teacher: As far as I know, at least all the primary schools in Tai Kok Tsui area and Mongkok do not teach *pinyin* in their curriculum.

The teacher obviously had the power to end the debate. Every woman students returned to their class notes and continued their memorization of English by reading aloud repeatedly, "One, one, two, two, three, three…." Now that the women mainland students could not learn a new language in a way that they were used to, they were made to learn it through memorization. Besides, learning English was

[23] Teaching of phonics is not included in the official curriculum designed by the Hong Kong Education Bureau. However, some schools provide such training if their teachers have proficient knowledge in this area.

hindered by having to fulfill household duties, such as looking after their children and parents-in-law, and taking up part time jobs. They were frustrated about not having enough time to go through the process of memorization, and even blamed on this as the reason of their failure to master this new language.

Obviously, the female mainland students were disciplined to learn English in a "mechanical" way. The teacher gave them a page of notes about numbers in English, and then asked them to take out a piece of paper and write down the numbers from "twenty-one" to "one hundred". Without questioning this, all the students did what the teacher requested. Again, it was Ah Mei who found it boring, unreasonable and time-consuming. Ah Mei complained, "There's so much to write, by the time I finish, it's already time to leave the class!" During the break, I asked students about what they thought about this learning activity. Three of them found the teaching material useful, while the rest of them were graduates from secondary schools, found it too easy to learn, but still worth as a revision. Most importantly, six out of seven students regarded it as a "command" from the teacher who was a Hong Kong person that they have to learn from. A command from the Hong Kong teacher means a command from a person who was believed to be culturally superior to them. The teacher exercised her power to decide content and methods of teaching; the mainland woman students who are socially and culturally secondary class people, thereby, had to

conform.

A mainland accent seems to be linguistically unacceptable in Hong Kong. Though there were no classes named "removing a mainland accent", all the language teachers I observed emphasized the need to "correct" the students' mainland accent in order to speak better English. The teacher of the English class said,

> According to my past experience, the accents of [women mainland] students who had never studied English in the mainland were much easier to correct. You all are now carrying some *hèung hah yàm* (鄉下音) so that the pronunciation is inaccurate and will take a longer time to be corrected!

Hèung hah yàm is literally translated as a "rural accent", which refers to the way of speaking of those people who have mainland accents. As *Hèung hah yàm* implicitly connotes being uncivilized and thus ranks lower than the Hong Kong accent, my women interviewees were being looked down or discriminated against whenever they speak. Being devalued for their natural accent after migration to Hong Kong, speaking with mainland accent becomes a burden to these women, and so they are willing to be corrected by Hong Kong people, and hoping to become a Hong Kong person after going through the learning process.

In reality, however, what the teachers taught in class was strictly speaking not English, but Hongkong-style English - a mixture of some English phrases or words

in daily Cantonese conversation. One of the students who I met in the research, Siu Bing, in her early twenties, had been in Hong Kong for only ten days. She showed a lot of anxiety due to her inability to understand what Hong Kong people were saying. She said,

> Even if I don't need a job, I feel extremely inferior when I overhear a Hong Kong person speaking in Cantonese with lots of English phrases and vocabularies that I have no clue about. I feel embarrassed and lose confidence for not able to answer someone who speaks with a mixture of English and Cantonese (Hongkong-style English).

Siu Bing had in fact taken an English Training course in Shenzhen as a pre-emigration training, but still thought that she was behind others. Though Hong Kong is not a completely English-speaking community, the daily use of a mixture of Cantonese and English, plus its being essential to social mobility inevitably pushes new arrivals to try to master this linguistic skill.

In the Shatin Center, there was a class named "Hongkong-style English", I found a similar Hongkong-style English course in the Mongkok center. Below is a record in my field notes written, when the teacher taught the English word "style", "size", "receipt" and "discount". She was giving examples of Hongkong-English:

Teacher: Some Hong Kong people may ask you, "*Néih haih māt yéh* 'style' *a*?"

(你係乜嘢 style 呀?, What kind of style do you like?)

Teacher: You may say, "*Néih jeuk māt yeh sàai-sí (size) a*?" (你著乜嘢 *sàai-sí* 呀?, What size do you wear?)

Teacher: The word, "receipt" can always be heard in conversation in Hong Kong. You may ask the cashier, "*Néih hó ngh hó yi béi jèung* 'receipt' *ngóh a*? " (你可唔可以俾張 receipt 我呀?, Could you give me a receipt?)

Teacher: The word, "discount" is also very useful in daily conversation. You may ask the salesperson, "*Néih hó ngh hó yi béi go* 'discount' *ngóh a*?" (你可唔可以俾個 discount 我呀?, Can you give me a discount?)

A student called Jane, 28 years-old, who just got her Hong Kong identity card, could quickly assimilate some English words into daily conversation. When she saw the word, "cheap" printed in the class notes, she asked,

I always heard when my niece and nephew were fighting, they always yelled to each other and said, '*Néih hóu* cheap *a*! (你好 cheap 呀!, You're so cheap!) Are they the same words?

In this way, the women mainland students were not really learning proper English as Hong Kong students (including their children who have moved to Hong Kong) learn in school. The women students were learning a hybrid language of English and

Cantonese.

Not only were these women taught to make up Hongkong-style English sentences, they were also disciplined in learning Hongkong-style English pronunciation. People from different parts of the world speak English with the accent of their own language. For instance, the "American accent", the "Australian accent", the "Scottish accent" and the "Singaporean accent", and so forth. In my fieldwork, I found the women mainland students were trained to speak English with a Hong Kong accent. The following is an interesting example:

Teacher: Can every one of you follow and read with me about the "monfs" (months)?..... "Junile" (July)..... Any questions?

Jane: Oh, I want to ask you about some pronunciations. "Is it 'July' or 'Junile'?"

Teacher: It's "Junile"!

Jane: Oh! Is it? I used to pronounce it as "July" when I was in China. Okay, "Junile", "Junile", "Junile", ... It's interesting, every place has a different way of pronounciation ...Another word, "Is it 'months' or 'monfs'?"

Teacher: It should be "monfs"!

Jane: "monfs", "monfs" .....

In this case, the cultural background of the teacher gave her power to claim the authority of knowledge regarding English language. As Foucault writes, "power

produces knowledge" and "power and knowledge imply one another" (1977: 175). My informants, who were powerless in this context, were willing to believe that whatever was taught in the center was absolutely correct, and willing to discard what they had, including their accent, in order to become an insider of the host society. Similarly, the following is an account of removing mainland accent so as to achieve accentless Cantonese.

Learning "accentless" Cantonese

The belief among Hong Kong people that the Cantonese is superior over other Chinese languages encouraged the women to learn it as one of the first steps to integrate into Hong Kong. It is essential even though some of them have already grasped the basic conversational skills while working in Shenzhen and watching Hong Kong TV programs at home. As discussed before, speaking with *daaih luhk yàm* (大陸音, mainland accent) or *hèung hah yàm* (鄉下音, rural accent), is treated as a linguistic marker of "otherness" in the Cantonese-speaking society of Hong Kong. According to Bernard and Spencer, speech is "treated as property of persons and social groups; people who share ways of speaking (i.e. who have a common set of linguistic practices) are said to be the members of the same speech community" (1996: 326). In Hong Kong society where the locals regard Cantonese as the property of Hong Kong people, mainland immigrants who speak in other Chinese languages

are regarded as "outsiders" and inferior to the locals.

Almost all of my informants felt scared and embarrassed to speak Cantonese in public especially when they first arrived, as if their identity would be exposed through speaking in Cantonese. Becky, aged 28, recalled,

> I remember when I first arrived, I always kept my mouth shut when my husband and I went out shopping or went dining outside. I always let my husband speak for me. Because whenever I opened my mouth to speak Cantonese, people treated me differently, they gave me an unfriendly face, spoke back to me in an unfriendly way. The typical example is the experience in Kwong Wah Hospital that I shared with you last time[24]. Or when I tried to buy some clothes, the salespersons seemed not to want to answer me, or sometimes gave me an unfriendly glance. I'm not saying all Hong Kong people are absolutely unfriendly, but I did have these kinds of experiences.

Jane, aged 28, also shared similar experiences. She said,

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[24] Becky said, "There was once I went back to the public hospital for check-up. It was a foreign doctor, so they've arranged a female interpreter for me. The doctor asked if I still feel sick, so I told her so and so, then the interpreter immediately scolded me, "This is the special unit for the problems related to the brain only, please don't tell us the sickness of the other parts of your body." Becky got very upset and said, "But it's the doctor asked me do I still feel sick, so I told her! She never mentioned that I can't say anything wrong with the rest of my body!" Then the interpreter giggled to another nurse, Becky got more agitated because she felt that they're laughing at her accent, so she argued back very seriously, "What's so funny! What are you laughing about?" Then the interpreter stopped, and spoke in English to the doctor again, I guess she was continuing with the translation.

For example when I walked on the street, people gave me a weird glance when they heard me speaking in an inaccurate accent of Cantonese. Sometimes, my friends who live in Tin Shui Wai asked me to go *yumcha* together, and we speak in Mandarin, because my friends still can't pick up this dialect (Cantonese) fluently though they've been in Hong Kong for a longer period. People [around us] gave us weird glances!

Feeling embarrassed so frequently, some of my informants were pressured to improve their Cantonese through taking a Cantonese class.[25]

Woman immigrants' Cantonese ability also affect they career paths. Siu Lai and Hiu Wah, who were in their forties, had a lot to share about their experiences of being discriminated against because they were not able to speak "proper" Cantonese. Hiu Wah, who now works as a helper at a vegetable stall in the wet market, said, "I never thought about finding a decent job through reading newspaper advertisements because I've been rejected too many times because of my accent." Similarly, Siu Lai complained,

One example is when I washed dishes in a Chinese restaurant. I was hard-working and so the manager (who is a male) gave me lots of credit. But

[25] To my interviewees, learning Cantonese and English were both significant. They believed that attaining better English would allow changes in their social mobility; while better Cantonese would protect them from being discriminated against by the majority.

the rest of the female staff gossiped that I didn't deserve to work there since I didn't speak proper Cantonese! They gave me a very hard time through verbal discrimination!

The fact that their cultural and gender identity had already marginalized the women, they found their "accent" even became hazardous to their survival in Hong Kong. My interviewees decided to attend classes to correct their mainland accent.

The class setting was similar to that of the English class. Six women students were squeezed into an area about 150 square feet. They sat in a circle, attentively listened, jotted notes and repeatedly read what the teacher said. No matter how noisy it was outside the classroom, one could clearly hear how strictly the woman students had followed to read. They read, "*Néih hóu mà* (你好嗎, How are you), *Néih hóu mà, hóu hóu* (好好, Very good), *hóu hóu, jóu sàhn* (Good morning, 早晨) *jóu sàhn*...." and so forth. After reading with the teacher, they were required to take turns to practice conversation with their teacher. However, speaking in Cantonese in front of the class was not as easy as a local could imagine. Some were stuttering out their words while their faces turned into red, some could not change their language but spoke in Mandarin (their mother-tongue) occasionally. While women students were concentrating their class notes, the classrooms were visited by representative of some of the commercial companies which donated money to this community center.

Similar to the prisoners in the Panoptican that Foucault had described, the mainland students were "visible" and under surveillance to see if their performances in classes were worth for donation to maintain such new arrivals' projects.

Using a different accent in Cantonese to a great extent points to a person's having Chinese identity. Although having stayed in Hong Kong for a few decades already, Becky's mother-in-law still felt stigmatized due to her inaccurate accent. She put a lot of effort into learning Cantonese. In every lesson, she brought along a piece of paper filled with vocabulary or phrases that she did not know how to pronounce. I was once invited to her apartment for lunch, and when she finished washing the dishes, she came out of the kitchen carrying different kinds of utensils and started to ask me how to call them in Cantonese. She explained, "Because I don't speak fluent Cantonese, that's why whenever I speak up, people would ask me if I am from Fukien. I feel very embarrassed!" Asking a woman if she is from a certain Chinese province implicitly means questioning whether she just came from China, which automatically implies the status of "new immigrants". Such a question thus makes a woman feel inferior because she was fallen into the category of "new immigrants",

Cantonese speakers exercise power over non-Cantonese speakers in Hong Kong, and therefore, some Hong Kong people take advantage of those immigrants who do not speak Cantonese fluently. During my fieldwork, I participated in a fundraising

event which was part of the course on skills in retail sales, where almost 20 women immigrants practiced their skills in selling goods and operating the cash register. While I was volunteering at the center one day, helping the customers to fill in a questionnaire, I overheard an argument between a Hong Kong man and a mainland woman immigrant serving as the cashier. This Hong Kong man appeared to be in his 50s, was short, and had dark complexion. He was paying for some clothes he bought, but there seemed to be some problem with the payment. The man suddenly stepped back and yelled at the cashier and accused her:

The man: Oh, you're from mainland!"

Ah Fa: What?

The man: You've just said '*léuhng go*' (兩個, two pieces)

Ah Fa: No, I said '*luen gihn*'. (兩件, two pieces)[26]

The man: No, I've heard you saying '*léuhng go*'"

Ah Fa: '*luen gihn*'...

This Hong Kong man apparently did not pay enough money for the two pieces of clothes, but he used the woman immigrant's "inaccurate" Cantonese as an excuse to cover up his wrong-doing. In the end, he did not pay the right amount and left with bags of stuff, leaving the woman immigrant voiceless.

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[26] There are many different ways of saying "pieces" in relation to different objects in Cantonese.

Learning a new language also means to learn the ideology of the new place. In Hong Kong, people often stress the ability to be *síng muhk* (醒目), which requires a person to respond quickly and with a witty and flexible mind. Such mentality was also found to be taught in adaptation classes. For instance, the teacher of the course about cash register operation introduced some new vocabularies in the class, e.g. *chyun gwaih* (穿櫃, to steal money by breaking the drawer). To steal money is illegal. But the teacher taught them not only that a staff should not commit a crime, she also cannot behave in a way that may make others suspect them of committing a crime. Therefore, the teacher reminded them that they must close the drawer quickly after finishing any money transaction, otherwise the boss might suspect that they are trying to *chyun gwaih.* I believe this teacher was less teaching the women on ethical issues, but rather, to teach them to act smartly. The women were required to learn such mentality in order to perform in the workplace, because a person who fails to achieve it may have a difficult path in their career.

These women students also learned to be *síng muhk* through knowing the nicknames of banknotes. The teacher in the class 'cash register operation' asked, "Can you guys tell me the nicknames of some of the Hong Kong banknotes? "When the students were still thinking about this, the teacher told them the answers: they are *chìng háaih* (青蟹, literally 'green crab', ten dollar banknote), *hùhngsàamyùh* (紅衫

魚 , literally 'golden thread fish', one hundred dollar banknote), and *gàm ngàuh* (金牛, literally 'golden cow', one thousand dollar banknote). In this example, we see how these women learned the language in a more local way which helped them to integrate. At the same time, they were expected by the Hongkong-teacher that they would become more *síng muhk* (smart) and would not be cheated easily in cases when people just refer the nicknames of banknotes during process of money transactions.

Acceptable femininity in Hong Kong was taught in the in the health class 'Eatsmart' organized by the social center. The social worker asked, "Do you know what adjectives are used to describe fat people [in Hong Kong]?" The students paused. The teacher answered herself,

> *jyù pàh* (豬扒, pork chop), *máih jì lìhn* (米芝蓮, the mascot of the Michelin brand of tyres), *bèi lèih* (啤梨, pear)...Do you know what *máih jì lìhn* is, by the way?

The women were all silent. These adjectives used to describe "fat" women tell us that women who are not slim enough are highly unacceptable in Hong Kong society. They are negatively associated with fatness and laziness Therefore, as the women immigrants learned the new language, they also learned about how most of Hong Kong people think about femininity.

Learning Proper Behavior

As research has shown it was the middle class in Hong Kong who have a higher proportion to identify themselves as hèunggóngyàhn, (Lau 2000) and Cole (1997) also argues it is important to study class identities in relation to migrants' experiences in a new place. I try to analyze what my interviewees have learnt in order to move up to the middle class. Here, I define "middle class" not only in terms of money they earned, but the behavior they learned that are more acceptable by hèunggóngyàhn.

There is no specific course on "Learning Appropriate Behaviors in Hong Kong", but these are nevertheless introduced through other lessons or activities. For instance, in an English lesson, the mainland women were asked to write in English on an exercise sheet on the topic, "Amusement Park". On the sheet, there were numerous concepts about discipline, such as "Don't run", "Don't litter" and "Stay in line". Though the English teacher did not explicitly teach what kinds of behaviors are considered appropriate by Hong Kong people, she did repeatedly pronounce and explain the meanings of these phrases. I believe the concepts would be internalized by the women and later transmitted to their children. In fact, in the community centers, I had often observed many migrant mothers yelling at their kids to queue up when waiting to play games, and not to throw rubbish around. This shows that the

knowledge of "queuing" and ""cleanliness" is reproduced in daily life.

Learning to be "polite" based on the standards of Hong Kong people became a burden to my informants. My informants imitated Hong Kong mothers to teach their children behave properly, but in fact, my informants themselves also learned "appropriate behaviors" painfully after arriving to Hong Kong. They were given sheets of notes of "manners guide in Hong Kong", which had a long list of "dos" and "don'ts". Very much similar to Foucault's notion of soldiers, whose bodies are docile through training to "alert manner, an erect head, a taut stomach, broad shoulders…" (Foucault 1979, quoted in Rabinow 1984: 185), the women were required to be corrected: "Stand straight with your shoulders back", "Spray with deodorant if you have body odor", "No spitting in public area", "No picking of nose in front of people", "No squatting on the street", etc. It shows that unless the women could strictly self-disciplined their behavior, they could never achieve a Hong Kong identity.

In a gathering of the Newly Arrived Women's Group, many of them shared their difficulties in adjusting to changes of ways of teaching their children after arriving in Hong Kong. Nga Mui, a housewife with two children, said,

> Our family members never said 'please' and 'thank you' to others when we were in China, but now we need to learn to be polite…. It's so hard to teach my

kids, because they are already used to the way of how people interact in China! These women often labeled themselves as "uncivilized", and very often, they had internalized this sense of inferiority such that they saw themselves as not as "good" as the Hong Kong people in many respects, including in their behaviors.

Playing the role as nurturers, my informants were willing to be corrected in their behaviors in order to teach their children with Hong Kong ways of behavior. My informants were disciplined not to have "side talks", i.e. not to talk to each other while a speaker or teacher is talking to them. In 'Eatsmart' class, the social worker set the rules for the course, which appeared on the first page of the PowerPoint presentation. She wrote,

> The rules of this workshop:
>
> Listen to others attentively;
>
> Respect others when they are sharing;
>
> Be involved in discussion;
>
> Encourage each other.

However, the class did not turn out well. The social worker was annoyed by a lot of noise in the class. When she was presenting her lecture or answering questions of individual students, the students would start chatting by themselves. Feeling offended, the social worker usually reacted by saying politely, "Let's discuss it later!"

She sometimes clapped her hands and said, “Okay, let’s come back here.” or “Okay, everybody please look at me and pay attention!” But sooner or later, the women mainland students began talking to each other in a loud voice again. As Miss Lui, another social worker, introduced the students one by one in the course on skills in retail sales, one woman found that another woman who looked like her, and just started to talk with her loudly. Interrupted by this, Miss Lui was cross and said, “ Wai Kuen, can you quiet down a little? Talk to her when I’ve finished!” Staying in the field for three months gave me an impression that these women generally did not conform to the classroom behavioral code.. They loved to chat and interact with other women when they felt they needed to express themselves. The social workers and teachers tried very hard to discipline them into being attentive students, with different degrees of success.

These women were disciplined to be ‘polite’ in the manner of Hong Kong people. In the retail sales skills class, Ah Hung, who came from Sizhuang, said, “I’m very bad at speaking [to others]; my words are very blunt and easily make other people angry.” Then the teacher started to train them how to better present themselves through speaking to others. She asked Ah Hung to role-play as a salesperson, and the teacher acted as the customer. She asked, “I’ve got a son who’s five years old. Can you recommend me some of your products that are suitable for

his age?" Ah Hung replied, "*yáuh gèi haaih yàhn lò*!" (有機械人囉!, We have got robots!) Then the teacher immediately turned her face from Ah Hung to the rest of the students and said,

> Do you say, "*ngàai a! néih mài nèih go là! ceng haih hou ge*!" ? (哎呀! 你買呢個啦! 真係好架!, Oh, Buy this one! This is really good!) You need to refine your words. Try to avoid words like *là* (啦), *lò*(囉), *zaig* (隻), because these words will bring your emotions up.

The teacher made up another example and asked, "For example, if you saw a grandpa coming in and out a few times without buying anything, what would you say to him?" Wai Ying, another student, blurted out and said, "*néih séung yiu di mat yéh a, a baak?*" (你想要乜嘢,阿伯? So what do you what to buy, grandpa?) Then the teacher corrected her,

> No! No! No! You never say it this way. You may try to understand his financial situation and his family background. If he says he's got two grandsons, you may recommend some toys and say to him 'Buy one and get one free', so his two grandsons can have their own toy to play with.

However, in my analysis, these women have more difficulties in language skill rather than presentation skills. If they master the new language, they will be able to present themselves in a more appropriate way when dealing with the locals.

My interviewees were also required to act (or to perform) politely in a Hong Kong way. Here, I adopt Goffman's analysis on face work and performance (Goffman 1959, 1967). He writes, "Obvious examples in our society may be found in the sequence of 'Excuse me' and "Certainly," and in the exchange of presents and visits. The interchange seems to be a basic concrete unit of social activity and provides one natural empirical way to study interaction of all kinds" (Goffman 1967: 20). Similarly, my ethnographic data also shows a correction of behavior by performing politely. In the cash register operation class, the mainland women took turns to role-play as cashier machine operators or as customers. When Lai Chun took her turn to operate the cash register; she didn't say thank you to the customer after she told her the total amount. She said, "*yāt baak yih sahp màn* (一百二十蚊, One hundred and twenty dollars)!" Then Ah Fan, another student reminded her and said, "*yāt baak yih sahp màn à, dò jeh* (一百二十蚊呀, 多謝! One hundred and twenty dollars. Thank you!)!" In the second trial, Lai Chun almost forgot, but suddenly remembered to say *dò jeh*. She said, "*sàam baak luhk sahp gáu go bun............ dò jeh*!" (三百六十九個半呀.... 多謝! Three hundred and sixty-nine dollars.......Thank you!) " All the students laughed. From these examples, we could see they were taught and made to practice repeatedly, in order to meet the definition of politeness in Hong Kong.

In their daily lives, all informants who were mothers were willing to learn proper behavior from their children. Choi Wun, aged 38, a single mother, recalled,

> My son always said, 'Mommy, why do you walk with your hands swinging so exaggeratedly? You walk like soldiers who are marching! You see, other Hong Kong people walk very gently, but you walk like soldiers who are marching!' Or sometimes he said, 'Mommy, don't laugh so loud! See other mommies laugh very gently!' …….. Sometimes he asked me, 'What do you say? You say thank you to me first.' Sometimes he taught me letters like 'A, B, C', or phrases like 'Sorry', and 'Thank you!' My son acts like my teacher!

She continued,

> My husband (who had passed away), used to teach me to act politely in the public area. I remember once he took me to get the HK identity card at one of the government's building. I had no ideas about lining up, so I just dashed to the counter. My husband immediately yelled at me and said, "Hey, why are you so rude? You need to line up here!

So, to the women, not only did teachers in the classroom teach them, but they considered other people in Hong Kong, such as their own children, potential models of Hongkongness. Failure to reproduce these "proper behavior" will imply their failure to become a Hongkonger. Wai Ying, on the other hand, was alarmed by her

own behavior. She said,

> Very often I can't see my own problems. For instance, mainlanders like speaking loudly, [they are] very selfish and [they] don't care about other people.... I'm very aware of these [behavior and mentality] and try to avoid them.

Apparently, Wai Ying wanted to get rid of the label "mainlander" by shedding off some kinds of behavior and ways of thinking. In my field work, I often hear praises of adaptation classes. As what Lai San commented, "I could meet friends first of all. And you know we new arrivals are very rude. I learn from teachers and staff [of the community centers] about how to behave more softly." The stereotypes of mainlanders as impolite and selfish have made even the mainlanders themselves believe they are simply secondary to Hong Kong people.

Indeed, different views of "proper behavior" are found between Hong Kong people and mainlanders due to their different cultural backgrounds. During the health class called Eatsmart, the social worker defined oatmeal squares and milk as healthy products and therefore opened boxes of them for the women to try. Nobody touched them for the first 15 minutes. Since I was a bit hungry, I took a piece of oatmeal square and started eating. Seeing me eating, the teacher encouraged other participants to feel free to eat while she was teaching. But one mainland woman said, "It's very

impolite to eat now!" and the others sat still, shook their heads and refused to eat. I thought that maybe they did not feel hungry. But at the end of the class, students all started to share the snacks and even took some home. From this example, I had a direct experience of mainland Chinese having different interpretations of politeness: even though the social worker regarded the lessons would be more interactive by encouraging the women to have the real trial of healthy products, the women found it was inappropriate to eat during lessons because such action was considered not respecting to the speaker. In the class of retail sales skills, I had another interesting observation. Ah Kam raised a question about her experience of learning aerobics in Hong Kong. She said,

> I went to aerobics class this morning. My teacher asked me not to wear sandals anymore. I don't know why! Am I not showing my respect to her by not putting on proper shoes? Because in mainland, only wearing slippers [to go to class] is considered to be impolite, and it's okay to wear sandals.

From these two examples, we can see that the women also place importance on treating others politely; however, the different cultural background has led to different expectations of what constitute "proper behaviors" and "politeness", making it hard for newcomers to understand Hong Kong culture.

Many social centers try to work hand-in-hand with the government in

socializing new arrivals on values in anti-corruption and discipline. There are posters and pamphlets emphasizing the intolerance of corruption. On one occasion, when members of a community center and their family were sitting in the lobby, waiting for a tour bus to go out for a picnic, an incident happened. A little boy from an immigrant family was running around in the lobby. His mother shouted at him.

The mainland mother: Stop running around, or else the police will come and arrest you!

The Hongkong boy: Yes, we shouldn't run around…

A Hongkong mother: We don't need the presence of policemen, we're all good citizens and all behave well!

The mainland mother had already reproduced what she was expected to act, however, the Hong Kong mother was even stricter in the aspect of self-disciplined. Not only did it demonstrate how Hong Kong people try differentiating themselves from mainlanders by viewing themselves more self-disciplined, it also show mainland families learned Hongkong-style discipline beyond the classroom setting.

Learning the Hong Kong Spirit

Hong Kong politician often talk about the idea of *hèunggóngjìngsàhn* in their speeches, particularly during the years of economic depression and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003. *Hèunggóngjìngsàhn* (香港精神, literally

'Hong Kong spirit') refers to the hardworking and resilient spirit which is believed to underlie the economic development of Hong Kong. Tam (2002: 133) first defines it as,

> ....the essence of Hong Kong's success boils down to the common folk's ability that goes far beyond just a superficial mixture of Chinese and western traditions. Thus Hong Kong style adaptability is the hallmark of the heunggongyahn identity, and the perseverance to put this into practice amidst unfavorable situations is what Hong Kong people proudly call the Hong Kong spirit.

Tsang also points out the characteristics of Hong Kong people from a historical perspective, he opines (2004: 168),

> Flexibility and ingenuity, whether in investments, nature of business or in employment, were the keys for survival. Post-war Chinese immigrants to Hong Kong developed their entrepreneurial spirit to the full because they felt they could only rely upon themselves in this foreign enclave.

In the following, I attempt to provide an emic view of just what *hèung-góngjìngsàhn is* according to opinions found in newspaper and the Internet[27]. I

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[27] One example is "一切也有可能，才是香港精神。" ("Everything is possible, and this is what we mean by Hong Kong spirit") found on the website of (http://hk.knowledge.yahoo.com/question/?qid=7006071302538)

conclude that *hèunggóngjìngsàhn* is the attitude maintained by people in Hong Kong in their determination to fight to survive and create a better future no matter how difficult the circumstances are. It is best used to describe Hong Kong people in the 1970s when all kinds of industries were developing. However, many Hong Kong people have lamented that this kind of spirit has been fading in recent years. Interestingly, some politicians use this term to motivate Hong Kong people. For example, the Chief Executive, Donald Tsang often uses this term in his speeches. He further elaborates it as *pingbok* (拼搏, to struggle); *chòngsàn* (創新, to create); *jihkèuhng* (自強, to be self-empower) in order to combat the fearful economic competition from other regions in China.

Another term, "*sìjísàanhahjìngsàhn*" (獅子山下精神, literally 'the spirit under the Lion Rock') is often used by Hong Kong politicians to encourage Hong Kong people to unite and to overcome problems that they were facing. *Sìjísàan* is the famous mountain in Hong Kong called the Lion Rock. During the 1970s, the singer Roman Tam's hit song "*sìjísàanhah*"[28] (獅子山下, literally below the Lion Rock) popularized this idea, and at times of depression this has often been used to encourage people to help each other. In the 21 century, another term called *Hèunggó ngjìjí* (香港之子, the son of Hong Kong) has emerged. It refers to those Hong Kong

[28] There is a computerized version of the song sung by Yung Joey and Lo Man in the year of 2006.

citizen who made tremendous achievements, and therefore manifest the *Hèunggó ngjìngsàhn.* Chow Yuen Fat (周潤發), a Hong Kong actor who used to appear in Cantonese soap operas, has now become a famous actor in Hollywood) is the first to be given this title.

So did my informants learn the *Hèunggóngjìngsàhn* from their classes or from daily life? The teacher of the course on skills in retail sales always encouraged the students in her class; at the beginning of the lesson, she said, "Don't think that you're not doing a decent job. Always put your heart into it, and you'll have success [in the future]." This explicitly means that anything is possible in Hong Kong as long as you work hard and struggle. In other words, these women were encouraged to keep up the "Hong Kong Spirit" in order to fight and struggle in times of hardship.

My female interviewees also learned *Hèunggóngjìngsàhn* through daily practices. In the individual in-depth interviews, when asked about differences between working in Hong Kong and the mainland, Sum Yee Mama, aged 43, who was carer in an elderly home, said,

> In the mainland, I felt like we're not working, but playing. People are inefficient, [they work] very slowly, and their altitudes are not serious at all. In Hong Kong, the bosses are very smart. If they pay you $10, you need to give $10 worth of work back to them. You would be very lucky if they didn't ask

you to do extra work! For example, my boss always says to us, 'Don't go shopping after work, go home and think about how to improve your performance at work!' So now, even when I'm sleeping, I still dream of working, I said [in my dream], 'Hey, be quick! Wipe it clean!'

Another interviewee called Hoi Mei also had a similar response. She said,

> To work in the mainland is more relaxing, if you're asked to work for eight hours, you're in fact only working for three hours, then playing and chatting for the rest of the time. But in Hong Kong, eight hours of work really means eight hours of work, it's tough!

Working as a waitress in a restaurant at Causeway Bay, Mrs. Chui said,

> To survive in Hong Kong, a person needs to have confidence, needs to works hard and quick. For example, even when there are no customers at the place where I work, we still need to stand properly at the door of kitchen to wait for orders. If we chat and laugh around, the manager will scold us!

Another informant, Lai Chuen, aged 38, had internalized the belief that being "fast" is a symbol of being a successful hèunggóngyàhn. She walked extremely fast while we were heading to her apartment for a visit. I said to her, "Wow, you walk very fast! " Then she was very happy and regarded it as a compliment. She replied,

> You know what, the policemen in Hong Kong could tell whether you're a

hèunggóngyàhn or not by checking your feet: whether you walk fast or not! So I try to walk as fast as I can after I move to Hong Kong!

The above examples show how the Hong Kong spirit was internalized by these female immigrants. While they were marginalized to work in the lower strata because of their non-local identity, they were disciplined by their bosses to be fast and efficient. One needs to note that these women were not paid for each job they do, but on a monthly basis. Therefore, it was very clear that the faster they worked, the more their employers would benefit. But these women were happy to speed up according to instructions, because the faster they worked, the more they could prove they had become efficient and hardworking Hong Kong people.

Another characteristic believed to symbolize Hong Kong society is to be "international and cosmopolitan. In this research, I focus on computer classes to see how these women learned to survive in the computerized and globalized world. Though these courses were about teaching basic skills of operating computer, my observation in the introductory class found that the teacher indeed had a passion to empower these women through teaching them how to search for paid work in internet, and even kept up these women's social network with their hometown through using e-mails.

Most students in the class said they had computer knowledge in the mainland

before they came to Hong Kong; however they needed to be retrained due to years of having left the labor market to take care of their children. Learning to recognize the regular (complicated) style of Chinese characters was the first barrier. For instance, a student called Ah Yu, who brought along her daughter to attend the class, said, "We used to learn to type simplified characters, but now we need to learn how to type the complicated style!" Ah Kam complained, "I think the Chinese typing is very weird in Hong Kong. For example, the word, '太', we need to consider even the little stroke at the top .... It's very hard to remember!" Their little knowledge of regular script had made them more difficult to master Chinese typing, resulting in greater frustration.

The women were required and disciplined to learn computer knowledge in the way that most Hong Kong people. The teacher of the computer course was strict in reminding them to switch their mind set from the simplified to the regular Chinese characters. For example, when the students were asked how to type the word "八", (*baat,* number eight), Man Wah associated it as a simplified Chinese word and replied, "This is the word, '儿' (*yìh*, little children). Then teacher responded strictly, "Don't think of the simplified Chinese writing, think of the complicated one!" The students were therefore disciplined to learn in a new way, resulting in frustration as they had to unlearn what they had worked hard to acquire.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined what Hongkongness is on a daily level, and how my women interviewees learned Hongkongness through taking adaptation classes, experiencing new work environments and interacting with their children who were either locally born or who migrated to Hong Kong earlier than them. They were to be trained to become more like Hong Kong people and less like mainlanders in the areas of language, social etiquette, and appearance. I argue the docile bodies of the women were constructed by the strict regulation on their use of language, accent, their behavior, and their spirit. The women who frequently watched their feet as if they were walking fast enough as the Hong Kong people; who learned English pronunciation by rote; who worried that their "accent-less" Cantonese could never be achieved; who reminded themselves to act politely in a Hongkong way. These women were just as the inmate of the Panoptican, where "state of conscious and permanent visibility" had controlled and produced inferiorized bodies.

I ask who makes these women into self-policing subjects during the process of learning? Bartky writes "discipline can be institutionally *unbound* and institutionally bound" (2003: 36). Similar to this research, the "classroom" did not simply exist in the physical structure of the community centers, but rather, extended to their families and even as a whole of Hong Kong. In Bartky's words, the disciplinary power "is

everywhere and it is nowhere; the disciplinary is everyone, and yet no one in particular" (2003: 36). Therefore, there was no single disciplinary power over these women, but rather, it could be all of the following: the social workers, the teachers, their children, their husbands and all people in Hong Kong.

Through participant observation, I found that there was no room for these women to develop the skills or potentials they already have. In the surface, women immigrants are required to learn to be like Hong Kong people, but their inferiority is reinforced through learning skills that we considered socially undesirable, which I will further discuss in Chapter 5. I also argue that there is no singular form of Hongkongness; the Hongkongness that the female immigrants are learning are largely by-products of imagination which I will fully discuss in chapter 6.

Chapter 4 Reconstructing Womanhood

> My [ex-]husband sometimes said, 'Look at you! You dress like a country bumpkin… You need to wear a bit more sexy, but cannot *zau gwòng* (走光, showing suggestive parts of her body) e.g., the little top with straps hanging over your shoulders. (Miu Ping)

In Chapter 3, I studied how my informants learned "Hongkongness" in daily life. An important part of this process is the learning of a Hongkong-style womanhood, which deserves a separate discussion. In this chapter, I will first examine how they emphasized the differences between Hong Kong women and themselves, and how they relearned femininity modeled on a particular type of Hong Kong woman, from appearance to manners, body, motherhood and wifehood. The second part of this chapter will be a focus on the relationship between their social integration and their marital experience.

What makes a Hong Kong woman different from a mainland woman? Is there a fixed Hongkong-style womanhood? Previous research has largely portrayed Chinese women as being subordinated to the power of their fathers, husbands and sons in a patriarchal system (Watson 2004). Though people in Hong Kong have experienced a different history from their compatriots on the mainland since the British colonization in 1842, the status of women in Hong Kong did not change much until the 20th century. In fact, Hong Kong retains more "Chinese traditions" as the

mainland went through changes, such as socialist rule and Cultural Revolution. Chinese customs, for example, keeping *muizai* (妹仔, a legitimate practice of selling daughters by parents as labor work to other households, who then had the right to resell them on to other guardians, the young enslaved girls were being called *muizai*) were prolonged until the 1950s in daily practice, though its abolition was ordered in 1938. It was because the confinement of *muizai* to domestic work had made them unaware of their protected status in law (Jaschok 1988). Prior to 1971, there were also women married as concubines under the system of polygynous marriage. Their reproductive ability was the main reason for their marriage, and they could be dispelled from households if they failed to reproduce a male descendent.

As discussed in Chapter 2, women's status in Hong Kong gradually changed with their participation in waged work in the manufacturing industries in the 1960s[29] and with increasing schooling opportunities in the late 1970s. Six years of free, compulsory and universal education in 1971 and its extension to secondary three by 1978 allow Hong Kong females who are at the age of schooling to attend school. In

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[29] Compared to the late 19th century when there was basically no occupation where women could fit in, factory women emerged from late 1930s onwards as textile industries moved from mainland China to Hong Kong to flee from Japan's occupation (Ho, Wong & Law: 2005: 129 – 134). Having "fast and nimble fingers", more Hong Kong women benefited along with the blooming of industrial development in the 1960s and 1970s, especially in areas of production of textiles, wigs and electronic components (Leung, 1995: 8)

the 1980s, tertiary education became more popular so that many females who had achieved academic success could go further education in at universities. In the year 2000, the percentage of women attending local universities had risen to 53.1 percent (Lee 2003: 5). Women in Hong Kong therefore experienced changes of social status through earning money and contributing to their family expenses and personal expenses. With women's increasing entry into higher education, some Hong Kong women could further attain higher status through working in managerial or professional work with higher salaries.

Today, the mass public has an impression that women in Hong Kong have gained higher status than ever before, and almost share equal status with men in recent years. A hotly debated issue around the concept of *góng néuih* [30] (港女, literally Hong Kong females) has appeared since mid-2006. One of the major criticisms towards women is they are being "too financially and emotionally independent", showing that a rise in status does mean that gender equality has been achieved. Despite these changes, not all women in Hong Kong have experienced such kinds of status changes. Indeed, there are wide variations in status among women in Hong Kong, particularly if we consider the female mainland immigrants

[30] Referred to the website of "香港網絡大典" (means Hong Kong Wikipedia), the definition of "*góng néuih*" ("港女") refers to "the women in Hong Kong who have bad conduct, but does not mean all women who reside in Hong Kong." ("是指擁有某些特徵的卑鄙女人，絕對不是泛指「居住於香港的女性」。")

and ethnic minority women who have already gained residency in Hong Kong, but are marginalized from the mainstream.

Interestingly, an enormous number of comparisons between "typical" Hong Kong and mainland women are found on the internet[31]. Mainland women are believed to be more *wàn yàuh* (溫柔, gentle), *wàn seuhn* (溫順, tamed), *hàau* (姣, flirty), physically attractive and 'better' at sex, etc. On the other hand, they are condemned (especially by Hong Kong women) to be more sexually available to any men, such that there are no differences between them and prostitutes. A new term *daaih luhk gài* (大陸雞, prostitutes from the mainland) has recently flooded forums on the internet. So what do these images of mainland femininity symbolize, and how do they affect mainland women's adjustment to Hong Kong? In dealing with social workers, class teachers, husbands and children, do the various value systems clash, and how does this contribute to the formation of a Hong Kong female identity among mainland women?

[31] Referred to the website of "《香港女人》vs《大陸女人》"(means "Hong Kong women versus mainland women"); the website of "Yahoo Knowledge" about discussion of "香港因男人娶大陸女人的原因" (means "Why Hong Kong Men Marrying Mainland Wife?") and "各位女士們…你們怎樣看內地女士" (means "Ladies, What do you Think about Mainland Women?"; the website of "Baby Kingdom" about discussion of "娶大陸妹心態" (means "The Psychology of Marrying Mainland Girls" and "港女邊緣化" (means "The Marginalization of Hong Kong Women").

Dressing up in Hongkong-Style

To the casual observer, the first and foremost distinction between Hong Kong and newly arrived mainland women is their style of dress. Clothing is definitely a marker of cultural identity. As Seller says, clothing "shows who you are and where you come from and the result is that you remain alien and different" (1994: 108-109). Interesting, previous research shows women migrants admire women, who are locally born in the host place, possess ideal forms of femininity. For example, research by Anthias (2000:16) finds that European women serve as the model of "ideal women" for migrants in Europe. Similarly, to the women interviewees in this research, Hongkong-style womanhood also served as the role model for them to learn from. However, Elias warns that the more the women longed for transformation of womanhood, the lesser they felt satisfied as they were negating what they had already attained (Elias 1991, quoted in Shilling 1993: 125). Feminists like Naomi Wolf (1991) and Rose Weitz (2003: 9) opine that the social pressure is increasing in modern world when women are trying hard to attain an acceptable appearance. The following are some examples showing their anxieties to about dressing up in Hong Kong.

Mainland migrants are commonly viewed as country bumpkins because the way they dress is perceived to be *nèuhng* (娘). "What is *nèuhng?*" is the question that

Becky asked the teacher in her Cantonese class. The teacher explained the word *nèuhng* as 'tacky, and old fashioned'. One of my informants, Lai San, aged 40, who had been in Hong Kong for one year, commented,

> To be honest, people could tell we're from the mainland by looking at our appearance. No matter how hard we learn to dress ourselves, we still do not look like Hong Kong people..... I mean the way people dress and the impression they create to other people. Even if we all buy the clothes from Hong Kong, the way that Hong Kong people match them is very different from that of mainlanders.

She then recalled,

> People can easily tell I'm from the mainland. I remember the first year I came to Hong Kong with the Two-way Permit. I was asked for the ID card for many times by the police: Twice when I was taking a bus from Shek Kep Mei to Tze Wun Shan, and once when I was walking on the street with my auntie. The policeman didn't ask my auntie but [asked) me only!

It was not only Lai San who felt uncomfortable with this. All of my informants believed that their clothing style made them stand out from the majority of Hong Kong women. For instance, Becky, aged 28, who stayed in Hong Kong on and off through a series of Two-way Permit, she said,

> I'm a bit frustrated and don't want to buy [clothes] anymore..... I don't know what to wear and how to match the clothes, I always feel like people are staring at my appearance, and mine is not as trendy as the one next to me. I think Hong Kong girls are very fashionable.

They felt they had different experiences in Hong Kong due to the way they dressed. They regarded themselves as old-fashioned, and thus inferior to local women. When asked about the distinction between Hong Kong and mainland women's clothing styles, an informant who worked as a Mandarin teacher, said,

> I think there are big differences in clothing between women from two borders, I mean in terms of taste (品味) and matching (配搭). The outlook of Hongkong-born girls is more casual. They wear jeans and sneakers; but mainland women love to wear a set, the color tone has to match from head to toe, even with the color of their handbags and other accessories.

Another informant had a different idea. She said,

> Hongkong-born girls are big spenders. They spend a lot of money on clothing, make-up and jewelry. Unlike Hongkong-born girls who wear jewelry neatly before they leave their apartments, we new immigrants wear very simple and cheap clothing. I do nothing about my outlook except combing my hair tidily before meeting my sisters (female friends).

Though the first statement may be more accurate in everyday life, both of the above descriptions do not tell us what Hongkong-styled clothing is. It is because fashion changes over time and varies across seasons, and women from different classes wear differently just as the second statement has reflected.[32]

Although the clothing style of women is not uniform, there are certain rules that define what is "appropriate" and "inappropriate". Some of the community centers organized classes to teach the female mainland immigrants how to dress. However, owing to the limitation of time at fieldsite, I could not do participant observation in these classes. Instead, I will use a documentary film to demonstrate what and how they learned. In a documentary film called "*jouh go sàn néuih yahn*" (做個新女人, literally To Be a New Woman), produced by the Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK), it featured how a social worker invited a male image designer to teach the female mainland immigrants what were the differences between the outlook of Hongkong-born girls and mainland women. When he demonstrated that wearing sandals with a pair of short socks is a major indicator of mainland women, the women immediately took off their short socks in response to the designer's comment. As have discussed in Chapter 3 that disciplinary practices in Foucauldian sense were

[32] It is now getting more difficult to give a general statement about mainland women's clothing, because they dress differently according to their status and financial income. Nevertheless, mainland women who typically wear silky stockings with a pair of sandals on can still be found in Hong Kong.

found in their process of learning cultural skills, this case also shows the women's absolute obedience when they were told what kind of outlook should be attained in Hong Kong.

Reconstructing a Hongkong-Style Beautiful Face

Though Hong Kong people and mainlanders are ethnically the same, many of my interviewees believed that there was a fundamental physical distinction between the locals and themselves. In a news report about how immigrant women felt about cosmetic classes organized by L'Oreal and the Hong Kong Council of Social Services(South China Morning Post 2004b), one woman was quoted as saying,

> Only after I arrived here I found out how important it is to have proper makeup. I feel only when I do that, the locals would treat me as one of them.

It showed that these woman were not only learning for the sake of becoming prettier, but to be more like the Hongkong-women in their outward appearance.

Facial care and make-up classes are commonly found in community centers serving female new immigrants. These are seen by the social workers as a way to build up the confidence of newly arrived women through the transformation of their appearance. In order to show how these women students thought about beauty, I will cite some quotes from the Eatsmart class where I did participant observation. The

teacher asked her students to discuss "what is beauty", and eight students sitting in a circle started to express their opinions:

> Kit Sum: (One) has to be tall, a tall person. Her face is not very important!
>
> Ah Yin: I also think that the figure is very important, and eyebrows, too. I know some actresses like Sammi Cheng (Hong Kong singer)and QiQi (Hong Kong model) have their eyebrows embroidered artificially, but (I think) natural beauty is more important, I think!.... umm....A beautiful girl has to walk with confidence in front of people.
>
> Ah Hung: I don't like girls putting on too much make-up. A beautiful girl has to be natural and not to be too exaggerated with the make-up. She should give people a comfortable feeling. Also, (she) cannot have a hunchback. She has to walk up straight with confidence.
>
> Siu Fun: She can't be too skinny, has to be healthy, and her skin should have the color of pink shinning through the white.
>
> Kuan Ho: (One) has to have smooth and white complexion. No pimples! People like Cheung Pak Chee (Hong Kong actress) is super beautiful to me!

The above shows the beauty concept by a group of female mainland immigrants who used Hong Kong singers and models as their reference and standard of beauty: a tall body figure, and smooth and white complexion, which was almost the same idea as many advertisements for Hong Kong's beauty salons.

In this particular context, I argue that these women were also learning the concept of beauty that was acceptable in Hong Kong. Though these beauty classes

were not called "learning Hong Kong-style beauty", nonetheless some of their content was based on Hong Kong people's beauty standards. In my fieldwork, I had observed and participated in the Beauty Workshop which was co-organized by the community center and a cosmetic company. Four beauty consultants in black suits and with heavy make-up came into the classroom, where four big tables were set up with mirrors, clips, trays of cottons and wet tissue. Each of them was appointed by the head consultant, Mabel, to station themselves at one of the tables and to "look after" the female mainland students. Students were assigned to sit at different tables, and I was arranged to sit at one of the tables with three other mainland women students.

To achieve a higher degree of acceptability in Hong Kong, the women students learned how to whiten their skin. Mabel said, "Your skin is just like your clothes, if you want to keep your clothes for life, you must keep your skin moisturized." After a brief discussion of the steps to beautiful skin, students started to try out the products. Without even listening to any instructions, the students already picked up the big hair clips on the table and put them into their hair, and proceeded to cleansing their faces. They were only allowed to clean half of it so as to compare their skin before and after cleansing. Mabel asked, "How do you feel after cleansing your face? Do you feel brighten up or whiter than before?" Almost all students were happily looking at

the mirrors and nodding their heads. The reason that my informants were happy to see their complexion turned whiter was because they believed they had been transformed into a prettier woman. And secondly, mainlanders are stereotyped as farmers who worked in the fields and often exposed their face to the sun. My informants who had darker skin were more likely to have negative experiences, such as an unfriendly stare by a passer-by, or to be suspected and asked to show their Hong Kong identity card by the police. Therefore, the ideal of a white complexion is especially important for these female mainland immigrants.

The teachers of this Beauty Workshop also taught the students about the quality of beauty products, and said that brand names would match their new identity as being "hèunggóngyàhn". After cleansing their faces, the students were asked to try using another product called "toner". Mabel said,

> The toner helps to keep your skin moist and actually can clean your skin again. For example, when you go back to China, if you find the running water is yellowish, you may use this toner to clean your face [instead of using the yellowish water in China].

Mabel then emphasized that some of their products were made in Germany, such as the "masks" that were good for firming the skin around the eyes. Mabel's teachings created the belief that living in Hong Kong was no longer like how the female

immigrants used to live in China. They were encouraged to use "better quality" products to construct a "beautiful face", and in this process, it reinforced the conception of "superiority" of Hong Kong over China that most Hong Kong people, including the beauty consultants, believed in.

The process of beautification was closely related to the cultural and gender identity of the female mainland immigrants. The head consultant recognized their new cultural identity as hèunggóngyàhn and gave advice to them. She said,

> The five steps of facial care include cleansing, adjusting skin texture, toning, moisturizing and protecting. You should all clean your face both day time and night time. 11pm to 2 am is the period when your skin starts to detoxify, that's why you all have to try to sleep earlier, but I wonder know how many Hong Kong people can do it.

At the same time, the gender identity of these women was also in consideration. Mabel held up a pamphlet in her hand and said,

> I've just got a pamphlet from one of the government hospitals, which says that overexposure to the sun will cause skin cancer. So you all need to put on this kind of lotion (a sun block) whenever you go out to pick up your child from school or go to the wet market [to buy food].

This implies that the beauty consultants had defined these women immigrants as

having successfully transformed themselves into hèunggóngyàhn who were "busy" and might not have enough time to take care of their faces. Throughout the class, the students were imagined to be typical housewives who solely relied on their husband's income, being unproductive to Hong Kong's economy, and remained in the domestic sphere only. Therefore, constructing a beautiful a Hongkong-style face, as advised by the beauty consultants, would be one of the ways to keep their marriage alive.

Learning to be a Wife of Hong Kong Man

In the above paragraphs, I have discussed the notion that the appearance of mainland women was expected to be "modified" after moving to Hong Kong. From this, I go on to question if their gender identity is being modified as well? What are the roles played by their Hong Kong husbands and social workers in such modification? The following will illustrate how their femininity and sexuality is reconstructed.

In a patriarchal society like Hong Kong, women's status is still subordinate to men. Mainland women who are married to Hong Kong men, were mostly secondary subjects to their husband, very much like what De Beauvoir (1989) describes. For those who married to a Hong Kong husband and went to community centers for

retraining, they were heavily influenced by their husband and by the social workers at the centers. Here, I try to investigate the learning of "independence" and "dependence" of female mainland immigrants in respect to finance, emotions, and sexuality.

Financially speaking, many female mainland immigrants are seen as dependents of their Hong Kong husbands. This stands in direct opposition to the aim of "financial independence" cultivated by the social workers. The community centers have some vocational training courses for the mainland women and encouraged them to grasp these training opportunities, though the training may not be a full form of empowerment for them. In Chapter 3, I quoted a lot of examples about how the women mainland immigrants acquired vocational and cultural skills in order to get jobs in Hong Kong. Here, I would like to demonstrate how some of the Hong Kong husbands tried to hinder their mainland wives in gaining financial independence.

Lai San, aged 40, worked hard to combat the difficulties she had in Hong Kong. She was a primary school teacher in China, and resented having to work as a "coolie" (e.g. dish cleaner, or sales staff). Though she found it uncomfortable to work in the wet market to sell vegetables, she thought she could at least earn some money. However, this job did not last long as she was forced to quit in order to make lunch for her husband who liked eating at home during his lunch break. During my

fieldwork, I often saw her rushing to leave before the class ended. She once explained to me that she needed to buy food from the market and to cook for her husband. Lai San did not have a burden in terms of raising their children who were already in their twenties. Rather, she aimed to prove herself as constructive and productive through gaining financial independence. However, she did not find it as easy as she expected, and one of the major obstacles was her Hong Kong husband's unreasonable control.

Emotionally speaking, however, some of my informants faced a lot of confrontations with their husbands for not being allowed to go out at all to attend classes in the community centers. Mrs. Liu, aged about 50, said,

> My husband has got nothing to do now (unemployed). He's staying at home day and night. No matter he's eating, sleeping, sitting, or standing, he's at home day and night. But I'm very different, I like going out to take classes and attend worship [at church].....He really hates me going out to learn anything. It seems that he's afraid I'll be smarter than him. But in fact, I just want to improve myself, so as to enhance my skills to rear our children. He's very much lacking in self-confidence.

She continued,

For example, I went to learn foot massage[33] recently which took me 25 lessons in total. He didn't like it at all and questioned why I liked learning this subject. He even accused me by saying 'Are you intending to seduce another guy?" I was so mad! Taking classes pushed us to quarrel.

Apparently, these Hong Kong husbands became a source of hindrance in their self-development.

Some social workers realize that many mainland wives tend to rely on their Hong Kong husbands in everyday life. To tackle this issue, one female social worker prepared some diaries for her women clients. She explained to them that,

> Living in Hong Kong is very different from living in the mainland. You all will find yourselves a lot busier [than when you were in mainland]. So look, this is a personal diary for you to put in your own handbag. You no longer need to write up your plans on the big calendar hung on the wall at home. The calendar has too little space for you to write on first of all, and besides, you don't want your husband to know every single thing about you! You could have your own secret, e.g. a 'date' with our own social center!

Though a diary may not mean anything to a Hong Kong woman, to these women it

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[33] While a professional foot massager provides therapy to individuals with muscular pain, and acquiring the qualification implies extra income, however in Hong Kong massaging is often considered to be a front for prostitution.

means learning to organize, to plan and to schedule their busy lives, just as most other Hong Kong women do. This could also be considered as part of the empowerment process. The ideas of having control of the women's own private lives were taught and thus their self-consciousness in this regard would be raised to a certain extent.

In terms of sexuality, there is also learning of an ideal sexuality vis-à-vis their Hong Kong husbands through daily interaction. Miu Ping was a typical example of the former cases. She told me in the in-depth interview,

> My [ex-] husband sometimes said, 'Look at you! You dress like a country bumpkin… You need to wear more sexily, but cannot *zau gwòng* (走光, *showing suggestive parts of her body*) e.g., the little top with straps hanging over your shoulders…..' I wouldn't wear according to his advice, unless he bought the clothes for me. You know, if you wear too sexy, people would say I'm a prostitute behind my back.

To a certain degree, Miu Ping lost her autonomy in choosing her clothing style. She had a deep concern about her husband's taste in women's clothing, even though she had already divorced him. On the day that I met her for the interview, she was wearing a "typical" little top that would be admired by her ex-husband.

Jane also loved to wear sleeveless clothes with a narrow strap on her shoulders.

Whenever I met her at the centers, she dressed in almost as little clothes as she could. Her female friends from mainland asked her once, "Hey, you always wear so little, doesn't your husband scold you?" This example reflected that a lot of mainland wives were not allowed by their Hong Kong husbands to wear too little in public. However, Jane was an exception among all her mainland friends in that she was allowed to do so. Being "allowed" did not mean she is free from her husband, rather, she was reconstructing an image that her partner was fond of.

The sexuality of some of my informants was modified by their Hong Kong husbands in another way. Becky was one of the core informants I often met in the community center. She was always in a T-shirt and skirt that covered her knees. She wore glasses, and tied her hair in a short pony tail. Once I visited Becky's family in Hong Kong, and she showed me pictures of her life in Shenzhen. In the photos, she was a pretty girl with big eyes, red lips and long hair over her shoulders. She did not look old-fashioned as most Hong Kong people would imagine mainland women. In the photos, she wore jeans and a little pink T-shirt. I was shocked by how pretty she looked when she was in China. She said,

> I feel like I don't know how to dress up after arriving in Hong Kong, but when I was in China, I did! My husband always complained to me that the clothes that I bought from Shenzhen are too tacky. So now, I'm a bit frustrated and

don't want to buy clothes anymore..... I don't know what to wear and how to match the clothes, I always feel that people are staring at me, and I didn't look as trendy as the woman next to me. I think Hong Kong girls are very fashionable.

From the above examples, we could see that many of my informants' tastes in clothing were controlled by their Hong Kong husbands. Whether these women wore very little clothes or not, it implies that they were obliged to construct an image that their Hong Kong husband expected them to have.

Some of my informants did not have a say as to their body figure, but had to alter it according to the tastes of their Hong Kong husbands. In Bourdieu's analysis, body is an incomplete project that needs to be reproduced and completed by "human labor". However, he finds people's self-identities will be pressured by their bodies if they are investing more time to control it (Bourdieu 1985, quoted in Shilling 1993: 125). In this study, we clearly find continuation of body construction, however, mot at the women's own will, but largely controlled by their husband's unreasonable requests. For example, Kuan Ho, a mother of a five-year-old son, who came from Beijing, complained,

My husband always asked me to lose weight! He said he would give me $100 to buy clothes if I could lose weight successfully. So I asked him, 'Do you want me

to be thin or to die? My husband replied, 'I want you to be slim, but I don't want you to be dead!.......I've tried taking pills, but I got very dizzy [whenever I took the pills], [I] always wanted to throw up, but it's not pregnancy morning sickness… Anyway, I always felt something went up to my stomach. My hands and legs seemed not to be functioning, I couldn't walk properly, but felt like my legs were walking in the air.

Kuan Ho repeatedly imitated her husband's tone in her recount, which implicitly suggests that her husband was the person that made her torture herself. This case echoes with what Bartky has found, i.e., dieting as a "disciplinary project of bodily perfection" because the women's appetite must be closely self-monitored in order to avoid subverting the slender body that have achieved (2003: 45). Although not all of my interviewees were required to keep slim by their Hong Kong husband, the above cases clearly show that these women were not in control of their sexualities, but in the hands of their husband.

Learning to be a Hong Kong Mother

Some people think being a mother is universally the same: to love and care for her children. However, my informants learn to be a *nèuhng móuh* (良母, good mother) in much of the "Hongkong-style", i.e., to equip themselves so as to nurture their children in the Hong Kong environment. Such process of socialization of migrant

mothers is not only found in Hong Kong, it exists in other countries. In the U.S.A, the Americanizers regarded migrant mothers were lack of "parenting and homemaking abilities", and therefore, taught "American-style of infant care, parent-child relations, family organization" to the new immigrants (Kasaba 2000 140-141). Similarly, the community centers in Hong Kong also design a lot of classes to retrain these women's English language, computer knowledge and communication skills with their children. During fieldwork, I found almost all of my interviewees under-valued and called themselves "uncivilized" in regard to the nurturing of their children. This is similar to the findings in a research conducted by the Working Party on Women Migrants (1978) in which migrant mothers are stressed as they to take up their nurturing role in teaching their children with a new language. In terms of helping with homework, Miu Ping said,

> Because I didn't receive high education, I studied only up to secondary school, it's so hard to help with their homework.....My son even asked me, 'How come my friends' mums are more clever [than you], and you're so stupid?'

Taking English classes became a channel for them to improve English in order to teach their children at home. When they were asked about how much they had benefited from taking the English courses, all of my informants who were mothers recognized their usefulness.

Besides, they were pressured for not being "clever" enough to raise their children in a competitive society like Hong Kong. Jane said,

> Yes! I feel being a parent in Hong Kong is more pressurized, because there are lots of competitions. For example, I need to spend time to help my son to find a primary school, there're lots of students to compete with... I feel very bothered! Only five minutes of interview decides my son's future! In the mainland, there won't be so many schools [with brand names] to choose from.

Having their children receive better education is the hope of many mainland mothers, because receiving better education would mean a better future, and that is vital to help the mainland mothers and children to remove the stigmatization of being mainland immigrants in Hong Kong.

My informants were asked to learn to be "good" mothers through varied activities provided by the community centers, including a workshop on 'raising your child' and other parent-children activities. During the event 'Fun Day for Parents and Children', children were asked to make little gifts to give to their parents and in return, the parents also expressed their best wishes and love to their kids by sending them cards. The social worker stood in front of the parents (23 mothers, and 2 fathers) who all sat quietly in a semi-circle. The social worker said,

> I hope you all understand that different children have different talents and

abilities. Try to understand the needs of your children. Writing cards is one of the good ways to express your love. You may practice this activity more often in your daily life!

Female mainland immigrants are perceived as low-skilled and needing to be trained in every aspect, including the way they communicate with their children and their literacy to nurture their own children. In the second half of this chapter, I will illustrate how the marital experience of women immigrants affects their process of becoming a hèunggóngyàhn.

Marital Relationship and Adaptation

In my fieldwork, 19 out of my 20 informants were mainland women who married to Hong Kong men and moved to Hong Kong. Some enjoyed a happy marriage, while some were stigmatized by their divorced status; and their degree of adaptation varied. In the following discussion, I attempt to explore the relationship between adjustment to live in Hong Kong and marital relationship from two aspects: (1) patrilocal residence, and (2) husband's fidelity.

Mainland women who married to Hong Kong men and immigrated to Hong Kong to reunite with their family are a product of the dominant patrilocal residence system. Patrilocal residence, refers to a "postmaritial residence pattern in which a

married couple lives in the household or place of the groom's kin." (Stone, 2000: 309). In terms of space, I do not restrict the definition of patrilocal residence to living with the groom's kin under the same roof, rather I take Hong Kong to be the residence of the Hong Kong husbands as the wives had to migrate there and be cut off from their place of origin. I will focus on the interaction between mainland wives and kin members of their Hong Kong husband in Hong Kong as the patrilocal space. Among my informants, some experienced it positively; but nevertheless all had an impact on the women in reconstructing a new identity.

Being a member of the affinal circle, the women may have a greater sense of belonging to Hong Kong. In terms of structure and membership, the Chinese family in Hong Kong structure is built on a patriarchal structure with identifiable members based on patrilineal descent. Membership can be obtained through agnatic (blood) relations and affinal (marriage) relations. If it is acquired by agnatic relationship, membership is primordial and sets out a member's primary responsibilities and rights; and it continues longitudinally from one's ancestor. But for membership acquired through affinal relationship, it is negotiated and often changeable; it defines a member's secondary responsibilities and rights; and it exists contemporarily.

In this research, mainland wives were uprooted from their social networks, including family members with blood relations and friends made in home after

marrying to Hong Kong subject to patrilocal system. One important aspect to their adaptation was marital relationship. According to Roth and Speranza's research, the Swiss husbands who were in access to economic and social capital at home, their behavior and altitude determines their African wives' adjustment in Switzerland (2000: 224-230). They opined whether the wives were encouraged by their husband to maintain good relations with their in-laws, to meet friends outside, to learn a new language and profession, determines what kind of lives they would spend in the host society (Roth and Speranza 2000: 224). Similarly, I found gaining acceptance from the affinal family may be the first step for my women interviewees to integrate into Hong Kong society.

Becky, who came from Anhui Province, aged 28 and married to a Hong Kong husband in the year 2003. She started traveling to Hong Kong regularly two years ago with the Two-way Permit. During her stay, she lived in her husband's apartment where his parents also stayed. Though she had not thought of the question of identity, she said she had confidence to live in Hong Kong in the long run. She recalled, "I was quite worried about living with my parents-in-law at the beginning, as I thought they might not like me or have bias against me since I'm a mainlander." But her worry was relieved as she found that being the wife of their son had gained her immediate acceptance in the affinal family. She said, "My parents-in-law said

they've got only one son, so they like what their son likes!" In a male-centred society like Hong Kong, families are usually son-oriented, and thus male descendents have a pivotal role in household decision-making (Croll: 1994).

In the case of Becky, she successfully joined her husband's family as an outsider. She happily told me that, "My husband treats me very well, so do my parents-in-law. They treat me as their own daughter, so I feel very lucky myself." Being treated as a *daughter* is different from being treated as a *daughter-in-law*. Though the position of a daughter is not as high as a son in a traditional Chinese family, she is still a descendent who is related through blood to the rest of the family. The daughter-in-law is always seen as the competitor of the mother-in-law, therefore, entering the husband's family does not necessarily mean becoming an insider of a family. In Becky's case, her mother-in-law treated her as her own daughter, she cared about her well-being by making all kinds of soup for her. She was also very concerned about her safety since Becky had once been involved in a car accident. Becky was transformed from an outsider to an insider. Feeling the warmth from her husband's family made this mainland wife happy and eager to learn to adapt in Hong Kong.

Similarly, Ivy, aged 23, married in 2001 to a Hong Kong man and moved to Hong Kong. She had her hair dyed brown, fuzzy and short. She was fashionable,

always wearing jeans and a sleeveless top. Her appearance is closer to Hong Kong women compared to the rest of my mainland women interviewees. During her two years of living in Hong Kong, she never felt discriminated against. She said, "People are very friendly in general. I feel uneasy to go to China now!" One of the factors that contributed to her integration into the new environment was her close relationship with her affinal relatives. She said, "I think I'm integrated well into Hong Kong society. Everybody treats me well! Even my mother-in-law treats me as her granddaughter. Yes, she's very old already, almost 80 years old!" The relationship of a grandmother and granddaughter is intimate; the former usually cares for, offers protection and treats the latter as a little girl. Being treated as her mother-in-law's own offspring, Ivy was thus brought to the circle of insiders'.

The insider's role in the husband's patrilineal family had a twist in the case of Wai Ying, aged 30, was arrived in Hong Kong just over one year ago. She commented that she was quite adapted to most of the aspects of living in Hong Kong. Not only was she able to assert influence at home, but she was already quite powerful. She said, "I told my husband [who worked as a construction manager] that the construction site is his site. But the apartment is my site, and I would take care of it properly!" Her two brothers-in-law also came to have dinner with her family every Sunday. She explained, "Because my parents-in-law had already passed away and

I'm the wife of the eldest, so I need to look after them. I made some nice soup and food for them. You know, it's not healthy to dine out all the time, so I try to make some soup for them." She saw herself as a care giver to her husband's kin members through taking up the responsibilities of motherhood. This shows that, somehow, she had inherited the position of her mother-in-law. According to Smith (1995: 277),

> in traditional China, a woman was supposed to assume a submissive role, as a daughter, wife, daughter-in-law, and even as widowed mother. Normally her status increased with age. Within these limits there were many levels in the family hierarchy.

Wai Ying played the role of mother not only to her own daughters, but to her unmarried brother-in-laws as well. Therefore, she could gain respect not only from her daughters, but from her male affinal kin as well.

Jane, aged 28, had been in Hong Kong for 2 months only. She was always wearing casual wear, and with a cap on her head, she looked young and energetic. She thought she was not a hèunggóngyàhn yet, but she agreed that she adapted to Hong Kong's life quickly. Good communication skills paved the way for her to better integrate into a new social environment. She said,

> In terms of language....umm... you see I can speak Cantonese quite well now, but at the beginning, I could hardly communicate with my husband's family.

members. I had words in mind, but I didn't know how to express myself in this dialect ….. but my husband's family all treat me very nicely. They are patient and they don't mind if I speak with a mixture of Cantonese and Mandarin, so it's still okay!

She appreciated the help from her husband's kin members in overcoming the language barrier which a lot of immigrants found a major challenge. She was definitely within the circle of her husband's family: she went to Chinese restaurants to *yumcha* with all of them every weekend morning; and she had very good relationships with her brother-in-law and sister-in law. She said, "I get along quite well with my brother-in-law and sister-in-law. We like chatting with each other, and we have many topics in conversation......They are very nice to me!" Jane repeatedly said that her husband's kin members were nice to her, and showed that their support was an important factor in enabling her to settle in Hong Kong. Many women immigrants longed for social and emotional support from her natal families who lived in China. In Jane's case, the warmth and friendliness of her affinal kin replaced the role of her natal families. It demonstrates that a mainland wife's acceptance being brought into the affinal family as an insider helps her to feel that Hong Kong is her home.

Some other informants were unfortunately disliked by their husbands' kin

members, and their indifferent and hostile feeling towards Hong Kong was obviously higher. Study of migration in Europe shows that not only do female migrants need to face all kinds of discrimination in society, but "as a woman, she is also subjected to discrimination within her own family." (Working Party on Women Migrants 1978: 120). The following cases may show how discrimination in the patrilocal residence resulted in a feeling of being a stranger in Hong Kong.

Yuk Lan, aged 36, arrived in Hong Kong in 2003 and she found it hard to get along with her mother-in-law. She frowned as she said,

> I treated myself as a hèunggóngyàhn at the very beginning, and I believed my adaptation ability was quite good. But after living here for a period, I always feel I am being discriminated against by my husband's family members. When my mother-in-law was watching news on TV, she always yelled aloud and said, 'The mainlanders are so and so....' Even our Indonesian domestic helper doesn't respect me at home. Nobody talks to me, even when the meal was ready, nobody asks me to go to eat together!

Yuk Lan regarded that her mainland identity lowered her status in her husband's family; her status was lower than her *gong yahn*, (工人, servant), which made her the lowest at home. In fact, she was not only stigmatized by her mainland identity, but her gender identity as well. Her mother-in-law disliked her on the grounds of

stereotypes broadcasted by the mass media. Mainland women are negatively portrayed as prostitutes and *yi lai* (concubines), who are ethically unacceptable to Hong Kong people, especially to Hong Kong women. They are also portrayed to be recipients of CSSA, who drain Hong Kong's welfare system. Since immigrant women are portrayed as hazardous to Hong Kong's society, Yuk Lan's mother-in-law may also see her as a drain on the family. The more a mainland woman feels she is left out from the husband's family, the harder she finds it to adapt to Hong Kong.

Another informant whom I met in the Cantonese class was Hoi Mei, aged 55, who divorced from her husband in China and later married to a Hong Kong man in 1999. Her present husband was 78 years-old, and used to be a jewelry and antiques trader, but was recently retired. She and her husband were now living in her step-daughter's private apartment. According to Hoi Mei, her husband was very ill and needed to take ten kinds of medicines each day. When she discussed her husband's family members, she criticized, "One of his daughters is already 50, but didn't get married yet! I think she's strange and crazy!" During the interview, she repeatedly told me that she felt depressed after moving to Hong Kong. She said,

> I don't know anything about social workers [in Hong Kong]! In fact, I need someone to talk to. I guess I've got some kind of depression, because my husband is very old already; his own children are almost my own age, and they

all look down on me!

Even simple tasks seem overwhelming if there is a language barrier for a newcomer in Hong Kong; and the hostile altitudes from a husband's family members are an additional component to one's anxiety. Hoi Mei was a Mandarin speaker, which first of all made her less like a hèunggóngyàhn. Though she did not explain why her step-daughters looked down on her, her financial dependence on her step-daughters made her looked like a parasite of the family, which echoed with the stereotypes of immigrant women as a burden to Hong Kong taxpayers. A mainland wife was obviously an outsider of the family in this case. Such a hostile relationship with the husband's family members negatively affected her experiences in Hong Kong, making her less likely to see Hong Kong as an ideal home.

A husband's fidelity is also positively correlated with a mainland wife's adaptation in Hong Kong. Becky once invited me to have lunch at her home after attending a Cantonese lesson. Her husband was at home due to the renovation that was undergoing in his office. She and her husband appeared to be in a very good relationship: she told him every single bit of what had happened in the Cantonese class, and her husband looked very gentle, nodded his head and listened to her carefully. She later shared her photos and told me her love story with her husband. Since her in-laws were around, she lowered down her voice and said,

> I didn't like him at all when I first met him, because he's very ugly and short. But I feel he's quite a good person after spending more time together. Now I think the longer time we've been married, the more assured I feel I didn't marry the wrong guy!

In terms of adaptation in Hong Kong, her husband played a major role in helping her to overcome whatever problems she had. He searched around to see if there were any Cantonese courses for her to attend, taught her Cantonese, encouraged her to speak more Cantonese in daily conversation, and took her to tourist spots in Hong Kong, such as the Big Buddha at Lantau, Ocean Park, Disneyland, Clear Water Bay, the Peak, etc. Her husband basically served as her supporter, teacher, and tour guide. When asked how often she visits the mainland, she replied that she goes there once or twice a month. She explained, "It's because my husband needs to go to Shenzhen for business, so I go with him for vacation!" As a result they had less time apart and more time together. At the end of the interview, she commented, "I have more confidence in the spousal relation with my husband [than looking for jobs]. I don't worry too much about it!" Such an intimate relationship made her feel more settled in Hong Kong.

The love from her husband also made Wai Ying feel more optimistic to live in Hong Kong. When attending the course on skills in retail sales, she appeared to be

friendly, outgoing and confident in sharing her opinions. Such positive performance may be partly due to her smooth settlement in Hong Kong and her satisfaction with her husband who perform the double roles of father and husband. She said in a joyous voice,

> He helps out [with domestic work] on holiday. Sometimes he takes our kids to the library and lets me take some rest at home. He's indeed very nice to me. He always said, 'Your job (housewife) is not an easy job at all!' He also always reminds the kids to love and care about me more!

When was asked about her expectation of married life, she said,

> My ideal husband is someone who loves me and respects me. My husband can fulfill such requirements! I used to have a *hukou* in the city and I'm the only daughter of my parents. I still remember how my husband ran to my hometown and begged my parents to let him marry me. Since he's older than me (19 years older), he was afraid that my parents would disagree to our marriage. So he promised [my parents] that he wouldn't give me a hard life and would try his best to give me all he could. He even bought insurance for himself to make sure that even if he died, there's still money left for me.

Apparently, this informant felt secure to live in Hong Kong; such security was guaranteed emotionally, by the love of her husband, and materially, by the life

insurance bought by her husband.

Suk Kum, aged 39, married a Hong Kong man in 2003, and had an 18-month-old daughter. She had a very positive view about living in Hong Kong. She said,

> I'm very used to Hong Kong life. If you asked me to return my hometown, I don't think I could adjust to it. I like Hong Kong very much indeed! Look at the policy and law system in Hong Kong, they emphasize human rights and people can appeal to the court.

Her sense of belonging to Hong Kong may be partly due to her background, and also partly due to her happy marriage.

Suk Kum's background was rare amongst my informants. She worked in her auntie's boat as a fisher in Hong Kong waters for nearly 23 years, spending most of her time in the harbor, and doing a little bit of shopping on land when she received pocket money from her auntie. Her lengthy time of stay made her familiar with Hong Kong's system, but she did not get a Hong Kong identity card until she married her husband. During the interview, she re-emphasized that she did not marry a Hong Kong guy for the purpose of gaining Hong Kong residence. She said, "I'm very picky and careful in choosing a partner. We've dated out for a year before we got married. I mean, if I wanted to get a Hong Kong ID card through marrying a Hong Kong guy, I wouldn't wait until I was 36 years old!" She said she longed for a '*mei*

mun' (美滿, happy) marriage. And in reality, her expectation is fulfilled. She said,

> I'm very happy with our marriage. My husband is very good to me; he is considerate and cares about me. You know what, he had to pass through a lot of tests in order to win my heart, e.g. I tested if he has patience, if he has a good temper, if he has a warm heart, and if he's a good guy!

She commented,

> Chinese society still has the mentality that men are responsible for the outer sphere, and women the inner sphere. That means men go out to work, but women stay at home for domestic work. But in Hong Kong, I found men and women are more on an equal footing. They help each other whenever they find their partner is busy. That's why I like hèunggóngyàhn better. Look! Hong Kong men also carry their children to go out, my husband also helps with mopping the floor and changing diapers for our baby.

I believe Suk Kum had over-generalized the relationship of men and women in Hong Kong, but it does reflect her expectation of an ideal husband: someone who does not solely work in the public sphere, but cares about the domestic sphere as well. In Suk Kum's case, the harmony in their marital relationship made her feel more like hè unggóngyàhn, and closer to having a Hong Kong identity.

However, some women immigrants had negative experiences in their marriage

that made them feel detached from Hong Kong society. Miu Ping was a very typical case. She was 30 years-old and had arrived in Hong Kong around two to three years. She preferred to confine herself and her children at home than meet other people. I was only put into contact with her through the help of a social worker. When I first met her, she started off the conversation about her husband; she wondered and asked me back, "Are hèunggóngyàhn very open? Are Hong Kong women very open, they seem not to mind or not to care about their husbands? Look at the '*yi lai* village' (二奶村, village where mistresses are kept), it seems like nobody cares!" Then she told me her love story which ended up in heartbreak. She said,

> I don't even know if we were in love with each other! ..... I didn't know he was having an affair with another woman when I first came to Hong Kong, but I suspected it in my heart….. Finally, we were divorced last year (in 2005). He was very good at covering up his behavior when he was in China, but after I moved to Hong Kong, I couldn't even see his shadow (連影都唔見, cannot see a person physically) …. He ran away at the end!

Miu Ping's judgment on Hong Kong women's values and altitudes was not made on a subjective basis, it reflected her self identification. She did not consider herself a hèunggóngyàhn, since she thought she did not share Hong Kong women's ethical standards. Her husband's fidelity was an important factor. The separation of marriage

made her feel she had lost everything, and she said, "I'm quite scared, and can't foresee my future…..Though I married a Hong Kong man, I've got nothing in the end!" Besides, her husband used a language that she could hardly understand. She recalled, "When I asked for a divorce, he said, 'I'm very democratic, it's up to you, you can do what you want!' But Miss Lau, what is democratic? I don't know what you hèunggóngyàhn are talking about?" 'Democracy' is a western ideology that is usually used in the context of politics; and using this term in the context of marriage made this mainland wife, who grew up in a different cultural background, feel even more confused and inferior.

Yuk Ha's failure in her marital relationship made her feel rootless in Hong Kong. She was 38 years-old, a single parent who looked after three children at home. She did not regard herself as a hèunggóngyàhn, but only a stranger in the city. When asked about her adaptation problems, she was sobbing as she gave the recount,

> I thought he was quite a good guy, and I could rely on him…… He worked in the field of electronics for 2 to 3 years, and then was sent to China to work. There's a lot of attraction, a lot of temptations, plus the mainland girls are very beautiful there. I couldn't spend time with him because I had to look after the children, so he always went to karaoke for entertainment. Later, I found that he had an affair with somebody else! So I wanted to end our relationship.

At first, I thought she did not really answer my question, but when I thought back, she did in fact. She was telling me the reason for her not feeling comfortable to stay in Hong Kong. Such experience was painful, and the picture of her husband's infidelity still existed clearly in her mind. She said,

> I came to Hong Kong to look for him. When I arrived at the apartment, I opened the door and found them sleeping together on the bed. I was furious! I asked him what's going on, but he seemed more angry than I was. He asked me back, 'Don't you know the *kwai koey* (規矩, rules and regulations)? Don't you know you need to call and inform a person before you go to his house?' Then he slapped me on my face. Some neighbors heard us fighting, so they came over and asked me to call the police, but I didn't want to because I had no idea about what Hong Kong was like! Then my husband and the girl ran away, leaving me alone in the apartment.

Similarly, Yuk Ha had negative experiences in this regard. She said,

> In Hong Kong, people have different perceptions. When they found out that I don't have a husband, and am a recipient of CSSA, they stayed away from me. I know it and I understand it. So I tried to do some reflection myself and decided not to contact too many people……The mothers of my sons' classmates gossiped about us, they said, 'They (her children) don't have a father at home! She doesn't

have a husband.'

Being left out from the social network due to the lack of a man at home, made her less willing to call Hong Kong home.

Miu Ping received a similar response from other people due to her divorced status. She said,

> In Hong Kong, I rarely have friends! I still talk to the mums of my kids' classmates, but I try to pretend that I have a husband at home. Being divorced is problematic, not only in the eyes of hèunggóngyàhn, but also in the eyes of new arrivals. They look down on women like me!"

She continued,

> Only my good friends whom I have known for a long time know about my experience, but I try to keep it secret from those new friends..... I guess people have different perceptions about divorced women – bad impressions! Women are troublesome! They look down on us and wonder what our problems are. Sometimes, they even imagine that we will try to seduce their husbands. The new arrivals are even worse, they are nosy and they like gossiping behind people's backs!

Miu Ping was not only outside the circle of Hong Kong people, but also outside the circle of new arrivals.

From the above cases, I find stigmatization of a divorcee status is definitely an explicit barrier to women migrants. In Chinese societies where patriarchal values are upheld, men are valued as the "head of the household" while women are secondary subject to men. As discussed, people in Hong Kong share more traditional Chinese values though it had been under British colonization for more than 100 years. Culturally and socially speaking, some people in Hong Kong still believe the absence of a man at home means absence of a male breadwinner and man's authority. Therefore, households without a man is problematized and marginalized. The Hong Kong social workers generally categorize language, finance and living environment as the major problems in the new arrivals' adjustment, however, these cases clearly show that integration of female migrants who were divorced were much harder than those who were not.

Conclusion

In the last chapter, I have discussed the women immigrants learned to become a Hong Kong person through learning Hong Kong English, "accentless" Cantonese, proper behavior and Hong Kong spirit. This chapter has described how my women interviewees learned to reconstruct new womanhood. As new members of Hong Kong, they found themselves aliened due to their darker skin tone and dressing code,

and therefore, they believed transformation of their outward appearance into Hongkong-style would be a way out of discrimination. As women in Hong Kong, the social workers aimed to teach them to attain some degree of self-autonomy from their husbands. As wives, the women were not in control of their sexualities (including dressing style and bodies), but very often by their Hong Kong husband. The ethnographic data also show that their mobility to attend adaptation classes was lying heavily upon their husband's minds. With these considerations, I found women's bodies as men's property is manifested through such process of reconstruction. As mothers, the women were perceived as not good enough to nurture their children in terms of literacy, and therefore, required to be retrained again. Adding all these requirements, we can see to become a member of Hong Kong is never easy. There bound to have some successful cases in the society, but at least to my interviewees, they were still learning but had not fully achieved yet.

Study on the relationship between marital relationship and adaptation shows how patrilocal residence and husband's fidelity or infidelity affected mainland wives in acquiring a new identity. For those who experienced a positive marital relationship, they had more confidence in combating other challenges, such as seeking waged work, and learning a new language. Those who experienced negative relationships refused to make social contact with people, and would bring their children back to

their mainland hometown in the holidays if they could afford it financially. If not, they would rather confine themselves at home, and as a result make it more difficult for their families to integrate into Hong Kong society. Evaluation of women migrant's integration to Hong Kong and recommendations to policy makers will be elaborated in Chapter 6.

Chapter 5 Empowerment and Disempowerment

> Learning how to do domestic work is very different from what I am doing at home. For example, when I wipe the windows, I usually wipe in a circular way for a few times only, but they taught me to wipe it vertically and then horizontally. There is time limitation too. It's like a test or examination when we need to finish certain tasks within 10 minutes, for example, putting a quilt on the bed, wiping the exhaust fan, wiping the windows, ironing clothes… every task should take only 10 minutes. (Mrs. Chui)

Class identities are an important component of the Hong Kong identity. Cole (1997) argues that integration into the host society does not only involve the issue of racism, rather class identities also play an important role. In a society like Hong Kong where the middle class have a greater tendency to identify themselves as hèunggóngyàhn (Lau 2000: 259-260; Mathews 1997: 4-5), I think the acquisition of Hongkongness necessarily includes the ability to show that one has the mastery over a superior cultural and economic capital. So, what were female mainland immigrants taught as they tried to achieve Hongkongness, and how much could they accumulate these different kinds of capital? Based on Bourdieu's theory of capital, I examine the gain and loss of capital experienced by the women immigrants, and seek to understand how they prioritize and redefine different forms of capital in the process of migration to Hong Kong. Secondly, I try to evaluate the effectiveness of the training courses, and the empowerment and disempowerment that have occurred as a

result of the provision of such welfare services.

Empowerment

Empowerment was a term first used in the U.S.A. in the 17th century. The enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1694 had forbid any action on restricting minorities to access to school and public places. Thus, its equal opportunity law has called for an increase of empowerment to groups of being marginalized. Since then, it has been widely used in areas of ethnicity, gender, religion, education, welfare, and psychology. In general, empowerment refers to the social process of changing power; it fosters power that helps members of the marginalized groups to obtain basic opportunities (Moser 1989; Qiu 2003; Moghadam 2007). The marginalized groups refer to people who cannot exercise power vis-à-vis those who can. Against this background, feminists call for empowerment for women who suffer from the patriarchal system when power is taken away by men.

In the study of feminism, there are three waves of theory development. Regarding the concept of empowerment, first wave feminism during the 19th and early 20th century believes that provision of resources, such as education, is pivotal to women's empowerment. The newer feminist movement, i.e., the second wave that started in the 1960s, questions if simply providing resources can fully empower

women. They call for the investigation of what sorts of resources are given and whether social institutions and cultural norms, e.g., socialization and popular culture, are helping to remove gender inequalities. During the third wave feminism in the early 1990s, the social feminists find that the experiences of the middle-class white women were emphasized by the liberal feminists, while those in the third world were neglected. They ask for a redefinition of empowerment (Collins 2000b: 274) through finding out how women are oppressed by the complex interlinked structure of gender, class and race. They argue consciousness should emerge from an individual and changes should be made from human agency. Individual empowerment is significant, but collective participation in groups will allow people "to develop their awareness and the ability to organize to take action and bring about change" (Karl 1995, quoted in 2007: 140). In Moser words (1989: 1815), empowerment is

> Seeks to identify power less in terms of domination over others (with its implicit assumption that a gain for women implies a loss for men), and more in terms of the capacity of women to increase heir own self-reliance and internal strength. This is identified as the right to determine choices in life and to influence the direction of change, through the ability to gain control over crucial material and non-material resources.

Today, new meanings are added to the notion of empowerment, such as extending

freedom of choices for self-sufficiency in social, economic and political sphere (World Bank 1996; Shams had 2007: 140).

In this research, female mainland immigrants were the clients of the community centers that aimed to "to assist their physical and mental development, to explore their potentials, to satisfy with their welfare needs and to promote feelings of belongingness to society (Hong Kong Council of Social Service 2003: 9). Though it did not state directly that the community centers serve to empower these women, but to a large extent, ideas of empowerment is embedded in the above statement. Here, I use Caber's definition of empowerment: namely, resources, agency, and achievement (Nail Caber 2003: 169-196) as the major framework for the following discussion. "Agency" refers to women who are able to see their capacities for action in making choices and changes. "Resources" are forms of capital such as education, training, and employment that the women can access to. "Achievement" is the follow up assessment of how much women's potentials are realized. Caber sees these three dimensions are interlinked and changes in one of the dimensions will lead to changes in the others.

Structural Resources

My analysis of "structural resources" in the empowerment theory is wrapped up

in Boride's terms of capital as in the following. Every society provides resources, and a member of a society can then make choices in life to convert, accumulate and expand their resources. According to Pierre Bourdieu (1977: 183), capital is resources in society that are interchangeable with other forms of resources. A person can accumulate one form of capital and change it to other forms of capital, so as to increase their savings, prestige, status or power etc. Society defines what capital is, and capital also means different things to different groups of people in different contexts.

There are many forms of capital, including economic capital, social capital, and cultural capital. Economic capital refers to money and property that a person owns; it can be saved as a surplus or be invested in other goods or production. Cultural capital refers to accumulated cultural knowledge, such as language skills, ideas and practices that are shared by a group; they are "instruments for the appropriation of symbolic wealth socially designated as worthy of being sought and possessed" (Bourdieu 1977). To Bourdieu, cultural capital is found in three forms. Firstly, the embodied state, which refers to the "long-last disposition of the individual's mind and body" (Throsby 2001: 48). Secondly, the objectified state, which means physical goods with cultural value, such as books, artwork, instruments, etc. Thirdly, the institutionalized state, which means when cultural capital earns recognition from

society, such as educational credentials.

The concept of capital is also applied to social relations. This is defined as social networks between friends, relatives and acquaintances that increase the productivity of a person or community. Bourdieu finds social capital as hierarchal and exclusive-- the elites use it to maintain their position, which results in an unequal society. Coleman's view of social capital is more positive. He believes that relationships among family and community members can help a person to overcome economic disadvantages, and it is beneficial to individuals and society as a whole (Coleman 1990). Putnam opines that social capital is particularly beneficial to society-- when trust is built up among community members, it leads to a high level of social cooperation (Putnam 2000).

In this research, I have found that physical capital is also an important kind of capital among the women immigrants. Physical capital as broadly used in economics means "stock of real goods such as plant, machines, buildings, etc. which contribute to the production of further goods". In this thesis, I use the concept of physical capital along the lines of Li (2002) who describes it as (following Bourdieu) a new form of capital that is defined as "the youth and attractiveness and potential for reproduction - of women" (Li 2002: 12). Furthermore, I argue that physical capital is even more complex. It is more than a woman being pretty and youthful. It involves

how a woman understands the subtleties of "appropriate" appearances in different occasions in the new cultural environment of Hong Kong.

Thus capital is a complex phenomenon to be examined-- the same object can be valued differently in different systems in society. For example, when we talk about the language of Cantonese as a powerful form of cultural capital in Hong Kong and its importance in employment, the command of it is not necessarily a significant form of cultural capital to members of other ethnic groups. To many British and American residents in Hong Kong, their fluency in English overrides the necessity to know Cantonese, so the same language ability has little impact on them in terms of looking for jobs especially in areas of education. However, to such underprivileged groups as new immigrants from the mainland, Cantonese means a lot. Not only is it necessary for them to speak Cantonese fluently, but also with a proper accent. However, an inaccurate accent may not necessarily be an obstacle for every mainlander. To some, speaking with an accent is unimportant, as in the case of Li Ka Shing[34] (李嘉誠) who has both social capital (high prestige and status) and economic capital (wealth), overrides his lack of cultural capital (Cantonese ability). In this research, for almost all of my interviewees, they did not have abundant social

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[34] Lee Ka Shing (1928 – present), born in China; arguably one of the most famous and richest Chinese businessman in the world, nicknamed "Superman Li" due to his influence as well as his legendary background.

capital or economic capital that could override their cultural capital; and they had to work hard to learn Cantonese and Hongkong-style English, to fulfill their aspirations to be like Hong Kong people.

Gain and Loss of Capital

Female mainland immigrants are experiencing a gain and loss of capital in the process of settling in Hong Kong. According to my field data, 90 percent of my informants had a positive impression of Hong Kong before migration. They imagined Hong Kong as a better place than mainland to live in almost every aspects. Firstly, a lifestyle which they imagined as perfect—as they described Hong Kong as "metropolitan", "heaven", "a place full of hope and opportunities", "a clean city", a place with "good public order" and "no corruption". They also imagined hèunggóngyàhn to be better human beings-- "hèunggóngyàhn are more civilized" (than mainlanders); "hèunggóngyàhn are more educated", and "hèunggóngyàhn are more polite". Such imagination is derived from popular culture: the soap operas produced by Hong Kong television had mythicized the lifestyle of Hong Kong people. Secondly, Hong Kong men who seek to marry mainland wives or who engage in extramarital relationships by keeping a mainland mistress appear to be big spenders in the eyes of many mainlanders, even though they are mostly those with

low incomes by Hong Kong standards (Lang & Smart 2002).

With all these positive expectations among mainlanders, many of the mainland women immigrants' relatives, friends, and neighbors believed that these women were marrying up when they find themselves a Hong Kong husband. Sum Yi Mama, who divorced her husband after coming to Hong Kong, took some time to adjust her expectations. She said,

> Like many mainlanders, I had a strong desire to come to Hong Kong some years ago. Whenever I heard people talking about Hong Kong, I just had a feeling of a very mysterious and perfect place! It was only recently that more people got to know about [the situation and reality of living in] Hong Kong. Before, most of the girls [from my hometown] just wanted to meet a Hong Kong guy, and get married to a Hong Kong guy. Marrying (and moving) to Hong Kong was [regarded as] the first step to heaven!

Another informant, Wai Ying, said,

> My first impression of Hong Kong is of a very clean city, people are more polite and have higher quality, unlike in China where people need to fight to get on the bus. The living standard here is higher.

With such admiration of Hong Kong as a better place than the mainland, their cultural capital in the form of prestige was certainly increased at the beginning of the

migration process.

Though these women gained one kind of cultural capital through marrying up, they also lost cultural capital of a different form. Lai San, who used to be a school teacher in the mainland, sold vegetables in a wet market as her first job in Hong Kong. Though taking some language classes enabled her to work as cashier in a chain store, she still regarded it a loss of status and prestige compared to her days in China. She said,

> It's tough to work in 7-11. I've worked there for a month, but I couldn't bear the hardship, so I resigned. The storage area for the stock was as tiny as a toilet; the stock was stacked up high to the ceiling. If the products were put at the bottom of the stock, I needed to climb up to the top to remove the stock one box by one box in order to get those products to display at the shop. I need to climb up and down; up and down repeatedly … it's really a job for a coolie!

Kim Ching, who used to run her own business in China, worked as a hawker on the street when she first came to Hong Kong. She recalled her experience:

> They (her friends and relatives in China) all know me well, and they know how hard I've been striving though life when I was in China. Honestly, nobody would believe that I had the experience of standing and selling clothes on the street when I first arrived, nobody would believe I work for others instead of being an

owner.

Not only did they suffer from a loss of some cultural capital, there was also a loss of economic capital as they gave up their former occupations in China. Ninety-five percent of them had participated in paid work to earn a living when they were in the mainland. However, those who had a paid salary in mainland had to leave their jobs behind when they migrated to Hong Kong. Lai Chuen said,

> I used to be a driver in the mainland, and people regarded me as too smart [for a woman]. I earned money and I had savings to construct a road and renovate our ancestral temple in my hometown. Money is usually donated by sons, but people didn't mind that I donated it.

Kim Ching who had divorced from her husband, said,

> I used to be a government cadre. I worked for the government and I had almost everything at that time!

When their jobs in China were lost and their professions and skills were unrecognized in Hong Kong, they had to rely on their Hong Kong husbands for an income. Forty percent of my informants could not participate in waged work and relied on their husbands financially after moving to Hong Kong. Their loss of economic independence had a strong negative impact on their power within the domestic sphere.

Leaving their friends and natal family in order to migrate to Hong Kong was also a huge loss of social capital. All of my informants worried about and suffered from losing social support from their family members, particularly in childcare. They also reflected feelings of loneliness and helplessness in the new place. One informant, Becky told me that social relations was a problem for her: "I guess it's because I don't go to work now, so I've got only very few friends in Hong Kong." When I visited their home, Becky's husband was glad to see me. He said, "My wife doesn't have a lot of friends in Hong Kong, that's why she's very happy to have met you!" Another informant, Miu Ping said,

> When I first arrived, I had times of both happiness and unhappiness….I worried about my future, and you know, I had to leave my family and friends. I asked myself, if I got sick, who's going to help me to look after my children?

Thirty-five percent of my informants felt that the loss of connection with their relatives hindered them in seeking employment (economic capital). Because the migration of these mainland women was due to the welfare of their children and Hong Kong husband in the first place, they become tied to and restricted to the family. It was almost impossible for them to look for jobs when there was no social support from their relatives to look after their children in the day time. As Coleman (1990) opines, solidarity among family or community members can lead to an

increase in productivity. Therefore, my informants' loss of social capital has led to a decrease of economic capital. Becky's statement below may best conclude what most of the female immigrants were experiencing:

> I've got friends, career and family there. But my husband has got a job in Hong Kong, and it would be very tiring for him to travel back and forth. Transportation expenses would be very high, plus it's not very safe in China.....It's not easy at all to have everything start from zero…!

The above examples show that these female mainland immigrants, though experiencing a gain of cultural capital through marrying Hong Kong men, also suffered from a huge loss of social, cultural and economic capital. The following examples are discussions about how these women prioritize forms of capital acquisition. I try to examine if there were discrepancies between social workers' and immigrants' views of the importance of capital, and how did these women redefine capital after moving to Hong Kong.

Defining Capital: Social Workers and Class Teachers

Social workers served as the frontline staff who helped to provide capital to female mainland immigrants; they often perceived themselves as "problem-solvers" and aimed to help mainland immigrants with any kinds of family problems they

might have. In the process of provision of assistance, social workers exercised the power to define what was essential to the new immigrants. Through participant observation and in-depth interviews, I found that the service providers prioritized the various kinds of capital (or what they called "resources", 資源) in the following order: social capital, cultural capital, physical capital and lastly economic capital

According to my field data, many social workers regarded building up social networks among these women as fundamental. They emphasized the building of a strong bond amongst the women so that they may share experiences of adjustment, information on Hong Kong, and support in times of problems and challenges. Social workers believed that these women could first be empowered through meeting more friends with a similar cultural background.

At the beginning of the course on skills in retail sales, the teacher said, "The goal of this class is not only learning how to sell things, but to build up relationships among members of the class." The teacher of the same class also repeated this opinion when she talked to me in person. She said,

> The cultures in the mainland and Hong Kong are very different. No matter how capable you are in the mainland, it's totally different when you work in Hong Kong.....The new arrivals usually have a lot of problems: finance, family, children... So we usually put them in a group in order to build up relationships

among them, then we'll provide skill training, and then employment opportunities. Of course, they might not be able to find an ideal job, but the jobs they've found after going through training should not be very bad. We try to help them move up step by step, and help them to adjust to the differences between psychological expectations and the reality.

Social capital was cultivated through games in class. For example, in the above class on retail sales, they played "ice-breaking" games. In one game, each of the women was asked to write five personal details, but they had to lie on one item. The pieces of paper were collected in a bag, and participants would draw out one paper at a time and read it aloud. At this point the rest of the participants would guess which item was the lie. Most of the women became very involved in the game; they put up their hands and yelled out their answers loudly. The room was full of laughter. In another game, the class was divided into two groups sitting face to face in two rows. In each round, one member of each team needed to stand up and call out the other's name as fast as they could. Though there were some quarrels at some points, the women chatted with each other and exchanged phone numbers at the end of the class. Various degrees of friendship among these women were formed.

Learning cultural knowledge is believed to be the second step in the process of integration. According to Bourdieu, cultural capital is an essential capital to be

sought and possessed for further "symbolic wealth". The social workers emphasized on teaching cultural knowledge such as linguistics skills, which were believed to be able to help the women gain economic capital in turn. For example, the teacher of the Cantonese class told me in the interview:

> Being able to speak Cantonese is fundamental for them to look for jobs. One of my students told me that she did not get a job cleaning dishes because she lacked this language skill. There was a woman who came to our center and was very eager to take this course because she kept being rejected by employers even though she wanted to work as a cleaner.

Apart from learning Cantonese, the service providers also stressed the importance of learning English. In some other vocational training classes, for example the retail sales class, in addition to having knowledge of the products they sell, students need to have a basic command of English. The teacher told the class, "The product you are going to practice to sell are mostly toys, so you all need to familiarize yourself with the players' age group, the characteristics of the toys, and the procedures to clean them. There are also labels on the back of the products (clothes and stuffed toys), and most of them are in English. I'll teach you how to read them later on." The above examples show that the service providers believed that a good command of Cantonese and English is necessary for job-hunting.

Physical capital was also emphasized in the training courses. According to a survey conducted for a body cleansing product, 88 percent of women in Hong Kong believed that "beautiful girls have an advantage in looking for jobs" (Ming Pao Daily 2005). The news report considered that such a finding might be the result of the slimming craze popularized by the mass media. In this kind of cultural environment, the community centers also provided make-up courses as a way to empower the newly-arrived women. The social workers, who were all local-born, believed that attaining a beautiful appearance was fundamental to the "transformation" of these women mainland immigrants. They invited a beauty product company to organize a make-up course for these women. Mabel, the teacher, introduced that the aim of her company was to "enrich women's lives through beauty, from the inner self to the outer appearance". She said that the founder of the company believed that women's confidence could be built through caring for their beauty.

Apart from this, another informant, Lai Chuen, had provided me some class notes she got after attending a women immigrants' sharing group. The notes advice that, in order to achieve a pleasant appearance, they should brush their teeth every day, spray their bodies with deodorant if they perspire heavily, walk with their backbone straight, and to lower down their voice when speaking....etc. Obviously, the social workers saw having proper appearance (physical capital) as a way to be accepted in

Hong Kong and consequently to facilitate the mainland women to gain a job (economic capital).

Redefining Capital: Mainland Women Migrants' Agency

My interviewees were self-aware of their lack of relevant cultural and vocational skills; they were eager to go through training for transformation. However, this research shows a different view of the priorities of capital in my informants to that of the social workers. Based on participant observation and in-depth interviews, I believe that the women's own priorities of capital are: cultural capital, economic capital, physical capital, and lastly social capital. Their view of cultural capital as the most important form of capital can be explained by their underrating of the cultural capital they already possessed. Even though 70 percent of my informants were secondary school (and above) graduates, they still regarded themselves as "uncivilized" (無文化). Many of them, such as Yuk Lan, regarded that taking more courses would make her "not so stupid". Ninety percent reported that they found their lack of command of English the first barrier they encountered in integrating into Hong Kong society. They believed that language skills were the first kind of cultural capital they should possess, which would eventually turn into economic capital when they find a job.

As most of them believed that having a stable income would secure their well-being, they were eager to acquire knowledge from the community centers. For example, Ah Kiu said, "I could only earn a few hundred or up to a thousand dollars in the mainland. This is just a waste of time. Isn't it a better for me to take more courses in Hong Kong, so that I can get a job with a higher salary?"

Lai San used to work as a primary school teacher, she said, "I can't find a similar job in Hong Kong; even a kindergarten will not employ me. I've been to a lot of kindergartens, but they all rejected my application due to my poor English."[35] She emphasized the importance of improving her English throughout the interview. "Now I just want to learn more English to improve myself. In Hong Kong, if you don't know English, you can't even get a job in a Chinese restaurant." Most of my interviewees believed that a gain of cultural capital would ultimately bring them economic capital. If they could not get a job through learning cultural knowledge, they would not participate in the classes.

An interesting twist is, since 1997 many people in Hong Kong begin to value Putonghua as a powerful form of cultural capital, and these women immigrants started to redefine what cultural capital meant to them as well. They began to make

[35] The interviewee believed that her English incompetency had obscured her from getting a job as a Kindergarten teacher, but in fact, there were other educational qualifications required in Hong Kong, for example, the certification of Qualified Kindergarten Teacher Education (QKT) or Early Childhood Education (CE).

use of their knowledge in Putonghua to generate other forms of capital. The teacher of the retail sales course once said, "New arrivals can succeed as well…They've got some strong points, i.e., their Putonghua skills."

Lai San said,

> Oh well, I feel when I am in Hong Kong, there's nothing I can do. I don't have the ability to do any kind of jobs. But I think my Putonghua knowledge is the only skill I have to my advantage [compared to the locals]. I hope I can get qualifications and then do some teaching jobs.

She added,

> You know, since Hong Kong has returned to China, Putonghua is getting more important. I remember when I came to Hong Kong to tour with my Two-way permit before 1997, people on the street would never give me promotional pamphlets. But now it's very different; the salespersons from the gold jewelry shops gave me their pamphlets. I was very surprised at first and thought - why would they give me 'face'? Now I understand! If you want to be a salesperson from the gold jewelry shop, Putonghua will be to your advantage.

As mentioned above, academic credential is an institutionalized form of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1977: 171-182). Becky, who used to work as an accountant on the mainland, explored ways of gaining cultural capital that would be recognized in

Hong Kong. She asked me whether the degrees offered by the Open University were recognized by employers, and how to get admitted to the Chinese University of Hong Kong where I studied. She had also done research about institutes in Hong Kong that offer courses in Putonghua teaching as she aimed to get proper qualifications as a Putonghua teacher. Most of my interviewees considered their Putonghua skills the greatest cultural knowledge they have in their possession, and they strived hard to use it in this particular historical moment in order to look for economic opportunities.

To the female mainland immigrants, improving their appearance through beautifying their bodies and faces would be the next step of capital acquisition. When the teacher of the 'Eatsmart' course discussed with the women immigrants the slimming craze in Hong Kong and the mainland, Ah King said,

> There are also some women trying to keep fit in China, but it mostly happens in the developed cities. For people in rural areas who don't have money to [buy food to] eat, they wouldn't bother whether they are fat or thin!

Other women immigrants agreed with her eagerly, yelling, "Yeah! Yeah!" It reflected that these women would not consider acquiring physical capital before first securing economic capital.

A comment from the teacher also helped me to assess how the immigrants rank the different forms of capital. When all the students had left the classroom, the

teacher of the 'Eatsmart' course commented to me privately, in an annoyed manner;

> I feel the new arrivals are very materialistic (功利主義). When they came to our center, they seemed to only want to learn all kinds of practical skills such as computer and English.... They had to leave with a pile of notes. They seemed to lack interest in other courses concerning health and outlook.

The teacher was not very happy because these women did not show great interest in her course. However, seeing the situation from their perspective, the choices of these women can be understood because they do not believe a healthy body can help them generate economic capital. According to most of my informants, a decent appearance would enable them to establish personal relationships with others, especially with the Hong Kong people. Choi Wen felt that her lack of physical capital had hindered her in gaining social capital. She said,

> My son always encourages me to join the classes, but I don't want to. I dress very ugly, and I'm afraid people will look down on me.

Without having enough economic capital, these women could not afford to gain physical capital through beautification. They believed that to attain a pretty face and a decent appearance would only help them to better perform and interact with others in society.

As discussed, capital means differently in different societies. Though these

women had their own prioritization of capital different from that of the Hong Kong social workers, their high attendance in the courses reflected that they were willing to redefine what capital meant to them when they moved to Hong Kong. The reasons were, firstly, the women were disempowered in the process of migration. They were defined as a "powerless group" and "problem-people", and in fact a problem to be "resolved". Secondly, the social workers were powerful because they had in their hands many kinds of capital: knowledge (cultural capital) through organizing training courses; assistance to access to welfare benefits (economic capital); provision of bonding among women through organizing women's groups (social capital). These knowledges and power had made these women believe that they should allow themselves to be molded by the social workers in order to integrate into Hong Kong society. Since many of my informants regarded Hong Kong as a place of "heaven" where they had long desired to live, they were willing to be transformed in order to fit into a new context. However, it took the women some time to redefine capital. For instance, the women used to believe that the proficiency of English and Cantonese will lead a person to succeed. But when they were told that Putonghua, their mother-tongue, was another resource that they could develop, they were delighted but also clearly took some time for them to make changes and go through such redefining process.

Evaluation of Achievement

When these women acted as agents and had access to forms of capital, i.e., resources, I now move on to analyze the achievements of learning process, the theoretical framework that is based on Kabeer's. In the following discussion, I ask what is the learning outcome of "Hongkongness"? Was it an empowerment OR a disempowerment process for these women to participate in these classes? Or was it an empowerment AND a disempowerment at the same time? In which areas can we find empowerment and disempowerment? I set out three indicators for its measurements of empowerment, i.e. (1) breaking down of cultural boundaries; (2) discarding stereotypes, and as a result, (3) constructing new relations.

Breaking Down of Cultural Boundaries

As have discussed above that these women were in access to forms of capital it is important to evaluate what kind of knowledge they had learned, and how useful the curriculum was in terms of helping them to integrate in to Hong Kong society. A few of my interviewees found the classes particularly resourceful for them. Wai Ying said happily,

> Yes, of course. In the computer class I learned how to input Chinese characters. The English class also taught us English skills in case we want to pursue such a

career, and it's useful for communication when we travel. For the class of retail sales skills, I learned how to sell products and how to communicate better.

Lai San also shared similar views. She said, "Yes, of course! There are some English vocabularies used in daily conversation, now I can catch a bit at least. And sometimes, when I was walking on the street, I tried reading the words shown on the signs. In the mainland, seldom could we find English signs, and even if there were, I wouldn't pay attention to them, because English is not that popular there." Ninety percent of my informants acknowledged that the improvement in their skills and knowledge was due to the effort made by the community centers.

However, the ethnographic data shows that the women were just "learning a little bit more" to gain a very basic knowledge of a subject. In the English lessons, the class felt uneasy about learning numbers in English, which children in Hong Kong learn at kindergarten age. They were asked to do some simple written exercises such as filling in the blanks with English letters. In response to it, Jane said, "In the mainland, we don't learn the letters A B C D until secondary school. We didn't learn it in primary school, unlike Hong Kong where kids learn it when they are in kindergarten." Ah Fung found her English level could hardly be improved since the teaching content was as much as her daughter's at the primary school. She complained, "I feel like I'm only at the primary school level, or even worse than

that." Surely these women were learning something, but the content of these courses implicitly told them what a hèunggóngyàhn should know, and what a hèunggóngyàhn should be able to do. The more the knowledge they could not master, the more they felt inferior compared to the locals, and thus feelings of foreignness and distinctiveness was reinforced.

The women blamed themselves for "failures" in mastering the English language that resulted in inability to handle daily matters. In Lai San's case, she was being proud of her devotion to study English that she had completed a number of courses from a couple of community centers. But she was embarrassed for the little advancement she could make from it. As in the case of her inability to read an English contract that I have demonstrated in Chapter 3, I revisited this case again because the fact that she could not read it, which she thought most Hong Kong people could, made her feel she had not successfully became a Hong Kong person. Feeling helpless and frustration in dealing daily matters that required English ability, she felt she was an "outsider" of the community.

Contrary to many Hong Kong people who proudly said they are smart and being flexible, my interviewees had a high tendency to use words, "stupid", "slow" and "forgetful" and "uncultured" to describe themselves. The following were some quotes based on my field notes.

It's very difficult! No matter how hard I study [English], I still don't get it! Whenever I hear an English word, I have a headache. (Ah Ha)

We people seldom use a computer, no matter how much the teacher taught, it all just flew out of our memory. I can still remember it at this moment, but I might forget it all afterwards! (Ah King)

By the time I get out of this room, I will forget everything. (Ah Woo)

I'm so stupid, I can never remember the things [I was taught]. I think I'm at the lowest grade! (Ah Yin)

Miss Lau, Can you help me with the English? I'm very slow, I can't follow [what the teacher was saying] (Lai San)

I'm not cultured and I don't know anything. (Lai Chuen)

To a great extent, the women felt incompatible to learn a new language and computer skills, which the locals were in master of it. Although the women were already put under training, they always felt they were lagging a lot behind compared to the locals, resulted in very low self-esteem. A strong differentiation of "we" and "others" was maintained by the women's self-devaluation.

Discarding Stereotypes

As have discussed in Chapter 2 that one of stereotypes of mainland women

immigrants in Hong Kong is that they are perceived as old-fashioned (or inappropriately dressed). Here, I aim to analyze how will learning process help in countering the stereotypes that the mainland women suffer in Hong Kong? I evaluate this aspect on the bases of their learning of appearances.

People raised and born in Hong Kong are fluent in the local culture, can (or believe they can) readily notice deviations from expected behavior, and may "look down" upon those who fail to reproduce it. So how much did these women immigrants achieve fluency in this particular discourse? Culture can be understood from different perspectives, but for these women, they were only learning about the material culture: e.g. dress and taste, and consequently their cultural relevance was measured within this material-based standard. While the locals have been socialized in these discourses since they were little, these mainland women are learning about them in their middle age, and they often could not learn the subtleties of these material cultures. Failure to learn becomes a form of violation of the norm that the locals can easily criticize, and categorize them as lower class.

Though the make-up class had given the women new skills in *how* to modify their appearance-- "to create a variety of looks", they nevertheless lacked fluency in *what* "look" is considered appropriate on what occasion. In the retail sales skills class, two participants stood out. One of them, Ah Man, who had long straight hair over her

shoulders, wore a big loose shirt with a stripes and tight blue jeans, and had heavy make-up on her face. When she came into the classroom, most women said, "Oh, you pretty woman, you look like a PR (public relations professional)!" Another woman, Ah Yee, who had long and curly hair, also wore make-up. One day she came to class wearing a white dress with big flowery laces on her chest. Her thick curly hair was bouncing in the air as she walked into the classroom. Everybody stared at her. One of the class participants could not help speaking out, "Wow! You look like Snow White today!" Ah Man and Ah Yee had obviously overdressed for the occasion (attending a class in a community center) and they looked even more distinct from the locals as a result.

Inappropriate appearance could also be found in other classes. In the retail sales class, the women were asked to do a practicum in selling toys. They were asked to dress comfortably in sneakers and jeans, while purple T-shirts were distributed by the Center. That morning, however, all of the women came dressed up. Ah Man wore purple eye-shadow to match her purple T shirt uniform. Ah Yin had her hair set in a salon, and had worn a little blush on her cheeks and pink lipstick. They did not look appropriate for this occasion which required them to move and carry loads, and perhaps sweat quite a lot. However, they defined the occasion in a different way, believing that as salespersons they should be properly dressed. Another occasion was

the establishment of the Institute of Putonghua, a subdivision of the community center. A drama was staged to portray the hardships of newly-arrived women. One of the actors, a newly-arrived woman herself, played the role of a woman who had problems looking for a job. However, she wore a colorful jacket with a big round feather collar. Apparently, she tried to look her best on stage, and disregarded her responsibility of portraying a disadvantaged woman desperately seeking a job. These interesting examples show that while the women mainland immigrants were taught knowledge of appropriate appearance (physical capital), the way they reproduced it differed from the Hong Kong teachers' expectations, as they applied their own set of criteria of proper conduct, those formerly acquired in the mainland. Being inappropriately dressed could not defend themselves against discriminating glance by passer-by. Stereotypes of women mainland migrants as "tacky" and "old-fashioned" still persisted among my interviewees.

Constructing New Relations

Despite all the problems they had in the courses, these were occasions when their circle of friends in Hong Kong was expanded. In the in-depth interviews, all of the informants reported positively about these courses. Choi Wen commented repeatedly about the social relations she had built with other female immigrants and

social workers. She said,

> I've taken a couple of classes. For example, the parent-child class, the women's sharing group, English class, and other outdoor activities. I feel much happier than before. The social workers are very kind-hearted and caring to me, especially Mr. Chan. He taught me how to take transportation, and even the preparation for my husband's funeral.

She continued,

> I've joined the women's sharing group in which the social worker taught us how to keep ourselves healthy, and how to get to some destinations, e.g. the hospital, Yaumatei and Nathan Road…It's very enjoyable in the [women's mutual help] group, because I can meet friends, I can chat with social workers…. Anyway, I've now more motivated to phone and talk to other people, e.g. Ah Heung, who shares a similar background, and we have a lot of topics to share.

She concluded,

> They did help me to become more adjusted to living in Hong Kong, they're quite good! I couldn't find such kinds of activities or courses in the mainland, but in Hong Kong only. I can forget whatever is unhappy; I can chat and laugh with the social workers…. I feel very happy.

Hoi Mei's loneliness seemed to have disappeared after joining a couple of courses.

She said,

> I feel much happier after taking the course because I have learned more about Hong Kong culture, and I met some friends from the domestic helper class. As for [taking] the security guard class, I made fewer friends because it only lasted for two lessons.

Wai Ying even felt a strong bonding of sisterhood through meeting other immigrants in the center. She said,

> I treat all my girl friends as sisters! Whenever they need help to look after their kids, I'd ask them to send their kids to me to look after. We always help each other!

Though there were variations in the degree of closeness, the sisterhood among these women played a fundamental role in enabling them to help each other in areas of childcare, and participation in the work force. However, I argue that sisterhood creation amongst the immigrant women might not work as effectively as the social workers believed. The social workers saw new immigrants as a homogeneous group. The fact is, these female mainland immigrants have come from different provinces, and they saw each other as different in terms of dialect, food culture and living habits. To add to the complexity, stereotypes of women from different provinces have framed stereotypes of one another, and they have a clear hierarchy of social status

derived from certain values. For example, Miu Ping, a single mother who took care of two children, felt disturbed and annoyed by other new arrivals. She said,

> Being divorced is problematic. Not only Hongkongers, but new arrivals also look down on divorced women like me.... Women are troublesome; they look down on us and wonder what kinds of problems we have. Sometimes, they even imagine that we'll try to seduce their husbands. The new arrivals are even worse; they are nosey and like gossiping behind people's backs!

Miu Ping was stigmatized due to her divorcee status. She did not get support from other women immigrants as the social workers had expected. These negative experiences made her decide not to make friends in Hong Kong. Not only were mainland women stereotyped as mistresses and prostitutes by Hong Kong people, some of them also saw each other negatively according to which provinces they were from. Becky said,

> You know what, in the place where my sister is living in Shenzhen, called Cheung Wan Yuen (長雲苑), nine women out of ten are from Sichuan and have married Hong Kong husbands. Most of the Sichuan women know that they themselves are pretty, have fair complexion and good body shape, and they calculate well whom they should marry to according to their appearance. Many Hong Kong husbands live there as well. They go back to Hong Kong to work at

6am, and return to Shenzhen only around 9pm. It's very tough for them! But these women are doing nothing, but gather together to play Mahjong or to have tea... In Shenzhen, there are a lot of women from Sichuan, who work at prostitution places or entertainment places.

Her bad impression of Sichuanese women made her feel uncomfortable to learn Cantonese with a classmate who came from that province. She said,

> I think I don't click with my classmates right now! I don't know! Probably it's my feeling only. They are older than me first of all. There's a woman who doesn't even know pinyin! I mean, every mainlander should know pinyin, but this woman had to use her Sichuanese, i.e. her hometown dialect to do the pinyin...."
>
> Another time, she said, "Today is the only time I heard her (the Sichuanese women) speaking up, she's been dreaming in the previous classes: holding the book up in front of her face, and murmuring. She's got no self-initiative [to learn] at all!

The above examples show that mainland women did not necessarily get along with each other. The diversities of provincial origin, age, and occupation might pull them apart. Constructing Sisterhood bonding between mainland women was considered failure to some degree.

Constructing friendship with Hong Kong people should be discussed in their

evaluation of achievement. As Münckler and Ladwig (1998, quoted in Knörr and Meier 2000: 259) discuss, "Being foreign is not a designation of things or characteristics, but rather a qualification of relations". This shows building up friendly relations with Hong Kong people is a measurement of their integration in to Hong Kong. In this study, only one teacher shared similar view. She informed me that she saw the importance of the immigrants' social connections with Hong Kong people, instead of just amongst the mainlanders themselves. The teacher of the Cantonese class said,

> There was once a woman who told me that she's been in Hong Kong for years, but she can only listen, but is not able to speak. I really want them to have guts, not to be too shy when speaking in front of other people. I think they need to have a friend who can speak Cantonese. I mean a Hong Kong friend! What I'm teaching now is largely related to their daily lives, they need a Hong Kong friend to practice the language.

It was not easy for the women to know any Hong Kong people through going to the community centers to take classes which are particularly designed for new comers. Social workers were the only Hong Kong people that the women mostly interact apart from their Hong Kong husband. In Becky's case, my visit to her apartment made her family delighted because I was the only Hong Kong friend she made here.

Forming female mainland immigrants into "mainland women groups" could undoubtedly give them mutual support, however, little could they integrate into Hong Kong society because of failure of building up relations or friendship with Hong Kong people As the women were kept from mixing with Hong Kong people in such learning process, there was no way they could step inside the circle of the locals.

Disempowerment

The other side of empowerment is disempowerment. They are just at the opposite ends of the scale of measurement, and have many different gradations in between. Kasaba's analysis on migration from the Third World to the First world is worth to be noted. She opines that such moving process is seen as improving women's life chances on the surface, but in fact, an intensification of existing subordination. She argues it "subject women to new forms of control and domination" (Kasaba 2000: 136). Similarly, Moghadam regards migration from rural to urban city will lead to "housewife-ization", and "tighter controls over girls' dress and behavior" (2007: 9). Rose and Black argue if the empowerment process is controlled by another party who are in access to resources (or capital), then such process will turn out to be a disempowerment one (Rose and Black 1985). In the following paragraphs, I will look at the kinds of disempowerment found in the aspect

of their economic performance, capital accumulation and how disempowerment was attributed by the paradoxical roles played by the social workers.

One of the major aims of social service is to help mainland women immigrants to engage in paid work. However, many of the ways this is currently done are sidestepping the important issues at best, and reinforcing the problems at worst. For example, many of the women immigrants are professionals themselves in the mainland, but their knowledge and skills often became "irrelevant" after they moved to Hong Kong as their qualifications were mostly unrecognized. Instead of helping them to continue with their professional career, these "adjustment courses" only teach them skills in non-specialist jobs such as janitors, waitresses, and elderly-home assistants. Similar to the Mexican women immigrants in the U.S.A who suffered from downward mobility by working as home cleaners (Segura 1994: 95-111), the women immigrants in Hong Kong were not given opportunities to learn skills in relation to their previous training and relevant to their profession. One of my informants, Sum Yi Mama, reported that 60 to 80% of the staff in the elderly home where she had just resigned from were new arrivals; the rest were older hèunggóngyàhn. She sighed,

I mean this job is not easy, it's tough, and I have to bear a lot of responsibilities. We're at the lowest rank, and we have to clean up patients' urine and shit. This is

the cheapest occupation. I can't take this kind of pressure!

It is common that new arrivals are discriminated against as they are seen as sources of cheap labour, while their professional qualifications were totally disregarded. This situation can be understood by dependency theory.

Contrary to modernization theorists who believe that all underdeveloped nations will be developed in stages, dependency theorists argue that the world is divided into the wealthy core nations and the poor periphery nations. The latter is exploited and stay underdeveloped through their relationship with the former. The natural resources and labour of the peripheries are extracted by the core at a low price through external trade. As a result, the economy of the developed nation will grow continually whilst the underdeveloped will stay incompatible and poor due to a lack of resources (Wallerstein 1979). Here, the metaphor of dependency theory also exists in this context. After these women migrated to Hong Kong, they are retrained as domestic work assistants, carers for the elderly homes, salespersons in the supermarket — in short, dead-end, low pay and low status jobs. They contribute to the host society with their time and labor, but what have they earned in return? I argue that new arrivals could not learn other skills because Hong Kong people do not want them to learn certain kinds of knowledge, namely the professional knowledge, such as nursing and accounting. In the language class, they could only learn "a little bit more" through

learning “simple English”. If these women are always put into classes to learn just “a bit more” of whatever kind of knowledge, they will remain as poor (the periphery) as before, and they can never reach the level of Hong Kong people (the core) in terms of education, income and social status.

From a feminist perspective, one could critique such learning processes as reinforcing gender segregation. Mrs. Au once told me about her “expert training” in domestic work. She said,

> Learning how to do domestic work is very different from what I am doing at home. For example, when I wipe clean the windows, I usually wipe clean in a circular way for few times only, but they taught me to wipe it vertically and then horizontally. There is a time limitation too. It’s like a test or an examination; we need to finish certain kind of tasks within 10 minutes, for example, putting a quilt on the bed, wiping the exhaust fan, wiping windows, ironing clothes… every kinds of task should take only 10 minutes.

Another informant, Lin Hue, also completed a domestic assistant training course. She commented,

> I’ve learned a lot from this course. For example, I used to do housework anyhow I like and not professionally at all, but now I have learned to be very tidy, and I learn to use appropriate skills to clean different kinds of electrical appliances,

such as the fridge, and the electrical fans.

Jane, who was in her early twenties, young and energetic, who put her faith in taking up "feminine" jobs. She said,

> Skills like elderly care, domestic assistance, and beauty care all interest me. I've already applied for the class of cashier machine operation in this center, but they haven't confirmed the exact date with me yet. I'd like to work as a cashier machine operator in a supermarket because I think it's more free, I could work for some hours, but I'd still have time to look after my parents-in-law. But I need to learn some basic knowledge.

These women were trained to be "professional" in doing housework. Though they could convert the skills into economic capital ($50 per hour) when they are hired, such profession is in fact a kind of domestic work that many people do not value.

Learning Hong Kong culture was indeed a painful process for these women, they negated their selves during the process of acquiring and accumulating forms of capital. They had to negotiate and get rid of their old identities as mainlanders, which meant they needed to forget about their past in order to become Hongkongers. Their negation of self exists in learning and reproducing Hongkongness. For example, in the aspect of language relearning, they were asked to forget the mother-tongue they

used to speak. When a student in the Cantonese class said, "*ah Yi*" (阿姨, middle-aged women), the teacher corrected her by saying we Hong Kong people do not say "*ah yi*", we say "*ah jei*" (阿姐, middle-aged women) instead. Another example was when the teacher of the Cantonese class asked, "What kind of congee do you like to eat?" Becky replied, "(地瓜粥, sweet potato congee.)" But the teacher immediately corrected her and said, "We don't call it '*deih gwà jūk*' (地瓜粥) here, but '*fàan syùh jūk*' (番薯粥, sweet potato congee) instead!" Similarly, in the Eatsmart course, when the women talked about their weight, they were asked to use "pounds" or "kilograms" which Hong Kong people use, instead of "*Jin*"[36](斤) that is common in the mainland. Their move to the new cultural environment of Hong Kong creates a disorientation which usually cannot be fully resolved unless and until they gain fluency in the language through which the culture is mediated, i.e. Cantonese. Successful integration depends upon this.

Learning the regular or complicated form of Chinese character is another form of self-negation among the immigrant women. When they learning Chinese input in the computer class, one of them read a Chinese word "*baat*" (八, number eight) in the notes, and she quickly associated it as "*yìh*" ("儿", son or children, the way "兒" is written in the mainland Chinese system) She said to the teacher, "I know this word, this

[36] One "*jin*" in China equals to 0.5 kilogram, which is different from the "*jin*" used in Hong Kong that is equivalent to 4/3 pounds.

is '*yìh*'." Then the teacher turned around and talked to the whole class and said, "Don't think of the simplified Chinese, think of the complicated one." Lai San felt she had to relearn Chinese writing even though she was a literate Chinese person, in fact a primary teacher in the mainland. She was upset and said to the teacher, "I've never learned the complicated Chinese writing style, neither can I read or write!" In order to use the computer, these women had to forget about what they had learned in China, especially the simplified writing system.

In addition, the popularity of English in Hong Kong also challenged them to reconsider selfhood as expressed in language, especially through the use of their own mother-tongue. In Chapter 3, I examined how new arrivals learnt about how Hong Kong people incorporate English into their daily conversation, and how female mainlanders as students in the computer class also had to struggle with using a new system of language – English, Cantonese and complicated style Chinese characters. When the teacher of the computer class introduced a term '*hāk haak*' (黑客), one of the students, Lai San, said, "oh, I know, we call it '*hāk haak gung gīk'* (黑客攻擊, attack by the hacker) in China. Then when the teacher talked about the button on the keyboard, "the space bar", he said, "In Chinese, we call it as '*hùng baahk gihn*' (空白鍵), but most hèunggóngyàhn refer to it in English, 'space'", then Lai San responded, "Oh, I know, we call it as '*hùng gaak gihn*' (空格鍵) ….." Lai San found

it difficult to learn all the English terms taught by the teacher and sighed, "In the mainland, we used to have some Chinese terms such as, '*wùih chè gihn*' (回車鍵, backspace), '*syù yahp gihn*' (輸入鍵, enter), '*chit wuhn chyùhn teui*' (撤換全退, shift'). But after coming to Hong Kong, I feel like I don't know anything about computers." Though they already had some key knowledge of using computer, they felt they know nothing -- unless they unlearn the language they used in the mainland and replace it with the one that is widely used in Hong Kong. Until they learn the English terms when they operate the computer, and be able to converse with each other in this new system, they will stay distinct from the Hong Kong people.

Apart from language skills, my women informants also negate their selves through watching their own behavior. In the interview, Wai Ying gave me an interesting remark. She said,

> People whom I met [in Hong Kong] all treat me quite well. I like learning how to better communicate with other people; because very often, I can't see my disadvantages. For example, mainlanders like speaking aloud, [they are] very selfish and [they] don't care about other people.... I'm very aware of these [behaviors] and try to avoid them.

When she was asked how she identify herself after taking courses in the community center, she replied,

> I think I am a hèunggóngyàhn already. I always remind myself to work hard to learn to be a better hèunggóngyàhn. I want to appear as having better quality when I come out to meet people.

This informant imagined all Hong Kong people are people with better quality, in contrast with people from her own place who were imagined as rude and selfish. She negated herself as a Chinese and learned to perform as a hèunggóngyàhn.

The paradoxical roles of social workers who serve clients dysfunction the process of empowerment. There is a hierarchal relationship between social workers and the mainland migrants; their job nature and cultural background can be taken into account. Social workers perceived their roles as helping those in need. For example, they help these women to look for schools for their children, and help them solve marital conflicts. They advise them on how to apply for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) if needed, and take them to the Labor Department to learn how to look for jobs. One of the NGO centers even set up a Putonghua Institute for the women to learn to be Putonghua teachers. Therefore, social workers as service providers were people in possession of knowledge and resources. In relation then, the female mainland immigrants as service users would automatically define themselves as help seekers as soon as they walked into an NGO or Government Integrated Family Center. Since the relationship between social workers and

mainland immigrants is built on "helping" and "receiving help", hardly can we see an equal relationship between them. Furthermore, as social workers are mostly Hongkong-born natives, the power-relationship means that the inferiority of the mainland women will persist.

This unequal relationship was reified in daily interaction between social workers and female mainland immigrants. One of the social workers felt she herself was a model for them to "learn" from. She said,

> Basically even when I'm just simply sitting here (in an office) not doing anything, I can still affect them. I'm a working woman who earns salary. I just sit here (in the office) with a name tag hanging on my neck, and I can access details of their families to solve problems. The way I speak, the way I dress and my gesture can become model behavior for them to learn from. They can learn by just looking at my outlook.

The sense of superiority among the Hong Kong social workers can be explained by their imagination of "slowness" and "backwardness" of the mainlanders. During fieldwork, I was able to participate in these classes as a volunteer worker. One of the social workers once requested me to look after the women during the lessons. She murmured to me that there might be one or two women who were quite slow in learning. I asked her how she knew this, she replied, "I could tell simply by observing

these women!" Stereotypes of female mainland immigrants were constructed among some social workers: they learn slowly, and are not as clever as the Hong Kong people. Undoubtedly, these women were placed at a much lower position than the Hong Kong social workers.

Giving assistance to mainlanders to apply for the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) is another example that the social workers feel uneasy about. The CSSA is said to be one of the welfare benefits that is exploited by the new arrivals, about which the hèunggóngyàhn feel annoyed. Such hostile feelings can be found on news reports, discussion blogs on the internet, and on the radio. Some social workers also stereotype that all mainlanders want to 'milk the system' when they come to Hong Kong. One of them said, "I wonder if we are being too nice to the new arrivals, are we spoiling them?" However, not all the CSSA recipients are mainland immigrants because the CSSA is not only eligible for new arrivals from mainland to apply for; it is eligible to all Hong Kong residents who come from low income groups, including those who are disabled, the elderly, children and adults. As mainlanders are stereotyped as CSSA recipients, Hong Kong social workers find themselves in a dilemma: on the one hand, they are obliged to serve these "others" as part of their job, but on the other hand, they are hesitant in serving a group of clients that "we" Hong Kong people dislike.

Conclusion

Hong Kong became a Chinese special administration region in 1997. However, Hong Kong people are not made to learn to become Chinese as a result. Instead, the reverse has been true. Mainland immigrants in Hong Kong have to learn to be Hongkongese. This can be seen in the superiority complex found amongst many Hongkongers vis-à-vis mainland Chinese. The pride coming from the city's economic success and the government's promotion of the myth of Hong Kong having transformed miraculously "from a fishing village to an international trade center" have been internalized in the hearts of most Hong Kong people. Recently threatened by the rise of Chinese cities in particular Shanghai, many Hong Kong people cannot bear the thought of their "rice bowls" being broken by mainlanders whom they have considered inferior in the past few decades.

By relegating the mainlanders to a lower status, Hongkongese maintain a lead in the labour market as well as in the cultural hierarchy. To a large extent, the retraining courses played a significant role in maintaining the segregation between the Hongkongese and mainlanders. As most of the centers teach working skills which will only enable a person to enter lower economic strata, e.g., a domestic assistant, a carer for the elderly, a cashier machine operator, a sales staff, etc, the privileged position of the Hongkongese can be preserved. The teaching material for English

language and computer usage was far too easy for some of my informants, who eventually dropped out from these classes. I argue that these women are being "undertrained", thus protecting the social and economic interests of the locals. Therefore, the relationship between these female mainland immigrants and Hong Kong people is similar to that of the developed nations (core) and underdeveloped nations (periphery) as discussed by the dependency" theorists. Similar to the periphery nations which can never fully developed due to the exploitation of their own resources by the developed countries for industrialization, these women's continued devotion of time and energy to the low-paid jobs in Hong Kong will mean they can never break the glass ceiling. Their only capital (resource) that Hong Kong people recognize and value is their fluency in Putonghua. Again, this resource is extracted through encouraging these women to become Putonghua teachers to teach the Hong Kong people. This eventually helps the Hong Kong people to capture other forms of capital through trading with the rising economy of China, whilst the best that these women can work is to become Putonghua teachers.

In this chapter I have shown that the retraining courses for new immigrants imply that they are different from, and therefore not full-fledged, Hong Kong people. They are a marginal group that needs to be transformed in order to be accepted by mainstream society. In the process, the new immigrants must first negate themselves

in order to reproduce Hongkongess. The irony is, they can never reach the goal as the yardstick as prescribed by mainstream society is a fluid and ever-changing one.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to provide a gender perspective as an alternative to study the issue of female mainland immigrants in Hong Kong. The flow of mainland wives to unite with their Hong Kong husband in the late 20th century shows that Hong Kong society practices patrilocality which requires a woman to move to where her husband lives. This gendered mobility leads to the women's loss of their original social support network, making their adjustment in Hong Kong much more difficult. The subaltern position of these women is twofold: Firstly, on the social level they are mainlanders un-welcomed and discriminated against by many Hong Kong people; and secondly; on the cultural level they are women who are considered an inferior sex that has fundamentally added to such oppression. Without gaining a true Hong Kong identity, they are marginalized and stigmatized as a result of their gender and cultural identity.

A Uniquely Hong Kong Process

Mainland Chinese have continuously moved to Hong Kong from China in the past, and gradually settled and identified themselves as hèunggóngyàhn. Due to the British colonial government's non-intervention welfare policy in Hong Kong, little assistance to the mainland immigrants was given (Wong 2004: 32- 37). Therefore

there was no competition for welfare benefits between the locals and immigrants in early Hong Kong. However, with the changes in immigration policy beginning in the late 1960s, and a growing sense of Hong Kong identity in the 1970s especially among the local-born, post war baby boomers, a cultural boundary between Hong Kong and the mainland was created and has continued to the present. A feeling of superiority is also deeply rooted in the hearts of many Hong Kong people due to the emergence of a local popular culture and the fast growing economy in Hong Kong.

On the other hand, the Hong Kong government has maintained the cultural boundary between Hong Kong and mainland through a number of polices over the past few decades. In 1967, riots stirred up by the Cultural Revolution in the PRC led the Hong Kong government to make a dramatic move that contributed to the sense of belongingness in Hong Kong: the Hong Kong government held a series of campaigns in order to show they were different from the socialist regime on the mainland. For example, the Clean Hong Kong campaign in 1974, which mobilized Hong Kong residents to identify themselves as part of a community that shared similarities in lifestyle and values. The establishment of the Independent Commission Against Corruption in 1974 also made the general public feel proud of themselves for having a clean government which distinguishes them from the corrupt bureaucracy on the mainland (Vickers 2005: 29; Grant 2001: 163). Though Hong Kong's sovereignty has

returned to China in 1997, the cultural boundary is still eagerly maintained. For example, the delayed development of the Lok Ma Chau Loop (落馬洲河套區) [37] shows how Hong Kong is worried about economically opening up to and physically integrating with the mainland. The recent double standard in immigration policy is another example: while "talents" such as musicians and elite athletes from the mainland are eagerly sought after, the wives of Hong Kong men are labeled "new immigrant women" and have had to wait for at least five years before they are permitted to migrate.

When we look at Hong Kong's migration history, the early male adult laborers from China are often praised as heroes of Hong Kong's economic success. While the role of female mainland immigrants has rarely been discussed, in fact they have made significant contributions to the economy and to the maintenance of the family system. Women immigrants have different experiences and face different difficulties from men. Without a balanced discussion of the roles played by both genders, we cannot see the full picture of migration history between mainland China and Hong Kong. In the 1990s, a growing number of mainland wives arriving in Hong Kong for family reunion aroused public concern. Images of helpless mainland women

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[37] Lok Ma Chau Loop is part of the Frontier Closed Area at the border of Hong Kong and Shenzhen. The Frontier Closed Area is a buffer zone set up between the border of Hong Kong and China in 1951, to combat illegal immigration when Hong Kong was a British colony.

immigrants were repeatedly featured in news reports of Tin Shui Wai, the district which was dubbed "the sad city". But alongside these sympathetic descriptions, there were heated debates over the abuse of CSSA by new immigrants. Provision of services to encourage adaptation and of job training is seen as an immediate solution to the "problems" of these women, and thus funding from the government to social service providers in this area suddenly increased. In the process of offering these adaptation and training classes, teachers and organizers (the community centers and mostly Hongkong-born female social workers) have made use of local-oriented programs, in which they teach Hongkongness and preach Hongkong-style womanhood. My study has shown that it is precisely the content of these courses that has helped to maintain the cultural boundary between Hong Kong and mainland people, instead of helping to dissolve the distinction.

Identity reconstruction for mainland migrants in Hong Kong is unique as mainlanders have to relearn a new identity even though their migration is strictly speaking an internal one, and though they and Hong Kong people are ethnically the same. Yet culturally and politically they cross a "national" border when they move to Hong Kong, which is largely the result of the policy of One Country Two Systems. Imitating Hongkongness is largely due to the hierarchy of identities in Hong Kong. Mainlanders are long being "otherized" and imagined to be poor, less sophisticated,

and therefore inferior to Hong Kong people. This cultural relationship has not changed with the return of sovereignty of Hong Kong to China, even though it is obvious that politically the Hong Kong government has increasingly bowed to Beijing's influence, and since 1997, messages of nationalism in the Hong Kong mass media have kept increasing. It is true that some extent of cultural integration is achieved as more and more Hong Kong people now commute to China to work, to study or to reside. In addition, many mainlanders have studied abroad, and many Chinese cities, especially Shanghai, have become very much international; and therefore we see the intellectual and living standards in Hong Kong and the PRC converging in many aspects. However, this does not seem to have an impact on the level of daily life in Hong Kong, where many locals still believe they are superior and regard mainlanders as inadequate. Interestingly, as Hong Kong people continue to learn to be patriotic, showing allegiance to China and listening to the national anthem every day, they require mainlanders, especially women immigrants, to adopt "Hongkong-style" clothing, manners, and behaviors. We must conclude that, as mainlanders acquire Hongkongness, they have come to dislike the "mainland style". As we can see from the previous discussion of my field data, many of the immigrant women believed they were moving upwards "culturally" by speaking Konglish--a mixture of English and Cantonese-- and changing their mannerisms to conform to a

Hong Kong style behavioral code.

Not only did they need to imitate Hongkongness, the women also needed to learn to climb up the social ladder in order to attain a true Hong Kong identity. According to previous research (Lau 2000; Mathews 1997) it is the people from the middle class in Hong Kong that mostly identify themselves as hèunggóngyàhn. Thus to gain a Hong Kong identity, mainlanders need to learn to move from the working class to the middle class. As discussed before, mainlanders are imagined to be a group of country bumpkins, and therefore migration from China to Hong Kong is stereotyped as a move from the Third World to the First World. Even for those "new rich" among the mainlanders, they are criticized by Hong Kong people to have bad taste. In my research, migrants who went to the community centers for vocational training were no doubt mainly from the lower income group and were those who found that their skills unrecognized and unvalued in Hong Kong. The acquisition of vocational knowledge and cultural knowledge helped them to better perform at work and in social interaction, and ideally helped them to move up to the middle class. I will discuss more whether these women can truly move up to middle class in the later part of this chapter.

Keeping an Imagined Boundary

To many mainlanders, Hong Kong people are perceived as people who are wealthy, better educated, hard-working, and "civilized". However, As Hall argues (1992: 287),

> Identity arises, not so much from the fullness of identity which is already inside us as individuals, but from a lack of wholeness which is "filled" from outside us, by the ways we imagine ourselves to be seen by others.

What are the factors that contribute to such imaginations among mainlanders? Firstly, popular culture, especially the local television programs that are broadcast in the mainland, which fosters an image of Hong Kong people who are categorically rich as they all enjoy a luxurious, leisure lifestyle. Secondly, Hong Kong men who cannot afford to support a family by Hong Kong standard, look for partners in the mainland and often appear as big spenders due to differences of living standard between Hong Kong and the mainland (Lang & Smart 2002). This promotes an impression of Hong Kong men as wealthy guys who are ideal spouses for mainland women.

Imagination of locals in the host country is found in previous research, such as Qiu's research on South-East Asian women migrants in Taiwan (Qiu 2003: 303-304). She opines patrilineal family members, neighbors and colleagues became the

"reference group and reference individual". Daily interactions between the Asian brides and the locals attribute to the construction of imagination of Taiwan (Qiu 2003: 305-306). Similarly, this study clearly shows how the mainland women migrants perceived and imagined Hongkongness through interaction with their husband, children, teachers in classes and social workers. In the eyes of, the women, hèunggóngyàhn were imagined to be more "civilized" in terms of education, more polite in dealing with people, more efficient at work, and more willing to struggle in hardship. To attain this high standard of "civility", these women were willing to go through a process of double negation of themselves as "mainlanders" and as "mainland women". In order to deconstruct their original identity of female mainlanders, they needed to leave behind their own cultures. They believed that the only way that they could avoid being "discriminated against" was to discard their "mainland" behavior, and act cautiously in a "Hong Kong" way. This means that they should no longer value their own cultural identity and had to forget their past.

I argue that the imagination of Hongkongness is the result of over-general comparison between Hong Kong people and mainlanders. In this ethnography, the female mainland immigrants, the Hongkong-born social workers, and Hongkong-born teachers divided themselves into two groups of people. They called themselves "we new immigrants" (我地啲新移民) and "we hèunggóngyàhn" (我

地香港人) respectively. They built up the dichotomous view about what Hong Kong people have as what the mainlanders don't, what Hong Kong people have more as what the mainlanders have less of, and what Hong Kong people have in better quality as what the mainlanders have in lower quality. My informants accepted this discourse, and genuinely regarded Hong Kong people as having ideal characteristics and thus were willing to learn from them.

Not only do mainlanders feel inferior to the locals, many Hong Kong people themselves also believe / imagine they are superior to the mainlanders. According to Hall, identity is fluid, and "always in process" (Hall 1992: 287). But interestingly, the notion that Hong Kong people are as "hard-working", "clever", and "persevering" as those in the 1970s seems to be frozen in time. For example, Mathews, Ma & Lui's recent research (2008) still find Hong Kong people rate themselves positively in general: Hongkongers identify themselves as "'practical', 'adaptable', 'clever', 'ambitious', 'valuing freedom' and 'westernized'" (2008: 98). In every day life, the news about the necessity to train Hongkong-born mainland babies to become 'quality babies'[38] , for example, reflects the idea that many Hong Kong people perceive themselves as cleverer than the mainlanders. However, much of the imagination of

[38] The news about the necessity to train the Hongkong-born mainland babies to become quality babies "優化「港產大陸嬰」質素", was reported on the 25th September 2006, Sing Dao Daily.

superiority of Hongkongness is only in regard to China. If we ask Hong Kong people how they would compare themselves to New Yorkers and Londoners, for example, there might be a totally different result. They most probably would consider themselves not superior, but instead inferior to them.

The idea that a "coherent identity" (Hall 1992) is not only constructed through imagining how our "selves" as seen by others, but also through imagining others' identities, is obvious in this study. Not only do mainlanders imagine how Hong Kong people are like, many Hong Kong people also imagine mainlanders through popular culture, their own memories and personal experiences. Although recently star athletes like Liu Xiang (劉翔)[39] and astronauts like Yang Liwei (楊利偉)[40] have caught the imagination of Hong Kong society, they are but rare examples of success-- Hong Kong people still retain memories of the poor and little educated mainlanders who fled to Hong Kong just a generation ago. However, the reality is there are many types of mainlanders in Hong Kong. In this particular context, there are female mainland migrants who are professionals and came to Hong Kong through the Talent Scheme; there are those who sustain higher living standard

[39] Liu Xiang, born in 1983. His performance in the 2004 Olympic at Athens gave China their first gold medal win in the track and field events. He is also the world record holder of 110 meter hurdles at 12.88seconds.

[40] Yang Liwei, China's first astronaut who traveled in the spacecraft, Shenzhou V in 2003.

through marrying up; there are young mainland females who go to university; and of course, there are those (just like a number of my interviewees) who came from lower classes. However, mainlanders are perceived as the major dependents on the Hong Kong social welfare system. This generally negative imagination has contributed much to the cultural ecology in which mainland immigrant women found themselves.

Imitating Hongkong-Style Womanhood

Female mainland immigrants are doubly burdened by their gender and cultural identity. Being a wife and mother, they undertake the role of family carer and nurturer. They are keenly aware that their eligibility to move to Hong Kong is based on their status as the spouse of their Hong Kong husband. Therefore, under the patriarchal system, their first and foremost identity is dependent of their husband. And in the capitalist system, because their domestic labor is unremunerated, they are considered unproductive and therefore a parasite of Hong Kong society. Being discriminated against repeatedly, these women questioned their femininity and cultural identity, and started to imitate Hongkong-style womanhood. Unlike Hong Kong women migrants in Australia who could sustain their own identity (Tam, 2003: 177- 199) mainland women need to go through a painful process in order to learn to

become members of Hong Kong. This can be explained by the lack of economic, social and cultural capital among the new immigrants compared to Hong Kong migrants overseas.

As mentioned above, facing social and gender inequality, the women interviewees in my study sought to transform their femininity to fit into their new home. Similar to Anthias' study in which European women serve as "ideal women" for the women migrants in Southern Europe to emulate (Anthias 2000: 16), I have shown that female mainland migrants find Hong Kong women as the ideal model to learn from. In terms of the attributes of this ideal womanhood, the women interviewees received their information on appearance, gestures, and behaviors from different sources: primarily from their Hong Kong husbands, the mass media, and social workers in the community centers. Making use of this new information, they actively reconstructed their bodies to become befitting objects of the male gaze. Yet they ran into a dilemma as the taste of their Hong Kong husbands and the mass media contradicted the image of the independent working women which was presented by the female social workers. As mentioned, some Hong Kong men imagine mainland women as having a plump figure and sexually available; and at the same time, advertisements emphasize beauty as women's ultimate life goal. However, according to observation and participation in the field, I found many female social

workers whose advice mainland women relied on, believed themselves to be ideal models of working women, who were financially independent, and in possession of a proper appearance. They organized courses that taught the mainland women how to eat healthily, how to keep a fair complexion, and how to dress up as a professional woman. In such a context of contradictory values, who were these women supposed to imitate, and what were the first characteristics of "Hongkong-style womanhood" that they picked up? Is such an imposition of local knowledge a form of "colonization" by Hong Kong social workers?

To add to this complex situation, we found the migrant women's new female identity was acquired not without some cultural contestation. As discussed earlier, this new female identity was reconstructed through the gain and loss of capital. But we should not simplistically think that in the process new cultural capital was acquired and old ones shed. Some women intervewiees actually still hold on to their mainland cultural baggage even after taking a lot of classes in Hong Kong. For example, they strongly assumed their female duty as *sèungfúgaaují* (相夫教子, to serve their husband and teach their children), and therefore, they believed their ultimate goal to come to Hong Kong was to help their husband to bring up a family, although now this was executed in a Hongkong-style.

The gender identity of these women immigrants makes the whole integration

process more complicated. It is commonly believed that some Hong Kong men seek to marry mainland women because they are stereotyped as being more sexually open but yet tamed in personality in contrast to the Hong Kong women, and the latter are believed to be "too career-minded" and "too independent" in the public discourse. In reality, an important reason these Hong Kong men married mainland wives is that they found themselves mismatched with Hong Kong women in terms of income and status. To state it more bluntly, mainland wives are believed to be easier to control. It is paradoxical when the mainland women themselves sought to reconstruct their womanhood, motherhood and wifehood, so as to become Hongkong-style women and were encouraged to do so by social workers. My informants gained skills and imitated behaviors according to the instructions taught them by the teachers of the training courses, and through interaction with the social workers. If these mainland wives were remade into Hong Kong women, would their Hong Kong husband be happy about it? Indeed jealousy and insecurity was obvious among some Hong Kong husbands as reported by my informants and by mass media.

Mainland mothers are also forced to reconstruct themselves by assuming an imagined Hongkong-style motherhood. Expectations from Hong Kong society, including their children's teachers at school, who are mostly female, make these mainland mothers feel inadequate for not knowing how to supervise their children or

how to help them with their homework. The social workers, who are also mostly female Hong Kong people, introduce courses to enhance the abilities of these women in teaching their own children at home. In this study, my informants were encouraged to take and retake "empowerment" courses, primarily for the benefit of their children. Just as Na (2001) found in her research in Korea that the acquisition of computer knowledge by mothers was to enhance their children's educational opportunities, this research shows similar results. Some of the courses (especially the English and computer classes) aimed to teach these women to help their children, with the long term goal of helping the children to ultimately accumulate more cultural capital. Therefore, no matter how much these women were empowered, their nurturing role in the private sphere was continually reinforced.

Women's Empowerment and Disempowerment

Most people would agree that these women migrants are empowered by the adaptation classes. Aa Naila Kabeer (2003) suggests one of that factors that lead to women's empowerment is by providing "resources". This research shows that mainland women immigrants did pick up some cultural and vocational knowledge, which suggests that they had increased access to resources. But, my question is, what and how much could they achieve through such provision of resources? Did they

gain social prestige as a result? In the eyes of policy makers and social workers, many mainland women are empowered as they pick up cultural knowledge and vocational skills. I argue, however, that it is instead a process of disempowerment, as these women are taking training courses geared to low-skilled vocations. Occupations like cash register operation, domestic work, and being a security guard, are all low-paid and dead-end jobs that have severe limitations on their upward social mobility. One can easily imagine that they might remain as an under-privileged group and lower social class. Piecing all these factors together, these women are marginalized and viewed as "dependents" by Hong Kong people, echoing the situation described by the Working Party on Women Migrants (1978) which found that female migrants 30 years ago in Europe were "alienated, exploited and oppressed". Consequently, the class system is reinforced within the society. The outcome of the provision of the above services to the immigrants is a continued reinforcement of stereotypes by the locals who see themselves as superior to the mainland immigrants. The Hong Kong husbands of these women, as well as the social workers who are mostly Hong Kong women, and the government, are all participating in this process of subordination and disempowerment.

Disempowerment exists through continued stereotyping. Having lived in Hong Kong for many years, these women are still called "new immigrants" or "new

arrivals", which implicitly shows that they are considered inherently different from Hong Kong people. Some of my informants, for example, refer to themselves as "new immigrants", a name full of stigmatization, though they had migrated to Hong Kong for nearly a decade. By looking at the titles and the content of the training courses offered to the women migrants, we can see that the women are designed to make "others" fit into Hong Kong society, for example, the "Women Mutual Help Group" that are designed for "new arrival women"[41]. There are also courses for those who do not know about the culture of Hong Kong, and who do not have the relevant skills to work in Hong Kong. Mainland migrants are therefore seen as a group of helpless, second-rate people who cannot communicate with Hong Kong people, who are too vulnerable to survive in the new environment, and who must be given assistance and guidance. Just as what Foucault has described about hospital as forms of building that provides "careful separation of patients" (Foucault 1979, quoted in Rabinow 1984: 190), women who go in these community centers result in stigmatization because people who do so must belong to the category of non-hèunggóngyàhn.

Learning to be like hèunggóngyàhn and Hong Kong women is, to a certain extent, an unattainable goal because Hongkongness and Hongkong womanhood do

[41] One of the activities posted on the Social Welfare Department of HKSAR at http://www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site_district/page_southern/sub_528/

change in relation to social, political and economic changes. This means that no matter how hard the female mainland immigrants try, such as by attending adjustment classes, at least a portion of them are bound to be failed in achieving Hongkongness and Hongkong-style womanhood. This is especially true to cases of my interviewees who came from lower class and were lack of resources. I am not saying all female migrants will be ended up in total failure, but nevertheless, the path of achieving Hongkongness and Hongkong womanhood will not be easy to walk through.

Policy Implications and Recommendations

The widely reported Tin Shui Wai tragedies may demonstrate the result of some mainland wives who are marginalized, stigmatized and disempowered by Hong Kong's social policy. In recent years, quite a number of serious family issues have occurred among cross-border couples in the Tin Shui Wai New Town[42]. Regular media reports documenting the murders and suicides in the district highlighted the supposedly inherent problems of cross-border marriages. For instance, in 2003, a Hong Kong husband fatally wounded himself after stabbing his twin daughters and

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[42] Tin Shui Wai New Town (天水圍新市鎮) is located in the northwestern part of the New Territories of Hong Kong, where a lot of public housing is developed; many new immigrants with lower income are allocated to reside there.

mainland wife to death. The wife had previously sought assistance from social workers and the police, but to no avail. In 2004, a mainland wife and two teenage daughters were stabbed to death in their flat by her husband, who then killed himself. In October 2007, a mainland wife suffering from mental illness jumped to her death after throwing her teenage daughter and son out of the window. With all these tragedies happened, what have we learned from and what can be done in the future?

Chavez (1991) regards the adaptation process by migrants as a transition process from outsider to insider. We can then ask: how much have the female mainland immigrants been transformed into insiders of Hong Kong society? The government of the HKSAR has certain measures in place to help the new immigrants to integrate into society, however, I argue the social policy in fact indirectly encourages the public to further exclude the new immigrants as different from the mainstream. New migrants are given a different code on their identity card; they face a different set of requirements as they access public welfare schemes; and they are made to take classes in community centers, which the locals would never participate in. More "friendly" occasions exist when they are given assistance to adjust to Hong Kong life, such as carnivals where games are organized for children. However, when we see that these are targeted at mainland immigrants and minority ethnic groups from South Asia, it is clear that these groups are considered non-mainstream and

consequently a boundary is reinforced between the locals and the non-locals.

More practically, I think providing intensive Cantonese and English classes will help them to increase self-confidence and discard feelings of alienation. As discussed earlier, we find that some English courses were too easy for migrants who were secondary school graduates. Instead of learning a "little bit more", the curriculum should be redesigned and to help them to be fitted in Hong Kong. Further, as Putonghua becomes more important globally, training them to become Putonghua teachers can definitely help them to gain more social prestige and be much better paid than dish-cleaners.

Recognizing mainland women's professional qualification will be helpful to the society. As we can see that Hong Kong's economy is undergoing economic structural changes, many Hong Kong politicians switch their focus to China, and emphasize the advantage of Hong Kong's being the "Gateway to China", which means that Hong Kong people can contribute to the economic development of China. However, the HKSAR government has neglected the potential of the women immigrants, it has seldom tried to make use of the labor and intellectual abilities of the mainland immigrants. Without recognizing their educational qualifications and work skills, the government is actually de-skilling them.

At the family level, I suggest that the husband's family of these women should

be the first base for the government or social service providers to initiate assistance, because warm acceptance by the family also helps with their integration. It is not only a challenge for the immigrants themselves to adapt to Hong Kong society, the fact that they are married to a Hong Kong man means that the husband's patrilineal family also needs to adjust to having a new member from a different cultural background. I also agree with Roth & Speranza (2000) that happy marriage is the key to social adjustment. In their study, Roth & Speranza (2000: 295) find that support from the Swiss husband has helped their African wives to integrate into Swiss society. For my informants who had successfully adjusted to living in Hong Kong, happy marriage was a milestone in their life. As individuals adjust to a new place, they cannot just rely on assistance from outside, i.e. the government. As shown in the ethnographic data, being 'mainlanders' in their cultural identity and females in their gender identity, getting divorced is a triple burden for them. Their marital experiences, to a large extent, affect the extent they are willing to take the initiative to mix with the locals. Therefore, a positive experience of marriage and patrilocal residence, can often bring positive results in integration, and vice versa. In the process of adaptation to Hong Kong, many of my interviewees were uprooted from their social connections (including their natal family members, relatives and friends) in the mainland, and this research shows that happy marriage and acceptance by the

patrilineal family entailed an improvement in their social network. In fact, some of my interviewees who lived in such an environment had positive images of themselves, more motivated to learn new skills, and faced challenges confidently. Therefore, having the adaptation program start within the patrilineal family will benefit women immigrants and also their family members.

At the social level, creating a positive image of "new immigrants" is essential to the benefits of the society. There are abundant stereotypes of mainland women in the public discourse, but successful mainland women like Chen Li Wah (陳麗華)[43] , Zhang Kang Kang (張抗抗)[44], and Han Xiqiu (韓喜球)[45], have rarely been reported. Likewise, the image of a group of unskilled mainland women who married much older Hong Kong husbands has been created by mass media, which makes commercial enterprises hesitant to hire them to work in higher positions[46]. Another

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[43] Chen Li Wah, a mainland-born woman, is a director of a land and property company in China. She started her investments in Hong Kong in 1981 and is now one of the millionaires in China. She is currently focusing on the development of the China Red Sandalwood Museum.

[44] Zhang Kang Kang, a female writer who was born in Hanzhou in 1950. She has devoted her time to write novels, memoirs, short stories and essays. She was also given the Second Chinese Women's Literature Award for her latest novel, Zuo Nü, or Uproarious Women.

[45] Han Xiqiu, aged 38, was responsible for part of the trip of the scientific research ship "Dayang Yihao" ("Ocean No. 1") from the eastern coastal city of Qingdao in 2007. She is also China's first female chief scientist for scientific exploration of the sea.

[46] A human resources director of an aviation company informed me that she had initiated a program to employ female new immigrants, however, there was hesitation from other staff.

possible solution is through teaching of love for the nation. Patriotism among Hongkongers is reified in events such as applauding Beijing's success in bidding to be the host city of Olympics in 2008, but we do not see this love in daily life. As ideas of learning to belong to a nation is perpetuated through media and schooling (Mathews, Ma & Lui 2008), this love may help Hongkongers to better accept mainlanders. However, encouraging social acceptance to new immigrants may be too naïve in reality as hostility towards them is still commonly found. It is going to take some time to develop such kind of acceptance.

As females, these new women immigrants should also be treasured because they perform important social functions such as social reproduction through looking after and socializing their children who are Hong Kong citizens, and contributing to the labor market through their employment, as well as supporting their husband's work through their domestic work. Marrying to Hong Kong men and moving to Hong Kong is a reflection that the women are subject to a patrilocal system. Only if the women are empowered to be able to attain economic independence and to raise their self-consciousness, can they fully express their potentials, and break down the hold of the patriarchal values on them.

Creating a lively social and cultural space for mainland migrants to apply their

skills and knowledge is essential, just as the situation that previous generations of immigrants experienced in earlier days of Hong Kong's history. If the government genuinely believes that the Hong Kong spirit is the key to Hong Kong's success, both past and future, they should put more effort into promoting integration and harmony in the society. If "struggling together" is so vital, then the unfriendly attitude towards these women will not do any good to the society. The feeling of being discriminated against was generally present among my informants. As a result, they had negated their self-identity to such an extent that all their experiences in interacting with Hong Kong people had become negative. This has created a rift between locals and mainland Chinese that contradicts the goal of creating a society with harmony promoted by the HKSAR Government. We can also foresee a closer contact between the mainland and Hong Kong in the future. The population of migrants will also include more mainland men, as more Hong Kong women start to seek partners from the mainland[47]. If Hong Kong people would like to see further progress of their society, the government and the public have to rethink and learn from past experience.

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[47] The number of Hong Kong women marrying mainland husbands increased from 675 cases in 1986 to 6,483 cases 2006 (Wenweipo 21 November 2007)

The Way Ahead

Focusing on the gaining of a new identity, my study has described and analyzed how female mainland immigrants learn Hong Kong people's behavior through undertaking classes in community centers and through interaction with their family members. My argument is twofold. First, these immigrants are learning an imagined Hongkongness and Hongkong-style womanhood. Second, the social services provided are in fact ways to further disempower and segregate the mainlanders from the Hong Kong people. My questions are: Can Hongkongness and Chineseness exist at the same time in Hong Kong? Will the Hong Kong government see the value of truly embracing diversity rather than simply paying it lip service?

To compare cases in my research and with those in Tin Shui Wai, I found firstly, most female mainland immigrants share similar integration difficulties and cultural background. Secondly, cross-border marriages do not necessarily end in failure; there were a number of happy marriages found among my informants. However, according to the information provided by the social workers, some mainland wives are invisible as they were confined to the house by their husband, or they "self-confine" themselves due to stigmatization of such reasons as their divorced status. Since unhappy marriages do exist among cross-border couples regardless of area that they are living in, how much do locality and provision of social services

affect those in Tin Shui Wai? The Hong Kong government has recently planned to invite investors to set up factory outlets in Tin Shui Wai and some companies had launched recruitment exercises aiming at Tin Shui Wai residents (South China Morning Post 2008). But will financial assistance and employment solve all the problems of new arrivals? Future research will have to deal with these questions holistically as a complex set of issues, rather than treating them independently. In issues of integration, the effects of gender, identity, town planning and social policy are all indirectly related. The solutions to these problems must start with casting off taken-for-granted beliefs about Hongkong-mainland distinctions, and with a genuine respect for cultural diversity.

Appendix: Interview Questions

Part A: Interview Questions for Migrant Women

Adaptation

1. What was your impression of Hong Kong before coming here?

2. Have you got any problems in adaptation in Hong Kong? If yes, what are they? (Adaptation / spousal relations / children learning / different living styles / language barriers / lack of emotional support / finance)

3. To whom will you seek help if you face difficulties? (Relatives / friends / social workers / government offices / neighborhood…)

4. Have you taken any courses offered by the government or the NGOs? (Cantonese / English / Computer / cosmetics / spousal relations / domestic helper)

5. How did you know about these courses?

6. How much have these courses been beneficial to you?

Identity

7. How did you identify yourself when you first arrived to Hong Kong?

8. Do you think your adaptation problems are solved after taking these classes? Can you explain?

9. How do you identify yourself after taking these courses?

10. How do other people (family members / co-workers / neighborhood ….) identify you?

11. Can you list down some characteristics of "香港人"? (e.g. 努力工作, 效率高的, 友善, 乾淨整齊, 聰明, 靈活變通的, 可信賴的, 粗魯無禮的, 有教養的, 使人討厭的, 嘈雜的, 未受教育的, 自大的, 貪婪的, 遵守紀律的, 中產階級, 懂人權)

12. Can you list down some characteristics of "中國人" / "大陸人"? (e.g. 努力工作, 效率高的, 友善, 乾淨整齊, 聰明, 靈活變通的, 可信賴的, 粗魯無禮的, 有教養的, 使人討厭的, 嘈雜的, 未受教育的, 自大的, 貪婪的, 遵守紀律的, 中產階級, 懂人權)

13. Do you visit Mainland after migrating to HK? If yes, how often do you go and for what purpose?

14. Do you have any leisure activities? If yes, what are they? How often do you participate?

Social Networks

15. When did you get married?

16. How did you meet your husband (dating / parental arrangement.....)?

17. What was your expectation of "marriage life" before coming to Hong Kong?

18. How much has it been fulfilled in reality?

19. Do you learn "Hongkongness" from your husband? If yes, what have you learned?

20. Do you have natal family members staying in Hong Kong?

21. Do you learn "Hongkongness" from your husband's family members (and your natal family members)? If yes, what have you learned?

22. Do you learn "Hongkongness" from your child / children? If yes, what have you learned?

23. Is there anything (e.g. dialect / moral values / manners....) that you expect your children to learn from you and be able to demonstrate?

24. Is there anything (e.g. dialect / moral values / manners....) that you expect your children to learn from people in Hong Kong and be able to demonstrate?

Waged Work

25. Do you participate in any kind of waged labor? If yes, how long do you work per day (in terms of hrs)?

26. Can you tell me what did you do yesterday (when you wake up until you go to bed)? (If it was weekday, ask her about daily work in weekend, and vice-versa.)

27. Do your family members share with doing any kind of the domestic work?

Others

28. Are there any differences between being a "wife" in HK and in mainland? If yes, what are they?

29. Are there any differences between being a "mother" in HK and in mainland? If yes, what are they?

30. Are there any differences between being a "daughter-in-law" in HK and in mainland? If yes, what are they?

31. Are there any differences between being a "female worker" in HK and in Mainland? If yes, what are they?

Part B: Personal Details:

Informant	**Informant's Spouse**
Name:	Name:
Age:	Age:
Nationality:	Nationality:
Home Town:	Home Town:
Place of Birth:	Place of Birth:
Educational Background:	Educational Background:
Occupation:	Occupation:
Language / Dialect(s):	Language / Dialect(s):
Length of stay in HK:	Length of stay in HK:

Informant's Child	**Informant's Child**
Name:	Name:
Age:	Age:
Nationality:	Nationality:
Place of Birth:	Place of Birth:
School Attended:	School Attended:
Language / Dialect(s):	Language / Dialect(s):
Length of stay in HK:	Length of stay in HK:

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