Grounding Migrant Belonging: Taiwanese Skilled Expatriates in the Yangtze River Delta (YRD), China

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Declaration

I, Yuhui Cheng, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated within the thesis,

Signed:

ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to understand the ways in which migrant people's belonging is constituted in the contemporary transnationalised world. Through an investigation, based on in-depth interviews and participant observation, of Taiwanese expatriates' everyday lives in the Yangtze River Delta, China, this research discerns the ways in which migrant belonging is grounded and constituted as part of their border-crossing practices.

My analysis considers Taiwanese expatriates' practices of belonging as outcomes shaped by their interactions in and with place. Therefore, it also contributes to a geographic understanding of migrant belonging. In particular, I foreground the role of place in mediating migrant belonging by attending to the spatiality of migrants' everyday lives with special regard to their practices in domestic space, workplace and leisure space. In this regard, my research findings also confirm the stickiness of place in contemporary migrants' activities and counteract the discourse of mobile peoples' frictionless movement in the borderless world.

The empirical study also establishes an understanding of migrant belonging in relation to the politics of identity. It highlights how migrants' everyday practices of belonging are often informed and shaped by their (negotiations of) identities. As an overseas Chinese group, Taiwanese expatriates' experiences and negotiations of cultural and ethnic identity integral to their practices of belonging can be considered within the broader scholarship of Chinese diaspora. However, this research challenges the idea of a homogenous Chinese identity through the case study of Taiwanese in Mainland China, drawing attention to the diversity of Chinese identities and how they are practised and experienced. In so doing, this research not only advances the understanding of Chinese transnationalism, but the focus on Taiwanese expatriates' belonging as situated lived practices also contributes to enrich recent academic writings on the grounded form of transnationalism and middling transnationalism.

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ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

BU	Business unit
CCTV	Closed-circuit television
CPC	Communist Party of China
DPP	Democratic Progress Party
E&E	Electrical and electronic appliances
FDI	Foreign direct investment
GDP	Gross domestic production
GM	General manager
HR	Human resources
ID	Identification card
IT	Information technology
KMT	Kuomintang/ Nationalist Party
MOEA	Ministry of Economic Affairs
OA	Office automation
PC	Personal computer
PRC	People's Republic of China
QA	Quality assurance
QC	Quality control
ROC	Republic of China (Taiwan)
SOP	Standard operating procedure
RMB	Renminbi/Chinese Yuan
R&D	Research and development
TPWS	Taiwanese professional women's society
TNC	Transnational corporation
YRD	Yangtze River Delta
3C	Communication, computer, consumer

GLOSSARY

Alishan	A-Li mountain (Taiwan)
A Yi	Female domestic worker
Chu wai ren	People who live and/or work in a place far away from home
Da di	Take taxi
Da lu ren	PRC Chinese; the Mainlander
Diu lian	Lose face
Gu zao ren	People who live in the past
Jian mu ya	Ginger duck with rice wine
Ma jiang	A ancient Chinese game
Mian zi	Face
Mi-Le Buddha	A Buddhist God
Quanxi	Interpersonal relations
Shao nai nai	Noblewoman ; female socialite
Shi fu	Master
Su siou	Suzhou embroidery; Su embroidery
Tai gan	Taiwanese cadre in China-based Taiwanese companies
Tai liu	Taiwanese people who go to China to do business, but end up bankrupt or losing their jobs and living in idleness.
Tai ma	Taiwanese mother
Tai shang	Taiwanese business people
Tai tai	Wife; married women
Teppanyaki	A style of Japanese cuisine
Tong bao	Fellow citizens
Wai sheng ren	Mainlanders who came to Taiwan after the Chinese Civil War
Xiao qu	Neighbourhood
Yang rou lu	Lamb hotpot
You quai	Turn right
Zhu wai	Expatriate personnel

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

This research examines contemporary migrants' emotional experiences of belonging in relation to transnational mobility and their grounded lives through the empirical case of Taiwanese transient migrants in the Yangtze River Delta (YRD), China. Transnational migration is an emotional journey involving complicated feelings, such as loss, dislocation and displacement as well as feelings of well-being, but this research does not intend to explore the whole range of emotional experiences forged in Taiwanese expatriates' migration. Instead, I focus on understanding migrants' experiences of belonging because it is crucial to migrants' well-being and this approach can also reveal migrants' longing for belonging in their migration and in relation to their uprooting experiences. Through discussing the constitution of migrant belonging, this research presents a geographical engagement with the scholarship of transnational migration by drawing together the themes of migrant identity, transnationalism, and geographical understandings of home and place.

Over the past two decades, a transnational perspective has been applied to understand international migration and special attention has been drawn to migrants' transnational practices and maintenance of social relations in more than one nation-state, as well as their development of allegiances with and commitment to two or more countries (Basch et al. 1994; Itzigsohn et al. 1999; Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004; Portes et al. 1999; Vertovec 2001). This literature has also revealed the complexities of migrants' identity formation in transnational social spaces (Guarnizo and Smith 2003) and the difference between actual social relations and practices in which transnational migrants engage as ways of being in a transnational social field, versus their practices signifying identities as ways of belonging (Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004). This thus demonstrates the

interconnections between migrant identity and belonging, making identity a key aspect to explore in studying contemporary transnational migrants' experiences and emotional process.

Not merely an integral affective dimension of identity (Crocher 2004; Hedetoft and Hjort 2002), belonging also has emotional components as it often implies feelings such as being at home; feelings of safety and comfort. However, feelings such as these are not born out of nothing or inherent to people's experience; instead, it is argued that they have to be made and constituted. As Bell's understanding of belonging illustrates, 'one does not simply or ontologically "belong" to the world or to any group within it. Belonging is an achievement at several levels of abstractions.' (Bell 1999: 3). Building on this conceptualisation of belonging, this research aims to explore the ways in which migrant belonging is constituted in relation to their transnational migration and grounded everyday lives. Especially, I consider how an array of feelings reflecting migrant belonging are developed in migrants' everyday lives and what migrants do to fulfil their longing to belong.

1.2. Migrant belonging and everyday practices

To understand migrants' emotional process of belonging as everyday grounded practices, this research pays special attention to migrants' practices and behaviours to fulfil this process. In this, a social practice is a useful concept which, as Hitchings (2010) argues, allows us to understand and discern people's everyday behaviours (Hitchings 2010). To do so, he suggests that an examination of people's practices should consider the specific combinations of factors that 'guide their actions associated with particular places' (p. 288). Besides, he also reminds us that people may not be always in charge of

their actions, but are recruited into patterns of behaviours. This thus implies that the connections between people's practices and the environmental contexts are encounters. Such understanding also has emotional implications as he refers to Giddens (1984) who considers that through people's reproduction of previously effective behaviours, a comforting form of familiarity can often be forged. This thus makes clear the relationships between people's emotional experiences, everyday behaviours and environmental contexts of places where their activities are based so offering insights to studying migrants' practice to constitute belonging.

The literature on practices of migrant belonging has increasingly examined the role objects play in migrants' everyday lived practices and the ways in which belonging is constituted by connecting objects to a given place (Mee and Wright 2009). However, previous studies have often centred on studying migrants' material practices at home in the domestic sphere (for example, see Dobson 2006; Salih 2002; Tolia-Kelly 2004; Walsh 2006a), omitting experiences in other spatial settings in which migrants' everyday lives are based (e.g. workplace and leisure spaces). This thesis seeks to address this omission and to enrich the understanding of spaces of migrant belonging by including an examination of the material culture and material practices in public domains in Taiwanese expatriates' practices of belonging. Specifically, I consider how the transnational similarities, constituted by material culture and migrants' experiences of interacting with places and the local environment, may shape their emotional process of belonging. My discussion will address the materiality of Taiwanese expatriates' everyday living spaces in terms of housing forms and the built environment in shaping their emotional experiences of belonging. As economic globalisation has contributed to large-scale property development projects across the world, the design of housing has also become a manifestation of the landscape of transnational connectivity and

similarities (Blunt and Dowling 2006). As such, the experience of materialising homes transnationally thus merits more discussion in understanding migrants' practices of belonging. In addition to that, I will also pay attention to the materiality Taiwanese expatriates experience in their workplace and a variety of leisure spaces to examine the relationship between their experiences of belonging in these places and their feeling of belonging.

Such an understanding of migrants' material practices and material culture at home as practices of belonging also makes it clear that people's identity is integral to this process as it is often revealed and reinforced through the material culture of home-making. Identity is a necessary element of the feeling of belonging also because belonging is often understood through the feeling of being understood, accepted and identified by people and by a group. In this regard, migrant belonging is argued to be constituted through their practices and performances of their identity to fit within certain social and spatial norms. This is evidenced by a range of studies on migrants' associations and gatherings as important social spaces in which migrants interact and can often forge a feeling of being at home, especially through practising and performing their ethnic and national identities (for example, see Ahmed et al. 2003; Fortier 2000; Lovell 1998; Pratt 2003/2004). However, the discussion of migrants' practices to constitute belonging through performing their identities seems to pay insufficient attention to the multiplicity of migrant people's identities and how they may be influential in their everyday lived practices to make them feel good. For example, workplace identity and identity that gives people a sense of superiority have not been fully explored in the literature on expatriates' experiences of belonging. This case study will thus fill the gap by attending to Taiwanese expatriates' multiple identities and especially examining how the various environmental contexts shape such practices to forge belonging.

The above discussion of migrants' practices of belonging has implicated the relevance of transnationality in migrants' everyday emotional lives. Transnational transportation of objects to migrants' new residence seems now to be a common home-making practice. There are also transnational transfers of habitual and ritual practices to have homeland traditions or culture imbued within the new home to become a space of belonging (see, for example, Jazeel 2006; Nowicka 2007). Further, to sustain a feeling of homeliness between family members in households of family separation, advanced communication technology also plays an important role in this process. Since contemporary transnational interconnections and advanced transportation have contributed to moving across national borders with relative ease, it has also witnessed the emergence of the transnational family with family members dispersed in different countries employed by migrants as a household strategy and strategy of transnational family. In this case, the intensive transnational connections mediated by telephone, Internet and transnational media, etc. make possible the maintenance of a feeling of homeliness among family members (e.g. Ho 2009; Willis and Yeoh 2000; Yeoh and Willis 2005c; Yeoh et al. 2005).

Consequently, such understanding of contemporary migrants' transnational practices has thus made clear the difference between those involving staying put and physical moving. In this research, I integrate both dimensions of migrants' transnational practices to examine how they are complementary in migrants' home-making and practices to forge belonging. In particular, I pay attention to the relationship between transnational migrants' physical cross-border movement and their emotional processes and practices of belonging as this aspect is highly relevant to the mobile highly-skilled workers and professionals who are able to move frequently across borders and/or return to the

home(land) from which they departed. Besides that, scholarly interest has been drawn to migrants' transnational practices in certain spatial settings, such as the domestic space or leisure spaces of socialising, but this seems to neglect those experiences in the workplace that are also important for expatriate workers' everyday lives and emotional experiences (see, for example, Beaverstock 2002, 2005). This case study will thus also address the gap in the literature.

Besides, contemporary transnational interconnections and the increase in people's border crossings also have effects on transnational migrants' construction of identities. This is evidenced by migrants' development of allegiances and attachment to more than one country, which contribute to transnational consciousness and the multiplicity of migrants' identities (for example, see Guarnizo and Smith 2003; Hannerz 1996; Vertovec 2001). As such, to understand migrant belonging through identity practices and performance, it requires to consider migrants' multiple and multi-scalar identities. This is of particular importance to this case study analysing the relationship between Taiwanese expatriates' identities and practices of belonging in relation to identities in China because the cultural, historical and economic links as well as complicated political relations have made Taiwanese people develop multiple references of identity that often affect their interactions with the PRC Chinese people. Also, this group of Taiwanese migrants' high mobility often makes them inclined to a kind of cosmopolitan and transnational consciousness that can also enable this research to add to the empirical understanding of contemporary migrants' identity in relation to transnational interconnectivity and mobility. I consider the multiple dimensions of Taiwanese expatriates' identities to include their self, family and workplace identities as well as their cosmopolitan consciousness, along with the conventional scholarly concern and stress on migrants' national and cultural identity and ethnicity. The discussion of

migrants' identity reflected in and mediated by their practices of belonging is particularly important when studying migrants in a foreign land with a shared ethnicity and assumed shared cultural origins and background. For Taiwanese migrants in China, the complex historical and cultural linkages amidst antagonistic political relations constitute a challenge to Taiwanese people in their interactions with the Chinese in the People's Republic of China (PRC) and to their identity performance.

Integral to the discussion of migrants' practices of belonging in relation to material culture, transnational practice and identity practices are geographical concepts of place and space and their role in shaping migrants' emotional process of belonging. This is in line with recent literature on emotional geography and geographies of belonging that argues that people's emotional experiences cannot be separated from place, as they are the result of the interactions between people and place (see Anderson and Smith 2001; Davidson and Bondi 2004; Bondi et al. 2005). This perspective thus allows geographers to engage in the scholarship of migrant belonging through understanding belonging as a sense of (being in) place and place identity. Consequently, this research on Taiwanese expatriates' practices of belonging will focus on the spaces of migrant belonging which currently receive little attention in transnational migration studies.

Given that migration studies on spaces of migrants' practices to forge belonging have paid significant attention to the domestic sphere and some public domains, including neighbourhoods, ethnic and social gatherings (see Çağlar2001; Jazeel 2006; Gordon 2008), my discussion aims to add to this present literature by including the full range of migrants' everyday living spaces into my analysis. In particular, I incorporate the often omitted workplace because it is the place where Taiwanese expatriates spend most of their time. Also, the workplace is a place in which migrants' practices around material

culture, transnationality and identity performances in their encounters with local people can be perceived.

In addition to the workplace, home has long been considered to be a space to understand belonging. This can be seen from the narratives of belonging that are often related to a feeling of being at home or homeliness. Rather than assuming belonging as inherent to the spatial setting called home, this perspective also addresses the constitution of a feeling of being at home which is associated with a series of people's home-making practices in the domestic space (see Walsh 2006a,b; Salih 2002).

Home-making practices in the domestic sphere are often contested and involve negotiations, due to power relations and diverse perspectives among household members and other occupants of the domestic space (Morley, 2000). These contestations also challenge migrants' feelings of being at home and belonging at the domestic scale, as home is often conceived of as meaning harmonious and safe. While existing studies have presented empirical cases of migrants as domestic workers and au pairs (or nannies) to show that their activities are regulated by a series of house rules, there is still not much literature addressing the negotiation of feelings of being at home between the domestic worker and the master/mistress. Also, what is less discussed in the literature is the presence of the foreigner as an important family member (e.g. spouse) and the interpersonal interactions within such household. This research addresses this aspect to further explore the complexities of interpersonal interactions in the household and consider how Taiwanese expatriates negotiate their feelings of belonging within different kinds of household.

Considering that home can be constituted at multiple scales and by the interactions of

forces occurring at different scales (Duncan and Lamber 2004; Magat 1999; Rapport and Dowson 1998), this research will examine migrants' experiences of homeand feeling of home(liness) at various spaces. In particular, I pay attention to Taiwanese expatriates' practices of belonging in relation to their experiences in virtual space, such as taking part in online communities. Advanced telecommunications technology has facilitated transnational interconnectivity and has contributed to the formation of different types of transnational (social) spaces as manifested by transnational organisations such as multinational corporations or non-governmental organisations (Pries 2001) and also spaces such as the home and urban consumption spaces in which transnational connections can be experienced. Spaces formed by online interactions and in virtual space are now considered to be important platforms for migrants to interact and to engage in homeland affairs (e.g. Chan 2005; Lee 2001; Tsagarousianou 2001); however, there is still much room to develop the understanding of the Web-based community as a space of migrant belonging (see, for example, Collins 2009). Considering that Taiwanese IT skilled expatriates have excellent IT literacy and knowledge of socialising in the online environment, my research on their practices of belonging in different forms of spaces will take this aspect into consideration.

1.3. Taiwanese expatriates in China

This research uses Taiwanese IT expatriates in the Yangtze River Delta (YRD) as a case study to investigate migrants' practices of belonging and how these are grounded in everyday living spaces of home, work and leisure and transnational spaces so as to understand how contemporary transnational interconnections and migrants' identity may shape their emotional process in migration and grounded lived experiences. I chose to study Taiwanese migrants in China because China is now host to the largest Taiwanese

migrant community in the world, but it still draws little attention as compared to Taiwanese migrants in Western countries. There is a lack of official statistics on the number of Taiwanese people living and/or working in Mainland China due to China's loose entry regulations on Taiwanese residents who, when holding a valid Mainland Travel Permit, are allowed to enter China and stay for a maximum of five years (Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council 1991). However, unofficial figures have shown that there are roughly one million Taiwanese people currently living in China. The greater Shanghai area alone hosts nearly 300,000 Taiwanese people, a number that far exceeds other cities in China (Chang 2010). As China's economy continues to grow, the number of Taiwanese people is forecasted to increase, yearly, due to the influx of Taiwanese job-seekers[1] (Han 2009).

Besides that, this research also examines the ways in which the complex Taiwan-China relations, with special regard to their historical and cultural links yet the divergent political and social developments, may affect Taiwanese expatriates' everyday practices. Doing so, this case study can also further the understanding of migrants' emotional experiences of belonging as an result of people's interactions with the wider social contexts and environment. Moreover, the geographical proximity between Taiwan and China that allows Taiwanese migrants to go back and forth across the Taiwan Strait may also affect expatriates' migration experiences differently from those who have relocated to more distant Western countries, so making this group's transnational practices relating to practices of belonging a distinctive experience that needs to be explored.

Within the Taiwanese migrants in the YRD, I chose skilled expatriates as my research subject group because they constitute a large sub-group of Taiwanese migrants in this

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[1] According to a media report made released in 2010, nearly seventy percent of Taiwanese middle-aged job-seekers are interested in moving to Shanghai to work (Chang 2010).

area due to the expansion and relocation of the manufacturing sites of some of the powerhouses of Taiwanese high-tech industries since 2000. I was informed by a human resources manager in a Taiwanese IT firm, that the number of Taiwanese skilled expatriates is roughly 100, but this varies from company to company, as well as in accordance with the size of the China plant. It is the high concentration of Taiwanese people in a single factory compound, located at a distance from the city centre and consequently   living and working in relatively controlled spaces that makes this group of Taiwanese migrants a distinct case to study migrants' grounded practices surrounding material culture, transnational activities and everyday interactions with the local people .

The focus on the Taiwanese skilled migrants also allows this research to engage in the debates around expatriates. The word 'expatriate' originally refers to a person who was driven away or banished from his/her native country or one who withdrew or renounced his/her allegiance to his/her country. 'Expatriate' is now also widely used to indicate temporary migrants who reside abroad for the purpose of business, mission, teaching, research and culture and leisure (Cohen, 1977). In this thesis, I apply the latter definition to understand Taiwanese migrants as expatriate workers who are parent country nationals working in foreign subsidiaries of multinational companies for a pre-defined period, usually 2-5 years (Harzing 2004a, b). The UN defines an international migrant as a person who stays outside his/her usual country of residence for at least one year, as such; expatriate workers are also migrants, according to this definition.

In management studies, expatriate workers are an important research subject and topic, in which special attention is paid to the role they play in facilitating successful

transnational business operations and how to improve expatriate management. Management literature has focused on strategies leading to successful expatriate management across different stages of expatriation, including selection, preparation, management and repatriation (Harzing 2004a, b). An important aspect of this literature addresses expatriate workers' well-being, as this is considered to be a determinant for the success or failure of expatriation. It seems, however, that the discussion of human management strategy to facilitate expatriates' well-being still neglects their interactions within the local environment in relation to their everyday lives and emotional experiences.

In addition, recent migration studies on skilled workers and professionals have also considered the significance of place in shaping expatriates' lived experiences to varying degree. The bulk of the studies on this group of migrant workers address their reproductive lives, in terms of their household negotiations and strategies regarding relocations (e.g. Hardill 1998), in addition to the gendered-differentiated experiences in the domestic division of labour (e.g. Iredale 2001; Kofman and Raghuram 2005; Yeoh and Willis 2005c). In addition, skilled expatriates' productive activities lead to attention being paid to their workplace practices (e.g. Beaverstock 2002; 2005), in which their transnational practices are embedded. Moreover, the discussion of skilled expatriates' socialising and experiences of interactions also adds to the understanding of their social lives beyond the domestic and workplace experiences (Willis and Yeoh 2002, Yeoh and Khoo 1998; Yeoh et al. 2003).

These empirical studies, however, do not seem to highlight the ways in which the local physical and social environment and expatriate workers' interactions within these environments may constitute their different emotional experiences (except for Gordon

2008; Nowicka 2007; Walsh 2006a, b.). Although studies have shown that amenities provided in the globalised city are important factors in attracting skilled workers (see, for example, Beaversotck and Boardwell 2000; Beaverstock 2002, Findlay et. al 1996), the amenities are not included in the analysis of factors that shape skilled migrants' everyday emotional experiences. This is an important aspect to explore when studying expatriate workers as their lives are grounded and expatriation is also affected by their place experiences, as well as their border-crossing activities and transnational lifestyle. Besides this, as mentioned earlier, existing studies on expatriates are also based on experiences drawn from skilled migrants in cross-cultural contexts; thus, the research findings may not be applicable to those who have migrated to countries whose populations are assumed to have a shared cultural background and ethnicity.

This research on Taiwanese expatriates in the IT industry can also add to the understanding of Taiwanese migrants' experiences in China in which the experiences of Taiwanese migrants are often homogenised and the diversity of this group of migrants is neglected. The literature has focused on Taiwanese business people (see, for example, Geng 2002; Lin 2009) but not on those who make up the paid workforce. Thus there is a gap in the literature that this research on middle-class Taiwanese expatriate workers can fill.

Given that Taiwanese IT expatriates are by definition, middle-class skilled migrants when their education, economic capacity and professions are taken into consideration, this research also adds to the understanding of middling transnationalism by describing not only their migration motivations, but also their border-crossing-yet-situated lived experiences. My participants are skilled migrants in the sense that most of them have a tertiary degree and have specific expertise. This is evidenced by the fact that they are

posted to the China plants to run the foreign operations by taking charge of managerial jobs and fulfilling necessary tasks including new plant set-up, transferring organisational culture, training the local Chinese employees and carrying out business strategies[2]. Specifically, Taiwanese IT expatriates are allocated to departments of administration (including human resource management, IT, facilities management, and engineering), business, research and development, manufacturing (i.e. material and supply, production management, operation, quality control and assurance). In most cases, they take supervisor or high-ranking positions so that unequal power relations are often formed between the Taiwanese and PRC Chinese employees.

Besides that, it also needs to be noted that although the sexual ratio is often unbalanced in the engineering workforce, female IT expatriates' experiences should not be excluded from any investigations into skilled migrants. The gender-differentiated participation in the labour market has resulted in a lack of data on female skilled workers' experiences. Thus, the research subject of Taiwanese expatriates will include the voices of the small number of female expatriate workers in addition to the voices of the people (family members) who relocated along with the expatriate workers, so revealing both the gender aspects and household relationships which are integral to migrants' grounded practices.

In their migration decision-making, Taiwanese IT expatriates often took the social and material environment of the destination city of their expatriation into consideration. As a result, cities in the YRD, including the globalised city of Shanghai have been referred to as favoured destinations, as compared to other Chinese cities. This is not only because of its safety, but because of the amenities provided in the region that are similar

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[2] There is a lack of consensus in defining highly-skilled migrants. Generally, a migrant is defined as being highly-skilled when he/she has a university degree, qualification, extensive experience in a given field and/or specific skills (Iredale 2001; Koser and Salt 1997).

to that of other globalised cities (Leng 2002). The relatively easy entry into China (as mentioned earlier) and the shared cultural background and social norms are significant considerations in their decision-making. Despite the fact that shared culture and ethnicity are considered to be advantageous for migrants in adjusting to living and working in China, this does not mean that they can integrate well and have pleasant expatriate lives. Instead, Taiwanese expatriates often discard the shared cultural system and perceptions of its usefulness in their social integration when they find that there exists a large gap between the realities of the China that they experience and that of their pre-migration imaginations (Lin 2007). As a result, Taiwanese expatriates often tend to live or prefer to live within expatriate bubbles or in Taiwanese enclaves (Clark 2002; Tseng 2007). Thus, the limited extent to which Taiwanese people interact with the local PRC Chinese and their identities in relation to everyday grounded lived experiences, are important dimensions that merit consideration in understanding migrants' practices of belonging.

To ensure Taiwanese expatriates' welfare and well-being, Taiwanese IT firms design and provide fixed and non-negotiable expatriate relocation packages to the expatriate staff. In addition to a monthly salary, housing and vehicle (or local transportation services), expatriate remuneration packages generally include an allowance for living away from home. Home leave (holidays) with return airline tickets are provided, which allows for expatriates who have relocated without their families to benefit 4-6 home-leaves a year (the number of leaves falls to 2-3 for those relocated with their families). In concern for safety of migrants, Taiwanese IT firms provide housing arrangements for their expatriate staff in the form of company-developed or built living quarters located in the factory compound, or an apartment/ house in the local gated communities, thus making this group's living space separate from that of the local society and also preventing

interactions with fellow nationals, locals and Taiwanese expatriates in other industries. As such, the enclave-like Taiwanese living compounds have become a distinct lived experience for Taiwanese IT expatriates, so making the discussion of their practices of belonging in relation to their interactions with and within their everyday living spaces in this research valuable.

The relatively frequent home-leaves provided (as compared to Taiwanese expatriates in other sectors) also reveal that Taiwanese IT expatriates are not only more mobile, but also engage more in transnational activities. This is not only demonstrated by their frequent physical movement, but also their daily transnational business contacts with people in Taiwan and other countries. It is such intensive participation in transnational activities that has made Taiwanese IT expatriates an ideal case to explore contemporary transnational migrants' mobile yet situated lifestyles. By addressing their transnationalism, this research further seeks to understand how migrants' everyday border-crossing actions and movements may affect their emotional process of belonging in a foreign land.

In addition, the stress of expatriate workers' emotional experiences in relation to their work performance and successful expatriation often draws more scholarly attention to consider this aspect in cross-cultural contexts (Tan et al. 2005). The lack of studies on the emotional valence of the everyday lives of expatriates in countries with shared ethnicity and culture will thus be supplemented by this empirical research on Taiwanese expatriates' grounded practices of belonging in China. In this, my special interest is to consider the relevance of Taiwanese expatriates' identity (in terms of identity performance and negotiations) to their everyday lived practices. This is because, although Taiwan and Mainland China share ethnicity and have cultural and historical

links, the transformation of national identity in Taiwan over the past few decades has made Taiwanese people embrace Taiwanese identity and consciousness (Chu 2000; Dittmer 2004). Also, it is now widely accepted among Taiwanese people that the idea of Chinese-ness is not an uncontroversial cultural concept and discourse (Chu 2004). In this regard, this has made a discussion of Taiwanese expatriates' identity imperative to their practices of belonging so that this research will address the ways in which Chinese identity is interpreted and operated in Taiwanese expatriates' daily lives, as well as how their identities (i.e. national, ethnic and cosmopolitan identity) are performed and invoked in their practices of belonging. Especially, I pay attention to Taiwanese expatriates' identity transformation and construction in relation to their mobility. As it is argued that contemporary transnational interconnections and people's mobility have challenged forms of their territorialised identities and may contribute to the formation of the transnational or cosmopolitan consciousness (Hannerz 1996; Vertovec 2001), I will examine how Taiwanese expatriates' multiple identities are performed and practised in their everyday lives. By doing so, the empirical study can also add to the scholarship on Chinese transnationalism by highlighting the interactions of overseas Chinese of different nationalities in which their embedded different identities reveal the heterogeneity within this ethnic group.

1.4. Research aims and questions

Based on the empirical study of Taiwanese expatriates' practices of belonging, this research aims to understand contemporary skilled migrants' emotional experiences of belonging in relation to their migration and resettlement, with special regard to their grounded practices around material culture, transnationality and social interactions, particularly with local people. The main aims of my thesis are as follows:

1) To consider the ways in which geographical concepts, such as space, place, scale and identity, may inform existing understanding of migrant belonging.

2) To explore the dynamics of the mutually-constitutive relationship between contemporary transnationalism and migrant belonging.

These aims are accompanied by several research questions:

1) How are Taiwanese expatriates' everyday living spaces of home, workplace and leisure spaces transformed into spaces of belonging? To what extent do Taiwanese expatiates' everyday interactions with and within these living spaces affect their emotional process of belonging?

2) How is the materiality of Taiwanese expatriates' everyday living spaces integrated and worked into their grounded practices of home-making to forge belonging in the home, workplace and leisure spaces?

3) In what ways do Taiwanese expatriates take part in transnational practices at home, in workplaces and in leisure spaces? How does such transnationality affect their everyday emotional experiences of belonging?

4) How do Taiwanese expatriates' identities shape their everyday experiences and grounded practices of belonging? What identities are invoked and practised? How do these practices vary spatially?

To fulfil the objectives, I designed my research plan to investigate the everyday aspects of Taiwanese expatriates' lived experiences in a range of spatial settings, including domestic, workplace and leisure spaces as well as in cyberspace, to explore the space(s) of Taiwanese expatriates' belonging. To this end, I employed qualitative

research methods, including in-depth interviews and participant observation, with sixty-five Taiwanese expatriates currently working and living in major cities in the YRD. Following a pilot research trip to the YRD in China the main field research was carried out from February to July, 2007. The fieldwork dynamics which helped me analyse Taiwanese expatriates' practices of belonging and the ways in which I managed my post-field data analysis and interpretation will be elaborated in Chapter three.

1.5. Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis is organised into seven chapters. This first chapter has outlined the research motivations and objectives. Chapter two reviews the relevant literature, including migrant belonging and transnationalism, which places the study in its theoretical context. Chapter three establishes the methodological framework of the thesis by providing information on my choice of research site; qualitative research methods of in-depth interviews and participant observation ; and the processes and procedures behind my investigations of Taiwanese expatriates' everyday lived experiences in the YRD. The empirical research is spelled out in the subsequent three chapters which are organised according to the everyday lived spaces of the home and domestic space, workplace and finally leisure spaces. Each of these chapters examines Taiwanese expatriates' practices of belonging to address the research objectives. These are followed by the concluding chapter, which elucidates the theoretical and methodological contributions, as well as practical implications of this research to the relevant literature and indicates possible directions for future research.

Chapter Two

Conceptual framework

2.1. Introduction

This chapter lays out the theoretical framework of this research and identifies where my research may contribute to existing knowledge of migrant belonging and transnationalism. I begin in section 2.2. with a discussion of the emotional valence of belonging and its relevance to transnational migration. I then consider the ways in which migrant belonging is experienced, grounded and achieved through people's practices. As such, I specify how the concept of place is suitable for understanding migrant belonging not only because belonging is often articulated by the sense of (being in) place, but because place experiences are also integral to migrants' practices to create a space of belonging. In the sections that follow, I then consider how a given space is made to fit into migrant people's imaginings of home and becomes a space of belonging.

In section 2.3., I relate migrant belonging to the metaphor of home. I examine the ways in which home at the domestic scale is turned into a space of belonging through a series of home-making practices, with special regard to migrants' material practices in addition to a array of habitual and ritual practices. This is followed by a discussion of migrants' practices of belonging in relation to their experiences of taking part in a range of collective activities and socialising to further understand the multiple sites to which migrants feel attachment and belonging. Doing so also allows us to consider how migrants' identity embedded and manifested in their everyday practices may also have an effect on shaping their practices and emotional experiences of belonging.

The next section turns to the conceptual work on transnationalism to consider how the academic understanding of this scholarship may inform my analysis of Taiwanese

expatriates' practices of belonging. Firstly, I elaborate the ways in which my investigation of Taiwanese expatriates' everyday practices of belonging intersects with recent intellectual work on grounded transnationalism which places stress on migrants' mobile yet situated lived experiences (Smith 2005). Secondly, I argue that this research on Taiwanese expatriates' home-making practices in China evidences that the binary of home and host country should be reconsidered, as migrants in a contemporary transnationalised world's longing for home can be fulfilled through their practices in a number of sites. In addition, the ways in which the empirical study of Taiwanese IT expatriates may advance the understanding of middling transnationalism will also be presented.

In the last section, I consider how this research on Taiwanese skilled migrants as a sub-group among the overseas Chinese may contribute to the scholarship of Chinese transnationalism that focuses mainly on overseas Chinese transnational business activities. I also consider the appropriateness of the discourse of shared Chinese-ness and discern the heterogeneity of the ethnic group by addressing the cultural politics and identity negotiations embedded in different overseas Chinese practices of belonging. The chapter concludes by summarising key arguments and highlighting contributions this research makes to scholarships of migrant belonging and transnationalism.

2.2. Reflections on migrant belonging

Belonging is a concept that has affective dimensions as it is often interpreted as opposed to the feeling of dispossession and displacement (Stratford 2009) and used to understand emotional aspects including feelings of homeliness (or being at home) (Hedetoft and Hjort 2001), safety (Anthias 2006) and emotional attachment (Krzyzanowski and

Wodak 2007). Also, belonging is intertwined with the idea of identity not only because modes of belonging denote feelings of being recognised, understood and accepted (Savage et al. 2005), but because, as Yuval-Davis (2006) argues, 'identity as transition [is] always producing itself through the combined processes of being and becoming, belonging and longing to belong', belonging can also capture emotional dimensions of identity (Bell 1999; Croucher 2004; Hedetoft and Hjort 2001). Moreover, as people's feeling of belonging to a place or of being in place are often shaped by their experiences of interactions with place, it also makes clear that belonging has important geographic dimensions, so becoming a theme for geographers to explore (Mee and Wright 2009).

Such an understanding of belonging suggests that it is a distinct approach to study transnational migration. This is not only because it can capture migrant people's emotional aspects of longing for a more rooted belonging in the context of their mobility (Ahmed et al. 2003; Rapport and Dawson 1998), but also because the concept also allows geographic research to engage in migration studies through incorporating the concept of identity into understanding migrants' emotional process and constitution of belonging.

Migrants' emotional experiences of belonging are considered to be constituted by a number of factors, one of which is the local institutional and social environment. For example, studies have shown that citizenship is an important mechanism that allows migrants to secure a national sense of belonging through granting them rights and privileges (Croucher 2004; Ehrkamp and Leitner 2005; Gullette 2006). However, given that the concept of citizenship also implies boundary-delimiting and filing mechanisms (Joppke 1999; Preston et al. 2006), migrants' experiences of securing citizenship as a way to forge a national sense of belonging are often integrated into particular political

projects of belonging (Castles 2002; Yuval-Davis 2006) and are also affected by their perceptions of citizenship (Çağlar2001; Ehrkamp and Leitner 2003; Ho 2008; Mavroudi 2007; Staeheli and Nagel 2006).

Transnational migrants' belonging are also negotiated and shaped by the social and cultural contexts of host societies (see Dwyer 2002; Ehrkamp 2005; Pratt 2003/2004). Studies have shown that the presence of imprints of cultural influence and identity (as demonstrated by material configurations like forms of settlement and housing style), is useful in fostering migrants' community identity and creating nostalgia for the familiarity of home (see, for example, Blunt and Dowling 2006; Westwood and Phizacklea 2000). This implies that belonging can be developed through migrants' interactions with the local physical and material environment so that highlights the significance of their place experiences in their emotional process. Also evident is the suggestion that the surroundings and the neighbourhood, in terms of the infrastructure and amenities, are important sites for migrants to experience a familiar environment and feel safe. In Gordan's (2008) study of Shell international expatriate community, she argues that the expatriate compound (designed to be a homogenous and predictable environment) allows expatriate workers to experience both a generalised milieu and stable and situated configurations of action, which make it easy for expatriates to generate a distinctive degree of familiarity. Further, Beaverstock (2002) specifies in his investigation of British skilled expatriates in Singapore that a range of places and amenities available in the global city (e.g. workplaces, bars, restaurants and social clubs) allow British expatriates to experience a taste of home (Beaverstock 2002; for similar discussions, see Çağlar 2001; Ehrkamp 2005; Friesen et al. 2005; Mankekar 2005; Nowicka 2007).

Spaces that migrants may develop a feeling of attachment and belonging not only refer to the physical spatial setting, but also include the social space constructed by people's social relations and interactions. It has been shown in previous studies that migrants' experiences of taking part in collective activities, institutional or informal, interest-, nationality- or ethnicity-based, are essential for them in generating a sense of social belonging during their stay abroad (see, for example, Jazeel 2006). A broader understanding of spatiality of migrants' practices related to their emotional process means that this research on Taiwanese expatriates takes into consideration the multiplicity of migrants' spatial practices, including those taking place in concrete and virtual spaces. In particular, I pay attention to Taiwanese expatriates' interactions in the online environment and virtual space (i.e. Cyberspace) to examine the role that telecommunications-mediated activities play in migrants' transnational links and consider how such practices may mediate their emotional ties and contribute to forging their sense of belonging.

Whilst studies have made it clear that environment is key to migrants' emotional experiences of belonging, it never suggests that migrant belonging is an intrinsic experience, but rather, it is, as Bell (1999) argues, achieved and needs to be fulfilled. This thus highlights the agency people have in this emotional process. Such conceptualisation of belonging thus makes scholars engage with the aspect of practices of migrant belonging. This is exemplified by Fortier (1999, 2000) who explores the performance of belonging using the empirical case of Italian emigrants' in London. She builds on Butler's idea of performativity which is defined as not about 'routines or the reiteration of practices within one individuals' life', but about citationality and it is 'through the invocation of conventions that "acts" derive their binding power' (Fortier 1999: 43). Fortier examined the performative acts (i.e. textual or performed in rituals or

commemorations) Italian emigrants took part in as practices through which Italian culture and emigrants' identity are produced.

Everyday life can also be viewed as experienced and reproduced through practices which become normalised, routinised and suggest a lack of agency. Hitchings' (2010) study on the working lives of professionals in London demonstrates that through working in air-conditioned offices these professionals have become insulated from the seasonal changes outside. His research reveals that people are not always in charge of their actions, but they are often socialised into patterns of behaviour highlighting the effects of certain environments (both social and physical) on people's behaviours. However, although such an understanding of practice acknowledges that people may be unconsciously reproducing practices, it never excludes the possibility that, in the context of changes of living environment, people can also (re)create the physical contexts in which their previously effective behaviours can be reproduced and through which they can develop a comforting form of familiarity (Giddens 1984, cited in Hitchings 2010: 289).

These perspectives thus offer distinct insights to this research on Taiwanese expatriates' constitution of belonging, with special regard to their engagement with the local social and physical environment through an array of practices. In my discussion of Taiwanese expatriates' everyday lived experiences related to the creation of belonging, I understand practice as sets of people's activities or individual's actions that are repeated, occur regularly and can be recognised in a given social or cultural contexts. As such, people's practices cannot be understood without regard to the broader political, social, cultural and physical environment in which they are sustained. As the above discussion shows, there are also multiple and various manifestations of people's practices. For

instance, Hitchings (2010) illustrates that practices can be the routinisation of everyday lives as people are always embedded in, but not separated from, the day-to-day contexts that structure their behaviours. Also, citing and (re)producing homeland tradition are often important ritual and habitual practices in migrants' lives (e.g. Fortier 2000). Moreover, practices are also embodied as people practically engage with the world through the body, so highlighting the significance of the human body and embodied practices in creating their everyday experiences.

Based on these understandings of practice, my empirical investigation will be attentive to an array of Taiwanese expatriates' lived experiences and practices to create well-being in their day-to-day lives in a number of ways. Firstly, as the reproduction of physical contexts to enable a continuation of previous behaviours is often needed for people to develop a sense of familiarity, I will pay special attention to the material culture that contributes to the fulfilment of Taiwanese expatriates' longing for home and their material practices of home-making. Secondly, while various practices also reflect people's positionalities and are shaped by their identities, I will also examine Taiwanese expatriates' embodied performance of identity to discern the negotiation processes involved in the construction of belonging and the nature of power relations in this process (Yuval-Davis 2006). Thirdly, and linked to the previous point, I will also consider how Taiwanese expatriates' identity performance is manifested in/by their cultural practices or actions, particularly around notions of 'tradition' as a strategy to overcome feelings of displacement or uneasiness. Finally, I consider these practices in the transnational context to analyse how transnationality is related or integral to the process of home-making.

2.3. Material culture, home and belonging

Belonging, as it is often articulated as a feeling of being at home or homeliness, is closely related to the idea of home. This thus suggests possible ways to study migrant belonging though addressing expatriates' practices to fulfil their longing for or their imaginings of home. In the contemporary transnationalised world, home is considered to be not merely a stable physical structure of residence or a spatially fixed location in which people naturally feel a sense of homeliness, but also a complex 'feeling, a metaphor, and a symbol' (Magat 1999:120). Hence, home is a mobile concept which implies an imagined belonging and is associated with people's identities and allegiances (Rapport and Dawson 1998) so   allowing it to be experienced in multiple sites (e.g. household, neighbourhood, community and homeland/country) (Al-Ali and Koser 2002; Duncan and Lambert 2004) and constituted by/in relation to other scales (Blunt and Dowling 2006).

However, as a spatial structure, home is always infused with power relations and all kinds of negotiations (see, for example, Blunt and Dowling 2006; Blunt and Varley 2004; McDowell 1997). Miller states:

> …There are many conflicts between the agency expressed by individuals, by the family, the household, and not least as we shall see the house itself, that make the private more a turbulent sea of constant negotiation than simply some haven for the self (Miller 2001:4).

One can arguably discard the idea of considering home as a natural site of space of belonging by acknowledging that a feeling of being at home is what needs to be fulfilled

through people's physical and emotional labours and by relations weaved together between physical, affective and symbolic states, and objects as well as spaces in which they are located. As a consequence of this understanding of home, this research took into account the ways in which migrants fill the spatial structure of home with a feeling of homeliness through a series of practices which this thesis identifies as home-making.

In studying migrants' home-making practices, many researchers have increasingly paid attention to migrants' domestic material practices and the role material culture plays in shaping their emotional experiences. Material culture is argued to be a useful approach in understanding migrant belonging because it is through material culture that migrants' social relationships and people's identities are revealed and can be practised; hence material culture may help migrants develop a sense of belonging (Jackson 2000; Miller 1998, Tilly et al. 2006). Consequently, a range of domestic objects or migrants' material practices, including domestic visual culture (landscape photos and pictures) (Rose 2003; Tolia-Kelly 2004; Walsh 2006a,b), objects for decoration (Dobson 2006; Gordon 2008; Salih 2002), house and kitchenware (Ramji 2006; Walsh 2006a), food (Law 2001; Miller 2001; Petridou 2001) and media and communications technology (Ehrkamp 2005; Lee 2001; Morley 2001; Shohat 1999) have become the focus of investigations into the relationship between migrants' home-making practices and domestic material culture.

The literature proves that one can feel at home with the presence of specific objects that either remind them of previous/other homes (Salih 2002) or imbue the space with a sense of security, familiarity and comfort (Gordon 2008). The literature also highlights migrants' subjectivity in creating a space of belonging though practices to personalise a space or by turning any given space into something more meaningful with objects or by connecting with objects through their usage. Katie Walsh's (2006b) study of British

expatriates' belonging in Dubai describes the latter form of this engagement, in which she relates expatriates' practices of belonging to their domestic home-making practices by tidying, sorting and disposing of objects to dispossess the residential space of meaning attached by previous residents in order to transform the space into a private and comfortable retreat for them (Walsh 2006b). Also, Tolia-Kelly (2004) argues that South Asian migrants' daily engagement with visual culture as material memory at home in England often helps them to reaffirm their identities, making it a useful practice for fulfilling their longing for being at home.

Furthermore, material culture is significant in migrants' practices in generating a feeling of being at home because it can shorten the spatial distance from home/homeland by connecting two places and ignoring the difference between them (Nowicka 2007). In this instance, objects that can help migrants to connect back to home or reproduce the sensual landscape of home through vision, sound, smell and taste, etc. are of particular concern within the scholarship of migrant belonging. For example, interest has been increasingly drawn to the role the mass media and communications technology (e.g. transnational media, Internet) play in migrants' experiences of being in the homeland without physically being there (Lee 2001; Ehrkamp 2005) and in helping them to defend the domestic space as a realm of cultural autonomy (Lee 2001; Morley 2001; Tsagarousianou 2001). In addition, food is also identified as useful for enabling migrants to feel close to home sensually through, as Miller (2001) describes, experiencing the smells and taste of their natal home or homeland. Moreover, as Petridou (2001) argues, food can also restore the fragmented world of the displaced through 'reconstructing the sensory totality of the world of home' (p. 89).

Given that material culture is the materialisation of peoples' identity (Miller 1998), migrants' practices of belonging through material culture also involves their identity performance and negotiations. Studies have revealed that migrants' negotiations with regard to their imaginings of home and home-making practices are frequently between family or non-family members who bear different cultural backgrounds and identities. For example, Law's (2001) study on Filipino domestic workers in Hong Kong describes the ways in which Filipino domestic workers' longing for a feeling of being at home is often fulfilled through their negotiations of home cooking by extending it to the public space in order to experience the taste, aromas, sights and sounds of home/hometown/homeland. Conversely, attention has been increasingly paid to household negotiations of gender relations, especially with regard to the material ways in which they are embodied (Blunt and Varley 2004; Duncan and Lambert 2004; McDowell 1997). While it seems to be the case that female migrants are important actors in domestic home-making practices, empirical studies have neglected the role that male migrants' play in this process (see Walsh (2006a) for the exception). As such, this empirical study will address both female and male Taiwanese expatriates' experiences so as to supplement the lack of a balanced understanding of gendered practices in migrants' home-making.

Besides that, the discussion of material culture within migrants' practices of belonging seems to focus more on the domestic space as this space is an important site in which 'the relation between the material and imaginary realm and process [is] located' (Blunt and Dowling 2006:22) and where the localised and (trans) national space of belonging can be experienced (Walsh 2006a). The domestic space is also an objectified collective memory which, as Morley (2001) suggests, not only manifests the inhabitants' emotional investment in connecting to the lived space and a feeling of homeliness (see

also Blunt and Varley 2004), but also reveals the complexities, conflicts and compromises involved in creating a home (Daniels, cited in Blunt and Dowling 2006:23). Concerning the multi-scalar understanding of home, the discussion of migrants' practices in forging a sense of being at home should also include those experiences that take place in other spatial settings in which their everyday lives are based. In this regard, my analysis will examine Taiwanese expatriates' everyday living, including domestic lives, work and leisure activities, and consider how the materiality of their living spaces affects their emotional experiences of belonging. Drawing upon both the private and public domains of migrants' daily lives, my investigation adds to existing understanding of material culture in migrants' practices to constitute belonging in the domestic space as well as the private domain. My discussion also addresses the materiality that helps to create a virtual form of space of belonging (i.e. in Cyberspace), with special attention paid to the transnational media and telecommunications technology; in doing so, my research can also add to the literature on spaces of public belonging.

A public space can be potential space of belonging for migrants partially because its physical forms or built components of landscapes, such as the housing style (Blunt and Dowling 2006; Westwood and Phizacklea 2000) and surroundings (e.g. the infrastructure and amenities) (for example, see Beaverstock 2002; Gordon 2008) can make migrants feel a sense of transnational similarity and familiarity. What is less discussed in the literature is the multiplicity of materiality of public spaces that migrants experience in their everyday lives, such as objects deployed and used as integral parts of the built spatial structures. This deficiency in the literature will also be examined in this research, with special attention paid to the material culture which makes up the landscape of vision, sound, smell and tastes that migrants experience in workplace and

leisure spaces. In particular, I take into consideration the material culture that contributes to the formation of a transnational (social) space, which has now been recognised as a useful mechanism in allowing for migrants to forge a sense of being at home through bringing their home/homeland to current locations and making a given space into a representation of culture (Crang 2005). By describing the material culture in Taiwanese expatriates' practices of belonging, this research also reveals the mutually constituting relationships between migrant identity and belonging.

As with many other public spaces, the workplace seems to draw less scholarly attention in discussions about spaces where migrants forge their belonging. The exception is Pries (2001) who argues that the dense institutional frameworks composed of artefacts, social practices and symbolic representations may contribute to the formation of a integrated community within transnational corporations (TNCs) that can help expatriate workers forge a feeling of being at home (see also Koser and Salt 1997). This perspective offers a useful insight into the understanding of a distinct form of manifestations of transnationalism created by the institutional frameworks, including the emergence of a homogenous organisational work culture and shared values, the border-crossing business operations of co-ordinations and integrated networking among the geographically-dispersed units within TNCs (see, for example, Flecker and Simsa 2001; Kotthoff 2001; Kostova 1999). However, this study seems to stress the soft structure of the institutional framework (e.g. work organisation and culture, business practices), neglecting the hard structure of workplace organisations (e.g. the physical and material settings) in strengthening the corporate culture and in the formation of the transnational social space within the TNC (Pries 2001). Because of the gap in the understanding of expatriates' workplace belonging in relation to the work environment of multinational corporations (or transnational corporations), this research will discuss both the physical

(material configurations) and institutional practices in Taiwanese IT firms. In so doing, this research not only identifies the effect of the physical structures and material culture of the workplace on expatriate workers' emotional experiences, but also advances the understanding of the formation of transnational social space within TNCs as a distinct space of belonging.

2.4. Embodied practices, place and belonging

In addition to material culture, migrants' practices in constituting belonging also include a series of spectacular and routine activities. As Westwood and Phizacklea (2000) suggest, the collective activities of national day celebrations or festivals are important occasions for migrants to develop a national sense of belonging, as they are often encouraged to remember and/or think of home/homeland in these events. The collective and social belonging can also be fulfilled by the binding power of a variety of organisational activities or gatherings (i.e. political, economic, cultural and religious associations), whereby in becoming a member migrants can feel acceptance (see, for example, Jazeel 2006; Madsen and van Naerssen 2003; Rivera-Sanchez 2002; van Naerssen 2007; Willis and Yeoh 2002). As Jazeel (2006) indicates in his study on the Sri Lanka Women's Association in London, social participation allows migrants not only to network and gain emotional support, but also to perform their ethnicity and identities through a series of cultural practices, thereby encouraging a sense of social belonging. This empirical research also implies that migrants' practices of belonging are associated with the citing or reproduction of traditions, conventions or cultural norms that can remind them and link them back to their homelands or important places elsewhere. This is also reflected in Fortier's (2000) research on Italian immigrants in London, in which she indicates that the adoption of norms of homeland religious practices in ritualised

activities is useful for Italian immigrants, who, in taking part in these activities, can cultivate a sense of belonging.

The literature that speaks to migrants' constitution of belonging through cultural practices seems to pay more attention to the institutional practices and collective experiences, while being much less concerned with individual migrant and household practices. Therefore, this research on Taiwanese expatriates' belonging addresses migrants' constitution of belonging through household practices by examining their experiences of reworking Taiwanese culture and traditions into their domestic home-making practices. In doing so, this research can add to the understanding of the effect that transnational migration has on migrants and migrants' reactions to this process through their household-based home-making practices.

Besides that, migrants' everyday routine experiences and habitual practices can also be an important emotional labour in forging belonging. Nowicka's (2007) study reveals that highly-mobile professionals can feel a sense of being at home everywhere they are as long as the distance between their current home and home they left can be bridged by keeping up with certain routines and activities and continuing their familiar lifestyle. Because a feeling of being at home is also linked to family intimacy, this feeling still can be sustained by migrants employing methods to stay connected to home and family members by using communications tools (see, for example, Asis et al. 2004; Lam et al 2002; Ley and Waters 2004; Waters 2002; Yeoh and Khoo 1998) as well as their border-crossing movements. Alternatively, a feeling of belonging can also be forged through migrants' practices around socialising to develop intimate relations, companionship and a sense of togetherness (see, for example, Dobson 2006; Walsh 2006a).

The analysis of migrants' socialising as a practice to constitute belonging has often focused on those taking place in physical spatial settings and concrete forms of socialisation, such as participation in associations and gatherings; overlooked is the virtual community, which is also a significant way that migrants interact with one another. Virtual forms of space such as Cyberspace are now considered to be a public sphere in which people interact, network and produce their identities (Bromberg 1997; Nakamura 2002; Turkle 1999) which means that a feeling of belonging and a sense of community can be generated through socialising in Cyberspace (see for example, Bernal 2006; Chan 2005; Fox and Roberts 1999; Hiller and Franz 2004; Papadakis 2003). For this reason, this research examines the role the Internet plays in Taiwanese expatiates' everyday lives by enabling them to remain connected with family and friends at home and/or co-nationals in the diaspora, and considers how their practices of taking part in online networking is integrated into their customary practices of belonging.

The grounded experiences of migrants' routine practices to constitute belonging also involve multiple sites, including both the private and public spheres. For example, an ethnic neighbourhood, in terms of its physical structure and milieu, is an important site as it is a place that allows migrants to reveal their identities; as a result their local attachment and place identity are more easily forged (see, for example, Ehrkamp 2005). Also, specific residential forms (such as expatriate enclaves or living compounds) allow for the development of social networks within the community of residents with similar backgrounds and identities. Furthermore a predictable environment (derived from the transnational material similarity and familiarity) enables migrants' practices to fit into the norms of the community whereby their experience of belonging is a result of being identified and understood by other residents (see Beaverstock 2002; Gorden 2008). There are also settings or specific landscapes, such as religious sites and consumption

spaces like cafés and restaurants, in which expatriates can immerse themselves in the home atmosphere (e.g. Fortier 1999; Çağlar 2001); as such, they are also transnational space where one can experience a feeling of belonging. Considering the multiple manifestations of space of belonging for migrants, I argue that the geographical concept of place, with special regard to the idea of the sense of place, is also useful in understanding migrants' practices to constitute belonging.

Being in place, or the subjective and emotional attachment people have to a place, is considered to be constituted through people's place-ballet that emerges when a person's time-space routine combines within a particular location (Seamon 1980, cited in Creswell 2004:34). Such a perspective identifies a sense of place as a grounded routine, that is regular and constituted in the everyday, but this seems to be insufficient to fully grasp contemporary migrants' experiences, as their experiences are associated with multiple sites and affiliated with places in their lives. A more complete picture of a migrant's sense of place should take into account the multiple sites of migrants' lives and space-time experiences associated with their inheritances, geographical background, and social networks (King 1995). It should also examine the relational interaction between people and wider structures, as well as people's social relationships stretched over space (Creswell 2004). As Walsh (2006b)'s study on British expatriates in Dubai illustrates, a feeling of belonging is affected by migrants' embodied foreignness, which can be understood to be negative when it makes migrants feel unsettled and displaced when engaging with foreign places and people; however, it can also positively reinforce migrants' identities as foreigners and allow them to draw on a national sense of belonging (Walsh 2006b).

Such understanding of migrants' experiences of forging a sense of (being in) place foregrounds the significance of migrants' identities in this process. As Levitt and Glick-Schiller (2004) argue, belonging can only be constituted by combining both individual practices and identities. In the same vein, others have argued that people's feeling of being-in-place cannot be captured without taking into consideration their feelings toward an identity with a place (see, for example, Cuba and Hummon 1993, Rose 1995). Place identity, as Rose (1995) suggests, can be forged through people's practices of necessitating boundaries to create a kind of 'us' milieu in which one can perform his/her identities and feel accepted and understood. This perspective has been elaborated by scholarly interest drawn to people's employment of various strategies to define a given space and carry out their spatial practices, such as the house rules in home-making practices (Constable 2003, Cox and Narula 2003, Law 2001), to make others' experiences fit into the implicit frame of reference (Keith and Pile 1993). It is worth noting that practices of boundary-delimiting which are integral to people's interactions with different social actors are inevitably conditioned and shaped by their stereotypical understandings of those perceived as others (Holloway 2001).

Highlighting the ways in which migrants' identities inform and mediate their feelings and practices of belonging also requires consideration of the multiplicity of migrants' identities as a result of contemporary transnational interconnections. Although contemporary mobile people's experiences of frequent border-crossing movements and links have challenged various forms of territorialised identities and contributed to the formation of transnational or even cosmopolitan consciousness and identity (Glick Schiller 1999; Hannerz 1996; Mahler 2003; Vertovec 1999, 2001), they never prevent migrants from grounding place attachment and place identities. As Ehrkamp's (2005) study has shown, transnational activities and connections assist in reproducing migrants'

current residence as a place of lived and imaginative experiences of home, which allows them to place identities and foster a sense of belonging. In this regard, a range of spatial settings in which transnational migrants can reveal and articulate their identities and forge the feeling of being in place need to be included in the discussion of spaces of (migrant) belonging. While existing studies have paid a lot of attention to the domestic space as a site for migrants to express and objectify their identities (Blunt and Dowing 2006, Lambert and Duncan 2004) through such things as visual/visible and material/tangible practices of home decorations (Gorden 2008, Ramji 2006, Salih 2002; Valentine 2001;Walsh 2006a), this research will add to the literature of space of belonging by discussing migrants' practices of identity and belonging within the public sphere including gated communities, the office-factory compound, leisure spaces and the virtual community.

Among other spaces, I pay special attention to transnational social space to consider how it can be made to be a space of belonging. Studies have revealed that a transnational corporation is a manifestation of transnational social space shaped by the dissemination of corporate culture and identity; an organisation's McDonaldising practices (Ritzer 1998; 2002); unified work culture as well as the shared values; and through the border-crossing co-ordinations and integrated networks (see, for example, Flecker and Simsa 2001; Kostova 1999; Kotthoff 2001). This makes the workplace under the framework of transnational corporations an important site for expatriate workers to feel a sense of being at home but not out of place. In addition to the workplace, virtual space (e.g. Cyberspace) as a site for people to socialise, network and gain emotional support, will also be considered as a form of transnational space that plays a vital role in migrants' practice of belonging.

Although different spatial settings and contexts allow for migrants to experience a feeling of homeliness or being at home in different ways, even the assumed most homogeneous environment such as the ethnic or national enclave, may be experienced and felt differently by migrants. As O'Reilly (2000) states, differences (in terms of class, gender, age, background, etc.) within the ethnic or national group always matter to migrants' experiences (O'Reilly 2000). In this regard, this research addresses Taiwanese expatriates' differentiated imaginings of home and practices of belonging. Besides, it will further consider how the interactions and socialisations between Chinese sub-groups of different nationalities are shaped by their identities and affect their emotional experiences of belonging.

2.5. Interrogating transnationalism

Transnationalism is now a widely accepted concept in depicting contemporary international migration. Transnationalism is identified as the 'process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement'(Basch et al. 1994:7) that has reached an unprecedented level in terms of its scope, volume and intensity in contemporary globalising world due to the development and advancement of transportation and telecommunications technology (Faist 1999; Leivitt and Glick-Schiller 2004, Portes et al. 1999). The border-crossing practices in which migrant people invest time and their labour are evidenced by their actions to connect back to their families and their participation in organisational activities (i.e. social movements and homeland political engagement) or by capital flows (Guarnizo and Smith 2003; Malher 2003; Vertovec 1999). Through a variety of transnational practices, Vertovec (2009) demonstrates that migrants can transform the social, political and economic structures simultaneously

within homelands and places of settlement. Furthermore, through these practices, migrants can also develop multiple affiliations with places, so facilitating the formation of a transnational social field (Basch et al. 1994; Guarnizo and Smith 2003; Itzigsohn et al. 1999), transnational social space (Faist 2000b) or transnational community (Bailey 2001; Vertovec 1999).

The conceptualisation of transnationalism places in the foreground migrant subjects as well as telecommunications technology used to facilitate transnational connections in their transnational lives. Talking on the telephone to families, friends or colleagues in other countries is the most commonly applied and useful ways for transnational migrants to stay connected to home and to forge a sense of being at home (e.g. Beaverstock 2002; Kotthoff 2001; Willis and Yeoh 2002). Also, attention has been increasingly drawn to media such as television, radio and the Internet which are useful in developing networks and participating in homeland activities and events (e.g. Chan 2005; Lee 2001; Nyiri 2001; Tsagarousianou 2001; Wood and King 2001). Accordingly, an understanding of migrant people's use of telecommunications tools or media may help us to discern the multiplicity of contemporary migrants' transnational practices apart from cross-border movements of people, objects and information.

Placing stress on migrants' transnational acts and involvement in transnational social fields also challenges conventional thinking of migration as a linear process (Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004; Parnwell 2005), which urges us to reconsider the distinction between the home and host society and what these ideas mean to transnational migrants. As transnational practices have been argued to expand the range of "home" to encompass both here and there (Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004), the binary

understanding of home and host society will be problematised in my analysis of migrants' practices to make a home wherever they reside.

Also, the emphasis on migrants' transnational practices often leads to a misunderstanding that transnationalism is de-territorialised and unbounded and obscures the fact that migrants are social actors whose lives, activities and social relationships are still embedded in the local society and are structured by the wider political, social and cultural frameworks. To this end, Guarnizo and Smith (2003) posit that the perception of transnational migrants as actors in de-territorialised terrains needs to be reconsidered because 'transnational practices do not take place in an imaginary third space' but instead 'are embodied in specific social relations established between specific people, situated in unequivocal localities, at historically determined times' (Guarnizo and Smith 2003: 11). McDowell (1997) shares the same viewpoint and argues that even those highly mobile global actors who have many opportunities to be regularly involved in transnational activities are also rooted and grounded in the place where they live, even if temporarily; at the very least, the workplace is an embedded location for them. As a result, recent scholarship on transnationalism is now considering how the transnational is locally lived and produced and places emphasis on the continuing significance of the place and locality in shaping transnational migrants' lifestyle and experiences (Mitchell 1997a).

Michael Peter Smith (2005), in his work on transnational urbanism, sheds light on the fact that the position of mobile people and the embodiment of their everyday practices needs to be recognised when studying their spatially distanciated social relations. This has brought scholarly interest to the study of transnational migrants' grounded lived practices while attending to their engagement in cross-border networks. Special attention is now being paid to the long neglected migrant group of middle-class

migrants and transnational elite, contributing to the development of studies of middling transnationalism. The scholarship of middling transnationalism concerns both the situated and mobile lifestyle of those transnational migrants who stand in between (e.g. middle-class migrants). A good example of this is seen in Beaverstock (2002, 2005), where his studies on British expatriate workers in Singapore and New York describe how expatriate workers' transnationalism is characterised by their practices surrounding everyday transnational organisational/business and social connections, which make them important aspects of expatriates' grounded lived practices and social relations (Beaverstock 2002, 2005). Other studies on skilled migrants' mobile lifestyles have shown that their grounded practices in every sphere of life are often tailored to local circumstances and contexts (see, for example, Lever-Tracy 2002; Ley and Waters 2004; Mitchell 1997a; Willis and Yeoh 2002; Willis et al. 2002; Yeoh and Khoo 1998; Yeoh and Willis 2005b). The emphasis of grounding skilled migrants' lived practices, along with their transnational lives, thus offers insights to this research in understanding Taiwanese expatriates' emotional labour of belonging.

In addition, this research on Taiwanese expatriates also allows for an engagement with studies of skilled migration. Skilled migration scholars have long drawn attention to the phenomenon of brain drain, with special regard to factors, such as increased economic globalisation and the emergence of transnational corporations that facilitate and channel the migration of skilled workers (Findlay and Gould 1989; Kofman and Raghuram 2005; Koser and Salt 1997). Also, much scholarly interest has been drawn to the effect of skilled migration on national development and also its economic and social effects (e.g. Beaverstock and Boardwell 2000; Findlay et al. 1996). For example, highly-skilled migration has been considered to play an important role in the (re)production of the global city (Findlay et al. 1996; Koser and Salt 1997); Findlay et al. (1996) illustrate

that it is the highly-skilled workers who make up the skilled labour pool who in turn serve to attract transnational investment and more skilled migration to enrich the global city. In addition to economic incentives, the social and cultural aspects of the global city (e.g. the amenities available) are considered to be important in attracting highly-skilled workers (Beaverstock 1994; Beaverstock and Boardwell 2000).

In addition to multiple motivations leading to migration (see, for example, Clarke 2005; Conradson and Latham 2005a), in recent years, increasing attention has also been drawn to, skilled migrants' grounded productive and reproductive activities as an important aspect to understand their transnationalism. For example, skilled migrants' everyday workplace organisational practices and transnational (business) connections are distinct manifestations of their transnational practices (see, for example, Beaverstock 2002, 2005) and are often considered to be able to contribute to the formation of a transnational social space within a TNC, in which the expatriate workers are encouraged to feel a sense of being at home (e.g. Pries 2001). This suggests that the significance of (transnational) organisational practices in affecting expatriate workers' grounded emotional experiences of belonging is thus useful for my investigation of Taiwanese practices of belonging in the workplace.

Aside from that, skilled migrants' everyday lives are also grounded in a range of private and public domains. As such, scholarly attention has also been drawn to transnational skilled migrants'/elites' participation in various forms of ethnicity- and nationality-based affiliations or collective activities in relation to their emotional experiences (see, for example, Jazeel 2006; Willis and Yeoh 2002; Yeoh and Khoo 1998). However, it seems that skilled migrants' private lives, especially emotional experiences, are still of little concern and are not discussed (for the exception to this see

Gordon 2008; Nowicka 2007; Walsh 2006a,b.). Consequently, this research on Taiwanese expatriates' emotional process and labour to forge belonging through every aspect of their lived practices and in a range of living spaces can provide an empirical case study for understanding skilled migrants' grounded transnationalism.

In highlighting the Taiwanese expatriate skilled workers' everyday practices of belonging, I disregard the idea of identifying this Taiwanese migrant group as homogenous; instead, I reveal their different experiences, especially the gendered differentiated practices. In skilled migration studies, gender is often discussed in relation to the absence of female skilled migrants in economic participation. This is seen as a result of gender inequality and expectations of gender role which hinders female migrants' participation in productive activities (for example, see Iredale 2001, Kofman and Raguram 2005, Raguram 2004). In these instances, female skilled migrants are either re-domesticated (for example of this, see Raghuram 2004; Yeoh and Willis 2005c), or they alternatively use social participation to seek empowerment and self-assurance wherein which they also create various forms of social space in host societies (Willis and Yeoh 2002; Yeoh et al. 2003; Yeoh and Khoo 1998). My perspective on gendered-differentiated experiences and practices adds to existing studies on female skilled migrants' experiences in the domestic sphere (e.g. familial relations and interactions) and social interactions (Kofman and Raghuram 2005). Emphasis on gender in skilled migration has also been placed on household decision-making processes among male-dominated migration and repatriation (e.g. Hardill 1998) and also how gender may be a useful mechanism to delimit the community boundaries among female expatriate elite in host societies (Willis and Yeoh 2002). These discussions tend to ignore female skilled migrants' emotional processes. Furthermore, as male experiences are also neglected in the discussion of migrants' practices in constituting belonging, this study acknowledges the necessity to present gender differentiated experience and so that

it will discern both male and female Taiwanese expatriates' everyday emotional experiences and labour.

2.6. Chinese transnationalism

The scholarship on Chinese transnationalism has long been concerned with overseas Chinese people's strategies of capital accumulation (Ong and Nonini 1997; Ong 1999), with special attention drawn to the roles Chinese cultural norms and ethnicity play in Chinese people's transnational business practices and economic performance (see example for Redding 1993,1995; Yeung and Olds 2000). Empirical studies have shown that ethnic networks and ties are vital resources employed by the overseas Chinese to aid external transactions in their trans-border businesses operations (e.g. Tseng 1997, 2000) which allows Chinese business to compete in the global market (see Chen 2002; Cheung 2004). The Chinese cultural trait of *quanxi* which implies 'a trusting and reciprocal obligatory relationship' (Hsing 1996: 44) is such a cultural trait used in overseas Chinese economic behaviours. As Kiong and Kee's (1998) study of Singaporean and Malay Chinese business people's business practices in Southeast Asia shows, overseas Chinese's economic decisions are not entirely based on market considerations but also on interpersonal relations and trust. In a similar vein, *quanxi* is argued to be a particular useful method for foreign investors to manage the social and cultural norms and the changing institutional environment in China's transition economy (Xin and Pearce 1996; Yeung and Tung 1996). This is because, as Björkman and Kock (1995) suggest, the codified and diffused information is still lacking in China's business environment, making *quanxi* and social networking necessary and help Western firms to break into the Chinese business world.

Literature on Chinese transnationalism is increasingly interested in understanding overseas Chinese migrants' social and cultural lives and practices. For example, household strategies and arrangements of family dispersion to different countries employed by   Chinese business migrants for their capital accumulation through family dispersion to different countries has become an important topic of investigation (see, for example, Chiang 2008; Ho 2002; Ley and Waters 2004; Yeoh et al. 2005). In particular, the astronaut family, a special form of transnational family strategy employed by the Chinese migrants in Western country contexts (e.g. Canada, New Zealand and Australia), has been studied in regard to issues around   changing family relationships, migrants' localised lived experiences and the transformation of family members' identities (see, for example, Waters 2002; 2003; 2010). This literature also highlights the grounded nature of the Chinese transnationalism and states that flexible citizenship as an instrumental tool Chinese business migrants employ for their worldwide business activities (Ong 1999) never indicates their frictionless transnational mobility. In this respect, studies on Chinese transnationalism have offered insight to my empirical research on Taiwanese expatriates' lives, (especially in regard to the emotional aspects of social lives), encouraging me to look into the ways in which the Chinese cultural traits can be not only a resource for Taiwanese expatriates' business practices, but also important in their everyday lived practices.

Taiwanese transnational migration has yet to be established as a research field in itself, but included in the wider discussion of the overseas Chinese transnationalism. Nevertheless, a small number of Taiwanese migration scholars have recently begun to explore Taiwanese emigrants in Mainland China, as China is now host to the largest Taiwanese expatriate community in the world. This serves as to complement more conventional studies focussing on the experience of Taiwanese emigrants in Western

countries. This literature investigates factors that facilitate the relocation of Taiwanese migrants and job-seekers to Mainland China, and also addresses Taiwanese peoples' integration into local Chinese society. As Lin (2007) argues, despite the fact that Taiwanese people have the ability to move easily across the Taiwan Strait, it is still hard for them to feel settled and integrated in China due to the gap between the reality that they experience in Mainland China and their pre-migration perception of the reality. As a result, Taiwanese people still tend to live in Taiwanese bubbles, contributing to the emergence of substantial Taiwanese communities or enclaves in major Chinese cities (Clark 2002; Tseng 1997). This understanding of Taiwanese migrants' lived experiences as evidenced in their residential preference and forms reveals the extent of Taiwanese migrants' integration into the local society while at the same time encouraging us to consider their emotional lives and processes in their migration and resettlement.

Given that the social and cultural analysis of overseas Chinese migration has indicated that the overseas Chinese migrants' identity is no longer attached to stable cultural entities (Ong and Nonini 1997), but instead is the result of construction and negotiation (see, for example, Ghosh and Wang 2003; Mitchell 1997b, 2004; Nyiri 2001), the discussion of identity is consequently useful and important in understanding Taiwanese migrants' grounded lived practices. Although migrants' ethnic and cultural identity is often re-invented in overseas Chinese practices to foster entrepreneurship and business networks for their successful operation in the global economy, identity practices and negotiations are nevertheless complicated by this group of migrants' other references of identity. Kong's (1999a, b) studies on Singaporean elite migrants in China demonstrate that national identity and Singaporean-ness are reaffirmed and upheld. In the same vein, intra-ethnic interactions between different national overseas Chinese migrants' identities

are often negotiated and performed. In this sense, to understand Taiwanese migrants'
practices of belonging in relation to their identity experiences, one also needs to
understand the narratives of Taiwanese people's identities and the politics of identity in
Taiwan. As a result, an examination of Taiwanese migrants' perceptions of the
Chinese-ness and ethnicity is necessary in order to have a complete picture of the
dynamics of intra-ethnic encounters between Chinese sub-groups.

Taiwan has experienced identity transformation in the post-Second World War period.
After the Kuomintang' (KMT, Nationalist Party) take-over in Taiwan shortly after the
end of the war , Taiwanese consciousness was thwarted by its implementation of a
series of great Chinese nationalism projects in order to reconstruct a cultural and ethnic
unity between the mainlanders and native Taiwanese people (Chu and Lin 2001; Lynch
2004). Such ruling mentality led to ethnic cleavage in Taiwan (Chu and Lin2001); it
was not until the 1970s when Taiwan was evicted from the United Nations that a
coherent Taiwanese identity started to develop (Dittmer 2004). Under these new
circumstances, Taiwanese people began to aspire to an independent statehood (Chu
2000; Chu and Lin 2001) and subsequently the opposition party, Democratic Progress
Party (DPP) was formed which upheld Taiwanese consciousness and affirmed the
necessity of a Taiwanese national identity (Hsu and Fan 2001). This political liberation
led Taiwan gradually to depart from Chinese nationalism (Chu 2004; Wu 2005) forming
a consensus among the Taiwanese people of the sovereign status of Taiwan and a
popular sentiment anchored in Taiwanese identity (Chu and Lin 2004) (Figure 2.1.).

The transformation of Taiwanese people's national identity is evidenced by Chu's (2004)
investigation that shows in the early 21st century more than a third of Taiwanese people
identified themselves as being Taiwanese compared to twenty-seven percent in 1993;

the percentage of people claiming exclusive Chinese identity was 7.9%. It is worth

noting that the Taiwanese identity is based upon the idea that Taiwan is a political

community with sovereignty that never excludes the idea of Chinese as a cultural

concept; accordingly, Taiwanese people often identify themselves as culturally and

racially Chinese but politically Taiwanese (Chu 2000).

1895 |--- Chinese immigration to Taiwan (1863-1895)

1945 |----Japanese colonial period terminated (1895-1945),
1947 |----KMT administration on Taiwan (since 1945); 2-28 Incident
1949 |----Nationalist government and military fled to Taiwan. The martial law
     initiated

1971 |----Taiwan withdrew from the United Nations
1978 |--- Taiwanese are allowed to visit mainland China
1986 |----Democratic Progressive Party established. The martial law lifted.
1988 |----President Lee Teng-Hui's democratic reform started.
1991 |----Taiwanese businessmen's westbound investment in Mainland China
     are approved
2000 |----The "no haste, be patient" policy regarding Taiwanese westbound
     investment was initiated.
2008 |----Three Links through, direct postal, transportation and trade, implemented.

Figure 2.1. Important historical events of post-War Taiwan

This understanding of Taiwanese people's identity transformation is useful in examining Taiwanese people's business ventures and other grounded lived practices in China where their national and ethnic identities are confronted and negotiated. As studies have shown, Taiwanese people may strategically turn to their Chinese cultural identity or dual- or multiple identities, only to water down or de-emphasise their Taiwanese national identity and political inclination to Taiwan in their business practices in Mainland China (see, for example, Deng 2009; Geng 2002; Lin 2009). It seems that what is still lacking in the literature is the discussion of how Taiwanese people cope with the possible dilemma of identity negotiations between national identity and ethnic identity as well as the Chinese-ness in their everyday intra-ethnic interactions and public encounters. This empirical study seeks to fill that gap. In addition to interpersonal interactions, I examine Taiwanese expatriates' identity practices and performance as manifested by their material and other spatial practices and also consider domestic and public material culture as important aspects of their practices of belonging. In so doing, the empirical study of Taiwanese expatriates' identity practices to foster a feeling of belonging can add to the scholarship of Chinese transnationalism by revealing its diverse manifestations.

2.7. Conclusion

This chapter sets out the conceptual framework for studying Taiwanese expatriates' practices of belonging and the spatiality of these practices. Instead of illustrating a full range of Taiwanese expatriates' emotional experiences in their relocation and resettlement, this research focuses on expatriates' belonging and their practices in order to fulfil their need for belonging during their stay abroad, so highlighting migrants' subjectivity in shaping their emotional progress. Established in the literature of practices

of belonging, this research addresses the everyday aspects and living spaces of migrants' practices in constituting belonging. I examine how Taiwanese expatriates' longing for a feeling of being at home and to belong may be fulfilled through their ordinary everyday practices, including those surrounding material culture, habitual lived experiences and socialising and a array of ritualised practices to rework homeland traditions and culture. Through my discussion I also consider how transnationality is integrated into contemporary migrants' everyday lives, and especially into their practices of belonging. Concerning the interconnections between migrants' identity and belonging, this research addresses how Taiwanese expatriates' multiple identities are embedded in their practices to forge belonging and also how their embodied identity performance may be a practice of belonging. In highlighting the everyday aspects of migrants' practices of belonging, this empirical study also argues that space(s) of belonging are constituted in multiple spatial settings and manifested in both concrete and virtual forms of space.

Given that this research aims to understand Taiwanese expatriates' belonging in relation to their transnationality, it can also add to recent studies on grounding transnationalism. This is evidenced by this study examining Taiwanese expatriates' situated lifestyle, with special attention to the local material and social environment, in which migrants interact and relate to their emotional experiences. In doing so, my discussion also advances the understanding of migrants' practices of belonging in relation not only to home-making experiences, but also to practices in other living spaces, especially the workplace, leisure spaces and virtual spaces. As such, this research also recognises that home is a multi-scalar notion which can be constituted in various scales and manifested in physical, virtual or discursive forms.

This empirical study on Taiwanese skilled expatriates is also inspired by and adds to the literature of middling transnationalism which describes middle-class migrants' situated and transnational lived experiences. While the focus of this literature is still centred on middle-class migrants' practices in the productive sphere and social participation in ethnic, professional and expatriate communities, my understanding of migrants' belonging in relation to their everyday lived experiences takes into account both their productive and reproductive activities. Furthermore, considering the lack of balanced investigations into both male and female skilled migrants' experiences, this research will also fill this gap.

Finally, the issue of identity flows through the thesis and forms an important part of my discussion of Taiwanese expatriates' practices to constitute belonging. In this, I paid attention to Taiwanese expatriates' multiple identities that shape their lived experiences. Also, my analysis discarded the discourse of a singular and homogenous Chinese-ness or Chinese identity, but considered the different practices (especially in the performance of identity in intra-ethnic encounters) among Chinese sub-groups of different nationalities so as to highlight the heterogeneity of the ethnic Chinese. Doing so, research can also supplement existing studies on Chinese transnationalism focusing on the overseas Chinese business practices.

The theoretical framework established in this research thus informs my empirical study on Taiwanese expatriates' grounded everyday practices to employ qualitative methodologies which allow me to have a more in-depth study of my participants' lived practices and emotional experiences. I shall include a justification of my choice of such methodologies and its usefulness for this research in next chapter.

Chapter Three

Research Contexts and Methodologies

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I elucidate the reason why I chose cities in the Yangtze River Delta (YRD), China, as my research field as well as research methods I employed to study Taiwanese expatriate skilled workers' everyday lived practices to constitute belonging. I begin with the justification of my choice of YRD as a suitable study site because it has the biggest Taiwanese community in the world. In addition, the closeness between Taiwan and China in terms of geography, history and culture combined with the complex political relationship between the two countries has shaped Taiwanese migrants' distinct lived experiences in China.

I then elaborate my rationale for conducting this research with qualitative research methods. My decision to employ in-depth interviews and participant observation reflects my personal inclinations towards the understanding of the social world constituted by the political, cultural, economic and social interactions that can be captured by qualitative methods (Dwyer and Limb 2001; Smith 2001). The section is followed by a discussion of the process and dynamics of the interviews, as well as reflections on my positionalities and the power relationships in carrying out the interviews. These dynamics are also stressed in my discussion of the practices of my participant observation with Taiwanese expatriates' everyday lived experiences, including their online practices. In the last section, I describe the ways in which I managed the post-field data analysis. As my fieldwork was done in my mother tongue (Mandarin Chinese), my particular concern is the ways I coded in the original form of my interviews and issues regarding translation in the quotations in the text.

3.2. The setting: Yangtze River Delta (YRD), China

The YRD (Figure 3.1.) is a distinct setting to study Taiwanese expatriate skilled workers. The YRD is now the second largest information technology producer in the world and one of four largest industrial clusters in China[3]. In terms of the foreign direct investment (FDI) in the YRD, Taiwanese IT firms[4] have had a salient presence in this area since the 1990s. For example, Taiwanese investment accounted for more than 50% of all FDI in Kunshan and Kunshan is also one of the cities that attract most Taiwanese investment, hosting one-fifth Taiwanese investment in China[5] (Chen 2009). The figure is even higher in Suzhou and Wujiang, reaching 80% and 95% of the total FDI of the two cities respectively (Wang and Lee 2007). In terms of the amount of Taiwanese IT investment, nearly 92% went to the YRD (MOEA 2007); this concentration is considered to be the result of the interaction between global production networks and local institutions (e.g. Wang and Lee 2007).

Along with Taiwanese IT investment come Taiwanese skilled workers who are assigned to execute the managerial tasks and transform skills in China subsidiaries (Jaw and Liu 2005). However, due to the lack of official statistics, it is difficult to obtain an exact figure of Taiwanese expatriates working for Taiwanese IT firms, so I have used figures to human resource managers gave me. For instance, it is very common that large-sized

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[3] The Pearl River Delta (PRD), YRD, the Bohai Gulf and Fujian are China's four largest industrial clusters, which attracted an average of 76% of all FDI during the period 1992-2002 (Golley 2007).

[4] The IT industry, also referred to as the electronic and electronic appliances (E&E) sector, is the biggest industrial sector in which the Taiwanese invest in Mainland China, which accounted for 41.3% of total Taiwanese investment in China in 2007 (MOEA 2007).

[5] It is estimated that there are more than 50,000 Taiwanese currently residing in Kunshan (population 670,000) (Yang 2002).
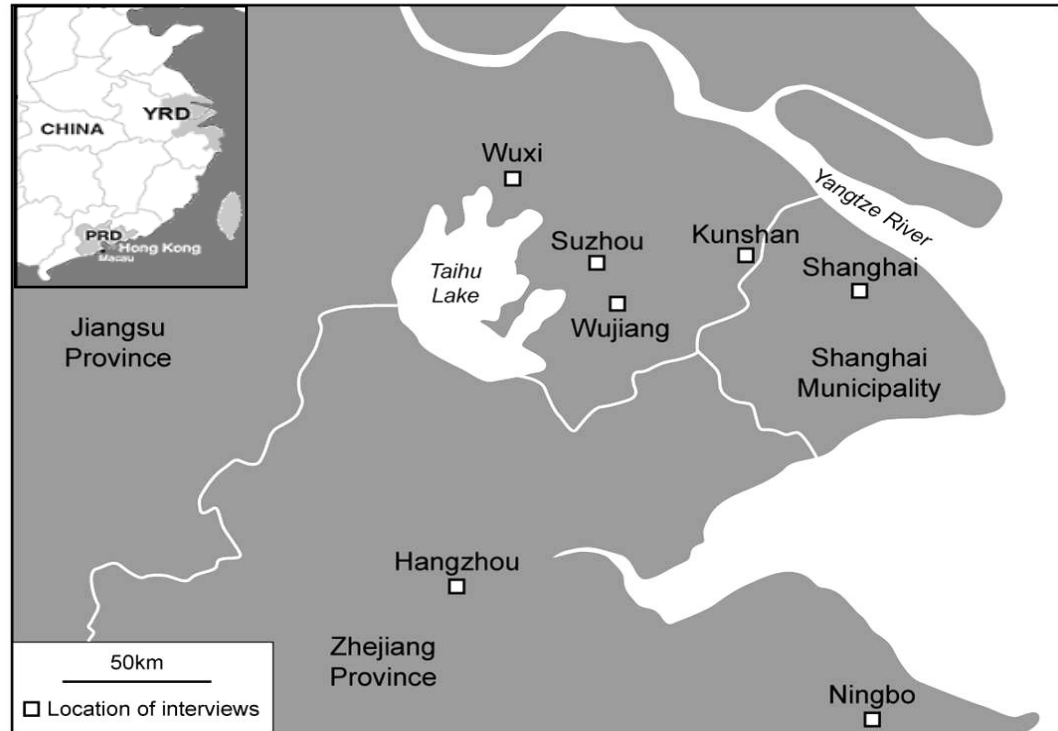
Figure 3.1. Location of interview sites in the YRD, China

Taiwanese IT companies, in terms of numbers of employees (i.e. more than one thousand) will have 100-500 Taiwanese expatriates in their Chinese subsidiaries.

Taiwanese expatriate skilled workers are unevenly distributed in cities in the YRD due to the urban hierarchy within this area. This is illustrated by the structure of the region, wherein Shanghai, the biggest city in this area, is the regional financial, industrial, trade, service and distribution centre, whereas the manufacturing sectors as well as factories are located elsewhere in its suburban and neighbouring provinces (Gu and Tang 2002). The administrative sphere of the YRD includes 16 cities,[6] among which the greater Shanghai area is Taiwanese job-seekers' and expatriate workers' favourite destination

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[6] They are under the jurisdiction of Jiangsu and Zhejiang province and consist of Suzhou, Wuxi, Hangzhou (cities in which my fieldwork was conducted), Nangton, Changzhou, Zhenjiang, Yangzhou, Nantong, Taizhou, Ningbo Shaoxing, Jiaxing, Huzhou, Zhoushan, Taizhou, Jinhua as well as Shanghai as a centrally-governed municipality.

and currently hosts the largest Taiwanese diaspora in the world (Tseng 2007), which is estimated to number 450,000 (long-term or short-term residents).

Since 2000, cross-Strait economic integration and Shanghai's economic boom has resulted in an increase in Taiwanese capital-linked migration, which has driven skilled workers to seek improved economic opportunities in Shanghai. This is described by Taiwanese media as 'Shanghai fever' or 'Shanghai rush' (Tseng 2007) and this can be seen from my respondents' motivations for migration. Most of them (52/65) specified that economic incentives and career advancement are the main motivations for relocation. Besides, nine of my respondents told me that the reasoning behind their migration was broadening their horizons (9/65) and three cited a desire to fulfil their dreams and/or a fondness for travelling (3/65). Only one respondent told me that she had decided to move to China to prepare her son for future studies in China.[7]. Interestingly enough, none of my respondents described their migration as coming back to the motherland; rather, they saw it as adding to their overseas work experiences. In addition to economic motivations, the social and cultural aspects of the global city that Shanghai provides for migrants' reproductive needs are also taken into consideration by Taiwanese people who take part in the Shanghai rush. Shanghai is now recognised as one of the most rapidly growing global cities in East Asia (Olds 1995) as demonstrated by its economic functions and integration into global economy. Shanghai's global linkages and claim to be a business hub is supported not only by a series of infrastructure improvements, such as transportation and telecommunications (Olds 1995; Wu 2000; Yusuf and Wu 2002), but also by conditions which allow for the ease of people's pursuit of a global lifestyle. For example, the urban space and built

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[7] Although they had given up this plan not before long after they moved to China because they realised that living in China is not as easy as they had imagined before they relocated.

environment in Shanghai, including mushrooming skyscrapers of high-grade office space, consumption landscapes and luxury housing (Chen 2009; Wu 2002), have resulted in the development of Shanghai into a leading international city and draws in global capital (Gu and Tang 2002; Huang 2004). Also, Farrer (2008) points out that nightlife spaces in Shanghai, such as bars and dance clubs, are indicators of the development of cultural infrastructure that define it as a global city with the possibilities for cosmopolitan living (Farrer 2008).

Apart from the global and cosmopolitan lifestyle, urban spaces and functions in the YRD area are also shaped by the presence of a great number of foreign populations and communities, which in turn determines people's grounded lifestyles. For example, located 55 kilometres away from Shanghai city centre but still within the greater Shanghai area, 'Little Taipei' or Kunshan city, has been transformed from an agricultural village into an industrial city by Taiwanese investors and migrants (Chen 2009). Not only is Kunshan a major destination for Taiwanese IT investment, it also hosts more than 50,000 Taiwanese expatriates (ibid). This concentration of Taiwanese people has attracted more Taiwanese investment in tertiary sectors such as restaurants, retailers and real estate, which now operate in Kunshan. In this regard, Kunshan's urban environment and functions allows for Taiwanese expatriates to experience or reproduce their Taiwanese lifestyles more easily.

Because of the presence of the largest number of Taiwanese expatriates, the booming economy and the accompanying transformation of urban spaces, the YRD (especially cities where Taiwanese people cluster, including Shanghai, Suzhou, Wuxi, Hangzhou and kunshan), was selected for my study to understand how Taiwanese expatriate skilled workers' belonging is grounded experienced. These cities are of principal interest in my

investigation of a wider range of expatriate workers' spatial practices but more particularly in the public sphere, as they are sites in which Taiwanese expatriates can easily experience a cosmopolitan and Taiwanese lifestyle, thus integrating these experiences in their practices of belonging.

My choice of the YRD to conduct my research was confirmed by my web-based research, as well as consultations with people who had experienced either travelling to work or living in the greater Shanghai area. This informal research convinced me that the greater Shanghai area is just like any cosmopolitan area in the world and is as safe and convenient as living in Taiwan, making it a safe place for me, a female researcher, to do research there alone over a six month period. I was further influenced by my summer break in June 2006, where, in the midst of my trip to Taiwan, I made a two-week pilot visit to Shanghai, Suzhou and Kunshan and interviewed fourteen Taiwanese expatriates (including group interviews with six people) in order to experience living there and gain a basic knowledge of the reality of Taiwanese expatriates' work and lives. This pilot visit also helped me to build contacts, which later also became a part of my personal network in China.

3.3. Doing qualitative research

Scholars have recognised the importance of using a mixed research approach of both qualitative and quantitative methods in studying migration (Beaverstock and Boardwell 2000; Findlay and Li 1999; Silvey 2003). The choice of research methods may very well involve pragmatic concerns or depend upon the migration issues being tackled. As Beaverstock and Boardwell (2000) point out in their study of the mobility of transnational elite in the UK bank sector, their use of semi-structured interviews as a qualitative technique was practical for exploring a richness of detail and depth in tracing

processes which could not have be successfully explored using other methods. Qualitative research has now been widely adopted by migration scholars, especially among those who are interested in exploring people's perceptions and everyday behaviours (see Chapter 2).

I employed qualitative methods to study Taiwanese expatriates' everyday practices to negotiate and constitute belonging because they are useful in elucidating the unquantifiable aspects of human environment and people's lived experience in greater depth and in interpreting the understanding and the meanings which underpin them (Berg 2004; Dwyer and Limb 2001; Smith 2001; Winchester 2000). Also, they can reveal the underlying causal mechanisms and structures that lie behind the behaviours of the observed. More specifically, qualitative methods can help to explore the meanings, emotions, intentions and values that make up our taken-for-granted life worlds (Gifford and Valentine 2003). Thus, qualitative research not only addresses the ways in which different voices can be heard, but also places emphasis on the subjective understanding of knowledge and the social world (ibid, see also Dwyer and Limb 2001). It is this emphasis on multiple meanings and interpretation of human experiences and behaviours which made qualitative research a suitable approach in uncovering the individual migrants' experiences of place and belonging.

This research employed mixed qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews and participant observation; each produced useful insights and complemented each other to produce a rich picture of transnational migration and belonging. Participant observation defined as researchers spending considerable time observing and interacting with a social group (Cook 2005; Dowler 2001) allowed me to gather materials through involving not only what my participants say they do but also what they are seen to do

(Bernard 1994:310). Besides, observation was also employed as a means to achieve a basic understanding of my research site, YRD and to gain a general idea about Taiwanese expatriates' grounded lives and living environment.

3.4. In-depth interviews

I employed in-depth interviews conduct this research on Taiwanese expatriates' lived practices of belonging. This is because, as Cloke et al. (2004) argue, the interactions, interviews and discussions with people are a way for researchers to understand the meaningful personal knowledge, experiences, perspectives, understandings, practices and interpretation that people have, as well as receive an explanation for their individual behaviours. . In other words, an interview is a good means through which the research participants are empowered to express their own lived experience and worlds, and enables researchers to understand the ways in which their informants "view their own world and the meaning they ascribe to it" (Valentine 2001:44).

I conducted 58 semi-structured in-depth interviews with Taiwanese skilled workers employed as personnel of administration and engineering in Taiwanese IT firms' Chinese subsidiaries as well as 7 spouses, through one-to-one and group interviews or informal interviews during my participant observation (Appendix I). I recruited my informants mainly through my own personal networks, from which a snow-balling method was practical in including diverse research participants. My participation in Taiwanese gatherings, such as church activities, regular meetings of net friends from the virtual community (i.e. Luntan[8]), and activities organised by Taiwanese religious, social and charity associations, also allowed me to approach potential informants. Since my

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[8] This is a pseudonym given to the virtual community I took part in and did research with.

education background is in social science, I found that my social circle made it hard for me to approach people working for high-tech industries. As such, I had tried to contact the public relations department of several Taiwanese IT firms via email or telephone. Although most of my enquiries for assistance accessing their expatriate employees were politely turned down due to worries surrounding confidentiality, two Taiwanese IT firms gave me consent to interview their employees. I was then directed or introduced to the human resource manager or directors of these two firms, who later became gatekeepers for my access to their Taiwanese employees. I asked gatekeepers to assist me by circulating my research plan and interview questions to their colleagues via the intranet, rather than to have them assign interviewees to me to ensure that my informants were willing to share information or knowledge with me (Cloke et al. 2004).

In order to hear the different voices of Taiwanese expatriates, my sampling paid special attention to the diversity of the biographical characteristics of Taiwanese expatriates, when recruiting my interviewees. These characteristics included age, gender, marital status, positions, education, identification, migration status and duration of expatriation. Doing so allowed me to recruit a satisfactory sample of interviewees; of my 65 participants, 46 were male. This figure also matches the workforce composition of the Taiwanese IT industry, as it is male-dominated. This gender composition also allowed me to understand and articulate the differentiated gendered experiences and practices in my interviewees' constitution of belonging.

The high percentage (more than 89%) of my informants who are in their early thirties to late forties also illustrates Taiwanese IT firms' criteria in selecting expatriates. They are mainly concerned with Taiwanese expatriates' professional skills and knowledge, as well as aspirations that Taiwanese people have of working in Mainland China. As

Taiwanese expatriates in this age group often occupy a range of managerial positions (ranging from team supervisor to general manger), my sample also allowed me to uncover diverse expatriates' experiences in generating belonging. The position of my employed informants in the firm, along with their credentials in education (sixty have tertiary qualifications and among them, sixteen have postgraduate certificates), also qualifies this group of people as skilled migrants. (See chapter two for a discussion of definitional issues).

Taiwanese expatriates employed in the Taiwanese IT firms' China subsidiaries who take charge of managerial or professional tasks and hold a higher position are often called '*Tai gan*' which means 'Taiwanese cadre'. The term *Tai gan* is widely accepted by Taiwanese people working in China as it captures well how Taiwanese employees are differentiated from their Chinese counterparts, in terms of identification and in relation to nationality and status, in the Taiwanese IT firm. While *Tai gan* were posted or recruited either willingly or involuntarily to the China subsidiaries, my informants thought that it was also appropriate to call them *Zhu wai* personnel which means people who are assigned to work in another subsidiary temporarily, (like being on a business trip for a long time), but who are still members of the Taiwanese base. This definition of Taiwanese employees' status was also utilised by most of the firms my interviewees worked for. For example, the document which illustrates Taiwanese assigned employees' rights and obligations that Peter[9] (a research and development (RD) engineer in his early 30s) showed to me illustrates this group of people is called *Zhu wai* personnel. Accordingly, while I was conducting my fieldwork in the Mandarin and Taiwanese dialects, I used the two words '*Tai gan*' and '*Zhu wai* ' interchangeably.

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[9] This is a pseudonym as are all the names used in the thesis.

More than half of my participants who are in the age group of early thirties to late forties are also married (44 of 65 or 68%). Official statistics reveal that in 2007, the average age of a Taiwanese man's first marriage was 31 whilst a women's age was 28 (Department of Statistics 2008). In this regard, it is understandable that Taiwanese expatriate workers, men or women in their thirties or forties would be married. Moreover, among the 44 married Taiwanese expatriates, 33 relocated to China with their families (including four married to PRC Chinese). It is important to note that all of the married female expatriates who relocated to China with their husbands. This reflects the gendered aspect and power relations in skilled migration regarding household decision-making and relocation (see also Hardill 1998; Willis and Yeoh 2000).

Given that the duration of stay in a foreign country may also be a determinant in shaping migrant people's feeling of belonging, I chose one year as a threshold in my sampling. I chose this because Black and Mendenhall's (1991) research suggests that it takes approximately six months for expatriate workers to overcome the culture shock and about 10-12 months to become adjusted to working in a new culture[10]. Accordingly, the fact that 57 of my participants (or 96%) had lived in Mainland China for more than one year makes it possible for this research to gain Taiwanese expatriates' fair impressions towards living in Mainland China instead of the biased feelings which may have emerged in the early stages of their migration.

In order to understand household dynamics, I included and recruited Taiwanese expatriates' spouses as my informants by requesting that my male informants introduce me to their wives. Apart from a few male informants who were willing to encourage

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[10] This is based on the U-Curve theory of adjustment which divides the cross-cultural adjustment into four phases: honeymoon, culture shock, adjustment and mastery (Black and Mendenhall 1991).

their wives to broaden their social circle and thus were glad to help me discover their wives' opinions, most of my married male informants refused my requests on their wives' behalves by employing various excuses (e.g. too busy to spare time to be interviewed, what their wives do and think is just like what they said, their wives do too much socialising, etc.). Again, such experience reveals the power relations and gendered dynamics in the household, which enables me to think about their negotiation of belonging at home.. Although I was told by my male informants that their wives did not want to be interviewed because they had not had this experience (of being interviewed) before, some of my female informants told me that female expatriates also have other concerns regarding talking about their expatriate lives. For example, Joyce (an expatriate woman in her early 40s) shared with me her friend's experience that, after being accused by her husband of potentially disclosing confidential information, she was always silent about her husband's work and avoided talking about him when they chatted. Furthermore, after having taken part in some women's gatherings and activities, I also realised that some of them did not want to be interviewed because they do not have self-confidence in their reproductive role and thought that their lives were not worth mentioning and being studied. In the end, most of the female expatriates I interviewed were recruited from various gatherings and activities in which I took part.

Methods employed to conduct my in-depth interviews were selected in relation to my research questions. Since my research questions were of a personal nature and can be seen as probing, I chose to carry out one-to-one and face-to-face interviews with female expatriates. In consideration of the fact that some might not feel comfortable being interviewed individually, I also conducted several group interviews as well as two interviews with couples. Although group interviews might discourage some participants from sharing their personal feeling and opinions (Kneale 2001), I still found it to be

useful and often provided insight through their interactions with one another. This was helpful in permitting me to get into their lives in a relatively short time, especially in the beginning of my fieldwork when I did not have much knowledge about the reality of Taiwanese expatriates' living and working lives in China. Moreover, when interviewing couples together, I was impressed that the interview also enabled couples to reflect on their feelings of living in China as well as share with each other their ideas of home (Valentine 1999). From observing their interactions in the discussion, I also sensed that husbands were often more silent when talking about the home-making practices and had to confirm with or consult their wives on a number of occasions. This observation permitted some insight into household relationships and the gender dynamics in the home-making practices. However, as Valentine's (1999) study indicates, joint interviews may make one person silent in the discussions, I often paid attention to my interviewees' reactions by perceiving the body language or facial expression when their spouse was speaking in order to identify if he/she agreed with what was being said.

Since I intended to understand Taiwanese expatriate skilled workers' practices surrounding the construction of belonging in different spatial settings, my interviews probed into the process of their migration and relocation to China, as well as into their daily lived practices and experiences around place- and home-making activities which made them feel at home in the domestic space, workplace and leisure space. In particular, I paid special attention to their feelings and emotional engagement inscribed in those spatial practices and their perceptions toward those spatial settings. Also, through interviews, I aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the ways in which my informants perceived the idea of home as well as their articulations of different forms of emotional status regarding the feeling of being at home (Appendix II).

When an informant's participation was confirmed, I made a telephone call or sent an email to set a date and venue for the interview and also let him or her know about my background, my research plan and gave them an outline of the interview questions to make sure that he or she had a rough idea about what to expect from the interview process. When the interview took place, I always re-addressed my research in the beginning and allowed us to have some time to chat about my research if they felt interested in knowing more. I then confirmed the confidentiality of the interview and that all information would be kept anonymous. I assured them that I would be using pseudonyms when I quoted their words in my thesis (see Appendix I for a list of pseudonyms). I gave each of my informants an English name, but not Chinese pseudonym, because it is common for employees in Taiwanese IT firms to have a English name. Also, my informants were informed that my interview data and all of the information they provided would only be used for academic purposes. The assurance of confidentiality and anonymity was of the utmost importance in earning my informants' trust, because most of them were worried that they might disclose confidential business matters during our talks. Additionally, I also asked for their permission to have their voice recorded by a digital recorder for later transcribing. Even though all of the conversations in the interview were recorded (with the exception of a few who lowered their voice or covered the recorder with their hands to avoid some issues of confidentiality being recorded, and reminded me not to include that information in my work), I still kept a note of my observations about my respondents' body language (including facial expression and emotions) during interviews and reflections about the interview process to aid in my later analysis. On the few occasions that my participants refused to have their voices recorded, I took notes on my informants' responses, which inevitably became an intrusion into our interaction (Cloke et al. 2004).

The interviews lasted for between one hour to two hours. Although I kept a short interview schedule to guide the interview, I still kept the interview process flexible to allow for my informants to raise any issue they wanted to talk about during the interview. I was attentive to practices such as distributing power and maintaining equality with my participants in order to recognise their multiple positioning and not to risk locating them as merely subjects of a researcher's power and privilege (McQueen and Knussen 2002; Miraftab 2004). By doing so, I found that issues which I did not think of or have knowledge of beforehand, allowed me to gain insight into my informants when they brought them up. Also, it was a good opportunity for my informants to reflect on their lives in China and give a free rein to their emotions, which for some, I found, were important. In addition to my research itself, I found that some of my informants were quite interested in my education and background and wanted to learn something from my experience studying in the UK. Although it was not relevant to my research, I still let the conversation carry on because I found it was also a good opportunity for me to give my feedback to them. When such conversations happened, I was always told by my informants in the end that they had also learned something from me and felt glad to have had the opportunity to talk to me.

The information exchange was also useful for me to build rapport with my informants. Besides, in order to establish a rapport with them, I also paid particular attention to my self-presentation. As a middle-age female PhD student from a UK institution, I realised this identity often creates an image for Taiwanese people that I am outstanding, independent, strong-minded and unwilling to be left behind. In this regard, I was especially careful about my behaviour, manner and etiquette when interacting with them. After several interviews, I found that being hesitant about my lack of experience in China and my openness towards learning helped in getting rid of their (especially male

expatriates') prejudices towards a female PhD student, such that they were glad to share their knowledge and experience with me. Moreover, the commonality of age and marital status between my interviewees and me also allowed me to have a greater understanding of their situations and allowed for our interactions to become more like chatting with a friend. Having similar backgrounds implies that we have experienced the same political and social environment as well as identity transformation in Taiwan, which made it easier for me to comprehend my interviewees' lived experiences in China as well as the challenges they faced in everyday lives. Also, the shared marital status became an important topic of conversation which allowed me to learn more about their household relationships and interactions, thereby assisting my understanding of their experiences in developing a sense of being at home in their domestic spaces. Moreover, my experiences of studying abroad and doing fieldwork in China were always paralleled by my respondents in their lived experiences and the challenges they encountered and faced while living in China. This interaction enabled me to consider the ways in which the feeling of togetherness as well as Taiwanese gatherings contributed to their sense of belonging.

Interviews were held in various places including my informants' homes, offices and restaurants, where they felt comfortable to talk. Conducting interviews in these venues also provided me with an opportunity to observe aspects of my informants' lives which might not be easily expressed verbally. For example, when interviewing them in their houses and offices, I was able to make an observation and talk about the material culture and spatial arrangement which might be meaningful for their feeling of belonging. Also, their interactions with family, local PRC Chinese (i.e. colleagues, domestic workers or waiter/waitress in the restaurants) as well as their reactions, feelings, attitudes and perceptions towards these interactions and spatial settings were able to be perceived.

These observations made during the interviews were also noted down in my diary for later analysis.

3.5. Participant observation

For the purpose of study, I undertook participant observation of Taiwanese expatriates' daily life as part of my fieldwork. Brewer (2000) describes participant observation as a task that involves gathering data by means of participation in the daily life of informants in their natural settings, watching, observing and talking to them in order to discover their interpretations, social meanings and activities. I attended various expatriate social events organised by Taiwanese associations or clubs and regular church services (and church meetings). In addition to social gatherings, I also took part in Taiwanese expatriates' activities, such as house parties, eating out, hanging out, as well as going shopping and on excursions (Plate 3.1.). Moreover, my opportunity to live as a tenant with two Taiwanese families who are both friends of my family allowed me to experience Taiwanese expatriates' lifestyle and gather first-hand information on their domestic and leisure activities. Several weeks after my fieldwork began, I came to the conclusion that the Internet-based activities were important aspect in many of my respondents' everyday lives; as a consequence, I began to carry out Web-based research using participant observation to take part in a Taiwanese online forum, *Luntan,* in order to understand Taiwanese expatriates' socialising in the virtual community and its relevance to their emotional experiences.

Plate 3.1. Hanging out with *tai tais*

The strategy of my participant observation was to follow my informants and take part in their daily activities. Through their introductions, I also had opportunities to access Taiwanese gatherings and events. As Brewer (2006) argues, the scope of a participant observer's observation is constrained by the physical limits of the role and location; I found my identity not only affected my access to certain Taiwanese expatriates' activities, but also determined my potential informants and relationships with them. For example, as a married woman, I was rarely invited by my male informants to join in their leisure activities or male-exclusive meetings because, as I understood, the presence of a woman might influence the dynamics and interactions between them. In this sense, I normally did not insist or ask my male informants to take me to their meetings or gatherings or to let me join their activities in order not to make them feel awkward. Also, concerning the proper female etiquette in these gatherings, I had to be very careful about approaching and talking to male expatriates, especially those with partners. In this case, I found that it was often my informants who chose to chat with me in these gatherings. As this limited my ability to interact with other participants, it inevitably led to a biased sampling for my participant observation.

As a middle-aged woman, it was very easy to get into female Taiwanese expatriates' circles. For example, during my stay with my host families, I was frequently invited by my hostess to accompany her to go shopping, to eat out, to hang out with her friends and to join gatherings. Although the presence of a PhD student doing research on them often surprised my informants at the beginning of my participation in these gatherings, I found that before long, they lost interest in me and ignored me after activities started. I also sensed that my marital status helped me to be accepted by the female expatriates due to our shared experiences in married life and running a family. I discovered that it was useful for me to convey an impression of naiveté and humility (Fielding 2001:149) in order to get close to them and to encourage the participants to feel that they were experts regarding living in China and as such, obliged to explain things to me.

Although I was eager to know people when I started my participant observation, after hanging out with Taiwanese expatriates for a while, I discovered that I sometimes unconsciously stopped observing some of them. I realised that this was because I felt that, rather than the relationship of researcher and the researched, we had developed a different relationship with each other. For instance, after living with Joyce's family for two weeks, I was surprised one day when I overheard her conversation with her friend on the phone. I wrote in my field diary:

> When Joyce talked to her friend on the phone, I was watching TV in the living room. I overheard them chatting about me. She seemed to mention that this is my first time travelling to Shanghai and it is hard for me because I do not have my social circle in Shanghai. Not only must I feel lonely but also it must be very difficult to approach potential research participants with only a few friends who can offer help. She then told her friend that I was just like her younger sister and asked her friend to help introduce me

to their friends if they know somebody who fit in with the requirements of my informants.

I was so touched by her warm-heartedness not only because her family assisted me so much with settling down, providing me with accommodation, feeding me and bringing me into their social circle, but also, in her mind, she treated me as a younger sister. It is such company that really made me feel that I had a family as well as a home in Shanghai. Returning to their house, I just felt like I was at home …

(Field diary 14/04/2007)

Although I felt like cultivating an open social relationship with my informants and enjoyed hanging out with them, I was still alert to maintaining a detached relationship (Brewer 2000; Fielding 2001) by not involving myself too much in the their social circle and acting as an innocent student so that I could shuttle between insider and outsider role (Herbert 2000). I sensed that my tactics as an insider and staying detached served to exclude me from my informants and gradually made me a person who was handy to talk to for my close female informants. In this regard, I was always sensitive to the situations of our meetings and tried my best to take our friendship into consideration first and foremost. I often discarded and forgot my research when I felt that we talked like old friends and thus had to remind myself that I was still doing research and would tell them in a joking manner that 'this is quite interesting and I should include it in my thesis' when I heard something relevant to my study. By doing so, I hoped that I had paid attention to ethical issues and did not exploit the friendship I developed in the field. Also, I acknowledged that I, as a researcher, gained much from my informants' experiences and information, and I not only wished that they enjoyed my company but also I wanted to give something back to them by means of either emotional support or in a practical way. As such, I helped my hosts by supervising their children's homework as well as by being their consultant regarding issues around education. My former

experiences as a high school teacher categorised me as a suitable person for my informants to turn to and to ask for help when they were having difficulty dealing with their children's work or in talking with their children. Although what I gave to my informants was very little compared to what I received from them, it always made me feel relieved and fulfilled when my other identities (i.e. an accredited teacher) gave me the ability to help them rather than only gaining information from them (Cloke et al. 2004).

Being a tenant living in China alone also affected my relationship with my host family. When I stayed with my host families, I found that a kind of quasi-familial relationship developed between us. As mentioned above, the slight age difference between my hostesses and me often made them treat me as their younger sister. Furthermore, since my hosts and hostesses considered my fieldwork in China as a kind of task or work, they were not only concerned with the progress of my fieldwork, but also always looked after my daily life by occupying themselves with feeding me, doing my laundry, and caring about my health, to ensure that I was in a good condition to work. In this case, I always felt that I was looked after as a child, and not before long I sensed that I had got used to being a member of their families and relied on them, as indicated in my diary: 'I felt safe and comfortable when I am in the house and stayed together with them.' Such feelings thus gave me some understanding about the family relationship and a feeling of togetherness in expatriates' construction of belonging. Regardless of the fact that the pseudo-familial relationship provided me with a good opportunity to take part in and observe my informants' daily lives in a natural setting, it was also challenging and restrained my autonomy in conducting my fieldwork.

When doing participant observation of my host families, I had informed the family in order to gain informed consent (Silverman 2001) on researching their daily lives. Although they always told me that there was nothing special that I could glean from them, they never refused my request. In order to observe my host families' interactions and practices in a natural setting but not disturb them, my initial plan was to act as an overt researcher. This position changed to a more covert observation after I discovered that my hosts' interactions with their PRC Chinese domestic workers needed to be investigated, as this relationship had a bearing on their domestic practices in home-making; this was not something that I intended to study at the outset of my fieldwork. As the interaction between Taiwanese master/ mistress and their domestic space is rife with relations of power, I realised to have a fuller understanding of these relations; I had to perceive them in its natural setting.

Being familiar with and accustomed to my host families' daily lives sometimes made me forget that my task and my duty were to participate and observe. I frequently had to remind myself to be sensitive and not to regard everything that happened in the household as natural. Instead, I tried to maintain an attitude of strangeness (Neuman 2006) as much as I could which I sometimes found to be overwhelming. The strategy I used was to de-familiarise and note down objects and physical settings, as well as the contents of their routine practices, especially those which were unfamiliar to me (such as the interaction between Taiwanese and their Chinese domestic workers).

Although my pseudo-familial experience eased my homesickness and dislocation in China, I was still cautious about my position in the household. Just as Chinese domestic workers who are always regarded as outsiders, being an outsider (to some extent), I sensed that my presence might also disturb and intrude upon their family lives. As a

result, I would leave the family to enable them to have private family time and space (Denzin and Lincoln 2000).

In addition, during the course of my stay with my host families, I realised that I was also observed and expected to work like a researcher. For instance, every now and then, my hosts/hostesses liked to inquire on the progress of my fieldwork and expected to hear stories of other expatriates' experiences from me. In this case, I felt like I was seen as a conduit for the different stories that were exchanged through me. Rather than talking specifically about others' experiences and also acknowledging the confidentiality concerns of my informants as well as my own ethical concerns as a researcher, I simply gave them a general picture of the information I had obtained. Although I was grateful for their kindness in helping me to recruit interviewees I found that on the few occasions where they accompanied me during my interviews with their friends that their presence hindered our conversation; they interfered in our conversation by talking about their opinions or even by guiding their friends' responses. Furthermore my interviewees might have had some misgivings about talking about specific issues in front of them. Again, this was an instance where my autonomy in the research setting was restrained.

My status as a student also affected my informants' perceptions toward me. For my host families, they treated me as a student who was not very aware of the ways of the world and needed to be taken care of. Nevertheless, as a researcher, I cannot help but have to get into Taiwanese circle and interact with people whose lives are totally different from mine and that is always challenging for me. This was especially evident in situations where I met people and socialised with them at various gatherings. For example, I found that, as a female PhD student, I sensed that I was kept at a distance by some of the female expatriates. As I noted in my research diary:

When I got in the restaurant, Lydia seemed to know that it was me 'cos I was the only

new face in this group. After saying 'hi' to everybody, I sat next to Lydia and she started

to talk to me. Most of time, she just asked me my reasons for coming here and what I did

for my research, etc. I found that I talked a lot to explain my work and motivation because

I did not want to leave them with the impression that I approached them just for my

research needs. Instead, I really wanted to make some friends there. But, after I shared my

experiences, I did not expect that she would tell me in a confessional tone that she had no

idea about academic work. She said 'I just have a secondary degree and what I know is

counting money. I really have no idea about doing research, I have no experience talking

to a PhD [student] and I think this is a very good opportunity for me to know what a PhD

is all about. Also, it can also gratify my vanity when talking to my friends that I know a

PhD [student] *[laugh]*'. To be honest, after she told me this, I really did not know how to

react and … In addition, at the same time when we were chatting, I saw that other ladies

of my age group and also sharing the same table with us, were listening. Even though

they seemed to be interested in my presence, I sensed that they did not really care about

me. Probably, they were interested in who I was but not interested enough to make friends

with me. After she finished asking me about my background, I found that Lydia seemed to

not know what else she could talk to me about and because she could not find a suitable

topic, she turned to talk to her acquaintances and left me behind. Since nobody there

showed their interest in talking to me, what I can do is to be a good listener, or an

invisible participant.

(Field diary 16/05/2007)

These female expatriates' lack of interest in me and my research may be attributable not

only to the differences in our background in education and career trajectories, but also

to my transience, which made it hard for me to build long-term relationships. On the other hand, I was often told by my informants: "wow, you are a PhD [student], you must be very talented and clever; it is impossible for me to do that because I am too stupid to study. I am so glad and honoured to know a PhD [student]." When they said things like this to me, I never felt as though I were complimented; instead, I just felt that it sounded as though I were strange and different person from them. Moreover, I also sensed that my educational background may have threatened my informants, both male and female, especially those who were the same age as me. Even though some of the latter held tertiary degrees, they gave up their career in Taiwan and focused on the reproductive sphere in China; this sphere is normally seen by Taiwanese women as being non-professional. In order not to make them feel awkward, rather than introducing myself as a PhD student, I always said that I was a student doing research in China. I also tried to continue our conversation in a chatty way, talking about issues that we might share in common so that they would not be put off by me and also that I might build a rapport with them.

In addition to playing down my identity as a research student, being new but transient to Taiwanese gatherings or meetings also challenged my access to potential informants. In this regard, after I was introduced to the participants, I chose to perform as a covert observer because I acknowledged that some people there might be unhappy to be studied (Cook 2005; Fielding 2001). As such, I tried to behave like a new expatriate so that others would share their experiences with me. Doing so provided me with the opportunity to observe the gathering and people's interactions in the natural setting. I found it also helped me to gain access to potential interviewees. In these situations, I found that it was helpful to give people the impression of being both naïve and humble. As a newcomer in China, my work and life were often of many people's concern. I

discovered that my status sometimes also put me in embarrassing situations. I wrote down one such experience in my field diary after attending a Taiwanese gathering:

> The host announced to everyone that there was a guest coming from Taiwan and currently studying towards a PhD in England. Then I was asked to introduce myself. When the meeting was finished, I was suddenly surrounded by several male expatriates who seemed to have a lot interest in knowing more about my research and how far I had gotten in my research on E&E expatriates, in which they take part in China. Since I did not have a very clear idea about my research at that time, I told them that I just wanted to understand every aspect of expatriate lives and work in China. I found that my answer seemed to disappoint them. Although they continued to question me, they still shared with me their thoughts and opinions about what I should do for my research. Probably it is because they knew that I am in China for the first time and needed more time to learn, but also because of my attitude as an eager to learn about everything, they were understanding and happy to answer all my questions and requests for help. Even so, I still felt embarrassed and frustrated because, as a PhD student, I should have been better prepared and have a more clear idea about my research, rather than to appear as a little girl lost in the forest spending time looking for a way out.
>
> *(Field diary, 26/05/2007)*

It is experiences such as these that made me consider what a feeling of togetherness and of being understood as well as accepted meant to Taiwanese expatriates in their practices in forging belonging. This excerpt also reveals the power relationship between me, the researcher, and my research participants in the field. Time and again, I came to the realisation that it was not me who controlled my fieldwork and research; rather, it was my interviewees who had the power to determine our interaction and make my

fieldwork possible. After coming to terms with this fact, I found that it was easy for me to act as a learner and patient listener, which was very useful in building rapport between my participants and me.

In addition to the dynamics of my participant observation, I would also like to reflect upon the ethical concerns taken into consideration when using these types of research methods[11]. When doing participant observation with my informants, I was flexible in revealing my identity and employed both covert and overt roles when interacting with my informants. My strategy in using covert observation was very useful in some instances because it helped me to gain better access to Taiwanese expatriates and study them in a natural setting. Even so, I was also aware of the ethical concerns of using such method of research. Common concerns surrounded the inability to gain informed consent from informants for their participation as well as the use of deception as a way of preventing participants from refusing to be studied (see, for example, Berg 2004; Kittin and Tate 2000).   This is because as the participants are being studied without their knowledge, when research comes to light, participants may end up feeling as though they have been exploited or that the researcher violated their privacy (Berg 2004).

Knowing this, in my participant observation, I never really concealed my identity and status as a researcher; I was always introduced to Taiwanese expatriates when we first met. While I sometimes played the role of a covert observer when taking part in their activities and did not always inform my participants that I was going to use the information I gathered, the validity of using this strategy is unquestionable because their

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[11]   The data collected through these research methods was also according to the procedures approved by the Royal Holloway Ethics Committee.

confidentiality is assured in my analysis by my use of pseudonyms when quoting their words or when describing a given gathering (Kittin and Tate 2000). Furthermore, as the participants knew my identity and my research intentions in the first place, they were always welcome to let me know that they were not happy to be studied. When asked, I would always stop gathering information; this is what I did with my host families. As none of the participants expressed to me their disagreement or their refusal to be studied, I consider my covert observation to be one that was carried out in public or open settings, involving neither deception nor violation of privacy. For those people with whom I had conversations or chats that I found may be relevant to my analysis, I asked their permission to quote their words and assured them the information would be used solely for academic publication. Despite the fact that covert observation helped me gain valuable information from my informants, it was used as a research strategy that supplemented the information that I gained using other methods.

In addition to participating and observing my respondents' everyday lives, my web-based observations also helped me to gain valuable information, thereby supplementing my other fieldwork researching methods. Internet-based research has now been acknowledged as viable research tool because it offers advantages such as allowing researchers to access a great number of potential participants. The data gathered through internet study are also presented in a format ready for analysis (Hewson et al. 2003). Moreover, as the online discussion forum provides rich qualitative data as well as an archive of members' interactions and conversations, this helps researchers build a picture of what was exchanged and discussed within a short period of time (Parr 2003). This type of research on the Internet is considered to be a type of observation studies whereby one can observe the traces of people's behaviours and thinking processes through the archived postings. Hewson et al. (2003) indicate that this

is a non-intrusive observation and allows for researchers to make their observations in a natural setting thus preventing biases caused by the observer's presence (see also Bordia 1996). Nevertheless, this also brings up an ethical issue of privacy with regard to whether online discussion lists are public or private (Barnes 2004). In this, Hewson et al. (2003) suggest that data that have been made voluntarily available in the public internet domain (i.e. World Wide Web) should be accessible to researchers. Also, it is argued that it requires researchers to determine if the postings on internet community are private or public communications (Eysenbach and Till 2001). Even collecting the data in a seemingly public domain, it is suggested that due care must be taken by researchers as it may intrude upon 'the privacy of individuals who, even while in a normally public space, may believe they are unobserved' (Lawson 2004: 85). He then further argues that this can be achieved by disguising the participants through, for example, removing their identifiers.

Nevertheless, the advantage of observational research on the Internet also raises specific ethical issues. For example, some consider unobtrusive observation to be an invasion of participants' privacy as it is like hanging out with people anonymously and listening into others' conversations (Parr 2003). On the other hand, because these conversations occur in a public discussion forum, participants are aware of the fact their behaviours are occurring in a public domain and that these data are deliberately and voluntarily made available in the public Internet domain; hence research is not a form of snooping into private conversations (Bordia 1996; Hewson et al. 2003). Moreover, others have pointed out that confidentiality can be maintained through not identifying individual participants and/or by not reproducing large segments of the postings. Confidentiality of the members participating in the forum can also be maintained by using pseudonyms when interactions between members are referenced and/or quoted (Mann and Stewart

2000). There are ways to obtain informed consent by asking permission to quote from postings; however, researchers may not need to make official announcement of his/her participant observation (ibid).

Despite the weaknesses of this method of research over the Internet, its advantages still make it a viable research method in which geographic studies can engage (Hoggart et al. 2002). It can also be useful for scholars of transnational migration who specialise in research on migrants' transnational practices embedded in their grounded everyday lives. An example of this usefulness is Collins' (2009) study of Korean students' transnational lives. Collins conducted his investigation using his participants' personal homepages and discovered that communications technology plays an important role in allowing students to connect their home in Korea with the physical realities of being in New Zealand. He further argues that these research methods are particularly useful in studying Korean international students because of the 'remarkably high levels of internet use' in Korea. Similarly, in Taiwan it is estimated that more than 65% of the population uses the Internet and around 75% of homes have Internet connections (Paul Budde Communication 2010). It is with this regard to my participants' IT literacy that I decided to carry out observational research on the Internet in order to supplement my other research methods.

Accordingly, I began my research by taking part in a Taiwanese-based online discussion forum 'Luntan', which allowed me to gain information about Taiwanese people's lives in China as well as learn about the issues that concerned them. 'Luntan' was chosen to be studied because it is one of portal websites for Taiwanese people to interact so that all of my participants either visit or are regular members of the website. The aim of this forum is to provide a platform for Taiwanese people to interact; as such, it has different

sub-forums for members to discuss matters including general issues, education, child-care, medical care and shopping. The forum also provides spaces for blogs, as well as a sub-forum for male members. Despite being a public forum, members' privacy is also assured to certain extent, in that the guests have a limited ability to take part in discussions and read members' blogs. Also, members can send private message to other participants if they would not like their conversation to become public.

To fully take part in this online community, I registered as a member and publicly identified myself as a PhD student doing research on Taiwanese expatriates' lives in the YRD. This was a method to recruit potential informants. As I did not intend to carry out web-based investigation by raising any issue related to my research to be discussed, I opted to be a participant whilst observing covertly members' interactions. I did so because I would not have liked my sudden appearance and my research to become a focus of the forum, as my life in China and also on the forum was transient. I also realised that the probability was high that that I would feel distanced from friends I met over the forum after I returned to the UK and Taiwan. Although friendships may continue, the changes in my living conditions may make my participation in the online interactions harder; consequently, the friendships may be maintained through private interactions including visits, phone calls or emails.

Being a forum participant and unobtrusive observer was advantageous for me because I did not lead their discussion in order to prevent bias resulting from the presence of the researcher. I was able to gather information which was useful for me in understanding how a sense of community can be developed in this online forum through participants' interactions. Therefore the focus of my analysis is not merely based on the words I quoted, but also the ways the forum operates in terms of the regulations, interactions

and politics I observed from the postings. Because I understand the forum to be a public space in which I can do research, I treated it like any other place or gathering where did my observations, where participants are aware that their conversations via the forum in which they voluntarily participate also take place in a public space and may be used by others; as such I did not inform the few people whose words I quoted. Nevertheless, in order to ensure their confidentiality, I did not reveal their identity in this thesis. Acknowledging the validity of the information I obtained online, I also compared the content of their messages with the information I gained from in-depth interviews with Taiwanese expatriates' regarding their online practices. By doing so, the observational study of this forum also allows me to take into account the ways in which virtual space can be a space of expanded human embodied subjectivity (Parr 2003) as well as a space to carry out migrants' practices of belonging.

3.6. Post-fieldwork: managing qualitative data

Upon completing my fieldwork, I started data interpretation and analysis, organising the data from in-depth interviews and field diary into a presentable and readable form (Crang 1997). To this end, I transcribed all of my interviews with Taiwanese expatriates verbatim and typed up my field diary and notes. While doing the transcribing, I also used notations (i.e. italics, dots, brackets, etc.) to describe their non-verbal communication (i.e. pause, pitch, inflections, stress, etc.) and nuances of verbal cues and body language so that they could be presented in words.

In addition, since my fieldwork was conducted in Chinese (Mandarin), all of my transcripts were in Chinese. I have only translated these quotations into English for the purpose of presentation, as researchers have recognised that translation may influence the validity and reliability of qualitative data as well as its analysis because of the

possible difficulties regarding the accuracy of the translation (Twinn 1997). As Frenk argues, '… every utterance in our interviews would be "untranslatable" since it is shaped, framed, configured by and for both its immediate, contingent contexts and its cultural context, for which *there is no equivalent in another language'* (Frenk 1995:138, my emphasis). To a lesser extent, the accuracy may also be affected by the difficulty of finding appropriate (English) words or expressions and the difference in grammatical structure to translate or match a situation (Strauss and Corbin 1998; Twinn 1997). I found that when I had to translate I was always struggling with the usage of English words to match the Chinese words that my informants used to express a certain situation.

In this regard, in order to avoid the meanings being lost in translation, not being a trained translator, I strategically employed minimal translation (Strauss and Corbin 1998) and endeavoured to make the meaning of the translated texts as close as possible to its original meaning. As a result, the decision to keep Chinese words of specific cultural terms or find a suitable word for translation was taken according the context; where I kept the Chinese words, I have provided explanations or descriptions that convey their original meanings in English. Furthermore, using minimal translation means I also chose not to translate all of my interviews to code; instead, I used my original Chinese transcript for coding and categorising. In doing so, I found that it was quite useful avoiding the risk of losing the meaning in translation and also allowing me to figure out the subtleties of meaning of my informants' responses.

After all my fieldwork data had been transferred into readable data, I then went on to the next stage of coding using the strategy of grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin 1998; Brewer 2000). The transcript was, firstly read through and, at the same time, I

categorised and grouped the contents by using both 'emic' codes (used by informants themselves) and 'etic' codes (used by researcher to describe events and attribute meanings and theories) (Crang 1997:189). For instance, because I am interested in Taiwanese expatriates' practices in generating a feeling of belonging in different spatial settings, I used etic codes such as 'domestic practices around objects', 'domestic interactions', and 'workplace business practices', to categorise the appropriate narratives of my informants. On the other hand, certain themes such as household rules emerged from my interviewees' narratives as an emic code, which was integrated in their domestic practices regarding home-making. In practice, I used simple codes for the segments of data as the summary of what my interviewees said and then drew different respondents' narratives of the same code together. A useful method of doing this was to present it in a cross-tabulated format which provided a methodical way in which the views and experiences of all the informants could be applied and different voices were heard equally (Table 3.1). Moreover, this also helped avoid the danger of the researcher jumping to a premature conclusion and the charge that qualitative researchers simply choose unrepresentative quotes to support their initial prejudice.

Topic / Interviewee	Migration Motivation	Feeling being at home	Transnational family	…..
Interviewee 1				
Interviewee 2				
Interviewee 3				
Interviewee 4				

Table 3.1. Illustration of 1st hierarchy code

As my analysis continued, I kept going through my data and my ideas evolved. I found that some topics (codes) might describe a range of situations; I then went through these and broke them down into sub-codes. For example, when I read through the narratives under the code of 'sense of belonging', I sensed that my informants had different articulations of generating these feelings. Consequently, I further cut the code down into different sub-categories such as the feeling of similarity and familiarity in specific physical settings, the feeling of being recognised or understood and the feeling of intimacy. Furthermore, since the category of 'physical settings' covers a wide range of spaces, I then divided it into different spatial frameworks including household, neighbourhood, workplace and public space (Figure 3.2). Lastly, based on the content of the analysis and codes, I started working with my analysis and interpretation through searching for patterns according to the regulations and variations I figured out in my fieldwork data.
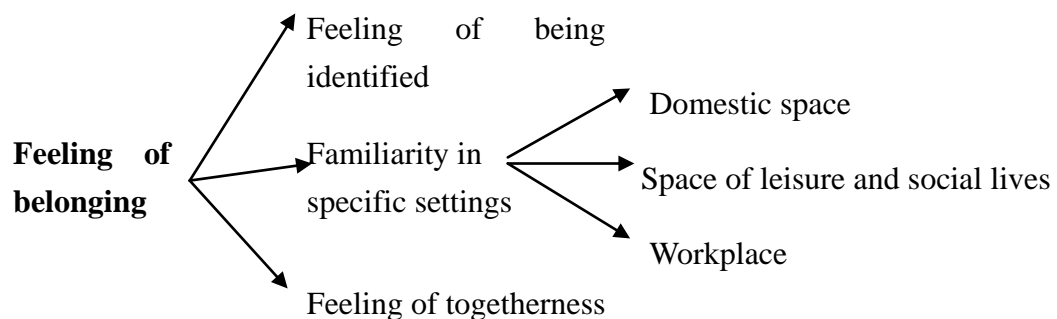

Figure 3.2. Illustration of the hierarchy of code

3.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have elucidated my choice of research site and methods and the fieldwork process of my study on Taiwanese expatriates' grounding practices surrounding the construction and negotiation of feeling of belonging. I justified the

Yangtze River Delta, China as a suitable research site by elaborating its significance in drawing Taiwanese highly-skilled migration as a result of the intensive cross-Strait economic and social links and the shared ethnicity and language between the two countries. Moreover, the political antagonism as well as the different social development of two countries have also made national and cultural identity an important issue in Taiwanese expatriates' belonging.

With regard to my research methods, I argued that qualitative research methods are useful in providing contextual and in-depth understandings of my research questions. Thus, I elaborated the reason I chose to carry out in-depth interviews and take part in my informants' daily and social lives as well as their online interactions as an embodied participant observer in order to gain the knowledge of their lived experiences. Given that being reflexive is a useful strategy for this (Rose 1997), I also described my shifting positionalities and the creation of the inter-subjectivity between my informants and me in the field as well as the ways in which they affected my fieldwork process. My embodied experiences resembling a newly-arrived expatriate and the fieldwork dynamics not merely allowed me to enter and experience my research participants' lived world in natural settings, but also allowed their lived experiences to be revealed by themselves in this collaborative research process. Moreover, they had also shaped my understanding and knowledge of migration and belonging as constituted through specific perspectives and my locations. In this sense, these qualitative research methods enabled me to gather empirical research data and contributed to theoretical advancements of the everyday' grounded experiences of transnational migrants' belonging. These theoretical advancements will be fleshed out in the remainder of this thesis.

Chapter Four

Home, domesticity and belonging

4.1. Introduction

In this first empirical chapter, my discussion aims to understand the relationship between the idea of home and migrant belonging. In this, I will not only demonstrate the ways in which Taiwanese expatriates' articulate their sense of belonging in relation to the feeling of being at home or homeliness (see, for example, Anthias 2006; Hedetoft and Hjort 2002), but also consider how the spatial metaphor of home, especially manifested by domestic architecture and lived experiences of home at the domestic scale, may affect their emotional process of belonging.

Increasingly, urban geographers have drawn attention to the development of modern housing and transnational influences on home in urban space as the effect of globalisation processes and global capital flows (see, for example, Olds 1995; Wu and Webber 2004). In the context of China, the transplanting of western cityscapes including residential estates, has also integrated China into the growing homogeneity of housing forms which stretch across the world. Such housing development is now also considered as imperative and important as it not only provides suitable housing to accommodate highly mobile transnational professionals, but also shapes their lived experiences of home (Blunt and Dowling 2006). As such, to understand Taiwanese skilled expatriates' everyday experiences of home, I draw on transnational housing in the YRD, with special regard to local gated communities and *Tai gan* living quarters to examine how the material forms of home and housing and the social relationships built in such modern housing forms may affect their everyday practices and well-being. Also, my discussion will be attentive to the ways in which Taiwanese expatriates interact with the local living environment and perform their multiple identities to feel a sense of (being in) place and forge place attachment.

In addition to housing as a transnational imagination of home, I will also examine how home is experienced and Taiwanese expatriates' longing for a feeling of homeliness is fulfilled at the domestic scale. Rather than assuming a sense of homeliness is inherent to the home as domestic space, this research understands that such emotional experience has to be constituted and is achieved by migrants' emotional labour, with special regard to a series of practices of home-making. Inspired by existing studies on migrants' home-making practices relating to the domestic material culture (see, for example, Dobson 2006; Gordon 2008; Ramji 2006; Salih 2002; Walsh 2006a), this chapter will also elaborate how the deployment of certain objects in Taiwanese expatriates' households and the ways they are used may imbue the domestic space with meaning and shape the domestic atmosphere so that their well-being can be developed. Through the discussion, it can also reveal the significance of the transnational flows of objects in Taiwanese expatriates' practices of belonging relating to the mediation of domestic material culture.

In addition to domestic material culture, scholarly interest has also been drawn to an array of migrants' domestic practices to understand how the sensory landscape of home/land is constituted and experienced at domestic scale (see, for example, Rapport and Dowson 1998). Given that most discussion is based on the cross-cultural context, my empirical analysis of Taiwanese expatriates' domestic habitual and ritual practices in China will not only consider how the reproduction of homeland tradition and cultures is integrated in their domestic practices of belonging, but also attend to the ways in which their identities are invoked, performed and negotiated through their practices. By doing so, this research can also add to existing understanding of migrants' identities and belonging by offering the empirical experience in countries migrants are assumed to have shared culture and ethnicity.

Aside from that, increasing attention is also given to intra-household interactions as an important factor in shaping people's experiences of home at the domestic scale. For example, in the presence of non-kin (e.g. domestic worker, au-pairs), the imagination of home is often considered to be fulfilled by the implementation of a series of house rules set by the master/ mistress (e.g. Law 2001; Cox and Narula 2003). Accordingly, it can also be perceived in such household configuration that the domestic space is often a terrain of negotiations of identity and well-being. However, what seems to be omitted in this literature is to consider how the inclusion of non-kin others as important close household members (e.g. spouses) may affect the family relationship and household interactions and shape people's imagination of home and feeling of belonging. The discussion in the last section of this chapter will pay attention to the household interactions between Taiwanese expatriates and their local Chinese domestic workers, with special attention drawn to the ways in which a series of house rules are employed to regulate the PRC Chinese domestic workers' activities and movement so as to make the domestic space fit into their imagination of home. Apart from that, I will also examine family interactions in intermarriage households to consider how such interactions are mediated by their identities and shape Taiwanese expatriates' experiences of home.

4.2. Transnational housing: gated communities as a space of belonging

As mentioned in chapter one, housing is always a key part of Taiwanese IT firms' policies relating to Taiwanese expatriates working in China. Often, to ensure the well-being of its employees, a decent and safe living environment is particularly valued and will be provided. This is evident in the housing arrangements for Taiwanese expatriate IT workers in the YRD that are often manifested by two types of housing

forms; the local gated community and separated *Tai gan* living quarters within the factory compound (thereafter *Tai gan* living quarters), as the below extracts illustrate:

…In our China base, there are five factory buildings and a living quarter. Inside the living compound, facilities such as a convenience store, restaurants, karaoke lodge, disco, barber and salon, are made to meet our employees' basic necessities of life. We also have a library, consulting room and health centre. It's just like a small community. And, by providing these services; we ensure our employees' well-being is taken care of so that they can devote themselves to work here…

(Leo, in his early 50s relocated to Wujiang alone and lives in Tai gan living quarters)

Yuhui: What is your accommodation like?

Alex: It is a three bedroom apartment located in a gated community called *shih dai hua yuan.* It is quite new and often a community like this has higher quality architecture comparing to others in this area. As far as I know, there are some Taiwanese working for other [IT] companies who also live there. It is not hard to see Taiwanese around.

(Alex, in his early 30s who has been living in a local gated community in Suzhou for 3 years)

In recent years, gated communities, including the local gated community and *Tai gan* living quarters, have developed and are of growing importance in the residential landscape in China's major cities (Giroir 2006). A transnational neighbourhood and home is manifested by its physical structure characterised by walls surrounding high-rise apartments or villa complexes influenced by foreign models (Wu and Webber 2004) (Plate 4.1.). Gated communtities in Chinese cities are also valued for their perceived security due to the entry controls (Plate 4.2.). Additionally, an array of

services are provided within this form of residential community, such as various (leisure) facilitates like landscaped gardens, playgrounds, swimming pools, gymnasiums, common (reading) rooms, shops and restaurants (Plate 4.3.). In particular, objects transported from Taiwan are always deployed in the *Tai gan* living quarters, or at least, there will be places for Taiwanese residents to go for Taiwanese products (e.g. foodstuffs, books, newspapers, magazines, etc.), such as cafés and shops (Plate 4.4.).

Plate 4.1.Houses within the local gated communities (Shanghai)

Plate 4.2. Gate and entrance post of a gated community (Shanghai)

Plate 4.3. Leisure facilities in the gated community (Shanghai)

Plate 4.4. Newspapers and magazines displayed in the *Tai gan* living quarters

(Shanghai)

In order to understand Taiwanese expatriates' lives in the gated community, I asked my

respondents to share with me their everyday lives in relation to their residential community and to reflect on their feelings living there as well as what affects their living experiences. I was then told that it is the physical environment of gated communities, including building forms of the house and the material configurations, that are particularly appreciated and satisfactory, as Linda (a business department section manager living with her family in *Tai gan* living quarters in Kushan for three years, in her 30s) said:

> …the cluster of factory buildings and living compounds is like the condominium style in Taiwan. Apart from the western architecture and the state-of-the-art apartments, it is installed with a variety of leisure facilities and amenities, including a swimming pool, fitness centre and shops which I think are even better than [those] in Taiwan. There is even an international school nearby. So, life can be very easy and comfortable within the gates.

As the excerpt implies, Taiwanese expatriates' comfort deriving from living in a gated community is often attributed to the state-of-the-art infrastructure, but also the atmosphere they can experience there. As Linda specified, familiarity is easily felt and experienced in the gated community due to the transnational similarities in the physical structure of the gated community that resembles the gated apartment complexes in Taiwan which are also product of the influence of the Western housing styles since the 1970s. Also, the YRD-based gated communities are often compared to the clusters of condominium buildings developed in Taiwan as a result of Taiwan's economic prosperity and urbanisation that has made such housing now a common residential landscape in Taiwan's major cities (Su 2002) (Plate 4.5.). Aside from that, as the residents are more and more concerned with the shared facilities and environment within the gated community concern (Chang 1995), the idea of gates, patrol guards and

homeowners' associations have also been introduced to Taiwan and become important elements in Taiwan's urban condominium (housing) (Webster et al. 2002). Accordingly, for Taiwanese expatriates, the shared experience of living in the clusters of condominium buildings among Taiwanese people has also made it easy for them to get used to the lifestyle of the YRD-based gated communities and not feel dislocated after moving to China.

Before I came here, I was told that everything is well-prepared and the accommodation was furnished for us. The place where we now live is very similar to our apartment in Taiwan. I don't think the environment is too messy in our accommodation. (Yuhui: How do you feel about the adjustment?) It is not difficult at all, at most, what is the difference from living in Taiwan is you have *da lu ren*[12] as a neighbour, but not all Taiwanese. But that is quite ok for me.

(Fred, in his early 30s, lives in Tai gan living quarters (Shanghiai) alone for 3years)

Plate 4.5. High-rise residential buildings in Kaohsiung, Taiwan

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[12] Meaning the PRC Chinese.

Besides, the perception of the higher standard infrastructure, leisure facilities and amenities of the gated community that often makes it a comfortable and enjoyable residential form for my respondents is also shaped by and connected to the ways the physical environment is evaluated in comparison to their previous lifestyle in Taiwan, As Willi (a single process integration section manager living in *Tai gan* living quarters in suburban Shanghai, in his 30s) specified:

> There are many [leisure] facilities, such as a gym, *Karaoke* lounge, a reading room, and halls for playing basketball, table tennis or badminton. What really excited me is there is a golf driving range so that I learnt to play golf here that I cannot afford to do in Taiwan. To be honest, I think it is really good to live in the compound not only because of the quality of the housing, but also the lifestyle.

Among other elements, the gated community's pleasant environment and surroundings, such as landscaped gardens and spacious green space, within the gated community are considered as very useful for my respondents to ease feelings of dislocation and foster comfort. As my host (living in a local gated community in suburban Shanghai for seven years) explained:

> As you can see, there are exquisite buildings, spacious greenery and landscaped gardens in this community. What's important is that they are all well-maintained and the surroundings are neat and clean compared to other places [outside the community]. Also, various plants and flowers are planted; different scenery can be seen in each season. It is very enjoyable but it is impossible for me to have that when living in Taiwan. So, I often take my sons out and give them a biology class *[laugh]*.

Accordingly, for Taiwanese expatriates, an enjoyable living environment also includes a pleasant outdoor space and environment that provides them with more space and a relaxed atmosphere that is regarded as not easy to have in the populated urban areas in Taiwan. For some of my respondents, such a longing can also be fulfilled by their small garden or courtyard, as Ivy (housewife living in a local gated community in suburban Shanghai, in her 30s) explained to me:

> We made it *[the garden]* because my husband likes gardening but couldn't have that in
>
> Taiwan. So we made it happen here. Now, we have a lot of work to do with the garden so
>
> that we spent a lot of time on the weekend working in the garden. It [the garden] not only
>
> changes the apartment a bit, but also brings us together via doing something together.

In this sense, a garden and the practices of gardening are not only for some of my respondents to fulfill their pleasure and interest; it also creates opportunities for family to get together which is especially appreciated. This is because as the Taiwanese IT engineering work culture of long working hours often makes family activities and family time hard to attain, the household practices around gardening have thus become valuable and a very useful opportunity for IT workers to feel a sense of homeliness.

However, Taiwanese expatriates' well-being related to their lived experiences in a gated community is never an individual matter, but is also an institutional issue as employees' well-being is often considered as an important asset for the good of the company. As I was informed in an informal group interview:

> I think that the state-of-the-art apartment with first-rate facilities and amenities is
>
> ultimately for the good of all. Isn't there is a saying: 'to resist the foreign invasion, we

have to preserve peace at home first'? They [the management personnel] know this very

well and just did the right thing cos it will be very unwise to make us go back [to Taiwan]

just because of the poor living environment here.

(Sven, lives with his family in Tai gan living quarters, Suzhou)

Also, Leslie (a R&D section manager relocated to Suzhou and lived in *Tai gan* living

quarters for 2.5 years, in his 30s) added that the 'company knows very well that it is

important that   its employees   have stable emotions and a feeling of being settled'. To

a lesser extent, such feelings of settling down are easily fulfilled through alleviating

anxiety and feelings of dislocation by living in a more comfortable physical

environment and the quality of living of the gated community in the YRD.

Aside from that, the gated community is considered as a space of belonging also

because it allows Taiwanese expatriates to feel a sense of security as their personal and

public safety is ensured. As Wu's studies on the development of gated communities in

Chinese cities show, security is a key reason for the development of gated communities

in China (Wu 2000, see also Wu and Webber 2004). Given that the impression of

China's backward lifestyle and public order often makes Taiwanese feel uneasy and

insecure living in China, a fenced and safe-guarded living space is particularly

appreciated and is regarded as very important as the conversation below shows:

Yuhui: How do you feel living here?

Alice: …It is safe. Sometime, I will go out without locking the door, if it is just for a short

while. I don't worry at all cos I know guards go around and check everything

regularly and the CCTV is working. They *[guards]* will tell us *[residents]* if there is

something wrong or strange things happened. Also, we have a checkpoint at the

main gate; visitors are strictly checked with their ID which I think that we don't do

very good in Taiwan. Probably it is because there are many rich Chinese living here

[laugh]…

(Alice, housewife in her late 30s moving to Shanghai three years ago and

now lives in a local gated community)

For Taiwanese expatriates living in the *Tai gan* living quarters, some companies even

have separate routes linking the living quarters and the office buildings to ensure

Taiwanese expatriates' personal safety. As Leo (deputy manager lives in *Tai gan* living

quarters and relocated to Wujiang alone four years ago) told me:

There is a passage connecting the factory building directly to their [the employees]

accommodation because it is located outside the factory compound. We did this because

we have to make sure that our employees can go back and forth between their

accommodation and the factory building safely…This is very important, especially for *Tai*

gan; we are very concerned with their safety and have to make sure they are protected.

In addition to the patrol guards, to make a gated community a safe place to live, certain

mechanisms are also employed. For example, Howard (HR department manager living

in *Tai gan* living quarters in suburban Shanghai with his wife) specified to me that

keeping the incoming and outgoing people under surveillance is imperative so that they

have 'strict identification and vehicles checks to censor our visitors' in order to stop

suspicious people and cars entering *Tai gan'*s living quarters and to make Taiwanese

expatriates feel protected.

The above discussion has shown that the presence of the PRC Chinese guards is an

important element along with other physical configurations in making a gated community a safe place to live for its residents. However, as the gated community is often a manifestation of the social stratification and fragmentation of housing consumption in China (Wu 2005), it is also implicated in the interpersonal interactions which take place there. A most common experience shared by my respondents is the privacy and anonymity they are allowed to have and perform in the gated community. Wu (2005) suggests that anonymity is essential to gated communities in major Chinese cities. My respondents also told me that being an anonymous resident is also useful for them to feel comfortable because they can thus be free of being gazed at as a foreigner (and Taiwanese). Dorothy (housewife living in central Shanghai in a local gated community for 5 years, in her 40s) explained her feeling of easiness living in a multinational gated community:

> Within this community, the Taiwanese circle is very small and most of us know each other. Apart from this, I have no idea what my neighbour is doing cos I don't interact with them. Of course, they don't know me either. I think it is good that nobody really cares who you are. I don't want my neighbours and others in the community to know I am Taiwanese. You never know what will happen if they know you are a foreigner. It seems to be better to be or pretend to be a *da lu ren* here, which also makes me feel more at ease.

Nevertheless, the homogeneity of the well-off residents in the gated community never excludes the presence of the PRC Chinese with lower economic and social status, as they are important service-providers[13]. As such, the interactions and encounters with the PRC Chinese service-providers in the gated community are often challenging, but also opportunities for Taiwanese expatriates to perform and practise certain identities that

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[13] Also see Leisch's (2002) study on the gated community in Bombay and Falzon's study in Bombay.

affect their everyday emotional process. As Betty (in her 40s, relocated to Shanghai six years ago and now living in a local gated community) specifies:

> We are greeted by the guards when going out and coming back. Some even take a bow, but you don't need to respond; you can just ignore that if you don't feel like responding. Besides, cleaners won't block our way when doing their works. Every time when they see us, they will stop to   let us pass; they cannot make us wait. Something like this made me feel strange in the beginning cos it seems that I am a cut above other people. But after a couple of months, I got used to it. This is the way we have to behave here and I think I am very good at handling this now, though it may make people think that I am arrogant *[embarrassedfacial expression].*

Betty's experience exemplifies most of my respondents' daily encounters with the PRC Chinese service-providers within the gated communities. Also, it demonstrates Taiwanese expatriates' behaviours and feelings in such interactions of which a sense of being respected and superiority is often felt and experienced. This, thus, often shapes their perceptions of living in the gated communities and, especially, helps them to foster a sense of being in-place and emotional attachment to it.

Besides, although the privacy and anonymity in the local gated communities also inhibited by the well-off PRC Chinese may hinder the development of a strong community consciousness and close neighbourhood relations, however, a sense of community seems easily to be formed within the *Tai gan* living quarters. The sense of community is often articulated by my respondents who live in *Tai gan* living quarters as what makes them feel being at home(land). This is because living in such living quarters is regarded as not only similar to living in a Taiwanese enclave, but also easy to have

close linkages and supportive networks[14]. Also, a sense of community can be forged through various social activities which take place in the gated compound to hold together the residents so that a sense of identity or commonality can be generated (Vasta 2000). As Leo said:

> Living in the compound you can always see Taiwanese there and your friends are just next door. And, every now and then, there are activities, either originated by the firm or voluntarily, such as a dinner party, family night and trips, Mid-Autumn festival and BBQ, New Year celebrations to bring us together. Or, at least, a range of leisure clubs allow us to meet up and interact with other residents.

In other words, it is the close interactions that create the environmental atmosphere which has made them feel accepted, understood and identified, whereby contribute to their feeling of homeliness in the living quarters. Especially, the closely-knit networks and coherence developed in the quasi-Taiwanese enclave living quarters often make my respondents compare them with military dependents' villages[15] in Taiwan which are characterised by close neighbourhood relations and strong sense of community (Pan 1997). By doing so, the juxtaposition also implicates Taiwanese expatriates' perceptions of such living space as very useful for them to feel a sense of collectivity and perform

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[14] Even so, *Tai gan* living quarters are never free of critics. As may be experienced in many expatriate enclaves, certain practices such as gossip, rumour, and a s*hao nai nai* (Madam) culture which implies a kind of thinking that stresses living a life of pleasure held by some unemployed women who came along with their husband to live in China are specified and regarded as unwelcomed in Taiwanese expatriates' living compounds.

[15] The military dependents' villages were originally built to accommodate veterans who came to Taiwan with General Jiang Jie Shi (who later became the President of Taiwan) after 1949 from China and are well-known for their inhabitants' coherence, but also exclusivity as many of the veterans are unwilling or unable to integrate into wider Taiwanese society.

their Taiwanese identity whereby it is turned into a space to identify with and to belong to. In this sense, the close neighbourhood relationships and a sense of community may be challenged or weakened by the presence of non-Taiwanese residents. These worries are thus raised by my respondents regarding the PRC Chinese spouses brought in to *Tai gan* living quarters by Taiwanese expatriates. As Wendy (a single IT engineer living in suburban Shanghai in *Tai gan* living quarters) said:

> Inside the accommodation, the atmosphere always makes me feel safe and gives a feeling that I am in Taiwan. I think it is because people living in our accommodation are all Taiwanese, so you won't see strange things happening here. What I mean is some of the Chinese people's unpleasant habits and behaviour such as rudeness, impoliteness and bad things like pick-pocketing or robbery. But now, the situation has been changed a bit because some Taiwanese guys bring their Chinese wives in. This is not totally a Taiwanese space any more that really makes me feel uncomfortable…

This excerpt has thus made it clear that while the anonymity is appreciated by Taiwanese expatriates living in the local gated community with well-off PRC Chinese, it is the solidarity and close-knit relations developed living together with fellow Taiwanese in *Tai gan* living quarters that are determinant in my respondents' emotional experiences of belonging.

4.3. Domestic material culture and home-making

Material culture, with the capacity to shape people's sensory experiences and to articulate identity, has been increasingly considered as a useful approach and embraced to study transnational migrants' home-making practices and the sensory dimension of

belonging (see, for example, Dobson 2006, Gordon 2008, Nowicka 2007; Tolia-Kelly 2004; Walsh 2006a). Domestic material culture and material home-making practices are also used by Taiwanese expatriates as a common strategy to create a home as their imagined belonging. Such experience of material practices can be laborious as, for some Taiwanese expatriates, it may involve the transportation of a large number of household possessions to their residence in China, as Sue's (an IT department manager relocated to Shanghai with her family one year ago) experience exemplifies:

> We decided to send as many of our possessions as possible by cargo because we didn't think it would be easy for us to get used to living in China. But also, it is because we were very concerned with my son's well-being; he is just a teenager and it may not be very easy for him to live in another country. *[So]* We decided to move all the stuff; pans, bowls and dishes, cutlery, deckchairs, hi-fi equipment, etc; everything as you can imagine that we use in Taiwan to China. We even brought my son's playthings *[laugh]*. Doing so, I think that, at least, will make us feel comfortable and also minimise the impact of adjustment to a new country.

For others, it is not a burden at all as there are only certain objects or articles considered to be able to create a kind of home atmosphere which are needed and which would be transported to equip their house. As Henry (relocated to Kunshan with his wife two years ago) stated, his wife brought their home decorations that are objects they collected from traveling abroad to the new house because she thinks that 'these objects can remind us of our trips to different countries and of specific events; with them, the flat is more meaningful for us.' Accordingly, these extracts reveal the significance of domestic material culture in Taiwanese expatriates' home-making in China as not only can it help to define the domestic space and allow my respondents to experience a feeling of

familiarity and security, but such familiarity also makes them   feel that their lifestyle in Taiwan is continued and re-emplaced.

However, there are also Taiwanese expatriates who are not overly concerned and put less effort into transferring their possessions to their new dwellings in China, but simply relocating with some necessary items, as Fred's experience exemplified:

> I agree that certain objects or a piece of furniture *[brought from Taiwan]* to decorate the flat may make it look better and make home a more enjoyable and warm place. I didn't do that; I came here with a suitcase full of my clothes and some daily supplies. I don't have much stuff because what I think is, one day, I will be assigned to other sites and when it happens, I don't want to be bothered again with moving a lot of stuff. Also, if I have a lot of stuff, what should I do when I have to move? Bring them with me to anywhere, or transport them back to Taiwan? Both are not good solutions, I just cannot throw them away because they mean something to me.
>
> *(Fred, a single production management section manager living in*
>
> *suburban Shanghai for 3 years, in his 30s)*

Such practical thinking was shared by some of the employed respondents, as they explained that, as Fred's extract shows, it is unwise and laborious to relocate with too many household possessions to each post because IT people's career lives (just like the industry itself) are full of variables and are so fast-changing that they never know where and when they may have to leave to go to another site. The transient nature of their post and changing career trajectory had caused many of my respondents to apply a strategy to be like 'mobile people' (Jim, a single male department manager relocated to Kunshan two years ago, in his early 40s) who are able to 'create a home anywhere' (Casper, an

operation control department manager living with his family in Shanghai for two years, in his 50s) within the shortest time. Such thinking has led them to develop specific relationships with objects and have a different interpretation of using and deploying objects at home. For instance, it was not uncommon to hear that some may believe that there are no objects which are necessary and cannot be replaced to perform the same function. Nevertheless, it does not mean that household material culture is excluded from this group of expatriate workers' imagination of home and belonging; it was just manifested in different ways.

For example, it was found that Taiwanese expatriates' use of objects to fulfill their imagination of home often includes articles brought from Taiwan or characterised by Taiwanese elements that are considered as irreplaceable to continue their lifestyle. As Karen illustrates:

> I didn't move my house to here, although I really wanted to *[laugh]*. But every time when I go back to Taiwan, I bring a lot of stuff. *[Yuhui: like what?]* Clothes, cosmetics and commodities I used to have in Taiwan, because I insist on using certain items bought from Taiwan. You know, the quality of commodities here is not guaranteed and I don't have confidence in them. With such stuff, at least, I feel that my lifestyle and living habits are maintained which I think is important for me not to feel homesick.
>
> *(Karen, a single production management supervisor living in Shanghai for one year, in her 30s)*

As the extract shows, the objects Taiwanese expatriates deploy and use at home are mundane commodities for everyday use so that their importance lies not in their value as a 'synecdoche for lost or unreachable homes' (Duncan and Lambert 2004: 388), but

because they can remind and allow my respondents to continue and not disrupt their previous lifestyle. Nevertheless, Taiwanese expatriates' endeavours to transport and install such mundane articles from Taiwan at home also reveals their prejudice and worries about the quality of objects made in China, which are perceived as being adulterated[16]. This is exemplified by Roger's (a R&D manager living in Shanghai with his wife and daughter, in his 30s) thinking as he said in a joking tone, 'I told my wife that if, one day, unfortunately, I am diagnosed with a disease, it may not because of my hard work but of the food we eat here. Because, you never know what they put in there and that really worried me.' In this sense, Taiwanese expatriates' home-making through deploying objects in the domestic sphere seems to be mediated by their perceptions and identities which are shaped by the two countries' divergent social and cultural evolution.

However, there are still certain articles that are particularly important and commonly deployed at home for the respondents' comfort. A laptop is an object that is often mentioned as being a necessity in daily lives because it is not merely a tool which can assist their work, but also an important medium which allows my respondents to access resources or information. For example, Sue reported that she 'needs to have a laptop around because it allows me to stay connected to the Internet to read Taiwanese news online and also to track my stocks'. Also, a laptop is regarded as useful entertainment medium which allows my respondents to watch Taiwanese TV programmes on-line or DVDs and listen to music. More importantly, it also helps Taiwanese expatriates to connect to their family and friends who are far away via talking to them on MSN, Skype, chat rooms or on-line forums whereby their feelings of uneasiness and homesickness that derives from separation from family can be alleviated. Walker commented:

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[16] Some of the respondents said that, if necessary, they will go to a supermarket or a department store to buy what they need, often, they prefer the imported products as they believe that the quality will be better.

> There is not much free time after work, so, what I often do in my accommodation after work is surf on the Internet. I talk to my wife and daughter either on Skype or over the phone everyday. If I don't do that, the consequence will be very serious *[laugh]*. It is also good for me 'cos it help me to know how my family is going back home so that I will feel better. Every now and then, I have a chat with my friends on MSN. Or, sometimes, I may just watch Taiwanese TV programs or news online.

> *(Walker who has been living in Wujiang alone for one year)*

Furthermore, through Internet-based interactions and taking part in virtual communities, some of my respondents also felt that their social circle was broadened and lives were enriched (for further discussion, see section 6.3.2). Henry (a QA section manager living with his wife in Kunshan for two years) shared his experiences:

> I met my wife in China, through the Internet. You know Skype? I found her on Skype and started to talk to her. I had no such experience before coming here. It is all because life is so boring here *[laugh]*. After talking to her several times, I asked her out and before long, we decided to get married.

Such an experience reinforced his perceptions toward online networking websites as a useful antidote and their importance in his and many of his friends' boring expatriate lives. As such, some of my respondents found that they were becoming reliant on their laptops and the Internet and tended to have them around to use anytime and anywhere. Some even mentioned that they didn't have their own PC or laptop and just shared with their children or husband/wife before relocation because they didn't use it that frequently and never talked to others online. But now, nearly all of my respondents had

their own laptop or PC, as staying connected to the Internet had become an important part of their routine. As Linda (business department section manager relocated to Kunshan with her family three years ago) told me, 'the first thing I do after returning to my accommodation is to turn on my laptop. It makes me feel uneasy if I cannot get access to the Internet; it seems that I am an addict to it *[embarrassed smile]*.' Accordingly, my respondents often feel panic when they find there is something wrong with their laptop; as such, they were concerned with the quality of the laptop and prefer to purchase and import them from Taiwan because, as Simon (in his early 30s, living in Shanghai for one year) specified, 'although it is made in China, it is cheaper to buy in Taiwan. What's even important is that, I know it may be just an illusion, it often leaves people an impression that stuff you buy in Taiwan seems to more guaranteed and makes people feel assured *[laugh]'* .

Aside from that, the deployment of a laptop at home is not fixed, but is flexibly arranged for the respondents' convenience. The most common configuration is to place it on the tea table in front of the television cabinet (Plate 4.6.) in the living room. Such an arrangement, as Willi (a single process integration section manager living in suburban Shanghai for three years, in his early 30s) explained to me:

> [It] is handy for me to surf websites and talk to my friends while I am watching TV. The
>
> living room is where I spend most of time in my flat when I am awake, but also it is
>
> because I am too lazy to go to another room just to use my laptop. So, it seems to be the
>
> best solution to put my laptop here. Actually, I did this in Taiwan as well…

Plate 4.6. Laptop and television cabinet in the living room

(Willi's accommodation, Shanghai)

Furthermore, the easy-to-carry feature of the laptop also allows Taiwanese expatriates to take it with them anywhere in their residence and for different purposes. For example, during my stay with a host family, my host would sometimes put the laptop on the dining table as a DVD player for the family to watch films or drama while having meals. In so doing, I found that the meal time was turned into an occasion for them to do something together and family interaction could be facilitated. For example, as it is children who often decide what to watch, it was also a good opportunity for the host and hostess to learn their children's interests, which could create a topic of discussion, so that pleasure and family intimacy may also be forged through watching together.

Accordingly, the laptop is not only a practical tool in Taiwanese expatriates' daily lives, but it also functions to facilitate their psychological well-being. Especially, it enables my respondents to turn their residence into a social space facilitated by their social relations and interactions with people which extends beyond the walls of the domestic space in which they may feel they are being comforted. In addition, a laptop also serves

an important emotional function, as it provides a space for people to preserve their valuable memories. For example, photos as important objects to facilitate remembrance and feeling connected with people or places were mentioned by my respondents as being deposited on their laptop, but not, as Winnie (a single QC section manager living in Suburban Shanghai, in her late 30s) specified, in the form of a stack of photos physically brought to China.

It is also necessary, for some Taiwanese expatriates, to print out and display their photographs in the domestic space so that it will feel more like a home. As Joyce (housewife relocated to Shanghai six years ago, in her early 40s) confided, when considering objects to decorate their new residence, she 'instinctively thinks about the family photographs, aren't they the must-have items in our house? They often make me feel that this is my home'. The deployment of family photos may enable people to convert a physical space into a meaningful place (Rose 2003) through showing to outsiders the composition of the family, even though the members may not necessarily be present in the house. For example, Joyce mentioned that the photos were useful for her to ease her feeling of missing her sons who attend boarding school. Accordingly, the viewing and display of family photos is also a significant mechanism for people to connect to family members or friends in other places or in the past. This is manifested in Betty's experience as she specified that 'every time I review them *[photos taken when she was still a career woman in Taiwan],* I am so comforted 'cos they seem to bring me back to relive the past life so that I would temporarily forget that I am now an ordinary housewife' (Betty, housewife living in downtown Shanghai for sixty years, in her early 40s). In this sense, photos displayed and shown in the domestic space can not only represent spatial identity, but also invoke Taiwanese expatriates' self-identities. Moreover, when viewing photos with my respondents, people told to me the stories and

background of the photos which were often related to their family lives, children, friendship, family in Taiwan (or other countries), traveling experiences and the description of a given scene, etc. Through such stories, photos also gave my respondents a chance to stretch the domestic space beyond the walls and connect to other places; thus, the domestic space in which photos are displaced may also be turned into a meeting point where those great memories experienced before and in other places are coalesced.

Other objects which were commonly deployed in my respondents' household are a range of cookware. Among the kitchen utensils, a specific brand of electronic rice cooker (Plate 4.7.) was referred to as the must-have item in the kitchen, as it helps to assist housewives' cooking. As Dorothy (housewife moving to Shanghai five years ago, in her early 40s) relates:

> Soon after I made the decision to come here, I realised that I don't have any excuse not to cook 'cos I will become a housewife. So, I consulted with my friends what I should bring to China and I was told that a *Ta tung* electronic rice cooker[17] will be very useful. That reminded me that it seems to be very handy 'cos both my mother and mother-in-law have one in the kitchen and use it very often. I then bought one and brought it here.

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[17] *Ta tung* is a famous brand name of digital consumer products and electric appliances in Taiwan. Since it launched its jingle "*ta tung, ta tung guo huo hao*" (T*a tung* products are native goods and the quality is good) in the 1970s , electronic products manufactured by the company has been recognised as native goods by Taiwanese people. As the company has set up a subsidiary in Wujiang, China to manufacture and sell home appliances, its products can now be purchased in China (resource: T*a tung* Company website, see links :http://www.tatung.com/en/about.asp]

Plate 4.7. *Ta tung* electronic rice cooker

The *Ta tung* rice cooker was highly recommended by the female expatriates in charge of cooking due to its practical utility as multi-function cookware. As Joyce discussed, she feels that 'to have the right smell and taste of certain hometown food, I have to cook with it'. In this case, the rice cooker may contribute to Taiwanese expatriates' home-making through the provision of the smell and taste of certain food which brings to mind the sensory landscape of home. These advantages have made it a hotly discussed topic on the Internet-based forums and it is identified as being an imperative tool for Taiwanese expatriates who live in China, as exemplified by a housewife's post on Luntan that says 'every Taiwanese household should have one; without it, I really don't know how can I survive in China for this long *[with a thumbs-up drawing]*.

Also, with regard to this item being viewed as handy-to-use cookware, a *Ta tung* rice cooker has also transformed some of the female expatriates, who had never cooked or had little knowledge of cooking before relocation to China, by bringing them into the kitchen. For them, cooking may not be merely one of their household duties; for some, through making food for the family, their gendered role and identities as a mother and wife can also be fulfilled. As Betty illustrated:

In my home, the cooking is the *A Yi's* task. I am not a good cook; I cannot make proper

food. But, I still do some cooking, very simple, for my husband and sons, such as tonic

foods. I didn't do it in Taiwan, like others, I just bought it in the market. After moving here,

I have to do it by myself. The first time, I just gave it a try, but what surprised me is that it

is so easy to cook with a *Ta tung* rice cooker; I just put everything in the pot and then wait.

It turns out to be quite good; I seem to be like a good cook and I am so happy that I can

feed my family.

Such perception of the advantages of a *Ta tung* rice cooker after using it also reaffirms and exaggerates many female Taiwanese expatriates' identification with products of Taiwanese brands and tendency to express positive sentiments toward products marked as Taiwanese. Accordingly, a *Ta tung* rice cooker was identified by most of the female expatriates as a prerequisite for them to cook certain food, which cannot be replaced and can only be supplemented by cookers of Chinese, or other countries', brands. Moreover, the common experience among female Taiwanese in China of using the rice cooker also causes them to go beyond the domestic space and to be linked to other Taiwanese people or places through sharing their experiences of using it, recipes for cooking with the rice cooker and the collective purchasing of the rice cooker either through physical contacts or discussion on specific forums.

Moreover, a *Ta tung* rice cooker in the household is also a mechanism to reveal Taiwanese expatriates' identities or manifest the negotiations between them and their Chinese domestic workers who have to take charge of the cooking. For example, as the use of a *Ta tung* rice cooker is regarded as a common experience among Taiwanese in China, the deployment of a *Ta tung rice* cooker at home has become a reference to distance them from the PRC Chinese domestic worker and to invoke or reinforce their

Taiwanese identity. As Betty told me, 'when *A Yi* first saw this rice cooker, she asked me what this old-fashioned stuff is. I understand her confusion because she had never seen this before and had no knowledge about it. So, I taught her how to use it and explained its advantages to her.' Even so, it was also mentioned by the respondents that 'what she *[A Yi]* learnt is to use the rice cooker for rice but not for other food, like soup. It seems to be hard for them to accept this plain thing is actually multi-functional' (Chloe, housewife who has lived in Suzhou for two years, in her early 30s).

To summarise, through the discussion of Taiwanese expatriates' practices regarding the deployment and use of objects for home-making in this section, this research corroborates studies on migrants' practices of belonging in relation to domestic material culture (see, for example, Walsh 2006a,b). This section elaborates the shared experiences of Taiwanese expatriates' domestic practices with regard to the objects commonly used and deployed to highlight the ways in which the domestic atmosphere is imbued with feelings such as familiarity, security, comfort. Also, it is specified that objects can be important mediators through which my respondents may not only stay connected and aligned with their social networks and important relationships (back home), but also their feeling of distance from home may be alleviated. Moreover, through deploying and displaying objects at home, the domestic space is also where Taiwanese expatriates' identities, ranging from cultural and national to small-scale self and family identities, can be performed and exercised, so that it may be easier for them to generate a feeling of belonging.

In this regard, although objects applied and used by the respondents are just banal articles, the usefulness of some objects in alleviating home-sickness has also made many of my respondents put effort to transport them from Taiwan. In other words, home-making through domestic material culture is often associated with the

transnational movement of objects and is integral to Taiwanese expatriates' mobility and frequent border-crossing. Nevertheless, as the above discussion shows, domestic material culture is more than the deployment and presentation of certain objects, but also involves a series of practices such as the use of objects which should also be incorporated in the investigation of migrant people's domestic practices. I shall include this aspect in the discussion in the following section.

4.4. Domestic habitual and cultural practices

In this section, I examine the ways in which Taiwanese expatriates' experiences of home at a domestic scale are shaped by their daily habitual and ritual practices. My discussion will not only attend to my respondents' identities mediated through their home-making practices, but also consider how far the reproduction of home(land) tradition and culture has contributed to Taiwanese expatriates' practices of belonging at domestic space.

4.4.1. Media consumption

For Taiwanese expatriates, a domestic space can be made to be a space of belonging by turning it into a fortress against outside intrusion or into a place where they feel connected to home and Taiwan. As such, certain domestic practices and activities are considered to be of particular use in this process. For example, the consumption of transnational media (i.e satellite TV) is not only mentioned as the most common leisure activities my respondents take part in at home, but is also regarded as very useful for them to seek comfort. As Lily (a material control section manager living for seven years in *Tai gan* living quarters, Wujiang, with her family, in his 30s) told me, her lifestyle and feeling of living in China was changed after the satellite television was installed in

the *Tai gan* living quarter because she doesn't feel that 'far away from home when watching Taiwanese TV.' Also, I was told by Clarke (an engineering section manager relocated to Shanghai one year ago and living in *Tai gan* living quarters with his family) that 'when I turn on the TV, I always stay tuned to Taiwanese channels'. In households where Taiwanese satellite TV is installed (Plate 4.8.), Taiwanese TV programs always take preference over the local Chinese ones. . Such practices of staying tuned to Taiwanese TV are partly attributed to Taiwanese expatriates' lack of understanding and knowledge of Chinese media culture, though some of my respondents also acknowledge the high quality of some Chinese programs. As Tony (living in Hangzhou with his wife for five years, in his late 40s) said:

When I watch Chinese TV programs, I feel…um..it's like when you watch [Chinese] drama, you feel the way their shooting, performance, and the storyline is very different and unfamiliar us. Even the assumed easy-understanding entertainment show, although I can always figure out what they are doing by guessing, it is still hard to catch the punch line. This is why, before long, I lost interest in it.

Plate 4.8. Satellite dish installed in a local gated community, Shanghai

On the other hand, Taiwanese TV programs are useful, comforting and a way to relax not only because of their easy-to-understand content, but also due to the familiarity they bring to the Taiwanese audience, as Tony explained:

Yuhui:What do you do after work.

Tony: Watch TV.

Yuhui: What kind of [programs]?

Tony: Easy ones; it is too tiring to watch serious programs like political talk shows after an exhausting work day.

Yuhui:You have your own TV set?

Tony: No, it is in the living room, it's shared. We watch together, often, we will watch Taiwanese entertainment shows which I didn't watch in Taiwan.

Yuhui: Why?

Tony: When in Taiwan, I always think they are low-grade *[laugh]*. But now, I feel that they are also good in the sense that they make you feel easy and so relaxed. They are very entertaining, so in here, I watch them because they always make me feel relaxed. I just don't care whether they are low-grade or not.

However, watching Taiwanese satellite TV is not merely a pastime to relax, but it may also be able to imbue the domestic space with the 'familiar tone and language, sound and music, talk and ideas' (Roger, R&D department manager living in the local gated community in Shanghai with his family). Through immersing themselves in such an atmosphere, my respondents can also feel a sense of being in place whereby they would often switch and leave the TV on as a background just 'to make the house full of sound I am familiar with' (Willi).

Even so, in most cases, the satellite TV is often the foreground of the Taiwanese household and their family lives. For example, the TV set is often placed in the living room where family members spend their leisure time together and through watching TV and discussions about the programs, family interactions also take place. I was impressed by such discussion when I had the opportunity to watch TV with my respondents as it allows family members not only to share and change their opinions, but also to express their nostalgia and identities. I noted down my observation as follows in my fieldwork diary:

> This afternoon, when we watched s*hih shang wan jia* introducing the cuisine in Taipei, my host was so surprised because there are so many good restaurants in the neighbourhood of his place in Taipei, but even he did not have idea about that. Besides, when I saw a variety of Taiwanese snacks shown on TV, they told me that they missed the food a lot and that really made their mouths water. They then suggested that we should note down the restaurants and try them after we go back to Taiwan.
>
> *(Fieldwork diary 28/04/2007)*

In this case, watching Taiwanese TV also enables Taiwanese expatriates to connect back to home(land) as they can experience Taiwan-ness through images brought to their residence in China via transnational media. Also, it allows those Taiwanese expatriates who are separated from their family to maintain a shared imagination of home through watching the same TV programs simultaneously creating shared experiences of the visual- and sound-scape of domestic space. Such experience thus makes it clear that transnational media is as useful and imperative as other telecommunication technologies to enable transnational migrants to maintain frequent contact with another home and family to sustain the transnational family (Huang et al. 2008). As Ricky's (production

management section manager relocating to Kunshan with one son and left another with his wife in Taiwan) experience manifests:

> We used to watch this program together on Sunday night in Taiwan. We like to discuss and comment on the guests' performance and also the ways in which the hosts arrange the setting. When watching, we felt like we were following the guests' progress and emotions, it is quite interesting. But now we cannot do that like before. But one day, I found that when we talk on the phone, we are unaware of our talk around the program like before as we both were watching the program then. So, I just joked to her that we are really wasting money. But you know, by doing so, I just felt that we are so close but not far away from each other.

Moreover, through watching Taiwanese satellite TV, my respondents can also affirm their Taiwanese identity. As Terry (a GM living with his family in Shanghai for 13 years, in his 50s) explained to me that he was happy to see his 'daughters learn the traditional Chinese characters from watching Taiwanese TV' because that will make them remember 'their mother language and mother tone and where they are from.' Also, Taiwanese identity is often expressed and articulated when my respondents watch Taiwanese TV and at the same time show their concern with Taiwan's political and social issues, as my observation illustrates:

> When watching news about president election in Taiwan, Dorothy and Betty started to discuss the KMT's candidate's political view. They were both concerned with the issues of the Three-links[18] and worried that the Taiwan Independence which was held by the DPP would harm the cross-Strait relationship, which might harm the interests of Taiwanese

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[18] The three links are direct postal, transportation and trade links between Mainland China and Taiwan.

people in China. It seems that they support the Three-links policy because of the convenience it may bring, but at the same time, they also care about the national security and feel that Taiwan as the homeland should be better developed. The latter concern thus often popped out during other news about what they perceived as incorrect policies implemented in Taiwan and also the deteriorating economic and political conditions in Taiwan.

(Fieldwork diary 20/05/2007)

Like Betty and Dorothy, most of my respondents told me that they feel Taiwanese satellite TV is important for them to catch up on what is happening in Taiwan. Also, through such engagement, often taking the form of discussion about the contents, my respondents can express their patriotic sentiments through showing their concern about homeland prosperity and development. Accordingly, the domestic space is also turned into a transnational space through the consumption of Taiwanese media at home, enabling Taiwanese expatriates to feel connected to Taiwan. However, in addition to the site of transnational links, the domestic space also allows Taiwanese expatriates to feel a sense of belonging through their socialising when watching Taiwanese TV or DVDs with fellow expatriates and Taiwanese friends (see also Walsh 2006a). As Tony's experience mentioned above shows, the everyday domestic activity of watching Taiwanese TV, for some of my respondents without their family around, is often a joint activity with non-family members (e.g. housemates); as such, it allows them to foster a sense of togetherness. Also, Helen (a R&D engineer relocated to China and lives alone in Kunshan, in her 30s) confided that Taiwanese TV-watching is a useful means to ease her homesickness:

When I was still a freshman, I felt that I was taken care of by my neighbour because

another *Tai gan* and his wife living opposite my door often came to invite me to join them watching films or DVDs. While watching, we also chatted; so, before long, we got know each other better. Sometimes, we would just visit each other to chat. This experience really made me feel less bored and lonely being here on my own. Also, I didn't miss home as much as I felt there is still somebody who cares about me.

In short, the discussion in this section has shown that domestic practices around transnational media consumption play a significant role in Taiwanese expatriates' everyday lives, also, it elaborated the ways in which their feeling of home and belonging is generated through invoking various identities (Zelinsky and Lee 1998; Tsagarousianou 2001; Ehrkamp 2005). As such, my empirical study is consistent with existing studies that recognise the diasporic media as a useful tool and mechanism to articulate and foster transnational migrants' identity and to facilitate feelings of belonging (Hiller and Franz 2004; Lee 2001; Thompson 2002). In addition to the communication technology used to shape the atmosphere of the domestic space and to turn it into a transnational space, the daily habitual practices are of the same importance as they allow the Taiwanese people to re-live a Taiwanese lifestyle or experience the homeland in the foreign land.

4.4.2. Recreating the sensual landscape of home through food production and consumption

Food, among other things, is what often mentioned by my respondents as what they miss most about home (and Taiwan) and as the most useful thing in soothing their homesickness. As Adam (in his late 30s, lives alone in suburban Shanghai for one and half years) said:

We go out for Taiwanese food once a week. Although what we can have are very banal dishes, such as *Cai pu dan*[19] and a variety of fried vegetable dishes, it is quite enjoyable because at least we can have the taste of our hometown.

The taste of home, as my respondents specified, can often be fulfilled through having Taiwanese food transported from Taiwan, just like the other commodities they bring with them to China to consume, as the excerpt below exemplifies:

Every time when I go back to Taiwan, I always have an empty suitcase with me but bring it back full of snacks or foodstuffs.

(Karen, a single female production management supervisor living in Shanghai)

I always bring canned food and instant noodles when coming back from Taiwan. Because they have become part of my life as I have eaten these things since I was a child *[laugh]* …When eating those snacks, I won't feel that bad working in China though.

(Sway, a single production department section manager lives in Ningbo for 2years)

But, more often, the taste of home is experienced through reproducing the Taiwanese food culture at home in China. This is often fulfilled by the authentic smell and taste of Taiwanese food through the Taiwanese ways of cooking. To produce a specific home(land) taste and meals, the right materials and ingredients are needed and prepared correctly by my respondents for their home cooking. I had an opportunity to witness this when taking part in my host family's preparing the traditional food, *zong*

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[19] Fried egg with dry radish.

zi[20]*,* for the Dragon Boat Festival. At that time, I was told by my hostess that she would like to capitalise on such holiday celebration to have authentic Taiwanese food. As 'it is very difficult to buy bamboo leaves in Shanghai coz they use leaves of specific plant', she always tried to find bamboo leaves to make Taiwanese style of *zong zi,* but not the Shanghainese style. Her experience thus makes it clear that, in terms of home cooking to produce Taiwanese taste, most of my female respondents sometimes would not like to seek Chinese substitute materials, but would rather make the effort to transport foodstuffs from Taiwan. As Roger who has been living in downtown Shanghai with his family for one year told me:

> As Taiwanese food and ingredients are very easy to get here, we thought is should be ok to buy here. So, we bought soy sauce of the same brand we used to have in Taiwan, but the meal cooked with it turned out to taste a little bit different. It's strange, maybe it is the psychological factor *[laugh].* But this experience had already thwarted us and after that, we just did not buy any foodstuff here but still brought them from Taiwan.

The foodstuffs brought from Taiwan by my respondents are often multifarious. I was surprised by some of my female respondents who even bring vegetable and spice plant seeds to grow in their gardens. This is exemplified by Joyce who has grown spring onions brought from Taiwan in her front garden because she thinks its smell is better than what she can buy locally. While such gardening activity was not a common practice among my respondents before they relocated to China, it reveals that the ways in which Taiwanese expatriates endeavour to make a new home in China often involves only reworking or reproducing certain domestic practices which are regarded as practical or interesting, but not fully recreating Taiwanese lifestyle or domestic practices.

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[20] Sticky rice dumpling.

Besides, through the gardening, my respondents' small front or back yard is also a place for them to connect to home/land and also a visual landscape to mark the difference between the Taiwanese and their PRC Chinese neighbours (Brook 2003; Morgan et al. 2005).

Taiwanese expatriates' concern with producing authentic Taiwanese flavours also contributes to the formation of networks among the female expatriates , especially those housewives, either in a virtual capacity (in cyberspace) or in real life (with neighbours or friends), through exchanging information about foodstuffs, recipes, places to obtain the right ingredients and group buying, etc. In this case, practices around the production of the authentic taste and smell of Taiwanese food also allows many female Taiwanese expatriates' daily lives to go beyond the domestic space and home territory to link to other Taiwanese people through sharing their experiences of cooking, recipes and taking part in group buying. Accordingly, cooking and its related activities also help the female expatriates to enlarge their social circle and seek comfort from their interactions with other housewives.

In order to make authentic Taiwanese food in terms of the right flavour and taste, the right tools and people taking charge of cooking are also of particular concern. For example, a specific brand of cookware (*Ta tung* rice cooker mentioned earlier in this chapter) is referred by my respondents as a very useful and the correct tool for them to produce specific Taiwanese foods and smells. Besides, the people who make the food is significant in shaping their experience of home. Often, I was told that it is the wife's (of course the female Taiwanese expatriates) cooking that can make the right flavours and taste. As Harrison (relocated to Wujiang with his family two years ago) said, 'as long as the food is cooked by my wife, no matter if it is good or not, it is the taste of home.' On

the other hand, in households wher the task of cooking is handed over to the PRC Chinese domestic workers (*A Yi)*, Taiwanese expatriates' longing for the taste of home often needs to be negotiated and determined by *A Yi*'s capacity to produce food that can satisfy them.

In this case, *A Yi*s will often carry out cooking by complying with their mistress's instructions. For example, it is common that the Taiwanese mistress will either go grocery shopping to prepare materials for *A Yi* to cook or ask *A Yi* to prepare food in a certain way. As Betty (housewife living in Shanghai for six years, in her 40s) told me, she often prepares foodstuffs for *A Yi* to cook meals she wants to have on that day, and sometimes, she has to show *A Yi* how to cook it when she finds out *A Yi* has no idea of how to do a specific dish or to deal with the materials. Even so, she still complains about her by saying 'she is very stupid, no matter how many times I tell her how to cook and give her instructions; she just cannot make the food as it should look.' When it happened, she not only feels disappointed, but also would show her anger to *A Yi,* though she also defends herself by explaining that she was just doing what the Chinese would do for cooking. In this sense, the domestic practice around food preparation also turns the domestic space into a site of tension and confrontation (see also Law 2001) so that my respondents' experiences of home in relation to food consumption have to negotiated.

It is thus the negotiation of the production of the taste of home that has made some of my female respondents decide to return to the kitchen to take charge of cooking for their family. By doing so, many of my male respondents' expectations and visions of home are also fulfilled. As Sven (a R&D section manager living with his family in Suzhou for 2.5 years, in his 30s) illustrated, 'the feeling of home for me is easy; it is like, my wife

stays at home looking after kids and prepares food waiting for me coming back from work to have meals together'. Such expectation has also encouraged my female respondents who did not cook in Taiwan to learn cooking to fulfill their husbands' imagination of home. In this sense, a new form of domestic gender relations and division of labour that are different from those in Taiwan are thus constituted in China.

However, the transfer of the home-cooking to *A Yi* can also create a place where different culinary and food cultures meet. The coalescence of different food cultures may also bring fun and an understanding of Chinese food culture to Taiwanese expatriates, as Betty explained:

> Sometimes, I will buy foodstuffs or materials that I had never seen in Taiwan and ask *A Yi*
>
> to cook that for us so that we can try Chinese food and know more about Chinese cuisine.
>
> It is very interesting though.

But such practices of consuming Chinese cuisine, for most of my respondents, are often very rare events and are often for fun. Dorothy (housewife living in downtown Shanghai, in her 40s) said, 'it *[having Chinese meals at home]* does not happen very often, but is just a once-in-a-while pleasure'. It is still the familiar taste and smell of the Taiwanese meals that is preferred and insisted upon by most of my respondents as it is always what can make them to have the sensory experience of home.

In short, the above discussion made it clear that food consumption can be a useful way for Taiwanese expatriates to fulfill their imagination of and longing for home by allowing them to experience the taste of home and the sensual familiarity, continuity and stabilisation. This is not only fulfilled by practicalities of home-cooking including

the right materials, tools, methods, procedure and the people who prepare and cook the food; but the transnationalisation of Taiwanese food culture and foodstuffs is also imperative in this process. Also highlighted in the discussion above is that through Taiwanese food consumption, Taiwanese expatriates not only reaffirm and perform their Taiwanese identity (Bell and Valentine 1997), but also their feeling of being in place at home at the domestic scale is fostered. But, rather than assuming that the domestic practices around food production are free of conflict, I emphasise the negotiations of such processes manifested by the encounter of different food cultures and the production of authentic Taiwanese flavour and meals carried out by the Chinese domestic workers. This has thus brought some female Taiwanese expatriates into the kitchen to take charge of the cooking for the family; as such, new forms of household division of labour and gender relations are constituted in their residence in China.

4.4.3. Practising Taiwanese customs

In addition to transnational media consumption and the dietary and culinary practices, the Taiwanese lifestyle is also recreated and Taiwanese cultural practices are carried out in many of my respondents' households. By doing so, it is felt that the domestic space can be turned into a space of belonging through making it a bulwark against what is felt as the intrusion and undermining influence of the new host culture (Morley 2001). I found that the reproduction of Taiwanese cultural and social norms concerns nearly all of my respondents who relocate with children. In this case, the most common concern is to make sure that children are raised in a Taiwanese manner and exposed to Taiwanese cultural influences. As Mary (a material and supply section manager who has two young children and lives with her family in suburban Shanghai) explained to me, she cares a lot about her children's behaviour and manners so that she has put much effort to imposing Taiwanese norms on them:

Soon after I found that they have some strange behaviours, I was very careful about their manner and told them what they can do and what not to do. [Yuhui: For example?] At one time, my son was punished and beat seriously by my husband just because he spat on the street, just like those Chinese do. We just wanted him to know that it is not good manners and he should not to do that again. [Besides], I am also concerned with the way my children dress, I can stand it if they dress like a local Chinese. But my daughter always wants to do that *[helpless smile]*, like she always likes to wear socks when she puts on sandals. No Taiwanese will do that, it is so weird and ugly. So, I always dress her myself to make her look like a Taiwanese kid *[laugh]*.

As the excerpt implies, Taiwanese expatriates will often do something to keep the ungraceful manners which are often attributed to bad Chinese influences out of their households and to impose   Taiwanese manners in home education and raising children (see also Wolf 2002, cited in Blunt and Dowling 2006:218). As such, it also implicates that it is parent's identity, especially their national identity, which has been imposed on their children through home education. Betty told me that, once, when her son (in the third grade in a local primary school) saw Taiwan's national flag on a book, he told to her 'this is the flag of your country'. She said that she was so surprised and very sad about that, so, she corrected him by saying that 'this is not only mine, it is yours too'. This incident has made Betty realise her patriotism as she said to me 'not until then, I didn't know how patriotic I am *[laugh]*'. This also reveals that Taiwanese identity is often reinforced and affirmed by the very ordinary things that happened in my respondents' everyday lives.

Taiwanese expatriates' practices to turn the domestic domain into a bulwark for

Taiwanese cultural norms are also manifested by their experiences of applying a series of Taiwanese customary practices or carrying out certain ritual activities in their home-making. The Taiwanese traditional and customary practices, as I was told, are still perceived as very important and carried out in China. This is because they not only allow my respondents to keep the continuity of Taiwanese lifestyle, but also they are what can often make them feel at ease and comforted. As Betty said:

> I was told by my mother-in-law not to have red spring festival couplets in the house to celebrate the Chinese New Year because my father-in-law just passed away a couple of months ago. So, the New Year holiday should be a mourning period in our family. To mourn him, we shouldn't have anything red in the house. Although we do not live in Taiwan now, we still do it 'cos this is our tradition. It is very strange if you know you have to do something but you didn't do it, isn't it?

On another day, when I had a chat with Henry (a QA section manager has lived with his wife in Kunshan for two years, in his 30s), he told me a specific Taiwanese customs was practised by him after a car accident:

> **Yuhui:** How have you been lately?
>
> **Henry**:Not too bad, apart from the car accident.
>
> **Yuhui**: What happened? But you look ok?
>
> **Henry**: Yeah, we are good, but my car was damaged. It is about two weeks ago, our car was hit on the motorway. Although there was no one hurt, we were so frightened. [so] After that, my colleague suggested I go to the temple to worship God and pray for good luck, just like we do in Taiwan, so we went to a small Taiwanese Taoist temple to do that.

Yuhui: Is there such thing here in Kunshan?

Henry: Yes, I was very surprised when I heard that. But it indeed exists. It's amazing that

we can find anything that we have in Taiwan here.

Yuhui: Is what they do to you the same as that in Taiwan?

Henry: Yes. I have seen so many statues of God there. I even brought back an amulet.

In this case, although it is not very common to see Taiwanese religious practices, such as Taoist festivals and celebration, in public places or in the household[21], it seems that they still play a significant role in Taiwanese expatriates' lives as a way to gain comfort or to pray for good luck. Accordingly, the practices of the customary or religious rituals are also imperative for Taiwanese expatriates to secure a feeling of homeliness and a sense of security in a foreign country.

Aside from that, the celebration of Taiwan festivals or holidays is always of great concern to my respondents and carried on by practising certain rituals in a specific holiday. For example, Howard (HR department manager living in *Tai gan* living quarters with his wife in suburban Shanghai) told mt that they always have big celebrations in important Taiwanese holidays. Especially, in the Mid-Autumn Festival, they would often have a big BBQ party on the day cos 'it is what every Taiwanese household does, isn't?' Also, in Chinese Lunar New Year, my respondents will also carry out rituals that Taiwanese people celebrate, such as spring cleansing, putting Spring Festival couplets up on the door and windows, having a reunion dinner on New Year's Eve and after that children greet their parents and grandparents and receive their cash gift, and family gather together to see the Old Year out and the New Year in. Although there is not much difference between the ways in which Taiwanese and PRC

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[21] This is often manifested by the preparation of food to worship Gods regularly on household basis.

Chinese celebrate traditional Chinese holidays, Taiwanese expatriates' practising what they were used to in Taiwan is still very useful in easing their homesickness.

However, although the recreation of Taiwanese traditional and cultural practices are commonly employed by my respondents as home-making practices, it seems that it is the female expatriates who often take charge of   preparatory work (e.g. preparing food or home decoration) for the celebration and thereby reveals that the distribution of household labour is uneven. I experienced this in my host family's preparation for the coming Dragon Boat Festival and in the process; I not only witnessed the laborious work, but also often heard complaining:

> They all like to have my hand made z*ong zi*, so I have to do it *[helplessly smile]* 'cos it is more like Taiwanese style. What we buy in the market here does   not really fit into our taste, they just have it for trying different food and don't like to have too much of that 'cos the taste is a little different. That's why I have to this and what makes me so tired before the holiday…
>
> *(Joyce, a housewife who has two little boys and lives in Shanghai, in her 40s)*

Despite attaching great importance to those Taiwanese rituals, they are never fully recreated and reproduced in China, but often, my respondents will just pick out what they feel like or perceive as the most important. In this sense, Taiwanese expatriates' home-making practices in relation to practising Taiwanese cultural norms are often the result of the selective reproducing and reworking of certain Taiwanese customs and traditions. Also, the home at the domestic scale in China is thus both a space in which Taiwanese expatriates' gender role is re-inscribed and where married female expatriates can escape from practising 'duties that they are expected to do by their parents or

parents in law' (Joyce) and feel emancipated.

The discussion of Taiwanese expatriates' cultural practices also makes it clears that such experience is often based on individual household context, but not collective actions of celebrations. In other words, there are still no public celebrations of Taiwan festivals or holidays in the YRD which can draw the dispersed Taiwanese people together and allow them to forge a sense of social or national belonging. This is partly because of the lack of Taiwanese official units in Mainland China to organise such national celebrations. Also, it is because the public celebration itself is also linked to the complicated political issues, as Jerry (GM living in Shanghai with his family for 9 years) elaborated:

> Since we are all Chinese, we share the same holidays or festivals [with the PRC Chinese]. In addition to that, I don't think that we have traditional holidays or commemorative holidays in Taiwan. You can say that we have religious celebrations and indigenous heritage festivals. But, since there is no Taiwanese temple here, how can we do public celebration? Besides, it is very unwise to celebrate our National Day here, it is too political.

Aside from that, the analysis of Taiwanese expatriates' cultural practices as a way to forge their belonging is also insightful in the way that it foregrounds such experience not only are common for migrants in the cross-cultural context, but also in country settings with shared culture and ethnicity.

4.5. Household interactions and the feeling of homeliness

As mentioned earlier, gated communities are terrains of interpersonal interactions and encounters that often shape Taiwanese expatriates' identity practices and affect their emotional process. On a smaller scale, the domestic space is also where interpersonal relationships are manifested (i.e. household interactions), as such, it is also a suitable unit to examine interpersonal interactions as an aspect of migrants' practices of belonging. Regarding this, existing studies have shown that house rules have been used to regulate non-family members, such as domestic workers or au-pairs, so as to maintain a sense of homeliness for the host/ hostess (see, for example, Cox and Narula 2003). But, such discussion has disregarded the situation when "the other" becomes an important member of the family and the household, such as a spouse, so changing and complicating household relationships. This section will thus attend to this aspect by considering how Taiwanese expatriates' imagination of home and belonging is articulated and constituted in   intermarriage households, along with a discussion of the ways in which the familial aspects of care-giving and emotional support of home are extended beyond immediate family members to domestic workers (e.g. Blunt and Dowling 2006).

From the articulation that indicates home as "where my family is" (Larry, GM, in his early 50s, lives in Shanghai with his family), it is made clear that family has represented a particular type of imagination of home and experience of belonging among Taiwanese expatriates. But, even for the households who relocate to China together, there are still different perceptions toward home and belonging between male and female expatriates. This is because as a new division of labour is formed, often manifested when one of the

parents is relegated to the domestic sphere[22], family interactions are also changed. As it is often the female expatriates who have to sacrifice in such division of domestic labour, they also have different reactions and perceptions toward such change. For some, being relegated to the domestic sphere may make them feel powerless and lacking self-assurance, as Alice (a housewife lives in a local gated community in Shanghai for three years) illustrates:

> Every morning, soon after walking my sons to school, I go to the market to shop for groceries and sometimes deal with household business if necessary. Normally, I will finish that by noon and will take a nap after lunch. I don't have a specific schedule in the afternoon and just wait to cook dinner for my family. It is nearly the same everyday. I believe it is also what other *Tai tais* do. We are expected to take charge of children's education and husbands do not seem to care much. Sometimes, my husband has even told me not to put too much pressure on my sons. I felt that he doesn't care about our children's schoolwork and lives, and is only concerned about his job. As a housewife, it seems to be my duty. What can I say? I am not a career woman and I don't have excuse not to do that.

The extract has shown that many of my female respondents, like Alice, often endeavour to fulfill the role of a housewife and mother. Also, it implies the male expatriates' expectations of a housewife, as Roger (a R&D manager lives in Shanghai with his family, in his 30s) said:

> The reason why we don't hire *A Yi* is because I don't think it is necessary. Also, it is not good to let my children think that they are served by *A Yi*. So, my wife has to do all chores

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[22] Among my respondents, it is usually the female expatriates who quit their jobs or give up their career to go back to take care of the household and family. However, one male expatriate decided to devote himself to domesticity due to health considerations.

on her own, although sometimes she will have a part-time *A Yi* come over to help with cleaning. I told my wife she should take very good care of our children, prepare food for us.

In a subtle way, Walker (in his early 30s, relocated to Wujiang with his wife) also shared with me his thoughts on what his wife should do which seems superficially to be more considerate and respected:

> I told my wife that, in free time, she can attend classes to learn skills, or go to Suzhou for afternoon tea or to Tongli Lake for spa treatments. But she also has to do housework and look after children well. Although I am happy that her social circle can be expanded, I don't like her to attend *tai shang Tai tais'* club or activities because they are all rich women so that they may do something that we cannot afford. I cannot imagine how busy she will be if she attends their meetings. What I think is no matter what she does, she should put the family in the first place and knows when to stop before going too far.

Such perception and imagination about what a home should be like has thus affected housewives' experiences of home and belonging within the household. For some, the new gender division of domestic labour and expectations of them to be a responsible housewife is accepted because they think that through reinforcing their gender identity and role as a mother and wife, they also play an important role in home-making that can contribute to other family members' feeling of homeliness. As Joyce told me, she is 'fulfilled every time when I look at them eating and enjoying the food I cook', as such; the domestic space is thus an important space of belonging for her. But, for others, a husband's expectations can be hard to bear and become a burden as what makes a man feel homeliness may be based on his wife's sacrifice of her career and interests for

family. In this way, the feeling of belonging constituted in the domestic space is often shaped by household power relations and also differently experienced by male and female respondents.

The domestic practices of belonging in relation to household interactions also involves negotiations which I found are of particularly obvious in the intermarried households[23]. For intermarried couples, a good family relationship is often referred to as an important element of their perceptions of home. Often, a harmonious family relationship is considered to be nurtured by the mutual appreciation and rejection of prejudice between the couples. Frank (lives with his Chinese wife in *Tai gan* living quarters in Kunshan for 3years) illustrated this:

> My wife likes to know everything about Taiwan, like cooking, so, I taught her. She also
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> likes to watch Taiwanese TV *[programs]* and only watches that *[helplessly smile]*, so she
>
> learns a lot from that. She always thinks that Taiwan is very developed country and it
>
> seems to be fun to live in Taiwan. She even thinks that everything from Taiwan is good
>
> and is better than the Chinese counterparts. That's why I don't think I have to adjust my
>
> lifestyle.

As the case exemplifies, family harmony can be fulfilled through reaching a consensus about running a family which often hinges on the PRC Chinese spouse's embracing Taiwanese expatriates' lifestyle and integrating into their social circle, rather than vice versa. Nevertheless, the interactions in such households are also full of contestations and negotiations as Yale (marries to a Chinese woman and living in Wuxi for three years) explained:

25 Four of my respondents had married Chinese women and one had married a Chinese man.

Sometimes, it is hard to persuade my wife to accept my opinions. For example, I told my wife several times that I would like to have our child raised in Taiwan after she gives birth to a baby. What I think is that it is more advantageous for children to study in Taiwan than in China. But, she felt unhappy about that. She just insisted on living in China and doesn't want to go to Taiwan with me. The reason I think it is better for my children to learn Taiwanese cultures and values is because I don't think they can learn so-called traditional Chinese cultures here coz all of them were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. There is no need to let my children learn the contemporary Chinese culture which is created by the Communist Party. I have to admit that such thinking is also influenced by my political standpoint, as I still think that Taiwan is Taiwan and China is China. They are different countries; they should be separated. But like me, my wife cannot give up her ideology either. She always tells me that 'one day, Taiwan should return to China'. It is so annoying to hear that, but for the peace in this house, I just keep my mouth shut *[with bitter smile].*

In this case, the family relationships seem to be influenced by the couple's identities and different thinking that are shaped by the divergent political and social development in the two countries. In order to maintain the peace and a harmonious relationship, certain issues are often banned or avoided in the household, with special regard to political issues and national identities. Especially, when the shared ethnicity is outplayed by the Taiwanese identity, the household interactions and the family relationship are often challenged. This becomes even worse when members of couples' natal families who may have less understanding of cross-cultural interactions are brought into household interactions. Mark (a R&D engineer married to a Chinese woman and living in Shanghai for one year), for example, told me his distress by saying that 'since they *[his*

parent and his Chinese wife] do not know how to get along with each other, they often have quarrels due to the misunderstanding. So, it turns out that I have to take charge of my parents and fulfill the filial responsibility by myself.' In this case, although Taiwanese expatriates can prevent themselves from standing in-between their spouse and natal family members, the Chinese spouse is also allowed not to practise filial responsibility for their parents-in-law in Taiwan. As such, the Chinese spouses are also excluded from Taiwanese expatriates' family, which often upsets my respondents as the feeling of home constituted by cross-generation family intimacy cannot be fulfilled.

On the other hand, Taiwanese expatriates' experiences and imagination of home are also be challenged when they have to interact with their Chinese spouses' family. It is not uncommon that as the only Taiwanese in their spouses' family, my respondents often feel 'excluded and powerless in getting into their family life' (Amy, a marketing section manager, in her early 30s, who is married to a Chinese man) which they realise is exactly what their spouse is experiencing when they make a visit to Taiwan. Feelings of isolation and disempowerment are reinforced when the Chinese spouse's family members are invited to stay with the couples. As Mark specified, in this case, he just felt that the house 'seems to become the place of their family reunion and I become an outsider in this house.' Accordingly, the understanding of a feeling of homeliness constituted through family interactions has to consider not only the negotiations of family members' identities, but also the family relationship extending beyond the nuclear family.

In addition to the PRC Chinese spouse, there are also PRC Chinese non-family members (e.g. domestic worker) who are brought into the household interactions so as to affect the domestic atmosphere and my respondents' experience of home. Often, it is

the economic consideration that has made the hiring of a PRC Chinese domestic worker and tutor to help out with chores or supervise children's schoolwork, which is a common arrangement in Taiwanese expatriates' households (eighty percent of my respondents). As Chloe (housewife lives in a local gated community in Suzhou, in her 30s) said, 'since it does not cost a lot to have one, why not treat myself well to hire *A Yi*". Such thinking was also supported by the male expatriates, as Andrew (lives with his family in a local gated community in Shanghai) explained to me that, by doing so, it can make up for his wife's sacrifices; 'after all, she surrenders her career and gives up all her loves coming here with me'. Accordingly, this kind of household arrangement reveals Taiwanese expatriates' perceptions toward spending money on outsourcing specific domestic and care work is worthy as long as the well-being of family members can be achieved. In this sense, a loving home seems to be able to be fulfilled by economic transaction.

Despite good assistance, the Chinese domestic workers also affect the dynamics of Taiwanese expatriates' intra-household interactions. At first glance, the capacity to have a domestic worker often makes my respondents feel they have move upwardly towards a higher social position as hiring a domestic worker is still not that prevalent in Taiwan and is often considered as the privilege of people who are either very rich or have great power or influence. But, on the other hand, as a new master/mistress, Taiwanese expatriates also find that it is challenging to interact with their domestic workers and it takes time to adjust to their new identities.

My participation in my female respondents' meetings allowed me to observe their interactions with their domestic workers. Especially, I found that they perceptions of the Chinese domestic workers are often revealed by the language they use when talking

about them. For example, the term '*A Yi'* , which literally means aunt or a close friend of a family who is about same age as the mother, is used by Taiwanese people to indicate the female domestic servants that has suggested that she is given a place in the household as   kin or at least a friend of the master/ mistress. But, such closeness is figurative as the unequal power relation is always embedded in household interactions. As can be seen from the way in which the term is used, although it is convenient and understandable, it also homogenises this group of people who, regardless of their personal difference, are designated to serve Taiwanese and are inferior. In this case, calling the female Chinese domestic worker '*A Yi*' is also a method to distance the Taiwanese people from the PRC Chinese employees and to highlight Taiwanese people's superiority. Therefore, the domestic space in which an *A Yi* is co-present has also become a place in which Taiwanese expatriates can practise their power as a superior master or mistress in the household.

In addition to the employer-employee relationship, Taiwanese expatriates would also like to maintain a good relationship with their Chinese employees. This is because as the Chinese domestic workers are perceived as very important in helping deal with household affairs (e.g. cleaning, cooking and child caring), my respondents told me that they will not risk losing them[24] so that they will often show goodwill to them and some even would like to build a friend-like or quasi-family relationship (see also Cox and Narula 2003). For example, quasi-parental relations with a child in that the *A Yi* is treated like a child who has to comply with the house rules the Taiwanese employers set to them are often developed, as explained by Joyce:

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[24] As the turnover rate is very high, in order not to bother with the re-adjustment to new domestic workers, most of my respondents would like to have their *A-Yi* stay as long as possible.

If I do not tell her what she should do or give her instructions, she does not know how to

do it or just does nothing. So, I have to tell her every detail about doing chores, such as

separating underwear from the socks when doing laundry, the way to sweep and mop the

floor and also what to cook…something like that. I just do not understand why they do not

know about these things. Moreover, I also have to keep an eye on her when she is doing

her work*;* otherwise, she does everything very carelessly, you know, *da lu ren*[25] is very

passive and lazy.

Accordingly, the quasi-parent and child relationship implies that *A Yi'*s practices and actions not only have to be under their Taiwanese master/mistress's supervision, but also fit into their expectations and imagination of home. Besides, the Chinese domestic workers' activities, with special regard to the use of space and their performance within the household, are also regulated in order to ensure Taiwanese expatriates' family lives are undisturbed. *A Yi's* structured housework routines of which their work time and spatial movement in the house are regulated and restrained manifest this, as my observation illustrates:

A Yi comes twice a day; the early shift starts from six o'clock to eight o'clock and the

afternoon shift is from four to six pm. What she has to do in the morning is doing laundry

(some has to be done by hand), drying clothes, making breakfast, feeding two boys and

preparing them for school, tiding up rooms, kitchen and other public areas. It is quite a lot

and I never see her taking a rest, it is not allowed, of course. Besides, I find that the *A Yi*

has her own rhythms and finishes her chores in order. She always starts with doing laundry

and ends with tidying the kitchen. Her movement in the house is thus very easy to figure

out as it seems to be structured. Besides, she normally won't stay in a space too long and

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[25] Meaning the Mainlander.

has to leave a room as soon as her job is done. Not to mention, she won't stay in the room

we are together. Most of the time, we do not see her, but only hear the sound she makes

from doing chores. It is quite strange cos I know someone is there but don't see her often.

(Fieldwork diary, 26/04/2007)

The scheduled working hours and restrictive spatial movement are also applied to the PRC Chinese tutor who is asked to do the tutorial in a given time period and in an assigned room:

At 9:00 am, tutor came and my hostess greeted him and gave him a pair of indoor slippers.

He was then led to the study room and my hostess went to prepare a drink for him. It took

no more than five minutes. He then stayed in the study for three hours apart from going to

bathroom. The tutorial was finished at 12 pm when he left the room and went straightly to

the front door. The family said thanks to him and saw him off.

(Fieldwork diary, 19/05/2007)

The PRC Chinese employees' restrictive spatial movement and the use of certain space and the scheduled household routines not only allow Taiwanese master/mistress to supervise or oversee them easily, but are also easy for them to arrange their family lives and activities around. Besides, to ensure that family life is not disturbed my respondents will also have a set of house rules to regulate their Chinese workers' activities. For example, I was told by my respondents that they do not allow *A Yi* to enter certain rooms, such as the room where valuable objects or safe deposit are placed, unless they have the master/mistress's company, to ensure their valuable possessions are secured. As Betty (housewife who lives in a local gated community in Shanghai, in her 40s) explained to me:

> There are a lot of stories about *A Yi*s stealing. Actually, it happened to me as well, but fortunately, it was not too serious. She only took small things, like kitchen stuff, that I do not care much about. But, as I am worried about her taking other valuable objects, I had bought a safe deposit box for all my valuable possessions and put it in my bedroom. I asked the *A Yi* not to go into my bedroom to clean. If she has to get into that room, to drop off my laundry, for example, she has to have my permission.

Under certain circumstances, *A Yi* may also be perceived or regarded as a possible threat to family intimacy so that they may be particularly overseen. This is experienced by some of my respondents that they will take precautions against *A Yi's* behaviour and manners, especially when they are perceived as unsuitable or inappropriate in the household, as Sven (lives with his family in Suzhou for 2.5 years) explained:

> We used to have *A Yi* who sometimes did strange thing. She would always clean the living room when I was there watching TV. Especially, when she cleaned, I am not sure if she did it on purpose or not, she always liked to show her cleavage in front of me. It was very annoying and uncomfortable coz I had to adjust myself to watch TV *[laugh]*. For a while, my wife thought it was not good so she replaced her with another less good-looking *A Yi;* she though this would be safer *[laugh]*. Things like this happen and nearly all of my friends have had such an experience.

Moreover, as the family time and intimacy always concerns my respondents, they also put a lot of effort to make a given space or occasion only for family members. Joyce told me that she does 'not allow *A Yi* to sit down with us in the living room because this is our private family time.' In this case, for most of my respondents, mealtimes are most

often mentioned as such an occasion for family members to interact so that it is expected to be pleasant and without *A Yi's* around, as Emma (a housewife lives in Shanghai for seven years, in her early 40s) illustrated:

> When we just came here, we decided to have a live-in *A Yi*. Having no experience before, we had no idea how to interact with her. [So] we just though that we should treat her as a friend, so we asked her to eat with us. But, after several days, we started to feel very uncomfortable and uneasy coz we really cannot stand her eating habits. She always made huge sounds and did not know any dining etiquette. Also, it was very difficult for us to talk about family affairs in front of her. So, my husband and I decided to ask her to have her meals alone so that we could enjoy our meal better and our family time.

The extract makes it clear that eating together is a crucial practice of relationship maintenance (see also Cox and Narula 2003), but it also implies that the person with whom Taiwanese expatriates have meals together is also important and affects their feelings of homeliness through food consumption. *A Yi*'s eating habits, which are often considered as ill-mannered and different from Taiwanese people's practice, thus mark them as the unwelcome guest; as such, their presence in family mealtime is often a challenging for my respondents' feeling of homeliness.

In some households, the Chinese domestic workers are also excluded from the childcare for the safety and family intimacy. As Richard who relocated to Shanghai with his family one year ago and now lives in the *Tai gan* living quarters elaborated:

> We do not ask *A Yi* to look after our daughter, even if we just go out for a very short time, we won't leave her with *A Yi*. It is also not possible to let *A Yi* take my daughter out

because we dot trust in the [PRC] Chinese people, though we know her. We are afraid that

she may be going to kidnap her and ask for money. Also, I am worried about the ways she

treats or feeds my daughter because I don't think she has good hygiene habits. That's why

my wife would rather sacrifice her career and look after my daughter on her own.

Although sending little children to a nanny to be looked after is also a common child care practice in Taiwan, it seems that it is more worrying in China's context due to their mistrust in the PRC Chinese who are often perceived as poor, careless about hygiene and lacking morality. Often, such understanding of the PRC Chinese is attributed to the divergent political and social development of the two countries and to China's less-advanced and perceived uncivilised social conditions. Besides, Richard's narrative also makes it clear that Taiwanese expatriates are concerned with child safety due to their growing worries about public security in China, especially at the time when incidents of Taiwanese people's being kidnapped happen more and more frequently (Jing 2007). As such, it is commonly felt among my respondents that, as foreigners in China, it is better to stay safe and know how to improve their personal safety because 'it is impossible to just rely on China's police system and it is unwise to believe in it, after all, this is their turf' (Richard).

In addition, some of my respondents also considered that raising children on their own is the best way to foster family intimacy. For example, Andrew (in his late 30s, lives with his family in Shanghai for five years) told me that compared to his family lives before expatriation; it is improved because his wife is now a full-time housewife and 'looks after our little boy. That really makes different cos I feel that we are much closer than before. It really comforts me.' Accordingly, the feeling of homeliness is often fulfilled by family togetherness and also the emotional support functions provided by

family members. In this sense, for those who have to transfer child care to *A Yi*, the inability to practise childcare by themselves to forge family intimacy often frustrates and disappoints them. As Ling who has two little children and lives in suburban Shanghai told me, she felt very sad about the way in which her son relies on and is close to *A Yi* that 'my son has been looked after by *A Yi* since he was a baby boy. Sometimes, I just feel that he loves *A Yi* more than us *[bitter smile]*'. In this case, family (intimacy) as an important determinant in constituting a feeling of belonging thus needs to be negotiated.

However, although house rules are applied to regulate *A Yi*'s use of space and activities as a way to ensure a feeling of being at home can be experienced, it seems to be not possible to exclude *A Yi* completely from family life and interactions. In this case, various strategies of family interactions will also be applied to distance *A Yi* from certain occasions and family times. For example, the use of language is such a tactic that my respondents will often speak Taiwanese dialect, but not Mandarin as China's official language, in front of *A Yi* when they do not want her to know what they are talking about and want to make sure their interactions are not disturbed. As Casper (an operation control department manager who has been living in Shanghai with his family for 2 years, in his early 50s) illustrated:

> When we have to discuss family issues when *A Yi* is around, we will talk in Taiwanese. Since she can only speak Mandarin and has no knowledge of Taiwanese, we don't need to worry that she is eavesdropping so we can say anything we want. It is very strange, isn't it? We have to be that careful about others while chatting in our own house *[smile with helpless facial expression]*…

4.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have elaborated how home at the domestic scale and as transnational housing is turned into a space of belonging by the materiality of the housing and through Taiwanese expatriates' everyday domestic practices around objects as well as habitual and ritual practices. The findings, firstly, suggest that, the materiality of home, with special regard to the transnational similarities of housing forms manifested by local gated communities and *Tai gan* living quarters and domestic material culture allows Taiwanese expatriates to experience the visual landscape of home so as to shape their everyday emotional process, especially in relation to the feeling of familiarity, security and a sense of community. As such, this empirical research thus complements recent literature on migrants' practices to construct a home by interacting and building specific relationships with a range of objects (e.g. Gordon 2008, Nowicka 2007; Walsh 2006a).

Secondly, my analysis has also shown that a sensual landscape of home can be experienced through Taiwanese expatriates' domestic habitual (i.e. around transnational media and food consumption) and ritual practices to recreate and safeguard a home in their new residence and remind and connect them back to their home(land). In this, I argued that, rather than being fully embraced, homeland tradition and cultures are often selected and partially reproduced and reworked by Taiwanese expatriates in their home-making practices. Also, I demonstrated the gendered division of labour in such household activities and highlighted the female expatriates' labour in preparing and fulfilling domestic cultural practices. Furthermore, the empirical case also confirmed that migrants' practices of belonging though reworking homeland tradition and culture are not merely shared by the settled permanent transnational migrants, but are also evident in transient migrants' (e.g. expatriate workers) domestic lives. Accordingly, through the discussion of Taiwanese expatriates' practices around domestic materials

and a series of habitual and ritual practices, I also found that the transnationality, manifested by the transnational influence of housing and their border-crossing links and actions are an important part of contemporary migrants' experiences and integrated in their practices of belonging. In other words, Taiwanese expatriates' experiences of home and feeling of homeliness at the domestic scale are often influenced and constructed by practices which take place at and are linked to different scales (see also Blunt and Dowling 2006).

Aside from that, the discussion in this chapter was attentive to household (interpersonal) interactions which have attracted less attention in the understanding of migrants' domestic practices of belonging. In this, I elaborated the atmosphere of home as domestic space and how Taiwanese expatriates' feeling of homeliness is constituted by their family relationships and interactions with the non-Taiwanese family members or domestic workers. Particularly drawing on households in which PRC Chinese are co-present, I understood not only that the idea of home is a concept which needs to be negotiated, but home is also a contested terrain as family and household members often have to negotiate their imagination of home and perform their power relations and identities. As such, my analysis has made it clear that migrants' identities are always an important determinant in all aspects of their domestic practices to constitute a feeling of homeliness and belonging. But the experience of Taiwanese expatriates' identities practices often manifest their narratives of multiple references of identities and identifications (e.g. self, family, national, ethnic and cosmopolitan identity).

However, while domestic space as a suitable spatial unit to analyse and understand migrants' spatial practices of belonging an examination of those practices in other spaces is also necessary. In next chapter, I turn to examine Taiwanese expatriates'

work-related and workplace-based practices and their spatial experiences in the workplace to consider how they may contribute to the emergence of their workplace belonging and a sense of (work)place attachment.

Chapter Five

Workplace belonging

5.1. Introduction

Both working long hours and working overtime have long been regarded as Taiwanese IT engineering work culture (Chang 2007; Ho 2003). Not surprisingly, my respondent Henry, a QA section manager in his early 30s who works in a Kunshan-based Taiwanese computer manufacturing company told me that it is common practice in his company to work overtime. Such work culture makes the workplace a very important space for Taiwanese IT workers' lives, so to understand the IT expatriates' everyday lives and space of belonging, it should be included in the analysis.

As mentioned earlier, as Taiwanese expatriates who are the focus of this research work for transnationally-operated Taiwanese IT firms, their workplace-based activities have to be understood under the framework of multinational corporations (MNCs) or transnational corporations (TNCs). According to Ghoshal and Bartlett (1991), a multinational corporation can be defined as a corporation that 'consists of a group of geographically dispersed and goal-disparate organisations that include its headquarters and the different national subsidiaries' (pp.603). The definition makes the Taiwanese IT firms in this research that operate in different countries fit into the categorisation of MNC or TNC. As such, the organisational practices of Taiwanese IT MNCs may thus shape their employees' everyday work lives. As MNCs and TNCs are transnational operations in nature, they also allow employees to experience transnationality through activities in the workplace.

The MNCs considered in management literature as intra-organisational networks (ibid) have now also been understood to be an institutional form of transnational practice (Vertovec 1999). Morgan (2001) puts forth the argument that this can often facilitate the

emergence of a transnational social space and transnational community due to the employees' structured interaction based on "the recognition of a shared set of interests within a specific transnational social space" (ibid: 117). This foregrounds the significant roles that expatriate workers from headquarters play in the formation of a transnational social space within MNCs. Because these workers are the bearers of the corporate culture, they are expected to disseminate this culture through their everyday workplace practices (Beaverstock 2004). As such, it is now acknowledged that such transnational organisation is very useful for expatriate workers to develop well-being and a feeling of being at home through immersing themselves in a corporate world characterised by familiar ways of working, shared attitudes and materiality (e.g. a ubiquitous corporate logo) (Koser and Salt 1997).

Based on such understanding, this chapter will examine Taiwanese expatriates' constitution of belonging through their workplace or work-related practices shaped by Taiwanese IT transnational corporations' work culture. My analysis in the first section will address the physical structure and material basis of the Taiwanese expatriates' workplace within the Taiwanese MNCs and consider how they may shape everyday workplace actions and experiences. To understand the formation of transnational social space within the Taiwanese IT firms, I will not only elaborate how the material culture of the China-based Taiwanese IT firms may contribute to the emergence of a unified corporate world, but I will also consider the role of the soft structure (i.e. corporate and work (place) culture) of the company on Taiwanese expatriates' work lives and their emotional experiences in the workplace. I draw particular attention to my respondents' transnational links in the workplace that occur on a daily basis as necessary to MNCs' organisational practices, to examine how such experiences are integrated into their practices to forge workplace identity and belonging.

In addition to emphasising the significance of transnationality manifested by the transnational transfer of the corporation's material culture and work culture as well as expatriate workers' transnational business links, this chapter further addresses how Taiwanese expatriates' interactions and relationships developed in the workplace are related to their emotional experiences of belonging. This will be presented in the last section by articulating my respondents' workplace interactions with their PRC Chinese colleagues and fellow expatriates and their practices to build *quanxi*, friendship circles and support networks. As such, I highlight that different identities are played out by Taiwanese expatriates in their daily workplace interactions to forge a sense of workplace belonging.

5.2. Material environment and workplace belonging

The material structure of the factory compound often concerns my informant Taiwanese IT firms, as it is considered to be useful in facilitating the employees' well-being. In my informant companies, it is common to see amenities, such as a gymnasium, spa and salon services, a swimming pool, a launderette, a reading room, shops and a café provided for the employees to use. This is because it is believed that such physical structure of the self-contained compound can not only improve managerial effectiveness[26], it is also advantageous for expatriate workers to feel safe and protected. Besides, such material environment is often considered as satisfying and enjoyable. As Alex (an R&D senior engineer in his early 30s who lives with his wife in local gated community in Suzhou) told me, he feels quite good and contented with such a work environment, despite the fact that it 'is just same everywhere [else]'. This illustrates that

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[26] For example, the military-style management in the China plant and the PRC Chinese employees' long-term exposure to intense work environment and the lack of supportive networks have made them increasingly feel disappointed and antipathetic working in Taiwanese IT companies (Zhi 2010).

the similarity of the material environments in each of Taiwanese IT firms' subsidiaries or plants is useful for the expatriate staff's well-being.

After observing the material settings of twelve Taiwanese high-tech companies[27], I was able to pinpoint commonalities shared between them. In general, each factory compound is surrounded by walls that are equipped with Closed-circuit Television (CCTV) and controlled entry with the presence of security guards. Within each compound, the office and factory buildings are often surrounded by a landscaped garden or a park-like public space, which is designed to counteract the impression of rigidity that the IT industry gives people. Such outdoor environment is also mentioned by my respondents as pleasant so that they would like to capitalise on it by partaking in leisure activities. As Harrison, who has lived with his family for two years in *Tai gan* living quarters in Wujiang explained:

> I often go jogging in the open space. As you can see, the environment is quite good; there are gardens, green land, and landscaping, isn't it very pleasant and enjoyable. It is clean, of course, which I just think is the most important thing to me; I really cannot stand staying in or doing something in an unclean place. Aside from that, what makes me comfortable also comes from the feeling that I feel I am protected when I jog inside the compound, as the guards patrol the compound 24 hours a day.

The similarities in the physical structure among branches of Taiwanese IT firms are often the result of standardised procedures, criteria and regulations that are set by

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[27] Among my twelve informant companies, there are five in Shanghai, one in Kunshan, five in Suzhou and one in Wuxi.

headquarters with which every new plant needs to comply. This is clarified by Howard, a HR manager living with his wife in suburban Shanghai, in his fifty:

> The factory is designed and built in accordance with company requirements. No matter where the fab[28] is, it has to be almost the same as Taiwan's parent company. We will not modify it too much unless we are in a very special situation. [Hence] The layout and buildings in each fab come from the same model. This is a kind of corporate image; we want to create a uniform corporate image in all our branches …

In order to reproduce a model branch or factory, some Taiwanese IT firms even endeavour to transport the whole set of machinery and equipment to the China base[29] and also hire Taiwanese teams from Taiwan to carry out the new plant construction (Chen 2005).

In addition to the built forms of the factory compound, the layout, use and deployment of objects in factory buildings is also required or, at least expected to comply with the criteria, so that it is a duplicate of headquarters or other plants in Taiwan. For example, the lobby (frequently a shop front) is always made to be bright and spacious; also, being a transit space, it is filled with a variety of objects that reflect the corporate culture. Further, the ground floor with the reception and exhibition hall or cafe is habitually made into a showroom or place where employees can interact with one another. Also, according to my respondents, the layout in their office is not that different from their

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[28] Fab is an abbreviation of "fabrication laboratory".

[29] For example, it is reported that one of the leading Taiwanese semi-conductor manufacturing companies had gradually transferred the machinery in two fabs in Taiwan to its China plant by air since it started to operate there (Li and Chou 2006).

previous offices in Taiwan, as Willi, a process integration section manager, in his 30s, described:

> There are separate offices allocated to managers and the rest of the office is divided into several blocks and allocated into different sections. Every employee is allocated an OA[30] office desk with a PC[31] so that they still have privacy. But they are still under my surveillance because I can see what they are doing as long as I stand up *[laugh]* … It is very similar to my office in Taiwan, that's why sometimes I get confused [as to]where I am!

Although the office layout and spatial arrangement allows Taiwanese expatriates with higher ranking positions to distance themselves from their PRC Chinese subordinates, it still manages to encourage their communication and enhance face-to-face exposure and interactions (see also Kunda 1992; Kilduff 1997). Nevertheless, those expatriates allocated to a separate office will often put forth an effort to create a distinct office atmosphere by individualising their office space. As Yale, a thirty-something customer service section manager told me, his office is a space that he has decorated to suit his tastes:

> I bought this Buddha statue and also the tea set from Jingde Township[32] last year. As *Mi-le* Buddha stands for happiness, it reminds me to be happy and enjoy life *[smile]*. And, this fish tank I bought for my personal interest because I like fish culture and used to have them in Taiwan. I had one here just because I think it will be very nice to have the company of fish in the office, which makes me feel at ease. Teas were brought from

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[30] OA is short for office automation.

[31] PC is short for personal computer.

[32] Jingde Township, located in the Zhejiang Province, China, is famous for its ceramics industry

Taiwan to appease my longing for Oolong Tea and the potted plants around also make me

feel relaxed. Without this stuff to make me have fun, it would be very boring staying in the

office all day.

Although the objects with which Yale decorates his office to satisfy his tastes and
desires can be obtained locally, he still insists on transporting some must-have articles
(e.g. Taiwanese Oolong tea) from Taiwan. Moreover, there are always some items that
are considered to be of particular significance, as they can help my respondents keep
track of what is happening in Taiwan. For example, the PC (or laptop computer) with an
Internet connection is the most frequently mentioned must-have article used in the
office, because it is needed for their everyday conversations with colleagues in Taiwan
and for its ability to help maintain connections with friends (see also Chapter four on
such practice at domestic space). Such practice thus turns the office into a site of
everyday transnational activities and links as part of a transnational space. Furthermore,
it also serves as a private space for Taiwanese expatriates to show their positions and
superiority or to fulfil their interests and likes.

To maintain the consistency of Taiwanese IT companies' built environment, the layout
of offices or functional rooms (e.g. meeting room, dining hall) and the material
deployment are also required to meet the criteria laid down by headquarters for its
branches, as a human resource department manager specified to me:

There is SOP[33] of all kinds for our reference; for example, there are more than 300

regulations related to my department. We are asked to follow these SOPs, though there are

still some variations in each plant concerning the regional and locality differences … Even

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[33] SOP is a shortened form of 'Standard Operation Procedure'.

the tiniest of things is specified in the SOP.   Take this conference room for example: how

it has to be cleaned, how many times it should be cleaned a day, and how many tables and

chairs are set, are all specified. And, we, the inspectors, have a list in our inspection form

to check. For example, the cleanliness of the tables and chairs, as well as the conditions of

the facilities, such as if the power of the AC and plug are properly set. As well as utensils,

if sufficient pens for the whiteboard are provided, etc. These are all explicitly regulated.

(Richard, an HR department manager in his early 30s who relocated to Shanghai with

his family one year ago)

The management mentality of what Casper, a fifty-something operation control department manager who has been living in Shanghai for two years calls "making the China plant the same as that in Taiwan", or recreating Taiwan's work environment in the China base, is often based on a belief that such an environment may help the expatriate workers to adjust to their new environment and get on in their new tasks within the shortest period of time, as they already "have knowledge to use and work with the resources the company provides" (Howard). Furthermore, the similarity in physical structure between the factory compounds in Taiwan and China that prescribes certain spatial norms and practices in the workplace (see also Crang 1994) also allows my respondents to feel as though there is no difference between working in the home country and in the China base.

To make the physical structure of the China plant a replica of the mother company in Taiwan, also involves the transfer of all kinds of a company's best-proven-practices that can express the corporate culture and unifies its employees. The corporate culture, defined as a network of meaning or shared experiences (Rafaeli and Worline 2004), has been considered to be imperative in facilitating consensus, commitment and shared

identity within the organisation and binding the organisation together (Flecker and Simsa 2001). Pries (2001) argues that the formation of such a framework of trust, understanding and mutual commitment within a transnational organisation can also contribute to the emergence of a transnational social space. By immersing themselves in the shared organisational culture through daily workplace practices, Taiwanese expatriates often feel that they are disconnected but are still aligned with headquarters and previous networks in Taiwan. In this respect, I contend that Taiwanese expatriates' workplace belonging is not only created by their feelings of safety in the protected factory compound, but also by a sense of familiarity and community shaped by the uniform workplace and corporate culture.

The most common way that corporate culture and spirit are expressed in the factory compound is by the use and installation of corporate slogans and logos throughout the factory. For example, the corporate slogan, represented in the form of words written on posters, is present in conspicuous places (e.g. the lobby, exhibition hall or where employees congregate) as a way of expressing corporate culture and values to both employees and outsiders, such as clients and visitors. The uniform corporate logo is also ubiquitous in the corporate park[34], in entrances, buildings and lobbies and found on objects such as posters, appliances, souvenirs, employees' badges and uniforms, is also a good ways of facilitating the employees' identification as being a member of 'Company X'[35] at any given time and anywhere within the compound. Through overexposure, corporate culture has gradually taken root in the employees' mentality so

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[34] Some large-scale investment of Taiwanese IT firms may occupy a vast area. A computer manufacturing company I had visited has invested to build its biggest production base in suburban Shanghai, which accounts for approximately 3,000 hectares. The term 'park' is used to describe the production base.

[35] This may be any given company.

that both Taiwanese and PRC Chinese employees may internalise their values and put them into practice. As Casper illustrated:

> Working in this kind of place, you just cannot get rid of the norms and company's ways of doing things. [And] I think it is important that the ways we do things and behave influence our [PRC Chinese] colleagues a lot. I believe that, at last, they will get used to it. Gradually, they will become more and more like 'T' persons[36] … In order to make it happen sooner, I always ask them to bring a sheet of paper with our corporate slogan on it with them to remind them. This is also what I do *[showing me his badge with extension phone numbers and a sheet of paper with corporate slogan].*

In these instances, Taiwanese expatriates also play an important role in the dissemination of the corporate culture; they bear corporate culture and demonstrate it in their daily workplace practices and behaviours. Although the transfer of corporate culture to a different cultural and social setting is challenging and not always straightforward, it is a worthwhile and useful corporation management strategy. This is because such practices can unify the employees scattered through subsidiaries in different countries under the shared meaning system, since they have the same communicative language and identification as a fellow employee. Moreover, it is also beneficial for expatriates, like Taiwanese workers, because of the familiarity and comfort they can receive through working within the same workplace practices and culture as home.

In summary, the above discussion has demonstrated how Taiwanese expatriates' workplace belonging is forged in relation to their feelings of familiarity and personal

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[36] 'T' is used here to stand for the company he works for to maintain the confidentiality.

safety derived from working in the Taiwanese transnationally-operated IT companies, and its predictable physical environment, coherence and shared values. This finding contributes to the understanding of the formation of a transnational social space within the MNCs relating to the reproduction and transfer of the physical structure and environment of a company. Furthermore, such spatial experiences provide Taiwanese expatriates with a reference to confirm their self and corporate identification. The mechanisms specified in this section as being useful in facilitating the formation of a transnational social space within the Taiwanese IT firms are also important for intra-organisational integration and coordination. They also, however, reflect the hegemonic roles and centralised management of the Taiwanese headquarters, as it is the Taiwanese working culture, workplace practices and managerial styles that are imposed on the PRC Chinese employees and in China plants, which in turn have limited the development of the local Chinese work cultural orientation. In this sense, the transnational social space formed in Taiwanese IT firms and dominated by the Taiwanese-style work culture and workplace practices is also an ethnocentric transnational social space (see also Kotthoff 2001). This point will be elaborated in more detail in the next section through examining Taiwanese expatriates' everyday workplace and work-related practices.

5.3. Constituting belonging through workplace practices

In this section, I examine the ways in which the soft structure, or the corporate and work(place) culture of the China-based Taiwanese IT firms may contribute to make the workplace a transnational social space and mediate Taiwanese expatriates' emotional experiences of belonging. In particular, I describe the spatial norms of Taiwanese IT firms and their organisational practices, of which expatriate workers' transnational

business practices are integral in considering how they shape the workplace environment and atmosphere, as well as how they shape my respondents' sense of being-in-place in their workplace.

5.3.1. Manifesting corporate culture in the workplace practices

Among my informant Taiwanese IT firms, it is not uncommon to see that company's work culture, including best-proven-practices, regulations and ways of doing things are disseminated throughout their scattered branches or subsidiaries. For expatriate workers, such management strategy is considered to be beneficial; working in an environment where familiar norms and practices are present reduces the feeling of dislocation and helps them to feel more at ease. Henry, a thirty-something QA section manager, who has been working in Kunshan for two years, told me that even the banal everyday work routine was useful in helping him adjust to the new work environment:

> Frankly speaking, sometimes, I just don't know where I am. Once I walk into the office, I start and keep moving between my seat—office—factory—dining hall—office—conference room—factory and do the same things every day. There is no difference from what I did in Taiwan. The adjustment didn't bother me at all.

In addition to the similar workplace routine, corporate culture is also expressed and manifested by a series of organisational best-proven-practices and standard operating procedures (SOP) that are recreated in China plants. For example, Clarke, an engineering department manager in his late 30s told me that as his company aims to become a learning organisation, some institutional practices, including team work, group learning and various events such as seminars and lectures, are often included in

their work routine and practices. This was echoed by Fred, a thirty-something production management section manager in a Taiwanese optronics company based in Shanghai. He commented on how local employees are integrated to his company's culture and ways of doing things:

> Yuhui: How you lead your *da lu* [PRC Chinese] colleagues?
>
> Fred: At very beginning, I let them know what I want and what they have to learn. So, I will explain to them every detail of our tasks. After that, I will give them a copy of all SOPs of the department and ask them to read and memorise them and they are tested a week later. I will not let them pass the test until I feel satisfied with their performance. I do this because I find it is very useful in that it can make them get into the way we do things very fast.

Homogenising work-related and workplace practices is what helps to disseminate the corporate culture; it is also a hallmark of the management styles of McDonaldised organisational practices (Leidne 1993; Ritzer 2002). My respondents benefit from working within McDonaldised corporations as they work within systems to which they are accustomed. For this reason, expatriate workers do not have the feeling of being dislocated.

Taiwanese IT firms' work culture is also expressed through a series of informal and unwritten workplace rules or ways of doing things that are brought to China plants by Taiwanese expatriate workers. Examples of Taiwanese IT work culture includes work efficiency, work first, work-led lifestyle and system of job responsibility (Tang 2001); team work and technology-shaped workplace identity (see also Kilduff 1997); and the management style of control and commitment (see also Kunda 1992), which are

transferred to China often through expatriate workers' leading by personal example. Below my conversations with Alex, an R&D senior engineer in his early 30s who works for a Taiwanese software company in Suzhou, evidences this:

> Alex: …in Taiwan; I can be in office any time as I wish 'cos we are not asked to clock in
>
> Yuhui: It seems you are freer in Taiwan?
>
> Alex: You can say that, but you know, it is job responsibility there. I don't think such system is really good.
>
> Yuhui: You did this here?
>
> Alex: Yes, we have to make our Chinese colleagues know about this and get used to working like this. It is really challenging as they have different thinking *[bitter smile]*. Didn't you know that the average work hour in high-tech companies is very long? In some departments, it is even more than 12 hours a day. Mine is about 11 hours, but it has already made me feel exhausted.
>
> Yuhui: what is your work like?
>
> Alex: I am doing RD stuff in here, I also lead a team. I have my own team here, so I have to take responsibility. The management work is really a burden 'cos I find that it is very hard to deal with people *[helpless smile]*. Probably this is because my Chinese colleagues are not very used to team work. I always have to let them know how important team work works well. Overall, apart from more of a work load, I don't think there is too much difference working in China; the workplace and the system are similar to that in Taiwan.

Alex's experience implies that the shared high-tech work culture practised in China allows for Taiwanese expatriates to continue in their ways of doing things despite the fact that they are working in a foreign country. Further, as Taiwanese organisational

practices and corporate images are reproduced in China plants through a series of institutional practices and material configurations, it also makes it easy to re-enact conventional workplace practices, as Leo illustrates:

> Some small things, like the personnel's behaviour are not specified in our formal employee training. But we are still concerned with them. We ask every employee to do what we would do in Taiwan. Take the girl [who served us tea] for example; don't you think she did not serve us properly? When things like this happen, though it is very small, we will still let them know how to do it [correctly] and ask them not to make ... [the same mistakes] twice.
>
> *(Leo, a man in his early 50s who works as a deputy manager of a Taiwanese power supply*
>
> *company based in Wujiang)*

In a similar vein, Taiwanese IT companies' work environment often influences and shapes the PRC Chinese employees' behaviours unobtrusively, as Andrew explains:

> Within the compound, they won't do some odd things, such as spitting, as what they would do outside without consideration. Of course, part of the reason is because we remind them very often, but the environment itself is the best material [with which] to teach them. What they have seen here is different from the outside messy environment; they know their behaviours have to be adjusted to be accepted here. They won't dare to be different from others' ways of behaving, will they? *[showing a 'you know why' facial expression]* So, after they work here for a period time, they know very well how to speak, dress and behave in accordance to the norms of this environment.
>
> *(Andrew, an administration department manager of a laptop computer*
>
> *manufacturing company in his late 30s, based in Shanghai.)*

As such, the decent work environment shaped by the employees' proper ways of behaving is interpreted by my respondents as a safer, cleaner and more pleasant place to work, as compared to that which is beyond the walls of the office-factory compound. Accordingly, as long as such expectation can be met, Taiwanese expatriates may feel comfortable, rather than dislocated within the compound.

Thus, the strategy of reproducing the Taiwanese model of work and workplace practices in China subsidiaries, with special emphasis on institutional and habitual practices, is useful in creating an efficient work environment that is also familiar to Taiwanese expatriates. Doing so has allowed my respondents to experience a more seamless relocation and adjustment period, as well as to experience a feeling of security within the Taiwanese enclave-like factory compound. Further, by injecting the workplace with the Taiwanese work culture and integrating the PRC Chinese employees into that said culture, both the locals and the Taiwanese expatriates are encouraged to build a sense workplace identity (see also Crang 1994). Moreover, the constitution of a workplace culture is also advantageous for Taiwanese expatriates in generating organisational nostalgia. Gabriel (1993) puts forth the argument that this is what enables expatriate staff to counteract the negative emotions caused by their relocation and to forge a feeling of workplace belonging.

5.3.2. The transnational in the workplace

The dissemination of Taiwanese IT companies' organisational and work culture has also made clear that company headquarters often employ the management strategy of a centralised administration to control and restrain the autonomy of their China subsidiaries. This centralised management, however, has contributed to the emergence

of a kind of quasi-market mechanism within the MNCs (Bartlett and Ghoshal 1988) that also prescribes inter-unit collaborations and coordination between dispersed divisions. Such management mentality thus shapes the employees' routine task and workplace practices. Winnie elaborates this point:

> In our company, the business units of purchasing materials and supply are very centralised; that is to say, it is headquarters that has an overall plan for these units and what we have to do is just follow headquarters' instructions. But, it is not like that in the production department; they have more autonomy because there exists a special relationship between the R&D and production department. The factory here is like a client of the R&D unit in Taiwan so that R&D personnel there have to serve us if necessary 'cos, when putting stuff into production, we are examining their design
>
> *(Winnie, a thirty-something QC section manager working for a Taiwanese Optronics*
>
> *company in Shangai)*

Thus expatriate staffs are important mediators between headquarters and their China plants. This has made Taiwanese expatriates' contact with personnel in Taiwan, in the form of both formal business links and informal contacts, a part of their daily work routines. Business links are often carried out on a departmental basis. For example, for the more centralised units, such as material supply and production management, daily contacts with personnel in Taiwan headquarters are compulsory and intensive, as the excerpt below illustrates:

> Although I am now working in the branch, I also belong to there [Taiwan] so I have to report to my boss in Taiwan. Every day I have to send a copy of report of the production condition regarding daily capacity and output here to him and sales people there to let

them know the material requirements and planning here. This occurs on a daily basis and

is often carried out by conference call which, sometimes, can last four to five hours 'cos

my boss always reviews every detail of my report.

(Mary, material and supply section manager in her late 30s, who works for an optronics

company in Shanghai)

The task is allocated to me by the production management personnel at headquarters. After

I get [my task], I have to report back to them [to let them know] if we can do it or [whether]

it should be allocated to other branches. Once the task is confirmed, I will send them a

production plan made according to this branch's production capacity. Then, they check [to

see] if our plan meets their requirements and will ask sales personnel to discuss this

production and delivery plan with their clients. If the sales people approve our plan, this

product will then be put into production in this factory.

(Fred, production management section manager in his early 30s who works for an

optronics company in Shanghai)

For some departments, such as business units and R&D, the transnational business links

may be less intensive.

There are different types of sales personnel in this company including the frontline sales

person based in North America, Japan and Western Europe markets, sales persons taking

charge of different products and BU [business units] and those based in Taiwan

headquarters or in the factory, like me. In my case, I have to take responsibility for helping

other sales people to sort out issues associated with production. For example, when they

get information about their clients' plans to come to China for business, the frontline sales

people will invite them to visit our factory 'cos it is a good opportunity to advertise our

company to host them. In other cases, the BU sales people in Taiwan have to turn to me for

assistance when there are problems with product delivery…

(Casper, a business department manager in his early 50s, who works for a

power supply company based in Wujiang,)

The product transfer takes place periodically. When a transfer meeting is called, both the

R&D engineers in Taiwan and the product engineers in this branch have to attend. When

the transfer is done, the production engineers take over and go on to the product trial run

and later production. During the pilot-run, problems often occur so that they have to report

back to the R&D personnel in Taiwan to sort it out.

(Keith, factory director of a Taiwanese telecommunications components

manufacturing company in his early 50s, based in Suzhou)

Even for departments with relatively high autonomy (e.g. the administration department), transnational contacts still take place sporadically:

Since the corporation is a unit, a good communicative channel is very important. In my

department, we have a formal meeting twice a month, which allows me to report my work

to my supervisor there. But, apart from that, I also keep in touch with the people in

headquarters 'cos I often need their assistance in doing many things. This kind of contact

is always for the good of the company and for smoothing out the China plant's operations.

(Howard, HR department manager of a semiconductor company in his early 50s

based in Shanghai,)

Regardless of the intensity and frequency, Taiwanese expatriates' transnational business contacts are carried out through formal meetings and informal personal

contacts. In the latter situation, it is the individual expatriate who will make effort to keep in touch with previous social networks through day-to-day interactions with personnel in Taiwan. As Helen, an R&D deputy engineer in her late 30s, who works for an electronics company based in Kunshan, told me, regular business phone calls to report to headquarters turned into an opportunity to build friendship with her correspondent in Taiwan headquarters:

There is an administration staff member in Hsinchu with whom I have good relationship. I did not know her from the beginning, but our friendship develops with our frequent telephone conversations. I have to keep in contact with her because there are so many things for which I need her help. So, after a while, we started to chitchat, just like friends [do]. She always shares with me office gossip; she knows everything *[laughs]*. Now, she is the only person in Taiwan headquarters who I think I can rely on and turn to for help.

(Helen, an R&D deputy engineer in her late 30s who works for an

electronics company based in Kunshan)

Despite its informality, regular contacts with personnel in Taiwan are considered to be very important by my respondents because they may be a potential resource for them, as Willi, a process integration section manager in his early 30s who works for a semi-conductor company in Shanghai, stated:

This is a big company, so a product is often made by different fabs. That means there are many places do the same thing as we do here. So, there is always something we can learn from them. So, when I need something, such as data or documents, I will turn to my previous team. It is much easier and faster to get these things from my acquaintances or ex-colleagues although they are all in different teams or fabs.

Also implied in the excerpt is that *quanxi* (interpersonal relationship) plays an important role in helping my respondents get resources. Therefore, they often put effort into establishing and maintaining good *quanxi* with personnel in Taiwan (i.e. those are in corresponding units) but not disconnecting themselves from their previous networks and team-mates. However, building *quanxi* is not always hard work, but can be very easy. Ling, an accounting department manager in her early 40s who works for a semi-conductor company based in Shanghai, affirmed, that "it is not difficult at all to have good *quanxi* and make friends with people in Taiwan as long as you know how to be a sweet person and don't be stingy in showing your concern [for them]." Most of my respondents are still actively trying to show their goodwill, for example, through offering assistance or visiting them in person when they go back to Taiwan. Kevin (a deputy engineer in his early 30s, who works for a semi-conductor company in Shanghai,) told me what he often does:

> Although it is not compulsory for us to report to the HQ when we go back to Taiwan for holiday, I still go there to see my ex-colleagues. I found that this is very important as it reminds them that I am still one of them. Besides, when I visit them, I often prepare gifts from China for them. Sometimes, they will also ask me to bring stuff, such as pirate DVDs *[laugh]* from China. In this case, I am more than happy to do so. For those who did not ask me to do that, I will also ask them what I can do for them to show my goodwill.

As the quasi-market mechanism has made for a kind of agency-client relationship within Taiwanese IT firms, it also shapes interpersonal interactions, and makes the cultivation of *quanxi* an important task for China-based Taiwanese expatriates' interactions with the personnel in Taiwan. Such practices are reciprocal in that personnel in Taiwan may also need to have good *quanxi* with their counterparts in China so as to

ensure a smooth working collaboration. This sentiment was reinforced by Winnie, a QC

section manager in her late 30s, who works for an optronics company in Shanghai, she

explained that in her everyday routine, she and her colleagues have to work with R&D

personnel in Taiwan frequently because they examine and get trial runs of products

designed in Taiwan. She stated that "in order to make things easy ... we are not too

picky about their design and [are] glad to collaborate [with them]. They have to have

good *quanxi* with us, especially with me*; otherwise we will give them a lot of trouble

[laughs]"*. It comes as no surprise that these findings are in line with existing studies

that highlighting the significance of *quanxi* in overseas Chinese practices and especially

in China (see, for example, Crawford 2000; Davies et al. 1995, Hsing 1996; Xin and

Pearce 1996). Moreover, my empirical study complements the understanding of the art

of *quanxi* in the inter-firm interactions by demonstrating that it is also an intra-firm

experience that is both an integral part and imperative to transnational corporations'

organisational practices.

In addition, I found that keeping in contact with personnel in Taiwan and cultivating

quanxi always involve a series of transnational actions mediated by a variety of

simultaneous communication methods, including electronic communication; telephone

meetings; video conferencing and contact via internal phone calls; web phone and email.

Terry illustrates this point:

> When we have to transfer a product to China base, we do it via conference calls or video
>
> conference. It is quite easy 'cos we have developed a special system that allows for
>
> personnel from headquarters and branches to log on. As long as the R&D engineers in
>
> Taiwan show a new product on his computer screen, engineers here can see exactly the

same thing on their computer screen … It is a waste of time and time to have R&D

engineers come over for sorting out everything.

(Terry, a GM of a remote control manufacturing company in Wujiang, in his 50s)

Mary, a material and supply section manager in her late 30s, who works for a Taiwanese

optronics company in Shanghai, explained to me the inner workings of a conference

call:

> I always feel that conference calls work in a very funny way. We use a special device for
>
> doing them. All we have to do is to talk into it. Since you did not see people, you never
>
> know if anybody is there.. I remember one time I discovered that nobody was on [the call]
>
> except me 'cos I did not hear anything back from the other side. It just made me feel like
>
> an idiot *[laughs wildly]*

Despite the fact that communication technology is imperative in my respondents'

transnational business contacts, the geographical closeness between Taiwan and China,

is also important to take into account as transnational contacts are also conditioned by

geographical factors. For Taiwanese expatriates in China, the advantages of geographic

proximity and the same time zone means that the difficulties of keeping in contact with

people in Taiwan and travelling back and forth from Taiwan have been minimised.

Frequent travels between Taiwan and China allow for face-to-face communication with

personnel in Taiwan that is also considered to be important in maintaining good *quanxi*.

As Walter (a man in his early 40s who works as a GM of a microelectronics company in

Suzhou,) explained, 'do we not have a saying that the face-to-face interaction makes

people have a greater affection for one another and that also makes everything easier?'

For certain business purposes (e.g. technical transfer and diffusion or problem-solving),

face-to-face interactions are of particular necessity and cannot be replaced by telecommunications technology. As Henry, a QA section manager working for a Taiwanese company that focuses on the production of information and communication technology products outlined:

> When a new product design is finished and put into production, problems pop up. When
>
> this happens, we inform the R&D personnel in Taiwan to revise them. After that, they send
>
> it back to me. If the same problem keeps happening, or a product cannot pass the testing
>
> procedure, they cannot do the modifications in Taiwan, but have to come here to check.

Hence, business trips back to Taiwan headquarters for regular or important meetings are thus necessary and required. Walter indicated that he has to "go back to headquarters [in Taiwan] every month for a monthly review meeting. Even though it can be done via conference call, some decisions still have to be made through the face-to-face discussions." In this sense, geographic proximity and Taiwanese expatriates' ability to travel across the Taiwan Strait[37] are thus contributory to fulfilling such practice.

The daily transnational businesses links may also be perceived as the Taiwan headquarters' surveillance of China-based personnel; nevertheless, they are also appreciated by most of my interviewees. This is because such practice is considered to be a very good channel for Taiwanese expatriates to have access to resources, receive assistance and solve problems. This leaves expatriates feeling as though they always have backup in Taiwan and are not cut off, as Yita articulates:

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[37] Taiwanese expatriates' travels back to Taiwan (twice a year for expatriates who relocated with their families and four to six times for expatriates who relocated by themselves) are also included in their expatriate remunerations.

I have a supervisor in Taiwan 'cos, in name only, I am still an employee of Taipei's

headquarters. So, I have to report what I have done here to him. Although it is a little bit

troublesome, I think it is also good, as through this opportunity, I can also turn to him for

help if there are any problems beyond my ability of resolving. This makes me feel that I

am not fighting a lone battle.

(Yita, an R&D engineer in his early 30s, who works for a software company

in Suzhou)

The information that flows and is exchanged in the transnational links also contributes to the professional advancement of Taiwanese expatriates, which is of particularly stressed in the technology-oriented and knowledge-intensive IT industry.

It is impossible and unwise to disconnect from Taiwan 'cos there are so many new

techniques to learn from there. In this company, there is a technical board, which is a good

occasion to meet people from headquarters and all branches, share experiences, exchange

information and brainstorm. When a new technique is developed, we will also turn to them,

either via formal channels or through personal relations, though it might not be relevant to

products we produce here in China.

Just like the technical board, there are also institutional arrangements for the employees to get together and interact within the Taiwanese IT firms, such as the case with teams that are based on a specific division or projects or products.[38] Despite being temporary and flowing in nature, such team work has allowed for employees to socialise and interact with one another within the company. This also encourages the employees to

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[38] Such team-based arrangements and practices are not uncommon in the high-tech industry (for example, see Kilduff (1997), Kunda (1992)).

develop their organisational identities and to forge a sense community within the team. For expatriate workers, it also means that the relationships and networks they build in Taiwan are challenged by their relocation to China. This often makes them put more effort towards maintaining their social circle through intensive transnational links and movement.

Moreover, it is also agreed among my respondents that a sense of community can be easily constituted among the Taiwanese expatriates through highlighting their sameness and exaggerating the differences between the PRC Chinese work culture and that of back home. However, despite identifying themselves as being Taiwan-based employees and belonging to the community established in Taiwan, Taiwanese expatriates also understand they are standing-in between Taiwan and China, as Tony illustrated:

> Every now and then, the Taiwan-based R&D engineers have to come to China for short-term collaborations with Chinese engineers to develop new products or work on a project. When I have to deal with both, especially when conflict occurs, I have to stand-in for the Chinese. Apart from the business, my position is paradoxical. For example, once, when we had a badminton match, I was asked by the Taiwanese engineers to play for the China team. Although I knew that it does not mean anything, I just felt very strange then.
>
> *(Tony, an R&D deputy manager in his late 40s who works for an optronics company*
>
> *in Hangzhou)*

Although feelings of being a stand-in may make some Taiwanese expatriates feel that they are still closely linked with Taiwan and backed up, they also constitute a challenge for expatriates to cope with and negotiate their identities in their interactions with their PRC Chinese colleagues. In this regard, their grounded workplace-based interactions

may also be an important aspect when considering their well-being and feeling of workplace attachment. This is the focus of the discussion in next section.

5.4. Workplace socialising, interactions and expatriate workers' well-being

Although skilled expatriates' workplace interactions have been integrated in the discussion of their transnationalism as demonstrated in their workplace practices (for examples of this, see Beaverstock 2002), their effect on expatriate workers' emotional experiences in the workplace seems to draw insufficient attention. In this section, I develop on Altman and Low's (1992) understanding of people's feeling of workplace attachment, which is arguably shaped by the employees' social relationships, through addressing how Taiwanese expatriates' interpersonal relationships and networking may contribute to their feelings of workplace belonging.

Taiwanese expatriates' workplace interactions and socialising are largely affected by the composition of the workforce in the China-based Taiwanese IT firms. As mentioned earlier, in my informant companies, there are not only divisions or departments taking charge of different business (such as administration, engineering, R&D, production, and IT), each department is also divided into sections (i.e. teams or groups) that take charge of different products and/or carry out different tasks. Usually, the leader of a unit, either a department or a work team, is a Taiwanese expatriate who has a number of the PRC Chinese employees to supervise[39]. Henry explained to me how the team system works in his company:

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[39] Increasingly, Taiwanese IT firms have some higher ranking PRC Chinese due to either cost cutting considerations (having fewer Taiwanese expatriate staff), or from an increased focus on equal opportunity for Taiwanese and PRC Chinese employees.

Yuhui: With whom do you work?

Henry: I have six Chinese to supervise. This means I have to inspect their work and follow

the progress [of their assignments].

Yuhui: How do you do this?

Henry: I have go around the production site and inspect my subordinate engineers two

times a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. If I do not go, , I will

ring them from time to find out how things are going or ask them to report their

progress to me. Every day, we have two team meetings and if necessary, a new

meeting will be called any time.

As the size of my informant Taiwanese IT companies varies, the ratio of Taiwanese supervisors to the PRC Chinese employees also differs. Taiwanese expatriates often make up only a small percentage of the total workforce in the Taiwanese IT companies. In Andrew's company, there are nearly 300 Taiwanese expatriates compared to roughly 100,000 Chinese employees. For the smaller sized companies, the number may be twenty to thirty Taiwanese leading one to two thousand PRC Chinese workers. There are also differences in the number of the male and female expatriate staff. As Adam, a man in his late thirties who works for a Notebook manufacturing company in Shanghai told me, the sex ratio of the Taiwanese workforce in his company is around four males for every female expatriate.

This management strategy is believed to be practical in facilitating the PRC Chinese employees' learning and becoming accustomed to the organisation within a short time. Nevertheless it seems that it also leads to distinct workplace-based intra-group interactions, especially between Taiwanese and local Chinese staff. On one hand, as Henry's excerpt outlines, the structured work routine requires Taiwanese expatriates to

have intensive interactions with the local Chinese employees so that they gradually get to know one another. On the other hand, such an institutional environment and atmosphere means that there will never be a seamless interaction between Taiwanese expatriates and their local colleagues; instead, their differences are often highlighted or even exaggerated. As following statement made by Vincent, a production department section manager who works for a Taiwanese semi-conductor company in Shanghai illustrates the differences in thinking and doing things between Taiwanese and the PRC Chinese employees are emphasised:

> After a while, I found that they were very bureaucratic. Also, they are very good at
>
> shirking the responsibility they have to take and shifting the blame onto others. This is
>
> particularly evident with those holding higher education degrees. They seem to think they
>
> are in a higher position and are always fastidious and demanding but inept. With this kind
>
> of attitude, they just do not put in any effort to learn.

Although such attitude toward their work is considered by some of my respondents to be understandable, as they think it "happens in Taiwan as well, the only difference is the extent[to which it happens]" (Winnie), for others, they may exaggerate it and tend to relate it to divergent political and social development in the two countries, as Sway indicated:

> You cannot just apply the same methods to them [Taiwanese and Chinese employees] as
>
> they were raised in a totally different society. Here in China, they do not know what team
>
> work is and I find that they have difficulty with team work [itself]; it seems to be hard for
>
> them to cooperate with people. This may be the result of cultural struggles and conflicts

which have been prevalent for many decades in China. Of course, individualism is also big

problem here.

(Sway, a man in his early 30s who works as a production department manager in

a Taiwanese optronics company)

It is such thinking that often makes my respondents perceive and evaluate their Chinese

colleagues negatively and use certain terms to describe them, such as inactive,

irresponsible, utilitarian, egocentric, conceited and inflexible. This can also be seen

from their interpretation of the local PRC Chinese colleagues' practices of *face,* as

Clarke, an engineering section manager in his late 30s who works for a semiconductor

company based in Shanghai, highlights:

> They [Chinese colleagues] just have too much self-respect. It is a big problem and it may
>
> do harm to the company 'cos if they conceal information about the mistakes they make just
>
> for the sake of not being blamed, it may make other things go wrong as well. But they do
>
> not seem to care about this, every time when they do something wrong, they just worry
>
> about being punished. They think they will *diu lian*[40] if they admit that they are doing
>
> wrong. But, they never think of the consequences.

In a similar vein, Willi shared with his thoughts on his Chinese colleagues' attitudes

towards work by specifying that "for them, it is all about *mian zi* [face], but we

[Taiwanese] take the consequences seriously so that we consider all kinds of

possibilities and will be very careful before taking actions." This illustrates the fact that

Taiwanese expatriates use their belief of superior work attitudes and professionalism as

a way to distance themselves from the PRC Chinese employees. This criticism of PRC

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[40] *Diu lian* means 'to lose face'.

Chinese, it does not mean, however, that my respondents can fully prevent PRC Chinese employees from taking part in cultural practices such as caring about *face* in the workplace. Instead, they are also important actors in workplace face practices and culture, as Kevin (deputy engineer working for a semiconductor company in Shanghai, in his early 30s) indicates:

> Working with *da lu ren* is like working with a group of fragile people. I think it is because of the One-Child policy that made my [Chinese] colleagues so fragile and weak. They are all only child in their family so that it is understandable that they are not independent, not to mention they cannot bear the pressure. I also found that they are easily discouraged. When they are blamed for making mistakes, they just want to quit the job rather than self-reflect. That's why I try not to blame them and have to be very patient and care about their feelings when talking to them *[bitter smile]*.

Although regarded as an integral part of Chinese business practices (Chen 1995; Fang 1999; Hu 1994), the use of *face* by Taiwanese expatriates to make a parallel between the Taiwanese and the local Chinese employees' work attitudes has shown that the shared Chinese-ness and cultural identity seems to have been discarded in my respondents' workplace. Instead, it is their negative perceptions of the social and cultural traits developed in Mainland China under Communist rule that have contributed to the highlighting of their differences and differentiating themselves from the local Chinese. Such biased understanding of their PRC Chinese colleagues is attributed to Taiwanese people's shifting identities in the past two decades and the abandonment of the idea that Taiwan and the PRC share the same Chinese values and identity, as well as a turn to a political ideology of an autonomous Taiwan and Taiwanese identity (see Chapter two). Thus Taiwanese expatriates' negotiations of their national and cultural identities have

shaped their interactions and socialising with their Chinese colleagues to what they experience at home at domestic scale.

In addition, Taiwanese expatriates' practices in keeping their distance from their local colleagues are also manifested by their maintenance of their superiority and power distance in the workplace. As mentioned earlier, their professionalism is often stressed by my respondents as indicative of their skills and ability to outshine their Chinese colleagues, as following statements show:

> Every time when I gave them assignments, they always said to me: "No problem, I can do it!" Hearing this, it's natural to think that they can do it by themselves, so I just wait for the results. But, it normally turns out to be either nothing or something you never expected to see. This is really annoying and bothersome because I have to show every step to them to get things done. If I don't do this, things are going to be very terrible.
>
> *(Adam, a production management senior supervisor in his late 30s who works*
>
> *for a notebook manufacturing company,)*

> Yita: Um, I think there is always a gap between us…Probably; this is because we [Taiwanese] have a sense of superiority; just like the ways the Japanese perceived Taiwanese people to be when they colonised Taiwan. But I don't think the locals think this way. They think that we are just the same and they are not inferior to you. That's why they will challenge you or test you …
>
> Yuhui: So, in this case, what you will do?
>
> Yita: I just take their challenges. As long as we have better skills and stronger motivation to learn, we have nothing to worry about from their challenges.
>
> Yuhui: What if they know that you are unable to do something?

Yita: I just admit that I am not good at everything or do not have knowledge about that [subject or thing]. But what I will also let them know is that I have more resources than them, which they can never have in this company. Even so, I know they will still laugh at me behind my back: they are always two-faced, they will show respect to you in front of you but say something bad or impolite behind your back.

(Yita, an RD deputy engineer in his early 30s who works for a software

company in Suzhou)

By taking on their PRC Chinese subordinates' challenges, Taiwanese expatriates can demonstrate their professionalism and skills to show their capacity that not only dwarfs the locals, but also reinforces their self-esteem and sense of superiority. Such self-assurance in turn often helps them to feel empowered and identify themselves in the company. More than just highlighting their superiority, Taiwanese expatriates also take more active roles in maintaining the distance between their local Chinese colleagues by excluding them from certain occasions. For example, the PRC Chinese will not be invited to attend certain meetings that are considered to be very important for Taiwanese expatriates' professional advancement (e.g. technical problem-solving meetings):

We attend the video conference with personnel in Taiwan to discuss technique issues every Wednesday. But only *Tai gan* are allowed to attend the conference. As the meeting is for personnel in the Taiwan headquarters to know our proces, such as the prescription we use here for a product, the Chinese workers are now allowed to attend the meeting for the fear of their *stealing* commercial secrets.

(Yale, a customer service section manager who works for a company that makes

electronic products in Wuxi)

Although it is believed that this distance is necessary in order to maintain a power dynamic, my respondents do not completely eliminate mingling with their Chinese colleagues. Instead, strategic considerations are taken in socialising. Andrew outlines why off-work socialisation is often worthwhile:

> For me, leadership and management is much about having good relationships with my subordinates. After all, they work for me and what they do will affect my success or failure. So, I told myself that I am not merely their boss; I have to get into their worlds as well. So I take part in their activities, like playing basketball together after work and once a month, I will treat them to a meal to encourage them… But still, I am alert against them; after all, the distrust is very hard to be totally removed.

The out-of-hour socialisation is often mentioned by my respondents as imperative not only for earning the Chinese subordinates' trust or support, but also for creating harmony in the workplace. Rather than always being a purpose-driven practice, for some, relationships based on workplace interactions and off-work socialising may also turn into a true friendship or into useful localised connections. As Colin, (GM of a medical instrument company in his late 30s based in Shanghai) told me, he takes his Chinese colleagues and clients very seriously and makes friends with them because he thinks that these friendships may be potential resources for him. He explained:

> There is a saying in China, "everything will be ok if you have *quanxi"*, on the other hand, you will get into big trouble if you do not have any *quanxi*. That's why I had made some local friends from work because they have better *quanxi* and more than you may need. Since they grew up here, they have a better sense of the ways in which people think and do things in China. So, sometimes I would rather ask my [Chinese] friends for advice when I

have problems as they can easily recognise the situation and tell you the best way to go …

You know as a foreigner doing business in China, everything can be either extremely

difficult or extremely easy. For example, if you want to import something, it may cost you

ten thousand dollars RMB, but you can also import it for just several hundred dollars RMB.

Why the difference? It is depends on the *quanxi* you have … If you have local friends,

they can tell you an idea about the price and also you can rely on their *quanxi* to deal with

it…. I think we Taiwanese are very lucky 'cos we are Chinese and there is no problem

communicating with the locals at all.

Colin describes the shared Chinese ethnicity as useful for Taiwanese people to make local friends. In minimising their differences and showing their approval of a shared ethnicity and Chinese identity, it becomes easy for them to approach Chinese circles and mingle with them. In this case, the politics of identity of Taiwanese expatriates is thus operating at a scale where the distance between cultures is narrowed by applying many similarities and cultural traits (see also Yeoh and Willis 2005b). Consequently, the workplace may also be turned into a place where companionship and feelings of being at harmony give rise to friendships and quasi-family relationships which allows for my respondents to develop a feeling of being at home as well as a sense of workplace identity.

Similarly, companionship and feeling of being at home are also felt when my respondents socialise with fellow Taiwanese expatriates and also among Taiwanese circles in the company. Wendy, an IT engineer in her early 30s who works for a semiconductor company in Shanghai, intimated to be me that she was lucky her seniors brought her into their (Taiwanese) circle. 'Despite belonging to different departments, we meet up during lunch time to have lunch together and exchange information.' In

addition to lunches, they also keep in touch via email, telephone, or even pop into each other's offices to chat from time to time. The friendships that began in the workplace also extend to outside of the workplace and become an important support in their expatriate lives. In this sense, the support networks and friendship circles made up by Taiwanese expatriates and have their origins in the workplace have contributed to their comfort and feeling of being at home in the workplace.

Taiwanese circles are not confined to the friendships and relationships established within the firm, but are extended to include personnel from other Taiwanese companies, as Andrew outlines:

> I turn to the HR (departments) in other firms for help. Of course, they do this to me too. We make phone calls to each other on a regular basis. Sometimes, we visit each others' factories as well. Although our products may compete in the market, I don't think the management tasks have anything to do with commercial confidentiality. That's why we can share our experiences to improve.

Thus, my empirical case not only confirms that the expatriate community is an important resource for expatriate workers doing business in China (see also Sergeant and Frenkel 1998).[41] What is problematic, however, is the idea of a shared business culture among the overseas Chinese. It has been shown that when pursuing certain interests and where the advancement of professionalism are concerned, Taiwanese expatriates still tend to turn to other Taiwanese expatriates, whether they work for the same company or not; they do not just rely on the resources and networks formed in and/or confined to one's work unit and group. Moreover, it seems that some of my

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[41] Though many studies are based on the Western expatriates' experiences in China.

respondents from different companies also establish a quasi-community of practice that is often made up of a group of people who are informally bound together by shared expertise and passion for a joint enterprise (Wenger 1998). Furthermore, Taiwanese expatriates' experiences reveals that their networking and social relationships are constituted of only Taiwanese people in the IT industry and not from other industrial sectors. This is because this group of Taiwanese expatriates are relatively self-contained and as the locations of their lives and workplaces are quite isolated from others in the Taiwanese community; their social circles are also limited.

In sum, the discussion in this section on Taiwanese expatriates' workplace interactions and socialisation has added to the understanding that people's sense of place attachment is largely shaped by their *in situ* social relations (see, for example, Altman and Low 1992). I found that Taiwanese expatriates' workplace belonging is affected by their feelings of superiority and being able to exert their authority and control in the workplace through creating a terrain from which the local Chinese colleagues are excluded and distanced. Paradoxically, to smooth work processes and to create workplace harmony, Taiwanese expatriates also endeavour to interact, network and develop friendships with their Chinese colleagues. In this case, the difference in cultural and social development in the two countries that are often stressed to distance themselves from the local Chinese are discarded and the shared Chinese identity and ethnicity are highlighted in their socialisation. Also, the relationships and friendships developed among the Taiwanese expatriates are always valuable as support networks and source of comfort. Thus, I also found that such networking is similar to a community of practice often made up by expatriates with the shared expertise or concerns. In this regard, while they endeavour to build *quanxi* for business purposes,

they also gain emotional comfort and workplace harmony from their various *quanxi* with their team mates or fellow expatriates.

5.5. Conclusion

This chapter elaborated on the ways in which the structure and culture of the Taiwanese IT firms as MNCs shape Taiwanese expatriates' grounded experiences of belonging. The research findings show that the emergence of a transnational social space within the transnationally operated Taiwanese IT firms as a result of the reproduction of the materiality and corporate culture in China, is significant in making the MNC workplace a spatial setting that allows Taiwanese expatriates to feel safe, familiar, connected to home and forge a sense of being-in-place and workplace identity. In this section, I have paid special attention to considering how transnational experiences (in terms of the transfer of the material, corporate and work cultures prevalent in the Taiwanese IT firms to China plants and my respondents' daily transnational business links to Taiwan) constitute Taiwanese expatriates' everyday workplace practices and shape their emotional process. The often neglected aspect of expatiate workers' workplace interactions and socialising in relation to their well-being were examined and I argued that embedded in such practices of belonging are Taiwanese expatriates' negotiations and practices of their multiple identities (i.e. ethnic, cultural and national identities).

The empirical case of Taiwanese expatriates' workplace practices of belonging can make distinct contributions to the scholarship on skilled migration in significant ways. Firstly, while existing studies on the formation of the transnational social spaces within MNCs have frequently considered them to be a result of expatriate workers' transnational business practices (e.g. Flecker and Simsa's 2001, Pries 2001), this

research has further developed the idea of transnational social space as a suitable approach to study skilled expatriates' workplace belonging. My analysis also adds to the literature on the formation of a transnational social space in relation to the soft structure of the MNCs (i.e. the institutional structure, corporate culture and organisational practices) by including the physical structure and the materiality of the MNCs into this discussion.

Secondly, this research demonstrated that the workplace is also a public terrain full of emotions and can be a meaningful space in which people can feel belonging in familiar structured workplace practices (e.g. the mundane work routines, contents of tasks and the personal interaction (see also Kilduff 1997; Darr 2000). I also argued that transnationality in which the transfer of objects and corporate culture, expatriates' daily transnational business practices and frequent travels are imperative in creating the materiality and soft structure that allows such a workplace to take form. As this empirical case demonstrates that the workplace in a given MNC may be also a transnational cultural space, I argued that expatriate workers' workplace identities and belonging is often associated with their identities and shaped by their ability to perform certain identities.

Lastly, the discussion that integrates the organisational and work culture into the analysis of Taiwanese expatriates' practices of workplace identity and belonging also extended the literature on the concepts of the McDonaldisation, *quanxi* and communities of practice and incorporate them into the analysis of expatriate workers' well-being. My research findings have shown that the McDonaldised business practices and *quanxi* that are integral to the China-based Taiwanese IT firms' work(place) culture have also helped them to experience a familiar institutional environment and gain

support, so as to generate a sense of workplace identity. Further, I considered the quasi communities of practices are seen in some of my respondents' work-related or workplace practices, help the members to develop support networks and nurture a sense of community. Accordingly, I found that the employees' identities are often common grounds of the configurations and manifestations of the workplace experiences. These findings reaffirm my argument that Taiwanese expatriates' hybrid and multiple identities are imperative in mediating their grounded practices of belonging.

Chapter Six

Grounding belonging in leisure space

6.1. Introduction

This chapter examines the ways in which Taiwanese expatriates' leisure activities that take place in the public domain (excluding their workplace) are integrated into their everyday practices of belonging. My discussion will address the constitution of belonging, as manifested by the sense of (being in) place and place identity, in relation to a variety of Taiwanese leisure activities. As studies have shown, transnational migrants' experiences of a sense of place and belonging in the public domain can be influenced by their grounded social relations and interactions with the local environment (for example, see Çağlar 2001; McCreanor et al. 2006; Nelson and Hiemstra 2008). Based on such an understanding, this chapter will discuss how Taiwanese position themselves in various public leisure spaces and employ embodied practices to forge a feeling of belonging. Also, I consider how Taiwanese expatriates' feeling of belonging is related to material culture in a variety of leisure spaces and examine the ways in which Taiwanese expatriates perform their identities to fit into different spatial norms so as to feel a sense of place.

This chapter also addresses how Taiwanese expatriates' social belonging is constituted, with special relation to the social interactions that take place in the public terrain. This perspective is used to consider migrants' networks of friendships that are believed to provide a structure of social support. Moreover, various social interactions show people's belonging to particular communities based on shared beliefs, values or practices. As studies have shown, migrants' participation in communal activities and social gatherings (i.e. clubs or associations) are useful in cultivating belonging as well as claiming a space of belonging (for example, see Fortier 2000; Jazeel 2006). I am especially interested in understanding Taiwanese expatriates' leisure activities, including

participation in various forms of social gatherings, clubs and community events. In addition to gatherings based on the physical spatial settings, I also examine my respondents' participation in online interactions and activities based in virtual space and consider how such practices may affect their identity practices and contribute to the alleviation of feelings of dislocation and homesickness. As public leisure space is often understood as a contact zone (Pratt 1992) in which differences are encountered and interact, the discussion of Taiwanese people's embodied practices and negotiations of identities in this chapter is imperative in the understanding of their practices of belonging, in relation to their experiences of practising and performing the 'difference' (e.g. Walsh 2006b; Yeoh and Willis 2005b) and 'sameness' in forging public and social belonging.

6.2. Grounding belonging in leisure space

As an important structure of social support, the development and maintenance of a network of friendships is highly regarded by my respondents, especially those relocated to China on their own. As a result hanging out with fellow Taiwanese expatriates and friends is often mentioned to be a common leisure activity. This is shown in my conversations with two single male interviewees living in suburban Shanghai:

> Yuhui: What do you often do after work, or on the weekend?
>
> Yves: I go out for dinner with friends to kill time. It often takes one and half hours and
>
> after that, we go to a massage parlour. This is what my weekday nights are like; it is
>
> just repeated every week.
>
> Yuhui: Whom do you go out with?
>
> Yves: Some are my colleagues and some are from other companies.

Yuhui: Are they all Taiwanese?

Yves: yes, all of them are Taiwanese.

(Yves, a single male expatriate, who has been living in Tia gan living quarters in suburban

Shanghai for three years, in his 30s)

Yuhui: What do you do in your leisure time?

Willi: On the weekend, I get up very late and I often go out for meals and shopping. Sometimes, we go to Karaoke bar. On Saturday night, we used to play *Ma jiang.* I learn to play *Ma jiang* here. Some of my colleagues have other interests or attend class to learn skills. I had learnt to ski, but now I play golf. Some of my colleagues also attend horse-riding class

Yuhui: Those are all costly activities.

Willi: Yes, it is impossible for us to do in Taiwan. But the cost is ok here.

(Willi, who has been living in the Tai gan living quarters in suburban Shanghai alone for

three years)

Hanging out with friends often allows my respondents to gain a sense of companionship, as Willi illustrated:

We like to try new restaurants… it has also become an important part of our lives here... I quite like it [this kind of hanging out] 'cos with them, I feel I have company and am being taken care of and won't feel that lonely and homesick.

Oftentimes, I was told by Taiwanese expatriates that they would like to go to the city centre or have excursions to nearby popular tourist destinations. The former may include a range of activities such as shopping, sightseeing, eating out or just being able

to experience the pulse of the city. Among others, eating out is always referred as the must-do because it is the easiest and most comforting way for migrants to have a taste of home and/or to alleviate their homesickness. Chloe, a housewife who has been living in Suzhou for two years, in her 30s, shared with me some of her strategies for better living in China:

> Life became easier and more enjoyable after I found some nice restaurants. It is very important 'cos we like to try different cuisine and can be comforted by food. As now we know where to get specific food, like Italian, Thai or other cuisines in the Science Park, we don't feel that bad and pathetic living here *[laugh]*.

As such, the Taiwanese restaurants are always referred as the best place in which they can experience a feeling of being at home, as Sven, a R&D section manager working in the Suzhou Science Park, in his 30s, illustrated:

> We like [Taiwanese restaurants] just because of the food that is served there; there are many Taiwanese-style dishes. That's why we visit Kunshan very often; there are so many Taiwanese restaurants there. To be honest, Taiwanese food is still very tempting for me and kept in my family. For example, I will always go for *yang rou lu* in the winter time as I did in Taiwan.

Apart from being an important place for hanging out with friends, Taiwanese restaurants are also regarded by my respondents as a place to experience the feeling of homeliness in terms of the sensual landscape of home. This need frequently is fulfilled by the environment/atmosphere of Taiwanese restaurants, an environment that is filled with the sights and sounds of home through the playing of Taiwanese satellite TV and pop music,

as well as Taiwanese prints and landscape posters that are used as decoration in restaurants. In this case, Taiwanese restaurants are also turned into a transnational space, as the sights and sounds of home are reproduced. These reproductions bring Alex, a senior engineer in his early 30s, who has been living in the *Tai gan* living quarters (Suzhou) for three years, a sense of familiarity and allows him to feel connected to home:

Yuhui: Is this kind of [Taiwanese] restaurant popular here?

Alex: I think so, otherwise, there won't be so many Taiwanese restaurants in this area. I am not joking; if you ask [all the] Taiwanese [people here] to raise their hands now, more than half will do that *[laugh]…*

Yuhui: How do you feel here?

Alex: It is comfortable 'cos everything is so familiar here. I assume you have already visited such restaurants and you should know that there are some basic elements, such as Taiwanese pop music is played although some of it is outdated, Taiwanese accent Mandarin or Taiwanese dialect is spoken here which makes me feel very friendly…

Yuhui: *[pointed to the map of Taiwan on the wall]* It is very interesting to have a map of Taiwan here.

Alex: *[laugh]* Yes, it is common. I think it was brought from Taiwan. They also provide newspapers, books and magazines from Taiwan. ... [it feels good to be] surrounded by stuff from Taiwan.

As the excerpt shows, the soundscape made up by Taiwanese pop music and Taiwanese accent Mandarin is important for Taiwanese expatriates to feel being at home when having food in Taiwanese restaurants, as these sounds are able to create an atmosphere

that is familiar for them. In this respect, the sounds and music can be seen as place-based resources that may help to shape Taiwanese expatriates' experiences of a given place. What's more, practices of identity also help to generate a sense of place and belonging (see also Duffy et al. 2007).

In addition to the audio and visual landscape, the smell and taste of food are also imperative in fulfilling people's sensory experience of home (for example, see Law 2001). To illustrate this point, when Alex was asked how he felt about the food served in the Taiwanese restaurant, he said that 'they *[beef noodle and pearl milk tea]* are quite good and the taste is similar to that we have in Taiwan'. Later, when we talked about the Taiwanese food he can consume in Suzhou, he told me that 'not all food marked as "Taiwanese food" is good. You know, some restaurants are run by the locals. I doubt that they know how to make authentic Taiwanese food.' Accordingly, the authenticity of food is often emphasised by my respondents as being strongly connected to the feeling of being at home. Being able to experience such authenticity, in addition to the experience of visuals and soundscapes of home(land), is thus important in many Taiwanese migrants' experience of belonging. As such, consuming food is as much a practice of belonging, as it is a domestic home-making practice (see Chapter four); it can also be fulfilled in the public leisure space in areas where the hometown flavour is authentically reproduced.

Despite being considered as cultural spaces, Taiwanese restaurants are not only perceived by my respondents as a place to which they belong, but also consider them to be something that belongs to them. To put it in another way, such places are often perceived by Taiwanese people as a representation of Taiwanese culture, such that within these spaces the differences between Taiwanese and PRC Chinese are

highlighted. (Plate 6.1.). I recorded these observations of a Taiwanese-people run restaurant in my fieldwork diary:

> Tina shared with me her thoughts on [running] her restaurants. Her initiative is to transport the complex-style restaurant in Taiwan to Kunshan to serve Taiwanese people. Thus, she made the restaurant a combination of a small library, internet café and lecture (meeting) room. By doing so, she hopes it can remind Taiwanese customers of themed restaurants, such as *man hua wang*[42], in Taiwan, but it can also be a meeting place, through the hosting of lectures and other kinds of activities. It is such distinctiveness that has made it well-known among Kunshan-based Taiwanese people and the reason why it attracts so many Taiwanese customers.

(Fieldwork diary, 26/05/2006)

Plate 6.1. A Taiwanese restaurant and the menu, Kunshan

Taiwanese food culture and eating etiquette as manifestations of cultural understanding are integral to practices that mark differences between Taiwan and China. As I was told, it is Taiwanese peoples' understanding of the ways to behave and perform food

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[42] *Man hua wang* is a chaine complex restaurant known for its combination of the restaurant and circulating library.

consumption properly in Taiwanese restaurants that often makes migrants feel as though they fit in perfectly. As such, migrants' often assert their Taiwanese identities by distancing themselves from the PRC Chinese who lack cultural understanding and practices of Taiwanese food consumption in places considered to be Taiwanese cultural space. Terry, a GM, in his early 50s who lives with his family in suburban Shanghai, told me his feelings toward the PRC Chinese customers in Taiwanese restaurants:

> Occasionally, I see PRC Chinese here. They often come with Taiwanese people. If not, they won't know how to manage eveything, like ordering food. Even the simplest thing, like figuring out what's the menu and what the dishes are, I don't think it is an easy task for them. Besides, it is very interesting to see their eating [habits]. I found out that theirs are totally different from ours. For example, they often make a lot of noise while eating. They also won't stop talking when there is food in their mouth. The table is always messy and disgusting after they finish. Things like this really make me lose my appetite.

When I shared a meal with Joyce at a Taiwanese restaurant near the gated community she lives in suburban Shanghai she lives, she shared her thoughts with me on the PRC Chinese waitress' service:

> I don't think they really know how to serve customers. As you had seen, she [the waitress] didn't even know what the dish looks and tastes like when I asked her. Sometimes, I just feel that they just don't care, they don't really take it seriously. I even suspect that they don't [have any] interest in learning that at all.

The above-mentioned incidents demonstrate that Taiwanese expatriates often use the ways the PRC Chinese improperly behave, in terms of eating, talking and performing,

to distinguish themselves from the locals in places perceived to be Taiwanese cultural space. Such spatial experiences also make them feel that their actions and behaviours are qualified and accepted, whereby helping to forge a sense of being-in-place. That said, various Taiwanese restaurants are not the only space where Taiwanese expatriates can indulge in the tastes of home: there are other places where the Taiwanese-style of consumption is available, that also attract the Taiwanese community, and furthermore allow migrants to experience the sensual landscape of home(land) in their everyday lives. Two residential areas, Hongqiao/Gubei (Shanghai) and Kunshan (about sixty kilometres away from central Shanghai), which host the biggest Taiwanese community in the YRD, are examples. Although the Hongqiao/Gubei district was once been the most visible Taiwanese ethnic enclave (Tseng 2007) in the YRD, it has grown more diversified in recent years. Despite this diversification, Taiwanese people still find the Hongqiao/Gubei district attractive because of its cosmopolitan atmosphere (ibid).

Kunshan City, which hosts nearly 50,000 Taiwanese people (equivalent to 8% of Kunshan's population) (Kunshan City Government 2005), on the other hand, has been transformed by Taiwanese business people from an agricultural village to an industrial city. The city has been imbued with the Taiwanese lifestyle, from which derives its name 'Little Taipei'. This is made evident by the ubiquitous Taiwanese consumption landscape, including Taiwanese restaurants, cafés, shops and entertainment places, found in clusters in the neighbourhood on the south side of *Huang He Bei* Road and *Zheng Chua* Road. When walking in the neighbourhood, it is very easy to identify places that have Taiwanese-style consumption from the Taiwanese elements used to design the exterior of shops and restaurants. For example, shop signs often indicate its links with Taiwan by highlighting words or terms familiar to Taiwanese people, such as the word 'Taiwan', place names in Taiwan (e.g. Taipei, Alishan, Lu-kang, etc.) or terms

like *gu zao ren, chu wai ren)* (Plate 6.2.) in order to attract Taiwanese customers.

Plate 6.2. Shop sign of Taiwanese restaurants, Kunshan

It is not only familiarity, in terms of the materiality of the Taiwanese consumption places; it is also the style of consuming food that is considered to be the most important in fulfilling my respondents' longing for home-made food or taste of hometown or homeland. This much was indicated by Leslie, a business department manager in his late30s who has been living alone without his family in Suzhou for more than two years:

> Kunshan is a must-visit place for Taiwanese 'cos it has been known as little Taipei
>
> since ten years ago. I go there once [in] a while as long as I feel like, to have
>
> Taiwanese food, just like in winter, I go there for *yang rou lu* and *jian mu ya*. I have
>
> to admit that the hometown food is still very tempting [especially] now [when] I
>
> am so far away from home.

In this regard, the places where Taiwanese people cluster, like Kunshan and Hongqiao/Gubei districts, can also be seen as important Taiwanese cultural spaces. As my respondents' experiences show, Taiwanese expatriates' involvement in the local Chinese society are not very integrated and are limited. This is seen from their shared leisure activities, such as going sightseeing or going on excursions during the weekend or while on holiday. For some of my respondents, the ability to explore the big country was an important factor in their making decision to relocate to China (see Chapter One). When going sightseeing (Plate 6.3.), I was told by my respondents that, rather than faultfinding and complaining about the bad sides of China, they often see China from a tourist's perspective, so that they end up with a different interpretation and understanding of China, than PRC Chinese:

> I have visited many famous [scenic] places, like *Wuyuan* which is called the most beautiful village in China. I also visited the hometown of *Zhan Tian-You;* I went there 'cos we belong to the same clan and he is such a big name in our clan. I just feel curious about his hometown [laugh]. Visiting those places made me feel very touched 'cos there are so many beautiful scenes and old buildings there and villages are so unsophisticated, that is very hard to see in Taiwan now. Besides, they have a lot of good stuff here, like s*usiou*[43]. There are just too many things to see here, that's why I always go travelling when I have holidays.
>
> *(Sven, a R&D section manager who relocated to Suzhou with his family two and half*
>
> *years ago, in his 30s)*

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[43] Susiou is Suzhou embroidery which is one of the four traditional Chinese embroidery styles.

Plate 6.3. Tourist destinations, Shanghai (left) and Xitang (right)

Accordingly, being a tourist, Taiwanese expatriates seem to have a better appreciation of the local environment and culture, which in turn, may make them feel better about their stay in China. It is worth noting that Taiwanese expatriates' fascination with the local culture is not shaped by their perception that China is their new home (cf. Yeoh and Willis 2005b); rather, it is instead shaped by a continued thinking of China as a foreign place for venture and adventure. This is evident by the ways in which my respondents describe China as a 'foreign country' and the terms they use, such as 'it(s)' and 'they/their', to distinguish Taiwan from China. Often, such perception of China is framed by their motivations to relocate. As Leslie (who relocated to Suzhou with his family 2.5 years ago) stated, "part of reason I decided to come here is to fulfil my dream to experience and understand this country more, I quite enjoy living here and travelling to different places in this country." Moreover, my respondents' feeling of being

comfortable and at ease in the tourist spots also come from the physical environment of these places, with their special regard to cleanliness and good maintenance, that allows them to feel as though they are able to escape from the everyday encounters with the untidiness and disorder of city life.

What's more, I had findings similar to those of Beaverstock (2002), whose study showed that amenities available are cited as factors that attract skilled expatriate workers to large cities and comfort them. As big cities in the YRD, such as Shanghai, are now growing and becoming more international (Yusuf and Wu 2002), Taiwanese expatriates who live there are able to experience the feeling of being connected to the urbanite lifestyle in Taiwan, or have access to a cosmopolitan lifestyle and consumption culture which may not even be achieved in Taiwan. As such, the city centre is also a good place to hang out or just to 'feel the pulse of the city', according to Sven, who lives with his family in Suzhou Science Park, and for many other of my respondents.

The places my respondents go when they visit downtown are often places where they think they can experience the urban and modernised consumption landscape, like department stores or shopping malls (Plate 6.4.).

Plate 6.4. Shopping landscape in Shanghai

Leo, a deputy manager in his 50s living in *Tai gan* living in Wujiang without his family for the previous four years, explained why he only visits these places:

Every time when I go into town, I go to *Huai hai zhong lu,* Xin t*ian di ,Pu dong*, or *Yuan qu*, *Guan qian jie*[44], etc. (Yuhui: Why these places?) I think it is because they are better planned. Taking *Yuan qu*[45] [in Suzhou] for example, it is well planned to be a modern, clean and comfortable place. Also, as shops with a higher level of consumption [are] cluster[ed] there, people visiting them seem to be better-off, so I don't worry too much about my safety. On the other hand, there are also all kinds of shops and entertainments such as cinema, restaurants, book shops, etc. there; I can always find everything I need

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[44] These are all places where shops of high level consumption are available, be that in Shanghai or Suzhou.

[45] Science park

there.

This excerpt of our conversation implies that these modern urban consumption landscapes allows Taiwanese expatriates to not only escape from what they see as the negative aspects of Chinese city living, (e.g., dirty and messy environment and low standards of living), but also to feel relief from having to worry about personal safety and security. This sentiment was echoed by Andrew, who has lived in suburban Shanghai with his family for 5 years: he told me that in order to 'avoid getting in touch with the bad sides of this country', his family 'only go[es] to those posh areas or department stores, like *Xu jia hui,* where we won't see many Chinese people's vulgar behaviours." Moreover, as these locations are similar to most of my respondents' living experiences, with special regard to living in the western-style housing and experiencing urban shopping landscape in Taiwan (Plate 6.5.), they also help them to foster a sense of familiarity and comfort.

Plate 6.5. Department store and shopping mall in Taiwan (Taipei and Kaohsiung)

Further, the environment and ethos shaped by the material configurations in certain urban landscape and consumption culture in cities, such as Shanghai, often turn the city centre into a meeting place of transnational links. As such, for some Taiwanese expatriates living a lifestyle similar to that of the mobile transnational elite, it is easier to experience and perform their cosmopolitan identity and to foster a sense of being-in-place when they take part in activities in such places. In other words, the urban space with the cosmopolitan lifestyle and consumption landscape is not only a transnational space, but also allows Taiwanese expatriates to feel a sense of being-in-place. This is also what makes Shanghai the favoured destination for expatriates, especially for those wish to pursue the cosmopolitan lifestyle, such as my respondents and/or other Taiwanese skilled workers (see also Tseng 2007). The experience of forging public belonging has made it clear that through their interactions with the local Chinese society, Taiwanese practices of belonging are often affected and mediated by their identities. As Yale's experience shows, Taiwanese expatriates' embodied practices and identity performance in the public space are carefully constructed to fit into certain spatial norms:

It is very easy for them [the locals] to know I am not a local. I think it is because of the way I behave and dress. I often put on a T-shirt and shorts and wear sandals, [much] as I did in Taiwan; ... I found [out that this] is not what they ... do. That's why they can tell I am not a local. But now, I have adjusted myself to look more like them. I can speak like local people by, for example, mimicking their accents and using terms they use, such as s*hi fu*, *da di*, and *you quai* to pretend I am a local. This is also good in the way that I won't be [able to be] taken advantage of that easily now *[laugh]*. But I also find the disadvantage of doing this; last time when I went back to Taiwan, my friends told me that I am more like *da lu ren* now, just because the way I talk *[helpless smile]*.

225

(Yale, who is married to a Chinese woman and has lived in Wuxi for three years)

This excerpt implies that many of my respondents employ strategies, such as behaving like a local PRC Chinese, or performing an ethnic Chinese identity, to avoid being treated differently (e.g. being taken advantage of or overcharged) and to ensure their own personal safety. It is particularly advantageous for Taiwanese expatriates to do so because of a shared ethnicity and language, as well as a cultural understanding of Chinese society. Accordingly, I was told that by my respondents that they often play down their Taiwanese identity and highlight their Chinese identity and cosmopolitan attributes in the public domain, to escape from PRC Chinese people's gaze. In doing so, they are considered to be and accepted as being *'zi ji ren*[46] *'* or an insider, which allows them to feel more at ease when interacting with the PRC locals. In this sense, the strategy employed by Taiwanese expatriates to generate public belonging through concealing their 'difference' from the locals, is different from the experience of expatriate workers posted to countries with different cultures. In those instances, expatriates attempt to forge a national sense of belonging through performing their foreignness.

In summary, the above discussion has confirmed that the milieu-bounded familiarity provided by amenities and infrastructure in the receiving cities are imperative for transnational migrants to feel as though they belong (see, for example, Ehrkamp 2005; Gordon 2008; Law 2001; Nowicka 2007; Huang et al. 2008). Also, my analysis further suggested that migrants' subjectivities in their practices of belonging, with special regard to their ability to transform a given space into their comfort zone and to shift their identities to fit in different spatial norms, are important aspects when considering

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[46] Meaning 'one of the lads'.

migrant belonging.

6.3. Constituting migrant belonging through socialising

Public spaces are not only sites for Taiwanese expatriates to experience a sense of belonging through their leisure activities and the material culture; they are also where people interact with one another. This section draws on Taiwanese expatriates' socialising to consider how their everyday emotional experiences are affected by such practices. To do so, I pay special attention to Taiwanese expatriates' participation in a range of communal activities, and also elaborate the differentiated experiences of my respondents. Besides that, my discussion of migrants' practice to forge social belonging will also be extended to include activities that take place in virtual space (e.g. online environment and cyberspace). By doing so, I will further argue that the Internet-based interactions have also played a significant role in migrants' social lives and in mediating their emotions.

6.3.1. Socialising, social gathering and belonging

As mentioned earlier, the large Taiwanese community in the YRD has contributed to the formation of a variety of Taiwanese gatherings that serve the migrant population. This has provided my respondents with plenty of opportunities to meet other fellow Taiwanese people and to socialise. It was intimated to me that such Taiwanese gatherings and meetings, regardless of their scale, are useful and important for my respondents in seeking companionship, especially for those who are not engaged in paid work activities, such as housewives. Sven, who has lived in *Tai gan* living quarters (Suzhou) with his family for 2.5 years, indicated to me what is commonly practised in

Tai gan living quarters:

> In the daytime, they (*Tai tais*) just stay at home doing nothing; so they have much time to
>
> learn skills or develop interests. ...[T]hey can always find people to join them. That's why
>
> there are so many clubs here.

For unemployed expatriates, taking part in gatherings and organised activities is a good way for them to ensure that they are still active, so that they will not just be 'do[ing] nothing apart from making them[selves] look good' (Alex, an R&D engineer in his early 30s) as their employed counterparts perceive them to be. Joyce, a housewife, in her early 40s who lives in a local gated community in Shanghai with two primary school age boys) shared her experiences with me:

> In the beginning, I really didn't know what I could do apart from doing housework, so I
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> just hung out with other *Tai tais*. We went shopping, went to the beauty salon or just had
>
> afternoon tea when we had time. But one day, one of us suddenly brought up the idea of
>
> doing something more meaningful, like learning some skills, but not just fooling around
>
> *[laugh]*. So, we started to organise something to do, like the painting class. It has been two
>
> years since then. Now, I feel not that empty, the painting class really enriched my life. It
>
> has become an important part of my life too; I quite enjoy the class and always like to be
>
> there.

As the excerpt implies, various social gatherings not only allow Taiwanese expatriates to alleviate their homesickness and feel accompanied, it also contributes to the feeling of being self-fulfilled and self-assured through the development of skills. Moreover, social gatherings are also occasions and places in which my respondents can build

quanxi. As Andrew, an administration department manager living in *Tai gan* livening quarters in Shanghai with his family for five years told me, 'playing golf is a very good method to make friends and to meet important people who may be useful to you one day'. He then explained to me that his initial reasoning in joining a golf club was to develop his interest in the sport; but it has turned out to also be an opportunity for him to broaden his social circle. After a while, he realised that a leisure activity can also be turned into a resource for him.

For my respondents, the social gatherings in which they take part are diverse. Most gatherings take the form of business, religious and charity associations. In the case of business associations, the membership is dominated by Taiwanese business people and representatives of Taiwanese firms' China plants, regardless of the sectors of industry. As only a few people in higher ranked positions in companies can attend business association gatherings, participation in these activities is seldom a shared experience among my respondents. But, for my respondents who are qualified to attend Taiwanese business associations, there are several which are particularly important, such as: Taicham/Gentlemen and Ladies Club, Tai tai Clubs, 1881 Taiwanese Professional Women's Society, and the multi-national business associations of the Taiwanese Chamber of Commerce[47]. Taiwanese-based or exclusive business associations and gatherings often share the same objective: to assist Taiwanese business people and enterprises, to ensure their rights are being upheld and to facilitate their interactions. The introduction to the "Taiwanese Chamber of Commerce, Shanghai" exemplifies this:

> The Taiwanese enterprises registered in Greater Shanghai area and Taiwanese people are
>
> subjects that the association aims to serve. The association hopes to facilitate interactions

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[47] These associations are based in the grater Shanghai areas.

and cohesion as well as safeguard the lawful rights and interests of its members. Ultimately, we take it upon ourselves to contribute to the prosperity of Taiwanese enterprises and Taiwanese people's well-being, as well as Shanghai's economic development.[48]

In some cases, the Taiwanese business associations or business people's gatherings are gender-specific. For instance, there are some associations targeting only at female expatriates or set up for female professionals, business women and businessmen's wives to socialise and interact, such as a variety of *tai tai* clubs. In addition to providing a platform for its members to interact, such female-oriented gatherings are also more outward-looking and invest more time and labour in community participation, usually in the form of community works, such as "elder and child care, money-raising activities or voluntary work, etc", according to Ivy, a housewife who has been living in a local gated community (Shanghai) for three years. Through taking part in this kind of activity, some of my female respondents told me that they have an opportunity to not only develop friendships, but to feel more fulfilled. Ivy further stated:

> As a cadre member, there are always piles of work and tasks to do. For this reason', I have to spend a lot time with other members and in the office. Of course, it makes my life very busy here, but I still enjoy it. [Because] [a]t least, I have made many good friends here. ... I didn't realise how busy other [businessmen's] *tai tais* are; they are not just staying at home counting money and doing nothing as we thought *[laugh]/*

In addition to benefits such as 'meeting people, seeking resources and building *quanxi*' that Clarke, in his late 30s who has been living in Shanghai with his family for one year,

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[48] This statement is extracted from the website of the Taiwanese Chamber of Commerce, Shanghai, http://www.hongxi.com/WebSite/company5/Default.asp?ID=236157, [in Chinese, my translation], last accessed on 13 Feb 2010

stated that various communal activities also help my respondents to forge a sense of belonging through feelings of familiarity and comfort generated from both the occasion and the venue. I was able to experience such feeling when I was invited to join an event organised by a Taiwanese association (Plate 6.6.). The visit was recorded in the diary entry below:

It is a small garden party. In the entrance, we were handed a sheet of paper with the activity schedule on it. Before the performances started, we just walked around in the garden and visited stalls selling all kinds of products, such as snacks and foodstuff from Taiwan. It seems that they are very attractive [to Taiwanese people]; there are always people getting together to look into a specific product. While we walked around, Taiwanese pop music was played out loud. People gathered into small groups talking and eating [Taiwanese food]. From the conversations I overheard, it seems that it is also a good opportunity to meet [Taiwanese] people and make friends.

(Fieldwork diary, 10/05/2007)

Plate 6.6. A Taiwanese social organisation's annual party, Shanghai

This experience helped me to realise that Taiwanese expatriates' comfort and ability to feel at ease in gatherings is largely associated with the environment and atmosphere that are filled with familiar visuals and soundscapes that remind them of home and /or homeland. A feeling of belonging is easily fostered by the sense of being understood and the acceptance that they experience in these venues, as Clarke explained:

> I quite like coming here 'cos, since our backgrounds, lives, work experience and social and economic statuses are similar, I feel that it is easy to communicate with others and also what I say is easily understood. That makes me feel very comfortable, and not excluded. As it is very hard to keep in touch with friends in Taiwan and also to make new friends with whom you can share everything here, it is helpful to join different meetings. Otherwise, my friend circle will be getting smaller and smaller.

Participating in a gathering as a leisure activity is also differently experienced by my respondents, which reveals the diversity of experiences of Taiwanese people in the YRD. Taiwanese people who migrate to the China for business purposes include successful business people, those who fail in business ventures (some of which are categorised as *tai liu*[49]) and those who fall in between. As such, my respondents' feeling of belonging as constituted by their socialising and participating in a variety of Taiwanese gatherings, is related not only to the sense of togetherness and companionship they can attain there, but also to their ability to perform certain identities (e.g. their social and economic status) and fit into norms of different gatherings. To express this in another way, Taiwanese expatriates' practices of belonging is largely associated with their embodied

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[49] The term is used by Taiwanese to refer to those who relocate to China to do business, but end up declaring bankruptcy or losing their jobs. As it is thought to be a matter of losing face in Taiwan, some do not have courage to go back to Taiwan and therefore end up living in idleness or becoming rascals who defraud people in the Taiwanese community.

practices to show to the others their understanding of the language and their ability to practise certain manners and behaviours which are accepted in different gatherings.

Although the Taiwanese-exclusive business associations or gatherings are often considered as very useful for my respondents in forging a feeling of being-in-place and belonging, it seems that such an emotional process is more difficult to be fulfilled in religious meetings and assemblies. For religious Taiwanese expatriates, a sense of belonging is often related to considerations as to whether certain religious practices or rituals can be fulfilled. As Joseph, a Muslim who lives in suburban Shanghai with his family, specified:

> For Muslims, the mosque is a very important place for us. I feel my life is not complete
>
> without going to a mosque to attend service. That's why I was so happy when I found
>
> one nearby. For me, the mosque has become my second home in China and every time I
>
> attend meeting, I feel very happy and content.

Similarly, Harrison, a Christian living in Wujiang with his family, linked his feeling of being at home to his participation in Christian meetings, which he describes as "a big family in which you have so many brothers and sisters around who not only accompany you, but also are good helpers." Although places, such as mosques and churches, which allow my religious respondents to continue their religious practices, are important in their expatriate lives, they frequently consider them as meaningful spaces of belonging when they meet their expectations of a religious place. This is evaluated according to whether their feeling of being in what Harrison called the 'family of God' can be fulfilled, which depends on the (religious) activities taken place there. For example, nearly all of my Christian respondents told me that rather than going to local churches

to attend services, they prefer going to Christian gatherings or group meetings organised by Taiwanese or limited only to the foreigners (including overseas Chinese[50]) due to the politicization of religion in China[51]. Although my religious respondents joked that such religious meetings are like secret assemblies, they just did not care about the forums as long as they feel the 'genuine religious rites and services can be practised and maintained' (Jerry, a GM in his late 40s who has been living in Shanghai with his family for nine years). In this case, the religious activities and assemblies that Taiwanese expatriates attend for seeking fellowships and companionships are also Taiwanese-exclusive, so they can also experience brotherly sentiments as well as feelings of familiarity.

There are also Taiwanese charity organisations that allow my respondents to meet and get together to do community and charity work. A well-know Taiwanese religious organisation evidences this, and it also regarded by my respondents as a trusted organisation to join. As Henry, a new member of the organisation who has lived in Kunshan with his employed wife for two years indicated, taking part in such charity activities 'fills up the emptiness in [his] heart' and also makes people feel as though their lives have become more 'meaningful and fulfilled while doing good things.' As a member, of this religious group, Henry was also enthusiastic about introducing it me and invited me their meetings. In the annual Spring Party (Plate 6.7.), I had a chance to

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[50] The Christian meetings attended by Taiwanese people are organised under the umbrella of the Beijing International Christian Fellowship. As the Fellowship is only open to foreign Christians in China, it often suffers less interference by the Chinese government and also has more autonomy in its operation (Lu 2005).

[51] This is because they have an impression that those churches are all set up by the Chinese government and, as Andy, a thirty something R&D manger who has been living in Shanghai with his family for three years said, they are tools for Chinese government's political propaganda so that they are very political (see also Lu 2005).

experience the atmosphere of the meetings. On that occasion, I was surprised by the large amount of Taiwanese people drawn together by the organisation and also gained a lot of information about many participants' stories about becoming a devoted member and how such transformation affects their lives in China, as my record below indicates:

I have been taking part in their activities for several years. It is busy and sometime I also felt tired, but I still think it is not a bad thing to be a member. To be honest, I quite enjoy it 'cos it makes me feel content. [Yuhui: What do you do?] I help out by doing recycling work once a week and [I] attend all kinds of meetings. It is very enjoyable to work with other members 'cos they are all very kind and friendly [people] with whom I can always talk about my cares and worries. Besides, when I attend events, I also feel a sense of familiarity. Probably it is because the standard ways perform the rituals and they behave. It is exactly the same as we can see of that taking place in Taiwan and probably other countries.

(Fieldwork diary 25/03/2007)

Plate 6.7. A Taiwanese religious organisation's annual spring party, Shanghai

For some of my respondents, taking part in social gatherings was originally intended to be a pastime activity; before long, it turned into a life focus. This is because they not only feel that the organised activities (e.g. recycling and charity activities) are meaningful, they also know they will always have the company of other Taiwanese members there. What's more, similar to other Taiwanese meetings and gatherings, a sense of familiarity can be experienced through the standardised practices. This includes the materiality of the meetings like the uniformed staff, the ways in which objects are used and deployed and the layout of a given venue, which constitutes and shapes the environment and the atmosphere of the event. Certain rituals, such as the Master's speech, are essential because it can often unite the participants and help to forge their feelings of being a member in the organisation. Thus, even little normative practices carried out in the gatherings can be a comfort for my respondents who are familiar with the system of meaning and value.

Accordingly, the experience of my respondents' socialising and participation in a variety of Taiwanese associations and gatherings makes clear that their practices of belonging are often related to their ability to develop new lifestyle or interests to enrich their lives abroad and help them feel fulfilled. The above discussion also shows that the social space in which Taiwanese expatriates feel belonged is also a cultural space that has been filled by the ways of behaving, manners and norms that are familiar and understandable for Taiwanese people. In this regard, the presence of difference (e.g. foreigners like the local PRC Chinese) is expected to be integrated and assimilated to fit into the social and cultural norms of practices in the Taiwanese gatherings.

6.3.2. Grounding belonging in virtual communities

In addition to physical spaces in which Taiwanese expatriates' socialising take place, virtual space (i.e. Cyberspace) and online interactions are also an integral part of my respondents' daily lives and play an important role in their emotional labour of belonging. As studies have shown, Cyberspace has increasingly been recognised as a space for people not only to interact and network (see, for example, Bromberg 1997; Nakamura 2002, Turkle 1999), but also from which people's sense of community and belonging can be fostered (e.g. Bernal 2006; Fox and Roberts 1999; Willison 1997). This is also evidenced in my empirical study on Taiwanese expatriate IT workers' practices of belonging in relation to their socialising activities. Having good IT skills, the Internet has always been mentioned by my respondents as an important and necessary tool in their everyday lives, for activities such as staying connected with home and catching up with what is happening in Taiwan. As a result, Cyberspace is a space for Taiwanese expatriate IT workers to interact with people so as to broaden their social circle.

The socialisation and relationships formed on Cyberspace have advantages. For example, I was told by Linda, an employed female expatriate who relocated to Kunshan with her family three years ago, that the mutual trust and friendships built online can be turned into a resource for Taiwanese expatriates to get tactics to survive in China. Also, Dorothy, a housewife in her early 40s who lives in Shanghai, specified:

> It was very hard in the first few months, no friends, no job, so I had to rely on my husband
>
> for everything. That really made me feels useless and depressed. But things changed after I
>
> was introduced to Luntan, I found it is very useful to, for example, get information and

make friends, so now I log on every day. With it, I do not need to pass everything to my

husband. Just like couple weeks ago, I did research on the nursery school , thanks to

another *tai ma*'s help, I can finally find one to send my daughter to. I was very happy

about that 'cos I felt that I did something for my family, [I'm] not [just] a useless

housewife *[laugh]*.

As the extract shows, the online interactions are helpful in coping with the changes of a

new life in China, especially for my female respondents who return to the reproductive

sphere after relocation. Moreover, as relocating and changing residence often bring the

feeling of social isolation and uneasiness to most of my respondents (see also

Bakardjieu 2005), online interactions and relationships can help to alleviate expatriates'

sense of dislocation by allowing them to a 'have normal social life to counteract the

boring expatriate lives' (Dorothy) and to gain support networks. Relationships and

friendships that began over the Internet are not always limited to the online environment,

however, but are often extended offline after a face-to-face interaction, and then

integrated in their real-life social circle. As my conversations with two female

expatriates indicates:

Yuhui: How do you know each other?

Linda: We met in the Luntan's banquet.

Fanny: It was one month ago. After that, we had made several visits to each others' place.

Yuhui: Is it common to make friend like this?

Linda: I think so. You cannot live in China without friends around. It's miserable. That's

why I often see 'net friends and go to the gatherings. When I find someone I feel

that I can get along with, I often keep in touch with them. Gradually, the friendship

can be developed. Of course, it is impossible to count completely on online chats, it

is also important to see each other from time to time.

Accordingly, relationships originating from the online environment are often maintained through the face-to-face communication and interactions. In addition, web-based socialising and networking are also important practices of belonging when a sense of community is considered to be formed among the members. The sense of community, as Papadakis (2003) argues, is not intrinsic to online interactions, but is often fulfilled by certain conditions such as common ties; reciprocity in relationships; shared beliefs, values, and cultural habits; a sense of solidarity or community identity; standards of conduct for community members; and the ability to take collective action, amongst others. I found that this was also the experience of my respondents, especially those who take part in the Luntan .

When talking about their experiences and feelings of interacting with other members in this online forum, I was told by my respondents that they can often feel a sense of reciprocity as it is always stressed and encouraged. This is manifested by the forum's objective that specifies that its aim is to be a platform for Taiwanese people in China to *share* and *exchange* information and meet people. In practice, the members are often encouraged to play roles such as issue raiser, information sharer and problem solver in their interactions online. Ricky (a production management section manager and an active member who has been living in Kunshan with his son for six years) explained:

> I started with throwing out questions and acted passively just waiting for the answer. But, as I gradually got used to life here, I tried to give advice and share my experiences with those that need help. The relationship should be mutual, shouldn't it? [So] I am no longer that passive but more active because I really hope that it will become a better platform. So,

when I found that there are some raising [insignificant] issues *[shaking his head]*, I will

throw out some serious issues to facilitate discussions or at least let them to have different

thinking. For example, not long ago, I posted a question entitled 'what else we can do in

Kunshan?' It turned out to get a great response. I think such discussion is for everybody's

good.

As the excerpt shows, the issues discussed on this forum are also place-specific and related to the real world matters; this in turn makes the space particularly meaningful and relevant to the participants' lives and emotions. Even though some of my participants told me that they prefer to be an invisible visitor and just catch up what is happening or get the information they need from others, most of them indicated that they would also like to be both a receiver and giver of information. As Lydia, an administration personnel, in her late 30s said, 'it happens naturally; it is very hard for me not to share my experience when I know somebody desperately needs to know something that I have knowledge of.' My respondents who are members of this online forum consider the forum as a space in which mutual benefits can be experienced and where reciprocity is practised.

Furthermore, the interactions that take place on the forum and the forum itself are also appreciated for their ability to help forge ties amongst its users. As the most well-known portal site for Taiwanese living in China (Chen 2008), this Taiwanese-dominated online community is also a place for Taiwanese people to meet people with similar migrant experiences or share mutual concerns. The homogeneity of participants, in terms of their nationality and migrant-background, has facilitated the understanding and better communication amongst users. In this sense, the members' identities are thus significant and affect their online interactions and in this online community, as the message posted

by a guest exemplified:

Title: I think that I am not a t*ai ma*

Text:

I am a Shanghaiese, my son is Taiwanese. I don't know what I am? Ha…it seems that I

just make trouble for you.

(Posted on March 28, 2006)

Shortly after this message was posted, it received a reply from a user:

You are definitely a *Tai ma*, we count you in *[because]* You are the mother of a Taiwanese

child.

This has demonstrated that the members' identities are considered important as a

means to ensure this forum is a space where people having a Taiwanese identity can

interact. Therefore, it is only when the foreigner's (e.g. PRC Chinese) status is linked to

a Taiwanese person (e.g. the wife/husband, the daughter-in-law/son-in-law or

mother/father of a Taiwanese person) and/or inclined towards Taiwanese identity that

they will be welcomed and accepted as a member of this online community. Moreover,

the online forum as a Taiwanese-dominated online environment also prescribes a series

of norms that are familiar to Taiwanese people. For example, certain verbal expressions

are used in the participants' conversations which not only make the virtual community

full of familiar topics and facilitate members' interactions, but also serves as a turn-off

for those PRC Chinese users who do not have knowledge of such culture. As a result,

Luntan also becomes a cultural space in which my respondents can perform their

Taiwanese identities, thereby contributing to forge their sense of belonging in this online

environment.

Lastly, I found that to make the forum as a meaningful space for Taiwanese people, certain mechanisms are employed to help forge the feeling of a sense of community amongst its members. For example, the rules and sanctions to uphold the manners of the virtual community are commonly imposed on the members. This manifests itself in the criteria regulating the use of the forum, such that issues related to the cross-Strait politics, religion, ethnic antagonism, personal attacks, commercial information and copyright concerns are strictly forbidden. The forum takes great pains in imposing sanctions, such as the removal of undesirable and unacceptable messages and membership suspension. Moreover, censoring methods are also implemented, often by means of the use of identification check and confirmation which reveals members' identifications and the extent of their involvement, to ensure a secure virtual community and online interactions[52]. As such mechanism allows for members to recognise others' status and identities easily, it in turn distinguishes senior members or active participants who often become key figures upon which others can rely. For this reason, newcomers are always asked to register and introduce themselves to other members, as evidenced by the message posted below:

Title: hello, everyone:

Text:

I am a mother of an 18 month baby boy. I live in Mingshen Garden in Minghuag District. I attended *Tai ma'*s meeting once, do you remember me? I have just moved to here last month, it is so great to meet you guys.

Posted on 31/03/2006

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[52] The system to differentiate the level of its members' involvement is analogous to the level of education, such as the newcomers always started from the pre-school level and the highest level is the lecturer.

This message received an immediate reply.

Welcome, come here often~~

Through the procedure of introduction, the identification and status of newcomers are then confirmed on this forum; otherwise, one might be viewed as a suspicious visitor. When it happens, as my respondents told me, there are always ways in which the old hands can test these visitors and expose their identification or intention. This was my experience when I became a member of the forum. Soon after I posted my introduction as a research student, I was asked by the Webmaster to specify my purpose and leave my contact information with her. Several days later, I received a phone call from her and was invited to attend an informal meeting. At the meeting, I was also asked to show the proof of my PhD student status. Although such methods of monitoring may not be guaranteed to be useful in controlling newcomers to the forum, to a certain degree, it still helps to ensure the forum is carefully maintained so as to make the members feel protected.

The Luntan may be a distinct experience as it is such a successful online community that draws a large number of Taiwanese people together and gives them a sense of community. Nevertheless, as my respondents' experiences show, other virtual communities may also be important for them to socialise and enrich their expatriate lives. Besides, I discovered that my female respondents are seemingly more reliant, and therefore invest more energy and leisure time in developing their online social circle.[53] This is partly because, as mentioned above, their employed counterparts have more resources to capitalise on apart from those available on the Internet. Unemployed

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[53] This was also confirmed by my respondents that, when asked to specify the website they visit most often, they referred to me some popular online forums which are mainly targeted towards Taiwanese women.

female expatriates, especially those who saw their identity change from that of a career woman to a housewife, have to gain resources on their own and seek to reaffirm their self-identity and personal worth. These women are more likely to make their participation in virtual communities and online forums an imperative part of their daily lives. This is particularly true for the single female expatriates whose living space and social lives are restrained after the relocation, as Wendy, an IT engineer in her early 30s who lives alone in *tai gan* living quarters (Shanghai), illustrated:

> As public security really concerns me, I do not go out [of the compound] on my own very often. But that also has disadvantages; for example, life becomes very boring here. Unlike those male expatriates, I do think they have fun here *[facial expression showing that you should know why],* my social circle is very small. That's why every time when I need help, in addition to turning to my colleagues, I will just find the answer online.

In summary, the discussion in this section confirmed the significance of telecommunication tools, (especially the Internet) in migrants' everyday lives and practices of belonging. In this section, I elaborated the significance of the online interactions for Taiwanese expatriates' lives is highlighted, with special regard to the formation of a sense of community in the virtual community. Through studying my respondents' experiences of taking part in the forum of the Luntan, I specified that the formation of the sense of community is associated with the feeling of the reciprocity and cohesion which is derived from common ties, shared concerns and the group identity, which are embedded in the members' interactions.

6.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined the role Taiwanese expatriates' leisure activities and leisure spaces play in their emotional process to forge a sense of belonging. My analysis firstly draws on the materiality of certain leisure spaces, such as places of Taiwanese consumption, tourist destinations and modern urban consumption landscape, to consider how the material culture in public space may affect Taiwanese expatriates' experiences of belonging. My analysis corroborates studies on the public (cultural) landscape as a visual representation of what belongs, which constitutes an essential element in migrants' practices to feel as though they belong (see, for example, Trudeau 2006). I also argued that it is Taiwanese expatriates' performance of different identities (e.g. national, ethnic, Chinese and cosmopolitan identity) in order to fit into certain spatial norms and experiences, that is important in helping them feel a sense of being-in-place and place attachment.

On the other hand, as a public leisure space is also a terrain on which difference is encountered and interacted, my discussion addressed migrants' practices of taking part in various forms of community and collective activities, as manifested by both concrete and virtual forms of social gatherings, to examine how such practices may contribute to forging a sense of community. The empirical case has shown that such an experience is often Taiwanese-based, so that migrants' feelings of social belonging are often related to whether they can perform their national identity and reveal their Taiwanese-ness. As such, it is made clear that while their various references of identities are encouraged in their interactions and encounters with the local social and physical environment, national identity is still important in their social interactions, especially in their participation in a range of economic, religious, cultural and charity associations and

gatherings. Such understanding thus adds to the scholarship of migrant belonging by arguing that not only is the 'difference' highlighted by migrants in their identity practices and performance, but that 'same-ness' can also be a useful indication and drawn upon in their practices to forge (social) belonging in public leisure spaces .

Furthermore, my discussion of Taiwanese expatriates' online interactions and networking as practices to constitute belonging, not only confirms the vital importance of telecommunications in contemporary transnational migrants' daily lives, but also highlights the usefulness of social relationships built in   virtual space in forging a sense of community and turning   Cyberspace into a space of belonging. In a similar vein, the social space shaped by Taiwanese expatriates' collective activities (i.e. taking part in various types of gatherings) in which a sense of community may be forged is also a distinct space of belonging. Accordingly, this research has made distinct contributions to the understanding of space of belonging, by arguing that both physical environment and virtual space are imperative spatial settings of transnational migrants' everyday lives and for their practices to forge belonging.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

7.1. Introduction

This research sought to understand migrants' practices to constitute belonging in the contemporary transnationalised world. My empirical study on China-based Taiwanese expatriates' experiences considered how migrants' everyday grounded practices surrounding material culture, transnationality and interactions with and within the local environment may contribute to transform the domestic, workplace and leisure spaces into spaces of belonging. In doing so, this research also highlighted the significance of place in migrants' emotional process of belonging and in their transnational mobility.

In this concluding chapter, I provide in the next section a summary of my empirical chapters and answers to my research questions. This is followed by a discussion of the research contributions this empirical study makes to the scholarship of transnationalism, migrant belonging and emotional geographies. It also highlights some methodological insights into the study of transnational migration, as well as the practical implications drawn from this study to expatriate studies. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the potential research directions that might follow from this study.

7.2. Summary of the thesis

In seeking to understand Taiwanese expatriates' emotional experiences of belonging in relation to their migration and grounded lived practices, this research has drawn on the everyday aspects and spatiality of their expatriate lives to examine how migrants' labour in order to fulfil their need to belong. I structured the empirical chapters to cover three spaces of belonging: home in the domestic space, the workplace setting and leisure spaces. To understand Taiwanese expatriates' practices to facilitate well-being, I

included the material culture in their everyday living spaces, their transnational actions as well as the grounded interactions with people and the local environment in the analysis.

Chapter four elaborated the ways in which the idea of home is related to migrants' experiences of belonging. In this chapter, I examined how a home can be turned into a space of belonging by articulating Taiwanese expatriates' perceptions of home, as manifested in the built and housing forms, and activities they undertake in order to create a sense of being at home in the domestic space. My research findings showed that the gated community, with special regard to its transnational similarity of housing forms, is an important reference with which highly-skilled expatriates can identify and/or feel comfortable and safe within (see also Blunt and Dowling 2006). Also, transnational experiences and practices constitute a significant part of Taiwanese expatriates' everyday lives and home-making practices at the domestic scale. To turn the domestic space into a meaningful space in which they experience the sensual landscape of home(land) and to perform their identities, Taiwanese expatriates conduct home-making practices including everyday links back home in Taiwan, which are mediated by modern media and telecommunications technology, the reproduction of domestic material culture and the transfer of a series of habitual and cultural practices.

But, rather than assuming that domestic home-making is a smooth process, I also highlighted the challenges and negotiations regarding the selection, re-creation and reinvention of an array of household practices integral to Taiwanese expatriates' domestic practices of belonging. In this, this research has shown the family members' negotiations of their imaginings of home and belonging, especially for the intermarried households and transnational families. This research has also paid special attention to

the interactions between my respondents and PRC Chinese who are important members of the household (e.g. domestic worker, spouse). This revealed the household power relationships and how different identities are practised so shaping Taiwanese expatriates' experiences of home and feeling of being at home. This chapter revealed that household interactions are also important aspects to consider in understanding transnational migrants' practices of belonging in the domestic space.

Chapter five addresses Taiwanese expatriates' workplace practices to examine the ways in which workplace belonging is forged in relation to the workplace's material settings and the institutional structure of Taiwanese transnational IT corporations as well as to their workplace interactions. The research reveals that Taiwanese expatriates' workplace (i.e. the factory compound) is often a reproduction of that in Taiwan and in accordance with headquarters' criteria. Also, the centralised management strategy applied by Taiwanese IT multinational corporations also envisages the intensive transnational (business) links between Taiwan and China. As such, Taiwanese IT firms operating in both countries can also be understood to be an institutional form of transnational practices (Vertovec 1999) and a transnational social space (Pries 2001). While the understanding of the constitution of a transnational social space within MNCs still focuses on the role its soft structure, particularly employees' transnational business practices, plays in this process (for examples of this, see Flecker and Simsa 2001; Kotthoff 2001; Pries 2001), this research has argued that the materiality of MNCs (i.e. the built forms of the factory compound and the deployment of objects within the compound) are also significant, especially in facilitating transnational similarities of the workplace. My research findings have also shown that as it is the Taiwanese work(place) culture that is injected in the China base and imposed on the PRC Chinese employees, the workplace is also an ethnocentric social space that allows Taiwanese expatriates to

forge a feeling of familiarity and workplace identity.

The workplace within the framework of MNCs also envisages the power relationships and distance between Taiwanese expatriates and PRC Chinese employees. This has allowed the small number of Taiwanese expatriates to establish a sense of superiority and to exercise authority in their interactions with PRC Chinese workers so as to develop their workplace identity. Despite this fact, my empirical investigation also showed that the distance between the Taiwanese and PRC Chinese employees is also narrowed for practical considerations (i.e. to create workplace harmony and build *quanxi*) and their socialising is very useful for some in fostering a feeling of being at home in the workplace. In this case, Taiwanese expatriates often engage in the politics of identity by playing down their differences and highlighting sameness with the PRC Chinese (i.e. the Chinese-ness and the shared ethnicity). In addition to the cross-cultural interactions, I found that Taiwanese expatiates' socialising to forge workplace belonging often takes place within Taiwanese circles, with fellow expatriates working in the same company or with those from other companies. The small Taiwanese circle originating from workplace interactions or business contacts often extends to expatriates' social lives outside the workplace and becomes the most important support network for my respondents.

In Chapter six, I discussed Taiwanese expatriates' leisure lives and examined various leisure spaces that allow them to experience a sense of place and belonging. Due to the distance and separation of their workplace and living space from the city, Taiwanese expatriates' everyday lives are disengaged from the local society; this distance is further exaggerated by the fact that migrants' often like to spend their leisure time in the city or in travelling to interesting places. As this empirical study shows, these interesting places

include famous tourist destinations, locations where Taiwanese consumption can be fulfilled, and the city centre where the modern urban and consumption landscape can be experienced. These locations are visited because these places allow Taiwanese expatiates to retreat to and escape from the disorder of the local society and experience the sensual landscape of home, in addition to other transnational familiarities. While the materiality and atmosphere in those places may comfort Taiwanese expatriates, it also prescribes certain norms of spatial practices and identities. Thus, it is also Taiwanese expatriates' capacity to perform multiple identities (i.e. Taiwanese-ness, ethnic Chinese or cosmopolitan identity) in order to fit into different leisure spaces, that allows them to forge a sense of being in place and place belonging. It should be noted that Taiwanese expatriates' practices to fit into the local society and fulfil certain behavioural expectations cannot be assumed or interpreted as an embracing of their host societies or as a process of integration or assimilation; at most, they are strategies used to make their lives in a foreign land easier and more enjoyable.

Further, this research also confirmed that migrants' socialisation and communal activities play a significant role in their everyday lives and affect their well-being. In this study, I not only examined the concrete forms of social gatherings (e.g. economic associations, religious meetings and charity organisations) that provide support networks to Taiwanese expatriates, but further highlighted the fact that the virtual forms of community developed through online interactions also contribute to the formation of a sense of community among the members. Rather than assuming that Taiwanese expatriates' sense of belonging is a logical outcome of their socialisation, I argued that their feelings of being identified and accepted are negotiated through the performance of multiple identities.

Through the examination of Taiwanese expatriates' everyday grounded practices at home, in the workplace and in leisure spaces, this research has highlighted not only the significance of place in affecting transnational migrants' practices of belonging, but also migrants' agency in such emotional processes and interactions with and within different everyday living spaces. This is demonstrated by their identity practices embedded in everyday lived experiences of material culture, transnational actions and interpersonal interactions and socialisations.

7.3. Theoretical and methodological contributions

This section elaborates on the theoretical contributions of this empirical study to the scholarship on transnationalism, migrant belonging and emotional geographies. Also, practical implications for expatriate management and policies drawn from the study will be presented. This is followed by the consideration of practical insights of my research methodology into the research of contemporary transnational migration.

7.3.1. Transnational migration

Through considering how transnationality is integrated into Taiwanese expatriates' migrants' everyday practices and emotional processes, my empirical study makes a number of contributions to transnationalism scholarship.

In addition to the two-way flow of people, objects, information, I discussed the more inclusive transnational experiences in which Taiwanese expatriates take part , including their embracing and transfer of a series of habitual and ritual practices from home, as well as the transnational material similarities (as seen in the housing forms and urban

landscape). Further, my analysis of Taiwanese migrants' transnational practices not only confirms the importance of advanced telecommunications and transportation technology in contemporary transnational migrants' everyday lived practices, but emphasises the ways in which transnational media (e.g. satellite TV) and the Internet are integrated into their everyday practices of belonging. In highlighting the fact that transnational practices are an integral part of migrants' experiences of belonging, this research also argued that a transnational social space (Faist 1999; Pries 2001) that is constituted through migrants' intensive transnational links and manifested in a verity of spatial forms (e.g. domestic space, workplace, consumption space and Cyberspace) are significant spatial experiences in contemporary migrants' lived practices. In this, this research not only presented valuable experiences of migrants' workplace-based transnational practices, but also posited that the spaces of contemporary migrants' actions of transnational links are based on both concrete and virtual spaces. Moreover, in addressing the everyday aspect of Taiwanese expatriates' grounded practices within which their transnational actions and links are embedded, this research has also made distinct contributions to grounding transnationalism (Conradson and Latham 2005a; Smith 2001).

Transnational links are particularly important for Taiwanese expatriates employing a transnational family strategy. In such household configurations, the dispersed family members' imaginings of home and feelings of being at home, though challenged and negotiated, may not necessarily be hindered by the absence of family members. Instead, these absences are often filled by migrants' frequent physical movements back and forth between the two homes as well as by the intensive contacts through the mediation of communication tools to maintain family intimacy.

This empirical study of Taiwanese expatriates also offers valuable insight to the literature of middling transnationalism. This case study not only presented a distinct migrant group's (skilled workers) experiences surrounding transnational practices, but it also argued that their everyday lives and transnationalism are often restrained and structured by the power relations between the powerful transnational corporations and the relatively powerless expatiate workers. Besides, I incorporated Taiwanese expatriates' reproductive and productive activities as well as their social lives into the discussion of the everyday aspects of migrants' practices of belonging. In particular, my analysis has revealed that workplace (in terms of the physical environment, materiality and employees' practices shaped by organisational and IT work cultures) is an important space for skilled expatriates to develop a sense of belonging. Being a group of migrants with better mobility, Taiwanese expatriates often have a greater inclination toward the cosmopolitan lifestyle. Their experiences of public belonging are often therefore constituted through their experiences of accessing amenities provided in the global city and practices of multiple identities. More importantly, by examining both male and female expatriates' practices of belonging, this research supplements the male-dominated migration experiences in the discourse of skilled migration by highlighting female expatriates' economic and social roles that are just as important as their roles in home-making practices (see, also Iredale 2001; Yeoh and Khoo 1998; Yeoh and Huang 1998; Yeoh and Willis 2005c).

This empirical case of Taiwanese transnational migrants' everyday practices of belonging further adds to studies on the social and cultural aspects of overseas Chinese people's practices, to supplement the excessive emphasis the Chinese transnationalism literature gives to their economic performance. My research drawing on Taiwanese migrants in a country where they share similar cultural roots and ethnicity has provided

an account vastly different from other migrants' experiences and practices in cross-cultural contexts. My analysis takes into account the complex interactions between sub-groups of the overseas Chinese resulting from their negotiations and practices of multiple identities that reflect both their political ideology and perceptions of their Chinese-ness. Otherwise stated, my discussion has made clear the heterogeneity of the overseas Chinese and (re)considered the discourse of a singular Chinese identity and its juxtaposition with other dimensions of migrants' identities integral to their practices of belonging. In so doing, this empirical study concerning the relationship between migrant belonging and identities can also offer insights into the understanding of migrants' identities in the contemporary transnationalised world. In considering Chinese cultural identity and traits to be useful resources for Taiwanese expatriates to retrieve and apply in their practices of belonging, I also found that *quanxi* is an important element embedded in overseas Chinese business practices which is integral to Taiwanese expatriates' practices of developing friendships and seeking social support which later constitute the basis of their belonging.

7.3.2. Migrant belonging

This research concerning Taiwanese expatriates' everyday lived experiences in relation to their emotional process has also added to the understanding of migrant belonging, with special regard to the aspect of practices of belonging in relation to material culture, transnational actions and socialising. My discussion of Taiwanese expatriates' everyday material practices and the material culture in domestic, workplace and leisure spaces has confirmed the significance of material culture in the reproduction of sensory landscape of home and/or the homeland through visual, aural and gustatory experiences and sensations that allow migrants to forge a sense of being at home in a given spatial

setting (see also Mee and Wright 2009; Walsh 2006a, b). In addition to domestic material culture, I paid special attention to the ways in which transnational material similarities that are experienced in the workplace and public leisure spaces have contributed to the constitution of Taiwanese expatriates' sense of familiarity, so as to generate a feeling of belonging. My research findings also confirmed that the transnationality manifested in the transfer of migrants' material practices and transportation of objects is an important aspect in Taiwanese expatriates' practices of belonging.

My analysis of Taiwanese expatriates' material practices has also revealed the gendered differentiated practices of belonging through material culture, and it also implicated identity negotiations in such processes. Otherwise stated, migrants' identity is not merely manifested in their practices surrounding material culture; it is also an integral to practices which show their power and status, to be recognised and accepted in a group or by people, as well as to fit into certain spatial and social norms of behaving. In particular, the focus on Taiwanese expatriates' grounded encounters with people and interactions with the local society demonstrated the ways in which they employ multiple identities (not just that of shared ethnicity and cultural identity) in their practices of belonging. Thus, my research findings have shown that for this migrant group of expatriate workers who are more inclined to international mobility and work experiences, the corporate and cosmopolitan identity are also significant and are relevant to their identity narratives in their everyday practices. In this regard, I also argued that certain spatial elements and environments that allow expatriate workers to perform a given identity are often useful in their experiences to forge a sense of place attachment and belonging.

Space(s) of migrant belonging is also a dimension that this research added to the

scholarship of belonging. My analysis had specified different spaces of migrants' practices to constitute belonging, including the concrete spatial settings such as home in the domestic space, workplace and urban commercial and consumption landscape, as well as the non-concrete forms of space such as online community and the transnational social space manifested by the multinational corporations and social gatherings. By doing so, this research presented the often neglected aspect of expatriates' workplace practices in relation to their emotional experiences. I also made the link between the amenities in the global city and urban landscape (e.g. gated communities and ethnic enclaves) and Taiwanese expatriates' practices to forge public belonging. More importantly, in light of the metaphor of home to which Taiwanese expatriates' narratives of (space of) belonging are related, this research also adds to recent geographical studies on home by suggesting a multi-scalar understanding of belonging constituted by homemaking practices that integrate home(s) in multiple places (see, for example, Blunt and Dowling 2006; McDowell 1997). Such an understanding of migrants' imaginings of home and feelings of being at home call into question the clear distinction between home and host countries (see also Dunn 2008).

The discussion of Taiwanese expatriates' socialising and social participation that contribute to the formation of a variety of social spaces to which they feel they belong has also shown that there is a lack of officially organised Taiwanese events or gatherings (e.g. the celebration of Taiwanese national day or holidays) in China where Taiwanese people can interact and socialise. This has made evident that the absence of a governmental force has restrained the China-based Taiwanese migrants from developing a national sense of belonging, and indicates that the political and social environment of the host society plays a significant role in transnational migrants' collective activities as a way to forge social belonging. Accordingly, by discussing different spatial dimensions

of Taiwanese expatriates' practices of belonging and highlighting the important role place plays in such an emotional process, this research has also made geographical connections with the literature of migrant belonging.

7.3.3. Emotional geographies

In light of Taiwanese expatriates' emotional experiences of belonging in relation to their transnational migration and resettlement, this research also made a vital contribution to emotional geographies studies by adding an empirical case on migrants' emotional processes, thereby contributing to the understanding of emotional contents of human life with a special regard to areas of public life (Anderson and Smith 2001). The focus of this research on migrant belonging also advanced the understanding of migrants' emotional negotiations and articulation of feelings like pain, loss or dislocation as well as the feeling of being at home. My study contributes to geographic studies on transnational migration through a more critical engagement with migrants' emotions to supplement conventional studies on the morphology of migration and economic and policy considerations.

The research findings revealing that Taiwanese expatriates' belonging is greatly shaped by their experiences of interpersonal interactions and also their everyday interactions with the local physical and social environment resonate with the argument emotional geographers have made about the relationality of the constitution of emotions, as emotions are often produced in relations between people and environment (Bondi et al. 2005). My discussion of the relationships between migrants' emotional process and their practices of identity in their local encounters and interpersonal interactions has provided valuable insight into the academic work on the sociality in relation to migrants'

(practices of) belonging.

This research examining domestic space, workplace and leisure space as important spaces of Taiwanese expatriates' practices of belonging also evidences the ways in which emotions are felt to reside   not only in the body as an interiorised subjective mental state, but also in places. This has thus contributed to studies on the spatiality of emotions and the literature on geography of belonging. In particular, I argued that the multiple sites in which migrant belonging can be forged also include non-concrete spaces, such as social space and virtual space, as well as home, workplace, urban space and nation.

7.3.4. Methodological contributions and reflections

Participant observation was a valuable research method in investigating Taiwanese expatriates' everyday practices of belonging in relation to their material practices, transnationality and identity practices. That this method was used also complements the work of other geographers who employ forms of ethnographic methods to research transnational migration (e.g. Ho 2009; Walsh 2006a,b.). The fact that I am a *tongbao* who shares the similar situation of living abroad, was particularly advantageous for me in accessing my respondents' lives and social circle in order to observe their lived experiences in a natural setting. The shared cultural understandings between my respondents and myself also allowed me to probe into the subtleties of my respondents' behaviours and words or even those unspoken feelings which supplemented information I gathered through other research methods.

In addition to participating and observing my respondents' real-life activities, I also

carried out qualitative research on their Web-based interactions and socialising in the Cyberspace, as the use of the Internet and other forms of telecommunications tools have become an important part of Taiwanese expatriates' daily practices. The information I gleaned from my respondents' online interactions has proved to be valuable and insightful for understanding their practices in developing a sense of community in the online environment so as to discern the different spaces of migrants' practices to forge social belonging. I argued that such a research method of online observation is useful in studying contemporary transnational migrants because it allows the researchers to gain information from the respondents' writings to supplement their verbal narratives or ideas or feelings that were not made known in their verbal expressions. Accordingly, it is suggested that studies that aim to discern contemporary transnational migrants' lives and practices should thus consider Cyberspace as a research field and integrate online participations or observations as part of qualitative research strategies.

Despite the usefulness of participant observation, there were also some limitations in carrying out such qualitative research methods in my fieldwork. Firstly, my respondents' concerns over confidentiality (i.e. whether or not the information and data they shared with me was going to be publicised and/or published) was a challenge, and it made my recruitment of respondents even harder. As a result, I gained access to only a limited number of Taiwanese IT firms and expatriate workers, from which I employed the snowballing method to recruit more research participants. As such, my research subjects were limited to a very narrow scope of Taiwanese expatriates and made the sampling bias inevitable. For example, in my research process, I experienced difficulties with recruiting and getting access to the spouses of my participants as my request for permission to talk to their spouses was often turned down. Consequently, my limited exploration reveals only a partial picture of my respondents' household practices.

Confidentiality considerations also hindered my access to my participants' workplace and workplace-practices. In only a few cases did I gain permission to do interviews with Taiwanese expatriates in their offices so that I could carry out observational research of their workplace-related practices. As a result, my discussion of Taiwanese expatriates' workplace practices (interpersonal interactions, material culture and organisational activities or practices) are limited largely to my respondents' words and descriptions, rather than my own in-depth observations.

Another challenge I confronted in the field was the difficulty in conducting participant observations to gather information on the full range of Taiwanese expatriates' transnational activities and experiences. Although I was able to experience Taiwanese expatriates' border-crossing movements through my own practices of moving back and forth between Taiwan and China during my fieldwork, to have a thorough understanding of their emotional experiences embedded in their journeys back home could only be achieved through following expatriates on their journeys. Furthermore, I was unable to witness certain transnational practices, such as moving and transporting objects from one home to another. Although this may not necessarily limit the validity of my analysis, the research would have been enriched if my investigations extended the research field from within the national boundary to the cross-border contexts and settings.

7.3.5. Expatriate management

The empirical study on Taiwanese expatriates' emotional labour of belonging also has practical implications for expatriate management, with special regard to the institutional practices to facilitate expatriate workers' well-being. Firstly, my findings of the

usefulness of the physical environment of Taiwanese expatriates' everyday living and work spaces (evidenced by the material configurations) in helping them to forge a sense of being in place and place identity, offers insight into the design of expatriate packages (in relation to living and housing arrangements) to ensure expatriate workers have a safe and pleasant environment in which to live and work. Expatriate housing helps migrants' to generate a sense of familiarity that can be achieved through the provision of transnational material similarities in the built forms and material configurations of the housing.

Secondly, as this research has shown that Taiwanese expatriates' socialising and support networks are also useful in forging a sense of social belonging, the company can be an institutional force to create a suitable environment or platform for its (expatriate) workers to interact, so as to facilitate their workplace belonging. Thirdly, the empirical research has demonstrated that expatriate workers' adjustment to new work environments in countries assumed to have the shared ethnicity and cultural background is not a smooth process, but a challenge. In this regard, I argued that the pre-departure preparations and cultural training which are often applied to expatriate workers posted to countries with different cultural background (Brewster and Scullion 1997, Harzing 2004a, b) are also necessary for those posted to countries with which they share certain cultural traits. In doing so, expatriate workers may not over-emphasise the similar cultural system and ethnicity they share with the locals and underestimate the difference between the two countries, and thus be better prepared for experiencing and confronting the stress of relocation and cultural shock.

Lastly, this research understands the significance of transnational movement and actions in which Taiwanese expatriates engage to sustain the transnational family. This has also

places in the foreground the important role that family support plays in expatriate workers' everyday lives and well-being so as to determining the levels of expatriate success (see also Ali 2003; Chiotis-Leskowich 2009). In this case, I suggest that for expatriates who choose to apply transnational family strategies and household arrangements, the company can develop its institutional arrangement and expatriate policies to make frequent travelling back to Taiwan and easy links back to home for expatriate workers, in addition to means to facilitate the employees' socialising and collective activities to have grounded companionship. In doing so, the maintenance of a transnational family can also be an advantageous household strategy, especially when considering that it prevents family members from experiencing emotional turmoil caused by the change of residence and the shift of role in the new household division of labour.

7.4. Concluding remarks and directions for future research

This research offers an empirical case to the scholarship of grounded transnationalism through the examination of Taiwanese expatriates' everyday practices involving material culture, transnational actions and identity practices to constitute their feeling of belonging. My discussion of the aspect of migrants' practices of belonging resonates with emotional geographical studies that emphasise people's emotional experiences as a result of interactions between people and the place/environment on which their everyday lives are based, so as to confirm the stickiness of place in contemporary transnational mobility in a supposedly borderless world. Furthermore, I have highlighted the multiple spaces of belonging for contemporary transnational migrants that extends existing understanding of migrants' practices of belonging at home and leisure spaces of socialisation, to spaces of belonging as demonstrated by a range of

transnational social spaces and virtual spaces so making this research a valuable case study to add to the recent literature of geographies of belonging.

As I complete this phase of my research, there are still a few issues I would like investigate further. Firstly, longitudinal investigations of the effect of transnationality on the China-based Taiwanese migrants' emotional experiences, lived practices and identity (especially after the commencement of the direct Taiwan-China flights in 2008) are required and will be a follow up to this study.

Secondly, issues surrounding the transformation of family strategies and household dynamics as a result of contemporary migrants' intensive transnational actions and movement (including as transnational family, new forms of domestic division of labour and household power relations) could also be explored more fully to engage in wider international migration debates. This can not only be examined in relation to migrant people's emotional process; addressing the household reconfigurations and power relations can also add to our understanding of the limits and opportunity of transnational migration for family members in terms of liberation or repression.

Another research field I would like to further develop is to continue integrating geographic perspectives in order to understand contemporary transnational migration and migrants' experiences, as it has been argued that the dialectical relations between mobility and the stickiness of place need further attention (Dunn 2008; Mitchell 1997a). Especially relevant in today's intensified transnational flows, my further research will be particularly concerned with how the local contexts in which migrants' transnational lives are based (in terms of both the physical and social/cultural environments) affect expatriates' identity practices and are integrated into their everyday lived practices.

The focus on the local contexts in shaping migrants' experiences is not fully explored in Taiwanese transnationalism, which is another area which my future research will explore. In this empirical research, I found that not only is an analysis of the institutional force (i.e. governmental policies and actions) in Taiwanese emigrants' lived practices in the host countries still neglected, the fact that brain-drain is seen as a *fait accompli* in Taiwan has neglected to draw much scholarly attention. Therefore, an investigation focusing on the Taiwanese government's migration policies and its role in helping their emigrants by bringing them together and establishing a migrant community and solidarity abroad is valuable.

Finally, comparative studies in migrants' grounded transnationalism are worth pursuing in the future. This can be developed by researching migration experiences of different sub-groups of Taiwanese emigrants (e.g., those with different social and economic status, those in different cultural country contexts, as well as temporary and permanent migrants). Also, comparative studies can be carried out to explore the manifestations of overseas Chinese's transnationalism in China, with special regard to the relationship between their multiple identities and grounded lived practices. By doing so, a reconsideration of the discourse of Chinese-ness and the generality of experiences of migrant people sharing the same ethnic and cultural background can thus be revealed. The research can also add to the understanding of migrants' identity in a transnationalised world, especially in relation to the negotiations of different scales of identities in their everyday lives.

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APPENDIX I

LIST OF RESPONDENTS

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Marital status	Education	Position	Duration in China	Housing location	Families
Alice	late30s	F	Married	Bachelor	Housewife	3years	Local GC[a]	2 children, China
Amy	early30s	F	Married*	Bachelor	Marketing section manager	1.5years	Local GC	0 children, China
Aru	early30s	F	Single	Bachelor	Business department section manager	1.5years	Local GC	Single[c]
Betty	early40s	F	Married	High school	Housewife	6years	Local GC	2 children, China
Chole	early30s	F	Married	Bachelor	Housewife	2years	Local GC	0 children, China
Dorothy	early40s	F	Married	Bachelor	Housewife	5years	Local GC	2 children, China
Emma	early 50s	F	Married	High school	Housewife	7years	Local GC	1child, China
Helen	late30s	F	Single	Bachelor	R&D deputy engineer	5years	Local GC	Single
Ivy	late30s	F	Married	High school	Housewife	3years	Local GC	2 children, China
Joyce	early 40s	F	Married	Bachelor	Housewife	6years	Local GC	2 children, China
Karren	late30s	F	Single	Bachelor	Production management supervisor	1year	FC[b]	Single
Lily	early30s	F	Married	Bachelor	Material control section manager	7years	FC	2 children, China
Linda	early30s	F	Married	Bachelor	Business department section manager	3years	FC	1 child, China
Ling	early40s	F	Married	Master	Accountant	2year	FC	2 children, China
Lydia	late30s	F	Single	High school	Administration staff	8years	Local GC	Single
Mary	late30s	F	Married	Master	Material and supply section manager	12years	FC	2 children, China
Sue	late40s	F	Married	Master	IT department manager	1year	FC	1 child, China
Tracy	early30s	F	Single	Bachelor	Production management supervisor	2years	FC	Single

Wendy	early30s	F	Single	Master	IT engineer	1year	FC	Single
Winnie	early30s	F	Single	Bachelor	QC section manager	2years	FC	Single
Adam	late 30s	M	Married	Bachelor	Production management senior supervisor	1.5years	FC	0 children, Taiwan
Alex	early30s	M	Married	Bachelor	R&D engineer	3years	Local GC	0 children, China
Allan	early30s	M	Married	Master	Production department section manager	1year	Local GC	0 children, China
Andrew	late30s	M	Married	Bachelor	General affairs department manager	5years	FC	2 children, China
Andy	early40s	M	Married	Bachelor	R&D department manager	3years	Local GC	2 children, China
Casper	ealry50s	M	Married	Bachelor	Production control department manager	2years	FC	2 children, China
Chris	early40s	M	Married	Bachelor	Procurement department manager	1year	FC	0 children, Taiwan
Clarke	late30s	M	Married	Bachelor	Engineering section manager	1year	FC	2 children, China
Colin	late30s	M	Single	High school	General manager	8years	Local GC	Single
David	late40s	M	Married	Bachelor	R&D engineer	1year	Local GC	2 children, Taiwan
Frank	early30s	M	Married*	Bachelor	Operation control section manager	3years	FC	0 children, China
Fred	early30s	M	Single	Bachelor	Production management section manager	3years	FC	Single
Harrison	early30s	M	Married	Master	Material control section manager	2years	FC	1 child, China
Henry	early30s	M	Married	Master	QA section manager	2years	Local GC	0 children, China
Howard	early50s	M	Married	Bachelor	HR manager	1year	FC	2children(Taiwan); wife(China)
James	late30s	M	Married	Bachelor	R&D section manager	2years	FC	2 children, Taiwan
Jerry	late40s	M	Married	Bachelor	General manager	9years	Local GC	2 children, China
Jim	early40s	M	Single	Bachelor	Operation control department manager	2years	FC	Single

Joseph	late30s	M	Married	Bachelor	Engineering section manager	1.5years	FC	0 children, China
Keith	early50s	M	Married	Bachelor	Factory director	1year	Local GC	2 children, China
Kevin	early30s	M	Single	Bachelor	Deputy engineer	1year	FC	Single
Larry	early50s	M	Married	Bachelor	General manager	5years	Local GC	3children, China
Leo	ealry50s	M	Married	Master	Deputy general manager	4years	FC	2 children, Taiwan
Leslie	late30s	M	Married	Bachelor	Business department manager	2.5years	FC	2 children, Taiwan
Lian	late30s	M	Married	Bachelor	Business department manager	1years	Local GC	1 children, Taiwan
Luke	early40s	M	Married	Bachelor	Business department manager	2years	FC	2 children, Taiwan
Mark	early40s	M	Married*	Bachelor	R&D engineer	1year	Local GC	1 Child, China
Peter	early30s	M	Single	Master	R&D deputy manager	3.5year	FC	Single
Richard	early30s	M	Married	Master	HR manager	1year	FC	2 children, China
Ricky	late40s	M	Married	Bachelor	Production management department manager	6years	Local GC	1 child in Taiwan with wife, 1in China
Rico	early40s	M	Married	Bachelor	Production management section manager	8years	Local GC	2 children, China
Roger	late 30s	M	Married	Bachelor	R&D section manager	1year	Local GC	1 Child, China
Simon	early30s	M	Single	Master	R&D department manager	1year	Local GC	Single
Sven	late30s	M	Married	Bachelor	R&D section manager	2.5years	FC	1 child, China
Sway	early30s	M	Single	Master	Production department manager	2years	FC	2 children, Taiwan
Terry	early50s	M	Married	Bachelor	General manager	13years	Local GC	2 children, China
Tony	late40s	M	Married	Bachelor	R&D deputy manager	5years	Local GC	0 children, China
Vincent	early50s	M	Married	Master	Production department manager	2years	FC	2 children, China
Walker	early30s	M	Single	Master	Material control section manager	0.5 year	FC	Single
Walter	early40s	M	Married	aster	General manager	1.5years	Local GC	0 children, Taiwan
Willi	early30s	M	Single	Master	Production integration section manager	3year	FC	Single

William	early40s	M	Married	Bachelor	Business department manager	9years	Local GC	2 children, China
Yale	early30s	M	Married*	Bachelor	Customer service section manager	3years	FC	0 children, China
Yita	early30s	M	Married	Bachelor	R&D deputy engineer	2years	Local GC	0 children, China
Yves	early 30s	M	Single	Bachelor	Production department manager	3years	FC	Single

* Married to PRC Chinese

a. GC: gated community;

b. FC: factory compound

c. Single: expatriate who relocated to China alone

APPENDIX II

SAMPLE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Part A: Expatriation (migration) process

1. When did you come to work in China?

2. Did you move to China by yourself or with your family?

3. What made you decide to come to China to work?

4. Why you were expatriated to China? (Questions about the criteria of expatriation)

5. Did you have any pre-departure training or guidance?

5. Can you specify the process of your relocation and settlement?

6. What is the expatriation remuneration included in your expatriation package?

Part B: Daily lives

1. What is your daily routine here? How is that compared to that in Taiwan? (follow-up questions about household responsibility and relationships)

2. Whom do you hang out (or contact) with often? (Questions about their social connections and friend circle)

3. What do you like or often do in your leisure time and for social lives? Do you have take part in any form of collective activities? What is that and why?

4. How do you feel living in China and in the neighbourhood as a Taiwanese? Does Taiwanese identity make your lived experiences special?

5. Do you have to keep in touch or connect with people in other countries (e.g. Taiwan)? For what and by what means? (Follow-up questions about the use of the telecommunication tools)
6. How much do you weight such connections? Are they important? Why?
7. How do you perceive China as a country? (follow-up questions about the ethnic identity and the effect on their feeling living in China)
8. Do you think your lifestyle and feeling toward living in China changes as you stay longer? If so, in what ways?
9. Do you feel any forms of organisational forces are imperative or play certain roles in affecting your expatiation lives? What are they?
10. What do you think can make your lives here more comfortable or better?
11. Have you done anything to make yourself feel more comfortable or being like at home here?

Part C: Spatiality of daily lived practices

1. Where do you live now? Can you briefly describe the environment in that area? How do your feel living there?
2. What is your spatial movement in a day?
3. How does it look like in terms of the physical structure and environment? How do you feel in the office?
4. Can you share with me your work routine? To what extent you have to interact with the foreign co-workers (i.e. PRC colleges) if there is any? How do you feel working with them?
5. Where do you often go after work or on holidays? Why these places?
6. How do you feel being in these places? What elements make you have special feeling toward these places and why?
7. Apart from these places, where do you think is very important to your lives?

Part D: Transnational activities

1. How often do you go back to Taiwan? For what reason?
2. How do you feel on the journey back to Taiwan and China?
3. Is there any stuff you need or like and will bring them from Taiwan? Why?