

TAIWANESE-VIETNAMESE TRANSNATIONAL MARRIAGE FAMILIES IN TAIWAN:
PERSPECTIVES FROM VIETNAMESE IMMIGRANT MOTHERS AND TAIWANESE
TEACHERS

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

In many parts of the world, immigration typically involves families emigrating from one country to another. However, transnational marriage, in which one spouse immigrates to the other spouse's county, has recently increased dramatically across Asia. This study focuses on Taiwan, where a significant number of Southeast Asian women have immigrated as spouses in the past decade; their children are now attending school. These trends have stimulated intense social and educational debate within the government and the public. However, little is known about these transnational marriages, how they socialize their children, or how the children fare once they enter the Taiwanese educational system.

The current study focuses on Vietnamese women, one of the largest “new” immigrant groups in Taiwan. Specifically, I address Vietnamese immigrant mothers’ and Taiwanese teachers’ childrearing and educational goals, with the objective of assessing how their beliefs and goals for the children converge and diverge. I inquired into (1) immigrant mothers’ childrearing beliefs and goals (e.g., language choice, maintenance of Vietnamese culture, adaptation to Taiwanese culture) and (2) teachers’ educational goals and perceptions of immigrant mothers and children.

The project was ethnographic in approach and longitudinal in design, involving 17 months of intensive participant-observation in two small towns with a high incidence of transnational marriage families. Fifty-nine hours of semi-structured audio-recorded interviews and 198 hours of video-recorded observations were collected. The analyses reported here were based on interviews with Vietnamese immigrant mothers of children (3-8 years old) and Taiwanese teachers (K-3rd grade). The Vietnamese mothers (who had been in Taiwan for at least 4 years) were comfortable speaking Mandarin Chinese; thus all interviews were conducted in Mandarin

and transcribed verbatim in Chinese. Coding criteria, developed with an eye to cultural validity, were reliably applied.

Results showed that the majority of immigrant mothers rapidly learned Mandarin Chinese. They were motivated by high educational aspirations for their children and realized that speaking Mandarin to their children was critical to children's success in the early grades. Immigrant mothers also send their children to supplementary after-school programs. In addition, most Vietnamese mothers revealed that they tried to instill values from their home culture and hoped their children would eventually learn Vietnamese language and customs as well. They cited their own lack of power and control, in relation to husbands and in-laws, as a childrearing challenge.

Despite a public discourse that forecasts educational problems for the children from transnational marriage families, Taiwanese teachers reported that these children did not have significant difficulties academically or interpersonally. Most teachers described challenges in communicating with immigrant mothers through the "communication book," a written form of home-school exchange that is standard in Taiwanese schools. However, those teachers expressed appreciation for immigrant mothers' efforts to communicate orally, such as calling or coming to school to speak with teachers in person.

Thus, this study, which is the first to bring together the voices of immigrant mothers and Taiwanese teachers to illuminate their respective childrearing beliefs and educational goals, points to a strong convergence in their mutual commitment to education.

To the memory of Mei-Li Ou (1948-2000) and Jun-Liang Chen (1979-2005)

&

For everyone who made this project possible

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CHAPTER 1: NEW IMMIGRANTS IN TAIWAN AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Under the influence of rapid advancements in technology and transportation, societies around the world are undergoing striking social, economic, political, and cultural changes. A century ago, it could take more than a month to travel from China to the United States; today it takes less than a day. Thirty years ago, it could take more than a week to receive a letter from a friend abroad; today it takes less than a minute to do so using email or instant messaging. American food—McDonald's, Starbucks, and Coca-Cola—is as popular in Shanghai as in Brussels and Melbourne. Japanese food—sushi or miso soup—is commonly found in Chicago, Rome, and Bangkok. Globalization is a new phenomenon that both causes and is caused by the increasing frequency of tourist and business travel, study abroad, and immigration.

Transnational immigration, broadly defined as the incidence and process by which people come to live in a country as immigrants, has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention for decades and is becoming a global issue. Transnational immigration takes a variety of different forms, such as transnational labor, transnational political activities, transnational education, and transnational marriages. Scholars have extensively studied the motivations and backgrounds of transnational immigrants (e.g., Foner, 2005, 2009; Constable, 2003, 2005), and they have explored why and how the recent wave of immigration is different from the past. In addition, researchers in the fields of sociology, economics, and international relations have also studied the impact of transnational immigration on issues ranging from the international economy and the labor market to the political landscape and policy making. Most of these researchers have focused on examining the type of immigration that typically involves entire families emigrating from one country to another, in which the individuals within the families all adapt together to a new culture, language, value system, and physical environment.

Recently, however, transnational marriages have become a new trend in immigration, in which one person migrates from his or her own country to the new spouse's country. For example, a January 11, 2011 news report titled "Mail-Order Bride Trade Is Flourishing: Global Economic Downturn Had Been a Boon of Finding Wives for Single Men" described that "Hand-In-Hand," a London-based matchmaking agency founded 14 years ago (in 1997) has now grown into "a multinational operation with 30 satellite offices from the United States to Abu Dhabi." The founder, Joseph Weiner, was interviewed and asked to share how his international matchmaking industry, also known as a "mail-order bride trade," has been successfully targeting "middle-aged men who find dating troublesome" and who, the reporter quoted Joseph Weiner, "don't have the money to go out on dates and go on weekends to Vegas and Atlantic City. They want someone to take care of them." Similar to many other matchmaking agencies, his company charges male customers up to USD 2,000 for a "supervised" foreign affair and romance tour which matches these men with young women in economically troubled Eastern European regions. These young women take part in order to immigrate to developed countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom. The story ended by detailing vigilant governmental responses to this issue, as well as noting harsh comments from feminists. For example, after a number of murders of women brought to America via international matchmakers became highly publicized, the United States passed the International Marriage Broker Regulation Act of 2005. Also, the executive director of the New York City chapter of the National Organization for Women criticized, as the reporter quoted her, "The mail-order bride industry is a softer version of human trafficking" (TODAY news, 2011).

Owing to the rise in economic development in East Asia, which broadens the gap of the gross domestic product (GDP) between East Asian and Southeast Asian countries, the number of

transnational marriages has been growing even more dramatically in Asia than in the United States. In the past two decades, there has been a significant increase in transnational marriages, wherein predominantly Southeast Asian women leave their native countries and move to establish families in their spouses' countries. For example, researchers have been documenting that more and more Japanese men who live in rural areas are traveling to the Philippines to find wives (Chiu, 1999, 2003), and working-class Taiwanese and Korean men are flying to Southern Vietnam to meet their young brides (e.g., Lu, 2005; Wang & Chang, 2002). With the rapid increase in transnational marriages in Asia, and more broadly around the world, there is a pressing need to understand this changing face of immigration. Recently scholars have begun to study transnational marriage and its impact on economic, political, health, and social developments in East Asia and Southeast Asia (e.g., Hsia, 2003; Lu, 2005; Wang & Chang, 2002; Chung, 2003; Yang, 2003); however, little attention has been paid to the *psychological* and *anthropological* aspects of how these immigrants re-socialize themselves into a new culture and society, and how parents in transnational marriage families socialize their children. In this dissertation, my concern is to deepen our understandings of the socialization of both immigrant women and their offspring, specifically focusing on immigrants to Taiwan. Inspired by developmental cultural psychologists who emphasize that human and child development must be understood in context, my dissertation research is ethnographic in orientation and culture-specific in perspective. I first explore how immigrant women are socially constructed in Taiwanese society. I then investigate how these constructed ideologies impact immigrant women's re-socialization of themselves and the socialization of their children in Taiwan by inquiring into their life challenges and their parental beliefs. In addition to examining immigrant women's parental beliefs and educational goals for their children, I also study Taiwanese

teachers' understandings of these immigrant women and their children, because these teachers form and influence the larger context within which immigrant mothers raise their children. My dissertation is carried out with an ambition to bring together the voices of immigrant mothers and Taiwanese teachers so as to illuminate the parental beliefs and educational goals of transnational marriage families in Taiwan.

In this chapter, I first provide a description of this new immigration phenomenon in Taiwan from a historical perspective. I then define and depict what foreign brides are, how transnational marriages are formed, and why Taiwanese men and Southeast Asian women marry one another. I illustrate the world these young immigrant women enter upon their arrival in Taiwan from two different aspects: the "family" and the "society," as these are the arenas in which immigrant women are immersed in their everyday lives. Then I explain the governmental responses to the new wave of immigration. Afterwards, I provide a brief literature review of recent scholarly work on transnational marriage families in Taiwan. The chapter ends with an exposition of my research questions that were raised based on the historical and contextual backgrounds that I describe.

A New Wave of Immigration in Taiwan

Since the 1990s, marriage migration has been an emerging trend in Taiwan. Although it is not the first time that Taiwanese society has had an influx of immigrants, this new trend of marriage migration is different from the Kuomintang (also known as KMT or the Chinese Nationalist Party) soldiers' retreat from China to Taiwan under the leadership of Chiang Kai-Shek in 1949. Two characteristics of the recent marriage migration make it unique in Taiwanese immigration history. First, this is a *feminized* migration which involves women from Southeast Asian countries immigrating to Taiwan by means of marriage. Second, this type of immigration

creates a unique family structure and dynamic. *Transnational marriage families*, so-called in my dissertation, are established by the coming together of individuals with different languages, customs, and values, which is distinct from the extensively studied so-called *immigrant families*. The latter involves a type of family formed by two individuals who share the same language and culture, and the immigration usually involves the family as a whole migrating to a different country.

In the early 1990s, a group of Hakka-Chinese Indonesian women married Taiwanese men and migrated to live in Taiwan. These Hakka-Chinese Indonesian women had preferred marrying men of the same ethnicity, owing to the Chinese Exclusion movement in effect since the mid-1960s in Indonesia. Since the mid-1990s, though, about 400,000 Chinese and Southeast Asian women have migrated to Taiwan by virtue of marriage. According to a report completed in November 2007 by Taiwan's Ministry of the Interior, the majority of these women were from Mainland China (62.74%), followed by Vietnam (19.72%), Indonesia (6.57%), Thailand (2.25%), and the Philippines (1.54%). In 2008, transnational marriages constituted 15% of all marriages in Taiwan (Taiwanese Ministry of the Interior, January 2009), and one out of every seven newly registered marriages was a transnational marriage (Taiwanese Ministry of the Interior, May 2008). These "New Immigrant Women [*xin yi min nv xing* 新移民女性]"—a politically correct term suggested by the Taiwanese government—now constitute about 1.7% of the entire population of Taiwan and are listed as the fifth largest ethnic group in Taiwan¹.

¹ According to the most recent report from the Council for Hakka Affairs, Taiwan's Executive Yuan (2008), Taiwanese Hoklo constitute 69.2% of the entire population, followed by Hakka (13.5%), Mainland Chinese who came to Taiwan in 1949 (8.9%), and Malayo-Polynesian Aborigines (1.9%).

In my dissertation, I focus on Vietnamese women because they constitute the largest new immigrant group who are non-Han Chinese in Taiwan². The number of Vietnamese brides who have naturalized and obtained Taiwanese citizenship since the 1990s has increased dramatically since the mid-1990s. Additionally, the second generation of transnational marriages has occurred. In 2008, one out of every ten newborns was from a transnational marriage family (Taiwanese Ministry of the Interior, May 2008). The first wave of children born to transnational marriage couples, called “New Taiwanese Children [*xin tai wan zhi zi* 新臺灣之子],” are now beginning to attend school. According to the Taiwanese Ministry of Education (June 2008), more than 103,000 students from transnational marriage families were enrolled in school in 2008, constituting about 4 % of the total elementary and junior high school student populations.

Although the number of these recent immigrant women and their offspring is still relatively small compared to the overall population in Taiwan, this trend has given rise to increasing concern from the government as well as from the general public, who predominately view this phenomenon as an emerging social problem. In the past few years, the issues of new immigrants and transnational families have been widely discussed by journalists, policy-makers, educators, and scholars in newspapers, television programs, and other media. The content ranges from extremely negative stereotypes of new immigrants to advocacy of social equality or promotion of multiculturalism. The diversity in news and media reports shows that Taiwanese society is far from reaching a consensus on these issues and that they are highly controversial. There is not even a consensus on issues of terminology used to address this emerging population. For example, Taiwanese government has promoted using the term “New Immigrant Women” to address the population; however, my participant-observation suggested that, in ordinary

² Women from the Republic of China are often perceived differently due to the dispute over whether cross-Strait marriages constitute transnational or internal marriages (Lu, 2005). As for women from Vietnam, the majority are Southern Vietnamese, mainly due to the fact that most of the marriage brokerage industry is in Southern Vietnam.

conversation the term “foreign brides” is almost always used. In my dissertation, I try to use terms my participants used.

A Marriage in Five Days

In this section, I define what the term “foreign bride” refers to in my dissertation. I then focus on Taiwanese-Vietnamese transnational marriages and describe how these marriages are formed, and the reason why Taiwanese men and Vietnamese women marry each other.

In my dissertation, the foreign bride population I refer to are those women who were born and grew up in a poorer country and whose immigration was based on marriage to men who live in a relatively wealthier country. In other words, the terms “foreign brides” and “new immigrants” that I refer to do not include, for example, professional European women who marry Taiwanese men and move to Taipei, nor do I refer to highly-educated and well-paid middle-class Taiwanese men who hold professional jobs, such as engineers or computer scientists who marry young English-speaking Russian women via marriage brokers and establish families in Taiwan.

Most of these transnational marriages are arranged through commercial agencies as package deals, like the so-called mail-order brides in the United States, a practice that has sometimes been described as the transnational trade in women. The international marriage brokerage industry has been flourishing and widely-accessible in Taiwan since the 1990s. One can find advertisements about marrying foreign brides in daily newspapers, on posters around town, or on Internet websites. For example, street utility poles might be pasted with advertisements for plumbers, the contact information for landlords if one wants to rent an apartment, or the phone numbers to call if one is considering marrying a foreign bride. On a utility pole photographed and posted online, an ad read, “Introducing Vietnamese Brides: Only NTD 200,000 [roughly

USD 6,500].” Below the headline, the broker listed “Four Contract Guarantees: Virgin guaranteed; Deal completed within three months; No surcharge;” and “Run away within a year, one more bride promised.” At the bottom of the poster were two phone numbers listed to request more detailed information.

Scholars such as Lu (2005) and Wang & Chang (2002) have documented the operations of the marriage brokerage industry and showed that marriage brokers play a key role in motivating potential brides and grooms to enter into transnational marriages. Typically, these marriage brokers arrange for prospective Taiwanese grooms to travel to Ho Chi Minh City in Southern Vietnam to select and marry their brides. If there is a successful match, then the Taiwanese groom and Vietnamese bride register for the marriage and hold a wedding banquet in the bride’s hometown. For the Taiwanese groom, this is a venture that is usually completed in five or six days. The new bride must then wait a few months in Vietnam before obtaining the official document (i.e. a visa) that will allow her to enter Taiwan. Then she moves to Taiwan to join their husband in a household that usually includes the husband’s parents. Marriage brokers serve as mediators and facilitators during the process, and they charge a Taiwanese groom roughly USD 10,000 to 13,000 for a successful match, including all expenses, such as airfare back and forth for the Taiwanese man, the wedding banquet in Vietnam, the dowry that the Taiwanese man gives to his bride’s family, and fees for paperwork and the visa. The entire package of service ends when the Vietnamese wife arrives at the airport in Taiwan and is picked up by her Taiwanese husband.

At this point, I have explained how the marriage is formed; but, who are these individuals who meet and decide to marry each other within five days? Why do they marry? Below I use

push and pull factors to illustrate respectively why Taiwanese men go to Vietnam to find wives and why Vietnamese women decide to marry Taiwanese men and leave their home country.

Push and Pull Factors for Taiwanese Men

Tien and Wang (2006) documented the motivations of Taiwanese men in seeking wives from abroad. By conducting in-depth interviews with 13 Taiwanese men in a rural area in Taiwan who had been married to overseas women for years, the researchers concluded that the men's motivations in seeking wives from abroad are two-fold.

On the one hand, Taiwanese men with disadvantaged socioeconomic statuses, relatively low education levels, or physical disadvantages choose to marry Vietnamese women due to their need for domestic help and their desire to produce offspring (Tien and Wang, 2006). In some cases, it is likely to be Taiwanese men in their thirties or forties who received poor education, hold working-class jobs, live in rural areas, and who have found no wives. In other cases, it is Taiwanese men who have experienced failed marriages and are considering new marriages. These tend to be men who are older, perhaps at least in their late forties. Still, in other cases, it is men who are physically disadvantaged, mentally challenged, or those who have constantly engaged in unhealthy behaviors—gambling, drinking, or avoiding employment. Yet, some of these men have preferred remaining single but are then persuaded, forced, or are themselves anxious to marry so that they can fulfill their filial responsibilities by having at least one son in order to pass on the family heritage. Taiwan has long been considered a patriarchal society. An old idiom still highly-valued in Taiwanese society says, “There are three ways to be unfilial, the worst is not to produce offspring [*bu xiao you san, wu hou wei da*, 不孝有三，無後為大].” In some of these cases, the men's parents travel to Vietnam to select wives for their sons, or

sometimes the parents accompany their sons to Vietnam so that they all may make an agreeable decision together.

On the other hand, Taiwanese men who want to uphold the “male-dominated culture” in Taiwan seek brides from Vietnam because more and more Taiwanese women are presenting themselves as modern and independent, which is not at all in accordance with the male-dominated cultural view of an “ideal wife.” Therefore, some Taiwanese men are eager to seek a bride from Vietnam because the media and matchmaking agencies portray these women from other countries as similar to traditional Taiwanese women from the 1950s (Tien and Wang, 2006).

Yet, why do Taiwanese men prefer Vietnamese women, in particular? A frequent response from Taiwanese men is that Vietnamese women have a lighter skin tone, if compared with women in other Southeast Asia countries (e.g., Cambodia, Indonesia, and Thailand).

Push and Pull Factors for Vietnamese Women

Some general characteristics of these Vietnamese women are that they usually grew up in rural areas in Southern Vietnam; most were very young—in their late teens or early twenties—when they got married; and the majority have only elementary or middle-school educations.

On the one hand, as Lu (2005) pointed out that not only poverty but also the expectations of an overall “betterment” of life have motivated Southeast Asian women entered transnational marriages. The author noted that a lack of work opportunities and age-related constraints, along with the cultural beliefs that marriage and economic support from husbands are blessings for women, have all contributed to drive these women migrate to an uncertain and risky world. In the case of Vietnamese women, they foresee what their lives will be like should they remain in Vietnam, which is not a preferable situation. Thus, although marrying Taiwanese men and

immigrating to Taiwan could be quite risky, for Vietnamese women it seems that taking the risk is more appealing than accepting their foreseeable futures in Vietnam.

On the other hand, most of the Vietnamese brides decide to marry and live abroad because they hope to improve the economic situations of their natal families. These women perceive marriage to Taiwanese men as a way of improving the economic prospects for their natal families, themselves, and their children, owing to the fact that the gross domestic product (GDP) in Taiwan (i.e. USD 393,200,000) is 4 times higher than in Vietnam (i.e. USD 90,880,000 [CIA World Factbook, 2008]). Many of these Vietnamese women consider improving the economic situation of their natal families as an act of filial piety—a highly valued practice in Vietnamese culture. Thus, many Vietnamese immigrant women strive to become capable of sending money back home and maintaining strong transnational ties with their home country as soon as possible after marriage. This desire motivates Vietnamese immigrant women to adapt to Taiwanese society and learn Mandarin as quickly as possible.

Vietnamese Immigrant Women in Taiwan: The World They Enter

I have explained *how* transnational marriages are formed, *who* are the individuals entering into these marriages, and *why* they do so. The next question is *what* kind of world these Vietnamese women gain access to when they arrive in Taiwan. Below I describe the world they enter from two different perspectives: the family environment and the societal atmosphere/surroundings.

Family: Taiwanese Husbands' (and In-Laws') Expectations

Because the majority of Vietnamese women arrive in Taiwan with limited, if any, Mandarin language proficiency, they do not share a language with their husbands (and in-laws) at the beginning of their marriages. Additionally, as noted previously, these young Vietnamese brides

tend to marry “working-class” Taiwanese men in “rural areas.” In some cases, the Vietnamese wives are expected to help with family incomes to make ends meet if the husbands cannot hold stable jobs and earn sufficient income for family expenses. In other cases, they are expected to stay home and take care of chores. Because these Vietnamese brides are more likely to marry men residing in rural areas in Taiwan where three-generational households are common, the newlywed couples oftentimes live together with the husbands’ other family members. Living with their in-laws is usually burdensome for Vietnamese wives. Quite often, these women give birth to their first children within the first two or three years of marriage, while they themselves are re-socializing into a new language, culture, and society. Thus, they are under considerable pressure within the family context itself to learn Mandarin and adapt to Taiwanese culture in order to successfully take up their social roles as wives, daughters-in-law, mothers, and sometimes breadwinners. Meanwhile, it is likely that the husbands (and in-laws) hold prejudices against their foreign wives (and daughters-in-law) due to a lack of trust in these women, resulting from the long-standing stereotypes of foreign brides in Taiwanese society. From the standpoint of developmental cultural psychology, these Vietnamese wives’ life circumstances within the home context needs to be understood within a larger social context—Taiwanese society, the other important component that shapes the lives and experiences of these women.

Society: Public Discourses With Regard to New Immigrant Women

With a rapidly increasing number of foreign brides arriving in Taiwan since the mid-1990s, and with one out of every seven newly registered marriages classified as a transnational marriage in 2008, the society as a whole has been paying a lot of attention to this immigration phenomenon. Transnational marriages and families have become topics widely reported in television programs, newspapers, and magazines. Unfortunately, the media mainly portray this

new immigrant phenomenon as problematic, thus conveying powerful negative stereotypes of transnational marriage and immigrant women to the Taiwanese society. These women are portrayed as individuals who come from underdeveloped countries, who don't know Chinese, who marry their husbands for financial purposes, and who have no idea how to raise their children. When media

Below I list some of the more recent headlines which have appeared in the newspapers. One headline proclaimed, "Misfortune! Marrying the Wrong Guy, Vietnamese Wife Forced to Become Prostitute." The article gave an account of a Vietnamese woman who was forced by her husband to engage in illegal sexual activities because he had lost his job and could not afford the family expenses. The wife insisted on remaining in her miserable marriage, because she wanted to obtain a Taiwanese identity card so that she would be eligible to live in Taiwan (October 2, 2008). Another news headline read, "Foreign Spouses Don't Care about Prenatal Examinations, Be Mindful of Having Newborns with Thalassemia," documenting that most of the newborns with this severe disease were born to "New Taiwanese Daughters-in-Law." The story ended with the reporter quoting the doctor, "Those who should have come in did not come in; those who did not have to come in all came in," indicating that those new Taiwanese daughters-in-law do not bother with prenatal care (February 9, 2009). Yet another title read, "Vietnamese Wife Faked Her Own Death to Deceive [her Husband], Taiwanese Husband Wasted Tears for Two Years." In the article, it was reported that a Taiwanese man went to Vietnam to find himself another new bride after two years of crying over his dead Vietnamese wife. He discovered that his previous Vietnamese wife was still alive in Vietnam when he brought his new bride to register for the marriage. The man said he was cheated by his previous wife's entire family (February 19, 2009). Such headlines frequently appeared in the newspapers: "Foreign Spouses with Different Customs,

More Tension between Daughters-in-law and Mothers-in-law” (December 15, 2008); “Thirteen Couples File for Divorces Everyday and More than Half are Foreign Spouses” (January 8, 2009); “Divorce Rate of Southeast Asian Wives is Soaring, 81.74% in the Past Year” (January 7, 2009); “Foreign Spouse Leaves Home, Children Become the Sacrifice” (March 13, 2009); and “Illegal Gambling Covered Up in [Vietnamese] Restaurants, Even Pregnant Vietnamese Brides Gambling ” (November 1, 2010).

Although there indeed was some positive news about foreign brides, the media reports regarding foreign spouses were predominantly negative and generally portrayed transnational marriages and families as social problems. For example, Hsia (2007) conducted systematic narrative analysis on the media construction of the “foreign brides phenomenon” and suggested that Taiwanese media (e.g., media coverage, authorizing description, fabricated statistics, and collaboration with government agencies) constantly construct this phenomenon as social problems by portraying these brides either as materialist gold-diggers or passive victims and their grooms as socially undesirable population. The author described many examples and pointed out that most reports were male-centered, leaving immigrant women’s voices unheard. Hsia (2007) argued that “social problems” are products of “interpretative work” accomplished by various effective narrative strategies, which help generated “imaged” and “imagined” threat to the nation and further created a discourse of “national anxiety” (also see Lin, 2003).

Society: Public Discourses With Regard to New Taiwanese Children

Now, with more and more children from transnational marriage families reaching school age, the general public’s concerns have broadened to include these “New Immigrant Children.” In general, the major issue revolves around the possible developmental and educational problems of the children of these transnational marriages and the impact this might have on society. For

example, a newspaper headline proclaimed, “[New Immigrant Mothers] Cannot Read Chinese! Help with Children’s Homework Adversely Causes [Homework] to Become a Laughing Stock [at School]. With Teachers’ Interventions, Completely Different Results,” indicating that foreign spouses are inadequate mothers who lack the capabilities to supervise their children’s homework (March 29, 2009). Take as another example a research report presented by the officers working in the Ministry of Education. In order to convey the importance of promoting multiculturalism in Taiwanese society, they documented that new immigrant mothers’ language barriers and different customs have tangibly and intangibly influenced the next generation’s education. In the article, they portrayed new immigrant children as having “communication difficulties, dyslexia and deviation behaviors,” and “unsuccessful interpersonal relationships,” and described new immigrant mothers as “lacking parental education” and “facing difficulties in cooperating with schoolteachers” (Kuo & Chen, 2006). A few other headlines included, “New Immigrant Children Should Receive Enlightenment Education” (December 23, 2004); “Taiwan’s Population Structure is Changing, Encourage New Immigrants to Attend Workshops to Diminish the Gap between Mothers and Children” (August 28, 2010); and “New Taiwanese Mothers and Children Workshops Offered for Developmentally Delayed Children Aged from Birth to 6 Years Old (June 1, 2008).”

To conclude, the public discourses about immigrant women have expanded to include new immigrant children within their concern, indicating possible negative outcomes and results raised about children from transnational marriage families. Many articles promoting multiculturalism or suggesting possible solutions have portrayed these immigrant children negatively.

Private Conversations/Personal Encounters

During my fieldwork in Taiwan from 2006 to 2008, I myself encountered many situations in which people readily responded when I brought up terms such as “foreign brides” and “foreign spouses.” Below I describe some conversations with people that I randomly encountered. These conversations were written down in my field notes. For example, at the beginning of the second phase of my fieldwork, on August 12, 2007, I went to a shop to buy light bulbs and a shower head. I briefly chatted with the salesclerk, a young woman probably in her early thirties, about the surrounding environment and explained the purpose of my living there. She responded by pointing out to me that there was a foreign bride working at the store just across the street, and another Vietnamese bride she knew who worked at the other end of the street, and she then concluded, “Foreign brides! We have a lot here!” Although she did not specifically express her perceptions or views of those “foreign brides,” she did provide confirmation of the relevance of my research: the images of “foreign brides” appeared in ordinary people’s everyday lives.

On August 21, 2007, I was in my apartment at the field site waiting for a technician to set up my Internet connection. It was raining heavily, and he was delayed by more than an hour. Although he was in a hurry to finish the work and get to his next job for the day, when he learned why I was there, he stopped his work to tell me about his experience: “There is also a [foreign bride] who lives downstairs in our apartment building, and we always tell her not to hang out with those who do not have jobs and wander around all day. [Foreign brides] are very naïve, and they think there are no bad people in Taiwan.” He continued, “I don’t know how they are going to teach their children. Well, they can speak Mandarin, but they cannot write in Chinese. There will be a lot of problems in the future! ”

On September 5, 2007, I went to a salon to have my hair done. The young woman who washed my hair and was perhaps in her late teens had a Vietnamese step-mom. She told me, “My dad also married a Vietnamese wife. She is not the one who gave birth to me, you know. We live in Kaohsiung.” During the following half-hour, she described, “My dad sells fruit on the street. My Vietnamese mom, when she finds a job, she goes to work. When she has no job, she helps my dad sell fruit on the street. [...] My Vietnamese mom finished her elementary school education in Taiwan, and she has Taiwanese citizenship already. My dad even wanted her to go to junior high school to receive more education! [...] My Vietnamese mom visits her family in Vietnam every six months, and she stays there for about a month each time. My dad went to Vietnam with her once, for about two weeks; he was not used to it and does not want to go there again. When I saw the photos they took in Vietnam, I realized that my Vietnamese mom’s old house was built with straw, and now it’s a brick house. [...] I like Vietnamese food, though I do not dare to try fish sauce and raw duck eggs, because they look odd to me, but my dad is very fond of both those foods.”

A month later, I went to a different salon. The assistant who washed my hair initiated a conversation by praising my polished nails. I told him that it was done by a Vietnamese woman. I explained that there were more and more Vietnamese women living in Taiwan and a lot of them were very good at manicures. He sounded surprised to learn about the fact that a lot of Vietnamese women in Taiwan ran businesses like nail polishing. He then told me that his mom ran a small fast food restaurant shop and hired a Vietnamese woman to help with the business. He explained that this Vietnamese lady held three different jobs. “She is very diligent. She never stops doing things when she comes over to our shop to help with the business. She just keeps working and working. She eats meals at the owner’s expense, so she does not even need to spend

money on meals.” I then said, “Most of those Vietnamese women are very diligent about earning money. A lot of them have to support their natal families financially.” He agreed and continued, “She earns about NTD 70,000 [i.e., USD 2,200] per month. But she has no choice because her husband does not have a job! He says that he cannot find a suitable job.”

As we continued talking, I admitted, “Although I call them ‘Vietnamese moms,’ most of them are much younger than I am.” He responded, “Right. The Vietnamese mom who helps with my mom’s business is the same age as me, 21 years old. But she is already married and has a child. My mom once told me that when I want to marry, I should find a woman like her [the Vietnamese woman that my mom hires]. They just accept misfortune as decreed by fate [*ren min* 認命]; Taiwanese women nowadays are not like those Vietnamese women....” At some point in our conversation, he also mentioned that this Vietnamese woman very much enjoyed going to their home. “She feels at home in my mom’s shop. My mom is also very good to her. My mom sometimes buys nice stuff for her to eat, because she won’t spend very much money on buying nice food. ”

In sum, during my random conversations with the people I encountered in my everyday life, once I introduced the term “foreign brides” or “foreign spouses,” everyone had something to say about the topic, whether it was a direct personal experience with these women, an indirect interaction heard through other people, or a piece of news gathered from television. It shows that the phenomenon of new immigration is not just a topic that has circulated widely in public media, but that it has generated keen interest among ordinary people. Additionally, the diversity in responses shows that Taiwanese society is far from having reached a consensus on the issue of transnational marriages and suggests that the issue itself is highly controversial.

In other words, my daily encounters with various individuals revealed that many lay people were actively constructing what it meant to be “Taiwanese” and what it meant to be “foreign brides.” Some individuals perceived foreign brides as problematic; whereas others created a counter-narrative about foreign brides. How did people come up with these diverse perceptions? Were their perceptions formed through face-to-face interaction or overhearing? How do first-person accounts differ from third-person accounts? Anderson (1983) claimed that an “imagined community” is different from an actual community because it is not based on everyday face-to-face interaction between its members. Instead, people hold in their minds a mental image of their community. Thus, my fieldwork experiences informed me of the significance of studying how people constructed this new immigrant phenomenon and further formed their understandings and perceptions of new immigrants.

Governmental Responses to the New Wave of Immigration

In response to the new immigrant phenomenon and the controversial debates raised among the public, the Taiwanese Ministry of the Interior completed a large-scale nationwide survey in 2003 investigating foreign brides’ life circumstances in Taiwan, and then established and implemented 56 policies aimed at “supporting and guiding foreign spouses to adapt to Taiwanese society” (Taiwanese Ministry of the Interior, 2003). These policies covered 8 areas of importance: language learning, residency, local customs, employment, public health and hygiene, the upbringing and education of children, personal safety, and basic rights. Among those implemented policies, one of the most significant was the Ministry’s launching of free and widely accessible “Language Learning” and “Life Support” classes for foreign spouses. These classes enabled them to study Mandarin Chinese and eased their adjustment into Taiwanese

culture. Every township in Taiwan received a budget from the government to offer courses or workshops for foreign spouses.

The establishment of these courses was heavily influenced by the advocacy and contribution of Hsia (2003), the first scholar to study Taiwanese-Indonesian transnational marriages in Meinung, a town in Kaohsiung County in the southern part of Taiwan. She argued that “foreign brides” are a product of global capitalism and that learning Chinese language is a tool for them to empower themselves in Taiwanese society. Considering her work as an action research, Hsia launched the first literacy class for foreign brides in Meinung in 1995 (which was, more precisely, the first Chinese language learning class for foreign brides in all of Taiwan). Subsequently, literacy classes were offered by NGOs (non-governmental organizations) in various places. In 2003, the Taiwanese government extended Hsia’s idea and launched nationwide Language Learning and Life Support courses for foreign spouses. In the regulations, it is stated that the “Language Learning course helps to improve the listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities of foreign spouses, and to improve their communication skills and help them to adapt to life in Taiwan,” and that the “Life Support course focuses on improving foreign spouses’ adaptability to life in Taiwan.” Each course consists of 36 learning hours. All courses are free, and a transportation subsidy in the amount of NTD 500 (USD 16) is granted to students who fully attend both courses. In addition, a certificate of proof for compliance with the “standards for basic language proficiency and basic knowledge of civil rights and obligations for Republic of China (ROC) naturalization” is issued upon completion of the requisite 72 hours of Language Learning and Life Support courses. Without the certificate, an individual has to pass a certain language test in order to be qualified for Taiwanese citizenship application.

In 2006, the Ministry of the Interior, together with the Ministry of Education, established further policies to include school age children from transnational marriage families. In addition to continuing to offer free Chinese language and literacy classes and life adjustment classes to immigrant mothers, the Taiwanese government listed children from transnational marriage families as one of the “under-privileged [*ruo shi* 弱勢]” groups, prioritizing immigrant children to receive free attendance to after-school programs offered in public elementary schools. That is, students who attend public after-school programs are required to pay a certain amount of tuition, but “under-privileged” students like those from transnational marriage families attend free of charge. Schools also started organizing parent-child workshops (usually two-day events offered on weekends) that were specifically designed for transnational marriage families. Immigrant mothers and their children were encouraged to participate so as to learn how to “enhance” the quality of mother-child interactions. Furthermore, with a growing number of children from transnational marriage families attending schools and categorized as under-privileged students, the Taiwanese government enlisted scholars to conduct research projects aimed at “assisting” school age children from these families. Interestingly, the results of this scholarly work seemed to reflect what had been circulated in the general public discourses—that is, many researchers stated that they had identified significant achievement gaps between local Taiwanese and immigrant children, while a relatively small amount of the research countered the public discourses and showed that immigrant children performed as well as local Taiwanese students did, at least in the domains of academic achievement and intelligence.

Other responses of the Taiwanese government to the new immigration phenomenon included, for example, the widespread establishment of service centers for foreign spouses and their families and a fervent promotion of multiculturalism curricula in schools. However, some of

these policies have been harshly criticized by scholars. Take as an example the implementation of literacy classes. Ho (2003) criticized that the government-funded literacy classes designed for foreign brides failed to appreciate and respect cultural diversities and differences by not incorporating cross-cultural understandings and multicultural sensitivities into the curriculum. She argued that this lack of regard made attending literacy classes a cultural assimilation process. Similarly, Wang (2005) argued that language training for foreign brides tended to favor assimilation and to reject multiculturalism, which was an unfortunate oversight on the part of the Taiwanese government.

Scholarship on Transnational Marriages and Families in Taiwan

As described above, owing to the increasing numbers of foreign brides migrating to Taiwan, many Taiwanese scholars have turned their attention to studying issues related to this new immigration phenomenon. Below I highlight some of the most influential studies carried out recently.

Sociologist Hsia Hsiao-Chuan could be considered the pioneer who led the way by embarking on studies on the new wave of immigration in Taiwan. Her research on the Chinese literacy learning of Indonesian-Chinese foreign brides who married Hakka Taiwanese men stridently aimed at “voicing the voiceless from the bottom up” (Hsia, 2003), and her work has heavily influenced the establishment of governmentally-founded Chinese literacy classes in Taiwan, as described above in “Governmental Responses to the New Wave of Immigration.”

Wang (2001, 2002) is a sociologist who investigated and wrote about the impact of the Vietnamese foreign bride population on Taiwanese society. The author conducted almost 400 questionnaires and 55 interviews with Vietnamese foreign brides in Taiwan and showed that this mass female migration from Southeast Asia has significantly influenced Taiwan’s labor market

and in-house service market, helping alleviate the labor shortage problem. The author concluded that foreign brides have contributed not only to fertility but also to labor productivity in Taiwan.

A third sociologist, Chung (2007), studied foreign brides married to Hakka Taiwanese men and described the impact of these immigrant wives on Hakka's "cultural reproduction." By carrying out ethnographic fieldwork, the author demonstrated that these female migrants played an important role as the carriers of cultures, not only across borders (e.g., Vietnam to Taiwan) but also across generations (immigrant women to their offspring), and argued that the reproduction of culture has influenced the structure of Hakka Taiwanese families.

Lastly, Lee (2006) examined what social constructs were created within Vietnamese society around Vietnamese women who married Taiwanese men. Her research pointed out that even though Vietnamese foreign brides believed that helping their families by virtue of marriage was considered a good deed and "a debt of the soul," the public discourses created by Vietnamese upper-class elites portrayed those [working-class] Vietnamese foreign brides as "bad women" because they married for economic reasons instead of true love. Vietnamese social elites have constructed a relatively negative discourse around these women and have stated that transnational marriage is a national "shame" and should be prohibited by law.

As described above, the majority of scholarly work with regard to foreign brides has been undertaken by sociologists. Studies that seek to understand foreign brides from a psychological perspective are rare.

Recently, researchers and educators have begun to focus their studies on the second generation of foreign brides. Interestingly, studies concentrating on children born to transnational marriage families have had contrasting findings. On the one hand, the majority of studies pointed out the negative aspects of children born to transnational marriage families. Take as an example

an article published in a journal read by an audience consisting mainly of educational professionals. The author speculated, based on statistics published by the government which show that increasing numbers of children who were born to immigrant mothers with little education are entering schools, that there were four emerging educational challenges regarding these “New Taiwanese Children”—low socioeconomic status, language barriers hindering children’s learning, delayed cognitive development, and divergent disciplines between fathers and mothers. The author ended the article by providing four possible solutions to these challenges: implementing multicultural education, encouraging appropriate guidance and care for the children, providing immigrant mothers multiple ways to access language learning, and offering resources to help immigrant mothers adjust to Taiwanese society (Chen, 2005). Another article, also published in a journal read by educators, stressed the importance of immigrant mothers’ Chinese language learning by suggesting that immigrant mothers’ language proficiency “predicts” their children’s academic achievements (Chen, 2002). Scholarly work often echoes what these two articles stated. For example, Chung (2003) and Yang (2003) found that newborns in transnational marriage families had a higher ratio of premature delivery. Many researchers unveiled that these children, when compared to local Taiwanese children, were more likely to exhibit delays in language development, cognitive abilities, and motor abilities. Most of these studies described that, due to the disadvantages resulting from a lack of cultural stimulation in the home environment, the children born to transnational marriage families performed academically worse than their counterparts. The researchers concluded with the suggestion that the government develop intervention and prevention programs to assist these families and children in order to maintain the quality of Taiwan’s future generations (e.g., Chen & Chen, 2003; Lin, 2005; Wu, 2004; Yang, 2003; Chung & Wang, 2004).

On the other hand, a relatively small number of researchers argued that children born to transnational marriage families are not left behind academically. For example, Hsi (2008), while not carrying out an empirical study, challenged existing studies which suggested that children born to transnational marriage families scored lower on intelligence tests, arguing that a broader view of intelligence—such as Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences—and an ecologically valid view—such as Bronfenbrenne’s Ecological Systems Theory—should have been taken into consideration when studying these “New Taiwanese Children.”

Lastly, it is critically important to note that most of the articles I just mentioned reflected the authors’ personal experiences and opinions and were not based on empirical study. Thus, these articles might best be viewed as offering a window into images of “New Immigrant Women” and “New Taiwanese Sons” as expressed by educational “authorities.” Again, this underscores the need to examine how people, whether they be Taiwanese or immigrants themselves, construct images of the new immigrant phenomenon (Anderson, 1983).

Understanding Transnational Immigrant Mothers in Taiwan

As described above, this new wave of immigration has generated intense social and educational debate within the government and the public, much of it influenced by negative stereotypes of Southeast Asian immigrant women. In recent years there has been growing scholarly attention given to this new wave of immigration, yet these scholars have mainly been sociologists and economists who are interested in studying the impacts of transnational marriages on policymaking across borders, economic development in Southeast Asia, and the complexity of financial and social remittance between host and home countries. Our understandings of transnational marriages, immigrant women, and their families from the perspectives of psychologists, anthropologists, or ethnographers remain limited. In addition, current literature

offers little with regard to our understandings of transnational marriages from the perspective of these women, the individuals who actually play an active role in the process of migration. In my dissertation, I take a *developmental cultural psychology* perspective to investigate transnational marriages from the perspective of *immigrant mothers*.

A Developmental Cultural Psychology Perspective

Over the past decade, a significant amount of scholarly work has been devoted to the field of cultural psychology of human development. Shweder (1990) defined cultural psychology as “the ways subject and object, self and other, psyche and culture, person and context, figure and ground, practitioner and practice live together, require each other, and dynamically, dialectically, and jointly make each other up” (p.1). Looking at this definition from a development point of view, developmental cultural psychologists are concerned about how children’s culture and their development mutually constitute each other. Challenging the mainstream tradition in developmental psychology, these scholars point out that it is necessary to recognize that every culture has its particular definitions and goals of development for its children. As a result, researchers need to understand what is important to children’s development from the viewpoints of children’s own cultures so as to develop a deeper understanding of development in local terms (Göncü, 1999). Generally speaking, in cultural psychology—excepting a few studies that specifically examine biculturalism (e.g., Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martinez, 2000) and immigrants’ identity formation (e.g., Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001)—the majority of research ignores immigrants’ well-being (e.g., Mahalingam, 2006). In fact, the limited amount of study there has been on immigrants has focused chiefly on “transnational families,” in which all members migrate together and share the same language, leaving our understandings of “transnational marriage families” even more wanting.

In addition, developmental cultural psychologists point out the importance of considering variability *within* and *across* cultures (Göncü, 1999). But, to date, most of the research on these topics has focused on middle-class European-Americans or other culturally homogeneous groups. Feminist family study researchers stressed the importance of recognizing the multicultural experiences of these women and to challenge the homogeneous and Eurocentric approach to understanding gender and females (e.g., De Reus, Few, & Blume, 2005). Furthermore, some researchers also emphasized the importance of understanding transnational families via their lived experiences of the immigrant themselves, where variants and degrees of intimacy are negotiated across transnational spaces (Yeoh, Huang, & Lam, 2005). Moreover, Mahalingam, Balan, and Molina (2009) integrated a social marginality perspective and the theory of gendered geographies of power and proposed a “transnational intersectionality” perspective as a theoretical framework to examine and construct experiences of motherhood and families in transnational spaces. They pointed out that cultural narratives that valorize motherhood, social marginality, the context of migration, and social class all contribute to the production of transnational motherhood. In a word, all these scholarly works point to a need to explore transnational marriage families in a mixed and complex cultural context within Taiwan in order to shed light on our understandings of the re-socialization of immigrant mothers and the socialization of children from transnational marriage families.

A Focus on Culture-Specific Socialization

Parental beliefs, child rearing goals, and childhood socialization are important issues in developmental cultural psychology. Specifically, research on childhood socialization intends to answer two questions. First, how do parents raise their children? Second, how do children learn to become acceptable members of a society? Importantly, these two questions have to be

examined in ecologically valid cultural contexts. In Taiwan, an area that embraces Chinese cultures, early development and socialization practices are heavily influenced by the Confucian tradition. For example, discipline, obedience, achievement motivation, filial piety, social harmony, high moral stance, and acceptance of social obligations are each highly valued in the Confucian tradition and are considered as having served as guiding principles of Chinese socialization for centuries (Ho, 1996; Wu, 1996). Empirical study has shown that although some Chinese societies have experienced rapid social and economic changes in the past few decades, the Confucian influence has remained strong in early development and childhood socialization. Looking at Taiwanese society in particular, scholars have demonstrated that Taiwanese parents continue enacting traditional Chinese values through their parental practices (Fung, 1999, 2006; Fung & Chen, 2001, 2002; Fung, Miller, & Lin, 2004; Miller, Fung, & Mintz, 1996; Miller, Wiley, Fung, & Liang, 1997; Miller, Wang, Sandel, & Cho, 2002). Take as an example the socialization of emotion. Fung (1999) examined parental beliefs and practices with respect to shame in middle-class Taiwanese families. The author found that these young children's sense of shame was manipulated by parents' recounting of shaming events, which were used to tell right from wrong and motivate children to improve themselves. The author also found that these parents believed in "opportunity education [*ji hui jiao yu* 機會教育]," an indigenous Chinese notion implying that parents should take every opportunity to provide their children with concrete lessons that link rules of conduct to the child's experience.

Vietnam, although also a country under the influence of Confucianism, might have different understandings of Confucian concepts such as discipline, filial piety, achievement, obedience, and gender socialization. Take Vietnamese socialization of gender as an example. Rydstrom (2003) examined child rearing practices in a rural commune in Northern Vietnam. The author

found that young Vietnamese children's understandings of gender roles were highly influenced by parents' and schoolteachers' emphases on morality and body performances. It was found that these Vietnamese parents perceived boys as "patrilineal family lines" and girls as "blank sheets of paper." Boys were therefore socialized to incorporate past, present, and future morality, as well as bring honor and reputation to their families, whereas girls were socialized to compensate for their own deficiency by exemplifying "a sense of sensitivity [*tiềm cảm*]."

To my knowledge, the first research team to explore the socialization of Taiwanese-Vietnamese transnational marriage families from a *developmental cultural psychology* perspective was that of Fung and her colleagues. This research team carried out a comprehensive five-year longitudinal ethnographic study on seven Taiwanese-Vietnamese transnational marriage families in private home contexts in both Taiwan and Vietnam. Their micro-level analyses on narratives and practices informed us about the lived experiences of Vietnamese immigrant mothers and how these mothers navigated different cultural systems and re-socialized themselves, while at the same time socializing their children, in transnational spaces (Fung, 2009, 2010; Fung & Liang, 2008, 2009, 2010; Fung, Liang, & Trần Thị, 2008, 2009a, 2009b). Fung and Liang (2008) described how Vietnamese immigrant mothers used Mandarin Chinese to cultivate deeply-rooted Vietnamese culture-specific understandings of filial piety. The authors found that these Vietnamese mothers fostered filial piety very early in their children's lives by exhibiting culture-specific practices such as "politeness training [*võng tay*]" and "affect cultivation [*thýỡng*]." It was shown that when these mothers disciplined their children using Mandarin, they very often required their children to show their respect to mothers by exhibiting *võng tay*— a body gesture of holding both arms in front of the chest to show politeness in Vietnamese society. The researchers found that *võng tay* is widely practiced in various situations

in Vietnam but only emerged in Taiwan within the context of discipline in Vietnamese-Taiwanese transnational marriage families. They also observed that these Vietnamese mothers showed their affection toward their children and expected their children to show their affection toward their mothers via social grooming—a behavior that symbolizes the concept of *thýõng*, which entails the hierarchical love between mothers and children in Vietnamese society.

In sum, their work showed that these immigrant mothers articulated and practiced filial piety differently from the Taiwanese concept, both in terms of what to do and the extent to which to be filial. Their studies also underscored the importance of understanding the socialization of transnational marriage families within contexts—that is, how Vietnamese mothers navigate their way through two different cultural systems to co-construct social meaning; how and in what ways the dominant Taiwanese and peripheral Vietnamese cultural systems are converged, blended, or mixed with each other in light of transnational immigration and marriages; and how a dominant socialization practice, such as Taiwanese socialization, has both persisted and changed in the transnational marriage family setting.

Research Questions

With the goal of shedding a light on how Vietnamese immigrant women re-socialize themselves (in young adulthood and are consciously engaged in this process) and how immigrant mothers socialize their children, and how the children fare once they enter the Taiwanese educational system, I examine transnational marriage families at *two levels* and from *two angles*.

At Two Levels: Macro- and Micro-Levels

From the perspective of developmental cultural psychology, experiences of mothers and children can only be understood in context and that the society as a whole shapes transnational marriage families' lived experiences. That is, in order to have a deeper understanding of

transnational marriage families, both the *macro* and *micro* levels that contextualize the everyday lives of these families and immigrants have to be understood. In this chapter, I have described and explained how the new immigrant phenomenon, Vietnamese immigrant mothers, and children from transnational marriage families have been constructed within Taiwanese society. In later chapters, I focus on micro-level analysis to understand transnational marriage families by carrying out a longitudinal ethnographic research that, hopefully, will contribute to our more holistic understanding of transnational marriage families.

From Two Angles: Vietnamese Immigrant Mothers and Taiwanese Teachers

I also intend to study transnational marriage families from different perspectives, insiders' views and outsiders' views, with the objectives of examining how their views were socially constructed as well as assessing whether their perspectives on the new immigrant phenomenon converge or diverge.

To deepen our understanding of insiders, *Vietnamese immigrant mothers*, I ask them in their role as mothers how they navigate within and between the two cultural systems. That is, how do they negotiate within the larger context in Taiwan and yet retain parental beliefs that are unique to their own culture? Specifically, I closely examine the following questions: (1) What are their parental beliefs and child rearing goals? (2) How do these mothers negotiate within the larger context in Taiwan while retaining parental beliefs that are unique to their own culture (i.e., maintenance of Vietnamese culture)? (3) What specific challenges do these mothers face in childrearing? (4) What efforts do they make to overcome these challenges (i.e., adaptation to Taiwanese culture)? Regarding Vietnamese immigrant mothers, I try to understand their child rearing beliefs and goals by exploring their language choices when talking to their children, their maintenance of Vietnamese culture in child rearing, and their adaptation to Taiwanese culture.

I also study the outsiders, *Taiwanese teachers*, to know more about their educational goals and perceptions of immigrant mothers and children. Taiwanese teachers' perspectives have to be investigated because, on the one hand, these teachers directly influence the education of children from transnational marriage families and indirectly shape the parental beliefs and child rearing goals of Vietnamese immigrant mothers. On the other hand, in their roles as teachers of Vietnamese immigrant mothers and their children, they learn to navigate the new classroom environment in which a certain amount of children are raised in transnational marriage families and students' backgrounds are more diverse than it used to be. Specific concerns include: (1) What are teachers' understandings of immigrant mothers and children? (2) What are their educational goals for children from transnational marriage families? (3) How do they deal with having children from both transnational and Taiwanese families in the same educational setting; for example, do they reinforce stereotypes, or do they make an effort to discourage students from stereotyping immigrant mothers and their children?

By investigating these research questions I raised, I hope to bring together the voices of Vietnamese immigrant mothers and Taiwanese teachers so as to illuminate their respective child rearing beliefs and educational goals, and to discern the complex dynamics between the two groups and how these two groups mutually shape each others' parental beliefs and child rearing goals.

Roadmap to the Remaining Chapters

The remainder of the dissertation is organized as follows. First, in Chapter 2, I will describe my research design and methods, followed by a narrative of my 17 months of fieldwork in two small towns in Taipei County, Taiwan. For Chapter 3, I will present the findings of my interviews with Vietnamese immigrant mothers by describing these mothers' life circumstances

and challenges in Taiwan, as well as how they socialized their children while they were re-socializing themselves into a new and unfamiliar land. In Chapter 4, I will review three different types of Taiwanese teachers' understandings of immigrant women and their children. at the end of both Chapters 3 and 4, I will provide a brief discussion of the individual findings. Finally, in Chapter 5, I will attempt to integrate the information that was gathered across all chapters. The chapter will end with a discussion of the general contributions of my dissertation to the field of developmental cultural psychology, as well as my dissertation's limitations and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

Research Design

Ethnographic in approach and longitudinal in design, my dissertation project involved a total of 17 months of comprehensive fieldwork in two small towns in Taipei County. Taipei County was chosen because it contains the highest incidence of transnational marriage families. My fieldwork unfolded in two phases: (1) the pilot study from August to December 2006 and (2) the comprehensive second phase from August 2007 to July 2008. During my initial five months of fieldwork, I collected relevant literature written in Chinese, conducted 10 interviews with parents from both Taiwanese and transnational marriage families, and established a connection with an elementary school in Moonrise River,³ a township in Taipei County. During the second phase, I resided in Moonrise River and participated in relevant activities taking place in this town and a nearby town, Sunset Mountain.⁴ My goal was to immerse myself in as many situations as possible in order to understand, at a micro level, transnational marriage families from different perspectives.

Research Methods

I employed multiple research methods, including *in-depth audio-recorded interviews*, *ethnographic participant-observations*, and *archival research*. Below I briefly describe my purposes of employing those methods.

In-Depth Audio-Recorded Interviews

The core of my dissertation consists of *in-depth audio-recorded interviews* with the participants (Vietnamese immigrant women and Taiwanese teachers). The purpose of the interviews with Vietnamese immigrant mothers was to obtain background information about the

³ The name has been changed to protect the confidentiality of the participants.

⁴ The name has been changed to protect the confidentiality of the participants.

participants and their families; to elicit their parental beliefs, child rearing, and educational goals for their children; and to understand their perceptions of the new immigrant phenomenon as a whole in Taiwan. The purpose of interviewing Taiwanese teachers was to understand their experiences working with immigrant mothers and children, as well as to underscore their perceptions and understandings of transnational marriage families.

The participants who allowed me to conduct multiple interviews were usually also observed in other contexts, such as in their literacy classrooms and workplaces. In other words, these were participants whom I knew for an extended period of time and interacted with in various settings. At the end of my fieldwork, I interviewed some of these participants again to clarify issues I had identified during my observations. In Appendices A-D, I provide my interview protocols for Vietnamese immigrant mothers, Taiwanese literacy teachers, kindergarten teachers, and elementary schoolteachers.

Ethnographic Participant-Observations

I actively participated in community activities involving members from transnational marriage families. These activities included regularly attending “literacy classes [*shizi ban*]” designed specifically for immigrant mothers (see Hsia 2001, 2003 for more details), visiting kindergarten classes that include children from transnational marriage families, participating in community activities, talking to community leaders, and occasionally visiting the homes and workplaces of my participants. The purpose of these observations was to deepen my understanding of the spontaneous interactions between immigrant mothers and children, immigrant mothers and teachers, and teachers and children, as well as to provide first-hand information on the process of socialization for both immigrant mothers and their children in

various contexts. Whenever possible, I audio- and video-recorded these observations; otherwise, I wrote up comprehensive field notes following the observations.

Archival Research

To better contextualize my dissertation research, I conducted *archival research*, consulting scholarly works, governmental documents, and reports in the mass media regarding immigrant mothers and the children from transnational marriage families in Taiwan.

First Phase of the Fieldwork (August – December 2006)

Below I provide a comprehensive narrative regarding what I had done during the pilot study phase.

Understanding Public Discourses concerning Transnational Marriage Families

I embarked on my initial fieldwork with an IRB approval and a rough draft of the interview protocol. Immediately after entering my field site, Taipei, the largest city in Taiwan, I realized that transnational marriage had become a topic of concern for ordinary people in their everyday lives. For example, on August 25, 2006, I overheard a conversation in a coffee shop in the neighborhood where I was living. After listening to the two young people talking about their current jobs, I realized that the woman seemed to be a high school teacher and the man a medical doctor, or possibly just an intern. Both of them appeared younger than I. They spent a lot of time talking about the difficulties they faced in their current jobs. Suddenly, the young man said, “I think the problems these foreign brides [*wai ji xin niang* 外籍新娘] bring to our country have now also become a responsibility for doctors. They come from underdeveloped Southeast Asian countries. If one of them comes to Taiwan with cholera or malaria and spreads it to ten people and then those ten people spread it to a hundred people, we will have a really serious problem. And you know what? They come to see doctors in the hospital, but they cannot speak Mandarin,

nor can they speak English. I don't even know how to communicate with them, not to mention how to diagnose their illness... ” The young man continued to talk about the difficulties he faced and the dark side of the system in the hospital.

News about “new immigrants [*xin yi min* 新移民]” in Taiwan—a term coined by the Taiwanese government to replace the more negative term “foreign brides”—is also widely reported in television programs, newspapers, and magazines. Based on my observations, news about new immigrants appears in the newspapers frequently, sometimes under a recognizable headline and sometimes in a section where it might easily be overlooked. The content ranges from extremely negative stereotypes of these new immigrants to advocacy of social equality or promotion of multiculturalism, largely biased in stereotypical and negative terms. For example, one headline read, “More Foreign Brides, More Developmentally Delayed New Taiwanese Sons, Government Should Solve the Problem” (Penghu Daily E-news, December 13, 2006). The news reporter used Penghu County (i.e., a rural area where most males are fishermen) as an example to illustrate the problems that come with the increasing number of foreign brides. It said, “According to the county government, the birth rate in Taiwan keeps dropping, yet within which babies born to foreign brides keep soaring. However, foreign brides remain unable to overcome language barriers and pick up Taiwanese customs, leading to the increasing number of babies with low birth weight and developmentally delayed children. Thus, the next generation in Taiwan faces a huge crisis.” The report ended with how much effort the Penghu County government had put into providing local foreign brides with information of a more “accurate” healthy lifestyle. An article written by an elementary schoolteacher titled, “Talking about New Taiwanese Sons’ School Adjustment from the Standpoint of Foreign Brides,” documented the possible challenges teachers may face when teaching students from transnational marriage

families (Futai Elementary School Special Issue, April, 23, 2005). The author, an elementary schoolteacher, used some cases she encountered when working with immigrant children with learning difficulties to illustrate her teaching challenges and the need for creating a multicultural environment in school. The article ended with ten suggestions she wanted to provide to the current government, such as “establishing an agency to supervise marriage brokers; providing brochures about relationships, tips for getting along with mothers-in-law, and parental education in Southeast Asian languages; and establishing long-term plans for foreign spouses’ lifelong education.” This diversity shows that Taiwanese society is far from having reached a consensus on the issue of transnational marriages and suggests that the issue itself is highly controversial.

I began my initial fieldwork by familiarizing myself with these discourses, including those articulated by both the opponents to the influx of new immigrants and the advocates for new immigrants’ rights and protection.

Searching the Literature and Attending Conferences

I spent a good deal of time collecting the relevant literature on transnational marriages, particularly sources written in Chinese. The materials I have collected include: government statistics on new immigrants and transnational marriage families, empirical studies of immigrants and their children, and journalistic reports and commentaries on the positive and negative impacts of this emerging phenomenon. In view of the significant amount of Chinese literature I was able to find, probably because the number of transnational marriage families continues to rise in Taiwan, I realized that there are more and more scholars interested in exploring this new immigration phenomenon from different disciplines (e.g., sociology, economics, health, gender, language, education, and immigration regulation/laws). Specifically focusing on literature that addresses immigrant women and the second generation of transnational marriage families, I

found that many of the articles written were based on personal commentaries (e.g., government officials suggesting possible solutions, schoolteachers sharing their personal experiences working with immigrants and their children, and doctors promoting health-related issues concerning new immigrants); only a few were scholarly works based on empirical studies (e.g., Fung & Liang, 2008, 2009; Hsia, 2003; Thai, 2008).

During my initial fieldwork in Taiwan, I attended two international conferences held in Taipei, respectively focusing on “Intermediated Cross-Border Marriages in Asia and Europe” and “Taiwan-Vietnam Economic and Cultural Relations under Regional Integration and Development.” The former focused on socio-demographic patterns, migratory motivation and processes in Asia and Europe, public policies and popular imagination, and social and cultural positioning of transnational marriage families and their coping strategies. The latter conference addressed East Asian economic integration and its impact on cultural and economic relations between Vietnam and Taiwan, foreign direct investment by Taiwanese companies in Vietnam, and the politics of transnational marriage between Vietnamese and Taiwanese. Notably, although a great deal of scholarly attention has been given to transnational marriage, the discussion of the development of the second generation of these families is still very limited.

Consulting with an Expert

During my fieldwork, I also consulted with one of my dissertation research committee members in the field site, Dr. Heidi Fung, an expert on moral socialization and language socialization in Chinese culture, and whose current research focuses on everyday language socialization of Taiwanese-Vietnamese marriage families in Taiwan (Fung & Liang, 2008, 2009). Since one of the goals of my study involves understanding the parental beliefs and childrearing goals that frame the socialization of Vietnamese immigrant mothers and their young children in

Taiwan, these discussions with Dr. Fung and her research team provided valuable guidance to my initial fieldwork.

Visiting Relevant Institutions and Organizations

While immersing myself in the public discourses and searching for relevant literature, I was, at the same time, exploring possible channels and means of getting to know members of transnational marriage families, especially immigrant mothers. I made several visits to churches, non-profit organizations (NPOs), immigrant women's associations, Chinese language and literacy classes designed for immigrant women, the Taipei City New Immigrants' Hall, and the first nationwide New Immigrants' Center located in an elementary school in Taoyuan County, which is 1.5 hours away from Taipei by car. In 2007, Taoyuan's population included 10.35% of immigrants and was ranked as the third largest county in which immigrant women reside (Ministry of the Interior, Taiwan Government).⁵ Considering these organizations immigrant women's social spaces, I visited these institutions hoping to get to know and to learn more about the women and, if possible, their children.

Yet, I soon realized that most of these organizations were usually closed to outsiders and were rather protective of the immigrant women, and consequently reluctant to allow outsiders like myself to talk to them face-to-face. That these women have been stigmatized by the mass media and the general public for a decade may be why both the institution and the Chinese language and literacy teachers were trying to protect them from additional pressures or interference. Possibly for the same reason, the women themselves had become somewhat

⁵ According to a report by the Department of Statistics, Ministry of the Interior, as of November 2007, there were about 137,000 transnational marriage families in Taiwan made up of Taiwanese men with wives from southeastern Asian countries (not including 260,000 families made up of Taiwanese men with Chinese wives). The top three areas with the largest number of transnational marriage families are Taipei County (19.04%), Taipei City (10.57%), and Taoyuan County (10.35%).

suspicious of unfamiliar people and disinclined to agree to be interviewed. Thus, getting acquainted with immigrant women via these channels was a very challenging task for me.

Building Rapport and Interviewing Immigrant Mothers in Moonrise River

The aforementioned experiences made me realize that the only viable way to find participants for my research would be through “personal networking.” In addition, I realized that the percentage of transnational marriage families in the population is higher in rural areas outside Taipei City, so I shifted my focus to these areas. I contacted friends who were schoolteachers (special education teachers at elementary schools and Chinese literacy teachers) working in the less-urbanized areas in Taipei and Taoyuan Counties. Through these contacts, I was able to establish contact with a number of immigrant mothers in a rural town in Taipei County about an hour away from Taipei by car. After establishing rapport with these immigrant women, another challenge arose—most of them expressed the need to talk to their husbands to make sure it was fine for them to be interviewed by me. In addition, it was extremely difficult to persuade husbands or fathers to be interviewed, even though they allowed their wives to be interviewed by me.

Discovering Teachers’ Impact on Transnational Marriage Families

Informal and private conversations with several friends, who coincidentally were all schoolteachers, helped me learn more about the situations of children from transnational marriage families at school. I have known these friends since either college or high school, and therefore they were very open about their own views in front of me.

From my discussions with these teacher friends, I realized that, on the one hand, the learning ability, school performance, and academic achievement of these children from transnational marriage families have become a major concern for educators and school administrators in

Taiwan. On the other hand, I also found that schoolteachers varied in their perceptions of these children. For example, the moment a friend of mine who is an administrator in charge of special education in a junior high school in Taipei City learned that I was interested in understanding children from transnational marriage families, she commented, “Oh. This is indeed a big problem. It will be a great challenge for me once they enter junior high school. I was told they have caused a lot of problems in elementary schools...” Another friend who taught special education in an elementary school told me she had made repeated visits to the home of a student from a transnational marriage family. She said, “The student’s parents did not come to the teacher-parent conference, so I went to his home to talk to his parents. But every single time I went to his home, I only found his mother and I think she was unable to understand all that I wanted to say. I never met his father and I really don’t know who he is. I plan to visit my student’s home again.”

These communications reinforced my belief that schoolteachers indeed play a significant role in these children’s development. Schoolteachers have a direct impact on children’s education in transnational marriage families and indirectly shape both the parental beliefs and the child rearing goals of these transnational marriage families. This finding propelled me to consider including schoolteachers as participants in the second phase of my fieldwork.

In sum, in the pilot phase, I conducted archival research, interviewed immigrant women, established a connection with an elementary school in Moonrise River (a township in Taipei County), participated in the life of the community, and sensed the need to incorporate schoolteachers’ views of transnational marriage families.

Second Phase of the Fieldwork (August 2007– July 2008)

In the second phase of my fieldwork, I lived in Moonrise River and participated in relevant activities taking place in this town and a nearby town, Sunset Mountain. I continued to conduct

interviews with immigrant mothers and schoolteachers, and I made systematic observations in various educational contexts, such as at Chinese language and literacy classes for Vietnamese immigrant women and at the public kindergarten classes that children of Vietnamese immigrant mothers attended. Below I describe in detail what I accomplished during this phase of my fieldwork.

Ethnographic Description of the Field Sites: Moonrise River and Sunset Mountain

I resided in Moonrise River for the entire second phase of my fieldwork. Moonrise River is located in a rural area one hour away from Taipei by car. The town covers an area of about 2,215,213 square feet (20.58 square kilometers). In 2007-2008, it had a population of 21,746, of which about 400 (1.8%) were new immigrants (Ministry of the Interior, Taiwan Government). There are two public preschools, one run by the township government with a maximum enrollment of 80 preschoolers, and the other run by the elementary school with which I have a connection. Moonrise River also has several private daycare centers and kindergartens. Yet, there is only one public elementary school and one public junior high school. With few exceptions, all school-age children in Moonrise River enroll in these two public schools to receive mandatory education. In the elementary school, there were 128 (out of 1,739) students from transnational marriage families, and 51 of them (in the 2008 Spring semester) were children of Vietnamese immigrant mothers. Three schoolteachers from this elementary school also taught adult literacy classes for immigrant mothers and Taiwanese elders in town. There were very few students from transnational marriage families in the junior high school, mainly because the influx of these families emerged in the past decade and their children hadn't yet reached the age to enter a junior high school.

It is important to mention that although there is only one elementary school in Moonrise River, there exist more than 10 private after-school programs [*an qin ban* 安親班] to serve those students. There has been an emerging trend in Taiwan that the majority of parents are sending their children to after-school programs to have children's homework supervised and to receive extra academic curricula (e.g., math and English). This is particularly true for dual-career parents, as their work schedules disallow them to accommodate their children's school schedules. Specifically, when the elementary school dismisses students at 3:40 p.m., most of them are picked up by after-school program teachers in front of the school gate and transported to the program centers (usually nearby the school). These students spend another 2–3 hours in the centers to finish their homework under the supervision of program teachers. Some program centers provide a snack or meal if the children have to stay late, but most of the children get picked up and go home for dinner. The public elementary school also offers after-school programs [*ke hou ban* 課後班], but these attract limited enrollments, partly because students are only allowed to stay in school until 5 p.m. (which doesn't always fit the parents' schedules) and partly because many parents challenge the quality of the public after-school programs (where teachers simply supervise homework but provide no extra curricula).

Many families in Moonrise River are three-generational households, though the number of nuclear families keeps increasing. Most parents received a high school education and held working-class jobs, for example as street vendors, taxi drivers, or construction workers. Some professionals, such as schoolteachers or township officers, reside in Moonrise River, and others live in Taipei City or nearby towns and commute to work on a daily basis.

Moonrise River is usually flooded with tourists during the weekends. A typical Saturday in Moonrise River is full of scenes of frustrated tourists having difficulties finding parking spaces,

hungry tourists standing in line waiting to be seated in a busy local restaurant, and excited tourists bargaining with the street vendors over local goods and souvenirs. These out-of-towners usually scatter after dinner time, often leaving the local vendors with triple the income they could earn on a weekday. Some businesses targeting tourists open only during the weekends and holidays.

The first 5 months of my second phase of fieldwork was primarily based in Moonrise River in order to discern various perspectives among my participants. Since the fourth month (i.e., November 2007) of this second phase, I began to gain access to a nearby town, Sunset Mountain, which is about 20 minutes away from Moonrise River by car. Sunset Mountain is also located in Taipei County. It covers an area of about 20,607,507 square feet (191.45 square kilometers) and has a population of 7,888, of which 137 (1.7%) are new immigrants (Ministry of the Interior, Taiwan Government). Although both field sites shared similar percentages of new immigrant populations, immigrant women in Sunset Mountain were more physically and socially isolated than those in Moonrise River. Due to the geographical circumstances, residents in Sunset Mountain are more spread out, and many of them live in remote mountain areas to grow tea leaves and vegetables. Without appropriate transportation (i.e., cars and motorcycles), it is extremely difficult to commute from one location to another. The downtown area mainly consists of a street with about 5 local restaurants, a handful of small grocery shops, and toward the end of my fieldwork, a newly-opened 24-hour convenience store. Most residents do their grocery shopping on the weekends in Moonrise River or another town. There is a bus line running from downtown to the remote mountain areas to serve locals, yet it only runs once in the early morning and once in the late afternoon. When an individual takes the bus, he does not tell the bus driver the street name where he wants to get off; instead, he would tell the driver that he wants to

go to visit his friend Chen's family. The bus driver would then immediately recognize which family he is referring to and know where to allow the passenger to get off the bus. At times, an individual would catch the bus with two plastic bags full of vegetables which she herself had grown and give it to the bus driver as a token of appreciation.

Because of these geographical characteristics, there are 4 public kindergartens and 4 elementary schools in Sunset Mountain. However, the enrollment for each kindergarten is significantly lower than the single public kindergarten in Moonrise River. For example, in the 2007-2008 school year, there were 18 children enrolled in the public kindergarten located in downtown Sunset Mountain, whereas there were over 60 children attending the single public kindergarten in Moonrise River. Additionally, that same year, there were 332 students enrolled in all four public elementary schools in Sunset Mountain, whereas there were 1739 students studying in the single elementary school in Moonrise River. Very different from Moonrise River, there exists no single private after-school program in Sunset Mountain. If a parent wants to send her children to a private after-school program, she has to transport the child to Moonrise River for the enriched education, or pay an extra fee to the program for picking up her child from a different town. In fact, only a handful of parents did so. Most of the school-age children either went home after school or stayed at school to ask for teachers' additional instructions. At times, these children spent the hours before dinner at the school playground. Because this is a town where most people are acquainted, parents generally feel secure allowing their children to spend time outside of the house, and other adults usually help look after children in the community. In the public elementary school that I studied, the school principal and teachers were able to recognize all 81 students by name, and vice versa.

In Sunset Mountain, the ratio of three-generational households was higher than that in Moonrise River. Most of the parents received high school education (9th grade) and held blue-collar jobs (e.g., taxi drivers, construction workers, and seasonal laborers in farming or harvesting). The job opportunities in this town were very limited; thus, most parents actually worked in other towns. For example, an individual in Sunset Mountain might be employed as a restaurant helper in Moonrise River, commuting between the two towns on a daily basis.

With a compact population, a slower lifestyle, and a friendly environment, gaining access to immigrant mothers and teachers was easier in Sunset Mountain than in Moonrise River. Consequently, for the second half of my second phase of fieldwork, I mainly focused on interviewing Vietnamese immigrant mothers and teachers as well as observing these mothers and their children in two different educational contexts in Sunset Mountain.

Building Rapport and Recruiting Participants

Regarding the approachability of immigrant women, residing in Moonrise River gave me quite a different experience from my initial fieldwork, mainly because I was able to engage in casual social contact with these immigrant women in various contexts. For example, when I went to a noodle stand run by a Vietnamese woman, I would see a group of immigrant women. After several visits to this noodle stand, I became acquainted with the owner and several Vietnamese women. Then, we might run into one another unexpectedly while grocery shopping at the major supermarket in town. Or, we sometimes saw one another on the street, since it was a small town. In addition, I encountered some of them again when I got permission to attend a Chinese literacy class aimed at instructing senior Taiwanese adults and immigrant women. In a few community activities (usually celebrations such as the Lantern Festival and the Mid-Autumn Festival), I got to talk to some of their husbands and children. In other words, residing in the same town with my

informants allowed me abundant opportunities to meet immigrant women, their friends, and sometimes their families. All of these contacts made my goal of interviewing immigrant women more achievable and the process more natural. Even though some of the interviews were just a one-time event, I often continued to interact with these interviewees again after the interviews.

Meeting Teachers and Gaining Entry to Elementary Schools

A teacher facilitated my entry into the only elementary school in Moonrise River. Because of her connections, I was able to talk to several school directors during the first week of the Fall 2007 semester and was granted full access to the school. I thus had opportunities to observe children in school and attend some teacher meetings. For example, during the second week of the semester, I was invited to attend a meeting involving an assessment of a potential ADHD third-grade student, a ten-year-old boy whose father was Taiwanese and whose mother was Vietnamese. In the elementary schools in Taiwan, students and teachers are usually assigned to new classrooms every other year so that students have the opportunity to meet new friends and teachers. This student's new teacher reported to the special education office at the end of the first week of the new semester, indicating that the student had too frequently disturbed her teaching in the classroom. She was seeking possible assistance from the special education office. A meeting involving 6 people took place the following week: the student's previous teacher, the student's current teacher, the director of special education, two special education teachers (one is my friend), and me. I was invited to attend this meeting because they saw me as a possible resource, capable of providing some professional assistance due to my background in education, expertise in child development, and interest in understanding children from transnational marriage families. At the meeting, I was invited to observe this student's classroom behaviors on a daily basis for the entire following week. When one of the special education teachers reported to the student's

parents on the decisions we had reached during the meeting, the parents immediately brought their child to see a doctor, who prescribed medication (i.e., Ritalin). A few days later, the student's current teacher canceled her request to the special education office, indicating that the student's disruptive behavior had decreased, that she did not want to put the student in a special position in the classroom, and that she thus preferred not having me enter the classroom to observe this student's classroom behavior. (By the end of my fieldwork, the student had actually started receiving special education for 2-3 hours on a daily basis, and I managed to interview his mother before I ended my fieldwork.)

Although I did not have the opportunity to enter the classroom for observation, I became known in this elementary school as an enthusiastic volunteer with backgrounds in education and child development. During this phase of my fieldwork, I engaged in some volunteer tasks at this school, some of which were highly relevant to my dissertation research. For example, on a weekend, I led a two-day workshop that involved facilitating parent-child interactions in transnational marriage families. All families who attended this workshop were families with school-age children born to Taiwanese fathers and immigrant mothers (see Appendix E for more details). In addition, I attended a reading seminar, which involved training Taiwanese mothers with children enrolled in this school to reach out to immigrant mothers. I later interviewed some of these Taiwanese mothers to gain their perspectives on and understanding of immigrant mothers and their children; yet, these interviews were not analyzed in my dissertation.

At the end of my second phase of fieldwork, I had conducted 60 interviews (a total of 114 hours)⁶ and 56 sessions of classroom observation (a total of 197 hours).⁷ Below I describe in details how I obtained the interview and observation data.

⁶ There were 23 interviews (46 hours) with immigrant mothers (14 Vietnamese, 2 Chinese-Vietnamese, 4 Chinese, 1 Thai, 1 Indonesian, and 1 Filipino), 15 interviews (32 hours) with Taiwanese schoolteachers (3 kindergarten

Conducting Interviews with Immigrant Mothers and Taiwanese Teachers

Although my interviews included immigrant mothers from a variety of countries (e.g., Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines), I focus on Vietnamese immigrant mothers for my dissertation data analysis. My rationale is that immigrant women from different countries have different ethnic identities, languages, and immigration motivations, and they bring with them different cultural values, beliefs, and perspectives. If immigrant women from Mainland China are excluded, women from Vietnam constitute about 49% of the immigrant population in Taiwan (Wang, 2002) and are thus the largest “new” immigrant group in Taiwan. Because of their sheer number and significance in the immigrant population, I choose to focus on Vietnamese mothers. Importantly, my interviews with Chinese language and literacy teachers also revealed that these teachers separated immigrant women from different countries and attributed different characteristics to women from Vietnam and other countries.

These Vietnamese immigrant mothers had all immigrated to Taiwan within the past 10 years and remained married, and each had at least one child (3-8 years old) enrolled in preschool or elementary school when they were interviewed. The mean age of these mothers when interviewed was 29 years old (ranged 25 to 37 years old), and the mean age at which they married was 22 years old (ranged from 17 to 28 years old). The Vietnamese immigrant mothers interviewed were comfortable speaking Mandarin Chinese; all interviews were therefore conducted in Mandarin (and occasionally in Taiwanese) and transcribed verbatim in Chinese.

The teachers were either preschool or elementary school teachers with experience in teaching students from transnational marriage families or as literacy class instructors. All

teachers, 9 elementary teachers, and 8 literacy class teachers), 14 interviews (23 hours) with Taiwanese mothers, and 8 interviews (13 hours) with community leaders.

⁷ There were 92 hours of classroom observation in Mandarin language and literacy classes and 105 hours of classroom observation in the public kindergarten.

teachers were females and had completed college (except for one literacy teacher who had only completed her high school education).

It is important to mention that interviewing Vietnamese immigrant mothers and Taiwanese teachers required different interview formats and adaptations. In Chapter 4, I will describe and discuss the extent to which I had to adapt when interviewing immigrant mothers and teachers.

Engaging in Participant-Observations

During the second phase of the fieldwork, I engaged in systematic longitudinal participant-observations in four different contexts: (1) adult elementary education classes in Moonrise River, (2) Chinese language and literacy classes in Sunset Mountain, (3) a public kindergarten in Sunset Mountain, and (4) a Taiwanese-Vietnamese family in Sunset Mountain. In addition, some community activities, mostly annual events or festivals, offered opportunities for participant-observations. Below I describe each context in more detail.

The first “literacy class [*shi zi ban* 識字班]” specifically designed for immigrant women to learn Chinese was launched in Meinong, a rural town in southern Taiwan in 1995 (Hsia, 2001, 2003). In 1999, due to the dramatic increase in the number of new immigrants, the Ministry of the Interior formalized this class and offered funding to various organizations that provided Chinese literacy programs for immigrant women across Taiwan. Two different major types of literacy classes thus emerged. One type was offered by adult education programs at elementary schools and recruited both senior Taiwanese adults who had not received a formal education in childhood and immigrant women who were not proficient in Mandarin Chinese (see Lin, 2009 for a detailed description of this type of adult education program). The other type was offered by churches, non-profit organizations, and local governments (county and city) and was designed specifically for immigrant women to learn Chinese. According to the newest Taiwanese

immigrant law announced in 2006 (Ministry of Interior, Taiwan Government), immigrant women are required to attend at least 72 hours of literacy classes or take a certain Chinese language proficiency test to be qualified for applying for Taiwanese citizenship.

Adult education classroom observation in Moonrise River

My connection with the elementary school in Moonrise River gave me the opportunity to observe the adult education program that provided immigrant women and illiterate Taiwanese elders an opportunity to learn Chinese and obtain an elementary school diploma. In the adult education program in which I participated and observed, all the students were immigrant women, excepting one Taiwanese elder who briefly attended the class and quit due to the illness of her husband. The materials and contents discussed in the classroom were mostly relevant information to immigrant women. Beginning in October 2007 and continuing through the end of the spring semester (June 2008), I audio- and video-recorded natural interactions in the classroom two hours a week, yielding a total of 21 two-hour-long observation sessions. The female literacy teacher was an elementary school teacher. In other words, she taught children during the day and adults in the evenings. In addition, she was married and had three school-age children. Because the teachers and most students shared certain life experiences as mothers, daughters-in-law, and wives, topics such as how to raise children, how to get along with in-laws, how to maintain a happy marriage, and how to balance work and family were often brought up and discussed in the classroom.

In addition to my observations in the literacy class, I also interviewed the teacher and six immigrant women who regularly attended the class. Through these semi-structured interviews, I was able to clarify some questions that had emerged during the classroom observation sessions and obtain first-person accounts of understanding and experiences relevant to my study. For

example, questions I asked the literacy teacher included: What are your educational goals? What are your understandings of these immigrant women's motivations for attending the literacy class? What kind of resources do you provide for these immigrant women? What do you expect immigrant women to learn from the literacy class? What are your understandings of immigrant women and their children? Have your understandings of immigrant women changed during the course of the class? Questions I asked immigrant women included: What do you expect to learn from the literacy class? How do you perceive teachers' and peers' sharing of personal experiences? Do you see yourself changing because of the class? What do you learn from attending the literacy class? What were the major life issues you encountered when you first moved to Taiwan? How do you overcome these difficulties? What are your educational goals and child rearing beliefs for your children?

Chinese literacy classroom observation in Sunset Mountain

An interview with a Taiwanese mother who resided in Sunset Mountain but sent her children to the elementary school in Moonrise River was what originally led me to explore Sunset Mountain. This mother had transferred her three children to the elementary school in Moonrise River mainly because she believed that, academically, her children would receive a better education there, even though she continued to maintain good relationships with the school in Sunset Mountain. My initial contacts with the school, the literacy class there, and a noodle stand run by a Vietnamese woman in Sunset Mountain were all made possible through this Taiwanese mother's connection.

In November 2007, I began a longitudinal observation of the Chinese literacy class in Sunset Mountain, which differed from the literacy class in Moonrise River in several aspects.

First, all the students enrolled in the literacy class in Sunset Mountain were Vietnamese immigrant women. Some of them had only recently gotten married, whereas others already had school-age children.

Second, the teacher in Moonrise River followed the guidelines and used the textbooks provided by the Taiwanese Ministry of Education. By contrast, the teacher in Sunset Mountain selected the textbooks on her own. This literacy teacher was a faithful Buddhist and had dedicated her entire life to enhancing moral education in Sunset Mountain, and one way she achieved her goal was by teaching immigrant women Chinese using specific teaching materials. She believed that exposing immigrant women to moral education was more important and meaningful than simply teaching them how to speak Mandarin and write Chinese. As a result, her selection of teaching materials was mainly related to moral education and included works such as “Guide to a Happy Life: Standards for Being a Good Student and Child [*Di Zi Gui* 弟子規]” and “Liao Fan’s Four Lessons [*Lao Fan Si Xun* 了凡四訓]”. During some of my observation sessions, the teacher explicitly explained why she chose these materials for teaching, and the immigrant women also provided their reactions to learning moral rules in the classroom.

Third, teacher-student interactions in the literacy class in Moonrise River were more typical of classroom interactions in Taiwanese culture. The teacher mainly lectured, standing at the front of the classroom, and the adult students listened and copied down what was written on the blackboard. Sometimes the teacher would initiate discussions or conversations involving sharing personal experiences, but the norm was to provide language lessons through lecturing.

By contrast, in Sunset Mountain, the teacher and students interacted in a much more relaxed and casual way, and students often brought their preschool-age children and homemade Vietnamese food to class. Most of the time, the literacy class began by distributing toys or

coloring pens to the children, and plates and forks to the adults so they could dig into the homemade Vietnamese dishes. During a single class, the teacher often had to take up several different roles, acting as an authority to discipline the children, a mediator between students and their in-laws, a resource provider for the women (i.e., how to obtain a new visa, how to apply for Taiwanese citizenship, how to obtain a driver's license, where to find a job, and, on occasion, where to get an abortion or a divorce), an older friend sharing her life experiences with younger women, and importantly, a literacy teacher.

In addition, the teacher often encouraged the preschool-age children who came to class with their mothers to sit down next to their mothers and engage in literacy learning as well. The teacher believed that this was an excellent opportunity to prepare these children to enter school. (Quite the opposite, children who accompanied their mothers to class in Moonrise River were asked to stay outside the classroom. These children usually played with their peers on the playground, with their mothers occasionally checking up on them.) Thus, in a regular class session in Sunset Mountain, interactions between the teacher and the immigrant women, the teacher and the children, the immigrant mothers and their children, women and women, and children and children were all taking place. Sometimes, many interactions took place at the same time; at other times, a single episode attracted everyone's attention and became the focus of the classroom.

The literacy class in Sunset Mountain (from November 2007 until June 2008) yielded a total of roughly 50 hours of observation in 20 observation sessions. In addition, I interviewed the literacy teacher many times, as well as four of the Vietnamese immigrant women who attended the class. In both communities, the literacy teachers, with their many years of first-hand experience interacting with immigrant women and their children, were my key informants, and

they provided me with a deeper understanding and perspective on the new immigrant phenomenon in Taiwan.

Kindergarten classroom observation in Sunset Mountain

Two Taiwanese mothers in Moonrise River (Mrs. Huang, Mrs. Lai) and the literacy teacher in Sunset Mountain facilitated my connection to a public kindergarten in Sunset Mountain. During the academic year (2007-2008) in which I conducted my fieldwork, 12 out of the 18 children enrolled in this kindergarten were from transnational marriage families. Of those 12, one child was from a Taiwanese-Filipino family, and the rest were from Taiwanese-Vietnamese families. Two teachers were assigned to teach this kindergarten: a senior teacher who had resided in Sunset Mountain and taught kindergarteners for 20 years and a young teacher in her sixth year of teaching with a plan to transfer to a kindergarten in another city to reunite with her husband. These two teachers' warm welcome and the parents' consent gave me the opportunity to observe in this classroom in the spring semester (February through June 2008). I visited this kindergarten once a week, randomly chose a child born to a Taiwanese-Vietnamese marriage family to focus on, and audio- and video-recorded classroom interactions. I selected six children (three girls and three boys) and observed each child during at least two different sessions. Each observation session lasted for about 7 hours, beginning at 9 o'clock in the morning and ending at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. I attended the class with these children, ate meals and snacks with them, took naps with them after lunch, and sometimes played with them on the playground after school was dismissed. This observation yielded a corpus of 15 observation sessions which tallied to about 105 hours of recorded observation.

Moreover, I twice interviewed both kindergarten teachers separately, once before I initially entered the classroom for observation, and once after the semester and classroom observation

had ended. The occasional questions that arose from my observations were usually clarified during my weekly visits. In addition to classroom observation and teacher interviews, I also collected these six children's academic records such as photos of their artwork, report cards, and daily teacher-parent communication books.

Family observation in a Vietnamese-Taiwanese family in Sunset Mountain

The inclusion of this participant family was made possible through the assistance of the literacy teacher and my engagement in the literacy class in Sunset Mountain. The mother of this family attended the literacy class regularly, and we had known each other since October 2007, four months before I visited the family for the first time (February 2008).

The literacy teacher assisted me in getting the oral consent from the parents-in-law, which allowed my interactions with this family to be more in accordance with Taiwanese culture. Specifically, if family decisions are to be made, parents-in-law usually expect to be respected as the authority. This is particularly true for three-generational households in Taiwan. Moreover, daughters-in-law are usually perceived as less powerful individuals, and this is particularly true for daughters-in-law from Southeast Asian countries such as Vietnam. After receiving the consent of all the adults in this family, I began visiting them on a weekly basis and audio- and video-recording home observations. Each observation was about 3 to 4 hours in length. By the end of my fieldwork, I had 9 observation sessions and roughly 30 hours of home observations.

This family consisted of six members: the Taiwanese husband, the Vietnamese wife, the husband's Taiwanese father, the husband's Taiwanese mother, the three-year-and-nine-month-old boy, and around the end of my fieldwork, a newborn infant girl. The family lived in the mountains on the outskirts of Sunset Mountain, which is not easily accessible without a car, leaving the wife dependent on her husband for transportation. For example, if the husband was

unable to go home at noon to pick up his wife for the literacy class in the afternoon, then she had to skip the class for that day. When I visited the family, I had to take a bus from a major street in the center of town to the mountain areas. The bus traveled this route only twice a day: once at 9:30 a.m. and once at 4:30 p.m.

Interestingly, this family was actually an affluent family, at least in the eyes of the locals. The family provided the child with a large number of Chinese children's books, instructional DVDs, and toys (e.g., six bicycles for riding in the yard). In other words, unlike most people's false impressions of a transnational marriage family, this family was financially secure, and the wife did not need to go out to work. Instead, she stayed home and spent most of her time interacting with her child through meals, watching television, engaging in pretend play, and helping with basic literacy and math skills. She sought many opportunities to engage her child in learning languages and math by helping him recognize the Chinese characters appearing in the television captions, or likewise the English letters (i.e., ABC) he could press on a computer keyboard, or by helping him count how many pieces of fruit he was going to eat, etc. When I visited this family, the child was usually the topic of conversation. The family planned to send the boy to a well-known elite bilingual Mandarin-English private kindergarten, which is roughly 10 times more expensive than a public kindergarten.

By the end of my fieldwork, I had obtained 56 sessions of classroom observation (a total of 197 hours) and 9 sessions of home observation (a total of 30 hours) for further analysis.

Ethnographic Fieldwork Challenges

Some of the challenges I encountered have been described in the previous comprehensive narratives of my two phases of fieldwork. Below I highlight two other major fieldwork challenges.

Getting the Trust from the Family and Entering the Home Context

Due to negative stereotypes of transnational marriage families, it had been very difficult to earn not only the trust of the immigrant women, but also that of their family members, which made it very challenging for me to enter their home contexts and observe their spontaneous interactions in private spaces. In some cases, although the immigrant mothers welcomed my home visits, their husbands and in-laws declined. My only successful visit was facilitated by a local resident, the Chinese literacy teacher who was also an old-and-respected local resident, and it took four months of regular interaction with this Vietnamese immigrant mother before I asked for a visit to her home.

Adapting Interview Formats

My interview strategies and formats had to be adapted, depending on my informants' familiarity and level of comfort with recorded interviews. This was especially true for Vietnamese immigrant mothers who were not used to the format of one-on-one face-to-face structured interviews. They generally felt more relaxed and comfortable talking about themselves when I approached them as a friend coming for a chat. In fact, on many occasions, they talked more when they were "interviewed" by me while, at the same time, occupied by some productive work (e.g., feeding the baby, washing dishes, or preparing meals). Yet, interviewing Taiwanese schoolteachers required a different set of interview strategies and formats. In Chapters 4 and 5, I illustrate in detail the extent to which I learned to adjust in order to successfully interview both immigrant mothers and schoolteachers.

Researcher's Role

As in any ethnographic work (e.g., Briggs, 1986; Miller, Hengst, & Wang, 2003), my own identity played a role in my research. Specifically, my participants' understanding and

perceptions of me influenced how they presented themselves to me and what they revealed to me during the interviews.

Take my identity as a *single, highly-educated Taiwanese woman* as an example of how their perceptions of me played a role in my research on Vietnamese immigrant women. In speaking to a *single* woman who is asking about their marriage satisfaction and child rearing beliefs, they may have felt at ease sharing their experiences with someone with no experiences of her own. Or they might have thought that I would never understand their struggles because I hadn't encountered similar challenges. Some looked at me with their eyes sparkling, yet preserved a sense of sadness as they wished they too could have the luxury to enjoy being a young single lady pursuing her own dreams. As a *professional*, I was viewed as an individual who could direct them to useful resources or who could help them with the Chinese language. As *Taiwanese*, as opposed to Vietnamese, I was someone to whom they felt eager to explain their unique Vietnamese customs when I showed curiosity. In other words, they became experts in my company, teaching a novice about what they themselves have been so familiar with and used to. They may have felt good about themselves, as there weren't many opportunities for them to "teach" another adult, particularly after they moved to live in a new society and were experiencing prejudice in this new place. They felt proud of themselves when they emphasized to me how important filial piety is in Vietnamese society and how hard they strived to preserve this virtue and fulfill their filial obligations. As a *woman* listening to their life challenges as wives, daughters-in-law, and mothers, my female perspective may have made them feel better understood than if they were talking to a male researcher. Although, I have to mention that my identity as a *woman* made it very difficult for me to talk to those husbands of Vietnamese women. The advantages and disadvantages of studying participants of the same gender have occurred in

others' research, as well. For example, a European-American male researcher found it very challenging to interview immigrant women in Taiwan, but he had easier access in talking to the husbands of these women (Sandel, 2008, personal communication). Lastly and importantly, as an *active listener* who showed interest in knowing more about their life experiences, I was able to generally make them feel understood and appreciated. These all show how my own social identity has an impact on my interaction with Vietnamese immigrant mothers.

Additionally, these women's perceptions of me were not static but kept evolving with time. Throughout the period of my longitudinal Chinese literacy classroom observation, the different names my informants used to address me suggested the changing dynamics between us. For example, immigrant women in the literacy classes all called me "Teacher Chen" when I first entered the classroom for observation, mainly because I was introduced to them by their Chinese literacy teachers—even though I actually sat down with them and we studied Chinese language together. With time, some students started to call me "Sister Chen," indicating their changing perceptions of me as we grew more familiar with one another. For example, we may have run into each other on the street, gone to the night market together after class, or have attended the same potluck parties. Our interactions outside the classroom shortened the distance and the hierarchy between my Vietnamese immigrant informants and me.

My identity as a *Taiwanese graduate student with experience teaching* in a high school in Taiwan also influenced my interactions with Taiwanese schoolteachers. As *Taiwanese*, I was seen as a person who shared a similar cultural background and values with them. They may have thus felt more comfortable expressing their judgments or perceptions of immigrant women and their children. As *an individual who was trained to be a high school teacher*, it was assumed that I understood how the school systems functions in Taiwan and I could be more easily

communicated with. As an individual who is pursuing a Ph.D. in a foreign country, I was seen as a *professional* who could be a voice for them and for immigrant women, and thus they may have felt a moral obligation to assist in my research as much as possible. For example, at the end of my interview with a Chinese literacy teacher, she (Teacher Chen, 1346) told me, “I hope that what I have said can be of some help to you. . . . Before [this interview], I only thought that I was “[shifted to use Taiwanese], throwing caution to the wind and reaching out to them [*bu gan xin* 不甘心] (a Taiwanese idiom, meaning that a person puts affection into heart to build a sincere relationship with another person without asking for returns).” She then laughed. “But, if there could be a dissertation to recognize [immigrant women], or, for example, to tell the truth to the public, don’t think [immigrant women] are (pause), don’t hold such a biased view toward them. Instead, show a more objective description of them. I feel if I could be of any help in your research, it would be nice. . . . If you have any questions you want to know about them, don’t hesitate to talk to me. I will tell you as much as I can.”

In Chapters 3 and 4, I use excerpts from my interviews with Vietnamese immigrant mothers and Taiwanese schoolteachers to illustrate in more detail how my role influenced what my informants revealed to me and what I learned from them.

Transcriptions and Data Analyses

The core of my dissertation involved systematic narrative and discourse analyses on interviews with 14 Vietnamese immigrant mothers and 17 Taiwanese schoolteachers. These interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim in Chinese by commissioned native Chinese speakers. Conversations conducted using Taiwanese (i.e., Tai-gi) were transcribed into Chinese because there is no widely-used standard to transcribe Taiwanese. Further, all transcribed interviews were checked and finalized by me for further analyses.

My field notes served as supplementary material to provide background and contextual information. Data collected via video-recorded classroom observations were not included in my dissertation. Only some segments which provide evidence relevant to my interview data were selected and analyzed within it.

I generated a brief coding scheme by repeatedly listening to tapes and reading transcriptions. The immigrant mothers coding scheme consists of a list of life challenges and child rearing beliefs frequently mentioned across different interviews. Similarly, the schoolteacher coding scheme contains a list of commonly articulated perceptions of immigrant women and children, as well as these teachers' teaching challenges and changing attitudes.

After the coding scheme was developed, relevant excerpts were identified and pulled out for a closer examination. Given the small number of participants I studied in my dissertation, it does not contain intensive quantitative analyses. A lot of emphasis was put on comprehensive narrative and discourse analyses.

CHAPTER 3: VIETNAMESE IMMIGRANT MOTHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THEMSELVES

In this chapter, I first explain my realization of the need to modify my interview methods and describe how I adapted my interview strategies when working with Vietnamese immigrant mothers. I then use my interviews with one Vietnamese mother as an example of how I recruited this informant, what the interviews were like, what the mother revealed, and in what situations she felt comfortable disclosing her life experiences and thoughts. The third part of this chapter involves the findings from my interviews with 14 Vietnamese mothers, including content analyses of the mothers' understandings of their life circumstances, their parental beliefs and child rearing goals, as well as discourse analyses concerning the ways they represented themselves during the interviews. This chapter ends with a brief discussion of findings regarding ethnographic research methods, interview content, and my informants' representations of themselves via discourse performances during the interviews.

Adapting Recruitment and Interview Strategies for Vietnamese Immigrant Mothers

Early on in my fieldwork, after I had experienced some failed attempts at recruiting and interviewing Vietnamese mothers, I came to an important realization: I needed to modify the standard practice of recruiting and interviewing to accommodate the concerns of this population. Because Vietnamese women were not accustomed to either the terms or the format of a so-called interview, I had to adapt my recruitment strategies and interview techniques to a more contextually and culturally appropriate way of gaining information.

This important realization of adapting my strategies reveals the significance of ethnography. An important objective of ethnographic work is to represent people's experiences and practices in their own terms. Thus, if I wanted to understand my informants' mindsets and their behaviors

as thoroughly as possible, I had to learn how to assimilate into their “talks” by adapting a culturally appropriate way to interview them. Like all ethnographic research, my approach sought to understand cultural meanings from the “inside,” that is, from the perspectives of the participants themselves, using the classic tools of interviewing and participant-observation (Briggs, 1986; Jessor, Colby, & Shweder, 1996; Miller, et al., 2003; Woolcott, 1995).

Adapted Recruitment Strategies

Instead of identifying potential participants myself and asking them directly whether they would be willing to be interviewed after we had only just met, I identified locations where Vietnamese immigrant women gathered regularly. For example, there were two noodle stands run by Vietnamese immigrants in Moonrise River and one noodle shop run by a Vietnamese mother in Sunset Mountain. These locations were places Vietnamese immigrant women would socialize together, eating Vietnamese meals, exchanging information, making new friends, or simply catching up with one another.

I began my recruitment of Vietnamese mothers by visiting the noodle stands regularly (1-3 times a week), having my meals there, and chatting with the owners during my visits. Once I became a frequent customer/visitor, they started conversing with me more often when they were not occupied by the business. For example, in the afternoons (2-5p.m.), when few customers stopped by for meals, the Vietnamese owners (and other helpers) generally enjoyed having someone to chat with, particularly someone whom they saw regularly and who showed interest in learning more about their culture and their life experiences. Gradually, they perceived me as a friend instead of as a customer. Sometimes I stopped by simply to say hi and catch up with them. Occasionally, when the owners were busy, they gently asked me to help take an order or wash the dishes. And, when they had prepared too much of a certain dish, they would, from time to

time, save some Vietnamese food for me to take home. These noodle stands thus became places for me to meet potential participants, and the owners became important informants who connected me to others of their Vietnamese friends. These places were the venues where I got to know Vietnamese women in more natural and appropriate ways.

In order to cast a wider net, I also sought out other ways to meet Vietnamese immigrant women. Through a Taiwanese teacher friend and a local Taiwanese mother, respectively, I gained access to the classrooms of an elementary school where an adult literacy class was held in Moonrise River and to a Chinese literacy class specifically designed for foreign brides in Sunset Mountain. Even though these classes were open to immigrant women from various ethnicities, Vietnamese immigrants were the majority of the students. By attending both classes every week, sitting down with the students and learning Chinese together with them, I began to get to know more about my potential participants.

I waited until I had become well acquainted with most of my informants before inviting them to be interviewed. This enabled me to witness and observe most of them beyond the sole one-on-one, face-to-face interview. Although it was challenging to establish rapport with them, I found that they wholeheartedly accepted me once they saw me as a trustworthy person. In fact, many told me that they enjoyed talking to me and appreciated being understood. Some admitted that they had seldom had the opportunity to share their experiences with, particularly, a Taiwanese friend.

My final way of recruiting Vietnamese participants was through a third party. This person could be a schoolteacher, a Vietnamese friend, or a local resident. This strategy was the least successful because many Vietnamese mothers declined the invitation to be interviewed. But from the responses I received during the process of recruiting and scheduling via this strategy, I

learned something important about the life circumstances of these Vietnamese immigrant mothers. For example, a resident in Moonrise River introduced a Vietnamese mother to me, and we arranged a time for a brief meeting so that I could explain my project to her. One evening around 9 p.m., after the Vietnamese mother's literacy class had ended, the three of us met at the resident's house. After I explained that I wanted to interview the mother about her experience of immigrating to Taiwan from Vietnam, she hesitated to schedule a time and place to meet for the interview. She explained that she would need to check with her husband first and see what he thought. Two days later, I called to inquire about her decision. She gently declined, telling me that her husband did not approve of the interview. This was not the only instance of a husband's disapproval of his wife's participation. Take a separate failed attempt as another example.

Through a kindergarten teacher in Moonrise River, I met a Vietnamese mother who excitedly agreed to be interviewed and suggested that I visit her home and interview her there, because it would be easier that way for her to take care of her newborn baby. Unfortunately, she ended up phoning me on the morning of the scheduled date to cancel the interview. She explained, guilt-ridden and apologetic, that her husband did not want her to be interviewed.

From these two cases, I learned that these women sometimes did not have the power to make decisions about their everyday encounters, such as in choosing whether or not to be interviewed by a researcher. The necessity of obtaining their husbands' or in-laws' approval and complying with their decisions reflected their limited status within the home.

Adapted Interview Procedures

I first realized I would need to adapt the interview format when I finally decided to "formally" interview a Vietnamese noodle stand owner. One afternoon, I sat down with this woman in her shop, turned on my recorder, drank the Vietnamese coffee she had made for me,

and began my prepared interview questions. As it turned out, though, she had very little to say, probably because she was too conscious of being “interviewed” and “recorded.” In addition, she seemed anxious about not taking care of the preparations for the dinner meals. After a few moments of silence, I decided not to follow my well-prepared “parental belief” interview protocol and instead invited her to share with me whatever she wanted to say about her school-age children. After my lack of success with this “formal” interview, I learned that a more appropriate way of interviewing these mothers might be in simply talking to them when they were working or engaging in other productive activities, which is when they were used to having more relaxed and comfortable conversations. Thus, I found that by interviewing the noodle stand owner when she was picking and cleaning vegetables worked very well (see also Miller, et al., 2002, 2003). She seemed less worried about being “interviewed” and talked to me like a friend who had stopped by to catch up with her. In such cases, although I was unable to always follow my interview protocol or direct the conversations to the topics that were of the greatest interest to me, each time I learned something new and interesting about my informants as they spoke freely about themselves. Additionally, I got to observe what topics they cared about or were interested in talking about. I learned to become more flexible and sensitive about the topics I chose and the questions I asked during conversations. For example, some immigrant mothers did not have a lot to say when I asked them about their child rearing beliefs. However, they had plenty to say about their life circumstances and challenges. As an ethnographer interested in examining which aspects of their lives they deemed of greatest significance, I became aware of what was most meaningful to these women, rather than focusing solely on what I intended to learn.

Why in a Classroom and Why in the Evenings?

Another interesting aspect of the interview scheduling was in the practicalities: the *locations* and the *times* in which to conduct the interviews. For the *locations*, when given the opportunity to pick the places in which they would feel comfortable being interviewed, 10 of my 14 participants chose to be interviewed in a classroom at an elementary school, a familiar location close to their homes and workplaces. The rest of my participants were interviewed at their workplaces (i.e., the self-owned noodle shops). One reason the majority of Vietnamese mothers chose to be interviewed in a classroom might have been because they did not feel comfortable expressing themselves freely at home, particularly with husbands or in-laws around. A second reason might have been that these Vietnamese mothers did not have the power to decide who to invite into their homes. Thus, picking a location outside the home context was much easier and more practical.

By contrast, the majority of the 20 Taiwanese mothers I interviewed invited me to their homes for the interviews. (I have not included this data in my dissertation.) They explained that it would be easier for me to understand their children's lives if I witnessed the home environment. These Taiwanese mothers felt comfortable inviting a guest into their houses and took pride in showing their home environments to a researcher like me. In addition, Miller and her colleagues' various longitudinal ethnographic studies with families in Taipei and the United States suggest that those families generally welcome researchers into their private spaces (Fung, 1999; Miller, Fung, & Mintz, 1996; Miller, et al., 1997, 2002). It took much more time for Vietnamese mothers and, more importantly, their family members (e.g., husbands and in-laws) to welcome researchers to enter their homes. For example, Fung and Liang's (2008, 2009) longitudinal study with Taiwanese-Vietnamese families suggests that it took a tremendous amount of time to build

up trusting relationships with their informants. In their study, they reported that, in some families, it took many years before the researchers were entrusted with the knowledge of what was really happening in the home environment.

As for the *times* during which to be interviewed, when given the choice, 7 of my 14 participants chose evenings. An obvious reason why the Vietnamese mothers chose to schedule the interviews in the evenings was that they had to work during the day (and some worked on the weekends, as well). Also, most needed their family members to help take care of the children or finish routine chores in order to be free for an interview.

Sometimes, making an appointment wouldn't work, particularly for those who were self-employed. This was probably because they themselves were also uncertain about when they would have lighter workloads. In these cases, my flexibility was critical. For example, sometimes they would call me unexpectedly and ask me if I had time to stop by, because they were free right at that moment. On those occasions, living in the field site was a huge advantage because, barring other commitments, I could arrive at the requested venue in just a few minutes.

Take as an example my interview with a Vietnamese mother one Friday, at midnight. Around 10 p.m., I received a phone call from a community leader who said to me, "There happens to be a Vietnamese foreign bride here. She is free and willing to be interviewed. Do you want to come by and talk to her?" Since it was already late and I did not have transportation, I asked to schedule another time to interview this mother. The response I received was, "I am afraid that she is only free on Friday evenings, like tonight. At other times, she is either working or taking care of the kids. How about I have her call you when she is available next time?" In order not to lose the opportunity to talk to this informant, I ended up taking an evening bus to a location where the community leader then offered me a ride to his house, where many members

of the community gathered to drink tea and enjoy their Friday evening. I conducted this interview with the Vietnamese mother in the living room, while her husband was drinking tea and chatting with other male friends in the yard.

During my field study, this experience underscored the necessity for maximum flexibility in both my interview scheduling and in its format if I wanted to talk to as many participants as possible. Some of my informants had little free time and, in addition, were unaccustomed to the idea of scheduling a time to meet someone.

My interviews with Vietnamese mothers were very different from my interviews with schoolteachers. The latter understood what I meant with the word “interview” and were able to foresee convenient times (e.g., during students’ naptime or after school was dismissed for the day) and locations (e.g., the teacher’s office or an empty classroom) for me to interview them.

Mrs. Jade: A Nearly Invisible Immigrant Mother

As described above, by regularly visiting a Vietnamese noodle stand run by a Vietnamese mother in Sunset Mountain, I got to know the owner, Mrs. Jade, and we began to establish a friendship. Instead of scheduling formal interviews, I adapted my methods so that, to her, our “interviews” felt more like pleasant chats with a friend. Mrs. Jade told me that she enjoyed talking to me because our conversations provided an outlet for her suppressed emotions. She also expressed how good it felt to be understood, particularly since she was socially isolated and had limited opportunities to make new friends.

In addition, interestingly, she revealed to me that the fact that I was not a member of the community and actually lived in a different town helped her to feel more comfortable sharing with me her life challenges. She explained that when she had first opened the noodle stand, she was eager to make friends with customers since the noodle stand offered the rare opportunity for

her to meet people. Sooner or later, however, she realized that she had better not reveal too much about her feelings and the challenges that she faced at home, because those customers were largely members of the community and word spread very quickly to her mother-in-law if Mrs. Jade complained at all about her husband or in-laws.

Throughout the period of my fieldwork, I collected 13 informal interviews with her, which tallied to nearly 9 hours of audio-recordings. The significance of participant-observation and the richness of ethnographic work both emerge from these interviews. For example, I witnessed that she had different narratives and varying presentations of herself depending on if she and I were alone, as opposed to when her husband was present. In addition, I heard contrasting accounts of the same events conveyed by her and her husband.

Back in 1978, Mrs. Jade was the first of the two children born to a very poor family in a rural village, Vĩnh Long, in southern Vietnam. Because her father had left home to work elsewhere, Mrs. Jade's mother was her and her sister's primary caregiver. When she was 12 years old, in the fifth grade, she had had to quit school to work to contribute to the family's income, first selling food, and then lottery tickets, on the street. Seeing her family struggle to make ends meet, she decided to marry a Taiwanese man when she was 20, hoping that the betrothal gifts could temporarily relieve the family's financial burden. Through a local marriage broker, she was brought to Ho Chi Minh City. Within a month, Mrs. Jade met her husband, a 35-year-old Taiwanese man with a high school education, and the two decided to marry a week later. The engagement banquet was held 19 days after they first met, and the wedding ceremony 3 months later in Vietnam.

Mrs. Jade arrived in Taiwan 29 days after the wedding with very limited knowledge of Chinese. Her first 7 months in Taiwan were spent taking care of her husband's 97-year-old dying

grandmother. Just after his grandmother passed away, Mrs. Jade became pregnant and gave birth to her first daughter in 2000. Her second daughter was born in 2001. When I interviewed her in 2007-2008, she described that, during the first half of her marriage, the person who supported her most was her father-in-law. She explained that he was the one who taught her Mandarin Chinese when she first came to the country and who gave her money to send to her birth family to buy land and build a brick house in Vietnam. Out of appreciation for her father-in-law, she maintained the marriage and promised to keep bearing children until a boy was born. Unfortunately, her father-in-law had a heart attack and passed away unexpectedly 4 months after she gave birth to her third child, a boy, in 2004.

That same year, since she had never been satisfied with the marriage and had always been disliked by both her mother- and sister-in-law, she left her children at home and fled with only NTD 115 (i.e., USD 4) in her pocket after a huge fight with her husband. The very next day, she found a job as a helper in a restaurant in a different town. Mrs. Jade expressed how fulfilled she felt at that time because, for the first time since she had come to Taiwan, she had a “job” and an “income.”

She revealed that the only reason her husband would give her money was to allow her to buy an international phone card to call home, and she had grown depressed and tired of asking for money for this purpose. She described that the most significant challenge in her marriage had been her physical confinement to the house, as she had not been allowed to work outside the home, due to her husband and her in-laws’ lack of trust in her. In the first 5 years of marriage, she had had neither a cell phone nor a bicycle, making it difficult for her to even step out of the house, not to mention meeting people and making friends. She said, “They didn’t want me to use a cell phone to contact friends, because [they were] worried that I would become bad. The whole

family said the same thing to me: they didn't want me to contact other people." Throughout the entire period of my fieldwork, Mrs. Jade was not allowed to buy a motorcycle because her husband worried that she would wander around to other towns once she had transportation. However, she ultimately obtained a cell phone to call people, as well as a bicycle with which to travel from her house to her children's school.

The husband controlled the wife to such an extreme that the wife felt like a dog chained at home, with no freedom to even leave the house for a breath of fresh air. In a voice charged with emotion, Mrs. Jade told me, "They [her husband and his family] 'married' me, but deep inside I feel that I am a foreign maid to them," indicating that she was responsible for all the housework for the entire family, which included four in-laws (parents-in-law, sister-in-law, and brother-in-law), in addition to her husband and her three children. On another occasion, Mrs. Jade explained the reason why she fled, "I wanted to work, but they didn't understand me. They said that I married only because of money. Then, they treated me badly.... I got angry, but I wouldn't get into a fight with them. I told my husband, 'I am Vietnamese. Why didn't I stay in Vietnam? I imagined that I married you and I could have a better life in Taiwan. I did not get married to be chained at home. It's like you are chaining a dog. I am not even a human being.' Why did I come here to be chained by them? I feel great sorrow about my life."

Mrs. Jade knew that fleeing from home had been simply a way of fighting for the opportunity to be able to negotiate with her husband about her status at home, since she had no access to her passport and residence documents, which were kept from her by her husband as a means of controlling her physical movement. Two months after she had left home, her husband found her in another town. (As for how he located her, the two had very different accounts when they separately related this event to me). Mrs. Jade negotiated with her husband that if she was

allowed to work, she would return home. Even though she preferred going out to work, she and her husband reached an agreement that her husband would help her open a noodle stand at home. Mrs. Jade explained that her husband did not allow her to go out to work because he worried that she would get to know some “bad” friends who would have a “negative” influence on her. Five months after the negotiation, she finally opened her own Vietnamese noodle stand on the first floor of the house. She described this as a turning point in her life in Taiwan. She explained that her life before opening the business was “filled with sorrow,” whereas her life since she opened the business was “fulfilling.” Still, she never felt satisfied with her marriage.

Like most of my Vietnamese informants, Mrs. Jade retained strong transnational ties to her birth family. She felt obligated to try her best to improve the financial situation for them. During the previous 9 years (1999-2008), she had visited her birth family 4 times. The first time, when she was 7 months pregnant with her first child, she brought her parents USD 800. At that point, she did not want to return to Taiwan because of her unsatisfying relationships with her husband and mother-in-law, but she did return. A year later, when she was pregnant with her second child, she visited home again. This time, she brought USD 6,000, which allowed her birth family to buy land and build a brick house. For that visit, she was not allowed to bring her daughter along to visit her parents, because her husband worried that she would never come back if she had both the money and the child with her. In other words, her husband did not trust her to return as she had promised and used their daughter as a means of ensuring her return. The third time she visited her family in Vietnam was for the purpose of bringing her 19-year-old sister to Taiwan to work, since she herself had been unable to provide adequate financial support for her birth family, even after years of marriage. Her sister and her husband’s brother had agreed to form a fake marriage in order to allow her sister to enter Taiwan and maintain her legal status while working

there. In fact, when I interviewed my informant, her sister was working in a factory in another city and was responsible for sending money back home to support the family in Vietnam. Mrs. Jade had difficulty earning enough to have any extra to send home herself, particularly with 3 school-age children in Taiwan. She explained, “If it were not for the debt that we have to pay [for building the house], I wouldn’t have brought my sister to Taiwan and left our parents alone in Vietnam.”

In addition to the physical confinement, Mrs. Jade’s husband limited the time his wife could spend with her three children. Her two daughters went to school during the day and returned to their grandma’s house after school. Her preschool-age son was taken care of mainly by her mother-in-law and her sister-in-law, particularly because she was occupied by the noodle stand during the day. Although Mrs. Jade’s house was only a 10 minute walk from her mother-in-law’s house, she usually got to see her children only during dinnertime. Mrs. Jade revealed to me that the only time she had her children solely to herself was during shower time and, sometimes, when they slept. They often slept at their grandma’s place.

When I chatted with Mrs. Jade at her noodle stand between the hours of 4 p.m. (when the children returned from school) and 7 p.m. (when Mrs. Jade went home to cook), I occasionally witnessed her children calling her from their grandma’s house, telling her what had happened in school earlier that day or wanting her to come to their grandma’s place to cook dinner. Although she spent a limited amount of time with her children, her son and two daughters seemed to be very important emotional anchors for her. For example, on one occasion, I asked Mrs. Jade whether she would make the same decision (i.e., marrying a Taiwanese man) if she could choose again, and she responded, emotionally charged, “I would not marry a Taiwanese man! I would never marry here. Now, it’s because I have no other option. One day, when I become a

Taiwanese citizen, I will not get married again. All that I have done is for my children. If it were not for them, I would have left Sunset Mountain a long time ago!” Another time, she said, “It would be impossible for me to remain in Sunset Mountain if it were not for my three children.”

Importantly, although she had little power and status in deciding how to raise her children, Mrs. Jade had her own child rearing beliefs. She told me that one of her primary child rearing goals was cultivating filial piety. She said, “I very much hope my children will be filial, like me. I hope so, but I don’t know [if that’s going to be the case].” As for language usage, she said, “I hope my children will learn how to speak Vietnamese. Perhaps when they are older, I will teach them. Right now my kids sometimes seem to understand Vietnamese, and sometimes they don’t. It takes a lot of effort to teach them.” When she spoke Vietnamese to her children, one or another often responded, according to Mrs. Jade, “Mommy, you’re speaking Vietnamese. I don’t understand you. Speak Chinese.” Her example indicated that they preferred their mother speaking Mandarin to Vietnamese at home.

Mrs. Jade also had high expectations for her children’s education. She said, “I hope my children can receive more education than [other children].... I hope to send them to after-school programs. I work harder in order to make more money so I can send them to those programs.” Mrs. Jade continued, “I told my daughter, ‘Mommy is Vietnamese, and there are some words I don’t understand, and so you can teach Mommy.’” She said that her oldest daughter’s response was, “Yes. I will study hard. I will teach Mommy how to do homework.” When I asked Mrs. Jade whether she wanted her children growing up identifying themselves as Taiwanese or Vietnamese, she responded without hesitation, “Of course, Taiwanese! There is so much struggling and suffering back in Vietnam, and do you want to see your children suffering?”

Responses like these, regarding language use, educational aspirations, and identity formation, were echoed by many other Vietnamese mothers I interviewed.

It should be noted that Mrs. Jade's husband was not satisfied with their marriage, either. Still, he was the one who retained more power and higher status within the marriage. Perhaps a snapshot of how the couple interacted in my presence could give readers a glimpse of the power relationship between them and the life challenges Mrs. Jade faced in her everyday life.

The afternoon of November 12, 2007 was the third time I visited Mrs. Jade at her noodle stand. While we were engaged in a conversation about her life before moving to Taiwan, her husband arrived home from work and saw me there for the first time. Our conversation topic changed from her experience as a teenager in Vietnam to how I transfer my recordings on a pen recorder to a computer. For the following half-hour, the three of us and a customer engaged in casual conversation. After learning that I was interested in understanding parental beliefs and child rearing goals in transnational marriage families, the husband commented, "Oh, there is a huge difference [between me and my wife]! Because we (pause), here, you know, those who marry Vietnamese brides are mostly working-class. [...] They [Vietnamese brides] don't know how to teach children.... Speaking of language, a huge difference already exists. Like me, in my family, speaking of teaching children, it's always me teaching them. So, you can see, my children, when they speak Chinese, there is no Vietnamese accent. "

When I asked Mrs. Jade which language she used when talking to the children, she responded, "Mostly Mandarin Chinese. As for Vietnamese, just a tiny bit." Her husband continued, "Well, it depends on whether you have the time or not, but, for example, speaking of Vietnamese [brides], they are all from a low socioeconomic status, thus they, Vietnamese women, are very unreasonable. [...] When they just know a little bit [about how to raise children], they

think they know everything....” The husband went on to state that he was the person who taught and disciplined their children, as he believed that the greatest benefit of marrying a Vietnamese woman was to “carry on the ancestral line [*chuan zong jie dai* 傳宗接代],” and he concluded that Vietnamese mothers do not know how to raise children. Thus, he believed that he played a very important role in their children’s education.

Interestingly, he soon shifted the focus to how challenging it had been for the couple to get along at the beginning of the marriage, and he remarked, “The first five or six years [of our marriage], you could not even imagine how huge the gulf was [between us].... They, those who are from Vietnam—low socioeconomic status, am I right?—if you allow your wife to go out and work, you have to worry a lot. They all (pause), there will be lots and lots of problems (pause). In this small town, Sunset Mountain, there have been some problems [in other transnational marriage families].” The husband seemed hesitant to reveal what had happened in other families. Yet, he continued to comment on Vietnam and Vietnamese wives until, eventually, he commented on his own wife. He said to me, clearly within earshot of his wife and the customer, “Let me tell you, I married a Vietnamese wife, and I am not regretful because it was my own decision. But if you said that I could choose once again, definitely and absolutely, I wouldn’t consider a Vietnamese wife.” He went on to explain the reason, “When you want to reason with them, they don’t understand you. [When you want to] civilize them, it doesn’t work at all.... [They] don’t know how to appreciate and don’t know how to feel grateful! Vietnamese women really don’t know how to appreciate! [My wife], greedy [*yu qiu bu man* 欲求不滿].” He continued, “Most of them know how to save some pocket money. I knew it, but I always turned a blind eye [*zheng yi zhi yan, bi yi zhi yan* 睜一隻眼閉一隻眼, meaning *overlooking purposefully*] to her stealing. Many of them are like that, old husbands with young wives, and the husbands

indulge their wives, indulge them...you got to know, they are all quick learners [even for picking up bad habits].” He seemed to suggest that it was a bad idea to indulge his wife. Then he went on, “These Vietnamese, they have huge shortcomings, because they are poor. Vietnam is a poor country, thus they all love to take advantage of others. Almost all of them, more or less, take advantage of others, and they see money as the top priority, unlike Taiwanese wives.... For example, when she and I were first married...” and the husband went on to describe how his Vietnamese wife, Mrs. Jade, lied to him and stole money from him.

As an outsider of the family, I was astonished to hear the husband criticize his wife in front of me, as well as within the presence of Mrs. Jade and a local customer. His wife, though, acted as she always did when her husband was present—kept silent and never confronted her husband on anything he said. However, as on many occasions after her husband had left, Mrs. Jade could not wait to tell me her disagreements with her husband’s accounts. This often left me with two contrasting narrations of the same event. Mrs. Jade’s silence and suppressed anger in her husband’s presence revealed the power relationship between the couple. It is likely that Mrs. Jade did not feel comfortable or powerful enough to confront her husband in front of others. Or, at least, she knew arguing with her husband in public was an unwise act. Yet, the husband, even in the presence of his wife, criticized her as an unreasonable, greedy, distrustful wife, and as an unfit mother.

Additionally, my unexpected conversations with Mrs. Jade’s husband on various occasions added to the richness of my fieldwork and elucidated the unique strength of ethnographic research. Take an event which happened to be recounted to me by both the husband and the wife at different times. While Mrs. Jade and I were alone, she described in detail her running away from home in order to obtain an opportunity to negotiate with her husband. Mrs. Jade described

to me that she had fled with only NTD 115 (USD 4) in her pocket and that her husband had looked for her desperately, eventually locating her in a different town 2 months later. However, I soon thereafter ran into Mrs. Jade's husband in the hallway of the elementary school, and he and I talked for about 40 minutes. So as to convey his dissatisfaction in the marriage, he shared with me the same event of his wife's leaving. He said, "She is not honest. Not trustworthy. It's all about money. When she ran away from home, she took all the money we had with her." He continued, "I had no desire to find her. But, she couldn't survive and she asked the boss of the restaurant in which she worked to call me and ask that I bring her back." I could not ask them to recreate the scene, nor could I talk to witnesses to discern a more objective portrayal of the event. What I want to point out, though, is that, if I had not, as a researcher, kept going back to Mrs. Jade, talked to her like an empathetic friend, and later on been introduced to her family members (her husband and 3 children) and to her children's schoolteachers, I probably wouldn't have gotten to listen to two dramatic versions of the same event, which not only reveals the power relationship and tensions within this marriage, but also demonstrates the richness of ethnographic work.

Finally, an interesting and important pattern of discourse performance—*othering*—emerged during our conversations. Specifically, othering, in this context, refers to the informant singling herself out of a stereotypical social group and highlighting her unique quality within the group. For example, Mrs. Jade presented herself as a Vietnamese wife who was different from those Vietnamese runaway brides reported on the TV news. And she identified herself as a filial daughter who saved all her money for her parents, unlike some other Vietnamese women who spent lots of money buying fancy clothes. She concluded that the stereotypes circulated in Taiwanese society too often caused community members to misunderstand her. My interviews

with other Vietnamese mothers showed that this is a frequently used account by these women in order to establish their moral discourse and identities.

Similarly, although I did not have many opportunities to talk to the husbands of Vietnamese wives, my causal conversations with Mrs. Jade's husband showed that he too used this strategy—othering—as a narrative performance to establish his unique identity from other men who marry Vietnamese women. For example, he presented himself as the primary caregiver—at least in terms of his children's education—separating himself and his children from the so-called transnational marriage families in Taiwanese society that were constantly stereotyped (e.g., fathers who don't care about their children's education; or children born to these families who come to school speaking broken Mandarin Chinese).

By the end of my fieldwork, Mrs. Jade had operated the noodle stand for two and a half years; yet, she remained unsatisfied with her marriage and her relationship with her in-laws. Once she described a serious fight she had had with her husband (i.e., she forgot to prepare the food for worshiping the ancestors and was thus beaten by him on the street with an umbrella). She told me that she had almost jumped off of the bridge at that moment but was stopped by neighbors. She said, "People in Sunset Mountain all knew about the event. But I never told anyone about what had really happened. I keep tolerating...tolerating until...until my children grow up; then I will start to prepare [a different life] for myself. I am not going to stay here." Mrs. Jade seemed determined to leave her husband once her youngest son had grown old enough to take care of himself. She did not plan on bringing her children with her, as she thought that her children would be more financially secure and stable if they lived with their father. When my fieldwork ended, Mrs. Jade continued to face her life challenges with resilience, and neither of us

knew when she would be able to end her marriage and open a new chapter of her life in a different location in Taiwan.

It is important to note that Mrs. Jade's circumstances and experiences were somewhat extreme among my participants. The majority of my Vietnamese informants seemed to have more latitude, agency, and status, particularly with regard to child rearing issues. In fact, most Vietnamese mothers were their children's primary caregivers. Yet, I use Mrs. Jade as an example to illustrate to what extent I had to modify and adapt my methods in order to gain a better and deeper understanding of her circumstances. Additionally, she was one of the very few Vietnamese women who allowed me, someone outside of her family, to enter her private space, both physically and psychologically.

Mrs. Jade's case could be understood from two different perspectives. One perspective is that her situation represented the borderline between two different cohorts of immigrant women. Those immigrant women whom I was able to talk to and work with represented a cohort with more autonomy. After all, they were the individuals who felt comfortable enough to reveal personal information and who had the freedom to make decisions about being interviewed by me. But, there existed the other group of Vietnamese women who were both invisible and unapproachable. These were the women whose resources were extremely limited (low status, limited power, restricted physical movement, and controlled social networks), and all of their interactions with outsiders were screened and censored by their husbands or other family members.

The other perspective, a more hopeful situation, is that Mrs. Jade's circumstances represented one end of the spectrum. That is, her case was somewhat unusual to most transnational marriage families. Most of the Vietnamese mothers were surviving well. To

conclude, readers need to be aware that my informants' life circumstances did not necessarily represent the life situations of "all" Vietnamese mothers residing in my two field sites.

Vietnamese Mothers' Understandings of Themselves

Of the 14 Vietnamese mothers I met with, in interviews usually lasting from 1 to 2 hours, 9 participants were interviewed once, 2 participants (Mrs. Chen and Mrs. Bao) were interviewed twice, and 3 were interviewed multiple times. Of the 11 less frequently interviewed participants, 3 had completed three years of elementary school education in Mandarin Chinese and obtained a diploma, 4 were enrolled in literacy classes when interviewed, and the other 4 participants had never attended literacy classes or elementary school education in Taiwan. The 4 participants who were attending classes were also longitudinally observed in the classroom. The three mothers I interviewed multiple times were all noodle stand owners (Mrs. Jade, Mrs. Ying, and Mrs. Fei), and none of them had ever participated in Chinese literacy classes. All together, I obtained 30 hours of audio-recorded interviews that I will analyze in this chapter. In Tables 1 and 2, I systematically list the descriptive information of all 14 participants.

As mentioned previously, my informants were highly self-selected and only represented a certain cohort of Vietnamese women. Specifically, they were all fluent in Mandarin Chinese and felt comfortable being interviewed, and most received the support of their husbands and also arranged their own interview times. Their average age was 21.71 years old (ranging from 18 to 28) when they got married and 29.43 years old (ranging from 24 to 37) when interviewed. The age gap between husbands and wives was at least 10 years. Six out of 14 completed senior high school (12 years of education), 4 completed junior high school (9 to 11 years of education), and 4 received elementary school education or less (two completed 8 years and two completed 5

years). They all remained married while the interviews took place. Twelve held full-time jobs when they were interviewed, one had a part-time job, and one was a housewife.

Major Life Challenges

Although I had planned to focus my interviews on Vietnamese immigrant mothers' child rearing beliefs, this was not usually the issue that these mothers most wanted to talk about. Instead, topics like their personal life experiences and their current life challenges seemed more the focus of their attention. They engaged in vivid and lengthy descriptions, usually with intense emotions, while sharing these experiences and challenges. The topics included (1) money and their financial situations, (2) conflicts within the home, (3) discrimination in the workplace and in the community, (4) unsatisfying marriages, and (5) other challenges, such as communication and overwhelming tasks. I will describe these frequently mentioned life challenges in succession before turning to some important patterns revealed through the interviews.

Money and financial situations

When I asked my informants for the major reasons why they had decided to marry Taiwanese men, 11 of the 14 (excepting Mrs. Ruan, Mrs. Chen, and Mrs. Bao) reported that their birth families' financial difficulties were the most important reasons. They had wanted to improve the financial situations of their natal families through, first, the betrothal gifts, and then, they hoped, through continuous financial support. Many of them reported that they had married their Taiwanese husbands with the hope that they would, on the one hand, live better lives and, on the other hand, improve their birth families' financial circumstances. For example, one Vietnamese mother (Mrs. Xie) said to me, "[I got married] when I was a senior in high school. I didn't take the graduation exam. Just one more month and the exam would have been administrated. I didn't go and take it. I got married a month before the graduation exam." When I

asked why she quit school with graduation only a month away and the diploma almost in hand, she said, “Because my family’s financial situation was very bad. We went bankrupt.”

Another Vietnamese mother (Mrs. Cai) reiterated this sense of urgent financial need, “I married here because of the difficulties. Everyone, everyone is the same. [We] got married because our families were very poor. [...] [We] needed to help our families. [...] There was no other solution, so we got married. [...] Life here [in Taiwan] is fine, but it’s too far away [from home]. You miss home, but you cannot go home.”

A third Vietnamese mother (Mrs. Lian) mentioned, “Why I want to earn money? Because the reasons why I married [my husband], first, you want to marry a good husband who will take good care of you [*teng ni*].” (As mentioned in Chapter 1, the concept of *thuong* is very important in Vietnamese culture; for more information, see Fung & Liang, 2010). “[Second,] more or less, I can help my mom. I don’t want my mom to work so hard. As a daughter, it’s my obligation to support her; it’s my obligation.” Later on, she added, “It’s an opportunity for my future life, and I can fulfill my filial obligation to my mom as well.” She then concluded, “If I knew my life would be like this in Taiwan, [I] would not have dared to come. Really, I would not have dared to come! [Laughs] [...] If I could choose again, I would not get married here [to a Taiwanese man]. Speaking about regrets, I am not regretful. [...] Because, I am now very successful [she is the breadwinner and pays her husband’s gambling debts]. What other people said and expected, I have done it! I achieved what they expected of me. I did not get looked down on by them. I feel...it’s like I...I can take pride in what I have done.”

My informants believed that sending money back home to improve their birth families’ financial situations was an act of filial piety. In order to support their birth families as well as their established families in Taiwan, all of my 14 informants conveyed that they had strong

motivations to work outside the home. They preferred having jobs and earning incomes to staying home as housewives. This is why 12 of the 14 held part-time or full-time jobs. Specifically, 6 (Mrs. Ying, Mrs. Cai, Mrs. Li, Mrs. Deng, Mrs. Ruan, and Mrs. Jiang) worked as helpers at restaurants, operators in factories, or janitors in hotels; 5 (Mrs. Wang, Mrs. Lian, Mrs. Chen, Mrs. Bao, and Mrs. Yue) assisted their husbands in running the family businesses—planting and selling vegetables, making and selling breads, planting teas, and selling tea leaves; and 2 opened their own businesses (Mrs. Fei and Mrs. Jade). Two of these (Mrs. Cai and Mrs. Lian) were actually the sole breadwinners, because their husbands were unemployed. Being the only wage earners in their families brought them more power at home. For example, one Vietnamese noodle stand owner (Mrs. Fei), whose husband was mentally retarded, demonstrated a lot of power over her husband, of whom she expected routine tasks to assist her with the business. The wife told me that she did not know about her husband's mental retardation until some time after they were married.

The only housewife (Mrs. Xie) among my informants showed a strong desire to work but was not allowed to work outside the home. Interestingly, my observation was that she would be highly competitive in the job market. She has completed 3 years of elementary school education and had won a competition in Chinese speech. In the community townhouse [*gong jia ji guan* 公家機關], she was sometimes invited to work as a translator. When I interviewed her, she showed no difficulty in understanding me or expressing herself. In fact, she used a lot of elegant Chinese expressions (i.e., four-word idioms) that were rarely used by my other informants.

In sum, the financial situations of these mothers' birth families carried a lot of weight in their decisions to establish families with Taiwanese men. Being capable of providing for their birth families by giving financial support was an important goal for them to achieve through

marriage. Thus, they were eager to have the freedom to decide how to use their money, and they did this by holding jobs and earning money themselves. In fact, very few of them (except under emergency or special circumstances) would ask their husbands to wire money back home to their birth families. Their insistence that they wanted to go out to work and make financial arrangements themselves often resulted in great tension in their established families. Many informants reported that they often had to negotiate with their husbands regarding issues such as where the sources of remittance were or how to arrange family incomes. The topic of money was mentioned in every single interview. As these women saw it, money was (1) the reason why husbands and in-laws lacked trust in Vietnamese mothers; (2) a source of their conflict with husbands and in-laws; (3) the reason why Taiwanese people discriminated against Vietnamese mothers; and (4) the reason why they had high educational aspirations for the next generation. I previously explained how the issue of money related to husbands and in-laws' lack of trust in these women, and below I illustrate further the life challenges that resulted from the issues of money that Vietnamese mothers faced.

Conflicts within the home

In Taiwanese culture, it is generally well accepted that mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law do not get along. My informants were no exception, particularly those who lived with their parents-in-law in the same household. Conflicts within the family context, particularly with mothers- and sisters-in-law, included my informants not being trusted, being treated differently from other sisters-in-law, receiving no respect when disciplining children, and being the victims of domestic violence.

For example, one Vietnamese mother (Mrs. Deng) revealed to me that her biggest life challenge in Taiwan was her intensely combative relationship with her mother-in-law. When she

described examples of conflicts with her, her voice carried a strong emotional charge. She said, “Living with my mother-in-law, it was such torture.... Now, it’s better, because we moved out and live by ourselves; we do not live with my mother-in-law anymore. [...] She treats me in this way. But she doesn’t do this to the wife of my (younger) brother-in-law.” When I asked this informant whether she thought the different treatments had something to do with her ethnicity as Vietnamese, she showed her agreement by saying, “I feel there is some difference.” Then later, “I feel...I feel the treatments are so different, way too different, I really cannot accept it! [Laughs] Sometimes I feel, um...so distressed, probably because I do not have any relatives [*qin ren* 親人] in Taiwan. When I am treated unjustly [*wei qu* 委屈], I do not dare tell others. I have nowhere to go. I can only stay home.”

She then described an incident that was clearly painful for her. Before her oldest daughter had started school, she had stayed home to take care of her two children and her brother-in-law’s son. At the same time, she was responsible for preparing dinners for the household (i.e., her husband and their children, her brother-in-law, his wife and child, and her mother-in-law; although the brother-in-law’s family lived elsewhere, they ate together with them). Every month, she received NTD 10,000 (USD 333.00) with which to buy groceries to prepare the meals. One evening at the dinner table, her brother-in-law’s wife didn’t eat much because she didn’t particularly enjoy the dishes that had been prepared for that meal. “Then, my mother-in-law yelled at me, ‘You, you didn’t make the stewed meat? Then, then, then what should my daughter-in-law eat?’ [When] she said this to me, I felt...I felt so aggrieved! She had given me NTD 10,000 (USD 333.00), but I didn’t keep a penny [of it]. I used it to buy food for the meals. [She] even said that to me! I felt so aggrieved. I felt, then, that I did not want to take care of their son.” When describing how she was treated, different from how her brother-in-law’s wife was

treated even though they were both the mother-in-law's daughters-in-law, the tears in her eyes and catch in her voice highlighted the emotional impact of this discrimination.

Another conflict she had had with her mother-in-law involved both discrimination and a lack of support for her child rearing practices. One time, her daughter asked her cousin for a piece of candy. Instead of sharing, the boy called her daughter a “beggar [*qi gai* 乞丐].” My informant then reasoned with the boy, “Mei-meï [using a kinship term for her daughter] respects you and she likes you. Could you give a candy to Mei-meï?” The boy did not respond. Her daughter asked for the candy again but received the same response: “Beggar!” After another failed attempt to reason with the boy, the participant intended to discipline the boy and said to him, “Don’t be like this. Why don’t you listen to your aunt? You are visiting here, but if you won’t listen to me, then you will go back home.” At this moment, her mother-in-law came out of her bedroom to scold her, “This is my house! Ah, he is here because he is visiting his grandma’s house! You do not have the right to ask him to go home!” This time, the participant could not hold back her tears and cried as she recounted the story. She said to me, “Why didn’t she scold her grandson before she scolded me? If she had done that [that is, scolded him first], I could have accepted [her reprimand]. Why [did she] do things like that?” The participant felt both angry and humiliated to have been reprimanded by her mother-in-law in front of her seven-year-old nephew and her two-year-old daughter. She ended the story sobbing, “I feel...it’s like...I will never be good enough to please her.” Later she mused, “Probably because she is not willing to trust me? She probably thinks, huh, ‘Whatever I say, you have no way to run away; where can you go?’ ”

When she was pregnant with her second child, she felt sick during the first few months and spent more time than usual in bed. She described to me another incident when her mother-in-law

again deeply wounded her, this time in front of neighbors. “Then [my mother-in-law] told her friends, using Taiwanese [*tai gi* 台語]—in fact, I understood [what she said].” The participant then quoted her mother-in-law, using Taiwanese, “So lazy! She doesn’t do this and that, keeps sleeping. Keeps sleeping.” The participant then shifted back and spoke to me in Mandarin, “I listened to them talking in Taiwanese. Huh, I always speak Mandarin with them; thus, they do not know that I can understand Taiwanese. It was just like this, right. They kept talking and talking, and I felt so miserable. I could not even have a good rest [during pregnancy]. It was exhausting.” This particular interview astonished me and has lingered in my mind ever since, because the participant concluded, “I sometimes very much feel that I want to die. I don’t want this anymore. Because... if I go back home [to Vietnam], leaving my children here, I won’t feel happy about my life. [Sobbing] Being dead is better. Huh, being dead is better.” Thus I was relieved when I learned that she had taken her two children and had moved into an apartment. Her husband, after a few months of hesitation, eventually moved out to join her.

For my informants, this kind of abuse from their mothers-in-law wasn’t rare. Another woman (Mrs. Chen) explained that since the second year of her marriage, she had been physically and psychologically abused by her mother-in-law. She said, “She didn’t talk to me, then, at that time. She [her mother-in-law] heard people say, ‘Don’t allow her [the participant] to have money in her pocket.... And don’t give her the sheet [the legal residence document].’ They told her that if she gave me the sheet, I would run away. [...] And she also heard, um, she was afraid that I would send money back to Vietnam, and then run back to Vietnam.” The participant went on to describe how she called her father in Vietnam and asked for help. Her father advised her to talk to her mother-in-law and resolve the misunderstanding. The participant said, “I talked to her, explained, and she said, ‘Are you pretending to talk to me so that you can have an excuse

for not doing the housework?” Her conflict with her mother-in-law persisted for years; eventually her mother-in-law moved out to live with the other son. The participant revealed, “My mother-in-law beat me. In total...I counted a total of 28 times. For the ten years I have lived in Taiwan, I have documented 28 times. If you beat me, I make a record of it. I took photos. I have many photos at home.... I ran to the fire department, and then they called the police.” After repeated incidents, the police suggested that the participant file charges against her mother-in-law for domestic violence. The participant never took this step, though, because she did not want to put her husband in the difficult situation of having to choose between his wife and his mother. Given this challenging situation, I was surprised that this participant responded, without hesitation, that if she could make the choice again, she would still come to Taiwan, because her life in Taiwan was much better than life in Vietnam.

Conflicts between daughters-in-law and parents-in-law (particularly mothers-in-law) are certainly not unique to transnational marriage families. For example, many Taiwanese daughters-in-law also encounter difficulties getting along with their in-laws. Although both Taiwanese and Vietnamese daughters-in-law may have faced the same challenges with their in-laws, though, their perceptions and interpretations of these challenges differ. I identified two explanations frequently given by my Vietnamese informants as they tried to make sense of their conflicts with their in-laws. First, many Vietnamese women believed that their in-laws’ lack of trust in them led to a desire to humiliate and discriminate against them. These women saw this lack of trust arising from the unstable marriage relationships witnessed among Taiwanese men married to Vietnamese women, as well as from the stereotypes of Vietnamese women prevalent within Taiwanese society. Second, Taiwanese and Vietnamese daughters-in-law had been brought up with different understandings of “filial piety.” Taiwanese daughters usually made their husbands’

families their top priority. These daughters expected that their brothers would take care of their parents. It is for this reason that giving birth to a son is usually a big deal in Taiwanese society. Vietnamese women understood their filial obligations differently. My informants reported that daughters had to take care of their parents, even after marriage. Thus, marrying Taiwanese men whose families did not understand this different conception of filial piety could create significant conflicts within transnational marriage families. One Vietnamese mother (Mrs. Xie, 3002) explained, “I sent some money back to my parents, and he complained, ‘You are always doing this. [You] send all your earnings to your parents. You don’t care about your family here at all. [Your] home here is not your home.’ [He says] things like this. In fact, I have explained it to him a hundred thousand times, he just doesn’t understand. He cannot understand why I do this.” Another Vietnamese mother (Mrs. Ruan, 1260) said, “I came to Taiwan, so I know. Taiwanese daughters, most of them, after they marry, only go back home on the second day of the lunar year. [This is a traditional practice in Chinese cultures. Married daughters usually spend New Year’s Eve and New Year’s Day with their husbands and in-laws. On the second day of the New Year, these daughters traditionally bring their husbands and children home to visit their own parents.] Married daughters stay with their in-laws’ family before that day [the second day of the New Year]. When their own parents get ill, it’s always the sons and their wives who care for them. Married daughters, their hearts become different [their priorities change.] We Vietnamese are not like this! We do not separate from our parents like this. We daughters still need to take care of our birth families.... Right, you see, it’s different in [Taiwan and Vietnam].”

Thus, although both Taiwanese and Vietnamese daughters-in-law may consider the conflicts with their in-laws to be challenging, those challenges arise for different reasons and create different family dynamics. For Vietnamese women, issues about money, unstable

relationships and marriage, and different understandings of the practices and obligations of filial piety can all lead to a lack of trust and can exacerbate the conflict and discrimination in the private home context. Further research is needed to fully understand the interactions and complex dynamics within these homes. To my knowledge, Fung and Liang's longitudinal study addresses some of these issues (e.g., Fung & Liang, 2008, 2009, 2010).

Discrimination in the workplace and in the community

Eight of 14 mothers mentioned feeling the effects of discrimination and prejudice, partly due to the stereotypes and negative public discourses that circulated in Taiwanese society throughout the previous two decades (since the 1990s). In other words, negative macro-level stereotypes of Vietnamese women echoed in micro-level everyday encounters. For example, when I asked a Vietnamese mother how she felt about others' perceptions of her, she responded by recounting an incident in which she had felt humiliated at the workplace when her co-worker questioned whether she wore second-hand clothes. She (Mrs. Xie, 3706) described, "My last job was a part-time job in a breakfast place. There was a lady there, also part-time, who was probably about 40 years old, roughly about that age. One day, I wore a new item of clothing; it was new, and it looked nice, and I had bought it myself. She said, 'Ah? That [blouse], that [blouse], did the breakfast owner give it to you?' I thought she was so weird. Right? I said [to her], 'Is it always the case that every item of clothing I wear is given to me by others?' I didn't like people saying [things like] that to me. I felt very hurt." She (Mrs. Xie, 3758) continued, "Some people would say, um...for example, a lady talked about others with me, but she was referring to others.. [...] She said that she had heard other people say that Vietnamese all come here for money. She said to me 'Do you agree?'" This informant explained that the question the lady had asked her conveyed both challenge and prejudice. She then continued, "With some

other people, the first thing they would say to me was, ‘Um, um, can I ask you a question?’ I would say, “What’s the matter?” and one man asked, ‘Um, your husband, when you two got married, how much money did he pay you?’ ...something like that. Why did he ask me a question like that? I feel [my marriage] is like an exchange. I don’t like people to say such things to me. And I think that that person should reflect about what he had asked. What was your real purpose for asking a question like this? We, indeed, some are good and some are bad. You cannot say that every Vietnamese woman is good. Some really do come here for money. They do whatever it takes to earn money. But others are not [like this]. [...] Like me, I had a choice. No one forced me. It was my own decision. It was my own free will [to decide to marry a Taiwanese man].”

This Vietnamese mother, like many of my informants, encountered prejudice in the workplace and in the community, as the content analyses of my data reveal. Widespread stereotypes of Vietnamese women, and people’s unfamiliarity with these women, fueled this discrimination. My informants reported that they were often perceived as individuals who were poor, who could be purchased, who came to Taiwan solely for monetary reasons, who could not understand Chinese, and who did not know how to teach their children. As victims of stereotypes imposed on them by the larger society, these women reported facing prejudice on a regular basis in their everyday encounters.

Inspired by Goffman’s (1959) work, “The representation of self in everyday life,” and Wortham’s (1996) work in “Techniques for discovering speakers’ footing,” I examined the transcripts of my interviews with these Vietnamese immigrant women with the goal of investigating how they reacted to the prevalent negative public discourses of immigrant women by actively constructing their own images and their counter-narratives. These discourse analyses show that these Vietnamese mothers very often segregated themselves from the stereotypical

images of Vietnamese women, particularly while describing others' negative views of them. In other words, in the interviews, my informants presented themselves as individuals who did not fit within the stereotypes. This strategy of "othering" themselves, of separating their identities from that of the misconceived majority, was an approach that allowed my informants to demonstrate their agency and morality. But by justifying themselves using a strategy like othering, rather than by working to dismantle the inaccurate stereotypes, they also contributed to the continuation of these misconceptions.

When asked about how they dealt with these provocative, unsympathetic comments from others, my informants reported that they simply left the scene as soon as possible, distanced themselves from such people, pretended not to care about what others had said, or ignored the comments altogether. Among those informants, four mothers (Mrs. Deng, Mrs. Wang, Mrs. Lian, and Mrs. Chen) said that they believed that time would speak for them. With time, they explained, people would get to know that they were not like those stereotypes. Only one mother (Mrs. Jiang) said that she stood up for herself and confronted the Taiwanese speaker in such situations. Without exception, though, they had all narrated their stories in voices that were emotionally charged. One woman expressed to me the responses that she had not been able to verbalize at such scenes, the anger that she had suppressed during these unpleasant encounters, as well as the strategies she had used to boost her own self-esteem. She (Mrs. Lian, 698) said, "It's reality. It seems that if you have no money, people look down on you. Then some people, some Taiwanese, you know, they say we come here to cheat for money. They look down on you, really. It's real! Very often! [...] At any rate, it seems to them that we came here to cheat them out of money. It seems a lot of people view us like that." When I asked how she responded and what she thought when those incidents occurred, she answered, raising her voice, "I felt within

myself, ‘Maybe I make more money than you! You are not my boss! What are you doing? Looking down on me?’ Really I... felt this in my heart, but I didn’t say it aloud. In fact, to myself I said it didn’t matter that they looked down on me. I didn’t say it to them, but I said this to myself, ‘Perhaps you did not know that you made less money than I make every month? And you stood there and looked down on me?’ In Taiwan, I encountered too many incidents like this. Most of these people didn’t make as much money as I made, but they thought they were superior. Since I came here, I have been relying entirely on myself! And I feed my family! [I] didn’t say it aloud. ‘You look down on me? It’s a mercy that I don’t look down on you! You look down on me?’ I said this to myself, I didn’t tell others.” This participant had earlier revealed that she made NTD 75,000 (USD 2,500) per month (roughly the same as the monthly salary of an assistant professor at the university), running a betel nut [*bin lang* 檳榔] stand on a street in Moonrise River. She justified her feelings during her interview with me by acting out her unspoken thoughts and creating a moral discourse for herself (i.e., I’m the breadwinner; I earn more money than you).

Yet, it is worth noting that 5 of my 14 Vietnamese informants (Mrs. Ying, Mrs. Fei, Mrs. Cai, Mrs. Ruan, and Mrs. Jiang) reported enjoying their time at work, mainly because their co-workers were also Vietnamese. Thus, while earning money and working full time, these Vietnamese women got to socialize with others who shared their language and cultural background. As one Vietnamese mother (Mrs. Cai, 978) put it, “The place I work is full of Vietnamese women. I think five of the six of us are all from Vietnam. And we speak Vietnamese when we are together.”

Marriage satisfaction

Although 12 of my 14 participants entered into their marriages through marriage brokers and agreed to marry their husbands without being much acquainted with them (excepting Mrs. Ruan and Mrs. Bao, who claimed that they had been romantically involved with their husbands before agreeing to marry them), 5 of my informants (Mrs. Cai, Mrs. Li, Mrs. Ruan, Mrs. Chen, and Mrs. Bao) explicitly reported being satisfied with their marriages. Two of these women (Mrs. Cai and Mrs. Ruan) provided very similar explanations of their understandings of their marriages. One (Mrs. Chen), for example, said, “Because we came from Vietnam, here in Taiwan [we have] no father and mother, no relatives around. If your husband treats you well, you are lucky. If not, unlucky. [...] As for my husband, he is nice.” For these informants, having a satisfying marriage provided them a strong support system as they adjusted to the new environment and learned to handle other significant life challenges.

Five of my 14 informants (Mrs. Ying, Mrs. Lian, Mrs. Jiang, Mrs. Jade, and Mrs. Yue) unambiguously stated that they were in completely unsatisfying marriages, assigning the causes of their dissatisfaction to husbands who were illiterate, unreliable, unemployed, or violent. They also mentioned that their fantasies or misconceptions of life in Taiwan had resulted in huge disappointments in reality. One (Mrs. Lian) revealed, “In coming here, if we marry a good man who is responsible, it’s really wonderful. As for my husband, I...because I feel, um, how can I say...? He seems irresponsible.” When I asked her to explain what she meant by irresponsible, she replied, “[He] wanders around, doesn’t want to work, likes playing mahjong, and drinks a lot. Yes, [he] drinks very frequently. He grew up like that.” As a result of her husband’s behavior, this informant had to be the breadwinner in her family, which was the opposite of her expectation of her life in Taiwan.

She continued to describe her disappointments concerning life in Taiwan and her resultant suffering which arose from the sugar-coated lies she had been told by married Vietnamese women. She mentioned, “I have a cousin. Um, how can I say...probably because she wanted to maintain face [*ai mian zi* 愛面子]...um, yes, many people come here, and [they] all say good things about it here, good things. No one reveals their suffering [when they talk to their Vietnamese families and friends]. If it were me, I wouldn’t reveal the bad things, either. As a result, no one knows, because of the need to maintain face. Thus [we] heard what they had said and [we] loved to get married to [Taiwanese men]. They [other Vietnamese women who married Taiwanese men] said it was great. It was wonderful [in Taiwan].” In other words, by choosing to reveal only the enjoyable aspects of life married to a Taiwanese man, and by omitting the sad stories about suffering, Vietnamese women themselves created a false picture of life in Taiwan for young unmarried women back in Vietnam. These fantasies and misconceptions about life in Taiwan contributed to the disappointments some Vietnamese women felt about their new lives in Taiwan, thus negatively affecting their marriages.

Other life challenges

Although learning the language well enough in order to communicate easily was a big challenge during their first few years in Taiwan, this was generally no longer a major concern for the women I interviewed (since my informants had been residing in Taiwan for at least 6 years—and as long as 12 years—when they were interviewed). Yet, a handful of them noted that speaking Chinese with an accent remained a problem on some occasions. One observed that her accent caused others to look down on her. She (Mrs. Wang, 1061) said, “Some customers come here for the bakery. Sometimes—[certain customers] did this on purpose—after I told them the

amount of money they needed to pay, [they] purposefully repeated what I said. Then they laughed at me. They did it [correcting my accent] just to laugh at me.”

Many informants revealed feeling overwhelmed by the numerous roles they were supposed to fulfill: wife, daughter-in-law, filial daughter, mother, student, and, sometimes, breadwinner. Yet in spite of these challenges, to my surprise, 12 of my 14 informants said that they would make the same choice if they had it to make over again. Many of them had not foreseen a promising future in Vietnam, and they believed that, by marrying a Taiwanese man and moving to Taiwan, at least they had had an opportunity to live a different life. Only two of them (Mrs. Lian and Mrs. Jiang) unequivocally said that they would not make the same choice if they could choose again. One (Mrs. Jiang, 379) responded without any hesitation, “No. No way, even if you beat me to death. It’s not that I don’t like Taiwan. There are many reasons. If I really could choose again, I would think about the ways I could survive back in Vietnam. I would not come to Taiwan.” I asked her to explain why she would have preferred staying in Vietnam to living in Taiwan. “First, if my parents needed me, I could go home immediately. [...] Second, I don’t have the ability to provide for my parents even I am here. When I go home and people [her parents and Vietnamese relatives] see me, they complain a lot to me.... ‘Others’ houses are so nice, they all build new houses, and ours is still this tiny one,” she quoted. Thus, in addition to being looked down on in Taiwan, this participant had difficulty meeting her birth family’s expectations regarding the level of financial support she was able to provide. She was faced with the particular pressure of sending home enough money to allow her family to build a brick house, which is frequently perceived as a symbol of the enactment of filial piety. Most of her Vietnamese friends who had married Taiwanese men were able to do this for their families in Vietnam.

Vietnamese Mothers' Child Rearing and Educational Goals for Their Children

When my informants described their life challenges and their uncertainties about their marriages in Taiwan, many of them also revealed that giving birth to their first child often provided an important emotional comfort for them, especially during their first few years in Taiwan. They also revealed that having children had strengthened their willpower and determination to stay in Taiwan, in order to provide for their children. For example, one mother (Mrs. Jade) told me that, until her first child was born, she had missed home terribly and had wanted to return to Vietnam. But since then, her life had been fully occupied and she did not have the energy and the time for sentimental reflection. As she put it, "Then I had this child, and I started to think seriously about staying here for good." Another mother (Mrs. Ying) who had never been satisfied with her marriage and her relationship with her in-laws stated, "I am here because of my children. Otherwise, I would have divorced my husband." They both expressed how much they care about their children and what high educational aspirations they have for them.

Language Use with Their Children

All 14 mothers reported speaking to their children in Mandarin Chinese on a daily basis. None reported using Vietnamese as the dominant language when communicating with them. Specifically, 2 of the 14 mothers (Mrs. Ruan and Mrs. Bao) stated that they never spoke Vietnamese to their children. The other 12 chose to shift between Chinese and Vietnamese but reported speaking Vietnamese with their children only rarely and for an extremely limited amount of time. Among those 12 mothers who occasionally spoke Vietnamese with their children, 5 of them (Mrs. Ying, Mrs. Wang, Mrs. Chen, Mrs. Jade, and Mrs. Yue) reported failed attempts and frustrations. For example, it upset them to witness that their children could not

communicate with their Vietnamese grandparents when these mothers called home or brought the children home to Vietnam. Additionally, because Taiwanese served as an important language in my field sites, 5 of my informants (Mrs. Ying, Mrs. Deng, Mrs. Ruan, Mrs. Jiang, and Mrs. Chen) reported speaking Taiwanese with their children, in addition to Mandarin Chinese.

Both of the mothers who chose to never speak Vietnamese to their children demonstrated a strong determination to acculturate and to become assimilated into Taiwanese culture. One of them (Mrs. Ruan) did not want her child to speak Vietnamese at all, even though her husband strongly encouraged it. She explained that she could not imagine that she would want her child to reside in Vietnam in the future and, therefore, there was no reason for her child to master the language. If her child wanted to learn a second language, she added, English would be a much better choice than Vietnamese.

The 12 mothers who spoke Vietnamese with their children emphasized that they did this in the belief that mastering two languages (i.e., becoming bilingual) would be an advantage in the future. They also expressed the hope that understanding the language would facilitate their children's understanding of their own upbringing, background, and early life experiences. Only 2 of these mothers, though, reported being satisfied with how much they spoke Vietnamese with their children. When I asked them about the inconsistency between belief and practice, some mothers explained that they were afraid of causing confusion in their children's learning of Chinese; some said that their children were not interested in learning Vietnamese; some simply said that they had too many tasks to handle everyday and thus had no spare time to teach their children the language; and some noted that their husbands and in-laws did not want them to speak Vietnamese to their children.

A close examination of my 12 informants' husbands' and in-laws' attitudes regarding Vietnamese use at home (not including the two who reported that they never spoke Vietnamese to their children) shows that 1 (Mrs. Wang) received support from both her in-laws and her husband, 3 (Mrs. Li, Mrs. Jiang, and Mrs. Chen) reported that their husbands and in-laws held different attitudes (one supported it while the other discouraged it), 6 (Mrs. Xie, Mrs. Fei, Mrs. Cai, Mrs. Deng, Mrs. Lian, and Mrs. Jade) noted that Vietnamese was discouraged by both the in-laws and husbands, and 2 (Mrs. Ying and Mrs. Yue) reported not knowing about their in-laws' and husbands' opinions. Interestingly, 2 (Mrs. Li and Mrs. Chen) also reported a change in attitude. In years past, either in-laws or husbands or both used to discourage or disallow Vietnamese at home, but now they were encouraging their daughters-in-law and wives to teach their children Vietnamese. I speculate that this change in attitude was partly due to the emerging consensus that mastering two languages is an advantage for the young, and partly due to the improving economic climate in Vietnam, which was starting to raise the demand for employees who were bilingual in Taiwanese and Vietnamese.

Cultural Identity of Their Children

It is well recognized that language shapes an individual's identity, especially cultural identity. Thus, the mothers' choice of language when talking to their children revealed something about how they perceived their own identity and how this perception contributed to their children's identity development. When I asked Vietnamese mothers whether they wanted their children to grow up as Taiwanese or Vietnamese, their responses showed a strong positive correlation to what they reported regarding their practices of language use with their children.

Specifically, 10 of my 14 informants (excepting Mrs. Cai, Mrs. Lian, Mrs. Jiang, and Mrs. Yue) maintained wanting their children to grow up identifying themselves as Taiwanese. They

explained that because their children were born in and receiving their education in Taiwan, it was “natural” for them to identify culturally as Taiwanese. Only 2 Vietnamese mothers reported wanting their children to grow up identifying themselves as “half Taiwanese, half Vietnamese.” None of my informants reported wanting their children to grow up holding a solely Vietnamese identity. Although these Vietnamese immigrant mothers offered varying explanations for their choices of language and their children’s identity, they all mentioned that where they live and where their children are likely to grow up plays a major role in making those decisions.

Educational Aspirations for Their Children

Although it is widely recognized that parents in Chinese societies, such as Taiwan, tend to place a high priority on their children’s education, immigrant mothers face even greater challenges in this respect since their children are studying in an educational system that is different from their own experiences. Additionally, throughout the past decade, there has been significant debate in Taiwanese society on immigrant children’s language development, cognitive development, and school performance. These children’s educational opportunities and academic achievements have thus become major concerns for Vietnamese immigrant mothers.

My interviews revealed the immense value most Vietnamese mothers place on education and their determination to ensure that their children succeed in school from a young age. Specifically, content analyses showed that when my informants felt that the language barrier or any other obstacle might impede their ability to prepare their preschoolers for school or to supervise their older children’s homework, they went the extra mile and found other ways to ensure that their children would succeed in school. For example, some immigrant mothers told me that they worked hard to be able to send their children to expensive private “after-school

programs” [*an qin ban* 安親班], while other immigrant mothers explained that the reason they attended literacy classes was to prepare themselves to assist with their children’s education.

Even though children born to transnational marriage families received priority in entering public kindergartens, half of the (7 of the 14) immigrant mothers with preschoolers chose to send their children to private kindergartens. Although these private kindergartens cost 2 to 3 times more than public kindergartens, these mothers did not want their children to be left behind. They explained that they worried about not being able to provide their children with stimulating home environments and that they believed that their children would receive more intensive academic educations in private kindergartens than they would in public ones.

Similarly, even though children born to transnational marriage families were granted free access to public after-school programs, 4 of 9 immigrant mothers with school-age children chose to send their children to private after-school programs that cost NTD 5,000-10,000 (USD 160-330) a month. Their reasoning was similar to the private kindergarten choice: they believed that these programs offered more academic instruction than the public ones. The immigrant mothers who sent their children to the free public after-school programs did so simply because they were unable to afford costly private tuition.

Additionally, some Vietnamese mothers echoed in the interviews the negative public discourses circulating in Taiwanese society regarding immigrant mothers’ abilities to raise and teach their children. For example, one mother (Mrs. Ruan, 2050) told me, “[I feel] very anxious. I worry that I don’t know how to teach my child. [...] Sometimes he asks me questions I do not understand, and then I feel I had better send him to a cram school [*bu xi ban* 補習班]; I cannot be stingy about the tuition. I then send him to private after-school programs.” Another Vietnamese mother (Mrs. Lian, 76) revealed, “Without Chinese phonetics [*zhu yin* 注音], I can understand

some words, but not all of them. [...] Because I don't understand, I cannot teach [my son] how to write. [...] My husband doesn't teach our child. Thus I ask the teachers for help. I send my child to private after-school programs.”

Another Vietnamese mother (Mrs. Xie, 1388) said, “I myself haven't received too much education here in Taiwan. [I have] no diploma. For example, I don't know very much Chinese. I wanted to send my child to a private kindergarten so that he could learn. I am afraid that I cannot teach him, for example, language. [I] worry about these things. But due to our financial situation, I had to send him to the public one.” Later on she remarked (Mrs. Xie, 2672), “Because we are foreign brides, not every one of us comes to the literacy classes. Without literacy classes, how will they understand Ping-yin? How will they teach their children?” In fact, this mother was one of the most articulate informants I interviewed, and she had completed three years of elementary school education in Taiwan at the time she was interviewed.

Another Vietnamese mother (Mrs. Cai, 682) illustrated at length her struggles to provide her son with a stimulating educational environment and her worries about her son's academic performance: “[I] hope he can study...has the ability to study. [...] Because my husband, he didn't...he didn't go to school.” When I asked for clarification, she responded that her husband was illiterate. She did not realize this until she figured out when their first child started school that her husband could not understand what the schoolteachers wrote in the communication book [a daily written exchange between parents and schoolteachers]. I then asked her how she supervised her children's homework, and she responded, “I can understand some of the assignments, but I cannot completely understand every word. If I don't understand, I go downstairs to ask my sister-in-law.” This mother sent her first-grade son to a free after-school program because she was the sole breadwinner at home and could not afford to send him to a

private one. Later on, she (Mrs. Cai, 1072) mentioned, “Because my husband didn’t receive education, [he] cannot teach [our son]. I myself, I am not very good at teaching him. I have no solutions. So, I talked to the teacher: ‘Teacher, I am not good at teaching.’ I told her that I am not very good at teaching my son. ‘What should I do?’ Now the teacher pays special attention [to my son]. Right, because, the teacher knows I am Vietnamese, so my son is different from other students.” This mother, as both breadwinner and primary caregiver, strived hard to make sure her son received the best possible education she could offer. Yet, she still worried constantly about not being able to provide sufficient educational opportunities for him. She (Mrs. Cai, 1288) continued, “One day, I saw my son’s grades; I felt worried in my heart. I looked at my son. He goes to school. Probably because I cannot teach him, thus we made him struggle with grades. Because I know, his school performance... supposedly it’s our responsibility, but we don’t know how to teach him. I knew we were to blame, thus, when I saw his grades. I started to worry, and now I worry very much. Everyday, I think about what I can do. I ask him to work harder. I tell him to study harder. ‘Do your homework and remember what you are writing.’ [...] I am Vietnamese. I am not good at teaching him, and thus he receives lower grades than others. There is a gap [between his grade and that of others]. A big gap. [Pause] If he had attended private after-school programs, this might not have been the case. Public ones? [Sigh] The private ones, they teach more [than the public ones]. They teach everything, such as English.”

Nowadays the percentage of school-age children attending after-school programs is extremely high (at least 80%). My informal conversations with working-class Taiwanese mothers revealed that they chose to send their children to after-school programs mainly because they thought their children could receive more structured and systematic instruction than if they taught their children at home. They also stated that having full-time jobs made it difficult for

them to accommodate their schedules to their children's regular school schedules. Yet, my interviews with Vietnamese mothers revealed that most of them believed that they were not capable of supervising their children's schoolwork and thus had to rely on professionals. These Vietnamese mothers may have internalized the negative public discourses (e.g., that they do not know how to teach their children) that are pervasive in Taiwanese society.

Besides striving hard economically to make enough money to send their children to the best possible programs, some Vietnamese mothers also had high educational aspirations of their own and sought out opportunities to educate themselves further. For example, when I asked one mother (Mrs. Deng, 496), who noted that she supervised her children's homework, what she did if she encountered challenges overseeing their schoolwork, she responded, "I learned [Chinese] by myself. I bought a dictionary, and I use it to study [Chinese]. If I don't understand [something], then I go and ask my husband. He will teach me. I don't have time to go to literacy classes. In the evenings, I have to take care of my two children." Another Vietnamese mother (Mrs. Ruan, 1030) echoed the stereotype of inadequacy, but she immediately countered it with her desire to improve her Chinese skills. "Because I am a foreigner, sometimes I cannot teach [my son] much, do you understand? [...] I cannot understand some very difficult words. So, I go to the literacy classes. I thought that by doing so, I could teach my own child." Still another Vietnamese mother (Mrs. Lian, 548) described with excitement, "I didn't go to literacy classes many years ago. I needed to work. I needed to earn some income. In fact, I have been here [in Taiwan] for a long time, but why didn't I go to school? I didn't have time. All my time was spent earning money. Now I can earn enough money for my family. It is sufficient. And my child also seems to be doing well. Right, everything is stable now. So I tell myself, 'I am going to school! I

am going to apply for citizenship. I am going to school! I am going to school! I am going to learn to recognize Chinese words.”

Culture-Specific Child Rearing Beliefs

Many Vietnamese immigrant mothers mentioned two important child rearing beliefs that reflected their culture-specific value systems. First, almost all mothers emphasized the necessity for their children to grow up understanding and enacting filial piety. Second, most Vietnamese mothers expressed the desire that their children understand the importance of maintaining “a profound attachment to siblings” and the significance of sustaining “the hierarchy in sibling relationships.” Some of these discourses are echoed in Dr. Fung and her colleagues’ current research focusing on family interactions and language socialization of children in Taiwanese-Vietnamese marriage families in Taiwan (e.g., Fung, 2007a, 2007b; Fung & Huang, 2004; Fung, Huang, Liang, & Trần Thị, 2006a, 2006b; Fung & Liang, 2008, 2009, 2010).

Filial piety

At least half of my Vietnamese informants, 9 out of 14 (Mrs. Ying, Mrs. Fei, Mrs. Cai, Mrs. Deng, Mrs. Ruan, Mrs. Wang, Mrs. Lian, Mrs. Jiang, and Mrs. Jade), considered cultivating filial piety as an extremely important child rearing goal, and these mothers believed that understanding the importance of filial piety and behaving accordingly had to be cultivated from a very young age.

Some Vietnamese mothers used their personal experiences to illustrate to what extent they themselves strove to enact filial piety and thus highlighted the extent to which they valued it. These women stated that a major reason why they married Taiwanese men was to fulfill their filial obligations to their parents—by being able to provide for the latter. And they expected their children to carry out their own filial obligations, just as they themselves did. For example, one

Vietnamese mother (Mrs. Deng, 752) stated, “To me, my personality, I am a filial child. Because after all, they are my parents, I have to be filial to them.” She noted that the reason she had married a Taiwanese man (who might be able to provide better than a Vietnamese man) was to enact her filial obligations by sending money back home and taking care of her parents. She continued, “To me, it is very important. My child, my daughter, what I do for her is my responsibility. In the future, I expect her to be a filial daughter to me.” This mother went on to use examples—such as her expectation that her daughter talk to her gently and understandably and help with chores—to illustrate how the cultivation of filial piety took place at home. Another Vietnamese mother (Mrs. Cai, 809) reiterated, “Filial piety is very important. It should be a must! Really important!” When I asked her about her understanding of it, she said, “Just like, ‘Children, um, be good to Daddy and Mommy.’ [They] should know it’s important to be grateful to Daddy and Mommy.... As a child, [you] cannot be...cannot treat parents badly, it cannot happen. [...] This is a must: teach children about filial piety.”

Although it is well-accepted that, under the influence of Confucianism, many societies—such as those of Taiwan and Vietnam—view filial piety as important virtues to retain, I argue that there exist different understandings and interpretations of it between Taiwanese husbands and Vietnamese wives. This not only often leads to distrust and misunderstandings, but also demonstrates culture-specific values surrounding the enactment of filial piety.

In particular, I have identified two unique and culture-specific characteristics concerning Vietnamese immigrant mothers’ understanding of cultivating filial piety in children. First, these mothers believed that a married adult daughter should uphold the responsibility of taking care of her aging biological parents. Previously, I explained that this different interpretation of filial piety often led to distrust and misunderstandings between Taiwanese husbands and Vietnamese

wives as, in traditional Taiwanese society, it is expected that sons (more specifically, the eldest of the sons) are the individuals responsible for taking care of aging parents. Married adult daughters are not necessarily expected to invest a significant amount of time, energy, or money into supporting their biological parents. Thus, Vietnamese immigrant mothers might socialize their children, particularly daughters, differently from Taiwanese husbands' expectations.

Second, these Vietnamese mothers' understandings of filial piety contained a strong reciprocity between the parent and the child. That is, these mothers considered mutual filial interaction very important, unlike most Taiwanese' understandings, which highlighted the filial obligation in one direction: from child to parent. Thus, these Vietnamese immigrant mothers stated that, while their children were young and dependent, they felt profoundly responsible for developing long-lasting bonds with them. And, when their children grew up to be autonomous adults, it would then be the children's turn to take good care of their parents. In some cases, this reciprocity of caring was articulated using the Vietnamese culture-specific term, *thuong*, which highlights the hierarchical love and mutual dependence between parent and child (Fung & Liang, 2010). The emphasis on reciprocity seemed to be lacking in the Taiwanese understandings of filial piety, which mainly pointed to children's responsibility in taking care of aging parents. Vietnamese mothers' expectation of cultivating filial piety needs to be understood in this specific cultural context.

Social hierarchy

One Vietnamese mother (Mrs. Xie) described her strong and profound attachment to her parents and siblings in Vietnam. By comparison, she noted that Taiwanese attachments seemed to her to be almost indifferent. As she (Mrs. Xie, 1016) described it, "People in Taiwan are more indifferent. In Vietnam, we do not close our doors, and neighbors can come in and out of each

other's houses freely.” At some point, she also mentioned that, as for siblings, “The older sibling is supposed to take care of the younger one, and the younger sibling is supposed to respect the older one.” For this reason, she found it very sad to see her own children fighting with one another.

Again, in Confucian societies, the use of kinship terms has been more often articulated than in western societies, and Taiwan and Vietnam are not exceptions (Sandel, 2002). Yet, I argue that, although the use of appropriate kinship terms among different generations of family members (e.g., child to parent or child to grandparent) seems well-practiced in both cultures, the dedicated and mindful use of kinship terms among peers (e.g., siblings) is unique to Vietnamese culture. For example, a Vietnamese mother (Mrs. Wang, 698) explained, “For my children, older brother [*ge ge* 哥哥] is older brother, and younger brother [*di di* 弟弟] is younger brother. Thus, since [they were] very little, they could not call each other's name. When you [younger brother] call your older brother, you cannot call him by name.” Later, this mother (Mrs. Wang, 721) mentioned, “For the older brother, he has to take good care of his younger brother. ‘Yes, call [him] younger brother [*di di* 弟弟] and be nice to your younger brother. Don't fight with your younger brother over toys.’” This mother revealed that she required the younger sibling to address the elder sibling as “older brother [*ge ge* 哥哥]” and demanded that the older boy acknowledge his duty to take care of his younger brother by addressing him as “younger brother [*di di* 弟弟].” When I asked another mother the same question, she specifically pointed out that using the kinship terms was a very important virtue to cultivate in Vietnam. She (Mrs. Cai, 773) responded, raising her voice, “Important! Important! This is very important! Because [pause], because for brothers, the younger one has to listen to the older one. And the younger one cannot talk to the older one impolitely. This is a very important thing in Vietnam.”

As these examples demonstrate, Vietnamese mothers emphasized the appropriate use of kinship terms when socializing their children. Age was generally an indicator for defining the hierarchy and appropriate kinship terms. This was unlike contemporary Taiwanese society, where the hierarchy among siblings seemed to be downplayed, probably due to the influence of westernization.

To conclude, although immigrant mothers were willing to compromise their use of language with their children and the formation of their children's cultural identity, the concept of being *filial* as well as *well-mannered* children seemed to be a culture-specific child rearing goal that these mothers insisted on cultivating and passing on.

Discourse Analyses of the Interviews

Besides the content analyses of my interviews with Vietnamese immigrant mothers, a close examination of these mothers' narrative performances during the interviews also revealed important facets of their life circumstances. First, some informants mentioned and quoted their Chinese literacy teachers often when I asked them about their life challenges and child rearing beliefs, highlighting the importance and significance of Chinese literacy teachers in their everyday lives. Second, a lot of informants shifted among various identities during the interviews. Sometimes, they identified themselves as belonging to the group of Vietnamese women. Other times, they tried hard to emphasize how much they differed from that group, particularly whenever they were discussing the general public's negative perceptions of Vietnamese women. These mothers' shifts among different identities revealed their unconscious ways of moderating their self-representations and generating their moral discourses.

The Significance of Literacy Teachers

Among the 14 Vietnamese mothers I interviewed, 8 of them had attended or were attending Chinese literacy classes. An unexpected and interesting finding was that many of these 8 informants mentioned the importance of attending Chinese literacy classes and some even quoted their literacy teachers in the interviews. Take as an example a Vietnamese mother (Mrs. Xie) who had completed three years of elementary school education. When I asked her about her opinions concerning conflicts with her in-laws and child rearing, she cited her literacy teachers in order to express her own views: “My...many of my teachers...I attended many classes, right?...I talked to the teachers. They are very nice. I told the teachers about [conflicts with my in-laws], and after hearing this, my teachers always told us that we must respect our mothers-in-law, because, after all, our mothers-in-law are our husbands’ mothers. You have to respect them. But, at the same time, you don’t have to sacrifice yourself to an extreme. Talk tactically and with a sense of propriety [*you fen cun* 有分寸]. [...] Right, you have to find the boundary of moderation [*na nie de chun* 拿捏的準]. Teachers say that you need to rely on your wisdom. [...] Smartness is innate, but wisdom is accumulated. Teachers always told us this.”

When I asked this mother what she did when she encountered challenges in child rearing, she again responded by citing her literacy teachers. She said, “I ask people; sometimes in the class, I ask teachers. ‘Teacher, how do I raise my child?’ Or ‘Teacher, how can I talk to my child?’ [...] There were two teachers who were extremely nice. It was just like we were friends. It was like you were talking to your friends.” This mother then described how she learned from one of her teachers to praise her children. She illustrated, “I used to keep quiet. I never used to say things like, ‘Ah, my son, you did a good job!’ I didn’t say things like this. But once he did something wrong, I scolded him. ‘Ah, blah blah blah,’ and sometimes I would even say he was

stupid! Then, once I started going to school, teachers told me that I could not do that anymore. Teachers said this. Yes, [teachers] said children need encouragement. The more you encourage him, the better he will perform. [...] Back then, I always stayed home. I did not go out. I didn't know about all these [ideas]! Right, back then, the way I raised my child was just like the way I was raised." This mother went on to explain how she had gone from scolding her daughter when her daughter drew on the wall to praising her daughter for her nice drawings. After hearing her cite and quote her teachers often, I asked this mother, "It seems like the teachers have a huge influence on you," to which she answered, "Right. I learned so much from coming to school. [...] I heard the teachers say that in some families, some husbands do not like their wives to go to school. I think...I think I am lucky. [Laughs] My husband encouraged me to come."

In addition, when we discussed her social network in Taiwan, she explained that she had not had an opportunity to get to know people outside of the family until she started attending classes. She said, "Vietnamese friends? I only got to know them once I came [to class]."

Regular interaction with Chinese literacy teachers provided these Vietnamese women an opportunity to present their life challenges and seek advice or solutions. In other words, as the example above reveals, Chinese literacy teachers and literacy classes were of great importance and significance for some immigrant mothers. Not only were these immigrant women able to further their own education through the classes, they were also able to engage with caring women who were eager to offer guidance and instruction on a range of issues—from dealing with difficult in-laws to improving their interactions with their children. In addition, the classes provided a venue where immigrants could meet and socialize with one another. These interactions and citations demonstrated the importance of understanding what was really happening in the literacy classroom, for both teachers and students. In Chapter 4, I analyze my

interviews with Chinese literacy teachers, describe my findings, and address some of the issues raised here.

Othering

Another aspect of discourse analysis that I identified in my interviews with Vietnamese mothers was their frequent shifts among different identities by manipulating the terms “I/me,” “we/our,” and “others.” At times, my informants aligned themselves with other Vietnamese immigrant mothers by highlighting their shared struggles as foreign wives, mothers, and daughters-in-law. At other times, one or another might sided herself with her Taiwanese family by describing their shared identity as an intact family. And sometimes they distinguished themselves from other Vietnamese women by emphasizing their special life encounters and unique personal characteristics.

One woman (Mrs. Chen, 1684) offered a clear example of this presentation of self—as distinct from Vietnamese women, in general—in her description of a serious conflict with her mother-in-law: “ [My mother-in-law] thought, when I first came to Taiwan, she thought I was just like some other Vietnamese women here. [These Vietnamese women] compare with each other, go out and get to know new boyfriends, then, once [they] get their identity cards, [they] run away, leaving their children with their husbands. My husband does not worry about that at all. My mother-in-law told him her concerns, and my husband told her not to worry.” She continued, “But to Vietnamese foreign brides here in Moonrise River, in their eyes, I am an idiot! An idiot! They think, why marry a Taiwanese man and sell vegetables on the street? Why come here to grow vegetables? Every one of them asked me questions like these.” Again, this mother separated herself from other Vietnamese women in town who would not want to live such a life of struggle, and thus established an image of herself as a “good” Vietnamese woman. When I

asked her how she felt about those defiant questions from other Vietnamese women, she answered, “My own feeling, I think every kind of job is the same. If you really put your heart into it, you will be able to do a job well. If you do not care about your job, you won’t be able to do your job well. Like me, I didn’t know how to grow vegetables before. When I first grew vegetables, it was a mess. [...] When I first began to sell vegetables, no one knew me and no one bought [them]. But now, everyone in Moonrise River knows me. It’s a job like others do.”

Another immigrant mother I interviewed serves as an example to illustrate my informants’ identity shifts. This mother (Mrs. Ruan, 1355) first described how difficult it was for her to express her sentiments to her husband using a second language like Chinese. She said, “I wish we could talk in Vietnamese. Vietnamese...I have a feeling for Vietnamese. Talking to foreigners, there is no feeling.” Although with this utterance she seemed to align herself with those who spoke Vietnamese in Taiwan, she shifted immediately when I followed up by asking her whether she thought she was similar to the majority of the Vietnamese women in town. “Not at all!” she replied without hesitation, indicating her unique experience of engaging romantically with her husband before they married. She clarified further with the explanation that some Vietnamese women were lucky to marry good husbands, whereas others were unlucky. She said, “In Vietnam, you knew nothing. It was all through marriage brokers. If someone introduced a Taiwanese man to you, you thought, ‘I want to go to Taiwan very much, no matter how filled with suffering my life will be; the top priority is to leave Vietnam and go to Taiwan.’ A while later, after giving birth to children, husbands and wives become different. You see, most of them are divorced now.” Her description of most Vietnamese women’s situation in Taiwan was offered as a way to highlight her successful marriage. She continued, “Unlike them, I got to

know my husband through romance,” indicating that she had made a choice at the beginning, and married with the confidence of knowing that her husband was a good man.

Summary

In this chapter, I focused on my interviews with 14 Vietnamese immigrant mothers, addressing how these women navigated their new roles as wives, daughters-in-law, mothers, adult students, and sometimes breadwinners. Throughout the interviews, I inquired into their (1) life challenges and adaptations; (2) child rearing beliefs and educational goals for their children; (3) representations of self; and (4) relations to Chinese literacy teachers.

Firstly, content analyses unveiled that these mothers faced significant life challenges, including difficulties communicating with husbands, lack of trust from in-laws, unsatisfying marriages, and discrimination in the workplace.

Secondly, I found that they strived hard to adapt to Taiwanese society in spite of these challenges. They had high educational aspirations for their children. They all chose to speak Mandarin to them and saw it as critical to their children’s academic success. And they made financial sacrifices to send them to private after-school programs for extra academic instruction. All the same, they hoped to instill important Vietnamese values and customs, particularly filial piety and the respect of social hierarchy, even though many reported that their lack of power and status at home, in relation to husbands and in-laws, made this difficult.

Thirdly, discourse analyses showed that in the interviews these mothers shifted among various social identities, revealing their unconscious ways of moderating their self-representations and generating moral discourses. They sometimes indexed themselves as part of the larger group of Vietnamese immigrant women, especially when discussing moral virtues they maintained and culture-specific child rearing beliefs they possessed. At times, though, they

emphasized how they differed from the group and highlighted their unique identities, particularly when discussing the negative public discourse of immigrant women. At other times, they aligned themselves with their literacy teachers, notably when articulating their life challenges and child rearing beliefs.

Finally, half of these mothers frequently cited their Chinese literacy teachers when articulating their child rearing beliefs and discipline strategies, pointing out the importance of studying these teachers' perceptions and understandings of immigrant mothers and, further, their children. In Chapter 5, I switch the focus to the findings from my interviews with literacy teachers, kindergarten teachers, and elementary schoolteachers.

CHAPTER 4: TAIWANESE TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF IMMIGRANT MOTHERS AND THEIR CHILDREN

In Chapter 2, I explained my rationale for including Taiwanese teachers' perspectives on and perceptions of immigrant mothers and their children in my dissertation research. I also illustrated the reason why I divided Taiwanese teachers into three different categories for investigations. In this chapter, I describe the findings from my interviews with various types of teachers. The teachers I interviewed included Chinese literacy teachers who taught immigrant women Mandarin Chinese, as well as kindergarten and elementary schoolteachers who taught children from transnational marriage families. Some of the elementary schoolteachers were also Chinese literacy teachers. In other words, these elementary schoolteachers taught children during the day and immigrant women in the evenings; thus, they had a great deal of experience interacting with both immigrant women and their children. In some cases, an immigrant woman and her child were from the same family. In these situations, the teacher had a more complete picture of a single family than any of the other teachers did.

The remainder of this chapter is organized as follows. I first explain the role these teachers played in transnational marriage families, focusing particularly on immigrant mothers and their children. This also serves to demonstrate the importance of including teachers' voices in my dissertation research. I then describe each type of teacher and the particular understandings each had of immigrant mothers and children in transnational marriage families, the teachers' pedagogical approaches and challenges, and their self-reflections. This chapter ends with a brief discussion of what emerged from my interviews with them.

The Importance of Teachers' Voices

Why include Taiwanese teachers in a study of transnational marriage families? First, in Taiwanese society, because of the influence of Confucianism, teachers are generally highly respected. For example, a commonly recited Confucian idiom is, “*Yi ri wei shi, zhong shen wei fu* 一日為師，終身為父 [Even if someone is your teacher for only a day, you should regard him like your father for the rest of your life].” Even nowadays with westernization, more highly-educated parents, and the enhancement of students' rights, teachers continue to be respected in small communities, if not always in urban areas. This is particularly true in rural locales like those that I chose as my field sites. In the two communities I observed, teachers are highly respected and their voices carry a certain weight with children, parents, grandparents, and other local residents. One reason teachers are highly respected in small working-class rural communities is that their level of education is higher than that of the majority of local residents. For example, most grandparents (born before World War II) have little, if any, formal education. In addition, fathers in transnational marriage families tend to be educationally and socioeconomically disadvantaged, and Vietnamese mothers generally received little education in their home country. Another reason why teachers are highly respected in small communities is due to low mobility rates within these locations. For instance, fathers may have attended exactly the same elementary schools that their children now attend. Some senior teachers could even have taught both the fathers and their children. Yet another reason is that Vietnamese mothers who attend literacy classes are likely to be taught by teachers who are also teaching or will be teaching their children. In other words, teachers might know and teach both the mothers and their children. Teachers' voices are thus highly regarded, particularly in transnational marriage families.

One teacher whom I interviewed articulated the important position of teachers as follows: “Schools play a very important role, because [schools are] more persuasive. [...] In fact, teachers and schools are very important channels for engaging with these families. For example, when I call their homes [and they] answer [the phone], and I tell them that I am a teacher from the Elementary School, their voices immediately become different!” I joked with this teacher, saying that if I were to make that phone call, they might just hang up. The teacher responded, “Yes, right. Then they would ask, ‘Who you are? What do you want,’ something like that. They are impolite. In fact, when they first answer the phone [when I call], they are also impolite, but once they learn that I am a teacher from the Elementary School, oh, immediately, their whole attitude changes. [Laughs] So, I believe that teachers can play a very important role.”

It is because of this influential role that I emphasize teachers’ voices in my research. Although studies on transnational marriage families in Taiwan have recently increased, to my knowledge there is still little research documenting immigrant mothers and their children in everyday, naturally occurring contexts, such as in the home or at school. In other words, most of the existing research has been conducted mainly via questionnaires rather than through in-depth interviews or observations. While there is emerging research documenting transnational marriage families in private contexts, such as in the home, which tries to understand these families from their own perspectives (e.g., Fung & Liang, 2008, 2009), mine focuses on examining how immigrant mothers and their children are perceived in an educational context, such as in the classroom.

Chinese Literacy Teachers’ Perspectives on Immigrant Mothers

Throughout the year, I interviewed 8 Chinese literacy teachers. I met with 6 teachers once, the interviews ranging from 60 to 90 minutes each, and met twice with the remaining two. All

together, I gathered 11 hours of audio-recorded interviews. Below I describe a brief interview with a Chinese literacy teacher (who was also an elementary schoolteacher and an administrator) as an example of how the interviews unfolded. I also illustrate my findings concerning Chinese literacy teachers' understandings of immigrant mothers and their families. Specifically, I examine four aspects of these findings: (1) these teachers' perceptions of immigrant mothers; (2) their understandings of immigrant women's circumstances in Taiwan; (3) their critiques of negative public discourses and policies pertaining to immigrant mothers; and (4) their understandings of themselves.

In contrast to my conversations with Vietnamese immigrant mothers, I found it easier to formally interview Taiwanese teachers. First, my past experience as a high school teacher allowed me to quickly establish rapport with them. Second, some young teachers and I were of similar ages and educational backgrounds. Our interactions and conversations thus took place more naturally, more like friends or colleagues sharing what had happened at work recently. Also, three of the teachers were pursuing their master's degrees in education when they were interviewed, and we engaged in stimulating intellectual conversations as a result. Third, most teachers had experience of interviewing before or were at least familiar with interviewing formats; they were usually well-prepared when I interviewed them. For example, one teacher brought her class rosters and students' academic records with her when she came to the interview, and some teachers arranged appropriate physical environments conducive to interviewing (e.g., a table, two chairs, a notepad, and tea or coffee) when I visited them in their classrooms.

An Interview with a Chinese Literacy Teacher and Educational Administrator

To allow readers to get a flavor of what an interview with a teacher is like, I begin this section by sharing my very first interview with a Chinese literacy teacher who was, at the same

time, a school administrator (i.e., the director of academic affairs). The interview was informal and lasted only half an hour, but it revealed a lot about how this teacher understood immigrant mothers and their families. Our meeting took place on the evening before the first literacy classes commenced in the 2007 fall semester, in the only elementary school in Moonrise River. This was the first time I'd ever met the director. Right after my teacher friend (Teacher Wen) introduced us, the director launched into a description of her understandings of immigrant women. She spoke continuously for 10 minutes, without any prompts, and she gave me and my friend no opportunity to participate in the conversation. Obviously, she was ready at a moment's notice to share her experiences in teaching immigrant women and her insights into transnational marriage families.

This teacher began the conversation by telling us, "The first time I taught the class, when I saw them come here to register for literacy classes, believe it or not, I almost fell down onto the ground. [Their] husbands were [each] either lacking an eye or a leg!" She indicated to us that these Taiwanese men who married foreign spouses were physically disadvantaged. Her personal observation of husbands seemed to echo the prevalent negative public discourse described in Chapter 1—that is, that these husbands were from disadvantaged groups in Taiwanese society.

She then offered some specific examples of foreign brides whom she had worked with in order to convey to my teacher friend and I her perceptions of immigrant women. She said, "They work very hard, actually. For example, one student works during the day; then she has to go home to cook dinner for her family and do the laundry before she hurries to attend my literacy class. I am a very serious person, so they don't dare come late to my class. When it is time for class, I make phone calls to every student who is late." She continued, "Another student lives in a distant town [in a remote mountain area, with bus service only every 2 hours]. She sells egg

rolls on the Old Street in Moonrise River from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Then she comes straight to my class, and then takes the 10 p.m. bus home. She has no choice, because her husband does not have a job, so she has to be the breadwinner for the family. I told her, ‘Your life is too hectic and your time is totally occupied; you have no time for your children. Don’t be like this.’ The student told me that she is not afraid of being tied up. She wants to learn Mandarin Chinese so that she can teach her children later on, though, indeed, she actually has no time for her children!” This teacher used her students as examples so as to explain to us that many of these immigrant women were tied up, if not overwhelmed, by fulfilling their various social roles—adequate wives, caring mothers, reliable breadwinners, and persistent students. She then illustrated her observations of immigrant women’s motivations for attending literacy class. She noted, “Every student comes to the class with a different motivation. Some are very smart; they know that they can get their [Taiwanese] citizenship with a minimum of 72 hours of instruction, and they come to class just to earn those hours. Seventy-two hours. How much [Mandarin] do you think they can learn in that limited period of time?” While the director agreed with the policy of requiring foreigners to take language courses in order to become eligible for citizenship, she criticized the minimum number of hours mandated by the government. She went on to talk about her close relationships with her students, and how they were fond of her. She said, “I taught one group [of immigrant women] for three years. That group just graduated this summer, and I developed very good relationships with some of those students. Some of them said that they wanted me to be their second mother [*niang jia* 娘家]. I told them, ‘No, no.’ Some were very outgoing and quite talkative; I can introduce them to you.” She then sighed and noted, “Teaching the class for three years, I also lost many students. Some came only once in a while; some gave birth to children; some found jobs and then quit school.” She explained to us that it took a great degree of effort

and persistence to complete all three years of adult education and receive the elementary school diploma.

At one point, the director described her interactions with several transnational marriage families to point out her perception of the parents' unwillingness to share the responsibility of disciplining their children. She commented, "It seems that they don't really teach their children. Sometimes, when they come to the literacy classes, they bring their children along with them. Then I have to teach the mothers and discipline their children at the same time." She went on to offer an explanation as to why some immigrant mothers didn't take responsibility for their children, "Since they grew up like this themselves when they were living in their home country, they don't really know how to teach or discipline their children." She continued by providing an example for us about how she had had to step in and discipline a child from a transnational marriage family. She said, "One time, a husband accompanied his wife to the [literacy] class. From the moment their child entered my office, [he] ran here and there, even played with the computers, and I was the one who had to discipline him. The woman's husband said [she shifted to Taiwanese], 'They, those who come from Vietnam, either sit quietly without moving or behave way too actively and you cannot even get them under control.' And I was thinking, 'Oh? Isn't he also your child? What do you mean by "those who come from Vietnam"?' That husband is not accepting his responsibility as a father!" She described to us that, in this family, the mother did not know how to discipline the child and the father did not take up his role as a father, leaving it up to her (the director) to interfere when the child acted inappropriately.

In short, although this director sympathized with immigrant women and understood that they strove hard in everyday life, she believed that, on the subject of child rearing, immigrant mothers did not know how to raise their children. Though she appeared to have much more to

say, our conversation was forced to an end, because she had to dash off to attend the literacy class orientation for a new group of immigrant women.

Perceptions of Immigrant Mothers

Overall, the Chinese literacy teachers I interviewed largely expressed positive perceptions of immigrant women, describing them as hard-working, young, lovely, and easily contented. Importantly, all 8 of the Chinese literacy teachers emphasized that Vietnamese immigrant women were quick learners. For example, one teacher (with 5 years of experience teaching immigrant women) commented, “They are very diligent, and [their] learning ability is very impressive” (Teacher Chen, 760). She then added, “I enjoyed teaching them. You just keep giving to them. You give them as much as you can, and they are just like sponges. [They] absorb whatever you teach them. This makes a teacher feel great, doesn’t it?” (Teacher Chen, 1002). This teacher revealed that witnessing her students picking up the language rapidly made her feel great as an educator. Another teacher (with 3 years of like experience) similarly said, “They learn very quickly, very quickly indeed. I feel that every single one of them is a quick learner. Really, [they] pick up the language very quickly. Very quickly! When they came here [to Taiwan], they, at the very beginning, did not know how to speak [Mandarin Chinese], and they watched TV at home. They all learned [Chinese] from watching TV.... They looked at the captions, and they learned quickly.” She continued, “They are still young. Young people, they learn things very quickly, very quickly indeed. See? They are just in their late teens—not even twenty yet!” (Teacher Zhuang, 205-213). Yet another teacher (with 3 years of experience) commented, “They are smart, very smart! I mean, their learning ability is very impressive. And they are witty. If they really want to learn, they are filled with curiosity” (Teacher Gao, 328-332). These literacy teachers all agreed that the immigrant women they taught picked up Mandarin

Chinese in no time. Additionally, even though the teachers I interviewed acknowledged that immigrant women attended literacy classes for various reasons and that their motivations for attending played a major role in determining how persistent they were, these teachers generally agreed that most of the continuous students were highly motivated to learn Chinese in order to find better jobs and be able to help their children with their homework.

Some literacy teachers praised these immigrant women not only for their ability to learn quickly, but for upholding the principle of filial piety. One teacher (Teacher Chen) used examples that she had encountered to state her admiration of the close bond these immigrant women maintained with their birth families. She remarked, “They are very good daughters, and they marry Taiwanese men. So, honestly, when I see them, in my view, I feel they are making a contribution [to Taiwanese society]. They are indeed quite unsophisticated [*dan chun* 單純], [but] good human beings. They care a lot about their children’s education, and they hold very traditional views.” Puzzled by what she meant by traditional views, I asked the teacher to elaborate. She explained,

Quotation #1

“Just like my mom, like the way my mom brought me up. [Immigrant women are] like our mothers’ generation. [They] have not received higher education, but they love their children very much. They care, and they take good care of their children. It’s not like our generation. Now an educational problem in Taiwan is that we have fewer children, but parents receive higher education, then [...] they spoil their children. But [immigrant women] come from villages, have traditional views, and they pass on to their children the idea that teachers

deserve respect. ‘You need to respect your teachers. You need to study hard.’ It’s just like what we were told decades ago...and I think that it’s right, that it’s a good tradition.”

In her explanations of her positive impression of immigrant women, this literacy teacher overcame racism by aligning these immigrant women with her own (Taiwanese) mother. She praised these women for retaining the traditional virtues that had seemingly been lost in Taiwanese society.

Another teacher (Teacher Liu) described immigrant women positively by indicating to me that she found that these young women maintained strong ties with their natal families and strove hard to fulfill their filial responsibilities. She believed that most Vietnamese immigrant women chose to marry Taiwanese men of their own free will in order to fulfill their filial responsibilities. She explained, “Some come here because of their [birth] families’ difficult situations. Honestly, they are all very good girls. They are willing to...[find] this kind of...[way] to come to Taiwan. They actually [pause] want to uphold their filial responsibilities. These are very good girls.” A few exchanges later, the teacher continued, “Although they come here through those means [...] the bond between the parents and children is spectacular.” She indicated to me that she admired the close bond between Vietnamese immigrant women and their parents. She continued, “In order to keep their dads and moms from working so hard, like farming or doing other things, they themselves could [decide to] do this. They say, ‘Let me marry a Taiwanese man. Then I probably will have a better life, and I also can improve... my birth family’s economic situation.’” This teacher, although she seemed hesitant to articulate her view of marriages formed through for-profit brokers, expressed her appreciation of the motivation behind these marriages.

Despite the fact that the majority of Chinese literacy teachers described Vietnamese immigrant women to me predominately in a positive light, they indeed also revealed some negative impressions. An example of this was the director's comment that immigrant women did not know how to teach their children. Other teachers who concurred with this view provided further explanations. One teacher noted that immigrant women had received limited educations in Vietnam, that they had grown up in poor rural areas, and that they thus didn't know how to properly raise and discipline their children. Another teacher who commented on immigrant mothers' inadequate parenting abilities provided an explanation which actually countered racism. She explained that these immigrant women were simply too young to be parents. Were they to give birth to their children once they were older, they would know better how to raise them. She noted that they were only in their late teens or early twenties when becoming mothers, and though they had so many things yet to explore for themselves, they were instead forced to take up the responsibilities of motherhood.

Understandings of Immigrant Women's Life Circumstances in Taiwan

The Chinese literacy teachers I interviewed were all actively teaching immigrant women at the time that I interviewed them. The length of their experience in teaching these classes had ranged from 6 months to 5 years. The activities they engaged in with the immigrant women included not only weekly formal classroom meetings, but intermittent outings such as visiting restaurants and night markets together, transporting students to a particular market where Vietnamese foodstuffs were accessible, and attending parties at some of the students' homes or in the classrooms. Importantly and interestingly, the Chinese literacy teacher with the least amount of experience (i.e., 6 months) expressed the least sympathetic view of these women. All of the other Chinese literacy teachers showed a great deal of compassion for immigrant women,

particularly when discussing the challenges these women confronted right after moving to a new and unfamiliar land. Below I describe these teachers' understandings of immigrant women's life challenges in Taiwan.

Family

Husbands. All of the eight Chinese literacy teachers whom I interviewed criticized immigrant women's Taiwanese husbands, pointing out that these men usually came from disadvantaged groups in Taiwanese society. In the worst cases, the husbands were not only physically, mentally, or economically disadvantaged, but were also irresponsible, lacking the motivation to work and often engaging in gambling, drinking, or domestic violence. One teacher told me that she believed that, in most cases, transnational marriages had a positive effect on Taiwanese men: these husbands became more mature and established more stable family circumstances with their new immigrant wives. In some cases, however, the marriages made the husbands even more immature and dependent. This teacher criticized Taiwanese husbands' incapability of establishing secure family environments. She commented, "They [husbands] do love their wives, but their ability is another thing. I mean, some truly have no jobs. He marries her and then wants her to be the breadwinner. I encountered two or three students in this kind of situation. These two or three students, their husbands were completely unemployed for years. So, she has to be the breadwinner. She has to find a job and work" (Teacher Chen, 184-194). This teacher pointed out that, in cases like these, immigrant wives faced great challenges at the beginning of marriage.

Parents-in-law and other family members. In Taiwanese society, three-generational households are still common, particularly in rural areas. Younger married couples are expected to take care of the husband's aging parents by providing a physically, economically, and

emotionally satisfying and supportive environment. Due to this practice and the fact that transnational marriages have a higher incidence in rural areas, many immigrant women reside with their parents-in-law after marriage. In some cases, parents-in-law burden immigrant women by adding another source of stress. One teacher showed her sympathy for these women's situations and noted a certain parallel with her own life.

Quotation #2:

“Do you know why we [literacy teachers] develop very good relationships with them [immigrant women]? It's because when [immigrant women] come here, in the families they face a lot of difficulties. It's just like when we [Taiwanese women] marry our husbands, and we also have to please our mothers-in-law. But their situation is a little bit awkward, because honestly [pause], honestly their husbands' backgrounds...some of them are [pause], they cannot...they cannot find wives. Some of them are [pause], some of them are very old, and some of them are handicapped or something like that, so...”

This teacher's reluctance in articulating the details of the Taiwanese husbands' backgrounds was linked with her great empathy for the challenges these immigrant women faced in their family contexts. Importantly, she expressed her empathy by aligning herself with immigrant women and pointing out that both she and I, as Taiwanese women, also face similar challenge when we marry and become daughters-in-law. However, she explained, it's more challenging still for immigrant women to handle conflicts with their in-laws at home, perhaps due to the negative master narrative prevalent in Taiwanese society. In other words, in the course of her interview, this teacher intended to erode a rampant racism by highlighting her own identity as a

daughter-in-law and thus establishing an alignment with immigrant women. On page 146, I explain in greater detail how literacy teachers built communicative bridges with immigrant women by invoking various social identities in their dialogues with them and interviews with me.

Children. Chinese literacy teachers' empathy extended to their understandings of one particular challenge most immigrant women face upon their arrival in Taiwan—giving birth to a baby. When asked what kind of challenges immigrant women face when they first move to Taiwan, a teacher responded without hesitation, “For one, language. Also...a different culture, different customs.... Because they are, they are still very young, I feel—some are not yet 20 years old—and then they are pregnant” (Teacher Chen, 125-132). A few exchanges later, this teacher remarked,

Quotation #3

“When they first come, they all face a problem. They must give birth to children. All are like that. Poor them, I feel, because I think, ‘Why is this a duty a woman is obligated to fulfill?’ It’s just like...I feel for them. I feel that all the unfairness to women that our society endorses, all of it happens to them [immigrant women]”.

This teacher showed her sympathy toward immigrant women by indicating that they are forced to become responsible caretakers while they are still adjusting to a significant transition in their own lives in a new land. Importantly, this teacher offered her sympathy with women in general—within the greater Taiwanese society, where inequality exists between men and women—challenging the negative stereotypes of immigrant women, and thus defying racism.

As 5 of the 8 Chinese literacy teachers that I interviewed (Teacher Gao, Teacher Wu, Teacher Su, Teacher Chen, and Teacher Xiao) also had experience teaching in elementary schools, I inquired into their understandings of children born to immigrant mothers. Notably, 4 of these 5 teachers (Teacher Gao, Teacher Wu, Teacher Su, and Teacher Chen) believed that, in terms of children's intelligence and academic performance, there existed no differences between Taiwanese and immigrant children. Quite the opposite, the one remaining teacher, along with the other three Chinese literacy teachers who had never taught children before, believed that there were differences between Taiwanese and immigrant children's school performance. In other words, those teachers who had experience working with both children and immigrant mothers discerned no significant differences among children from different backgrounds. However, those teachers who only had experience working with immigrant mothers—but not their children—were more likely to suspect the existence of a gap in school performance between Taiwanese children and children born to transnational marriage families. Yet, very importantly, these teachers did not attribute the cause of the difference to immigrant mothers; rather, fathers and the paternal family background and environment were viewed as responsible for the speculated differences among children.

One teacher who believed that there were no differences among these children indicated that some immigrant mothers worried a great deal about their children's academic performance because they did not want their children left behind. She used the results obtained from a nationwide phonological exam administered to all first-year students in Taiwan to back up her opinion, "I just want to let you know, new immigrant children, indeed, their scores are not lower than Taiwanese children's [scores]." The teacher noted that the Taiwanese Ministry of Education lists three types of students as "disadvantaged students," and "new immigrant children" is one of

the categories (the other two are “children from low-income families” and “mentally or physically disadvantaged students”). In her view, this was an act of discrimination. She commented, “In fact, I don’t know, maybe some people do not like new immigrants; they think it’s going to be a social problem in the future. But, when I see these children, I love them more than our own children [Taiwanese children].” (Note that this teacher revealed that her firsthand observations of and interactions with immigrant children were not in accordance with the discourses that had been widely circulated in the media (see Chapter 1), and that she was offering an implicit critique of the public educational policy.)

This teacher later noted that some immigrant children do indeed perform poorly in school, but she explained that every group of students follows the “normal distribution pattern.” She asserted that the father should be the one to blame. She criticized these fathers, pointing out that they are disadvantaged in Taiwanese society in the first place, and that some simply do not have the capability or the courage to assume their responsibilities as husbands and fathers. She said, “Some [Taiwanese husbands] are incapable. They don’t even have jobs. In some cases, it was ‘his mother’ who decided which girl her son should marry.”

Another teacher (Teacher Xiao) who believed that children from Taiwanese families performed better in school than did children from transnational marriage families commented, “And I find that, just like what we used to say, it is strange, those children born to new immigrant mothers, they seem to be weaker. [...] Well, honestly, it’s real, they really are weaker in their studies.” The teacher went on to explain, “I am not saying that they are less intelligent. In fact, their appearance—I even did research on this, and I have closely observed them—and I found that they are much more attractive than local Taiwanese kids. [Laughs] It’s because their parents’ blood relationship is more distant. [...] Yes, yes, they really are more attractive. Well, of

course, there will be some who say, ‘Ah, it is because they [new immigrant mothers] are pretty that they can come to Taiwan.’” The teacher continued, “Otherwise, when you see the fathers, you will think, ‘Why are the children so (pause)...?’ Right, and I feel that in terms of ability, some kids really are great, so why do they not perform really well in school? It’s not what we would expect: with such ability, you should be able to perform well. And I think the most important factor is their environment and their stimulation—cultural stimulation.” Here again, a teacher was empathizing with immigrant women and pointing out that the reason children born to transnational marriage families performed badly in school was linked to a lack of stimulation at home. And, importantly, immigrant women tended to marry into families with lower socioeconomic statuses and less stimulating home environments. The teacher continued, “Because, honestly, I thought about it very carefully, [new immigrant mothers] come to Taiwan and immediately they are giving birth to children. And then they have to adapt to a new environment. Even when some of them are still struggling very hard within the new environment, they get pregnant, they give birth to children!... Then their children, you tell me what kind of stimulation they can give to their children? No. We used to say that, in early childhood education, we said, ‘By three years of age, your whole life is set.’ It turned out that this was the time when their mothers were trying to make sense of their lives in a new environment. So, the critical period of early childhood education was missed. So I think their children perform not as well, not because of their moms, but because of their home environment. Right, then you think that they also have fathers. Fathers can also give kids some stimulation. But their fathers are those with lower socioeconomic statuses.”

This teacher went on to use examples that she had witnessed to support her statements, and she explicitly told me that she did not think that the children’s weaker educational performance

was linked to the mothers' ethnicity, but rather to the home environment. In her explanation, she mentioned the lack of power and status at home as a reason why these new immigrant mothers could not implement their own child rearing beliefs. She noted, "I think, concerning childhood education, that their status is lower. Then, then they do have their ideas about how to teach children, they do, but they seldom have a chance to really implement these ideas." In this teacher's view, immigrant mothers' child rearing practices were heavily influenced by other family members, particularly by the interventions of parents-in-law.

In sum, no matter whether Chinese literacy teachers believed that children born to transnational marriage families were competitive or not in school performance, they were able to articulate and identify the causes of children's poorer performance: lower socioeconomic statuses and less stimulating home environments. These teachers not only countered the stereotype that a mother's ethnicity or immigration status contributed to a child's performance, they also pointed out that socioeconomic status was the key to the phenomenon.

Workplace

It is not surprising that immigrant women encounter discrimination at the workplace given the stereotypes that have been pervasive in Taiwanese society over the past decade. People often associate immigrant women with money. This association applies not only to the way in which their marriages were formed but also to the continuance of the marriages. The general public attributes immigrant women's motivations for marriage and immigration to their desire to earn and send money back home. Expressions like: "You are purchased," "I have paid to bring you home; you better be good," and "They come here for money," are frequently heard in the two communities I observed and also within the general public discourse. Chinese literacy teachers

showed their sympathies in this regard, which I will illustrate in more detail in the following section, “Critiques of Governmental Educational Policies and Negative Public Discourses.”

Regarding discrimination against immigrant women in the workplace, one teacher provided an interesting and uncommon interpretation. She believed that a certain level of discrimination comes from the fact that immigrant women are highly competitive in the job market. She explained that this is because they are diligent and quick learners and will accept lower salaries. In a tight and competitive job market, it is thus perhaps not surprising that some local Taiwanese want to exclude these women.

Critiques of Government Educational Policies and Negative Public Discourses

Throughout the interviews I conducted, the majority of Chinese literacy teachers noted that their firsthand observations of and interactions with immigrant women were not in accordance with what had been broadcast in the media and with what circulated within the general public discourses. They often criticized the government’s literacy class policies.

Critique on Governmental Policies

Four out of 8 teachers agreed with the governmental policies and believed that literacy classes provided positive outcomes. They explained that, apart from offering language learning opportunities, literacy classes served as venues for these women to express their ideas, share their emotions, seek advice, and obtain social support.

Nevertheless, Chinese literacy teachers generally did not accept the idea that a minimum of 72 hours was sufficient to significantly enhance immigrant women’s proficiency in understanding Chinese. Whether the women benefit from the literacy classes was dependent upon their motivations for attending and their attitudes within the classes. In many cases, the support provided by their Taiwanese families was also a factor.

Only one literacy teacher (Teacher Lin) articulated her strong objection to transnational marriages. She believed that the government was to blame for having authorized these marriages in the first place. She explained to me that it was a serious mistake allowing Taiwanese men to marry foreign brides. In her view, the government's efforts at establishing literacy classes and new immigrant centers were the result of needing to deal with the consequences of having legalized transnational marriages in Taiwan.

Teachers' Discourses Countering the Public Discourses

Generally speaking, the Chinese literacy teachers did not agree with the prevalent public discourses. Seven out of 8 teachers explicitly stated their differences of opinion with the public viewpoint. Their expressions of these views were usually integrated into their answers to other interview questions. Most of the time, they used examples of personal interactions to illustrate to me how their experiences with immigrant women diverged from the views expressed by the general public about these women. Detailed examples are discussed below, in "Chinese Literacy Teachers' Understandings of Themselves: Changes in Attitudes over Time."

Here I provide a few of the quotes uttered by Chinese literacy teachers: "Yes, because, in fact, many things are not like what we thought."; "I feel [that] often, what needs to be reformed is our Taiwanese belief, right. Right, this has to begin within the family!"; "So, honestly, when I see them, in my view, I feel they are making a contribution [to Taiwanese society]"; "In fact, I don't know, maybe some people do not like new immigrants; they think it's going to be a social problem in the future. But, when I see their children, I love them more than our own [Taiwanese children]"; "I feel many things; they are not like what we thought before we really understood them." In sum, these literacy teachers were trying to convey that their direct interactions with

immigrant women had helped them to revise their initial stereotypical perceptions of these women.

Understandings within Local Communities

These teachers were also sympathetic to immigrant women concerning the society by which they were surrounded. For example, one teacher (Teacher Chen) noted that she believed that most of the local perceptions of immigrant women remained negative. She said, “Local people look down on them. Middle-aged women, they said [to them], ‘You are purchased with money [*ni shi hua qian mai lai de a* 你是花錢買來的啊!]” In addition to the negative critiques of public discourses and policies pertaining to immigrant women that most Chinese literacy teachers articulated, this teacher offered a further critique of Taiwanese society, proclaiming its unfairness to women in general. She commented,

Quotation #4

“I feel [immigrant women] are really [pause], maybe because of my own background.... We [she was indicating herself and I] are both educated and we know that, in this society, there are many things unfair to women. For example, for a woman, we...when we are at home, because of traditional views, we have to do more chores. Also, we are mothers. It’s taken for granted that we need to take care of the children. Then, fathers are the breadwinners. In this domain, there are already some conflicts, and I feel this situation is even more likely to happen to [immigrant women], so they have to bear a greater burden.”

This teacher aligned herself with me, identifying us as highly-educated Taiwanese women who understand that gender inequality, first and foremost, has created room for conflicts. She

then aligned herself with immigrant women by highlighting her own identities as a wife and a mother, thus developing a sympathetic view of immigrant women. Importantly, by discussing immigrant women's perspectives and empathizing with them, she rejected the prevailing racism.

Chinese Literacy Teachers' Understandings of Themselves

In addition to gaining an understanding of Chinese literacy teachers' perspectives of immigrant women and their children, I asked these teachers to share with me their understandings of themselves. For example, I wanted to know what goals they had in the classroom, what challenges they themselves faced when teaching immigrant women, and whether they enjoyed teaching them. Throughout the interviews, they had a lot to say about their own changes in perceptions and attitudes toward immigrant women, due to their direct interactions with them. Below I demonstrate these teachers' understandings of their own development over time and then go on to discuss the teaching philosophies and strategies they developed as a result of their revised perceptions of immigrant women.

Changes in Attitudes over Time

When reflecting on their roles as Chinese literacy teachers, they very often, without any prompting, noted to me that their experiences in teaching immigrant women had caused them to dramatically revise their attitudes toward these women. This was a theme that I had not expected but which was frequently mentioned by the teachers. For example, at the very beginning of my interview with a teacher who had taught immigrant women Chinese for 4 years and elementary school students for 6 years, I asked about her impressions of new immigrants. She replied, "My overall impression? Honestly, I think [that] before I had experience teaching them...to be honest, I felt that, um, I shared the perspective that our [Taiwanese] locals had of them. Since I have begun interacting with them, I have been able to understand them from their own perspective.

Yes, because, in fact, many things are not like what we thought. Right, just like one time when I was talking to my colleague, she said to me, ‘What can you teach these new immigrants? Teach them to tolerate [*ren* 忍]!’ I could not agree with her at all in that moment, right. [...] So I feel that the overall impression, compared to one’s real personal experience interacting with them, is different, right. And only after you have real personal experiences interacting with them do you then start to research, to think about why...why are there differences among the children? Right, I can now understand them from a different perspective, and I feel that I think more and more about these trends and the issues [involved].” In other words, this teacher noted that her personal interactions with immigrant women had radically changed her initial perceptions of them. She used to believe the circulated public discourses concerning immigrant women until, that is, she spent time with them and found that her revised understandings of them countered these public discourses.

At another point, this teacher also revealed, “I feel, at many times, what needs to be reformed is our Taiwanese belief, right. Right, this has to begin within the family! That is, their husbands’ [and] their parents-in-law’s beliefs.... If we don’t change their beliefs, these problems will keep going on and on. And when we should think about these problems carefully, you know; a lot of times, it is not the mother’s problem. It is the family...the family they married into; there are problems in these families....” As she had more and more direct interactions with immigrant women, this teacher’s perceptions of them underwent a dramatic change, from initially holding stereotypes against them to eventually wholly understanding the life challenges that they faced.

In another interview, I asked a teacher whether her experiences interacting and teaching immigrant women had had any impact on her. She responded with charged emotion, “Of course! Huge influence!” She revealed that she used to confuse foreign workers and foreign brides and

had negative impressions of “them.” After years of firsthand experience working with immigrant women, she was now aware of the differences among foreign workers, Vietnamese immigrant women, Chinese immigrant women, and Indian immigrant women. She emphasized that these individual groups of women could not be lumped together and understood as one group. Throughout the entire interview, this teacher repeatedly stressed that she thought Vietnamese immigrant women were very naïve, pure, good-hearted, easily contented, hardworking, competitive, and full of affection and potential.

Lastly and importantly, all of these teachers noted that they were originally “assigned” to teach literacy classes. With time, as their attitudes and perceptions changed, there arose different motivations for teaching the classes. Four teachers decided to continue them because they enjoyed both teaching and developing relationships with their immigrant students. One teacher (Teacher Chen) told me that five years ago, she was “assigned” to teach immigrant women Chinese; now, though, she was filled with affection for these women. She said,

Quotation #5

“Maybe what I have been telling you is not very scholarly, but I am very, very sincere when I interact with them. And I share with them my most valuable life experiences so that they accept me and my suggestions. It makes me feel great to be an educator.”

Another teacher (Teacher Xiao) wept during an interview when she told me that she had fought back tears when she announced to her students that she had to quit the position due to other commitments; her students’ response had been tearful as well.

Teaching Philosophies and Pedagogies

For involved Chinese literacy teachers, teaching the language was not their most important goal. These teachers believed that a literacy class had even more to offer. They agreed that learning the language was an “empowering” process, meaning that understanding the language enabled immigrant women to voice for themselves their needs and desires. Importantly, this belief usually shaped these teachers’ pedagogies within their literacy classes.

As one teacher put it, “For me, [teaching immigrant women Chinese] has had a huge impact on my beliefs—a huge change. [...] Since I became familiar with them, I have been thinking, I am always thinking: ‘How can I help them to change themselves, including their beliefs, and even including some of the roles they have to play within their families?’ Then I even keep hoping, hoping I can give them something. I feel literacy learning is not the most important thing for them. Rather, some of their beliefs can be changed, and this is what I really want to give them. Right, so I keep telling them to love themselves, because, in fact, they seem to have lost their selves.”

She explained to me, that, during the four years she had been teaching new immigrant women, she had continued to think about ways these women could gain greater respect at home. She found that she needed to consistently offer her students hope. “From this literacy class, I want them to find hope through their studies!” She continued, “I feel they never, in their minds...have the word ‘pride.’ Because when the larger society is always telling them, ‘You are inferior,’ they really feel themselves to be inferior. It’s just like giving them a label. So, when they come to my class I keep encouraging them to feel proud and have self-confidence [zi xin xin 自信心]. I keep telling them, ‘Why do you think you are different from other people? What are the differences? We are all the same, we are all people, we are not different from one another.

[I] gradually build up some of their capacity to feel self-confident. I feel that in their everyday lives, there are rare opportunities [for them to feel self-assured]. You can even tell from the way they walk. [...] Sometimes I feel very sad for them.” This teacher then linked the commoditization of these new immigrant women to her observation of their extremely low levels of self-confidence: “Sometimes I really feel that. Sometimes they themselves also feel [that they are only commodities], because everyone is telling them, ‘You have been purchased.’ Even their own Taiwanese families hold this view! Then, of course, no wonder they would feel inferior. [...] I feel that they, generally speaking, do not have any self-confidence.” In other words, by working with immigrant women, this teacher not only came to understand them from a different perspective, but also learned to revise and develop a different pedagogical style. And, importantly, her evolution of a different pedagogy prompted her to develop a unique set of teaching techniques in her literacy classroom.

Teaching Strategies

Based on individual teaching philosophies, teachers developed effective strategies to convey what they wanted students to learn in the classroom. Given that certain motivations played a major role in determining whether immigrant women remained continuously enrolled in literacy classes, one teaching strategy a teacher (Teacher Chen) used to motivate her students was to emphasize to them that each was her own children’s role model. She told me, “I made them aware of their own learning attitudes. I would tell them that their children were watching how their mothers were acting. ‘Oh, it is so cold. It’s raining. Mommy doesn’t want to go to school. Mommy is lazy. Your children are watching and observing whether you care about your own studies.’ [...] I told them, ‘You are the persons who control your own and your children’s future, not your husbands.’ Their husbands are unreliable; we know that.” She added that it was

very motivating and inspiring to be able to make immigrant mothers understand that they can have an impact on their own future and on their children's futures.

Another teacher, who believed that enhancing immigrant women's self-esteem, status, and power in the home was the most important thing to convey in the classroom, said, "Then, at that time, I told them...that the only opportunity they had to engage in their children's education was when their children started school, when they started learning the phonology system for Mandarin Chinese (i.e., bo, po, mo, fo, etc.). That is, the level—the level of their educational engagement—in fact, no one could do this back home except themselves." Puzzled by what this teacher meant to illustrate, I asked her to explain her idea in another way. She said that because these mothers were familiar with the most up-to-date teaching materials because of their own recent attendance at literacy classes, they had an advantage over their parents-in-law and husbands, whose experiences with the phonology system for Mandarin Chinese were in the distant past. "[When their children] go to elementary school—into the first grade or [even] while in the final year of kindergarten—what their children learn in school is something that other family members cannot supervise. This is a time when only [immigrant mothers] with their own recent experience studying Mandarin can engage in their children's education. [If they do this,] then they will be allowed to have a voice [at home]; they can even raise their status [at home]. In fact, I have used this strategy to instruct many mothers. It is very effective!"

The teacher went on to offer another example: "Because in fact, their husbands, we have come to realize that...their socioeconomic statuses are not high. Right, and the phonology system for Mandarin Chinese, this is not something everyone knows how to teach. [...] Maybe their husbands are okay, but the problem is that their understanding of the phonology system for Mandarin Chinese is outdated. Right, the husband may be able to teach Chinese characters and

math, but as for the phonology system for Mandarin Chinese, he still wouldn't be able to do it. ...Right, so I always encourage immigrant mothers that you need to study with your children. For example, one immigrant mother asked me what she should do since she did not understand her children's homework: 'Should I send my children to after-school programs?' I then suggested to her, 'Why don't you study with your children?'" Puzzled by the teacher's explanation, I asked her to elaborate, and she continued, "Because adults learn more quickly than kids. Right, when you learn more quickly, you can teach your own children. And then your children will find that, um, in fact, only my mom can help me with my homework; then the children will listen to their mothers, and their mothers will thus receive respect. Right, so I think they can gradually build up their self-confidence from there. Then their statuses at home can change." This teacher, after years of experience working with immigrant women, had eventually come to develop a set of effective teaching strategies that not only inspired immigrant mothers' literacy learning but also influenced these mothers' statuses back at home.

In sum, Chinese literacy teachers who had frequent and regular interactions with immigrant women got to know plenty about their life circumstance and challenges. These teachers offered specific examples of the challenges the women faced in their families and were empathetic toward them. Although some Chinese literacy teachers believed that immigrant mothers did not know how to teach their children, these teachers were actually more critical of the women's husbands than of the women themselves. In addition, the majority of teachers offered critiques of the government's policies and the general public's opinions concerning immigrant women.

Discourse Analysis of Interviews with Chinese Literacy Teachers

Inspired by Goffman's (1959) work, "The representation of self in everyday life," and Wortham's (1996) work in "Techniques for discovering speakers' footing," I examined the

transcripts of my interviews with these literacy teachers with the goal of investigating how these teachers had constructed their counter-narratives during the course of the interviews.

I found that often these teachers articulated their thoughts to me by invoking different social roles during the course of the interviews. They did so by manipulating personal pronouns in order to shift their social identities. For instance, sometimes “we” referred to “the teacher and I;” at other times, it referred to “the teacher and her immigrant students.” Just so, “they” sometimes referred to “immigrant women” and other times to “those Taiwanese who hold stereotypes.” Lastly and importantly, these literacy teachers, by shifting their social identities during the interviews, created a new moral discourse that indeed challenged the negative master narrative circulating in Taiwanese society.

I use my interviews with one particular literacy teacher (Teacher Chen) to specifically exemplify in what ways the teachers constructed their counter-narratives. Above, five quotes were indented in order to aid in their quick referencing. For readers’ convenience, in Appendix F, I put together these quotations.

I follow the flow of my interview with this teacher to discern how her manipulations of pronouns aided her to align herself with different social identities to reject racism. She began illustrating her understandings of immigrant women by creating a sympathetic view of immigrant women in her description of them, as shown in Quotation #3. Then, in Quotation #4, she shifted her own identity to group herself and I together as two educated Taiwanese women who understood how gender works in this world, knowing as we do that women are often treated unfairly. Soon after, she changed to align herself and I with all other Taiwanese women, as shown in Quotation #2 where “we” referred to “Taiwanese women,” who also faced the same challenges as immigrant women faced. She said, “It’s just like when we marry our husbands, and

we also have to please our mothers-in-law.” Later on, she very clearly identified herself with immigrant women, as shown in Quotation #5. (I, as a single woman, then became an outsider in her discourse.).

By putting Quotations # 3, 4, 2, and then 5 all together, it was obvious that her language was highly gendered and that she noticed similarities between her own experiences and those of immigrant women, which is the opposite of “othering,”—that is, immigrant women were not only different from but also inferior to Taiwanese women—one of the long-lasting negative stereotypes circulated in Taiwanese society. In those quotes, she seemed to convey to me that conflicts within the home context were not just the problems for foreigners and immigrant women but were challenges we all faced as wives, as mothers, and as daughters-in-law. While she spoke, this teacher was trying to break down racism, discrimination, and stereotypes by constantly shifting her own social identities—from educated modern Taiwanese women, to Taiwanese women in general, and finally, to women as a whole, no matter their backgrounds. Eventually, in Quotation #5, she aligned herself with immigrant women, leaving me an outsider, and noting to me that maybe what she has told me was not scholarly, but that she and her immigrant students worked together to support each other to resolve conflicts that wives, mothers, and daughters-in-law all faced at home. Notably, this teacher concluded her understandings of immigrant women that, portraying them in a positive light, immigrant women they are individuals worth of admirations and praises because they uphold virtues that have been lost in recent generations, as shown in Quotation #1.

In sum, literacy teachers were able to successfully establish connections with their immigrant students despite their different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. By developing a sympathetic moral discourse and shifting their social identities, these teachers were able to, first,

craft a narrative that challenged the negative master narrative of immigrant women and, second, help these women negotiate the tasks of emerging adulthood in a new culture by offering concrete assistance beyond teaching them Chinese.

Kindergarten Teachers' Perspectives on Immigrant Mothers and Their Children

I interviewed three public kindergarten teachers, two in Sunset Mountain and one in Moonrise River. Although the number of kindergarten teachers I interviewed was relatively small, I engaged in intensive and thorough interactions with the two teachers in Sunset Mountain. I got to know them well because I was able to enter the kindergarten to conduct classroom observations for 6 months (spring semester 2008). Every week, I visited the kindergarten for an entire day, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., documenting each time what a typical day was like in this particular kindergarten. In this class, 12 out of the 18 children were from transnational marriage families. Of these 12 children, 11 had mothers from southern Vietnam (one was Chinese-Vietnamese and 10 were native Vietnamese), and one child's mother was from the Philippines. Although I got to know all 18 students, I chose 6 particular children from Vietnamese-Taiwanese transnational marriage families and observed each of them for three different days in order to better understand how they engaged in classroom activities. Throughout the observation period, I asked the two kindergarten teachers for explanations or interpretations if I encountered anything I did not understand or found particularly interesting. By the end of my fieldwork, in addition to these casual conversations, I had gathered four formal interviews with these two teachers (two interviews for each teacher, one conducted before I entered the classroom for observation and the other conducted at the end of my fieldwork). The length of these interviews ranged from 1 to 5.5 hours, for a total of 11 hours of interviews. Additionally, I logged 108 hours of classroom observation and kept a notebook documenting my everyday and informal exchanges with the two

teachers. In other words, my interactions and engagements with these two teachers were regular, continuous, in-depth, and for much of the time, informal and spontaneous.

Using the data obtained from the formal interviews as my primary source and the observation field notes as a supplementary source, in the following section I present my findings with regard to three areas: (1) teachers' perceptions of immigrant mothers and their children, (2) their critiques of educational policies and negative public discourses, and (3) their understandings of themselves.

Perceptions of Immigrant Mothers and Their Children

All three kindergarten teachers reported that their interactions with most immigrant mothers were frequent but brief. Face-to-face verbal communication took place almost every day when the mothers dropped their children off in the mornings and picked them up in the afternoons. Phone calls were made in between if necessary. In addition, there was a parent-teacher meeting every semester. Written exchanges also occurred daily via communication books. The teachers wrote comments about what the child did and performed at school that day in a booklet that the child brought home. Parents were expected to read the comments, provide feedback, and sign the book every evening.

When asked to offer their major impressions of immigrant mothers, all three teachers mentioned that these women were too young to be parents. The teachers felt that, as a result, child rearing might not be the mothers' top priority because they were still exploring and trying to make sense of their own life experiences. They might be more focused on their own education or becoming financially independent than on taking care of their children. As mentioned previously, this discourse also emerged in my interviews with literacy teachers.

Kindergarten teachers indeed expressed some negative impressions of immigrant mothers. Two of the teachers mentioned that they had noticed that immigrant mothers tended to compare themselves with their Vietnamese friends regarding how much money they sent back home, and that these mothers put more importance in making money than in engaging in their children's education. For example, one teacher (with 21 years of teaching experience) said, "I found that new immigrant mothers, after they come here, are all very eager to make money!" (Teacher Lan, 305) When I asked the teacher how she got this impression, she explained, "Particularly when children reach kindergarten age, the [immigrant mother] has more time. Oh, then she wants to go out to work, is eager to make money. Then she [pause]...perhaps [she] needs some extra money? Perhaps the husband only gives her household expenses? Then she does not have any extra money. According to what I heard, she wants to save money to send [it] back home to help her birth family. Because usually the family back in Vietnam is very poor, she wants to help, but maybe [she] feels [it would be] inappropriate to ask her husband for money; I mean, to ask her husband to support her family back home" (Teacher Lan, 307-317). This teacher tried to be sympathetic when she interpreted immigrant mothers' motivations for making money but, compared to Chinese literacy teachers, this kindergarten teacher narrated her impression of immigrant mothers in a more negative light. Importantly, this teacher had not witnessed or observed what she noted to me; rather, her impressions were based on hearsay.

All three teachers indicated that some immigrant mothers were quite concerned about their children's education, even though child rearing may not have been their top priority. As one teacher put it, "Some immigrant mothers really care a lot about their children's learning [and] educational conditions. Some of the immigrant [mothers] care much more than local Taiwanese [mothers]....Yes, maybe they [immigrant mothers] also worry that children are, I mean, less

competitive in learning. Yes, I feel they, um...yes, some of them are very anxious. But there indeed exist some who do not care” (Teacher Lan, 219-225). These teachers explained that some immigrant mothers might have internalized the widespread negative public discourses that they heard and were concerned that their children would be left behind in their studies. These anxious mothers thus took the initiative to prevent their children from falling behind by improving their own capabilities to supervise their children’s homework or by sending them to after-school programs.

One teacher provided a specific illustration. She described a Vietnamese mother’s active involvement in her children’s education. This mother talked to teachers and checked her children’s homework regularly. Additionally, this mother was assertively improving her own education. She had completed her elementary school education by attending three evening courses weekly for two years in the nearby town, Moonrise River. She had then registered for the junior high school program for adults, which required her to attend school from 6:20-10:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, for another year in a more distant community. The teacher praised this immigrant mother for her persistence in pursuing her own and her children’s education and noted as well that this mother was blessed to have such a supportive family that allowed her to attend school every weekday evening.

Interestingly, all three teachers cast immigrant mothers in a positive light when compared with local Taiwanese mothers. For example, one teacher (Teacher Lan) told me that, overall, she thought immigrant mothers were okay. She even praised immigrant mothers by saying, “[They are] fine. Additionally, they treat, for example, teachers like me with respect. They also teach their children manners. Ah, sometimes they’re even better than Taiwanese mothers! Right, [immigrant mothers] ask children to greet teachers in the morning. ‘You need to say “Good

morning” to your teachers.’ I mean, in terms of educating about everyday life [*sheng huo jiao yu* 生活教育, meaning education about how to conduct properly in everyday life], they are great! Right, I feel that they care a lot about teaching good manners” (Teacher Lan, 260-265).

Two of the teachers expressed their sympathy for immigrant mothers by pointing out that their lack of authority and power at home may have influenced their child rearing practices. One of the teachers revealed that she encouraged Vietnamese immigrant mothers to speak Vietnamese with their children at home. This teacher believed that exposing children to different cultural backgrounds and providing them with opportunities to learn different languages would result in positive outcomes in the long run. Some Vietnamese mothers told her, though, that their husbands did not support these ideas, leaving immigrant mothers no freedom to teach their children Vietnamese. The teacher told me that Taiwanese husbands required their wives to speak Mandarin at home. Since the husbands could not understand Vietnamese, they didn’t feel comfortable hearing mothers and children speaking it, because they were not sure what was being discussed. In other words, for transnational marriage families like this, there is a “Mandarin only” policy at home.

But this teacher also offered examples of husbands encouraging their wives to speak Vietnamese with the children. “For example, a father said, ‘I teach Mandarin!’ Do you understand what I mean? [Immigrant mothers] do not speak standard Mandarin. ‘You don’t speak standard Mandarin. Don’t speak Mandarin with the children. I will speak [Mandarin]!’ So, the father said, ‘I will teach Mandarin and you teach Vietnamese.’ He is afraid that, because the kids are only just learning, if you speak non-standard Mandarin, there will be an accent, right? But what I have seen has been okay, their Mandarin. When they are three or four years old [and start kindergarten], their Mandarin is okay, no problem.” Although this father encouraged

Vietnamese at home, the reason he did so was as a precaution against the children picking up Mandarin with an accent. This explanation actually cast the immigrant mother's Chinese language proficiency in a negative light.

Another teacher sympathized with immigrant mothers by describing the constraints imposed by husbands and in-laws. She used an illustration to explain her idea to me: "For example, an immigrant mother—I heard this originally from an elder [in town]—the father initially was thinking about providing his wife with a motorcycle, and he discussed this with his mother by saying that this would make picking up the kids at school much easier for the wife. But this father, he heard, he heard others say, 'No way!' Then they said, 'If she has a motorcycle, then very likely she will wander around everywhere.' [...] Then the husband cannot control her. He thinks if she has no means of transportation, she can only stay home; then she won't be able to wander around, because [by using the] community bus, each day...there are only two buses a day." This teacher shared with me this example that she had "heard" and showed her sympathy concerning immigrant mothers' physical constraints, or more broadly, these mothers' paucity of status, power, and voice in the home.

Two teachers specifically distinguished between two different cohorts of Vietnamese immigrant mothers (dependent upon when they'd immigrated), regarding the previous cohort (those who had immigrated to Taiwan a decade ago) in a more positive light. They noted that the more recent immigrants knew much better than their predecessors about how to survive well in Taiwanese society, due to better established resources and increasing Vietnamese networks in Taiwan. These teachers discerned that, by contrast with the previous cohort who spent much more time at home with their kids, newer immigrant mothers were more eager to find jobs and make money, thus putting their children's education second. They described the recent cohort as

more stylish and more assertive. The teachers admitted that in some cases, though, these women had no choice but to find jobs and make money, since they were expected to be the breadwinners.

To conclude, kindergarten teachers described immigrant mothers as women who wanted to work and very much wanted to earn money, but also as mothers who cared and felt concerned about their children's education, and about teaching them good manners as well as respect for their teachers. Although the teachers had frequent interactions with these women, they revealed that they had very little knowledge about immigrant mothers' backgrounds. As a result, their understandings of these women usually derived from either random topics that had come up in conversations with immigrant mothers themselves, or from examples and stories they had heard from other community residents. Many examples they shared with me had come from third parties, particularly those stories that were described as having happened at home. In other words, kindergarten teachers' understandings of immigrant mothers were not always based on firsthand knowledge; often these impressions were formed indirectly. Kindergarten teachers' perceptions of immigrant women were thus more in line with the master narrative pervasive in Taiwanese society.

In sum, compared to the Chinese literacy teachers, these kindergarten teachers were less familiar with immigrant mothers' life circumstances in Taiwan. The kindergarten teachers had a lot to say about children from transnational marriage families, though, and their understandings of immigrant children were both intensive (thorough and exhaustive) and extensive (longitudinal).

Children from Transnational Families Are Not Different from Other Children

All three kindergarten teachers said that, overall, children from transnational marriage families performed as well as local Taiwanese children. They described immigrant children as

quick learners, smart, witty, and able to easily catch up. These teachers showed their consensus in statements like, “Honestly, I feel these kids are okay, whether considering cognitive development or learning capabilities. Honestly, there is no difference between them and local kids.” One teacher noted that immigrant children arrive at school speaking perfect Mandarin. She commented that, in many instances, she had observed immigrant mothers and their children speaking Mandarin to each other. She had not observed these children and mothers speaking Vietnamese in the school context. Even kids who perhaps spoke Vietnamese at home always spoke Mandarin to each other at school. She pointed out that it is obvious that Mandarin Chinese is the dominant language for children from transnational marriage families. She thus didn’t think that children from these families came to school lacking age-appropriate Chinese language proficiency.

Two of the teachers praised children from transnational marriage families by providing examples of immigrant children outperforming local Taiwanese children. In addition, one teacher told me, “Generally, I don’t think there are significant differences. If you really want me to find some difference, I would say immigrant children have a different temperament from local Taiwanese children.” This teacher cast immigrant children in a positive light by explaining that she thought immigrant children sometimes made easier transitions from home to school. She said, “In terms of verbal expression, managing daily routines, [immigrant children are] more independent!” She also commented, “I feel—this is what I observed—I feel immigrant children experience less feelings of tension and fear. I can only guess why. Right, I very much want to know the reason [for this difference], because I’ve found that immigrant children...you know, often when a child comes to school, he feels anxious, and he may cry or make a scene.” I confirmed with the teacher that she was talking about separation anxiety. She responded, “Yes, it

is normal, because he is unfamiliar with the new environment. But I find that very few immigrant children express this emotion. In my experience, I feel it happens less. Maybe when [immigrant children] come, they too are fearful, but [I] feel that they show less anxiety than local Taiwanese children. And they adapt very quickly. ”

The teacher tried to make sense of what she observed and offered two possible explanations. First, she suggested that immigrant children were perhaps more adaptable because they had experienced a lot of changes at home throughout the time that their mothers were becoming accustomed to Taiwanese society while also raising them. Additionally, the parents’ new and unstable marital situations might have forced these children to learn to adapt quickly. Her second explanation was entirely different. She thought that immigrant children were “more isolated” and “not fully engaged” when they come to school and possibly felt “less sensitive” to environmental changes. This reduced sensitivity to changes might explain lower levels of anxiety during the transition from home to school. The teacher then said, “But I don’t really know the reason, because I do not really completely understand immigrant mothers.”

An important note is that the five fundamental evaluative areas of interest in kindergarten education are verbal expression, interpersonal relationships, creativity, problem-solving ability, and establishment of daily routines. The fact that academic achievement and outcome is not the primary assessment of children’s kindergarten education leaves room for teachers to speculate about potential differences when children enter elementary school. In fact, all three teachers that I interviewed pointed out that even though they did not see obvious differences between children from transnational marriages and Taiwanese families, they wondered what would happen when those children entered elementary school, where academic achievement was one of the most important indicators used by teachers and parents to evaluate children’s school performance.

Additionally, one teacher speculated that Taiwanese and immigrant mothers may have different expectations about their children's kindergarten education; that is, they may want their children to learn different things in kindergarten. She used what happened when mothers came to school to pick up their children as an example to illustrate her thoughts. She told me that the first thing that Taiwanese moms asked their children was, "Do you have any homework today?" By contrast, immigrant mothers first said to their children, "You need to say goodbye to the teacher!" In other words, this teacher believed that Taiwanese mothers may focus on children's academic performance and outcomes, whereas immigrant mothers may put more emphasis on children's manners, interacting with others, or mastering daily life skills.

In sum, kindergarten teachers believed that children from transnational marriage families were as competitive as local Taiwanese children, at least in terms of the five areas of evaluation in kindergarten education. They all speculated, however, that some differences might become apparent once children entered elementary school. Most importantly, all three teachers stressed that the home environment and parental involvement were the best indicators of children's performance in school, not the ethnicity of the mother.

Fathers Play an Important Role

A significant finding from my interviews with kindergarten teachers is the important role they considered fathers playing in their children's education, particularly when immigrant mothers had limited Mandarin language skills and limited knowledge of the educational system as a whole in Taiwan, and when immigrant mothers' personal schooling experience had been dramatically different from their children's. The teachers criticized fathers for failing to get involved in their children's education. Consider as an example my conversation with the teacher who had 21 years of experience teaching kindergarten in Sunset Mountain. When I asked her

whether she had observed any particular differences between the children born to transnational marriage families and the local Taiwanese children, she responded, “I don’t think so. Because I think local Taiwanese children—indeed, many of them—are also slow in learning. Regarding immigrant children, I feel that if the father, um...cares about the children—I feel if he cares about children’s education—[then] basically the children are okay. That’s how I feel. ” She then stressed the important role fathers play in children’s education, particularly in transnational marriage families. Yet even when they realized the importance of their role, she noted, most fathers were not really involved in their children’s education, believing that education was more the mothers’ responsibility. “So [the immigrant mother] cannot assist [her children] and, honestly...those fathers who are married to foreign brides, um, basically, um, the majority of them are not really paying attention to their children’s education. Well, some [fathers] really care, but the majority of them are [not paying attention]. ...The mother cannot understand what is written in the communication book. She doesn’t understand it. But he still thinks it’s her responsibility to sign the book!”

I asked the teacher how she could tell who was in charge of the children’s education at home. She responded, “[I] base it on the communication book. I see who signs the book most of the time. Most of the time, it is the mothers!” She then commented that it was the same for Taiwanese families: mothers were usually the ones who signed the books. In other words, she thought that working-class fathers were not involved in their children’s education, no matter whether mothers had jobs or not, nor whether mothers were Taiwanese or Vietnamese. This is another piece of evidence that evinces that teachers attributed children’s academic achievement to the socioeconomic status of the family rather than to the ethnicity of the mother.

This teacher, though, provided me with an exceptional example of a participatory family (i.e., Mrs. Jade's family mentioned in Chapter 3) who did not fit her description. Instead of the mother, the girl's father and aunt both actively participated in her education. This child, although born to a transnational marriage family, excelled in many aspects of kindergarten. When describing this child, the teacher said she had excellent verbal expression, was an extremely quick learner, and was clever in problem-solving, but that she often threw temper tantrums in order to get the teachers' attention. This teacher seemed to suggest that fathers'—or more broadly—parents' involvement in children's education is a more precise indicator of children's performance in school.

Kindergarten teachers also described husbands in transnational marriage families as coming from disadvantaged groups within Taiwanese society. One teacher said, "But they, very often—those fathers who marry foreign brides—their socioeconomic status is lower. [...] There was once an immigrant mother who told me [about her husband]. I had said to her, 'If you do not know how to fill out the forms...' Because when their children enrolled in kindergarten, there were many forms parents had to fill out, right? For [immigrant mothers], it was very challenging; some of them really did not know how to fill out the forms. So I said to her, '... You could take them home and ask your husband to help you with the forms.' She then said, 'He can't [help me]. He even needs me to help him with writing.'" This teacher used this as an example to explain to me that, although it may have appeared that husbands were unwilling to be involved in their children's education, sometimes it may have been that they simply did not have the capacity to be involved.

Although kindergarten teachers expressed their sympathy for immigrant mothers by criticizing their Taiwanese husbands, these teachers sympathized less than the Chinese literacy

teachers did. At the same time, kindergarten teachers did not perceive particularly significant differences among children from different cultural backgrounds. There were two important findings that emerged here. First, although kindergarten teachers had less direct interaction with immigrant mothers than Chinese literacy teachers had, kindergarten teachers' perceptions of immigrant mothers involved a complicated mix of positive impressions (e.g., that they cared about their children's education), negative impressions (e.g., that making money was their top priority), and sympathy for them. Second, kindergarten teachers had considerable direct interaction with immigrant children, and they all reported that immigrant children were as competitive as local Taiwanese children. These findings, along with the findings that emerged from my interviews with literacy teachers, impel me to posit that more direct interaction with immigrant mothers or immigrant children leads to a deeper understanding of transnational marriage families, and to less of a tendency to believe that stereotypes present an accurate picture of them.

Parental Involvement Is What Really Matters

Importantly, all three teachers stressed that they believed that children's school performance and overall adjustment depended on "parental involvement" and "home environment," rather than on the mothers' ethnicities. One teacher justified the importance she placed on this involvement by saying that if none of the parents got involved in their children's education, both local Taiwanese children and immigrant children from transnational marriage families would begin at the same level. That is, they were equal in terms of the educational resources available to them at home. In her view, what really mattered in terms of children's school performance was parental involvement, which often positively correlated with parents' socioeconomic statuses. The fact that working-class parents tended to be less engaged in their children's

education and were also inclined to perceive teaching as the responsibility of teachers meant that in a rural working-class community (like the one in which she teaches), local Taiwanese children and immigrant children were both disadvantaged to begin with when compared with children from middle-class families. As she noted, in this rural working-class community, Taiwanese mothers were not teaching their children, and immigrant mothers did not know how to teach their children. Though Taiwanese and immigrant mothers may have had different reasons for not being engaged in their children's education, as far as the teachers were concerned, the outcome was the same. It is for this reason that this teacher did not think that, in her classroom at least, immigrant children were in a disadvantaged situation, nor did she believe that immigrant children performed worse than local Taiwanese children.

Another teacher mentioned that the quality of the parents' marriage also had an impact on children's school performance. Because most of the transnational marriages were made possible through marriage brokers and the knots were tied in a relatively short amount of time, maintaining a good quality of marital relationship was usually more challenging. The downside of a poor relationship was that the family system tended to be less stable, and this left parents in a more challenging position with respect to raising and educating their children.

If parental involvement was limited, the teacher continued, then children's school adjustment and achievements depended solely on the children's own learning attitudes, abilities, and motivations. That is, whether the child was actively engaged and involved in school depended exclusively on each child's own characteristics. Of course, the teacher noted, children who were more curious and had more positive attitudes about learning usually adjusted well and performed better in all areas.

Critiques of Governmental Educational Policies and Negative Public Discourses

All three teachers very harshly criticized the Taiwanese government's responses to the new immigrant phenomenon. Also, each of the three teachers provided a counter-discourse to the general public's perceptions of children from transnational marriage families.

Teachers' Discourses Countering the Public Discourses

Kindergarten teachers confessed to me that they had expected immigrant children to be slower in learning and more delayed in cognitive and language development prior to their experience teaching them. The teachers' first-hand personal interactions with these children made them realize that this view, which had been widely circulated in Taiwanese society, was a stereotype. One teacher commented, "At the very beginning, we thought that way as well, that maybe [immigrant children are] slower learners. Well, there are [some slow immigrant children], but this always happens when you have a group of children. I don't know if this has anything to do with immigrant mothers, because there are also some local Taiwanese kids who are very slow at learning." This teacher added, "I feel [immigrant mothers] only differ with respect to language proficiency.... I don't think there is a huge difference. I don't think we should categorize them as, that is, um, those 'Vietnamese immigrant mothers' or 'immigrant children,' like that" (Teacher Lan, 273). This teacher suggested that the fact that the government categorized and labeled "immigrant children" and established policies favoring them over the entire group of children was not wise.

Another teacher with 6 years of teaching experience in Sunset Mountain had some rather harsh criticism for both the public discourse and the governmental policies. She said, "I very often think about this [issue]. Honestly, I don't really like the idea that they are categorized as 'disadvantaged students,' because I don't ever feel that they are different. [...] In addition, I

think it could be because this is a rural area that I find this, [but] if you compare Taiwanese mothers with immigrant mothers, I, I don't think that Taiwanese mothers have more advantages [here] or are more assertive. ” When I asked the teacher to elaborate, she told me that most of the parents in this community were working-class and struggling to meet the demands of basic family expenses. She explained that if parents were busy working and did not pay a lot of attention to their children's education, it did not make any difference whether the children had Taiwanese mothers or immigrant mothers. In other words, this teacher seemed to suggest close correlations between children's performance in school, the level of parental involvement, and the richness of the home environment, but she did not see any correlation to the mothers' cultural backgrounds or ethnicities. She pointed out that she had sometimes felt immigrant mothers, who were more anxious, cared more about their children's education, partly because they themselves had not been educated in Taiwan and thus had limited knowledge about their children's educational opportunities, and partly because they were afraid their children would come to exemplify the negative descriptions that had been circulated in Taiwanese society. Restating her impression about the differences in children's school performance, she said, “I don't think it's because of foreign brides. I think it is due to the family environment.” She concluded by telling me that she didn't know where those stereotypes came from. And she reiterated her criticism of the government for responding to the new immigrant phenomenon by implementing policies based on stereotypes rather than on hard evidence.

Disagreement with Educational Policies

This teacher vociferously disagreed with the government's educational policies and commented, “I never, I never liked this idea [of categorizing immigrant children under ‘disadvantaged students’]. I mean, why do you put them in that category? Because I have never

thought so! ... A lot of studies are carried out because we think [immigrant children] are a disadvantaged group, so we have to investigate the situation and see what kind of assistance they need.” At another point, she noted, “I’m very worried. A lot of professors and researchers come in [to the classroom]. Maybe they really do see some existing differences; why else would the government put so much emphasis on this issue?” She stressed that what she wanted to make clear to me was her belief that hard evidence should precede the implementation of a policy. It seemed to her, however, that the government had implemented the policy first and then spent a lot of resources trying to prove that a difference between the children did indeed exist. As this teacher saw it, there were no differences, and she argued that the government neglected the adequate order of a policy implementation.

Kindergarten Teachers’ Understandings of Themselves

Teaching Philosophies and Pedagogies

As for the teachers’ philosophies on how to teach children from different cultural backgrounds, they each revealed that they did not want to make children’s parents’ cultural backgrounds into an issue in the classroom. It’s important and interesting to note, though, that these teachers provided different explanations as to why. One teacher said that she tried to avoid differentiating children from different cultural backgrounds, and so she purposefully did not mention Vietnamese culture in the classroom unless it came up unexpectedly. Another teacher revealed that she did not make any distinction among children because she really believed that there were no differences in terms of how the children looked and performed. In other words, the former teacher acknowledged children’s different cultural backgrounds but didn’t want to highlight those differences within her classroom, whereas the latter believed that the differences didn’t exist and thus it didn’t make sense to her to distinguish among them.

Teaching Challenges

As for whether immigrant mothers' Chinese language proficiency had an influence on parent-teacher exchanges regarding children's kindergarten education, the teachers agreed that it was not a problem for them to communicate with immigrant mothers verbally. However, written communication was much more challenging, as some immigrant mothers could not fully understand written Chinese. Thus, extra efforts (such as phone calling) were required if they wanted to be sure of clear communication with these mothers.

One challenge a teacher expressed facing was that most of the time she received no feedback from immigrant mothers. She offered three explanations for this lack of response. First, immigrant mothers did not understand written Chinese. Second, they were not familiar with the Taiwanese educational system. Third, they had limited resources within the community. Her concern with the emerging number of children from transnational marriage families was grounded in this lack of effective parent-teacher exchanges. Another teacher was sympathetic when she cited immigrant mothers' lack of feedback. Her understanding was that these immigrant mothers did not know "how" to get involved in their children's education. She explained, "I feel that they just need a little bit more encouragement.[...] I mean, based on my own observation, I don't feel that they are uncooperative. [...] I feel it's that they don't know how to enter this domain of their children's lives. [...] I say so because when we hold some activities, immigrant mothers' attendance rate is even higher than local Taiwanese mothers." In other words, this teacher believed that immigrant mothers had great attitudes but that they didn't know what kind of resources they had.

Significantly, all three teachers speculated about possible problems in the future. Take as an example what a teacher said, "We [kindergarten teachers] do not sense huge differences [now].

Perhaps elementary schoolteachers will feel differently from kindergarten teachers. The only thing I find especially challenging is the communication between teachers and parents.”

Teaching Strategies

A solution these teachers came up with to solve the difficulties they encountered while communicating with immigrant mothers was to create “visual communication books” by pasting photos and pictures in the communication books. They explained that in this way immigrant mothers at least got an idea of what kinds of activities their children were engaged in at kindergarten. These teachers revealed that they found this solution worked much better than providing immigrant mother solely with written feedback.

When I asked the teachers whether they integrated Vietnamese culture into their teaching programs, one teacher reported that she had tried once, unsuccessfully, and had never tried again. She had invited a Vietnamese immigrant mother to the classroom to tell the children some Vietnamese children’s stories. However, she found it difficult to keep the students’ attention on the topic, and thus it had limited effect. But, once in a while, kindergarten teachers held activities such as “multicultural week,” during which immigrant mothers were invited to the classroom to introduce food, clothing, and customs from their own birth countries.

To get the fathers involved in immigrant children’s education, kindergarten teachers created opportunities for those fathers. A teacher said, “...She [an immigrant mother] probably cannot fill out those forms independently. In that case, I always encourage her to fill out the forms with her husband. [...] Sometimes I call the father on purpose.” This teacher explained that she would sometimes call and inform the child’s father that he needed to work with his wife to complete some forms that night. Or, when a child got sick in school, she would sometimes call the father

instead of the mother to come and pick up the child. This teacher believed these were at least some opportunities in which they could get fathers involved in their children's education.

Elementary Schoolteachers' Perspectives on Immigrant Mothers and Their Children

I interviewed 9 first- and second-grade teachers in order to find out how immigrant children fared once they entered elementary school, when academic engagement and achievement became the center of focus. The reason I chose to interview first- and second-grade teachers is that, when I was conducting my fieldwork in 2007-2008, the influx of immigrant children enrolling in elementary schools was just starting, as the new immigration phenomenon had begun about a decade earlier. That is, immigrant women had married Taiwanese men and become mothers usually within the first 2 to 3 years of marriage, and thus many of these children born at that time were entering the first and second grades in school when I did my fieldwork.

Among those 9 teachers, 5 taught new immigrants Chinese language in addition to their full-time jobs as elementary schoolteachers (Teacher Gao, Teacher Wu, Teacher Su, Teacher Chen, and Teacher Xiao). The teaching experiences of all 9 ranged from 3 to 16 years. Six of the teachers held bachelor's degrees and the other 3 held master's degrees. All were female.

An important distinction arose out of my interviews with these elementary schoolteachers regarding whether or not, in their everyday teaching, they held the categorical mindset of separating immigrant children from local Taiwanese children. My attention was drawn to this when a teacher said, "New immigrant children's problem? I never thought about this until that day when you asked to interview me about new immigrant children's issues. It was only at that moment that I realized maybe I should pay more attention to these kids." Very often, the teachers I interviewed would ask me to define what I meant by "new immigrants." Most teachers wanted to know whether, in my research, "new immigrants" referred simply to Southeast Asian women,

or also included wives from China or other Western countries. Although we would eventually reach a consensus that I was focusing on Vietnamese immigrants, I noticed that, much of the time, these teachers did not really separate Vietnamese mothers from other Southeast Asian mothers (e.g., Thais, Filipinos, and Indonesians). When asked to identify new immigrant students' mothers' ethnicities, only two teachers could mentally recall accurate information, while most of the others who thought that specific students' mothers were from Southeast Asian countries had to go back to check the students' basic information sheets to be certain about these mothers' ethnicities. As I had obtained complete information sheets from the director of academic affairs, I discovered that two of these teachers were mistaken in their recall of the information. This made me aware of the fact that, for a lot of elementary schoolteachers, the ethnicities of their students' mothers did not necessarily represent an important piece of information to them. Surprisingly, the majority of teachers reported that they encountered bigger challenges when they worked with children from single-parent [*dan qin* 單親] or grandparent-raised [*ge dai jiao yang* 隔代教養] families than with children from transnational marriage families.

Elementary schoolteachers' perceptions of immigrant mothers and their children were more diverse when compared to kindergarten teachers'. However, many of the findings from my interviews with elementary school teachers are in line with those interviews with kindergarten teachers. Below I describe these elementary schoolteachers' understandings of this new immigrant group based on 10 hours of interviews I gathered. Findings are illustrated pertaining to three domains: (1) perceptions of immigrant mothers and their children, (2) critiques of governmental educational policies and negative public discourses, and (3) elementary schoolteachers' self-reflections.

Perceptions of Immigrant Mothers and Their Children

Compared to kindergarten teachers, elementary schoolteachers reported that they had limited direct interaction with immigrant mothers. For example, after a teacher told me that her impression of Vietnamese immigrant mothers was that they were very stylish and fashionable, she confessed, “I actually don’t know.” She explained that she had not had much interaction with immigrant mothers, “The interactions, conversations, or small chats I’ve had with these children’s moms have been superficial. I’ve only gotten to see the surface.” Most teachers said that the conversations they had with immigrant mothers mainly focused on the children. All teachers reported that most of their interactions with immigrant mothers were through the written daily communication books, with occasional phone calls or face-to-face conversations. Although these teachers revealed that they were uncertain about immigrant mothers’ Chinese reading proficiency (as sometimes these mothers would misunderstand what was written in the communication books), they reported that they had no problem communicating with these mothers verbally. One teacher commented, “After all, they have been in Taiwan for at least 8 years once their children are enrolled in elementary school.”

Immigrant Mothers Feel Anxious and Care about Their Children’s Education

Elementary schoolteachers often described immigrant mothers to me by comparing them with local Taiwanese mothers. These comparisons predominantly focused on mothers’ attitudes toward teachers and mothers’ involvement in their children’s education.

First, all 9 elementary schoolteachers I interviewed commented on appreciating immigrant mothers’ cooperative attitudes toward teachers and schools. They explained that immigrant mothers used very good manners and were extremely respectful when interacting with teachers, which predominantly pleased the teachers. Parents’ increasing engagement in and power within

school administration meetings made many teachers feel they were losing their authority when educating schoolchildren. These teachers stressed that parental support of and cooperation with teachers was very important for them in continuing to effectively educate their children.

Interestingly, teachers reported that they usually received more support from transnational marriage families than from local Taiwanese families. Many used examples to illustrate to me their opinion that more and more Taiwanese parents were overprotecting their children, which not only made educating a challenging task for teachers but was also likely to lead to negative consequences in the long run.

Second, 7 of the 9 teachers emphasized their belief that immigrant mothers cared very much about their children's education and had high aspirations for them. One teacher said to me, "So, in fact...they put a lot of effort into children's education. [...] I've noticed when I am talking to them that they seem very genuine. In addition, I think they pay [more] attention to their children, compared to Taiwanese parents...! I even think they care more about their children's education [than Taiwanese parents] [laughs]! It's true. I mean it!" She then indicated how frequently these mothers signed the communication books to support her statement. Another teacher echoed this discourse by telling me that some immigrant mothers, when they could not understand what the teacher said, brought a family member or friend with them to school to talk to the teacher. Still a third teacher reiterated, "They hope their children do well in school. Right, keep studying and studying, just like we Chinese always say. It's like this is the golden opportunity for salted fish to turn over [*xian yu fan shen* 鹹魚翻身]," indicating that children doing well in school was the most efficient and effective way for the family to advance in society.

Although 7 elementary schoolteachers agreed that immigrant mothers cared deeply about their children's education, these teachers had diverse views in terms of their understandings of

immigrant mothers' capability for involvement in their education. For example, when I asked a teacher whether she thought that immigrant mothers were capable of teaching their children, she responded, emphasizing each word, "*They do teach!* But they might encounter some challenges, because they cannot speak Chinese fluently. How are they going to teach?" She went on to explain the gap between immigrant mothers' motivations and their capabilities, "They *want to teach*, but they do not know *how* to teach. They do not have enough resources." In other words, this teacher believed that immigrant mothers cared a great deal about and were devoted to their children's education, but she had doubts about how much these mothers could achieve, given their limited resources.

On the other hand, 5 teachers praised immigrant mothers' devotion to their children's education by striving to send their children to private after-school programs. According to the teachers, even though public after-school programs were free to immigrant children (who were categorized as 'disadvantaged students' and thus received top priority and free tuition within the programs), some families made every effort to send their children to more costly private after-school programs in order to enrich their children's educational opportunities. A teacher reported that the tuition for enrolling children in decent private after-school programs could sometimes cost one-third to one-half of immigrant families' incomes.

Lastly, 4 of 9 teachers described that, compared to Taiwanese mothers, immigrant mothers were very anxious and worried about their children's education. A teacher explained, "I feel, if you want to know [whether they] care or not [about children's education], I must say they care a lot, but often it's because these immigrant mothers get very anxious; they do not know how to teach their children. [...] Immigrant mothers are very worried about how children are doing in school. Indeed, an immigrant mother asked me, 'Ah, Teacher, Excuse me.' Because she...she

cannot express very well, but I think what she wanted to tell me was, ‘My child...please pay special attention to my child’s studying; please make sure my child is on track.’ Another teacher accounted for immigrant mothers’ anxieties and worries by describing how they related to the negative public discourses. She explained that people kept telling these mothers that they could not teach their children, which led them to internalize the idea that they were incapable of doing so, thus giving rise to their anxieties and concerns about their children’s education.

Fathers’ Involvement Is the Determinant; Family Environment Is the Key

Four of the 9 elementary schoolteachers I interviewed (Teacher Gao, Teacher Wu, Teacher Su, and Teacher Xiao) pointed out the significance of fathers in transnational marriage families being involved in their children’s education. A teacher elaborated on the importance of these fathers’ involvement by telling me, “[It] depends on the father’s attitude. I always have...this deep feeling that the father is the determinant.” When I asked her to explain her point of view, she continued, “Like the class representative—the top student—her father...when I talked to her father, he said that he reads stories to his child every single day! I mean, the father-child relationship is great! Right, the father-child relationship is very intimate. On the other hand, I am not saying that, for example, the other girl, her father doesn’t care at all, [so] once the girl goes home, it’s about watching television and sleeping, or things like that. That girl is, um, messy...I mean, off the track.” The teacher then emphasized that both these children were from transnational marriage families, explaining to me that fathers play a significant role in immigrant children’s education.

However, all 9 teachers reported that immigrant mothers were the primary caregivers. Six teachers supported their statements by pointing out that, in their classes, the immigrant children’s daily communication books were signed by mothers (excepting only one), which indicated to

those teachers that mothers were the individuals who supervised children's school-related issues back at home. (The one child whose daily communication book was signed by the father was from a transnational marriage family in which the father and the mother had separated and were in the process of filing for a divorce).

Even though schoolteachers pointed out the important role fathers play in their children's education, their behaviors may actually further reinforced the idea that immigrant mothers were the ones expected to take responsibility for children's education, and vice versa. The downside of this mutual reinforcement is that teachers actually pushed fathers even further away from getting involved in their children's education. Here is an example of one teacher's assumption that mothers are the primary caregivers and thus the individuals to communicate with. One afternoon, when I had just finished interviewing a teacher in her classroom, she said that she had to make a phone call to an immigrant mother's home before leaving school. I stayed in the classroom with her while she made the call. It was the parent-in-law who answered the phone. When the teacher asked to talk to the mother, the in-law responded by indicating that the mother was not home but the father was and then handed the phone to the father. To my surprise, the teacher only talked briefly to the father, saying that it was about the child but that there was nothing urgent and she would call back later in the evening to talk to the mother.

It seemed to me that this teacher had assumed that the mother was the person to talk to regarding the student's situation in school, even though the person who answered the phone was the father! When I revealed this surprising episode to my teacher friend (a teacher who works in the same school as the one in which I did the interviews), she responded, "That is pretty normal, okay? Usually it is the mom who is in charge. What would the dad know about the child?" Two other teachers echoed this mindset in their interviews, which led me to wonder whether teachers'

assumptions had reinforced parents' behaviors or responses. Similarly, had mothers' involvement reinforced teachers' assumptions and behaviors? And had teachers' behaviors contradicted their expectations, leaving fathers little room to get involved in children's education? Further investigation is required to unravel the paradox here: while teachers expect fathers to be more involved in children's education and believe that fathers' involvement in immigrant children's education is an indicator for how well these children perform in elementary school, these teachers do not see fathers as the individuals to talk to when they want to discuss children's situations in school.

Similar to what kindergarten teachers had reported, elementary schoolteachers mentioned that "marital status" and "family environment" were also factors in influencing children's school performance. However, they reported that transnational marriage families tended to have more challenges in establishing stable marital statuses and peaceful family environments when compared to those families in which the marriages had followed courtships.

Observed Similarities and Differences among Immigrant and Taiwanese Children

All schoolteachers revealed that they did not observe obvious differences in language proficiency between immigrant and Taiwanese children. Four of the 9 teachers (Teacher Wu, Teacher Su, Teacher Xiao, and Teacher Shen) gave examples or provided official records to support their statements. For example, 2 teachers mentioned that the top students (i.e., the students who received the highest test scores in the class) were both from Vietnamese-Taiwanese transnational families. One of these 2 students was also the class representative. Another teacher indicated that she did not observe significant differences in students' scores for the "phonetic symbols testing exam [*zhu yin fu hao jian ce* 注音符號檢測]" administered nationwide to all the first-graders. She said, "I really think there is no difference between local Taiwanese and

immigrant children. When I got the test results, I did not pay particular attention to immigrant children, because there is no difference that stands out.” This teacher joked, “Perhaps they are smarter than local Taiwanese kids, because they are learning a foreign language at the same time!”

Yet, two of the teachers commented that although they did not observe significant differences in academic achievement, they suspected that differences would emerge, particularly concerning children’s reasoning abilities and value systems, as these children entered higher grades in school. For example, one teacher said, “If you try to understand it in the long run, more or less, the children’s customs [are their mothers’ customs], [and] their mothers’ birth country is Vietnam. And customs and habits in Vietnam are different from those in Taiwan. Perhaps these mothers’ convictions or their reasoning is actually different from ours. I think there will be a gap. But if the children adjust well [to Taiwanese customs], it should be fine.” In other words, this teacher suspected that parents’ dissimilar ways of thinking about everyday life encounters would eventually have an impact in their children’s reasoning and belief systems. She also seemed to criticize Vietnamese culture by concluding that if immigrant children adjusted well to Taiwanese society, their children would be fine.

In the non-academic domain, 4 of the 9 teachers (Teacher Wen, Teacher Gao, Teacher Xiao, and Teacher Shen) reported that they observed differences among the children in terms of daily habits, manners, and learning attitudes. They reported a combination of positive and negative views concerning immigrant children. Five of the 9 teachers (Teacher Gao, Teacher Wu, Teacher Su, Teacher Chen, and Teacher Shen) said they found that immigrant children tended to adapt more quickly (e.g., better at responding to and picking up new information) than local Taiwanese children did when they first entered elementary school. However, one of these teachers further

stated, casting immigrant children in a negative light, that she thought immigrant children seemed to have a weaker sense of crisis [*wei ji yi shi jiao luo* 危機意識較弱]. She explained that this discrepancy was like two faces of a coin: on the one hand, when you scolded the children, they remained very optimistic and content and didn't feel hurt or depressed; on the other hand, it was difficult to change the children's behaviors since they were not aware of potential challenges.

Five out of the 9 teachers (Teacher Wu, Teacher Su, Teacher Chen, Teacher Xiao, and Teacher Shen) said they observed that immigrant children developed good learning attitudes and excellent manners. In the domain of learning, these teachers reported that immigrant children were more aggressive in studying and more likely to take initiatives to learn new things. However, they also commented that when it came to positive learning attitudes, some immigrant children did not do well in school due to the lack of cultural stimulation at home. These teachers believed that school performance was more relevant to children's intelligence and effort than to children's or their parents' races or nationalities. Yet, children born to transnational marriage families tended to be exposed to less stimulating home environments.

When it came to manners, 5 of the 9 teachers (Teacher Wu, Teacher Su, Teacher Chen, Teacher Xiao, and Teacher Shen) commented that immigrant children had excellent manners and were generally very polite and respectful when interacting with teachers. This discourse seems to reflect Vietnamese mothers' educational goals in early childhood, as described in Chapter 4. (Immigrant mothers had focused more on moral education than on academic achievement when children were in kindergarten.)

However, 2 teachers (Teacher Wen and Teacher Gao) cast immigrant children in a negative light by describing to me that they tended to be messier in daily routines. Examples given by

these teachers were: “They do not organize their drawers neatly,” and “They sometimes forget to bring homework to school.”

There Are No Differences Because All the Children Go to After-school Programs

Toward the end of my fieldwork, I started to realize that after-school program teachers might be better candidates to ask about immigrant children’s academic achievement, as they were the ones who assisted in children’s everyday homework. According to what I observed and what the elementary schoolteachers told me, instead of going home after a school day ended, the majority of students went to after-school programs in order to finish their homework and receive enriched instructions in subjects such as English and Math. As one teacher revealed, “You can count on one hand those children who do not go to after-school programs,” referring to the fact that almost all students go to these programs.

With almost all students, whether local Taiwanese or immigrant children, attending after-school programs led to two consequences: (1) students’ school performance reflected the quality of after-school programs instead of parental involvement back at home; and (2) elementary schoolteachers saw the same outcomes among children’s homework because it had been supervised and completed at the after-school programs. One teacher pointed out to me that perhaps elementary schoolteachers did not observe significant differences between immigrant and Taiwanese children’s academic achievement because all children went to after-school programs. This teacher concluded that, with adequate educational resources, immigrant children perform as well as local Taiwanese children.

Further investigation into after-school program teachers’ perceptions of immigrant children may give us better understandings of these children. After all, in terms of academic achievement, what the elementary schoolteachers witnessed in school was the outcome of children attending

after-school programs. No wonder they didn't observe any academic differences among children from different cultural backgrounds.

Children of Different Ethnicities Do Not Discriminate among Themselves

When I asked teachers whether cultural identity was an issue that they had integrated into their everyday teaching due to the increasing number of immigrant children, all 9 teachers told me that they hadn't perceived the necessity to initiate and discuss this issue in the classroom. However, 4 of the teachers (Teacher Gao, Teacher Wu, Teacher Su, and Teacher Shen) added that if those issues were brought up by students, they would be sensitive when explaining concepts to them. They said the reason they had not seen an essential need to discuss cultural identity issues in the classroom was mainly because they did not think children at the ages of 7 or 8 had established clear ideas about race, nationality, or ethnicity. For instance, a teacher explained, "Most kids do not know about cultural identities; they learn from parents. We do not have discrimination in the classroom. They do not have a concept of 'race' or 'nationality.' I feel it is not necessary to inform children of [that]. [They] play together! *Completely* no problem!" (Teacher Gao, 802), and she emphasized this word by raising her voice.

Another teacher similarly said, "Since our society is promoting multicultural integration, there is no need to particularly mention children's ethnicities because they [immigrant children] are the same as we are. Students, they do not label; only we teachers label them. They all speak Chinese, and I never heard them discussing issues like ethnicity or race. They do not say, 'You are Vietnamese, I am not going to play with you'" (Teacher Shen). Another teacher revealed the same idea, "Kids, they do not attach special meanings to Taiwanese [or] Vietnamese; they play together. Even if the kid knows that the other kid is from a transnational marriage family, it does not influence whether they want to become friends or not. And no Taiwanese moms said to me,

‘I do not allow my children to play with immigrant children.’ Taiwanese moms are not worrying about this. ”

Yet, one teacher conveyed to me how children learn stereotypes from adults, and stressed the importance of adults not holding stereotypes. This teacher provided an instance she witnessed to explain her idea, “A boy, he was teased by neighbors! It was...around the winter break, and his mom was visiting the boy’s grandparents in Vietnam. Kids in the neighborhood teased him and said, ‘Your mommy is not coming back!’ Huh, then he cried, kept crying. It was at about the end of the fall semester that I witnessed this. I saw him very upset... He kept crying, and then I told him, ‘You! Do not listen to them! [Your] mommy will come back. Mommy told teacher [me] that she will be back.’” The teacher concluded that she believed the children had learned to tease the boy from the adults in the neighborhood.

To sum up, the majority of elementary schoolteachers, at the time that they were interviewed, did not see the importance or significance of initiating conversations concerning cultural identities. These teachers did not consider it an important educational goal to teach students about cultural identity. Their beliefs were based on their understandings that these children hadn’t yet reached the age of seeking identities. (According to the developmental stages proposed by Eric Erickson (1959), the essential development for children ages 6-12 is industry vs. inferiority and the crucial development for adolescence, ages 12-18, is identity vs. role confusion.)

Children from Transnational Marriage Families Are Not a Problem for Us

Another crucial finding from my interviews with elementary schoolteachers is that 6 of the 9 teachers indicated they encountered additional challenges when dealing with students from single-parent families and with grandparent-raised children. They reported that they did not

generally single out immigrant children because they did not think these children needed special attention. These teachers noted, rather, that children from single-parent and grandparent-raised families generally required more attention and were often more difficult to work with. As one teacher (Teacher Shen) put it, “You cannot tell from their appearance. I do not care about my students’ ethnicities. I pay attention to those students who have difficulty concentrating on their studies or who frequently interrupt my class.” This teacher then launched into telling me about the challenges she had faced when dealing with single-parent families, which was an indicator that she was more concerned with children from these families than with children from transnational marriage families. She commented, “A huge problem I witnessed was single-parent families. By comparison, actually, new immigrant children...I feel they are fine. They are not as problematic as [these others].”

Another teacher (Teacher Gao) also revealed, “They are not a burden or a troublesome issue in school; instead, those students who are hyperactive [*guo dong zheng* 過動症] or being disruptive are far more challenging to handle!” This teacher went on to tell me that the most serious problem she faced, at the time she was interviewed, was her work with a group of children from aboriginal families [*yuan zhu min jia ting* 原住民家庭]. She used the example of a girl from an aboriginal family who had lacked cultural stimulation at home until the age of 7 and had thus required a great deal of attention from her and the other students in the classroom. “We called her ‘Little Wild Monkey [*xiao tai shan* 小泰山],” the teacher concluded.

To my surprise, more than half of the teachers (Teacher Gao, Teacher Wu, Teacher Su, Teacher Hong, and Teacher Shen) initiated this topic themselves and revealed their teaching challenges, without me asking anything related to single-parent or grandparent-raised families. As one teacher (Teacher Wu) stated, “There is no correlation between students’ school

performance and mothers' ethnicities. Immigrant children do not create an extra burden [for me], whereas children from single-parent and grandparent-raised families are those who need more attention in school. It is difficult to deal with those children and very challenging to communicate with their caregivers." Still another teacher (Teacher Hong) reported that hyperactive children and children from grandparent-raised families were her big challenges. She declared, "Grandparenting is an even bigger problem! Grandparents cannot help with their grandchildren's homework, and they tend to be more permissive when raising their grandchildren. These kids are like birds with absolute freedom!" The teacher concluded that grandparent-raised children had consistently required more of her attention than had children from transnational marriage families. Another teacher echoed this discourse and explained that children from single-parent families tended to receive less attention back home because these parents were overburdened. So these children came to school and acted inappropriately in order to grab people's attention.

In addition to the above statements, one of the teachers added, "Sometimes it is even more challenging to teach local Taiwanese children. A lot of families have only one child, and they spoil the child while raising him. The child becomes very egocentric because he has always been the center of attention at home. It's difficult to teach [them about] sharing or about perspective-taking."

It Is Not a Problem Now, But It Might Be a Problem When the Kids Get Older

Two of the 9 teachers I interviewed (Teacher Xiao and Teacher Shen) suspected that immigrant children would encounter some difficulties once they entered higher grades, such as by the 5th or 6th grades. Both teachers worried about immigrant children's reasoning abilities, explaining that their concerns might have something to do with the children's immersion in a

bilingual environment at home. That is, they suspected that children who learned two different languages at the same time were more likely to confuse two different mindsets and that this would have a negative influence on children's school performance. One of the two teachers further suspected that this lessened reasoning ability would influence immigrant children's performance in subjects like math. Yet, given the findings from my interviews with immigrant mothers, it is known that almost all Vietnamese mothers speak Mandarin Chinese at home, and only a very limited number of children pick up Vietnamese.

Critiques of Governmental Educational Policies and Negative Public Discourses

Among the 9 teachers, none specified agreeing with the governmental response to the new immigrant phenomenon. Moreover, 4 teachers (Teacher Gao, Teacher Wu, Teacher Su, and Teacher Shen) severely criticized recent policies concerning new immigrants. For example, one teacher challenged the government's reasoning for paying so much attention to and putting a lot of budget on new immigrant students. She described it as "chaos [*luan xiang* 亂象]." The other three teachers challenged the government's definition of "new immigrants" and argued that the government should not have classified immigrant children as their own group.

One teacher remarked that all new immigrant children were eligible to attend free public after-school programs provided by the school, which she said did not really make sense since she had come across transnational marriage families who were actually considered middle-class. She'd also encountered cases in which highly-educated and well-paid Taiwanese men married non-Chinese-speaking wives whose children were eligible for free public after-school programs. She concluded that the eligibility for these free programs should have been based on families' incomes instead of on mothers' ethnicities.

Another teacher commented that she understood the government might have implemented the policies as preventions, but she considered their implementation an act of reinforcing stereotypes. She explained that, for one thing, she observed no significant academic gap between immigrant and non-immigrant children. Furthermore, she witnessed children from non-transnational marriage families sometimes in need of governmental support. Yet, the government's specific attention to immigrant children had not only reinforced stereotypes but had also forsaken those children who actually needed additional social resources.

The third teacher pointed out that, for her, the educational policies aimed at immigrant children had misled her, leading her to believe that they were low achievers. It was not until she had worked with immigrant children that she began to revise her initial stance. She said, "I...we now witness that immigrant children are not [behind in school]. They are not like, um, like policymakers [referring to the Ministry of Education] had said. But we had bias when teaching these children. Thinking that they were...low achievers. In fact, we could've avoided that assumption at the very beginning. Because I overheard, like, um, when we received the class rosters of new students, when we received that sheet of paper, [I] overheard that some...some teachers complained, 'Gosh, I have so many immigrant children in my class. So many, sigh, [I am] in trouble.' What I care about is not my students' mothers' ethnicities; I pay more attention to those students from single-parent or grandparent-raised families.... For me, I really think, immigrant children are not a problem for me."

To sum up, in my interviews with elementary schoolteachers, one-third of them (3 out of 9) specifically expressed their critiques about recent educational policies aimed at assisting students from transnational marriage families. They pointed out that the implementation of these policies had not only narrowed the available educational resources for students really in need but also had

reinforced the stereotypes of immigrant students. In fact, many of the elementary schoolteachers, whether they agreed or disagreed with recent educational policies, pointed out that they encountered more challenges working with children from single-parent and grandparent-raised families than with children from transnational marriage families. Additionally, some (but not many) of these elementary schoolteachers were initially misled to believe that immigrant children were problematic because of the implementation of educational policies aiming at assisting immigrant children.

Elementary Schoolteachers' Self-Reflections

As a fair number of elementary schoolteachers I interviewed reported no observable differences between Taiwanese and immigrant students and stated that children from transnational marriage families were not their major concern, it was obvious that they had not devised teaching philosophies or strategies specifically aimed at immigrant children. In addition, most elementary schoolteachers reported teaching challenges not in working with children from non-transnational marriage families, but rather with those from single-parent or grandparent-raised families. These teachers generally reported that students who exhibited disruptive behaviors in the classroom were one challenge, and parents who did not show support to schoolteachers were the other challenge.

To elaborate on students' disruptive behaviors as a teaching challenge, these teachers revealed that helping children establish appropriate daily routines, develop good interpersonal relationships with peers, and cultivate positive learning attitudes and habits were their major educational goals, and they considered the teaching materials for 7- and 8-year-olds to be relatively easy. In other words, academic achievement was not first- and second-grade teachers' major concern. Yet, interestingly, some of these teachers suspected, "This will be a problem in

the future even though I do not see any problems now.” The explanation they provided was that academic achievement was not their most important teaching goal. In other words, they suspected that there would be a difference in the area of academic achievement between Taiwanese and immigrant students when these children got older and when academic achievement and performance became the educational focus. It is important to note that this iteration was also articulated in my interviews with kindergarten teachers. Kindergarten teachers said that they did not perceive significant difficulties teaching children from transnational marriage families, but they suspected some problems might occur when children entered elementary school. And first- and second-grader teachers told me that they did not see too much difference in academic areas, but they suspected that differences would emerge, particularly in reasoning and comprehension abilities, when these children entered the fifth or sixth grades. In other words, these teachers witnessed no differences, but they imagined future problems for growing immigrant students. The downside of these imaginations was that immigrant children could really become problematic, in the vein of self-fulfilling prophecies.

As for the importance of parental support of schoolteachers, half of the teachers reported that one teaching challenge for them was the difficulty of communicating with immigrant mothers using written forms, such as exchanging written comments in communication books. They described that sometimes they took the further step of calling mothers and reiterating what they had written in the books. Although they commented on immigrant mothers’ limited Chinese reading capabilities, these teachers expressed that they appreciated that immigrant mothers were highly cooperative and respectful which, in some cases, made interactions with them more enjoyable than with Taiwanese families.

Only one teacher expressed her frustrations in working with a transnational marriage family. She had found that she could not communicate effectively with the immigrant mother. Her next step had thus been to talk to the father. Yet, she revealed that it had been even more challenging to get the student's father involved in his child's education than to get the mother to understand her. Without the involvement of the student's family, she had found herself in a difficult situation handling this student's disruptive behaviors in school. In other words, what elementary schoolteachers cared about was not children's parents' cultural backgrounds, but the amount of support parents showed to schoolteachers. And, they revealed, sometimes it was easier to gain support from transnational marriage families than from local Taiwanese families.

Discussion

In response to the influx of immigrant wives who enter Taiwan with limited Chinese language proficiency and raise their children in Taiwan, the government established adult Chinese literacy classes for "new immigrant wives" and implemented new policies to assist children from transnational marriage families.

In this chapter, I examined my interviews with three different types of Taiwanese teachers to discern these teachers' understandings and experiences of immigrant women and their children. I also examined what their specific teaching pedagogies, challenges, and strategies were in interacting with immigrant mothers and their children, if they had any. In Tables 3 to 6, I briefly summarize my interviews with these teachers.

Chinese Language and Literacy Teachers

My interview analyses revealed that literacy teachers' firsthand interactions with immigrant women changed their preexisting stereotypes and led them to feel a moral obligation to help their students. They viewed their students in a sympathetic light, which challenged the negative

master narrative about immigrant women as coming from poor countries with little education, speaking no Chinese, and lacking the knowledge of how to raise children. Literacy teachers' counter-narrative challenged stereotypes and portrayed immigrant women as quick learners of Chinese, responsible mothers who strove hard to educate their children, dutiful daughters who struggled to fulfill their filial obligations to their natal families, and traditional women who maintained virtues that had been lost in modern Taiwanese society. Some teachers took their duties a step further by providing concrete assistance, responding to requests for advice, visiting students at home, and talking to students' husbands or in-laws.

Discourse analyses unveiled that literacy teachers established connections with immigrant women by shifting their social identities during the interviews. Many aligned themselves with immigrant women by highlighting their shared struggles as wives, mothers, and daughters-in-law. By so doing, these teachers developed a moral discourse that broke down racism. In some cases, literacy teachers aligned themselves with the researcher as an educated modern Taiwanese woman who understands gender equality in the society. These teachers also argued that immigrant women faced even greater challenges of gender inequality than other women. Again, by so doing, these teachers developed a sympathetic view in understanding immigrant women's life challenges in a new and unfamiliar land. In a word, by developing a sympathetic moral discourse and shifting their social identities, these teachers were able to craft a narrative that challenged the negative master narrative of immigrant women and broke down racism.

Kindergarten Teachers

Interview analyses with kindergarten teachers revealed that kindergarten teachers had more to say about their understandings of immigrant children than immigrant mothers. In their understandings of immigrant mothers, some of these teachers echoed the negative public

discourses. However, importantly, these teachers reported that they had limited interaction with immigrant mothers. In fact, many of the stories and descriptions that kindergarten teachers recounted were ones that they had overheard. Yet, these teachers appreciated some immigrant mothers' devotion to their children's education. When they encountered difficulties communicating with immigrant mothers, they created visualized communication books by including photos taken during the day so that immigrant mothers could understand their children's kindergarten experiences.

As for kindergarten teachers' understandings of children from transnational marriage families, they reported that these children were as competitive as local Taiwanese children in the five major domains of kindergarten education: verbal expression, interpersonal relationships, creativity, problem-solving ability, and establishment of daily routines. Importantly, although kindergarten teachers maintained that children from transnational marriage families were as competitive as local Taiwanese children, they speculated that there would be differences once they entered elementary school, when cognitive abilities and school performance become the focus of elementary education.

Elementary Schoolteachers

Elementary schoolteachers showed more diverse views in their perceptions of immigrant mothers and their children. These teachers conveyed that they had very limited understandings of immigrant mothers, but they were confident discussing their understandings of children from transnational marriage families. Elementary schoolteachers' opinions about immigrant mothers were the most closely related to the general public's views when compared with other teachers', partly due to the fact that they did not have enough direct interaction with immigrant mothers. While all teachers praised immigrant mothers' devotion to their children's education, half of the

teachers had doubts about those mothers' abilities in promoting children's academic achievement. In addition, instead of holding onto views consistent with the discourses circulated in the general public which perceived immigrant children as low achievers, all elementary schoolteachers revealed that they observed no significant academic differences between children from different cultural backgrounds. Yet, they emphasized that academic achievement was not their primary educational goal for 7- and 8-year-olds. They suspected that differences would emerge once these children entered higher grades in which academic achievement became the major evaluation of children's school education. Some elementary schoolteachers found that immigrant children and Taiwanese children were dissimilar in the ways they approached everyday routines (e.g., messy) and manners (e.g., polite).

Many elementary schoolteachers stated that, in their minds, there was no differentiation between "immigrant children" and "non-immigrant children"; instead, they were more likely to divide students into "those who were disruptive in school" and "those who were not." These teachers explained that parental involvement and support was their major concern when teaching students. They reported that transnational marriage families did not show less support than local Taiwanese families. In fact, more than half of the elementary schoolteachers revealed that the teaching challenges more often faced were in working with children from single-parent and grandparent-raised families, no matter their ethnicities.

Conclusion

If the three different types of Taiwanese teachers are put together to get a picture of their understandings of immigrant women and children, an important pattern emerges. That is, teachers who had more direct interaction with immigrant women and their children tended to hold fewer stereotypes. Chinese literacy teachers, who had the most direct interaction with

immigrant women, showed the highest levels of sympathy toward immigrant mothers. They viewed immigrant mothers mostly in a positive light. Kindergarten teachers and some of the elementary schoolteachers—who had more interaction with children from transnational marriage families—stated that while children from different cultural backgrounds did not perform differently in academic domains, there were differences in their manners and daily habits.

Lastly and importantly, 5 out of the 9 elementary schoolteachers I interviewed also taught Chinese literacy classes. When I combined all those interview transcripts, an interesting and unexpected finding emerged, which supported my argument that direct interaction reduces stereotypes. Specifically, in terms of these five teachers' perceptions of immigrant mothers, all provided sympathetic views in describing their understandings of these mothers. When it came to their understandings of immigrant children, 4 out of these 5 teachers (Teacher Gao, Teacher Wu, Teacher Su, and Teacher Chen) reported that immigrant children were as competitive as Taiwanese children in school. Only one teacher (Teacher Xiao) who adapted a sympathetic view in understanding immigrant mothers reported an observed difference among the immigrant and Taiwanese children she taught in the elementary school. In other words, those 4 teachers who had worked with both the immigrant mothers and their children provided a counter-narrative to the general public discourse. The remaining 4 teachers (Teacher Wen, Teacher Li, Teacher Hong, and Teacher Shen), who had taught the children but not their immigrant mothers, echoed the general public's stereotypes when providing their understandings of transnational marriage families. This piece of information serves as evidence suggesting that direct interaction reduces stereotypes.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Since the mid-1990s in Asia, there has been a significant increase in transnational marriages, wherein predominantly Southeast Asian women leave their native countries and move to establish families in their spouses' countries. This new immigration phenomenon has drawn many scholars' attention as it has not only created a *feminized* immigration involving primarily women crossing borders, but has also created a new type of *family structure* consisting of culturally dissimilar husbands and wives establishing families together. Most of these scholars have focused on studying this new immigration phenomenon's impacts on economic, political, health, and social developments in East Asia and Southeast Asia (e.g., Hsia, 2003; Lu, 2005; Wang & Chang, 2002; Chung, 2003; Yang, 2003); little scholarly attention has been paid to the *psychological* and *anthropological* aspects of how these immigrants re-socialize themselves into a new culture and society and how parents in transnational marriage families socialize their children (e.g., Fung & Liang, 2008, 2009; Sandel & Liang, 2010). In this dissertation, my concern is to deepen our understandings of the socialization of both immigrant women and their offspring, specifically focusing on immigrants to Taiwan. Specifically, I study how Vietnamese immigrant women re-socialize themselves in Taiwanese society by examining their everyday life challenges, their efforts made to overcome these challenges, their negotiation of power relations at home, as well as their reactions to the socially constructed negative discourses of immigrant women (Anderson, 1983). Note that, different from childhood socialization which begins at birth, these immigrant women were very consciously engaged in the re-socialization process during their young adulthood. I also investigate these Vietnamese immigrant mothers' parental beliefs and socialization goals by taking into consideration how these beliefs and goals are shaped or impacted by their everyday life challenges.

Recently, Mahalingam, Balan, and Molina (2009) challenged the homogeneous, essentialist, and Eurocentric normative approaches used to study gender and family. These scholars argued that, with globalization, the study of gender ideologies requires not only an appreciation of multicultural voices but also a recognition of the lived experiences of women. They pointed out that the displacement of these women brings many challenges to their lives as “it forces these women to reconfigure their identities, power relations, and resources in a new social milieu” (p.69). In this dissertation, my goal is to deepen our understandings of these immigrant women’s sense-making and re-socialization processes from their own subjective perspectives by demonstrating, in order to make sense of their lived experiences, how they navigate their new lives, negotiate their identities, reconstruct their power relations to their newly established families in Taiwan as well as natal families in Vietnam.

Recognizing that the re-socialization of immigrant women and the socialization of their children required interdisciplinary inquiry, I situated my work at the intersection of several disciplines, including cultural psychology, developmental psychology, education, anthropology, and women’s studies. A guiding premise was that the experiences of mothers and children can only be understood in the multiple, shifting contexts of their lives (Göncü, 1999; Shweder, 1990; Shweder, Goodnow, Hatano, LeVine, Markus, & Miller, 2006). Thus, my dissertation research was ethnographic in orientation and culture-specific in perspective. I explored how immigrant mothers socialize their children while, at the same time, re-socialize themselves into a new and unfamiliar land. In addition to examining immigrant mothers’ parental beliefs and socialization goals for their children, I also studied Taiwanese teachers’ understandings of these immigrant women and their children, because these teachers form and influence the larger context within which immigrant mothers raise their children. In a word, my dissertation was carried out with an

ambition to bring together the voices of immigrant mothers and Taiwanese teachers so as to illuminate their respective child rearing beliefs and educational goals.

In this chapter, I first review important findings of my interviews with Vietnamese immigrant women and Taiwanese teachers as well as the implications of these findings. I then discuss the strengths and weaknesses of my research methods. This chapter ends with suggestions for future research.

Vietnamese Immigrant Mothers

My interviews with Vietnamese immigrant mothers indicate that they struggled with a host of challenges, particularly those relevant to *stereotypes regarding gender* and *immigrant status*. When they entered Taiwan as new brides, they did not share a language with their husbands or in-laws, which made learning how to speak Chinese their top priority. Within the home context, in some cases serious conflicts arose, with husbands and in-laws arrayed against the “foreign brides.” Additionally, Vietnamese immigrant women cited incidents of discrimination in the workplace and in the community.

Self-Understandings

Many Vietnamese immigrant women stated that their motivations for marriage and immigration were often distorted by Taiwanese family members. They revealed that they were frequently stigmatized because they were “bought” by their Taiwanese husbands. As these women saw it, issues about money, unstable relationships and marriages, and different understandings of the practices and obligations of filial piety could all lead to a lack of trust and exacerbated conflict and discrimination in the private home context. For instance, many of them expressed strong commitments and transnational ties to their natal families, and they regarded providing their natal families with regular and substantial financial support as a modern way to

fulfill their filial responsibilities. Yet, their insistence in wanting to work outside the home and to make financial arrangements themselves frequently resulted in great tension in their established families. They were often faced with a moral dilemma—how to negotiate and establish a balance between their obligations to their husbands' families and their natal families.

Additionally, many Vietnamese women married into three-generational households where they encountered conflicts with parents-in-law. Often these women were not trusted, were treated differently from other sisters-in-law, received no respect when disciplining their own children, and were sometimes the victims of domestic violence. Most of them cited their own lack of power and control, in relation to husbands and in-laws, as a child rearing challenge.

Women who had work experience reported that they were often discriminated against in the workplace and in the community. Individuals in the community actively constructed negative images of immigrant women. These widespread stereotypes of immigrant women, people's unfamiliarity with these women, and community members' imagined threats from these women, all fueled this discrimination. They reported that they were commonly perceived as individuals who were poor, who could be purchased, who came to Taiwan solely for monetary reasons, who could not understand Chinese, and who did not know how to teach their children. As victims of stereotypes imposed on them by the larger society, these women reported facing prejudice on a regular basis in their everyday encounters.

Parental Beliefs and Child Rearing Goals

When my informants described their life challenges and their uncertainties about their marriages in Taiwan, many of them revealed that giving birth to a first child often provided an important emotional comfort for them, especially during their first few years in Taiwan. They also stated that having children had strengthened their willpower and determination to stay in

Taiwan, in order to provide for their children. Thus, despite adverse circumstances, Vietnamese immigrant mothers took advantage of the Mandarin classes offered and rapidly learned the language, for they realized that speaking Mandarin to their children was critical to their children's success in the early grades. All of the mothers I interviewed reported speaking to their children in Mandarin Chinese on a daily basis. None reported using Vietnamese as the dominant language when communicating with their children. Although some made the effort to teach their children Vietnamese, they reported failed attempts and frustrations, sometimes due to the lack of support from other family members and at other times owing to their children's preference in speaking Mandarin Chinese. These mothers expected their children to grow up identifying themselves as Taiwanese. While there were some mothers who wanted their children to grow up feeling bicultural, none of them reported that their children would grow up identifying themselves as Vietnamese.

Although immigrant mothers were willing to compromise on their use of language with their children and the formation of their children's cultural identity, the concept of being *filial* as well as *well-mannered* seemed to be a child rearing goal that these mothers insisted on cultivating and passing on. Almost all mothers emphasized the necessity for their children to grow up understanding and enacting filial piety. In my dissertation, I have identified two unique characteristics concerning Vietnamese immigrant mothers' understanding of cultivating filial piety in children. First, these Vietnamese mothers believed that a married adult daughter should uphold the responsibility of taking care of her aging biological parents. Previously I mentioned that the different interpretations of filial piety often led to distrust and misunderstandings between Taiwanese husbands and Vietnamese wives as, in traditional Taiwanese society, it is expected that sons (more specifically, the eldest of the sons) are responsible for taking care of

their aging parents. Second, these Vietnamese mothers' understandings of filial piety contained a strong reciprocity between the parent and the child. That is, these mothers considered mutual filial interaction very important, unlike most Taiwanese' understandings, which highlighted the filial obligation in one direction: from child to parent. Thus, these Vietnamese immigrant mothers stated that, while their children were young and dependent, they felt profoundly responsible for developing long-lasting bonds with them. And, when their children grew up to be autonomous adults, it would then be the children's turn to take good care of their parents. In some cases, this reciprocity of caring was articulated using the Vietnamese culture-specific term *thuong*, which highlights the hierarchical love and mutual dependence between parent and child (Fung & Liang, 2010). The emphasis on reciprocity seemed to be lacking in the Taiwanese understandings of filial piety, which mainly pointed to children's responsibility in taking care of aging parents. Vietnamese mothers' expectation of cultivating filial piety needs to be understood in a cultural context and by taking into account how Taiwanese's and Vietnamese's concepts of filial piety clashed and meshed to shape the unique child rearing beliefs.

Lastly, these mothers expressed high educational aspirations for their children because they believed that receiving the best possible education was the most effective way for them to improve their social and economic status. Despite financial constraints, half of my informants sent their children to private kindergartens, which were usually 2 to 3 times more expensive than sending their children to public ones. Once their children entered elementary school, they enrolled them in supplementary after-school classes as well, to make sure their homework was properly supervised (Chen, Miller, & Fung, 2009, 2011).

An interesting discourse pattern emerged when Vietnamese immigrant women presented to me other people' negative views of them. In the interviews, my informants presented themselves

as individuals who did not fit within the stereotypes and segregated themselves from the negative images of Vietnamese women. This strategy of “othering” themselves, of separating their identities from that of the misconceived majority, was an approach that allowed my informants to demonstrate their agency and morality.

Visible and Invisible Women

The findings I have just summarized must be interpreted in light of recruitment constraints; these women likely represent a select group of Vietnamese immigrant women who had more latitude, agency, and freedom in deciding their schedules than other women may have had and could thus be interviewed and approached by me. On the other hand, Mrs. Jade, with her life circumstances and experiences as described in Chapter 3, was the most challenging of my participants. Yet, fortunately, I was able to forge a relationship with her, a woman whose experiences would otherwise have been unexpressed and unheard, and who would have thus fallen into the invisible and unapproachable group of immigrant women.

Specifically, Mrs. Jade’s case could be understood from two perspectives. One perspective is that her situation represented the borderline between two different cohorts of immigrant women. Those women whom I was able to talk to and work with represented a cohort with more autonomy. After all, they were the individuals who felt comfortable enough to reveal personal information and who had the freedom to make decisions about being interviewed by me. But, there existed the other group of Vietnamese women who were both invisible and unapproachable. These were the women whose resources were extremely limited (due to their low statuses, limited power, restricted physical movements, and controlled social networks), and whose interactions with outsiders were screened and censored by their husbands or other family members. The other perspective, a more hopeful situation, is that Mrs. Jade’s circumstances

simply represented one end of a spectrum. In this scenario, it might be assumed that most Vietnamese mothers were in circumstances better than Mrs. Jade's. To conclude, readers need to be aware that it is impossible to know how many women find themselves in circumstances that resemble Mrs. Jade's, or where exactly the visible and invisible women fit in the distribution of immigrant women.

Taiwanese Teachers

My interviews with Taiwanese teachers—including adult literacy teachers, kindergarten teachers, and elementary schoolteachers—showed that they, with different levels of interaction with immigrant mothers and their children, had actively constructed diverse understandings and perceptions of these mothers and children. Importantly, these socially constructed ideas influenced these teachers' further positive or negative interactions with these immigrant mothers and children.

Chinese Language and Literacy Teachers

The teachers who had the most intensive and frequent firsthand interactions with Vietnamese immigrant women were the adult literacy teachers. They described these women as young, full of curiosity, hard-working, and easily contented. All the literacy teachers agreed that Vietnamese students who regularly attended literacy classes were highly motivated to learn Chinese in order to find better jobs and become capable of teaching their children. The literacy teachers all sympathized with these women's situation, as well. Upon arrival in Taiwan, Vietnamese immigrant women are forced to become responsible homemakers, are sometimes also expected to become breadwinners, and are soon mothers while still themselves experiencing the transition into a new family and a new life. Literacy teachers mentioned the lack of power

and status at home as a reason why these immigrant mothers cannot implement their own child rearing beliefs.

All of these teachers explicitly expressed their disagreement with the negative general public discourses. Using firsthand accounts, they explained how their experiences interacting with immigrant women ran counter to the general public discourses. Importantly, though, they also stressed that their frequent and continuous direct interactions with immigrant women led them to dramatically revise what were their original perceptions of these women. Even those teachers who initially saw immigrant women in a negative light became much more sympathetic to these women after having the direct contact with them. These teachers explained that their earlier misconceptions were largely due to unfamiliarity and stereotypes. Some teachers mentioned immigrant women's contributions to Taiwanese economic development, and they speculated that the resistance and discrimination in the workplace and within local communities may be due to the economic threat some people felt from the increasing numbers of immigrant women. These teachers reasoned that immigrant women are highly competitive in local job markets, as they are quick learners, diligent, and accept lower wages; thus, local Taiwanese may want to exclude Vietnamese immigrant women due to the potential appropriation of jobs.

Discourse analyses of the interviews unveiled that literacy teachers established connections with immigrant women by shifting their social identities during the interviews. Many aligned themselves with immigrant women by highlighting their shared struggles as wives, mothers, and daughters-in-law. By so doing, these teachers developed a moral discourse that broke down racism. In some cases, literacy teachers aligned themselves with the researcher as an educated modern Taiwanese woman who understands gender inequality within the larger society. These teachers also argued that immigrant women faced even greater challenges of gender inequality

than other women. Again, by so doing, these teachers developed a sympathetic view in understanding immigrant women's life challenges in a new and unfamiliar land. In a word, by developing a sympathetic moral discourse and shifting their social identities, these teachers were able to craft narratives that challenged the negative master narrative of immigrant women and prevailed over the pervasive racism.

Kindergarten Teachers and Elementary Schoolteachers

Despite a public discourse that forecasts educational problems for children from transnational marriage families, interviews with kindergarten teachers suggested that they did not observe significant cognitive, social, or emotional difficulties among children from these families. Kindergarten teachers described immigrant children as quick learners, smart, witty, and quick to catch up. They also reported that immigrant children experienced less emotional stress than their Taiwanese classmates during the transition from home to school, perhaps because these families tended to experience more changes; thus, these children might have learned how to adapt quickly very early in life. Kindergarten teachers' interactions with immigrant mothers were frequent yet brief, usually taking place when mothers dropped off or picked up the children at school.

Compared to literacy and kindergarten teachers, elementary schoolteachers' direct interactions with immigrant mothers were much more limited, and they revealed more diverse perceptions of these mothers and their children. Most elementary schoolteachers described challenges in communicating with immigrant mothers through the "communication book," a written form of home/school exchange that is standard in Taiwanese schools. Yet many teachers expressed appreciation for immigrant mothers' efforts to communicate orally, which these mothers often did by calling or coming to school to speak with teachers in person. Some

elementary schoolteachers used the results obtained from a nationwide phonological exam of first-graders as a piece of supporting evidence to illustrate that children from transnational marriage families are doing as well as children from local Taiwanese families.

These teachers acknowledged that they only got to know immigrant mother on a surface level and did not have much understanding of Vietnamese immigrant mothers specifically. Most of what they knew about immigrant mothers was learned from third parties, which often echoed the stereotypical images of Vietnamese women. Yet, both kindergarten teachers and elementary schoolteachers confirmed that immigrant mothers care about and are anxious about their children's education. They reasoned that immigrant mothers seemed to have internalized negative public discourses and feared that their children would be left behind in their studies. Some of the mothers therefore strove hard economically to provide their children with the best possible educational opportunities, such as sending them to after-school programs. Additionally, both kindergarten teachers and elementary schoolteachers pointed out that immigrant children's school performance was influenced more by the levels of cultural stimulation and support their families could provide than by their mothers' ethnicities. These teachers pointed out the important role fathers should play in immigrant children' education; unfortunately, fathers from transnational marriage families are not only socially and economically disadvantaged, oftentimes, but also emotionally uninvolved in their children's education. Many teachers expressed their frustration at their inability to invite these fathers to be involved in their children's education (Chen, Miller, & Fung, 2009).

In sum, interviews with Taiwanese teachers suggested that their firsthand experiences with immigrant mothers had often led them to revise their opinions in a more favorable direction. Specifically, Chinese literacy teachers who have had the most intensive and frequent experiences

interacting with Vietnamese immigrant women were the least likely to be prejudiced against these new immigrants. Kindergarten and elementary schoolteachers predominately described children from transnational marriage families as doing as well in school as local Taiwanese children. These findings echo the “social contact hypothesis” proposed by social psychologists indicating that direct contact is conducive to reduction of bias toward out-group members (e.g., Allport, 1954; Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachman, & Rust, 1993; Gaertner, Dovidio, Nier, Ward, & Banker, 1999). However, some elementary schoolteachers reported challenges interacting with immigrant mothers and forecasted that their children would have academic difficulties in the future. These teachers’ anxieties about future educational challenges accord with Benedict Anderson’s (1983) arguments that an imagined threat to a community is usually based on the mental images held in individuals’ minds which, most of the time, are different from actual situations based on everyday face-to-face interactions.

To conclude, in my dissertation I find that: (1) Vietnamese immigrant women described enormous challenges, including pervasive negative stereotypes and lack of power and control as mothers, in relation to husbands and in-laws; despite these difficulties, they learned Mandarin Chinese rapidly. (2) Vietnamese immigrant mothers and Taiwanese teachers shared a strong mutual commitment to children’s education. (3) According to teachers, children from transnational marriage families adjusted well to kindergarten and did not lag behind their native-born Taiwanese peers in cognitive and social domains. (4) Teachers with more experience interacting with Vietnamese immigrant mothers and children were less likely to believe in the negative stereotypes of new immigrants, and some vigorously challenged the demeaning master narrative of immigrants circulating in Taiwanese society. I thus argue that perceptions of "differences" and "deficits" that undergird the negative stereotypes are likely due to unfamiliarity,

misunderstanding, and prejudice (e.g., Allport, 1954). However, this interpretation raises the perplexing question of why some husbands and in-laws, as in Mrs. Jade's family, persist in their negative stereotypes of immigrant women, even though they are the individuals who have the most intimate interactions with Vietnamese women on a daily basis.

Vietnamese Immigrant Mothers and Taiwanese Teachers

When juxtaposing the findings from my interviews with Vietnamese immigrant mothers and Taiwanese teachers, two important patterns emerged. First, these interviews showed that Vietnamese mothers' and Taiwanese teachers' educational goals converge. On the one hand, Vietnamese immigrant mothers held high educational aspirations for their children and strived hard to provide their children the best possible educational opportunities. They revealed that their unfamiliarity with Taiwanese educational systems made them show great respect to teachers and feel obligated to cooperate with them as much as possible. On the other hand, Taiwanese teachers who received a lot of support from immigrant mothers felt morally obligated to provide children of these immigrant mothers a high quality education. In sum, both Vietnamese immigrant mothers and Taiwanese teachers shared a mutual commitment to children's educational excellence.

Second, some of these Vietnamese immigrant mothers who attended Chinese literacy classes were able to forge a positive relationship with their literacy teachers. On the one hand, these mothers welcomed the opportunity to share their everyday life challenges and seek advice from their teachers. On the other hand, these literacy teachers felt a moral obligation to help their immigrant students. Through direct interaction, these teachers actively constructed a counter-narrative challenging the long-lasting negative master narratives. These teachers portrayed immigrant women as responsible mothers who strive hard to educate their children, dutiful

daughters who fulfill their filial obligations to natal families, and “traditional” women who maintain traditional virtues. Furthermore, discourse analysis of interviews focusing on how teachers actively constructed their understandings of Vietnamese immigrant women revealed that these teachers forged a bridge to immigrant women by constantly shifting their social identities during the interviews. Many of them aligned themselves with immigrant women by highlighting shared struggles as wives, mothers, and daughters-in-law. At times, they also aligned themselves with the researcher as modern Taiwanese women, educated and professional. Other times they aligned themselves with other literacy teachers by emphasizing their authority and significance to impact the immigrant students and their families. In sum, these literacy teachers, by using discourse strategies to present themselves and shift their social identities during their talks (Brown & Gilman, 1960; Chen, 2011; Goffman, 1959; Ochs, 1983; Wortham; 1996), forged positive communicative bridges with these immigrant women.

Methodological Reflection

Taking an ethnographic approach to study Vietnamese immigrant women and their children has its strengths and limitations. Below I illustrate the significance and importance of carrying out ethnography, and then acknowledge the limitations of my study.

Strengths

The important realization of adapting my strategies to recruit and interview Vietnamese immigrant mothers so as to accommodate the concerns of this population reveals the significance of ethnography. An important objective of ethnographic work is to represent people’s experiences and practices in their own terms. Like all ethnographic research, my approach sought to understand cultural meanings from the “inside,” that is, from the perspectives of the

participants themselves, using the classic tools of interviewing and participant-observation (Briggs, 1986; Jessor, Colby, & Shweder, 1996; Miller, et al., 2003; Woolcott, 1995).

My fieldwork revealed that many Vietnamese women were not accustomed to either the terms or the format of a so-called interview, and some of my informants had little free time and were unaccustomed to the idea of scheduling a time to meet someone, underscoring the necessity for maximum flexibility in adapting my recruitment strategies and interview techniques to a more contextually and culturally appropriate way of gaining information. For those immigrant women who were interviewed, the fact that the majority of them chose to be interviewed in a classroom or workplace suggested that, on the one hand, they might not feel comfortable expressing themselves freely at home, particularly with husbands or in-laws around. On the other hand, they might not have the power to decide who to invite into their homes. In either case, allowing them to choose the location of the interview was critical to the validity of the findings.

As for those Vietnamese women whom I initially met (but who later on declined being interviewed), they nonetheless informed me of their life circumstances. Sometimes they did not have the power to decide how to spend their time and who to make friends with, as their activities outside of the home context were censored by their husbands or in-laws.

Lastly, my glimpse of the life circumstances of a nearly invisible woman, Mrs. Jade, served as an example to demonstrate the extent of the challenges a Vietnamese woman could face. It also served as an example to illustrate to what extent I had to modify and adapt my research methods, which is a unique strength of carrying out ethnography. In brief, without my flexibilities in accustoming the formats and strategies so that I could enter Mrs. Jade's private space and interview her, Mrs. Jade's life challenges and circumstance would have been unknown.

There might well be a group of immigrant women who are unapproachable and inaccessible by researchers, assuming the possibility that they are physically confined and socially isolated.

Researcher's Role

As in any ethnographic work (e.g., Briggs, 1986; Miller, Hengst, & Wang, 2003), my own identity played a role in my research. Specifically, Vietnamese immigrant mothers' and Taiwanese teachers' perceptions of me influenced how they presented themselves and what they revealed to me during the interviews.

In regards to Vietnamese immigrant women, my initial strategy of recruiting them was unsuccessful. Many of them were defensive and protective to outsiders like me, owing to the long-standing stereotypes of these women in the society. It was not easy to gain their trust and form relationships. After I had experienced many failed attempts at recruiting and interviewing Vietnamese mothers, I came to an important realization: I needed to modify the standard practice of recruiting and interviewing to accommodate the concerns of this population. For example, I visited literacy classes and studied Chinese together with immigrant women, and I went to the noodle shops they opened to have meal. Gradually, my identity as *Taiwanese* faded away and they perceived me more as a *female* who had something in common with them. Thus, my identity as a female listening to their life challenges as wives, daughters-in-law, and mothers made them feel better-understood than if they were talking to a male researcher. My identity as Taiwanese, as opposed to Vietnamese, made them eager to explain their unique Vietnamese customs when I showed curiosity. For example, some Vietnamese mothers explained to me that they had a different understanding of filial piety than their husbands did, which often caused misunderstandings and conflicts at home. These women noted that Vietnamese daughters are

dissimilar from Taiwanese daughters, in that the former remain an important member in the natal family and have an obligation to fulfill their filial duty, even after they marry.

To Taiwanese teachers, my identity as a *researcher* may have made them feel a moral obligation to assist in my research as much as possible, as they saw me as a *professional* who could be a voice for them and for immigrant women. My identity as a *former high school teacher* may have made it easier for them to communicate with me, as I understood how the school system functions in Taiwan.

Limitations

Although carrying out ethnography comes with an array of advantages as I just described, I have to acknowledge the limitations of my ethnographic research. That is, my informants were highly self-selected and only represented a certain cohort of Vietnamese women. Specifically, they were all fluent in Mandarin Chinese and felt comfortable being interviewed, and most received the support of their husbands and arranged their own interview times. By recruiting Vietnamese women who felt comfortable expressing themselves in a second language, I have left a group of Vietnamese women's voices unrepresented. Thus, the findings of my dissertation research cannot be generalized to represent other Vietnamese women's life circumstances and lived experiences.

Another limitation of my dissertation research was the lack of depth of my interactions with them. There were things that they were not willing or not comfortable revealing to me, particularly when it came to sensitive issues such as how to save and send money back home. As Fung and her colleagues' five-year longitudinal work with seven Vietnamese-Taiwanese transnational marriage families in Taiwan demonstrated, sometimes it took years to discover an account that was closer to the truth (Fung & Liang, 2008, 2009).

Future Direction

Vietnamese Immigrant Mothers and Children in Transitional Educational Contexts

One direction that future research could take to build upon and complement my dissertation work, which focused on interviews, would be to examine the rich corpus of observational data that I collected as part of my ethnographic study. This data consists of extensive field notes and nearly 200 hours of audio- and video-recorded classroom observations in two educational contexts that provide “transitional spaces” for immigrant mothers and their children, respectively: the government-sponsored Chinese language and literacy classes for Vietnamese immigrant women, and the public kindergarten classes that the children of these mothers attended. My aim is to address two critical questions raised from my dissertation findings: (1) What role do Chinese language and literacy classes play in Vietnamese immigrant women’s acquisition of Chinese and in their more general adaptation to life in Taiwan? (2) How are the young children of Vietnamese immigrant mothers socialized into local meaning systems and Mandarin language in the kindergarten classroom?

My longitudinal participant-observation in these transitional educational contexts offers an opportunity to closely examine the dynamics between teachers and students as well as between the students themselves within the classroom, and to study how these interactions impact the socialization processes. Take the Chinese language and literacy classes, for example, where certain questions could be addressed from the standpoints of the students and the teachers. On the one hand, what do immigrant women expect to learn from literacy classes? How do they respond to literacy teachers’ instructions? What kinds of life difficulties (if any) do they reveal to their teachers and peers? How do immigrant women support one another in the classroom? Do they see themselves changing over the course of the classes? On the other hand, what do Chinese

literacy teachers expect immigrant women to learn from literacy classes? How do literacy teachers build a communicative bridge and establish connections with their immigrant students? What kind of resources do the teachers provide for immigrant women? Do teachers' understandings of immigrant women change during the course of the class? To answer these questions, important observational episodes will have to be identified and transcribed in the original language, and appropriate coding schemes will need to be developed.

Similar data analysis strategies could be applied to investigate the kindergarten classroom observations, with an attempt to unveil how young children from transnational marriage families and local Taiwanese families interact in the same classroom, as well as how kindergarten teachers manage to teach children from diverse cultural backgrounds within one classroom. It is my hope that the results of my study will serve to inform social and educational policies in Taiwan so that more effective policies can be enacted for immigrant mothers and their children. More broadly, I hope to contribute to a more inclusive and deeply contextualized understanding of immigration, especially as it affects women and children.

Taiwanese Husbands' Voices and Perspectives

The other line of direction for future research could be informed by my unexpected conversations with Mrs. Jade's husband on various occasions. When I worked with Mrs. Jade, her husband got to know me and perceived me as a young scholar who was interested in studying transnational marriages. On the occasions when he was present with his wife at the noodle stand, it was always he who talked about his experiences of marrying a Vietnamese woman. Mr. Jade was not afraid of criticizing his Vietnamese wife in front of me or in the presence of other customers. At times when I ran into him on the street, he coincidentally revealed the three huge fights he'd had with his wife and his struggles with marrying a foreign bride. His accounts of

these three incidents were dramatically different from what his wife had revealed to me. Mr. Jade's dissimilar accounts suggest that Taiwanese husbands may also want their voices presented. Further research has to be carried out if these Taiwanese husbands' voices are to be heard.

TABLES
Table 1
Basic Descriptive Information of Vietnamese Immigrant Mothers

	Education (years)		Age Married /Via Broker	Age Interviewed			Yr in TW	Citi zen	Occupations		Family Income	# of kids	
	Vietnam	Taiwan		Wife	Hus band	Age Gap			Husband	Wife			
Xie	11	3	19	Y	26	36	10	7	Y	N/A	Housewife	25,000	6;0 boy 3;6 girl
Ying	12	0	18	Y	27	N/A	N/A	9	Y	Yes	Restaurant employee	N/A	8;0 boy 7;0 boy
Fei	12	0	24	Y	33	N/A	N/A	9	Y	Restaurant helper	Restaurant owner	N/A	8;0 girl 4;0 girl
Cai	9	3	28	Y	36	48	12	8	N	Unemployed	Factory operator	20,000	7;0 boy 5;0 boy
Li	8	1	28	Y	34	N/A	N/A	6	N	Delivery man	Restaurant employee	N/A	5;0 girl 1;0 boy
Deng	12	0	24	Y	34	N/A	N/A	10	Y	Auto repair employee	Hotel janitor	72,000	10;0 girl 7;0 girl
Ruan	12	3	24	N	36	N/A	N/A	12	Y	Government officer	Factory operator	N/A	4;0 girl
Wang	12	0	19	Y	27	45	18	8	Y	Taxi driver	Family business (bakery)	> 20,000	7;0 boy 6;0 boy
Lian	9	1	18	Y	27	42	15	9	Y	Unemployed	Family business (street vender owner)	75,000	8;0 boy
Jiang	9	1	18	Y	25	N/A	N/A	7	N	Security guard	Factory operator	50,000	3;0 girl
Chen	12	0	27	Y	37	56	19	10	N	Taxi driver	Family business (farmer)	> 20,000	10;0 boy 7;0 boy

Table 1 con't

	Education (years)		Age Married /Via Broker	Age Interviewed			Yr in TW	Citi zen	Occupations		Family Income	# of kids	
	Vietnam	Taiwan		Wife	Hus band	Age Gap			Husband	Wife			
Jade	5	0	20	Y	20	45	15	10	Y	Security guard	Restaurant owner	N/A	7;0 girl 6;0 girl 3;6 boy
Bao	5	3	19	N	26	46	20	7	Y	Family business	Family business	N/A	7;0 boy 5;0 girl
Yue	8	1	18	Y	24	N/A	N/A	6	N	N/A	Family business (restaurant helper)	N/A	4;0 girl 3;0 girl

Table 2
Summary of Interviews with Vietnamese Immigrant Mothers

	Life Challenges	Childrearing Beliefs			
		Language	C's Identity	Education	Goals
Xie	financial difficulty conflicts within home context discrimination in community	Mandarin > Vietnamese (against wish)	Taiwanese	public kindergarten	social hierarchy
Ying	conflicts within home context unsatisfied marriage	Mandarin > Taiwanese > Vietnamese	Taiwanese	Private kindergarten Private afterschool program	filial piety
Fei	discrimination in community	Mandarin > Vietnamese (against wish)	Taiwanese	private kindergarten private afterschool program	filial piety
Cai	financial difficulty conflict within home context	Mandarin (against wish)	Half-half	public kindergarten free afterschool program	filial piety social hierarchy politeness education
Li	no particular challenge	Mandarin > Vietnamese	Taiwanese	public kindergarten	education
Deng	conflicts within home context discrimination in community	Mandarin > Taiwanese (against wish)	Taiwanese	private kindergarten private afterschool program	filial piety social hierarchy
Ruan	no particular challenges	Taiwanese > Mandarin	Taiwanese	private kindergarten	filial piety education
Wang	discrimination in community	Mandarin > Vietnamese	Taiwanese	private kindergarten no afterschool program	filial piety social hierarchy education
Lian	conflicts within home context discrimination in community unsatisfied marriage	Mandarin (against wish)	Undecided	private kindergarten private afterschool program	filial piety education

Table 2 con't

	Life Challenges	Childrearing Beliefs		
		Language	C's Identity	Goals
Jiang	discrimination in community unsatisfied marriage	Mandarin > Taiwanese > Vietnamese	Half-half	private kindergarten education filial piety social hierarchy politeness
Chen	financial difficulty conflicts within home context discrimination in community	Mandarin > Taiwanese > Vietnamese	Taiwanese	public kindergarten free afterschool program education
Jade	financial difficulty conflicts within home context discrimination in community unsatisfied marriage	Mandarin > Vietnamese (against wish)	Taiwanese	public kindergarten free afterschool program filial piety
Bao	no particular challenges	Mandarin	Taiwanese	public kindergarten free afterschool program education
Yue	unsatisfied marriage	Mandarin > Vietnamese	Undecided	public kindergarten politeness

Table 3
Basic Descriptive Information of Taiwanese Teachers

	Age	Education	Teaching Experience (years)	
			Literacy classes	Elementary schools
Literacy Teachers (N=8)				
Liu	41	College	5 years	0
Gao	29	Master's	4 years	7 years
Wu	29	College	3 years	7 years
Su	29	Master's	3 years	7 years
Chen	38	Master's	5 years	16 years
Xiao		College	4 years	6 years
Lin	36	High School	6 months	0
Zhuang	56	College	3 years	0
Kindergarten Teachers (N=3)				
Liang	42	College	0	20 years
Lan	49	College	0	21 years
Zheng	29	College	0	6 years
Elementary Schoolteachers (N=9)				
Wen	31	College	0	4 years
Li	47	College	0	10 years
Gao	29	Master's	4 years	7 years
Wu	29	College	3 years	7 years
Su	29	Master's	3 years	7 years
Chen	39	Master's	5 years	16 years
Hong	32	College	0	10 years
Xiao	35	College	4 years	6 years
Shen	29	College	0	5 years

Table 4
Summary of Interviews with Chinese Language and Literacy Teachers (N=8)

	Perceptions of		Public discourses		Pedagogies	Teaching	
	Immigrant mothers	Immigrant children	Immigrant mothers	Immigrant children		Challenges	Strategies
Liu	Critical & Sympathetic	No experience	Countered & echoed	No experience	Literacy classroom as a place for emotion, resource, and networking	High drop-out rate	Linking literacy to everyday life encounters
Gao	Sympathetic	Competitive	Countered	Countered	Language learning	Different classroom etiquette	No specific strategies
Wu	Sympathetic	Competitive	Countered	Countered	Language learning	Different motivations lead to different learning attitudes	No specific strategies
Su	Sympathetic	Competitive	Countered	Countered	Language learning	High drop-out rate	No specific strategies
Chen	Sympathetic	Competitive	Countered	Countered	Literacy classroom as a place for emotion, resource, and networking	No at all, align with immigrant mothers	Immigrant mother as a role model for their children

Table 4 con't

	Perceptions of		Public discourses		Pedagogies	Teaching	
	Immigrant mothers	Immigrant children	Immigrant mothers	Immigrant children		Challenges	Strategies
Xiao	Sympathetic	Competitive	Countered	Countered	It's more than teaching literacy, it's about empowerment & self-confidence	High drop-out rate, lack of husbands' support	Empower mothers and engage them in children's education, hope for a better future
Lin	Critical & sympathetic	No experience	Countered & echoed	No experience	Boosting self-esteem	Lack of self-esteem and creativity	Provide more encouragement
Zhuang	Sympathetic	No experience	Countered	No experience	Moral education; Literacy classroom as a place for emotion, resource, and networking	No at all, align with immigrant mothers	Use different texts to teach about moral education

Table 5
Summary of Interviews with Kindergarten Teachers (N=3)

	Perceptions of		Public discourses		Teaching		
	Immigrant mothers	Immigrant children	Immigrant mothers	Immigrant children	Pedagogies	Challenges	Strategies
Liang	Sympathetic	Competitive	Countered	Countered	Daily routine, social skills	Family function matters	No specific strategies since no difference
Lan	Critical & sympathetic	Competitive in cognition, different in daily routine	Echoed & countered	Countered	Daily routine, verbal expression	Home environment matters, difficult to get fathers involved	No specific strategies since no difference, suspect difference in the future
Zheng	Critical & sympathetic	Competitive in cognition, different in daily routine	Echoed & countered	Countered, criticize policies harshly	Daily routine	Immigrant mothers have no resources	No specific strategies since no difference, suspect difference in the future

Table 6
Summary of Interviews with Elementary Schoolteachers (N=9)

	Perceptions of		Public discourses		Pedagogies	Teaching	
	Immigrant mothers	Immigrant children	Immigrant mothers	Immigrant children		Challenges	Strategies
Wen	Critical & sympathetic	Competitive	Echoed & Countered	Countered	Learning attitudes, daily routine	Hyper-active children are more challenging than immigrant children	No specific strategies since no difference
Li	Critical & sympathetic	Competitive	Echoed & countered	Countered	Having love, being neat, willing to admit faults	Hyper-active children are more challenging than immigrant children	No specific strategies since no difference
Gao	Sympathetic	Competitive in cognition, different in routines	Countered	Countered, criticize policies harshly	Learning attitudes, daily routine	Fathers play an important role, more challenging working with children from aboriginal families and hyper-active children	No specific strategies since no difference in academic achievement
Wu	Sympathetic	Competitive	Countered	Countered, criticize policies harshly	Daily routine	Family involvement matters, more challenges with ADHD children, children from single-parent families	No specific strategies since no difference

Table 6 con't

	Perceptions of		Public discourses		Pedagogies	Teaching	
	Immigrant mothers	Immigrant children	Immigrant mothers	Immigrant children		Challenges	Strategies
Su	Sympathetic	Competitive	Countered	Countered, criticize policies harshly	Daily routine, interpersonal relationship	Fathers play a critical role, more challenges with single-parent and grandparent-raised families	No specific strategies since no difference
Chen	Critical & Sympathetic	Competitive	Echoed & Countered	Countered	Daily routine, communication skills	More challenges with hyper-active children,	No specific strategies since no difference
Hong	Sympathetic	Competitive	Countered	Countered, no difference because it's a working-class community	Personality cultivation, appropriate manners	Communicate with immigrant mothers via written forms, more challenges with grandparent-raised families	No specific strategies since no difference
Xiao	Sympathetic	Weaker in reasoning ability, different in manners	Countered	Echoed	Daily routine, self-esteem	Family environment matters	No specific strategies, speculate difference in the future
Shen	Critical & sympathetic	Competitive in cognition, different in routines	Echoed & countered	Countered, criticize policies harshly	Daily routine, moral education	Aboriginal, single-parent, and grandparent-raised families	No specific strategies, speculate difference in the future

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APPENDIX A
Interview Protocol with Immigrant Mothers (Initial)

Interview Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Participants' Home Address: _____

Telephone(s): (H) _____; (C) _____; (W) _____

Participants present during the interview: _____

I. Personal demographic information about the parents:

	Father	Mother
1. Name		
2. Age		
3. Birth of origin	City: Country:	City: Country:
4. Educational level		
5. Religion (if any)		
6. Natal family members		
7. Native language		
8. Language proficiency	Chinese: Tai-gi (Taiwanese): English: Others (_____):	Chinese: Tai-gi (Taiwanese): English: Others (_____):
9. Occupation (if any)		
10. Working experience (if any)		
11. Income (if any)		

12. [Immigrant] When did you come to Taiwan?

13. [Immigrant] What was it like for you when you first moved to Taiwan?

14. How did you get to know each other?
15. When did you get married? Where did you get married?
16. [Optional] Why did you decide to marry to your Taiwanese husband/wife? What are the major deciding factors (Note: arranged marriage or free-will marriage)? What kind of qualities your husband/wife has so that you decide to marry him/her? (Note: this might help to clarify what some female immigrants care about beyond economic concerns)
17. [Immigrant] When you decided to marry to your Taiwanese husband/wife, how did you feel? Did you feel excited, expecting, afraid, worried, sad, or not wanting to be separated from your natal family?
18. [Immigrant] Do you know of any other friends in your home country who also marry Taiwanese man/wife?
19. [Immigrant] Have you ever returned to your home country since you came to Taiwan? If yes, when and how many times? Did you bring anybody with you to visit your home country? How did you feel when you return to your home country?
18. [Immigrant] How do you keep in touch with your natal family nowadays? Using telephone, writing letters, or using emails? How often do you contact your natal family? (How many times you talk to your natal family in a week?)
20. [Immigrant] Have your natal family member(s) ever visited you in Taiwan? Who came visit you? For what reason(s)? How long did your family member(s) stay? How many times did your family member(s) visit you in Taiwan? How did you feel when your family member(s) visit you in Taiwan?
21. [Immigrant] [Repeated question] Did you have a job before you married to your Taiwanese husband? If yes, what kind of job did you hold in your home country? Do you have a job outside the family now? If yes, what kind of job do you hold?

II. Personal demographic information about the other people living in the household

1. Other than you two and child/children, is there anybody else living in your household? (e.g., parents-in-law, husband's unmarried siblings)

III. Questions concerning the focal child:

1. Child's name: _____
2. Child's gender: _____
3. Child's birth date: _____; Age: _____
4. Child's birth order: _____

5. Child's birth place: _____

6. Child's sibling(s):

Name	Gender	Age	School (if applicable)

7. [Optional] Child's motor development:

7-1. When did s/he start to climb? _____

7-2. When did s/he start to walk? _____

7-3. When did s/he start to talk? _____

8. Child's language development:

8-1. Do you recall the first word your child spoke?

8-2. Which language(s) is/are your child's native language(s)?

8-3. Which language(s) do you two use when talking to each other? Which language(s) do you use when you talk to your child? Do both of you speak the same language to your child? Why do you choose to talk to your child in this language?

8-4. Which language does your child use when s/he talks to you? Does your child speak in different languages when talking to each of you?

8-5. Do you wish your child could understand your immigrant spouse's native language? If yes, how do you teach your child to speak the native language? (e.g., through storytelling or singing? What kind of stories? What kind of songs?) Does your spouse or parents-in-law agree with your opinion?

9. Child's personality and social development:

9-1. Tell me a little bit about your child? What kind of child is s/he?

9-2. How would you describe your child's personality? Easy or difficult child?

10. Child's care giving:

10-1. Who is responsible for taking care of your child on a daily basis? How do you two share the responsibility for your child's care giving? Dose anyone else help you with this?

10-2. Does your child go to daycare or preschool? If yes, since when? What kind of daycare or preschool?

11. Would you please describe to me a typical day of your child? For example, when does s/he wake up, have meals, and go to bed? What kinds of activities are involved in your child's daily life, such as playing activities or bedtime stories?

12. How does your family spend weekends or vacations? Can you give me an example?

APPENDIX B
Interview Protocol with Immigrant Mothers (Second)

Interview Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Participant: _____

Other participants present during the interview: _____

WARM UP: Talk a little bit about what I have learned from parents about their child.

From our last conversation, I learned about your own experiences as an immigrant and how you get used to your life in Taiwan. I also learned that you have XX children, and they are now XX years old. Today, I would like to discuss more about your experiences with and beliefs about childrearing practices.

IV. Experiences with and perspectives on childrearing practices

1. When did you give birth to your first child? How about the other children? Where were they born?
2. What was it like for you when you were a mother for the first time?
3. What would you do when you face some difficulties while raising your child?
 - 3-1. Whom do you consult with when you have question concerning how to raise your child? Do you consult with different people while facing different situations? (e.g., consult with Taiwanese parents-in-law regarding food and health questions; consult with natal family regarding moral education, etc.)
 - 3-2. Do you read books or magazines when you encounter questions concerning how to raise your child? If yes, what kind of books or magazines do you read? Are they written in Chinese or your native language? How do you know these books or magazines? (e.g., suggestions from friends, husband, parents-in-law, or yourself?) Where do you find these books or magazines? Which book or magazine is the most useful resource for you?
4. What are your goals as a parent? What are the important childrearing goals for you? What are the personal characteristics that you try to instill in your children (i.e., knowledge, social skills, filial piety, or health)?
5. What's your expectation of your child? What kind of person do you expect your child growing up to be?
6. Do you have different expectation and requirement for your child based on his/her age? [If having more than one child] Do you treat your children differently based on their ages and/or birth order?

7. What do you appreciate the most about your child? Personality or what else?
8. What do you feel proud of your child? (i.e., being polite to family guests, showing respect for parents, being liked by schoolteachers, etc.)
9. As a parent, what do you worry about the most about your child? (i.e., short attention span, lack of concentration, bad temper, lack of proficiency in your native language, or lack of proficiency in Mandarin Chinese)
10. What are the qualities that you try to encourage or discourage in your child?
11. How much influence does a parent have in shaping the child's behavior or personality? How do you shape your child's behavior and/or personality? What do you do?
12. You might have some pre-conceived ideas about how to raise a child before you had a child. Could you tell me what is the part (attitude or realization) that changes the most after you have a child?
13. [Optional] Do you consider yourself as a suitable mother? In your opinion, what makes a good mother? [NOTE: see if this question is appropriate as some people, in certain context, may find it offensive being asked about their "suitability" as a parent.]
14. What kinds of challenges do you face as a parent? Do you think this has something to do with your different cultural background (from your husband's)? Specifically, as a parent who comes from a different county and culture, what are the major challenges you faced while raising your child in Taiwan? What part of the rules/practices is the most difficult to get used to or to understand?
15. Mothers' childhood experience versus focal child's childhood experiences:
 - 15-1. Could you describe to me your childhood experience? Is what your child is experiencing now similar or dissimilar to your childhood experience? Could you explain the similarities and differences to me?
 - 15-2. What are the differences between children who grow up in Taiwan and in your home country?
 - 15-3. What makes a good child in your home country? How is he/she different from a good child in Taiwan? Could you give me an example?
 - 15-4. Do you want your child to know about cultural rules or/and practices of your home country even s/he is born and growing up in Taiwan?
 - 15-5. Do you talk about your childhood experiences with your children? Why do you do so?
 - 15-6. When you were a little child, did your parents tell you their personal stories?
16. Has your child ever visited your home country? If yes, when, how many times, and how long your child stayed in your home country? Do you think your child enjoyed the visit(s) to your home country? Why you brought your child to visit your family (e.g., bring him/her to see

your natal families or bring him/her to be taken care by your parents)? Do you enjoy bring your husband and/or your child back to visit your natal family?

17. Some people believe that parents become more mature as they raise their children, what are the inspirations and growth you have gained from raising your child?

V. Focusing explicitly on the concept of moral, gender, and emotion

[Moral]

1. What are the rules you expect your child to follow or obey at home? (i.e., go to bed on time, do not watch TV while having dinner, show respect to the elders, etc.) Why do you think these rules are important?
2. What are the rules you expect your child to follow or obey in public (i.e., parks, family gatherings, supermarkets, preschools)? (i.e., do not make noises, do not fight with classmates, show politeness to others, follow parents and do not get loss) Why do you think these rules are important?
3. How would you handle the situation when your child misbehaves in public? How would you handle the situation if s/he misbehaves at home (versus in public)? Do you scold your child in public? Why or why not? Do you spank your child in public? Why or why not?
4. How do you lead your child to understand these rules? Through personal storytelling, reading books, watching TV, or opportunity education? Which method is the most effective one for you?
5. What are the consequences when your child breaks the rules? How do you discipline your child when s/he commits a transgression? Reasoning with your child, punishing your child physically, or withdrawing privileges from your child? Which discipline method is the most effective one for you?
6. What do you think this kind of punishment will make your child feel? How do you know that your child feels angry, sad, shameful, or guilty? What impact do you want the punishment to have on your child?
7. When you were a little child, who usually disciplined you when you committed a transgression? How did he/she punish you? Is there anything special about the punishment? (For example, in Vietnam, parents may ask children to embrace arms in front of their chests while being punished.)
8. Who is responsible for disciplining your child? Your parents-in-law, husband, schoolteacher, or yourself? What kind of role do your parents and your spouse's parents play in your child's life?
9. What do you feel when other adults discipline your child? (i.e., grandparents, teachers, friends, etc.)

10. What do you do when your child does something good or accomplishes something extraordinary? How do you praise or encourage your child? Verbally (e.g., saying something good about your child), physically (e.g., giving your child a hug or a tender touch), or materially (e.g., buying a present or some candies for your child)?
11. What do you think this kind of praise will make your child feel? How do you know that your child feels excited, happy, or proud? What impact do you want the praise to have on your child?
12. When you were a little child, who usually praised you when you accomplished an achievement? How did he/she praise you? Is there anything special about the praise?
13. Some parents believe that when disciplining their children, it is important to make a distinction between the child and the child's behavior. They might say to the child, "I love you but I don't like what you just did." What is your opinion of this? Is this something you do? [NOTE: if parent endorses this distinction, ask why he or she feels this is important. If parent does not endorse, ask why he or she thinks this is misguided.]
14. Some parents believe that it is important to keep reminding their children of past misdeeds – things that the child did wrong yesterday or a week ago – so that the child will not do the same thing again. What is your opinion of this? Is this something you do?
15. What do you remember about your own upbringing that has a bearing on how you raise your child? Do you remember any particular experiences when you were growing up, especially concerning how praise and punishment were handled that really stand out in your mind? How would you say those experience influenced you in terms of your style of parenting?

[Gender]

16. In your opinion, what kind of role do parents play in the child's life? Do you think fathers and mothers should share different responsibilities for childrearing? Do you think fathers and mothers should play different roles in childrearing practices?
17. Do you think you and your husband share different childrearing beliefs and attitudes? What are the things that you two share similar attitudes? What are the things that you two do not agree with each other? How would you handle the situation when you and your husband have different childrearing beliefs? (Do you ever have conflicts with your husband or parents-in-law about how you are raising your children?)
18. Do you think it is important to raise boys and girls differently? Do you have different expectations on boys and girls? In other words, do you think that discipline methods and expectations on boys and girls should be different or similar? Why?
19. If you think that it is important to raise boys and girls differently, what would you emphasize when raising girls? What would you emphasize when raising boys?

20. In your opinion, what are some qualities or characteristics that girls should have but are not necessarily for boys to have (i.e., speak in a soft tone, take care of younger siblings,)? What are some qualities or characteristics that boys should have but are not necessarily for girls to have (i.e., do not cry in public, be brave)?
21. In your opinion, do you think girls should learn how to be a housewife? Why? If yes, what age should girls start to learn these tasks? How about boys?
22. Do you think there should be different behavioral standards for girls and boys? Why?
23. Do you buy different toys for boys and girls? If yes, what kind of toys do you buy for boys and girls? Do you purposefully buy toys from your home country for your children? Why do you do so?
24. [Birth order and gender] Do you have different expectations on your children based on their birth order? For example, do you have more expectations on the oldest child? Do you spoil your youngest child more than others? Would you have different expectations on the oldest child based on the child's gender? Why?

[Emotion] Comparison? Shame? Self-respect-heart/mind?

25. Among your extended families or your friends, do they have children whose ages are similar to your children's? Do you compare your child with them? If yes, what are the things you make comparisons (i.e., language proficiency, politeness, personality, motor development such as height or weight, etc.)?
26. When you find that your child's performance or qualities are not as good as other children's, what would you do and what would you tell your child?
27. Do other people compare your child with theirs? Who are these people? What do they make comparison with? How do you feel about that?
28. In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of making comparisons among children?

[Insider versus outsider]

29. [Insider's explanations] When you see (negative) news or reports on TV or newspapers regarding children born to transnational families (particularly Taiwanese-South East Asian families), how do you feel and what do you think? Do you think what has been reported/presented by the media is fair to these transnational families? If you have the opportunity to speak to these news reporters or magazine editors, what do you want to tell them?
30. Do you have any special feeling and thought when you see the media makes comparisons between transnational families and local Taiwanese families?

31. Do you have any thoughts on the phenomenon of Taiwanese marrying Westerners and living in Taiwan? What are the challenges for Taiwanese-Westerner families and what are the challenges for Taiwanese-Southeast Asian families?
32. [Insider vs. outsider] In your opinion, what are the similarities and differences among Taiwanese-Southeast Asian families, Taiwanese-Westerner families, and Taiwanese-Taiwanese families?
33. Do you want your child to grow up to be Taiwanese or XXX (depend on father's nationality)?

[Foodways, language, and Region]

34. [Foodways] Do you cook at home on a daily basis? What kind of food do you usually cook? When your family has dinner outside, what kind of food your family usually eats? [Note: For Vietnamese mothers, they love fish sauce which Taiwanese husbands rarely get used to.]
35. [Festivals] Do you celebrate your home country's festivals in Taiwan? If yes, who you usually have the celebration with? Your family or friends from your home country? How do you celebrate these festivals? Could you give me an example?
36. [Region] Do you have religious beliefs? If yes, do you have this religious belief before or after you got married? Do you think that having religious beliefs provides you some strength in getting used to the new environment in Taiwan? Does your religion have an impact on your marriage or/and childrearing beliefs?
37. [Language usage] Which language do you use when you talk to your child? Your native language or Mandarin Chinese? Why do you choose to talk to your child in this language? Do you wish your child could understand your native language? If yes, how do you teach your child to speak your native language (e.g., through storytelling or singing? What kind of stories? What kind of songs?)? Does your husband or parents-in-law agree with your opinion? [SAME QUESTION]
38. [Language usage] Do you expect your child to learn more than one language (other than the child's native language)? Which language(s) do you want your child to become competent? Do you think that being competent in more than one language will bring your child any advantages? What kind of advantages? Why do you think so?

VI. Focusing explicitly on the transition from home to school

1. When did you start sending your child to preschool? What was it like for your child when s/he started going to preschool? Was it difficult for your child to get used to preschool environment? How long did it take for your child to get used to the preschool environment?
2. What was it like for you when your child started going to preschool? Do you have any special feeling or thoughts?

3. In your opinion, what's the main purpose of sending your child to preschool? (i.e. to allow both parents to hold full-time jobs, to improve child's social skill, to improve child's literacy, to prepare child to go to primary school, etc.)
4. Do you think your child enjoy going to preschool? Does your child share with you what happens in preschool on a regular basis? What are the major topics your child talks about?
5. How do you think of preschool teachers and classmates?
6. Do preschool teachers contact you regularly to discuss issues related to your child? What are the major issues you and preschool teachers discuss? How do you feel when preschool teachers contact you?

[OPTIONAL]

1. Birth-giving and "doing the month" (confinement) (spending the month after giving birth to recover) practice:
 - 1-1. Are the childbirth practices in Taiwan different from your home country? In what way are these practices different? (e.g., babies with mothers after birth)
 - 1-2. Did you "do the month" after giving birth to your child? Where did you "do the month"? Does anybody help you with this practice?
 - 1-3. Did you follow the practices in Taiwan or your home country whiling "doing the month"? Did you like the way you had your "doing the month"? Why or why not?
 - 1-4. According to the practices in your home country, what are the major issues new mothers need to pay attention to after giving the birth? Any taboos?
2. Hypothetical question:
 - 2-1. Next Friday will be your child's five-year-old birthday, how will you celebrate it? What kind of birthday party do you want to have?
 - 2-2. You plan to invite some friends to your home to celebrate your child's birthday, who would you invite? Why?
 - 2-3. One of your guests brings your child a birthday cake. You want your child to wait until all guests arrive to celebrate. However, your child can not wait to have a bite of the cake. What would you do?
 - 2-4. One of your guests bring your child a birthday gift. Before the guest hands the gift to your child, your child has already searched the gift in your guest's handbag. What would you do when you see your child doing so?
 - 2-5. Would you handle these situations in the same way if today were not your child's birthday? (Is there anything special because today is your child's birthday?)
3. Hypothetical question:
 - 3-1. Assuming that your child is now a second grader, what kind of expectations and requirements you would have on your child? (school performance, interpersonal relationships, emotion, and moral education)
 - 3-2. Assuming that the first term-exam was over and the school just posted the grades of your child's performance. Your child's performance was quite bad and ranked the fifth from

the last in the class, how would you handle this situation? What would you feel about this situation?

- 3-3. Assuming that your child was ridiculed or bullied by his/her classmates because s/he did poorly on the exam, what would you feel about this situation? How would you handle this situation?

APPENDIX C

Interview Protocol with Literacy Teachers

補校教學經驗：

1. 請問您帶過幾年的補校了？教什麼科目？
2. 您是在什麼樣的因緣際會之下，投入新住民補校教育的工作？
3. 可否描述一下您帶補校的經驗為何？
4. 您認為你與其他的識字班老師有什麼不同？

教學教材：

1. 您如何選教材？
2. 您目前及曾經使用過的教材有哪些？是否有自己設計的教案？在自己設計教案時，您會想教些什麼東西給您的學生？
3. 這些年來，您的授課方式是否曾改變、調整過，為何？
4. 您認為第二外語之學習 vs. 母語學習之教材與教學方式之同異？

對新住民學生的認識：

1. 您覺得這些學生來上學的主要目的是什麼？(e.g., 學中文、交朋友、有一個時間跟空間可以遠離家人) 您覺得是什麼原因讓他們一直願意來上課？你覺得學生來上課，除了學會中文，其他最大的收穫會是什麼？(e.g., 對台灣文化的瞭解、建立社交網絡)
2. 他們最需要學習些什麼？
3. 您會希望他們以怎樣的態度與目標學習？
4. 上補校對他們最大的幫助在哪裡？
5. 現在行政院開始規定要歸化台灣國籍的話需要通過語言檢定，可以用補校上課時數、國小同等學歷抵押，您的看法如何？
6. 上補校已儼然成了「指標」，包括：與先生的關係好不好、公婆是否講理對待、是否與外界有接觸、是否足以成為稱職的母親、孩子以後適應與就學狀況。你認為呢？
7. 據我所知，您班上學生目前都多是越南籍。不知您以前是否教過其他國籍的學生？您的印象是什麼？學生語文程度差異大嗎？若在同一個班級裡頭，學生語文程度差異很大，你會怎麼帶這個班？
8. 依您的瞭解，越南籍姊妹/新移民與其他地方來的移民有何特別不同之處？
9. 您會怎樣跟台灣社會大眾介紹越南姊妹、越南文化？
10. 這些年來，您認為「外籍配偶」現象有哪些改變或趨勢？

對新住民下一代教育的看法：

1. 新住民的下一代該不該學母親的母語？該何時開始學母親的母語？
2. 新住民下一代是否會有中文學習問題？
3. 新住民媽媽是否會有無法與老師、學校溝通的問題？
4. 新住民媽媽在補校的表現與她孩子在學校的表現有關係嗎？會互相影響嗎？媽媽是否可能因為語言障礙而無法輔導孩子課業，因而造成孩子在學校難以適應、功課跟不上？
5. 您認為社會大眾或媒體報導是否公正、確實？有哪些需要糾正的偏見嗎？

APPENDIX D
Interview Protocol with Kindergarten and Elementary School Teachers

擔任教職年數：_____ 擔任導師年數：_____

與新住民學生接觸的年數：_____ 曾經帶過多少位新住民學生：_____

可否請您介紹幾位班上的新住民家長、台灣家長、補校學生，接受我的訪問？

教師教育理念：

1. 請問您的班級經營的重點是什麼？
2. 您在您的教室裡面，您所重視的是什麼？您對學生的要求是什麼？（probe: 生活常規、學習態度、學業成就、人際關係）
3. 學生的學業成就，對您而言很重要嗎？（您是不是很重視功課？）（您會不會要求學生成績一定要達到一種程度？）
4. 您覺得孩子來到學校，最重要的是要學習什麼東西？（probe: 做人做事的道理、對自己負責任、學業表現）請問您是怎麼告訴學生這些道理的？您如何讓學生學習這些道理？
5. 你覺得教養小孩生活常規是誰的責任？指導功課又是誰的責任？（probe: 媽媽？爸爸？老師？同儕？）

與新住民接觸經驗：

1. 請問您最近一次帶的班級裡頭，總共有幾位學生？其中有幾位是新住民學生？
2. 您對班上新住民學生的整體印象為何？
3. 可以針對幾個新住民學生，說說看這幾位學生在學校表現的特色嗎？（probe: 課業、態度、同儕相處、生活習慣？）
4. 可否描述一下您與新住民學生接觸的經驗為何？
5. 可否描述一下您與新住民學生家長接觸、溝通的經驗為何？
6. 您覺得台灣籍跟新住民學生，有什麼不同或相同的地方嗎？您會對台灣籍學生與新住民學生有不同的期待嗎？
7. 您覺得班上新住民學生在學校的表現，有與其他同儕相同或不同的地方嗎？（probe: 課業、態度、同儕相處、生活習慣？）您覺得是什麼原因造成這樣的表現？
8. 如果您班上新住民學生因為某方面表現不佳而被其他同學取笑，你會怎麼處理？如果有，通常是哪些方面？
9. 對於班上的台灣籍跟新住民學生，您會特別鼓勵他們玩在一起嗎？還是您不會特別處理，讓學生們自由來往？

補校教學經驗：

1. 請問您帶過幾年的補校了？教什麼科目？可否描述一下您帶補校的經驗為何？
2. 您對這些新住民女性的整體印象為何？
3. 您覺得新住民家長來到台灣，面臨最大的挑戰為何？
4. 您學得新住民家長在補校的表現與她孩子在學校的表現有關係嗎？會互相影響嗎？

APPENDIX E
Proposal of Workshop Designed for Transnational Marriage Families

新住民親子互動成長團體活動計畫書

一、活動目的：

1. 以活潑、輕鬆的團體活動，增進參與活動的親子之間的正向互動機會與品質。
2. 從不同活動中，帶入多元文化、互相尊重、子女教養等概念。

二、指導單位：

教育部、台北縣政府教育局。

三、主辦單位：

台北縣深坑國民小學。

四、參與對象：

深坑國民小學新住民親子、弱勢家庭親子、對於親子成長課程有興趣的親子。

五、參與人數：

親子 10-15 組 (20-30 人)。

六、活動時間：

民國九十七年一月十三日，早上八時三十分至下午四時三十分。

七、活動地點：

台北縣深坑國民小學終身學習教室。

八、團體講師：

陳倩慧 (美國伊利諾大學心理學系碩士、博士候選人)。

九、活動流程：

活動時間	活動名稱	活動目的	活動內容	教學資源
08:30 - 9:00	相見歡：認識你我	一、認識彼此，熟悉團體。 二、促進成員的互動與了解。 三、訂定團體約定。	相互介紹。	音響、CD、彩色筆、名牌。
09:00 - 10:30	我眼中的你	一、透過彩繪，增進親子	一、親子彩繪彼此畫像。	音響、CD、圖畫紙、彩色

		彼此的了解。 二、透過成員分享，促進團體凝聚力與信任感。	二、親子分享。 三、團體分享。	筆、色紙、剪刀、膠水等等。
10:30 - 12:00	親子共讀	一、藉由繪本的介紹拉近新住民媽媽對書本的距離。 二、了解如何利用繪本說故事，提升親子關係。	一、領導者帶領閱讀繪本「你最重要的東西是什麼？」 二、團體分享。	音響、CD、實物投影機。
12:00 - 13:00	午餐時間	透過一起用餐，拉近親子、團體彼此之距離。	食用越南美食。	玉妃越南美食便當、新住民媽媽家鄉的音樂、音響。
13:00 - 14:30	外公、外婆的家	一、透過親子共同製作一件作品，增進孩子對母親原生國家的認識。 二、透過分享，增進成員彼此的了解與信任。	一、親子彩繪或製作作品，介紹孩子外公、外婆的家。 二、團體分享	新住民媽媽家鄉的地圖、音響、CD、圖畫紙、彩色筆、色紙、剪刀、膠水等等。
14:30 - 16:00	一起來學習	一、藉由課業指導，讓新住民媽媽拉近對孩子學校生活的認識。 二、了解如何利用分享學校生活，提升親子關係。	一、親子課業指導活動。 二、團體討論與分享。	學習單（國語、數學等等）、紙、筆。
16:00 - 16:30	溫馨時刻	一、整理參加團體的經驗與學習。 二、成員能互相珍惜情緣。	一、回顧活動內容。 二、團體分享。 三、珍重與祝福。	音響、CD、小卡片、筆、小禮物。

APPENDIX F
Quotes of Interviews with Literacy Teachers

Quotation #1

“Just like my mom, like the way my mom brought me up. [Immigrant women are] like our mothers’ generation. [They] have not received higher education, but they love their children very much. They care, and they take good care of their children. It’s not like our generation. Now an educational problem in Taiwan is that we have fewer children, but parents receive higher education, then [...] they spoil their children. But [immigrant women] come from villages, have traditional views, and they pass on to their children the idea that teachers deserve respect. ‘You need to respect your teachers. You need to study hard.’ It’s just like what we were told decades ago...and I think that it’s right, that it’s a good tradition.”

Quotation #2:

“Do you know why we [literacy teachers] develop very good relationships with them [immigrant women]? It’s because when [immigrant women] come here, in the families they face a lot of difficulties. It’s just like when we [Taiwanese women] marry our husbands, and we also have to please our mothers-in-law. But their situation is a little bit awkward, because honestly [pause], honestly their husbands’ backgrounds...some of them are [pause], they cannot...they cannot find wives. Some of them are [pause], some of them are very old, and some of them are handicapped or something like that, so...”

Quotation #3

“When they first come, they all face a problem. They must give birth to children. All are like that. Poor them, I feel, because I think, ‘Why is this a duty a woman is obligated to fulfill?’ It’s just like...I feel for them. I feel that all the unfairness to women that our society endorses, all of it happens to them [immigrant women]”.

Quotation #4

“I feel [immigrant women] are really [pause], maybe because of my own background.... We [she was indicating herself and I] are both educated and we know that, in this society, there are many things unfair to women. For example, for a woman, we...when we are at home, because of traditional views, we have to do more chores. Also, we are mothers. It’s taken for granted that we need to take care of the children. Then, fathers are the breadwinners. In this domain, there are already some conflicts, and I feel this situation is even more likely to happen to [immigrant women], so they have to bear a greater burden.”

Quotation #5

“Maybe what I have been telling you is not very scholarly, but I am very, very sincere when I interact with them. And I share with them my most valuable life experiences so that they accept me and my suggestions. It makes me feel great to be an educator.”

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Eva Chian-Hui Chen was born in Taoyuan, Taiwan. She graduated from the National Taiwan Normal University in 1998 with a bachelor's degree in education and counseling psychology. For several years Eva Chen worked as a research assistant for Dr. Heidi Fung at Academia Sinica in Taiwan before relocating to Champaign, Illinois, to pursue graduate studies in developmental psychology. She completed a Master of Arts in Psychology from the University of Illinois in 2005. Following the completion of her Ph.D., Eva Chen will join Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas as a Psychology faculty.